

HOW HE
LOVES US



REVEALING *the*
AFFECTIONS *of* GOD

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AFFECTIONS *of* GOD

LORI GANO



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I want to give a huge thanks filled with love to just a few. God, you are my very heartbeat. You are all of the life and hope that is in me. Thank you for restoring me from the darkest of places. It is all for You.

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Lastly, I want to acknowledge my sweet mother, Betty-Lou, who spent hours e-mailing and on the phone sharing laughter and tears over each sentence and every page of this book, ushering me along and encouraging me. Thank you, Mom. You are beautiful. I could not have done it without you.

INTRODUCTION



The Song of Solomon is a powerful and poetic book that can open our hearts and minds to the affectionate love of God toward us. Inspired by God and written by King Solomon, we enter into an intimate and captivating journey of passion and devotion between the King and a young, immature maiden, the Shulamite. This enchanted love story is much deeper than that of just a King and his bride; it is the story of THE King, Jesus Christ, and HIS bride.

How He Loves Us will parallel a walk through the Song of Solomon seeing the literal picture of the bride and groom relationship and that of Christ with His individual believers. We will evaluate our own walks with Christ and study the learned truths from the book as they relate to various women of the Bible. As you open each chapter of this book, you will encounter a different woman of the Bible and her story. Each woman's journey overflows with opportunity, not only for us to know

her better, but to know our God more intimately. As we break into the details surrounding each woman's story, we also gain confirmation of God's consistent love as we walk simultaneously through the journey of the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon.

The Song of Solomon, filled with passion and poetry, is an allegory between Jesus and the church as a whole body and also His people on an individual level. Let's visit this book as a journey of the progression between Christ and His individual believer, the King representing Christ and the Shulamite representing the believer. It's time to stop considering the book of Songs to be a *possible* reflection of Christ's relationship to His people and to begin looking closely at how it is *exactly* that perfect reflection.

Dear Friend,

I am so excited to share with you the treasure of *How He Loves Us*. I desire for every woman to know deeply how God longs for you and how much His heart aches for you. You are not forgotten. He knows right where you are, and He is reaching for you. This book was overwhelming to write. These pages have been worn with tears and tissues as God moved, and I typed. He is an incredible King, Savior, and friend. My own heart is forever changed from having the honor of putting pen to paper and learning fresh perspective into His extravagant love for us. I have used this study for some time to lead other women out of the trenches of their past and far away from the shame and guilt that paralyzes them. I walked a very long and very broken road for many years. After an indescribable decade of healing through the love of God, He called me to speak and teach other women. The powerful and consistent love of God kept rising to the surface as I would teach. These women were thirsty to soak in every ounce of truth regarding God's love for them. In order to overcome their past, they needed a heavy dose of His affectionate love. I pray this resonates with you as you encounter truth and love from your heavenly Father. His arms are wide open and waiting on you.

Much love in Christ,

Lori

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Journal

Before beginning this study of the affections of God, take a moment and write out your personal answers to a few questions:

How does God feel about you?

Have you felt neglected or forgotten by Him? When?

Has there been a significant time in your life that you felt the Lord's presence and knew that He was moving on your behalf? When?

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What one word would you use to describe your relationship with God?

Is there anything you feel you need to change about yourself before you can get closer to God?



... she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Genesis 2:23

EVE—MEANING LIFE-GIVER



“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”

Genesis 2:18–22 (ESV)

There she stood, created in perfection. The last living thing brought into existence by the direct hand of God. With woman, God was finished. Her existence made creation a completed work. As an artist steps back to gaze upon his completed

project with great delight and satisfaction, how much more must God have experienced fullness by His own handiwork! Being made in His image, God gives us small peeks into His own character. As we envision a project, work through the details, and begin the work of our hands to feel the satisfaction of seeing that project finished, we begin to understand on a small scale how much fulfillment the creative process offers. God is the ultimate artist, the ultimate creator. When He saw the beauty and wonder of His creation, He was fully pleased.

