**Song of Songs 5:2-8**

**Bride to Daughters of Jerusalem**

**2**   I was asleep but my heart was awake.

The sound of my beloved knocking,

“Open to me my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one,

for my hair is filled with dew; my hair, with damp

of the night.”

**3** I had put off my tunic; must I put it on again?

I had washed my feet; must I soil them again?

**4** My beloved withdrew his hand from the door,

and my feelings were aroused for him.

**5** I arose to open to my beloved

and my hand dripped with myrrh

and my fingers with flowing myrrh upon the handles

of the bolt.

**6** I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone.

My soul had gone out to him when he spoke.

I sought him but did not find him;

I called out to him, but he did not answer me.

**7** The watchmen who go about in the city found me.

They struck me; they bruised me.

They took my shawl from upon me-those guardians of the

walls.

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

if you find my beloved-as to what you will tell him-

(tell him) that I am faint with love.

**The Unavoidable and Cold Reality of a Married Life**

After such a marvelous wedding procession and unforgettable first night, we might now expect the romance to conclude with “and they lived happily ever after.” Most modern love story fiction would end that way. But even if king Solomon’s romance with his bride is indeed an ideal. It is not and cannot be a fantasy. Their romance is truly realistic as with all the rest of the married couples. In this section of the Song of Songs, king Solomon’s romance presents us with the cold yet realistic problems of marriage that we can encounter in our everyday life of the married couples. Thankfully to God, though this section not only presents the common problems of marriage but also the principles for solving them.

**Conflict between the Two Wills**

1. We are forgiven sinners, yet as sinners, we got married. Therefore, all married couples fight. Good couples fight clean and productive. Bad couples fight dirty and destructive. Indeed, no marriage is without conflict between the two wills. If so, the conflict between married couples is a necessary evil or what? It depends on how the couple handles their conflict of wills. Good conflict leads to a productive resolution and a new platform to communicate for a closer and peaceful relationship. Bad conflict leads to certain victories and vindications but creates and even deepens alienation and bitterness.

2. King Solomon who has encountered conflict with his wife in 5:2-6:13 says in Proverbs 14:4, “Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.” If there is no ox at all, the trough is clean but the owner cannot increase in his field during the harvest time. But strong oxen lead to a greater increase in the field, thus more prosperity for the owner. Likewise, good fights and conflicts are making married couple’s relationship hard to work on, but the end results lead them to more and richer marriage life as God intended for His children.

3.       King Solomon no doubt expects a sudden and awkward situation like this after wonderful and unforgettable wedding night. But it happens in any marriage life. One night his love and devotion to his newly wedded wife were met with her apathy and indifference. More often than not, the opposite of love is not hate but indifference. If someone hates you, at least she regards you as a significant person still. But if she is indifferent towards you, then she regards you as a thing invisible, or nothing. King Solomon has grown used to a response of love from his newly wedded wife. Yet this night he was met with her indifference. Definitely, it was not a good sign for a loving married couple like his.

4.    In 5:2, king Solomon comes to her chamber after his long day work at the palace. While his wife could not wait for him long enough and falls asleep, Solomon’s fervent address to his wife is a startling contrast to her lifeless and indifferent response. He says, “Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one.” Interestingly enough, nowhere else in this Song of Songs king Solomon addresses her with so many affectionate terms. Here, Solomon is as full of love for his wife as he could. As we recall, “Sister” was his affectionate term for his wife; “darling” had been his name for her during their courtship; but “dove” and “perfect one” were new terms of affection that gave his full expression of appreciation for her love for him. Yet his affectionate words served only to provide an eloquent contrast to his wife’s apathetic and indifferent response. “I had put off my tunic; must I put it on again? I had washed my feet; must I soil them again?” (5:3)

5.    The amazing thing about king Solomon’s response to her apathetic, selfish, and indifferent attitude towards him is that he does not become upset or angry with her. In 5:4-6, his wife says, “My beloved withdrew his hand from the door, and my feelings were aroused for him. I arose to open to my beloved and my hand dripped with myrrh and my fingers with flowing myrrh upon the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone.” What king Solomon did was leaving her a “love note” and then simply went away quietly. In those days, a lover would leave this fragrant myrrh at the door as a sign that he just had been there. No anger on Solomon’s part we could find in this scene.

6.    King Solomon knew from her response in 5:3, she indeed waited for him long enough and prepared herself for him that night, but he was way late. Thus, Solomon was more than willing and able to understand her frustration and disappointment in such a loving manner. We are to be aware here, God shows us what can be done by a loving husband for his upset wife who gives him a cold shoulder. His “love note” was what his way of saying “Sorry, I am late, yet still love you so much” instead of getting angry with her indifferent response. King Solomon realized that his anger could not force her love. He heeded the wise advice, “not to arouse not to awaken love until it pleases” (3:5).

7.    In this whole scene, we see a conflict of the two wills. Each has its own legitimate reason to insist, and impose its own way on the other. But this loving husband, king Solomon chose to fight in a wholly different manner. Solomon left her a “love note” with no signs of anger, while he was more than willing and able to wait for her coming back to her own senses for a peaceful conversation with him. No sooner king Solomon left her a reminder of his visit than she says, “My feelings were aroused for him… My soul had gone out to him… But he did not answer me.” (5:4-6) And sadly, one problem seemed to lead to another. In Chinese proverb, we find this, “A bad thing comes not alone!” She went from bad to worse, indeed. In 5:7, the night watchmen mistook her for a prostitute, so struck her and bruised her, and dealt roughly with her to her shame. Her indifference to her loving husband led her to dismal circumstance. She lost her and got herself into a shameful situation, so from a bad situation to a worse one. No wonder that immediately after her humiliation she cries out for help from the women in palace. “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved-as to what you will tell him-

(tell him) that I am faint with love.” (5:8) She had come a long way from the ingratitude that led to her humiliation in the first place. Unlike king Solomon, his wife lost her sense of deep gratitude to God who gave her a loving and patient husband. And her ingratitude towards God and her loving husband led her to such a humbling experience on that unforgettable night.

**Questions to Ponder with Prayers**

1.    Do you really expect a sudden conflict of wills in your marriage life?

2.     What could be a husband’s attitude towards at the beginning of the seemingly insignificant conflict with his wife?

3. Usually, what does make the wife become careless, and then apathetic/indifferent towards her husband?