

## **"I Am Black But Comely"** **Song of Solomon 1:5-8**

### **Scriptures for Today: Song of Solomon 1:5-8**

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I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. 6 Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. 7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? 8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

### **Introduction — The Book Most People Avoid**

The Song of Solomon is often misunderstood. It is poetry. It is romance. It is desire expressed inside covenant love. In other words, this book shows a man and a woman who love each other the right way, which is INSIDE of marriage.

If you think you love the person you are with, but you aren't married, this is not love. Love is the fulfillment of the commandments of God. When you follow His commandments, you love. When you break His commandments, you do not love.

True love is not vulgar. True love is not shameful. True love is God-inspired Scripture. This book shows that love, attraction, and desire inside marriage are not sinful. They are designed by God.

As a husband, loving your wife, being attracted to your wife, and desiring your WIFE inside MARRIAGE is a great thing. And there is no law from God against this. As a wife, loving your husband, being attracted to your husband, and desiring your HUSBAND inside MARRIAGE is a great thing. And there is no law from God against this.

True love is perfect. Many people get nervous when someone speaks about this book and about love in general. Most pastors and Bible teachers are afraid to preach out of this book. We are not ashamed of this book. We LOVE the words in this book.

Song of Solomon shows romantic love the way God intended it to be and that is between a husband and a wife. One man and one woman.

This passage of Scripture that we're going to look at today touches identity. In the verses we are studying today, the woman or wife is speaking about how she sees herself. She says, "I am black but comely." She explains why she looks the way she does. She explains how others treated her. She talks about working in the vineyards. She admits that she feels different than others.

Identity, or how we perceive ourselves, shapes how we love and how we receive love. And that's what I want you to learn today.

What do you believe about yourself? What's your worth? Your appearance? Your value? Your place? The woman that you'll find in Song of Solomon today is saying that she doesn't look like other women. She is saying she has worked out in the sun. She is saying her siblings made her work hard.

And look, it's good to look different than all the other women out there in today's world. You don't want to look like them. This woman in the Bible is different.

But she also says that she is comely. She is saying I am beautiful. She knows who made her. She knows her worth to God. And you need to see this and understand this today. We have just 4 verses to go over in detail so stick with me today.

## **Section 1 — “I Am Black, But Comely”**

### **Song of Solomon 1:5**

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

She speaks to the daughters of Jerusalem — the watching audience. “I am black.” In context, this refers to sun-darkened skin from laboring hard outdoors. She has worked a lot in the sun and her skin is dark. Verse 6 explains that. This is not racial commentary or saying that black is better or worse. That's not what that means.

She is simply comparing herself to other women. She is different than the other women in many ways. And this is a good difference because she has worked hard out in the sun. And yes, that's hard work in the hot sun.

She is saying: I am darkened from work. I do not look like other women.

Me, as a man who has worked hard and will continue to work hard, I was attracted to a woman that worked hard. I advise young men to look for a hard working woman to marry. Your life will go so much better. Don't go after a lazy woman. Laziness is sin. The husband and wife, both, should be hard workers. If you aren't, it's time to change that. And yes, it's hard. That's why it's called HARD WORK. Nothing worth something is going to be easy.

The tents of Kedar were dark colored tents. The curtains of Solomon were rich and beautiful. She compares herself to both. Dark and beautiful. This is her identity and how she sees herself. She is not ashamed of the difference. She knows who she is and she knows that she is God's creation.

She doesn't deny how she looks. She doesn't pretend that she's something else. She does not degrade herself. She acknowledges her condition and her beauty. That matters for her and for

you. This is a simple verse that most people don't understand. "I am black but comely." Comely is beautiful or good looking. She looks good and she says so. That's not vanity either.

You and I must know that God created us. We are worth so much to God that Jesus was sent to die for us. You need to know your worth.

## **Section 2 — Wounded Identity**

### **Song of Solomon 1:6**

Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.

She is saying to not look at her because she is black. Don't look at her because she has been out in the sun. We see her siblings were angry with her. They forced her to labor in vineyards. She took care of the vineyards for her siblings. She did hard labor out in the sun.

She says: "But mine own vineyard have I not kept." That could be poetic language. Maybe that refers to her own body, her own care, her own personal life. She labored for others and neglected herself or her things. She did so much work for others and didn't get to her own work.

She worked outside. Her siblings were angry. They assigned her work in all the vineyards. They made her KEEPER of the vineyards. She wasn't able to take care of her own vineyard. She had too much other work to do. And she doesn't want people looking at her because of how she looks. She is aware of how she look and thinks others are noticing her because of that.

Or, she doesn't want people staring at here because she is different in appearance than others.

## **Section 3 — Directed Desire**

### **Song of Solomon 1:7**

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

Notice the focus that she has right here. She does not scatter her affection between different things or different people.

"Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth." She asks directly for the one her soul loves.

She wants to know where he is. She does not want to wander among "his companions." She wants clarity. Her desire here is exclusive and only to him. She is not flirting with many or wanting many different men or different things. She is seeking one right here in this verse.

Again, she calls out to him: "O thou (singular) whom my soul loveth." That means she is speaking to ONE PERSON – the one she deeply loves.

