

ADRIAN ROGERS

LEGACY

C O L L E C T I O N



S O N G O F S O L O M O N

These transcripts are taken straight from live audio recordings of Adrian Rogers during his tenure as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. As such some of the transcripts may contain stutters, stammers, transcription errors, and other authentic remarks as would be common in a live setting.

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Song of Solomon

1. The Music of Marriage | *Song of Solomon 1:1-16*

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The Music of Marriage

By Adrian Rogers

Scripture Text: Song of Solomon 1, 2, 5

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved...”
SONG OF SOLOMON 5:2

Outline

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Introduction

What a wonderful blessing the music has been today! And, speaking of music, would you open your Bibles to the Song of Solomon. Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. To chapter 1, would you, please. I want to speak to you in a moment on this subject, “The Music of Marriage.”

But, I want to read something to you. It’s one of the saddest few paragraphs that I have read. Many of you remember Christian Barnard, that famous South African surgeon—a heart surgeon. He went to the University of Minnesota, and there he spent years in developing the aortic heart valve. And then, he gained great notoriety because he did the first successful heart transplant. He was in the newspapers, he was on the talk shows, he was in television, he was the leader, and he was on the cutting edge in that area. Then he wrote a book. The title of that book was *One Life*. And, in that book, he told how he lost his home and how he lost his family. I want you to listen to this—I’m quoting:

“It was a bright April morning when I drove out of Minneapolis. It seemed like a century since I first arrived there. A time longer than all the years before it. In New York, I put the car on a boat, and caught a plain for Cape Town. A northwest wind was blowing, and we came over the sea with the waves close below. My wife was there with the children. I’d not written much in the last two months, yet I was unprepared for her greeting. ‘Why did you come?’ There was no longer a smile in her eyes.

‘Oh God,’ I thought, ‘I have made the most terrible mistake of my life.’ ‘Don’t look so surprised!’ she said. ‘We gave you up. We decided that you were never coming back.’ I replied, ‘It was only a little delay. I wrote you April the 1st.’ ‘No, you wrote once saying you weren’t coming home.’ ‘We were building valves—aortic heart valves,’ I answered.

'No, you were building a family—that is, you were, until you dumped it in my lap,' she said bitterly. "We have ceased to exist for you."

I wanted to say I came home because I love my children and I thought I loved her. I wanted to come home, because I felt it; but what could I say? Now, that sounded so meaningless. It began to rain. The city was gray under a gray sky. It was winter in Cape Town, but in Minneapolis, the trees were splashy bright green. How was it possible to lose a whole springtime?"

That was a man who was successful in the eyes of the whole world, but in his own eyes a failure—because he gained the whole world, but lost his family. And, as you listen to that story, the key there is that there was a lack of communication.

Did you know that marriage counselors tell us that, in all marriage counseling, and in all marriage problems, that 80% of those problems root in poor communication? I ran this past a marriage counselor. I said, "Tell me, what percent do you think of marriage problems root in communication?" I wondered if he would say 80%. He didn't say eighty 80%—he said 100%. If you trace it back somewhere, that marriage problem roots in poor communication.

I want to talk to you today about "The Music of Marriage," because the very book that we're studying is called the Song of Solomon. It begins with this verse: "The song of songs, which is Solomon's." (Song of Solomon 1:1) And, it is a love poem. It is two lovers communicating. It really is the music of marriage. May I say this to you, if you're married, or intend to get married: You will communicate, or your marriage will disintegrate. Communicate or disintegrate.

Proverbs 18, verse 21: "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof*" (Proverbs 18:21). First Peter chapter 3 and verse 10: "*For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile*" (1 Peter 3:10). Again, he's saying, if you are a lover of life, if you want to see good days, then you must control your speech. How many marriages are on the rocks because of poor communication?

One woman went in to see a lawyer. She said, "My husband wants to divorce me." The lawyer says, "Why? Does he have a grudge?" She says, "No, he has a carport." He said, "No, I don't mean that. Does he have any grounds?" "Oh" she said, "About five acres." He said, "What is the problem?" She replied, "Oh, he says, 'We can't communicate.'" "Well, I can understand why."

Sometimes, it happens before we get married. I read about a young man who wrote his girlfriend a letter. And, he said, "You know, I remember proposing to you last night, but I can't remember whether you said, 'Yes' or 'No.' Can you help me out?" She was very smart—she wrote him back a letter. She said, "I'm so grateful that you wrote the letter. I remember saying no to some proposal for marriage, but I forgot who it was. So,

thank you for writing the letter.”

