

Introduction

When we read the Old Testament, we will discover many interesting passages that touch on themes of our personal life. Our curiosity is piqued, and we want to explore the subject at hand. What do we do, and how can we find out what the Bible has to say about the subjects?

Remember that *Biblical concepts* are often quite different than the natural definitions for many of the really poignant matters of our heart. If we simply transfer our natural thinking to the text, we may miss some incredible truths. So, how do we start?

Begin with the text and the context:

"Put me like a seal over your heart,
Like a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death,
Jealousy is as severe as Sheol;
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
The very flame of the LORD.

"Many waters cannot quench love
Nor will rivers overflow it;
If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love,
It would be utterly despised."
Song 8:6-7

1. These words are spoken by a woman in love. They express longing, not dread.
2. In light of that desire, what does she want? What sort of love?
3. Curiously, *jealousy* is called "the very flame of the Lord." But I always thought of jealousy as a bad thing. What could this mean?

Jealousy

4. Look at other verses that speak of jealousy--is there a meaning I don't know?

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 2.Cor. 11:2

Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? James 4:5

5. Other translations of the word also help see aspects I know nothing about:

The LORD will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse *His* zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies. Isaiah 42:13

And He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle. Isaiah 59:17

6. If God's kind of jealous love is a good thing, how has it been distorted by sin?

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. James 3:16

For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not waiking like mere men? 1 Cor. 3:3

... that perhaps *there may be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; 2 Cor. 12:20

...idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, disensions, factions... Galatians 5:20

7. So we have two kinds of jealousy--an unrighteous one for our own sake, and a righteous jealousy for the sake of others: