

## **Solomon on Sex - Recovering from a Marital Wipeout**

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**March 18, 2012**

Good morning Faith family. We are in the 10th week of the *Solomon on Sex* series. Last week, Solomon and his bride had a marital wipeout. She was tired of him working all day. She was frustrated with him coming home late and serving her nothing more than the emotional leftovers from his day.

In her dream, she concocted a way to get even. When he came home late and was interested in a conjugal visit, she locked the door to her bedroom. She frustrated him. When he asked for her to open the door, she gave him lame excuses. If she didn't enjoy relational intimacy in the daytime, he didn't enjoy physical intimacy in the nighttime.

That felt like a good plan until, in her dream, crushed by rejection, Solomon left home. She realized her bitterness carried her too far. Rather than drawing them closer, she was tearing them further apart.

Thankfully, rather than waiting for him to return, in her dream, she set out in search of him. She even enlisted the help of her friends, the daughters of Jerusalem.

This morning, we will see how this couple recovers from their marital wipeout. What we learn from them will help us recover from marital wipeouts of our own. We pick the story up with the daughters of Jerusalem wondering what could be so special about him that they should help her in the middle of the night.

What is your beloved more than another beloved, O most beautiful among women? What is your beloved more than another beloved, that you thus adjure us? Song of Solomon 5:9 (ESV)

Why should the Shulamite be so concerned about losing him? After all, aren't men a dime a dozen? What she tells her girlfriends about her husband are some of the things a wife needs to say to her husband to help their relationship through rough patches. Wives, this is how you can help your husband recover from a marital wipeout.

Interestingly, she will oscillate between extolling some of his external physical qualities and internal character qualities. Both are important to her.

### **What does a wife need to say to her husband?**

#### **External --- You stand out from other men.**

**My beloved is radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. Song of Solomon 5:10 (ESV)**

The Shulamite says Solomon is ruddy. That means he has reddish-brown skin. She also says he is radiant. That doesn't mean he wears make-up to make his complexion flawless. The word radiant in the Hebrew means dazzling or glowing. It means he stands out in a crowd.

It is similar to when I go to a high school sporting event and looking for Cindy in the crowd. When I can't find her, I squint my eyes scanning the crowd for long blonde hair. For some reason that always works. She just pops out from the group in my mind. That is the feeling the Shulamite has about Solomon. To her, he is unique. He stands out in a crowd.

That is why she says he is distinguished among 10,000. That is an ancient way of saying, Solomon is a one-in-a-million kind of guy.

**Application:** Wives, don't just tell your husband you love him, tell him that to you, there is nobody else like him.

**Internal ---- I appreciate your intellect and gifts.**

**His head is the finest gold;... Song of Solomon 5:11 (ESV)**

What is she referring to when she says his head is like gold? She is not saying his brain is thick and metallic. Many Bible scholars believe she is affirming his intelligence and gifts. She is affirming his mind and skills. Wives, if you make your husband feel stupid, that doesn't help things. She appreciates his intelligence and planning. She appreciates that he saved and paid the car off early. He appreciates how he figures problems out at home.

Some of you may not see your husbands as that intelligent. Your husband may not have a great deal of education. Find the area of his strength in his life and affirm it. This was brought home to me for the last few weeks with the stage, lighting and video project that begins tomorrow. I can program websites, research and write, but when it comes to building construction, I am helpless. If it wasn't for friends in the church, who understand carpentry and electricity, things would be scary. Wives, there are some things your husband does and he does well. Affirm him at them. A husband needs to know his wife admires his intellect and skills.

**Application:** Wives, be your husband's cheerleader.

**External ---- I love the way you look.**

**his locks are wavy, black as a raven. Song of Solomon 5:11 (ESV)**

He has black, wavy hair. This is the same kind of hair as his wife. She likes his hairstyle. There's nothing wrong with that. Guys, I must confess. What my hair looks like is a concern to my wife. I have a colic that stands up like

Alfalfa from the *Little Rascals*. Every morning she helps me paste the colic down. When it is standing tall, things are not good. I read this and kept thinking this lady reminds me of my wife.