Friend, if you can't communicate, you can't stay together. There are five basic levels of communication. First is the frivolous level. We'll do that all day long today. This just deals with clichés. “It's a beautiful day.” “It's hot.” What about sports, talk about clothes, and so forth? That's the frivolous level. You communicated out there in the lobby and all over. We just communicate that way.

But, then there's another level, which is a little deeper; and, that's the factual level, where we're reporting facts and we talk about facts. And, no real personal involvement—it's almost like a news commentator giving out the evening news on television.

Then, there's the third level, which is the fellowship level. On that level, we talk about our ideas, we talk about our judgments, and we talk about our philosophies. And, at that point, we begin to risk a little bit, because somebody may reject our judgments, our ideas, our philosophies; and, we may retreat back. That's what I call the fellowship level.

Then, there's a level beyond that—that's the feeling level. Not only do we talk about philosophies, and judgments, or ideas; but also, we open up and say how we really feel about these facts and these judgments. And, that's about as far as most people get in communication.

But, there's another level in communication. And that, my dear friend, is the freedom level. I mean, when we are just completely open with our mate. We share our dreams, our fears; we share our ideas, and we are completely free, because there is no fear of rejection. The word *intimacy* comes from the Latin word *intimus*. And, it means, “inmost”—inmost. That is, you're dealing with the inmost part—your dreams, your fears, your secrets, your failures, and your aspirations—things that you would share with no one else on earth, except that person that you're intimate with. And that, my dear friend, is the secret of lasting love.

In the Bible, when husband and wife come together in the act of marriage, the Bible describes it this way: Thus and such a person knew his wife. May I tell you this? You listen to me. To be completely known and still be loved is the supreme goal of marriage—to be completely known and still be loved; to be intimate.

Now, today, when we talk about intimacy, people are thinking about physical intimacy. But, my dear friend, physical intimacy is not truly intimacy. It is void and without meaning, without spiritual and psychological intimacy. Now, thank God, God gives us a model for this intimacy. God gives us a model for communication. God shows us in His Word how husbands and wives can communicate, and that model is found in this wonderful book called the Song of Solomon.

And there, you're going to find King Solomon and a Shulamite girl, whom he has married, as they're talking to one another. And, you have the most intimate speech.

Almost, sometimes, we blush to read it—but it is there by divine inspiration, to give us a model for marriage, an illustration of how husbands and wives are to talk to one another.

This man and his wife—this book talks about how they praise one another. They speak in terms of physical attraction, they talk in terms of affection, they talk in terms of affirmation; and, I want us to kind of eavesdrop. I want us to listen to intimate conversation. I want us to see what God has given in His Holy Word as a model for intimacy between husbands and wives, in this message that we call “The Music of Marriage.”

Now, there are four things I want you to notice about their conversation out of this book—King Solomon and this Shulamite.

I. Their Words Are Plentiful

The very first thing I want you to notice is this—if you’re making notes, write it down: Their words are plentiful—plentiful. That is, they talk, and they talk a lot. As a matter of fact, almost 60% of the verses in the Song of Solomon are words that are spoken between these lovers. And, as you read it, it is obvious that they miss the sound of the other’s voice when they’re separated. They praise the other’s speech, and they’re so free. One is free to give without embarrassment. The other is free to receive without resentment.

You know, husbands and wives need to learn how to talk together. And so, many times, it’s the wife who craves the husband to talk to her. Astronaut Michael Collins estimated that, in an average day, a man would speak 25,000 words. And, in an average day, a woman will speak 30,000 words. Now, it’s not a big difference. Men are talkers too. But, he said, “The problem is unfortunately, when I get home at the end of the day, I have used up my 25,000, and my wife hasn’t started on a one of her 30,000.” And, that is a problem of the silent man and the woman who talks. And, you know, sometimes, it seems that when our marriages get older that we get colder. We stop talking.

I’ll tell you another reason for that is this: that men are goal-oriented. Women wonder why he doesn’t talk to her like he did when they were dating. He would call her on the telephone, call her from the office, and talk and talk, and talk and talk. But, then they get married, and he suddenly stops talking. But, a woman is security-oriented, and she craves communication. She craves conversation. But, having achieved marriage, he moves up to some other goal. But, she has an ever-deepening need of being affirmed. And so, there is a built-in problem.

So, I want to say to both men and women, as we look at this book—this Song of Solomon—and as we think about the music of marriage. The very first thing is to have

communication. You must talk, take time, make time to talk. Their words are plentiful.

II. Their Words Are Personal

Secondly, I want to say that their words are personal. Oh, they say some very intimate things to one another. Look, if you will, here, in Song of Solomon chapter 5 and verse 2: *“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved...”*—underscore the words *my beloved*—*“it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night”* (Song of Solomon 5:2).

