

The Weekly Word
December 11-17, 2017

December is speeding by. I hope your time in God's **W**ord continues to feed and encourage you. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, December 11: Song of Songs 3- Love is not lust...

The world I live in is over sexed. Madison Avenue sells by sex. TV and movies are laced with sex and lots of it. Checkout counter magazines are filled with sex. Porn rules the Internet. Sex is everywhere. And the **e**ffect on our society is obvious.

The **B**eloved gives an apt piece of advice in today's reading. In fact this is the second time she has offered this advice:

Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires (5).

How true this is, but how hard it is to live by in our world. *Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.* All the images, stories, ads using it can't help up awaken love... or at least the desire for love (sex, lust) in our world.

Younger and younger people are engaged in sex and as a result teen pregnancy is toooo high. I don't know what to do about this...

I am beyond the age where this advice is relevant. My love has been awakened and the Lord has grace me with a wife of decades who continues to be the love of my life!

I weep for young people who are caught in the grip of love (lust, sex) awakened too early. My hope is that the church will love them to wholeness, forgiving mistakes and helping them navigate life until they find true love and the love of Jesus.

*O**h**, Lord, help me be an example of faithfulness in love to a generation that doesn't see enough examples of love Your way. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Tuesday, December 12: Song of Songs 4- How well do you love your spouse?...

As I read this chapter my heart goes to my wife. At first I thought this wasn't 'devotional' enough. Where are my meditations on God, Jesus and the Spirit? I wondered if my thoughts of my wife were carnal, **b**. But then I realized what a gift my wife is... a gift from the Lord and I am led to probe my own life making sure that I treasure her—a gift from the Lord—as He would treasure her.

Am I loving my wife as Jesus Christ loves his church? **...** Jesus laid down his life for the church. Am I expressing that kind of love for my wife?

I realize that God is speaking to me after all. The Lord is probing my in most being, discovering if it is aligning with His will for human marital life. And like every probe from the Lord, He reveals places I need to grow to be more like Him...

Thoughts of Galatians 5, the **f**ruit of the Spirit, pierce my heart... am I loving, joyful, peacemaking, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and filled with self-control in my exchanges and thoughts about my wife—my lover—my gift from the Lord?

If you are reading this and you are married, you might probe some of these same areas regarding your spouse.

If you are not married I am not sure where you might go... I believe the Lord will direct you as you ponder His **W**ord.

Thank You Lord for the recognition that my wife is a gift from You and I must, repeat must treat her with the respect and love that Jesus shows His church. Please empower me to do so Lord, as I live to honor You. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Wednesday, December 13: Song of Songs 5- Am I my wife's friend? ...

Yesterday the heart of the lover for his bride filled the pages. Today the tables have turned; it is the beloved thoughts on her lover. My eyes filled with thoughts as I read the concluding sentence.

*His mouth is sweetness itself; he is altogether lovely. **This is my beloved, this is my friend, daughters of Jerusalem** (16).*

"Am I?" I wondered. Am I my wife's friend?

It is one thing to be her husband and her lover. But am I her friend? Do we relate on friendship levels? Do we enjoy each other's company? Do we enter each other's world? Do we simply like being together?

Friendship with one's spouse is such a gift. Sadly it is too often overlooked. Rarely is spousal friendship portrayed on TV or in the movies. Watching a TV show with Susan yesterday she commented, "It seems like everyone on this show is married 2 or 3 times." How sad that is.

I am blessed to be married only once and to my best friend at that. It is a gift I wish for every couple I know.

*Thank You, Lord God, for this word about marital friendship... Your **W**ord is spurring me on to treasuring this gift and causing ~~me~~ to make sure I do not take that gift for granted. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Thursday, December 14: Song of Songs 6- How do I speak about my spouse in public?...

The woman says in this chapter, *I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine...* (3a).

Security... she feels secure in her lover's love.

Immediately after this he speaks forth his delight and love for her, he praises her in front of his friends (verses 4-9).

I began to replay conversations among friends, listening in my mind's ear to how people speak about their spouse or significant other. It is not always pleasant. The more I think about this often it is not pleasant. How sad.

I am stopped in my tracks... "How do I speak about my wife, and if I extend this thought a bit to add my children... how do I speak about them in front of other people, particularly when my spouse (or child) is present? Such is the situation in chapter 6.

I push the envelope even further... "Is my natural reaction and speech to honor, bless and delight in them in conversation?" How would a transcript of my talk among friends about my wife read?

I hope, I pray, it would be honoring and positive, rather than cranky and complaining.... How about you?

O, Lord God, use my mouth and my words to bless my wife and children at all times but particularly when I am speaking about them in a public way and in quiet conversations with my closest friends. Lord, increase my love for my wife and give me practical ways to express my love for her to her. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, December 15: Song of Songs 7- Oh Lord what a blessing you are...

I struggled to find a God-oriented devotional moment in this chapter. Love words between a lover and his beloved didn't draw me. So I sat and waited for the nudge of the Lord and His beckoning voice.

Thoughts and love for my wife began to bubble in my thoughts. She is such a gift from the Lord and f. From this my thoughts bounced to the Lord. Oh, Lord, what a blessing You are. You are the giver of such good gifts. You are the Lover of my soul. You watch over me and care for me.

So as I sat, I thought about the Lord, His love speaking over me...

Lord God, how blessed I am to be your child. You love with a love that is beyond any human love. You love unconditionally, not because I look appealing; You love because You are love. I am so grateful, Lord, to have had my eyes open to Your love. I praise and bless You, Lord. Thank You for this time in Your presence. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Saturday, December 16: Song of Songs 8- The love of God...

Again I struggled with connecting this chapter with the Lord. Much of my time in this book has been a devotional struggle.

I decided to read another translation, the Message, and verse 7 reached out to me. *Flood waters can't drown love, torrents of rain can't put it out. Love can't be bought, love can't be sold— it's not to be found in the marketplace* (MSG).

True love is a-gift...and it cannot be bartered for or purchased~~purchased or bartered for~~. True love, real love, God's love cannot be drowned out either.

I found myself pondering God's 'agape' love. How deep and wide and long it is. Romans 8 came to mind.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

Such is the love of Jesus, the Father and the Spirit. It is a love that gives and gives, and will not be broken.

What joy fills my heart; I ponder the deep, deep love of God for me.

Oh, Lord, I am so blessed by Your unconditional love... Your love that is a free gift. I don't have to buy it or earn it. It is just given by You. I am overwhelmed by Your incredible love... which comes to me through faith in Jesus. Praise to You, Lord God...

I pray through Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, December 17, 2017, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will

answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.