**Internal --- I love your gentleness.**

His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a full pool. Song of Solomon 5:12 (ESV)

She likes his eyes. What type of description is this? If you picture the scene she just described, it is a gentle scene. It is a bird by a stream. She tells him that she loves the way he looks at her. She loves his gentleness toward her. It puts her at ease.

If you remember from the *Toy Story* movie, Mr. Potato Head had a set of angry eyes. That wasn't the way Solomon looked at his wife. He looked at her with a gentleness that put her at ease.



**Application:** Wives, tell your husband how much you appreciate his gentleness.

**External --- I appreciate the way you care for your appearance.**

His cheeks are like beds of spices, mounds of sweet-smelling herbs. Song of Solomon 5:13 (ESV)

Do you think Solomon had facial hair? According to the scholars, this verse tells us he had a beard. Apparently, he didn't walk around with leftovers hanging in it that smelled like rotten limburger cheese. We don't know how long his beard was but he kept it washed and well groomed. She loved snuggling with

him and smelling that beard. He was a well-groomed man who cared for his appearance.

He didn't have grease under his fingernails. He didn't wipe his nose on his sleeve. He didn't wipe the dust from eating his Doritos on his T-shirt. He was neatly groomed, and she appreciated it.

**Internal --- I love the gentle way you talk to me.**

his lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh. Song of Solomon 5:13 (ESV)

His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable... Song of Solomon 5:16 (ESV)

While these lines describes his physical mouth, and hint that he is a great kisser, they also tell us about the words that came from his mouth. His words are sweet. Solomon was not harsh with his wife. It was not just the look from his eyes that was gentle, but his words were gentle and refreshing when he spoke to her.

**Application:** Tell your husband how refreshing gentle words are to your heart.

**External --- I appreciate it when you stay in shape.**

His arms are rods of gold, set with jewels. His body is polished ivory, bedecked with sapphires. His legs are alabaster columns, set on bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. Song of Solomon 5:14–15 (ESV)

With all this talk about gentleness, we might be tempted to think he is a wimpy man. These verses dispel those thoughts. She is describing his body and what she likes about it. She is a lady who is enticed verbally but that doesn't mean she isn't attracted to him physically. She loves his arms. They are like

rods of gold set with jewels. Solomon packs a set of pipes for arms. He has a set of big guns. He has veins showing through his forearms. He is a strong guy.

He is also a trim guy. In Judges 3:17 it describes Eglon, king of Moab as a fat man. As the king, he had everyone serving him. When his murderer stabbed him, he was so fat that the fat closed in over the handle of the knife, and they lost the murder weapon inside his body. While Solomon has the right to have everybody serve him, he doesn't look like Eglon. His body is like polished ivory. He has a six-pack. He is ripped. His abdomen is rock hard. He even has veins showing through his torso section he is so ripped. It sounds like Solomon could be on the cover of *Muscle and Fitness* magazine. His legs were also strong. He must have spent time on the treadmill; he did some squatting or dead-lifts to build his muscles. In case you think those descriptions are stretching the truth of this poetry, she also describes him like a cedar from Lebanon.

The cedar trees in Lebanon grew to tremendous size. These trees could be live more than 2,000 years. They are huge. In a forest, there is no way you can miss them. They are strong and powerful. That is what she sees when she looks at Solomon. He is strong and powerful. He stands out in a crowd.

Wives, maybe your husband doesn't look like this. Not many people do. The point she is making is that she appreciates when he takes care of himself for her. When your husband tries to eat healthy and spend some time at the health club, tell him you appreciate it.

**Application:** Wives, encourage your husband as he takes care of himself.

**Internal --- He is not just my lover, he is my best friend.**

**This is my beloved and this is my friend. Song of Solomon 5:16 (ESV)**

This is a great way to cap off her description of what she loves about Solomon. There are great physical qualities that attract her to him. There are also great internal qualities. But to cap it all off, he is her best friend. If a marriage isn't based on friendship, it won't make it. In fact, one of the best ways to solve many marital problems is to simply focus on friendship. When friendship is intact, the romance comes naturally.