Now, she has a word for him. She has a name for him. She calls him, *My beloved*. He has a word, a pet name, for her. He calls her, *My love*. And, he also calls her, *My dove*. It's very interesting. They have little pet names for one another. Words are so personal, and you know these pet names. Do you have a pet name for your wife? I have some for Joyce. I don't call anybody else by those names but Joyce. She has some names for me. You say, “What are they?” Friend, I'm not going to tell you. But, some pet names, personal names. Do you know what these little pet names, these little love names, are? They are ways of saying to your mate, “You are unique. I don't use this name for anybody else. You're special. You are unique. You are one of a kind.”

You know, the Bible says, *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands”* (Ephesians 5:22), and that word *own* is an interesting word. It is the word *idios* in the Greek language. It is the word we get idiosyncrasy from. It is also the word we get idiot from. *“Wives, submit yourselves to your idios husband—to your idiot husband.”* It literally means that you submit to your very special husband, your unique husband. Husbands and wives need to know that they are number one, that they are unique. Have pet words for one another that don't... Listen—if you call your wife sweetheart, don't call the waitress sweetheart. If that's your name for her, then it is for her alone. She is special; she is unique.

Look in chapter 5, and verse 10: *“My beloved”*—and, that's what she says about him—*“is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand”* (Song of Solomon 5:10). He is number one in my life. Everybody needs to know that they're number one. And, when you take these little pet words, these little phrases that may seem silly to somebody else. And, mister, let me tell you something—you take one of those names, and you whisper it in your wife's ear at the right time and the right place, you'll be surprised at what begins to happen—as you whisper that special name into her ear. Everybody needs to feel unique. Like you are. Speak romantic words of affirmation and love.

III. Their Words Are Positive

Now, here's a third thing I notice about their words. Not only are they plentiful, not only are they personal, but they are positive. How positively they speak to one another. There is not one negative word of criticism in this book—nothing critical, nothing negative, and no correction.

Look, if you will, in chapter 5 again, and verse 2: *“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove,”*—now, watch it—*“my undefiled”* (Song of Solomon 5:2). That literally means, “my flawless one.”

Now, I'm sure, because she was human, she wasn't flawless—but that's what he called her. He is affirming her. He is not belittling her. Look, if you will, in chapter 1 and in verse 8—all we men could learn a lesson, *“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. I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver”* (Song of Solomon 1:8–11).

Skip on down, if you will, please, to verses 15 and 16, and look. *“Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes. Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green”* (Song of Solomon 1:15–16). This man's a romantic rascal isn't he?

You say, “Why can't I talk that way?” Well, I don't imagine that Solomon did this without working on it a little bit. I mean these words didn't just come out. But, my dear friend, I want you to see how positive these words are. They are very, very positive words. Now, you see, the Bible says, in Colossians 4, verse 6, *“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt”* (Colossians 4:6).

Now, what does salt do? Salt adds taste to food. And, grace adds flavor to speech. Salt is a preservative. Speech that issues out of the nature of grace will preserve a marriage, and a relationship between husbands and wives. Listen to it again—“Let your speech be always with grace.”

Do you know what grace is? Grace is not giving somebody what they deserve. Grace is giving somebody what they need. You say, “My wife doesn't deserve that kind of speech.” “My husband doesn't deserve it.” Then, my dear friend, that's all the more reason to give it—because they need it. Grace is to speech what color is to art. How we need to learn to let our speech be positive, and not negative.

You see—one of the key characteristics of intimacy is acceptance. There can be no intimacy without acceptance. And, if you're critical and negative, it's a sign that you have not accepted the other person. Do you know why we can't be intimate? Because, we're afraid to expose ourselves; we're afraid we'll get criticized.

If I expose my inadequacy, then I'm afraid I won't be accepted. And, you see—out of this acceptance grows trust. And then, out of trust there comes intimacy. And so, you see—intimacy can only grow where there is a place of safety.

I want Joyce to think I am wonderful. So, therefore, if I'm afraid she's going to criticize me, rebuff me, or chastise me, I can't be intimate with her. I just have to wear a mask. I just have to live in a smokescreen. I have to pretend. But, if I know that she loves me, I know that she accepts me, and I know that, no matter what, I am number one to her, then, for the first time, I can be intimate.

Friend, there is such a potent power of praise. Praise, like these people are giving one another in this book, will transform your marriage. Look, if you will, in chapter 5 and verse 16—she is speaking of him, and she says of him, *“His mouth is most sweet”* (Song of Solomon 5:16). What she is saying is “his mouth,” and she's speaking of his words. His mouth is sweetness personified.