What overwhelming joy Adam must have encountered! Seeing the beauty of the treasure he had received from God inspired an immediate poetic response. Adam's first recorded words were an outpouring of the joyful contentedness he felt seeing his bride for the first time. We catch a glimpse of His excitement through his words.

“And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’”

Genesis 2:23 (KJV)

Adam was overcome, marveling at the wonder of his new companionship. He gazed upon God's perfect work. He soaked in the exquisiteness of Woman. While the Bible gives no physical description of Eve, it is understood that she was flawless. Absolutely magnificent, she had not one single imperfection. Eve was created in the image of God, representing tenderness with grace, intelligence, charm, beauty, and innocence. All of those qualities are the very essence of the character of God as

are the balance of the components of God’s design of men. God designed creation with a system of continual balance. Can you imagine a life with only men? What about a world with only women? God’s plan of balance not only relates to us but also includes the make-up of the animal world, insect world, our climate, and the positioning of each component of the universe. The world as we know it would not exist without His flawless calibration of each component to the most precise exactitude.

Many authors have poured over adjectives and worked to put into words a suitable description of Eve’s indescribable perfection; however, God’s inspired words to us focus on her purpose and God-given role rather than her physical beauty. The fact that the Bible does not touch on any description of her physical form is a solid reminder that the primary traits of pure excellence have nothing to do with superficial beauty. We read a description based on who she is, how she was made, and what God’s plan for her is. That description is contrary to what our culture longs to know . . . body shape, hair texture, eye color, and facial composition. We only know Eve was perfect and that her perfection went far beyond her appearance. Woman was the essence of completeness.

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”
Genesis 2:24 (KJV)

Together with man, woman completed the first picture of God’s divine plan for marriage. She is used to give us our first

example of God's fulfillment of perfection in union. One man and one woman as two persons, different in function but equal in essence, become one indissoluble unit. Eve was created for Adam just as Adam was created for God.

“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”

1 Corinthians 11:8–9 (KJV)

Adam was designed to be the leader and the father. Eve was designed to be the helper and the mother. Physically and emotionally, man and woman were created with specific and obvious differences. Those differences lead to a godly balance when brought together. Woman's role is key to Adam's existence. Her submission is vital to a healthy union. She is described as Adam's "helper," and she complements him as he complements her. It is a mutually beneficial partnership. There is equality in their purpose and love from God; one does not outshine the other.

Wrapping our minds around the idea of headship belonging to the man, a headship driven by equality, is difficult. Our minds struggle to fully comprehend complete equality within the framework of a headship. There will also always be both men and women who abuse their positions or refuse aggressively or passively to fulfill their roles. The enemy will always be working diligently to contaminate the true beauty of submission; however, there will always be one absolute example to rely on, and that is the Trinity.

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

1 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV)

The Trinity illustrates how headship and submission work together in seamless perfection. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all one and all equal.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

2 Corinthians 13:14 (ESV)

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

Colossians 2:9 (KJV)

“Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.”

Philippians 2:6 (ESV)

“I and my Father are one.”

John 10:30 (KJV)

Sound familiar? We often hear these verses and take them at face value but breeze right over the message buried in them. The Trinity is our gleaming example of equality in submission. It is an importance measured of the same value; however, it is given to us with requirements for humble submission. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal in essence and

value, different in function, and submit to the headship of God the Father.

It is beautiful to see that Christ never wrestled with a desire for equality. It was already His, and because of the confidence He carried by walking in the perfect will of God, in addition to knowing His identity of equality, He always humbly—yet boldly—submitted to the Father’s headship.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

Ephesians 5:25–32 (ESV)

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

Revelation 19:7 (KJV)

Getting a grasp on the God-ordained divine makeup of marriage is fundamental to our understanding of the church’s relationship to her bridegroom. We, as believers, make up the

church. Christ has lovingly chosen the church to be His bride. Our relationship to Christ is much like the marriage relationship of the bride to the groom and the woman to the man. The wife is to the husband what the church is to the bridegroom. Ladies, we have an opportunity here to represent the power of equality in submission! This is a partnership, not a fight for control, and most definitely not a loss of purpose. Marriage represents the completeness of union. We are made whole through the fulfillment of our union. Our union in marriage, in addition to our union with Christ, challenges us to change, grow, and serve one another as we are being refined. This is not an easy calling. Every part of the perfection of union is a challenge. It was a challenge for Christ as He walked in the form of man on earth and eventually hung on the cross. It is also a character-building challenge for us.

