

Becoming One - The Woman (SOS 1:1-7)

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. WELCOME TO THE BRIDGE - I'm Jared and here's why we're here.
 - a. I MISSED YOU! (Thank you so much to our staff, Charles and Stuart, and you...)
 - b. ... you won't get all you can at our church if you simply attend a few weeks a month...
 - i. Group Connect - here's what we're doing! Warehouse (4:00 - 5:30) Sept 13/20
1. Almost 3 weeks ago - we started a new series through the Song of Solomon called **Becoming One** - because that's the journey of marriage: **me becoming we**.
2. **REALLY QUICK: WHY WOULD WE DO THIS SERIES? (SOS can be kinda awkward!)**
 - a. Well two things:
 - i. We believe it takes the whole bible to make the whole christian.
 - ii. There is an entire **BOOK** on marriage, romance and the adventure God has for marriage.
3. Our first week, we looked at the man in this relationship and asked, **What kind of man is he?**
4. Observations of Godly Man:
 - a. He has an honorable name
 - b. He speaks words that build up
 - c. He enjoys spending time with her
 - d. He provides and protects
 - e. He pursues in each and every season
- 5.
6. Today, we're going to turn the question around and look at the woman.
7. And I'm aware there's something a little awkward about me preaching a sermon on what it means to be a godly woman - mainly because I'm not one.
 - a. It's a little like a vegan teaching you how to grill a steak.
8. So I'm not standing up here as the expert on being a woman.
9. What I can do is point us to the Word of God and say, **What does God show us about the kind of woman He is forming?**
10. And let me make one thing clear before we get there: *this is not a sermon about becoming the kind of woman who can "get a man."*
11. Marriage is not your ultimate purpose. "Wife" is not your ultimate identity. "Mother" is not your ultimate identity. **Your identity is found in Jesus Christ.**
12. So whether you're single, dating, married, divorced, or widowed, the goal is bigger than becoming a better wife.
13. **The goal is becoming a godly woman.**
14. And in these opening verses of this song, I see 5 interesting observations of her.

First: She Uses Her Words to Bring Life

1. Look at *how* she talks to him...
2. Verse 2: "*For your love is better than wine.*"
3. Verse 3: "*Your anointing oils are fragrant; your name is oil poured out.*"
4. The words she is using FOR SURE is building him up...
5. A few weeks ago, we challenged the men about this.
6. Men, speak up.
 - a. Tell her she's beautiful.
 - b. Tell her you appreciate her.
 - c. Tell her what you admire about her.
7. But ladies, the same principle applies to you.
8. **Your words carry enormous power in the heart of a man. You may not realize just how much.**
9. SUNDAYS AFTER CHURCH...
 - a. Two things about me:
 - i. Words of affirmation
 - ii. I preach in front of people
 - b. One compliment from Mere vs 1,000 compliments from everyone else.
 - c. One constructive criticism from Mere vs. 1,000 constructive criticism.
10. Because, ladies - you may not believe me, but *he cares what **you** think.*
11. Let me get cheesy really quick:
12. *Your words can become wind in his sails or holes in his boat.*
13. And one of the easiest patterns to fall into after years of marriage is constantly pointing out *what isn't happening.*
14. "You forgot this." "You didn't do that." "You should have known." "Why can't you ever...?" "Why do I always have to...?"
15. Now, sometimes things need to be addressed. *This is not a call to ignore problems.*
16. *But there is a difference between correction and contempt.*
17. There is a difference between addressing behavior and attacking character.
18. There is a difference between saying: "This hurt me." And saying: "You're worthless."
19. A godly woman learns how to speak truth without tearing down the person she loves.
20. Here's a simple challenge.
21. When was the last time you told your husband something you admire about him?
22. Not something he accomplished.
23. Something about **him**.
 - a. "I respect your work ethic."
 - b. "I love the way you love our kids."
 - c. "I appreciate how faithfully you provide for us."
 - d. "I love your heart for people."
 - e. "I'm proud to be your wife."
24. You may be surprised what happens inside a man when the woman he loves tells him: **I believe in you.**
25. A godly woman uses her words to build up.