**Application:** Focus on friendship.

**There are no secrets between them.**

The Shulamite was able to convince her girlfriends that Solomon truly is a wonderful man. He is worth searching for in the middle of the night. Where should they start looking? There is an entire city to search. If you were the Shulamite, and your husband left home, where would you begin? The bars, the bowling alley, the golf course, or the coffee house; where would you begin to look? The Shulamite thinks she knows the place. He has a garden he escapes to when life is stressful. It is a place he can walk and talk with God when times are tough.

**Where has your beloved gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you? My beloved has gone down to his garden to the beds of spices, to graze in the gardens and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he grazes among the lilies. Song of Solomon 6:1-3 (ESV)**

What does this tell us about the relationship between Solomon and his bride? It tells us she has walked and talked with Solomon in this garden before. She know how he thinks. She has an idea where he will go and what he will do.

As a wife, she knows her husband well. There are no secrets between them. They are not just naked in bed, but they are naked in their hearts. There is nothing they do not share.

This morning, how well do you know your spouse? Do you have something in your life you do not want them to know? If you went through a marital wipeout, does your spouse know you well enough that they would know where to find you?

This morning, is the Holy Spirit bringing something to mind that is hidden from your spouse? Today, on the way home, tell your spouse you want them to know everything about you. You want them to know where to look when things fall apart.

**Application:** Tell your spouse there are no secrets between you. If there are secrets, change it.

We return to our story. The Shulamite finds her husband in the garden. They reunite. This time, Solomon does the talking. Let's hear the words he says to his wife as he tries to help them recover from their marital wipeout.

**What does a husband need to say to his wife?**

**You captivate my heart.**

You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners. Turn away your eyes from me, for they overwhelm me— Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead. Song of Solomon 6:4–5 (ESV)

In this scene, the Shulamite comes upon Solomon in the garden. He is broken in spirit. He is rejected. When he talks with her, he tells her she is like two cities, two very different cities. First, he describes her like Tirzah. Tirzah was a small country city. It was a feast for the eyes when it came to natural beauty. It was the place tourists used most of their film. It is a place of stunning natural beauty. That is how Solomon describes his wife. He tells her she has stunning natural beauty.

Thankfully, she is not a one-dimensional woman. She is more than a pretty face. She is also like Jerusalem. For us, that would be like traveling to West Des Moines. In West Des Moines, there is always new something happening. There are fancy restaurants (Who has visited Hu-Hot?) and great night life. There are places to go, things to do, people to meet. There is something new and fascinating every day in the city. That is what she is like to him. She isn't just a pretty wallflower. There is always something new and exciting to learn about her and to do with him.

He also tells her she is awesome as an army with banners. If you have see a Civil War reenactment, you can understand this. When an army lines up on one side of the field, with hundreds of muskets and canons pointing forward and military banners flying, you understand this feeling. It is the feeling of being overwhelm. It is the feeling that your knees are buckling. That is the way Solomon says he feels in his wife's presence. In fact, it only takes one look from her eyes to overwhelm him.

You can picture the scene. His heart is broken. He tells her how she makes him feel. Then he says, “One look from your eyes overwhelms me.” He feels overwhelmed around her.

**Application:** Husbands, tell your wife how you feel about her.

**You capture my eye, just like when we met.**

Your hair is like a flock of goats leaping down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of ewes that have come up from the washing; all of them bear twins; not one among them has lost its young. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil. Song of Solomon 6:5–7 (ESV)

If you were around a few weeks ago, you will remember these lines. He is recycling lines from his wedding night. He likes her teeth, her long wavy hair and her cheeks. At first, it sounds like this man lost his creativity. I don't think that is the issue. I think he is bringing her back to one of their closest and most thrilling moments together. He is reminding her of their wedding night. He says she still has the same effect on him.

Some of you know I met Cindy at the Willow Creek Community Church singles ministry. It was an October fall festival. Several hundred singles were gathered to listen to the worship band and play mixer games, which I thought I was too cool to be involved in. That evening, I gazed across the room and saw the back of this woman wearing tight '80s jeans and a ski jacket. She had long blonde hair. She really caught my eye. I thought, “Wow, there is one great-looking woman.”

