



## AFFIRMATION & INTIMACY (SOS 4:1-16)

***Proverbs 5:18-20 “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?”***

It's an amazing thing that God has given us a glimpse into the beauty and the holiness of their wedding night. This should tell us just how strongly God feels about marriage, and in particular SEXUAL INTIMACY between a husband and wife. Through the medium of poetry, God found the perfect balance in describing the sexual union between husband and wife. The Scriptures are specific enough to be helpful, but sensitive enough not to be offensive. This is characteristic of Arabic love poetry, called “**wasfs**”, which are poems or songs of praise where one of the lovers describes, metaphorically, the other's bodily parts moving from head to toe or vice-versa. SOS is the only place in the Bible that it occurs.

### **SOS 4:1-7 Affirmation of Beauty**

Solomon affirms his bride by telling her that everything about her is beautiful and that she is perfect in his eyes. Solomon's bride has already told us in chapter 1 that she doesn't meet their cultural standard of beauty. She calls herself a common meadow flower, a lily of the valleys. She humbly says that there's nothing special about me; there are thousands more like me. Solomon is not evaluating his bride as though he were judging a beauty contest. The purpose of his song is not to compare her to other women, but to cherish her by EXCLUDING all other women. He is praising her worth to him and affirming his commitment to her. What she may have looked liked to others is irrelevant because her beauty is in the eye of the one who beholds her. And this is a key point for both husbands and wives today: He affirms her as HIS STANDARD OF BEAUTY. We all must be verbally generous and affirm our spouse as our standard of beauty, as being the unique person that they are. It's a major way in which healing comes to our lives as we seek to recover from the influence of a world that degrades us. Your spouse must have confidence that they are the perfect one for you and that you only have eyes for them.

### **SOS 4:8-16 Respect and Intimacy**

Solomon goes out of his way to emphasize that the woman he loves is a person in her own right with boundaries that must be respected. He may be her husband, but he cannot control her or use her. He must be invited. That's why there is so much wooing going on. Solomon realized that the relationship can only be good if it's mutual, so he pursues her with a passion. This is especially important for married couples, because it's all too common for couples to “settle down” into marriage and begin to take the other person for granted. Too often we lose the sense of the other person as being “other” at all—a unique separate person with whom it's an incredible gift and privilege to spend one's life with. This is where real romance must be an ongoing feature of our marriages, not just before the wedding. The wooing should never stop.

The natural and good end of affirmation and wooing is unrestrained and joyous sexual, emotional, and spiritual intimacy. Deep body and soul intimacy with another person is very rare. We all desire it. We want someone to really know us and then desire to know us even more. We want someone with whom we can be “naked” in every way, who won't judge us and who delights in our presence. This is how we are made. God created Eve to respond to Adam's loneliness, and He gave them an intimacy that drew their hearts not only to each other, but also to delight and desire God more passionately. Husbands and wives will either participate in the mystery of this union as a taste of intimacy with God, or they will see it as nothing more than a momentary pleasure at best. So we shouldn't be surprised that Satan works so hard (and has been very effective) to destroy and distort the wonder of God's design for married sexuality through abuse, immorality, disgust, boredom, anger and fear. God's plan is for us to pursue him and know him in and through the sexual intimacy that we have with our spouses.