Second: *She chooses her friends wisely*

1. Look at what she says in verse 4:
2. *"Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers."*
3. And then out of nowhere someone else starts talking -. *Her friends!:*
4. *"We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you."*
5. This woman has people around her. *And more importantly, she has the **right** people around her.*
6. Her friends aren't tearing down the relationship.
7. And what they're SAYING IS SO GOOD - AND WHAT THEY'RE NOT SAYING IS EVEN BETTER...
 - a. There isn't any gossip, there's no drama, they're not complaining...
8. *Notice:*
 - a. *They're celebrating what is good.*
 - b. *They're reinforcing what is healthy.*
 - c. *They're encouraging her toward what is right.*
9. **Everyone (especially ladies), one of the most important decisions you will ever make is deciding who gets a voice in your life.**
10. Because the people around you *become contagious*.
11. Have you ever heard, you are the sum of the 5 people around you?
 - a. Attitudes are contagious.
 - b. Bitterness is contagious.
 - c. Cynicism is contagious.
12. **But listen closely - you know what else is contagious? faithfulness and joy.**
13. If you surround yourself with women who constantly criticize their husbands...
 - a. eventually you'll begin noticing everything wrong with yours.
14. If every conversation is about what's wrong with men, what's wrong with marriage, what's wrong with everybody else's relationship...
 - a. eventually that spirit starts finding its way into your own heart.
15. Proverbs says: *"Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise."*
16. You need women around you who: Love Jesus, Love the Bible, and Love You...
17. *There is a difference between a friend and a fan.*
18. A fan always applauds. A friend sometimes tells you the truth.
19. You need women who will say: *"You're right. That's not okay."*
20. But you also need women who love you enough to say: *"No. You're wrong on this one."*
21. You need friends who strengthen your marriage rather than sabotage it.
 - a. Friends who push you toward forgiveness rather than resentment.
 - b. Friends who push you toward prayer rather than gossip.
 - c. Friends who push you toward Jesus rather than simply taking your side.
22. **Ladies, let me give you a practical question: Who has your ear?**
 - a. Who do you call when you're frustrated?
 - b. Who gets to speak into your marriage?
 - c. Who gets to speak into your dating relationship?
 - d. Who gets to influence the way you see your husband?

23. Because if you want to become a godly woman, surround yourself with women who are becoming godly too.
24. A godly woman chooses her friends wisely.

Third: *She finds her security in who she is, not how she looks*

1. Now we get to verses 5 and 6.
2. And suddenly we see something incredibly relatable.
3. She says: *"I am very dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon. Do not gaze at me because I am dark, because the sun has looked upon me."*
 - a. She's aware of her appearance.
 - b. She's aware that people are looking at her.
 - c. And apparently she's aware that she doesn't fit whatever beauty standard existed around her.
4. In her culture, being deeply tanned likely communicated that you had been working outside.
5. And we're going to discover why in a moment.
6. But notice what she says. **"I am very dark, but lovely."**
7. She acknowledges what she sees. *But she doesn't allow it to determine her worth.*
8. She knows: **I am still lovely.**
9. Ladies, we live in a culture that makes billions of dollars convincing you that you're not enough.
 - a. Not thin enough. Not young enough. Not fit enough. Not stylish enough. Your skin isn't right. Your hair isn't right. Your body isn't right. Your clothes aren't right.
 - b. Then all instagram
10. **And comparison is brutal.**
11. Because comparison always moves the finish line.
 - a. There will always be somebody better or prettier at whatever ...
12. If your security comes from being the prettiest woman in the room, eventually another woman will walk into the room.
13. **BE CAREFUL NOT TO REPLACE BEAUTY FOR PRETTY**
 - a. *Pretty fades - beauty grows...*
14. So your security has to come from somewhere deeper.
15. Psalm 139 says: *"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."*
16. **Your confidence doesn't come from believing you're perfect.**
17. **It comes from knowing whose you are.**
18. Don't buy the lie that your worth is found in something that is fleeting.
19. Just remember - "I may be dark - but I am lovely"....
20. Notice what she says next - she tells us why she's been in the sun.
- 21.
22. Verse 6: *"My mother's sons were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept!"*

Fourth: *She is honest about her wounds without being defined by them.*

1. Now we're learning some of her story. There's family conflict here.
 - a. Her brothers were angry with her.

2. We're not told why. We're not given every detail. But apparently they sent her out to work the vineyards.
3. This woman has wounds in her story.
4. Family wounds. Relational wounds.
5. *And she doesn't pretend they aren't there.*
6. That's important.
7. Because all of us bring a story into our relationships.
8. Here's the big idea I want you to know: *Nobody arrives at the altar as a blank sheet of paper.*
 - a. Believe it or not, You bring your family.
 - b. You carry your experiences.
 - c. You bring disappointments and fears.
 - d. You have your own habits and often, your own wounds.
 - e. You bring what your parents taught you about marriage.
 - f. You bring what they didn't teach you about marriage.
 - g. You bring things that happened twenty years ago that you thought you'd forgotten.
 - h. And eventually, marriage has a way of finding them.
9. That's why one of the healthiest things you can do is learn to say:
10. **"This is part of my story, but it doesn't have to control my future."**
11. Your wounds are real. But they don't get to name you.
12. Your past matters. But it doesn't have to master you.
13. What happened to you may explain some things about you.
14. *But through Jesus, it doesn't have to define you.*
15. *One of the biggest steps is for us to realize: WHAT HAPPENED WAS NOT GOOD, BUT GOOD WILL COME FROM WHAT HAPPENED.*
16. Ladies, don't hide your wounds.
 - a. Bring them into the light.
 - b. Bring them before Jesus.
17. Talk to trusted people. Get wise counsel when you need it.
 - a. Heal.
 - b. Grow.
 - c. Forgive.
18. And sometimes set healthy boundaries.
19. But don't build your identity around what somebody else did to you.
20. A godly woman can acknowledge: **I've been hurt.**
21. While also believing: **God is still writing my story.**

