

Memory Sustains in Time of Pressure; the Woman's Aggressive Response to Her Right Man Illustrates the Believer's Reciprocal Love for Christ, SOS 3:1-3; Rev 3:20

There is no genre of music that captures loneliness like the high lonesome sound of Bill Monroe, the father of Bluegrass music. Here's a song Mr. Monroe wrote about a man who misses his departed wife. Its name is:

"Close By"

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You've gone so far away, my darling.
Each time I think of you I cry.
I'll press your picture to my bosom,
Then I'll feel that you're close by.

The years have passed—
You've not returned, dear,
Now that they say you have died.
But your soul will live forever
Now I know you'll be close by.

I saw you last while you were leaving
The tears from you I tried to hide
You took me in your arms and said, dear,
"Your memory I keep close by."

They've buried you in a lonely graveyard
And a spot they left beside.
Now we'll sleep 'til Jesus calls us
So that we can be close by.

53. Just as night is a stimulant to one's memory so also are words recalled from the missing lover. An obvious stimulant is music and its lyric that express the feelings of a couple separated by the exigencies of life.
54. We have already noted the four types of stimuli for recall: (1) Visual (seeing), (2) aural (hearing), (3) tactile (touching), and (4), olfactory (smelling).
55. For the Shulammitte, loneliness has become chronic and she is unable to recall a vivid memory of the Shepherd. As a result she becomes aggressive in her love for him. She gets up and goes looking for him.

SOS 3:1 - [SW] "Night after night on my bed I sought after the one whom my soul loves; I sought him but I could not find him."

1. There are a number of things that can cause one's memory to fade and to have only a blurry recall of an object, an incident, or a person. Here the Shulammitte's memory is failing to recall her lover but there is no specific reason stated.
2. Consequently, she is presenting a principle that is common to us all. There are things that cause memory to fade but in Song of Solomon the one its context suggests is pressure.
3. When she awoke at the vineyard on this particular morning she did not have Solomon on her Day Timer. The idea of being hustled off to his tent was not on her mind. The suggestion that she would be invited to join his harem would never have entered her mind.
4. Then, suddenly, the Daughters of Jerusalem arrive, no doubt with a retinue of Solomon's soldiers as escorts, to invite her down to the tent for tea.

5. She is quite poised and manages herself admirably but Solomon's pick-up lines alert her to the seriousness of her situation. She does well concentrating on doctrine at first but by chapter 3 she is suffering mental fatigue.
6. To orient, she remembers an incident when she could not recall her missing Shepherd and how she handled it then. She even recalled what she said to herself at the time:
SOS 3:2 - [SW] "I must arise now and go about the city's streets and squares. I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but I did not find him."
7. Loneliness caused this woman to become aggressive in her love for her right man. Frustrated by her inability to recall the Shepherd's image in her nighttime reveries she makes a series of volitional decisions in an effort to find him: "I will arise," "I will go," "I must seek."
8. We do not know the reasons for her loss of recall in this situation but it required her to become proactive. In Solomon's tent the pressure is causing her to waver and she is able to remember how she became proactive on the occasion she is describing.
9. Here her only choice is to continue to say "no." Her focus must be on her confidence that she will be delivered by her Shepherd. In the meantime she must remain poised under pressure but become mentally aggressive.
10. Her aggression is legitimate and is actually in response to the presence of the Shepherd in her soul.
11. There are three areas of legitimate response that a woman has to her right man: (1) when he initiates physical sex which is a direct response, (2) when she is stimulated by certain vectors such as music, literature, poetry, drama, or even "foolish things" that she finds alluring—also a direct response, and (3) when he is absent she is able to capture him in her memory, an indirect response.
12. Principle: A woman must have something to respond to. If her right man is in her soul she responds to him, present or absent. And when she does her response becomes active and therefore aggressive.
13. We might refer to this as reciprocal aggression, a mental attitude that complements the relationship between right man and right woman.
14. The aggression of the man and the reciprocal aggression of the woman are restricted by limitations prior to marriage but are unrestrained after marriage.
15. Here we find the Shulammitte aggressively responding to the Shepherd in her memory as she recalls a time when her reciprocal aggression motivated her to pursue him and find "him whom my soul loves."

SOS 3:3 - [SW] "The policemen who patrol the city found me, and I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?'"

1. The first three verses may be used as an application for believers under pressure. The nature of pressure is that it is sudden, disrupting, and often frightening.
2. Believers in every stage of spiritual growth are stymied by the chilling influence of pressure. When this happens the usual response is to react with human viewpoint.
3. Such a disposition inevitably resorts to human-viewpoint problem-solving devices. These can stimulate not only poor application but also erroneous mental attitudes that accompany them.

4. Fear is common. So is anger, bitterness, and revenge motivation. The tendency is to grasp desperately at solutions common to the devil's world, to seek the advice of man, resort to human energy, and reach cosmic rationales.
5. The inability to acquire tranquility of soul from these applications causes loss of sleep and with the mounting pressure of the testing the carnal believer eventually finds himself longing for divine guidance.
6. But this divine guidance is unavailable to him in his present status of mental disorder. For order to be restored to the soul the believer must "seek the One Whom my soul loves"—the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. To do this esprit de corps must be restored, a process referenced by our Lord in:
Revelation 3:20 - "Listen to this! I keep on standing at the door [availability of instant recovery through rebound] knocking repeatedly [divine discipline in three categories: (1) warning, (2) intensive, (3) terminal]. If anyone [cosmic believer] hears My voice [rebound motivation] and opens the door [rebound recovery], I will enter face to face with him [restoration of esprit de corps] and I will dine with him [restored fellowship], and he with Me [inculcation of divine viewpoint from Bible study, i.e., feeding on the Word]."
8. To respond to the love of Christ for cosmic recovery the believer must become reciprocally aggressive. This requires a desire for fellowship with the Lord and this requires an aggressive act: confession alone to God alone.
9. The Shulammitte's motivation to seek "him whom my soul loves" is an illustration of "hearing the voice" of the Lord through corrective discipline, i.e., rebound motivation, the reciprocal desire to reestablish fellowship.