Would you learn to let your speech be positive and not negative? And, when you begin to be positive and not negative, it's amazing how communication will begin to flow. When you get negative, then that person is going to suffer from trauma of transparency, and they're going to withdraw and go back.

IV. Their Words Are Passionate

Now, let me say something else about their words. Not only are their words plentiful, and not only are the words personal, and not only are their words positive, but oh my friend, their words are passionate.

Boy, I'm telling you—you'll read some of this stuff in this book, and it'll make you blush. But, it's not X-rated. Oh, my dear friend, this is what God intended for husbands and wives.

Look, for example, in chapter 2 and verses 8 to 14. Just think how they kept the honey in the honeymoon. *“The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely”* (Song of Solomon 2:8–14).

May I say something to you here? Words of love may flow out of feeling, but not

always. Most of the time, it is feeling that flows out of words. If you don't believe it, don't deny it until you try it. Your words will sustain your marriage. Your words will repair hurt feelings. Your words will grow love.

Now, if you were to just take these four simple things—and they're so simple. Their words are plentiful, their words are personal, their words are positive, and their words are passionate. And that, my dear friend, is the goal that God has given, in the Holy Word, for communication between husbands and wives.

Now, let me say this, my dear friend: This is not easy. In order to do this, you have to adjust. And, may I say that Joyce and I are still adjusting. And, sometimes we regress. I suppose—and this will be personal confession—that this is my biggest frontier. To learn to communicate with my beloved wife.

You see—the husband is the one, probably, who needs the adjustment most. In almost all marriage counseling, it is the husband that won't talk. Now, she has a need for intimacy. As I've said before, she craves communication. Did you know that I have found this about a woman? That she will sometimes push her husband into a corner just to get him to talk. I mean, she'll just keep on. She'll just keep coming, just keep coming, just keep coming, until she gets him in a corner, and *Pow!*—he explodes. And, it's terrible. But, she says, "Ha, I've got his full attention—I've got his full attention." Now, she probably didn't do it for that reason, thinking it out. But, subliminally, there is something in her that had rather have an argument than to be ignored. She wants communication.

You know, men just don't want to talk. One woman said, "The only time my husband speaks is when he wants food, sex, or to change the channel." Just don't talk. And, I believe it's the men who need to talk. Have you ever noticed how many books there are on marriage? And on intimacy, and on communication? I'll tell you the problem: The men don't read them. The women read them; but the men don't read them. Why is it? I'm telling you, there needs to be adjustment between men and women. There are so many natural barriers that keep we mule-headed men from communication. There are emotional differences.

And, let me say this, lady. Your husband is not like you, he never will be like you, and you need to accept that. And, most of these books that are written on intimacy are written by women. Did you know that? And, women's magazines. You read the women's magazines—what are they about? "Five ways to develop closeness in your marriage." "How to have harmony in the home." "Achieving intimacy with your lover." All of these are women's magazines.

What do men's magazines say? "How to remodel your garage." "How to double your gas mileage." "How to make it big in the stock market." Hey, that's just the difference. You might as well admit there is a difference. And, there are background differences,

also. I mean, the boys are taught not to show their emotions, aren't they? "Don't cry, son." "Big boys don't cry!" Isn't that right? So, we're told to be hard and not to show our emotions. It's a sign of weakness, if we do that. And then, there's the old *macho* myth. Boy, I'm telling you that you've got to be reliant, totally reliant. And, a part is the silence to show that you're in complete control.

I was talking to some men the other day, Bob. Well, it was at the deacon's retreat. We were talking about how stubborn we men are. I'm glad there were no women around. But, we were confessing. We would drive for a half an hour, not knowing where we are, rather than stopping at a service station to ask directions, isn't that right? Why is that? Joyce will say, "Adrian, why don't you just pull over and ask." "I don't need to ask. I know where I'm going." "Well, you can ask; we're going to be late." "Listen, I know where I'm going." And, I don't know! Why is that? My dear friend, there is something in a man that wants to impress his mate. I'm in control. We know we're not.

Conclusion

Well, you see, there's this problem. And, men have to adjust. And, it hurts. But, women, don't be too hard on us. You are weird, too! Let me say this—let me say this: She needs to understand his feelings. He needs to try to understand hers. But, we need to work on this thing of intimacy in marriage—and I'll tell you why. It gives an incredible freedom, and it's worth it. You'll never arrive at perfection; but you need to make a start, if you want to have a happy home.

Christian Barnard, one of the most famous men in the world, wrote one of the saddest paragraphs I've ever read. Taking care of everybody else's, except the heart of the one he loved the most.

Let's bow our heads in prayer.