Last: *She communicates what she wants without fear*

1. Now look at verse 7.
2. *"Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon."*
3. I love something about this woman.
4. **She has a voice — and she is not afraid to use it.**

5. She wants to know where he is at noon - so she asks!

- a. She doesn't sit quietly hoping somebody notices what she's thinking.
- b. She doesn't convince herself that having a question makes her difficult.
- c. She doesn't apologize for wanting clarity.

6. She simply says, "Hey boo - where you at at noon?"

- 7. And ladies, there is something powerful about a woman who has learned to **speak up**.
- 8. Somewhere along the way, some women have gotten the idea that being godly means being quiet about everything.
 - a. That you're not supposed to ever disagree or have an opinion.

9. But silence and godliness are not the same thing.

- 10. I did some digging this week of women in the scriptures who had the boldness to speak up...
 - a. Abigail spoke up when her husband's foolishness was about to destroy their household.
 - b. Esther spoke up when the lives of her people were on the line.
 - c. Deborah spoke with courage and authority in a critical moment for Israel.
 - d. Priscilla helped explain the way of God more accurately to Apollos.
- 11. These weren't women without humility. **They were women with courage.**
- 12. Ladies, God gave you a mind. God gave you wisdom. God gave you convictions. And God gave you a voice.

13. Don't be afraid to use it.

- 14. That doesn't mean being loud just to be heard.
- 15. It doesn't mean being combative, disrespectful, or needing to win every argument.
- 16. Because strength isn't measured by volume.

17. You can have a strong voice without having a harsh spirit.

- 18. Ephesians 4 tells us to speak *"the truth in love."*
- 19. Notice both parts: **speak the truth - and speak it in love.**

20. A strong woman knows that her voice is a gift from God - and she has the wisdom to know when to use it, the courage to use it, and the grace to use it well.

- 1. Ok - Ladies as I did with the guys a few weeks ago, here's what I don't want you to do today.
- 2. Don't take these five things home and turn them into another impossible standard:
 - a. I need to encourage more.
 - b. I need better friends.
 - c. I need to be more confident.
 - d. I need to deal with my baggage.
 - e. I need to communicate better.
- 3. Because if all you hear today is five more things you need to fix, we've missed the gospel.
- 4. Christianity isn't fundamentally about becoming impressive. It's about becoming like Jesus as He changes us from the inside out.
- 5. This woman says, *"I am very dark, but lovely."*
- 6. **But the gospel gives us an even greater declaration: I am sinful, but loved.**
- 7. Not because I made myself lovely enough for Jesus, but because Jesus loved me when I wasn't.

8. Romans 5:8 says, *"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
9. Ladies, you don't have to spend your life trying to become valuable. **In Christ, you already are.**
10. You don't have to compete, compare, or build your identity around whether someone else notices you or approves of you.
- 11. Jesus settled your worth at the cross.**
12. And when that truth moves from your head to your heart, it changes you.
 - a. You can choose healthy friends without needing everyone's approval.
 - b. You can encourage without competing.
 - c. You can walk confidently, acknowledge your wounds, and communicate honestly because your identity is secure.
13. *That's the kind of woman God is forming.*
- 14.
15. If you're single, don't spend all your energy looking for the right person. *Pursue Christ and become the kind of person who can love well.*
16. If you're married, don't spend all your energy trying to fix your spouse. *Ask God to keep changing you as you pursue Christ.*
17. Because **Becoming One** doesn't begin with changing them. *It begins with surrendering me.*
 - a. A man surrendering himself to Jesus.
 - b. A woman surrendering herself to Jesus.
 - c. And two people saying, *"Jesus, make me more like You so I can love them more like You."*
- 18. That's how two become one. And that's where a beautiful marriage begins.**

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

1. PRAYER TEAM!! This a great time to pray with someone!

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, ^[b] "This is my body, which is ^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

may the Lord look with favor on you^[b]