**Song of Songs 3:1 - 5**

**Bride (in soliloquy)**

 **3:1**  Upon my bed in the night I thought him whom my soul loves.

 I sought him but did not find him.

 **2**I will arise now and go about in the city,

 in the streets and in the squares.

 I will seek him whom my soul loves.

 I sought him but did not find him.

 **3** The watchmen who go about in the cityfound me.

 (I said), “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”

**4** Scarcely had I passed from them when I found him

 whom my soul loves.

 I held on to him and would not let him go

 Until I brought him to the house of my mother,

 to the room of the one who conceived me

**to Daughters of Jerusalem**

 **5** I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

 by the gazelles or the hinds of the field

 not to arouse, not to awaken love until it pleases.

**When to Get Engaged?**

 At the end of the successful courtship, both of you will know you cannot think of yourself without relating the other person your life, then the time has finally come to have a mutual commitment to your marriage. Such an ending to the courtship is to have a definitive commitment to each other before their living God in the form of engagement.

 How do you know that time has come to both of you?

1. The sudden fear attack:

Suddenly a totally unknown fear strikes the Shulamite woman here in 3:1. In her dream her lover Solomon was taken from her. It is a fear-fulfillment dream. She is committed to marrying to him in her heart, and during one night she has such a fearful nightmare where she feels as if she lost her lover and she panicked over it. It illustrates the intensity of her love for her future husband. So deep is her love that she fears to lose Solomon and such fear produces great anxiety in her mind. In such a state of emotional dread, only thing can calm her is a verbal commitment from her lover to their future marriage. When you want something or someone so bad, you have such a fear attacking your mind, so this fear-fulfillment symptom occurs in your mind and heart. It is quite natural, that you are being scared of thought of the losing your love. Now you know it’s time you’d better move forward to have an engagement and giving assurance to each other in the form of verbal commitment to your future marriage. A brief and tightly scheduled engagement period is ideal that such period is wholly devoted to practical matters like wedding preparations, honeymoon, place to live together after their wedding, financial responsibility, or something like in that nature.

1. The naturally growing and hardly controllable physical intimacy:

Both of you have a strong desire to get closer to each other ever before, not only emotionally but also physically, so it becomes very hard not to think of your physical intimacy with each other. It is about time to have a mutual engagement commitment, and ready to prepare for your wedding and the life together in a very tight and short period schedule. By doing so, none of you fall into an illicit physical involvement that will damage your spiritual life together and have unnecessary shame for the rest of your marriage life. God is witness to your pure engagement period and will certainly bless your life together to honor His holy name in your married life.

**How Do You Understand a Bold Move by the Shulamite?**

 In 3:2-4, in her soliloquy, Shulamite expresses her fear could not make still lie on her bed. Innermost self she reaches out for him but he is not there. She might have been told she should wait until he returns to her, but how long should she wait? It could be days or even weeks. She feels now lonelier than ever before, more empty and helpless in her heart without Solomon’s physical presence at her side. It becomes evidently unbearable for her now in the middle of night after the nightmare of the remotest possibility of losing her lover. Love not only brings a greater experience of joy but a deeper capacity for pain as well. So as the joy of Solomon’s presence became greater, so the sorrow from his absence becomes deeper now.

 That’s why after such a terrible nightmare, she anxiously and urgently sought “him whom her soul loved” (v. 2) without waiting until next morning upon her bed. Instead, she goes out to the city street to search for Solomon. While she looks for him she comes across the men who guard the city at night. When these watchmen find her, they help her find the king Solomon. So she says, “The watchmen who go about in the city found me. (I said), ‘Have you seen him whom my soul loves?’ Scarcely had I passed from them when I found him whom my soul loves.” (v. 3)

 When a person is insecure or anxious about someone or something, it is quite natural to want to go to a place or to make a certain environment where she associates with security and stability. Therefore, our home is a great place to go after a disorienting and hectic business trip or a lonely and depressing experience away at college. It is natural in times of anxiety to want to go to a place where one always felt secure, where everything was okay. Understandably, then, after fearing the loss of her future husband, her fiancé, and finding him, the Shulamite woman takes Solomon to her home in the countryside. “I held on to him and would not let him go until I brought him to the house of my mother, to the room of the one who conceived me.” (v. 4) She was like a very young kid who waking up in the middle of night after her nightmare and being assured by her parents that all is well, nevertheless, she stills crawls under the covers of her comforting mother to sleep until the lingering fear are completely gone out of her terrified mind.

 The Shulamite woman is calm now, all tempests are gone. Now she gives such a wise advice to the women in the palace, “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field not to arouse, not to awaken love until it please.”(v. 5) In other words, let the flower blossom in its proper season and time so do not force it to blossom! Now the Shulamite woman’s almost unbearable longing and patience for Solomon’s responsive love bears its fruit at her wedding day.

**Questions to Ponder with Prayers**

1. After some time spent during courtship, when is an appropriate time to get engaged?

  2.    Is your engagement period occupied with things like what?