

## THREE STAGES OF LOVE

The “good ground” soil described in the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:8, bears fruit in different degrees. 3 stages/levels of growth, development and maturity, are revealed in scripture. The Song of Solomon describes 3 levels of love among “professing believers”; Song Of Solomon 2:16; 6:3; 7:10.

### 1. INITIAL LOVE – Song of Solomon 2:16 – “My beloved is mine, and I am His”

**A. Description:** She (the believer) is thankful for what He has done for her, but she wants a relationship with Him on her own terms. The idea of “dying to self” is foreign to her; she wants to preserve her own life. He is not the focus; she is the center of attention (she cannot see that He is the Center of all things).

**B. This Stage Of Initial Love** reveals JESUS in the Feast of Passover: 30-Fold Realm of babes/little children, the New Birth, Outer Court, Water Baptism, Brazen Altar, Spirit is made alive, Justification

#### **C. Characteristics:**

1. Her faith is shallow and superficial, based upon what she sees and how she feels; it must be tested.
2. She has a zeal, but not according to knowledge. She will gain wisdom as the fear of the Lord comes.
3. She must learn to cultivate a living relationship with the Lord Himself, not just His people.
4. Her idea of worship is influenced by external observances, religious tradition and opinions of men.
5. As a young believer, she follows the ministries and receives instruction from her mentors.
6. She feeds upon the milk of the Word and is learning the elementary doctrines of the faith.
7. Her natural mind must be renewed; she must become grounded in the Word of God.
8. She is a convert, not a disciple. Her desires, understanding, speech and behavior are carnal.
9. When she hears the call to carry her own cross, she will be tested in the area of her “loyalties”.
10. She is learning that the terms of discipleship go beyond good works and church attendance.
11. She must learn to hear the Lord’s voice and obey the call to “come away”.
12. She does not understand the demands of His love or what it may cost her to walk with Him.

### 2. INTERMEDIATE LOVE – Song of Solomon 6:3 – “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine”

**A. Description:** She has rearranged her priorities; she has endured many trials and tests. Her focus is changing from herself to Him. She hungers for His presence and is learning to walk in the spirit.

**B. This Stage Of Intermediate Love** reveals the HOLY SPIRIT in the Feast of Pentecost: 60-Fold Realm of adolescence/young men, Candlestick (oil), Holy Spirit Baptism, Holy Place, Operation of the Gifts of Holy Spirit, Soul is being saved, Sanctification

#### **C. Characteristics:**

1. She is advancing in her relationship with Him, and is learning how to walk by faith in adversity.
2. She seeks the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, but her main focus is still her “ministry”, not Him.
3. She finds her identity in her titles, accomplishments and good works; she must “die” to these things.
4. Her prayer life increases; she utilizes the spiritual power and authority that is entrusted to her.
5. She is bearing more fruit; purging and pruning is removing that which is dead or unfruitful.
6. She understands more fully the importance of repentance, holiness and obedience to Him.
7. She still must come to the end of herself, and her dependence upon her own ability, her own natural strength and resources. Increasing trials of her faith will bring her to full dependence upon her Savior.
8. She is learning how to enter His rest: to cease from her own labors and her own ambitions.
9. She recognizes the need for deliverance, to “deny self”, through the further dealings of the Cross.
10. She is abandoning the pursuit of non-Kingdom issues and the desire for recognition and attention.
11. She is realizing that inward transformation and godly character is of the utmost importance.
12. She is growing in intimacy with Him, and is seeing the need to lose her own life, to gain His.

**3. MATURE LOVE** – Song of Solomon 7:10 – “I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me”

**A. Description:** She (the Bride) reflects the nature and character of Jesus Christ; she has fully renounced the right to herself and her own interests. The desire for communion with Him is greater than any other desire. He, in turn, desires and enjoys the exchange of a mutual love with her in the Most Holy Place.

**B. This Stage Of Mature Love** reveals the FATHER and the reality of the Feast of Tabernacles: 100-Fold Realm of maturity/manhood, the Mercy Seat, The Most Holy Place, Full Rest, Baptism in Fire, Body shall be saved (transformed), Glorification (realized at Jesus’ appearing)

**C. Characteristics:**

1. She has experienced a deep work of the Spirit’s grace within her; her life is hidden in Christ.
2. Prayer is a lifestyle; her burden for humanity causes her to intercede continually.
3. Her devotion to the Lord is reflected in continual worship and adoration to Him.
4. She seeks first the eternal Kingdom of God, and not the building of her own temporary kingdom.
5. The fear of the Lord has replaced the “fear of man”. She cannot bear the thought of grieving Him.
6. She is mature (“developed”) and has the ability to reproduce the life of Christ in others; she feeds and nourishes the young (with milk) and the mature (with honey); Song of Solomon 4:11; 8:10.
7. She has been delivered from the demands of religious performance. Having gone “outside the camp”, she bears His reproach; she knows the isolation and the sufferings of Gethsemane.
8. She seeks His pleasure first; she waits upon Him continually, for He is her Reward.
9. Because she has entered His rest, she ministers from that place of communion with Him. Her works are a reflection of her walk with Him, from the heavenly, spiritual dimension.
10. She abides in Him, having yielded to, and submitted to His life, His will and not her own. Therefore, she bears much fruit, having endured through seasons of testing.
11. A baptism in fire refines her motives, her speech, and her actions, causing the “gold” (of purified faith and the divine nature) to be produced.
12. Her vision sees beyond the present world, the earthly realm, into eternity. She seeks full union in the spirit (marriage) with Him. Having severed her earthly ties, she groans for bodily release.

“And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in Him. By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us.”

1 John 4:16-19 (NAS)

“Love endures long and is patient and kind...God’s love in us does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful...it pays no attention to a suffered wrong...Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person...it endures everything...Love never fails”; see 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (Amplified)

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”; Luke 14:26-27 (NAS)

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