Eve had an opportunity to represent! What happened?

Before the temptation and fall of man we cannot think of the serpent as a vile and repulsive reptile. What we now know as the shape and manner of the serpent is the effect of the curse.

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

Genesis 3:1 (KJV)

The serpent was charming; some translations say he was “crafty.” The Hebrew word for *subtil* {Hebrew Strong’s Number: 6175} is *`aruwm* meaning *cunning*. We often define cunning as

artfully subtle or *charmingly appealing*. This has a negative connotation, and we know the type. Imagine the enemy, engaging and fascinating, quite certainly intelligent. He could have been beautiful as well. The serpent, although now cursed, still shows traces of its graceful subtlety in its own fluid movements and colorings. We must consider a picture far different than that of artists' renditions of the slithering, foul serpent in the Garden of Eden. He was approachable and convincing. The woman was deceived and transgressed, whereas Adam was not deceived by the serpent directly but also chose sin. We sometimes struggle in our day not to maintain a biblical balance of the root of sin. There are some who too often blame all sin, calamity, and trials on Satan. They believe everything is his fault with no accountability for their own decisions. There are others who don't respect the influence Satan can hold in their lives and dismiss any work of the enemy as not being his.

Adam and Eve show us a balanced illustration of sin. Eve was directly influenced and deceived by Satan. Adam was tempted in his flesh. They both made a choice and walked into the pitfall of sin. Satan is a powerful influencer and is due the respect of understanding his agenda. At the same time, we are not to give him undue attention as it steals from our mindfulness and thoughts toward God. Prayerfully find the balance of recognizing your own propensity to sin and the enemy's interference in his quest to distract and destroy you. There are always two forces at work over us, fighting: God, whose agenda is life, and Satan, whose agenda is death.

Adam and Eve's sin represented the universal sinfulness of all of humanity. The woman saw the tree and its ability to fulfill

desires of the flesh. She saw an opportunity to experience more, to taste of the wisdom that belonged only to God. How many terrible decisions have we made because we thought we needed something or wanted something that really wasn't ours to have? Eve wanted something that wasn't hers to have. So many of our desires can be destructive when we haven't sifted them through prayerful conversation with God first. We can wander off course before we even know what's hit us. Eve was a woman who revealed her immaturity through her selfish longings. Instead of honoring her role as "helper," she chose to sin and then led her husband down the same path. As Adam's support and companion, we easily see the power of influence she carried.

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."

Genesis 3:1–6 (ESV)

Eve's choice to disobey God reset the stage and changed the way her life would look. Eve carries many titles. Among other things, she is the only woman born perfect and without sin, the first human to be deceived by Satan, the first human to sin, and thus the first example of the influence the helper has over the headship. Eve was the first wife, mother, and grandmother. She was also the first woman to experience heartbreak and grief, loss and death.

And here we are now, on this side of the fruit. The man and woman's eyes were opened. Their sin was a rebellion against a specific command of God. They were no longer just *aware* of good and evil, they would now *experience* both good and evil.

This reminds us of our childish nature. How many times have we been told by someone wiser the consequences of poor choices yet still follow through with them? Think back to a time when you were warned of the dangers of a choice you were facing, and you chose your way regardless. Something amazing happens when we pair information with experience. Once we experience the pain and regret ourselves, we suddenly become convinced of the danger of our selfishness and disobedience. We suddenly have a deeper understanding of the warnings that were spoken to us.

As a mother warns a child not to touch a hot stove, we can see a curious and disobedient child wait for a quiet opportunity to reach out in a brief moment of defiance, but they are left with a scarred reminder of the pain and consequence of a willful disregard for the wise guidance that comes from authority. How likely are we to obey when danger is explained to us? How much more likely are we to obey when we've been there and

done that? Some of us have harder heads than others, but most of us diligently seeking after God learn well from experiences. Unfortunately, the short-lived pleasure and satisfaction of sin then brings negative consequences, and those consequences are usually followed by shame.

