

Song of Solomon 4:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

Analysis

Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb (nopheth titopha siphtey kha kalah, נָפַת תִּתְפֹּה שְׁפֵתּוֹתָךְ כָּלָה)—the image of lips dripping honeycomb celebrates the bride's words as supremely sweet and desirable. Nopheth (נָפַת) refers to fresh honey dripping from the comb, the purest and sweetest honey. The bride's speech brings pleasure, nourishment, and delight.

Honey and milk are under thy tongue (devash vechalav tachat leshonekh, דְּבָשׁ וְחַלָּב תְּחַת לְשׁוֹנֶךָ) suggests abundant sweetness in her speech—not just surface pleasantness but deep, nourishing wisdom. Honey represents sweetness; milk represents nourishment. **And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon** compares her fragrance to Lebanon's cedars and spices—fresh, clean, naturally beautiful. This verse celebrates comprehensive beauty: sweet speech, nourishing wisdom, and pleasant presence. The Church's words, when filled with gospel truth, are honey and milk to hungry souls (1 Peter 2:2-3).

Historical Context

Honey was Israel's premier natural sweetener—the Promised Land flowed with "milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8), representing abundance and blessing. Fresh honeycomb was prized delicacy. The combination "honey and milk" represented optimal nourishment and pleasure. Lebanon's cedar forests and spice gardens produced legendary fragrance—expensive and exotic. The beloved celebrates the

bride's speech as both delightful and nourishing, her presence as naturally fragrant. Early church fathers saw the Church's "honey and milk" as sound doctrine—sweet truth that nourishes believers. Christ gave the Great Commission to a Church whose words would carry gospel honey to the nations. The Reformers emphasized that gospel preaching should be both sweet (attractive, compelling) and nourishing (substantive, truth-filled). The Puritans taught that gracious speech—encouraging, wise, truthful—beautifies a person beyond physical appearance.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Do your words "drop as honeycomb"—bringing sweetness, encouragement, and spiritual nourishment—or do they spread bitterness and poison?
2. How can the Church ensure her message contains both "honey" (attractive gospel grace) and "milk" (nourishing biblical truth)?
3. What spiritual disciplines help cultivate speech that is consistently gracious, wise, and life-giving?

Interlinear Text

וְיַדְבֵּר as the honeycomb	נָפָת H5317	נָפָת drop	נָפָת H5197	שְׁפָתֹתֶךָ Thy lips	שְׁפָתֹתֶךָ H8193	כִּלְבָשׂ O my spouse	כִּלְבָשׂ H3618	דְּבָרָשׁ honey	דְּבָרָשׁ H1706	וְיַדְבֵּר and milk	וְיַדְבֵּר H2461
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בְּרִיךְ יְמִינְךָ are under thy tongue	תְּמִימָנֶךָ H8478	לִשְׁוֹנְךָ H3956	כְּרִיכָּךָ and the smell	שְׁלָמָתְךָ H7381	בְּרִיךְ יְמִינְךָ of thy garments	תְּמִימָנֶךָ H8008	לִשְׁוֹנְךָ H7381	כְּרִיכָּךָ and the smell
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לְבָנָן:
of Lebanon
H3844

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 5:1: I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Genesis 27:27: And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

Song of Solomon 5:13: His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

Song of Solomon 7:9: And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.

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