The rest of the story is that she is now the mother of my children. I like to tell her, “Honey, when I see you across the room, I get those same feelings I did the first time I saw you 20 years ago.” It is a great way to make her blush. This

is what Solomon says to his wife. He is still overwhelmed by her just like he was on their wedding night.

**Application:** Tell your wife she is beautiful, just like the day you met her.

**She is the only woman you want.**

There are sixty queens and eighty concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my perfect one, is the only one, the only one of her mother, pure to her who bore her. The young women saw her and called her blessed; the queens and concubines also, and they praised her. Song of Solomon 6:8–9 (ESV)

This verse should throw us for a loop. While the text doesn't give us all the details, we were operating under the assumption this was Solomon's first wife. We thought it was later in his reign he went astray and became a womanizing polygamist. Who are these queens and concubines?

To get that answer, a little detective work is required. In monarchies, when a king died, his queens and concubines were passed down to the next king. That didn't mean the new king had to be intimate with these women, but by right, they were his. Some scholars believe these women were passed down to Solomon from his father David.

Another question pertains to the concubines. Who are they and what did they do? Usually, these are the rough equivalent of girlfriends on the side. They didn't have the rights of a wife to be part of the family. The king would be intimate with them. When it came to intimacy, these women were considered sexual experts. Unlike queens, if a concubine wasn't thrilling, she didn't have a job.

Solomon says there are beautiful queens I have a right to. There are also concubines, sexual experts, with which I have a right to enjoy intimacy. There

are also virgins without number who would be interested in being my wife. I do have my options, but I don't want any of them. I only want you. He says she is the perfect one, the only one for him.

**Application:** Tell your wife you only have eyes for her. If you could marry her again, you would do it in a minute.

### **Marital wipeouts happen when the love and respect relationship is broken.**

As you can guess, Solomon and the Shulamite recovered from this marital wipeout. He told her how much he loves her. She told her friends, and I am sure they eventually told him about the love and respect she has for him. In the rest of this book, we will see how they worked on repairing their marriage.

This week, as I was studying this passage, it reminded me of Ephesians 5.

**“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Ephesians 5:31–33 (ESV)**

According to Paul, for a marriage to be healthy, a husband must strive to love his wife and a wife must respect and support her husband. Most marital wipeouts happen when a husband fails to love his wife or when a wife fails to respect and support her husband.

Think about this when it comes to Solomon and his bride's marital spat. It appears, Solomon was failing to love his wife by coming home late night after night. He was serving her nothing more than emotional leftovers day after day. She felt used, not loved when he visited her at midnight.

While he didn't love the way he should, she didn't respect and support. She locked her bedroom door and gave lame excuses to sexually deny him. Friends, when you and your spouse get in a fight, if you strip the fight down to the bare essence of the problem, it will be a husband not giving love to his wife and a wife not giving respect and support to her husband.

Both of them need to repent to restore their marriage. Thankfully they did and the final chapters of the book will tell us more about how they changed.

Some of you will get this intellectually, but you won't be able to pull it off in your marriage. Let me explain why. The love and respect relationship that must exist between a husband and wife exists because earthly marriages were designed by God to run in parallel to the relationship between Christ and the church.

Christ loves the church. He humbled himself to die for the church. The church is to be led by Christ. We respect, and support Christ's leadership over our life and the church.

Husbands, it is only when you ask Christ to be your savior, become part of the church and experience what it means to be loved by Christ unconditionally that you can begin to give unconditional love to your wife.

Wives, it is only when you ask Christ to be your savior, become part of the church and experience what it means to submit to Christ's leadership, that you can comprehend true submission and respect. It is only when you learn to submit to respect and submit to Christ's leadership in your life that you will be able to respect and submit to your husband's leadership in your marriage.

In short, marital wipeouts usually happen when the love and respect relationship goes bad. The only way to really fix that relationship is by a husband and wife both repenting of their sin and giving Christ his rightful place of leadership in their life. That is how they experience the original love and respect relationship of Christ and the church, the one their marriage is patterned after.

Today, as I close in prayer, pray along with me in your heart, repent of your sin and give Jesus the rightful place in your life.



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