She asks: "Tell me where thou feedest. Tell me where thou makest thou flock to rest at noon." She wants to know exactly where he is. She is not looking for anyone else or anything else. She is looking for him ONLY. Her eyes aren't wandering around to other men, objects, or things. It's only him.

Then she says: "Why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

She doesn't want to wander around near the other shepherds. We learn that HE is a shepherd. She doesn't want to be seen or mistaken as someone who casually moves from flock to flock. She wants to go directly to the one she loves deeply. There is no other man.

Again, she is not searching for many. She is not spreading her affection around. She is asking for the one man that she loves. She wants to be with that ONE MAN. This verse simply shows direct and focused love to the one.

Here's an example of why I have always loved my wife. I have watched other women see movie stars or rock stars or athletes or famous people, and they go crazy about them. They say, "That's the one man I would cheat on my husband with. Look at him. He's this. He's that." And the husband is standing right there. Pam has never done that. If she was like that, I would have never married her. Why would I want that?

Her eyes are on me, and I love her for that. A wife needs to keep her eyes on her husband only and give honor to her husband. And vice versa. A husband needs to keep his eyes on his wife only and give honor to his wife. That's what the Scriptures are teaching here.

## **Section 4 – The Response**

### **Song of Solomon 1:8**

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

In verse 7, we saw the wife say: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth." She is speaking to him. But then in this verse, verse 8, we see someone say "O thou fairest among women." The voice is changing from verse 7 to verse 8. Verse 8 is the husband responding to his wife.

And he calls her, as every husband should, "O thou fairest among women." This means the most beautiful among all women. The most attractive among all women. The most lovely among all women. "YOU ARE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN."

That is a strong compliment. He is not criticizing her. He is not comparing her negatively. He is telling her that she is extremely beautiful to him. That's what this means. And for a husband and wife, that's what it should be like.

To him, she is the most beautiful woman. Why is that? Because she is his. She is not a stranger. She is not wandering. She is not looking for attention from other men. She belongs to him, and he belongs to her. That matters. The Book of Proverbs warns about the "strange woman."

The strange woman is dangerous because is not bound by that same marriage covenant. She is not bound by those same promises. She uses charm to pull men away from their wives. But this woman here in Song of Solomon is not one of those women. She is not strange. She is known by her husband. My wife knows me, and I know her.

She is known. She is faithful. She seeks the one that her soul loves. That faithfulness is beautiful.

A wife is so beautiful to her husband not because she competes with every other woman in the world, but simply because she is devoted to him and him alone. She is his companion. She is loyal. She is not scattering her affection to other things like dogs, cats, pets, and friends.

When a woman gives her heart fully to her husband, that loyalty makes her beautiful in a way that no outward appearance can match. It's not possible. Beauty in Scripture is not just outward beauty.

True beauty is a wife that gives her heart fully to her husband. A wife that fears the Lord, honors her husband, and guards her affection – that is true beauty. A godly husband sees that. And that's the difference in a strange woman versus a very beautiful wife. All the other women out there have nothing on my wife because she is mine. And every husband should see his wife in that same way.

The strange woman hunts married men. The godly wife doesn't flirt and flatter other men. The faithful wife is known and devoted. That's the beauty that the Scriptures in the Song of Solomon are celebrating. And it is to be celebrated.

## Practical Applications

1. **Do not measure yourself by others.** She talks about how she looks, but she does not deny her worth. Do not let comparison determine how you see yourself. Your value is not based on how you stack up against someone else.
2. **Being self-conscious does not mean you have no value.** She explains her appearance, but she is still called "fairest among women." Feeling insecure does not mean you are not loved or valuable.
3. **Keep your affection focused.** She seeks the one her soul loves. She does not spread her desire around. Love is meant to be directed toward one person in marriage, not scattered everywhere.
4. **Attraction inside marriage is not wrong.** This book shows a man and a woman drawn to each other. That is not sinful when it is inside marriage. God designed that bond to be exclusive and faithful.

## **Conclusion**

Song of Solomon 1:5–8 shows us something real. She says, “I am black, but comely.” She explains her labor in the vineyards. She asks directly for the one her soul loves. And he answers, “O thou fairest among women.”

There is honesty here in the Scriptures. That man is not lying. "Fairest among women." Every wife should be the most beautiful woman in the world to her husband. Always. Husbands, keep your eyes off other women. Don't make that mistake. Same for women. Don't make that mistake.

She does not hide how she looks. She does not pretend to be something she is not. But she also does not deny her beauty. She knows she is beautiful to her husband. When a husband looks at another woman, this is disrespectful to his wife. And vice versa. Don't do it.

The man she loves speaks clearly and directly to her. This passage shows focused love. They are focused in on each other. There is no room for another man or another woman.

She seeks one man. He calls her the fairest among women. There is direction. There is order. There is faithfulness. They move through life together in love.

This is not scattered desire. This is not wandering affection. This is love that is directed and exclusive. God designed love to work this way. Not loose. Not shared with many. Not confused. But clear. Faithful. Committed.

And when love stays inside those boundaries, it is stronger than anything. We love each other by following the commandments of God, and you can see them right here in this chapter. And don't forget these Scriptures. This is so important in today's world.

Let's pray.