

Song of Solomon 7:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;

Analysis

I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof (אָמַרְתִּי אֶעֱלֶה בְּתֵמַר אֶחְזֶה בְּסִנְיָוִי)—the bridegroom declares his intention to climb the palm and grasp its branches. The Hebrew e'eleh (אֶעֱלֶה, I will ascend) and ochazah (אֶחְזֶה, I will take hold) express active pursuit and passionate embrace. This is covenantal intimacy within marriage—mutual, desired, and celebrated. **Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples** (וְיִהְיֶינָה שְׁדֵיךָ כְּאֲשָׁכֹלוֹת הַגֶּפֶן וְרִיחַ אֶפְרָךְ כְּתַפּוּחִים)—the imagery shifts from grapes to vine clusters and adds the fragrance of apples, emphasizing sensory delight: sight, touch, taste, smell.

This verse celebrates marital sexuality as God's good gift—passionate, mutual, multi-sensory delight within covenant commitment. The bridegroom's declaration of intent ('I said, I will...') demonstrates that covenant love is both passionate and purposeful, spontaneous and committed. Church tradition allegorically read this as Christ's union with His Church or the soul's mystical communion with God.

Historical Context

Palm trees were climbed to harvest dates or for pruning. The imagery is intimate and purposeful—the beloved doesn't merely admire the palm but actively engages with it. The combination of grapes (vine clusters) and apples creates a garden of delights, recalling Eden before the fall. Apples (or possibly apricots—Hebrew

tappuach, תַּפּוּחַ) were celebrated for fragrance and flavor (2:5; 8:5). The Song's frank celebration of physical intimacy countered both pagan fertility cults (which separated sexuality from covenant) and ascetic denial of the body's goodness. Church fathers like Origen and Bernard interpreted this mystically as the soul ascending to God. The Puritans recovered appreciation for marital sexuality as holy and delightful when practiced within covenant.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does the Bible's frank celebration of marital sexuality challenge both cultural shame and cultural idolatry around sex?
2. What does purposeful, committed passion ('I said, I will...') look like in your covenant relationships?
3. How can you cultivate multi-sensory appreciation (sight, touch, smell, taste) in appropriate contexts of covenant relationship?

Interlinear Text

אָמַרְתִּי	אֶעֱלֶה	בְּתֵמַר	אֶחֱזֶה	בְּסִנְסֵנִי	וְהָיִי
I said	I will go up	to the palm tree	I will take hold	of the boughs	
H559	H5927	H8558	H270	H5577	H1961

נָא	שֵׁךְ יִנֶּה	כְּאֲשָׁכֵל	הֶגֶן פֶּן	וְרֵיחַ
	thereof now also thy breasts	shall be as clusters	of the vine	and the smell
H4994	H7699	H811	H1612	H7381

אֶפְרֹחַי	כְּתַפּוּחִים:
of thy nose	like apples
H639	H8598

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 2:14: Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

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