Adam and Eve's famous attempt to fashion clothing out of fig leaves illustrates the utter inadequacy of our human response to cover shame. Nothing man-made would ever be enough to cover the dishonor of our sin. We can imagine by Eve's response to God that she was tormented by a deep sense of fear, shame, and dread. Neither of them came forth with a full confession but instead tried to pass the blame. At once, Eve saw her own darkness and sin. She was faced with experiencing self-disgust, guilt, and humiliation . . . something we can all relate to. Oh, how we wish we hadn't done that thing we did!

“Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ And he said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’ He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’ Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ The Lord

God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.' To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'"
Genesis 3:7–19 (ESV)

There you have it . . . the curse. The woman, who once stood as a glorious creation in beautiful perfection, was now experiencing the consequences of her sin. She was now facing burdens, illnesses, pains, trials, tribulations, and ultimately death. Can you imagine the reality that was settling in around her?

Then something interesting happens. In the next two verses, we begin to see a glimmer of hope and grace through the peephole of their journey.

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."
Genesis 3:20–21 (KJV)

The woman, regardless of her immaturity, her selfishness, or her sin, had been given a name that represented the future. Up until this point she had only been called woman. She now was called Eve. The Hebrew word for *Eve* {Hebrew Strong's Number: 2332} is *Chavvah* meaning *life-giver*. The woman who was deceived by Satan and brought death into the world had been given a name that meant life. It was a title of hope and destiny. Eve was the first to receive the divine prophecy of the cross, hearing God tell the serpent that her seed would bruise the serpent's head. It was a foretelling of the Savior who would come and destroy the works of the devil. When Jesus cried out on the cross "It is finished," He meant that the serpent's head, representing power and authority, had been bruised. He laid hold of all principalities and powers that Eve's transgression brought into the world and put them under His feet.

Had Eve's destiny been forever wiped away due to her sin? No! Her destiny, although now filled with the consequences of her actions including difficulty, pain, and death, was opening the doors for many generations to come. Eve was punished with the consequences of her sin, but her sin did not stop the call on her life. Her God-given destiny was to bring forth the human race. Her sin did not end God's purpose for her, it only created undue pain in it. As the woman destined to bring forth life, her curse related directly to her calling. It is interesting to note that Adam's name simply means man, while Eve's name carries promise and life. Through a woman (Eve), God's perfect universe was tainted and scarred becoming enslaved to sin. In the coming years, through a woman (Mary mother of Jesus), a Savior would be provided to all of humanity otherwise

destined for death. Pause for a moment and meditate on the abundant grace God offers. God could have elected to remove all privilege from woman. Eve's name could have represented her sin and mistakes, but that is not the God we serve.

Fascinatingly, the very next action from God is an action of love as well as necessity. He made coats of skin and clothed Adam and Eve.

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”
Genesis 3:21 (KJV)

God has said that the wages of sin is death. That means something or someone had to die, blood had to be shed in order to cover sin.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
Romans 6:23 (KJV)

When Adam and Eve sinned, something had to be used to cover that sin and thus make them presentable to God. God sacrificed the innocent animal, shedding its blood, in order to use the skin as coats. This must have been quite shocking to Eve as neither she nor Adam had seen death or a dead animal. This sacrifice on their behalf would have been quite significant to them. Imagine seeing something like that for the first time. They watched as something had to die in order to fix their mess. The sacrifice of animals was only a temporary fix as it would take a human's bloodshed to cover the sin of humans.

The sacrifice had to be from an innocent and unblemished human, and we are fully aware that none of us fit that description. This is the reason God had in His plan to bring forth His Son in order to be the perfect sacrifice for His creation.

It's easy to become so focused on the consequences of Eve's sin that we minimize the grace and love God administered. He has such a heart for His creation! He didn't just leave Eve to fester in her shame. He didn't turn His back on her. We do not see God on a ranting, berating, belittling, tirade. We simply see an action of love, an offering of sacrifice to cover the sin.

