

Song of Solomon 4:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!

Analysis

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse (mah yafu dodayikh achoti kalah, מֵהַ יָּפָע דְּדַיְךָ אֲחֹתִי כָּלָה—the exclamation "how fair" expresses wonder and delight. The term dodayikh (דְּדַיְךָ, your love/lovemaking) celebrates both emotional affection and physical intimacy. The dual address "my sister, my spouse" (achoti kalah, אֲחֹתִי כָּלָה) combines familial intimacy with covenantal commitment—she is both intimate companion and bonded partner.

How much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices echoes the bride's earlier declaration (1:2-3), now reciprocated. The beloved finds his bride's love surpassing all other pleasures. Wine represented peak sensory delight, yet her love exceeds it. The fragrant ointments suggest her preparation and the aromatic beauty she brings. This mutual declaration—both bride and bridegroom finding each other's love superior to all else—models covenant exclusivity. Christ finds His Church's love (devotion, worship, obedience) more delightful than all worldly offerings.

Historical Context

The "sister-spouse" terminology appears throughout ancient Near Eastern love poetry, particularly Egyptian love songs. This wasn't incestuous but conveyed deepest intimacy—the beloved is as close as family yet romantically committed as spouse. Wine and spices were luxury items associated with celebration and

pleasure. The bridegroom's reciprocation of the bride's earlier praise (1:2-3) demonstrates mutual delight—covenant love flows both directions. Early church fathers saw Christ calling the Church both "sister" (sharing His Father, adopted into God's family) and "spouse" (united in covenant marriage). The Reformers emphasized that Christ genuinely delights in His Church's worship and devotion—He isn't obligated to love us but takes pleasure in our love. The Puritans taught that healthy marriages involve mutual, reciprocal affection and appreciation, not one-sided devotion.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ addressing the Church as both "sister" (family) and "spouse" (covenant partner) deepen your understanding of intimacy with Him?
2. What does it mean that Christ finds your love—worship, devotion, obedience—more delightful than all worldly offerings?
3. In marriage, how can spouses cultivate mutual reciprocal delight, both finding each other's love superior to all other pleasures?

Interlinear Text

ט בָּרָא מֵהֶם כָּל הַ אֶחָת יִגְּשֶׁב מֵהֶם
H4100 **How** **fair** is **thy** **love** my **sister** my **spouse** H4100 **how** **much** **better**
H3302 H1730 H269 H3618 H2895

בְּשָׁתִים: מְכֹל שְׁמַנִּים יְגַעַן יְמִינִים
is **thy** **love** **than** **wine** **and** **the** **smell** **of** **thine** **ointments** H3605 **than** **all** **spices**
H1730 H3196 H7381 H8081 H1314

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 7:6: How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

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