

Fragrances, Study 1

# **SMELLS, FRAGRANCES, AND ODOURS IN THE CHURCH**

written by Andrew Corbett

*But thanks be to God, who always leads us in victory through Christ. God uses us to spread his knowledge everywhere like a sweet-smelling perfume.*

**Second Corinthians 2:14 (NCV)**

In the Song of Songs, there is a beautiful picture of Christ and the Church. Despite how many have initially been told to understand the Song of Solomon, the "lover" in this story is not Solomon! Rather, Solomon is the one trying to entice the Shulammitte from her betrothed, a young shepherd. While working her family's vineyard, it appears that she had grown to love the shepherd boy whose family would graze their sheep among the vines. Eventually, at the appropriate age, the two young lovers are betrothed to each other. But shortly after this, King Solomon spies this girl working in her family's vineyard and takes her to be one of his wives back in Jerusalem. She is quizzed by the existing members of King Solomon's harem about her lover and where to find him and tells them-

¶ *If you do not know,  
O most beautiful among women,  
follow in the tracks of the flock,  
and pasture your young goats  
beside the shepherds' tents.*

**Song of Solomon 1:8**

This book is full of descriptions of rural fragrances which remind the Shulammitte of her childhood sweetheart. While Solomon offers her various riches, wines, spices and perfumes, she remains faithful to her betrothed. It is a beautiful picture remaining faithful to Christ despite the alluring temptations of the world.

As the Lover (Christ, the Shepherd) tends his garden (the Church), it too begins to exude a sweet smelling fragrance (Song 1:12 NIV). The bride talks of herself as being her lover's "garden" and says- "*There are young figs on the fig trees, and the blossoms on the vines smell sweet. . .*" (Song 2:13 NCV).

1. One of the main themes of the Song of Solomon is \_ \_ \_ \_ .
2. The fragrance of God is also associated with \_ \_ \_ \_ .
3. We see from the message of the Song of Songs that God wants His Church to be a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ church.
4. Paul says that the Church is a \_ \_ \_ \_ smelling fragrance.

Therefore, it is our aim as a church to become more *smelly*! (In a sweet way of course.) Perhaps one of the insights from the Song of Songs is that our *fragrance* is proportional to our love. The faithful Shulammitte bride in the Song of Songs describes her Lover (a type of Jesus) as being “...like a bunch of flowers from the vineyards at En Gedi.” (1:14). Therefore, since the lover seems to represent the Son of God, it similarly seems that God has a ‘smell’.

5. This is not surprising, considering the very essence of God is \_ \_ \_ \_ (1Jn 4:16).

All followers of Christ are spiritually fragrant! What is this fragrance that the Bible is talking about? It is love...

Love produces a feeling but love is first involves a way of acting. It is also a way of thinking about others - not as problems, not as nuisances, but as people created to be loved. God's kind of love (which the Greeks at the time of Christ called “agapé”) cares most for someone else rather than ourself. Agapé love is sincere and genuine.

## ***THE FRAGRANCE OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER***

6. The love of the Father is un \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

In the Old Testament, the words most used to describe God's love are-

**'ahab** This word for God's love occurs 250 times in the Old Testament. It describes spontaneous and outflowing love.

**hesed** A word denoting deliberate choice of affection and kindness. This word is often translated as “mercy”, “kindness”, or “steadfast love”.

**(The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Vol. 3, pg. 173-174)**

Jesus described the love of the Father by saying-

*"...He causes the sun to rise on good people and on evil people, and he sends rain to those who do right and to those who do wrong"*

**Matthew 5:45**

Jesus made it clear that His followers must have the same fragrance of their heavenly Father-

*"If you love only the people who love you, you will get no reward. Even tax collectors do that. And if you are nice only to your friends, you are no better than other people. Even those who don't know God are nice to their friends. So you must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."*

**Matthew 5:46-47**

## ***Obligations***

1. We spread the fragrance of God's love like a sweet-smelling perfume when we spend time in God's presence- privately and corporately.
2. We can intensify the fragrance of God on our lives when we flow in the Father's love.
3. The greatest display of love in the world today should be in the church and amongst believers, their families and their friends.

*Amen.*

**Next study:** *The Different Types of Loving Perfume In The Church*

### **ANSWER KEYS**

1. love 2. love 3. faithful 4. sweet 5. love 6. (un) conditional

## Fragrances, Study 2

# ***THE DIFFERENT BRANDS OF LOVING PERFUME IN THE CHURCH***

*37 He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."*

**Matthew 22 (NRSV)**

## **Recap**

Love is closely associated with *sweet smelling fragrances* (as pictured in the Song of Songs). The church's relationship with God is based on loving intimacy, therefore produces an attractive spiritual fragrance. The very nature of God is love. Everything He does reflects *love*. The Father's love is both spontaneous based on a predetermined decision. As we love, we too become spiritually fragrant.

Now we will see that love has three different types of fragrances and that God deserves the sweetest!

## ***"DO YOU LOVE ME?"***

There were four types of love in classic Greek:

- (i) *Affection love* - Greek word = **stergo** (Romans 12:10)
- (ii) *Friendship love* - Greek word = **phileo** (second most common Greek word for love in Scripture).
- (iii) *Erotic love* - Greek word = **eros** (not used in Scripture)
- (iv) *Selfless love* - Greek word = **agape** [ar-gar-pay] (the most common word for love in the New Testament)

1. God deserves \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ love from us. (Mat. 22:37)
2. But God also expects us to show \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ love to others as well.
3. This brings \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to God (John 13:35)

Note the use of two different forms of the word *love* in Christ's conversation with Peter (Jn. 21:16ff).

*He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love (agapé) me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love (phileo) you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep."*

**John 21:16**

4. The church is made up of people who are often cold-hearted, self-centred, gossips, inwardly immoral and deceptively righteous in appearance- yet God loves them! And He tells us to do the same! God's kind of love is not a reward, it is a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.

We are to *love* not just to *like*. Yet, as we see from John 21:16, liking is sometimes a good place to start to learn how to love.

## ***Obligations***

1. How is your love for God? Hot, lukewarm, or cold?
2. How is your love for the church?
3. How is your love for your spouse?

*Amen.*

**Next Study:** *The Ingredients To The Best Love Fragrance In The Church*

### **ANSWER KEYS**

1. agapé 2. agapé 3. glory 4. gift

Fragrances, Study 3

# ***THE INGREDIENTS TO THE BEST LOVE FRAGRANCE IN THE CHURCH***

*Now that you have made your souls pure by obeying the truth, you can have true love for your Christian brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply with all your heart.*

**First Peter 1:22 (NCV)**

## **Recap**

1. We have seen that the Scriptures describes God's love for us like a sweet smelling \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (2Cor. 2:14; Song of Solomon)
2. God's love for us is *agapé* love: the highest form of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ love. It goes beyond mere friendship, it transcends physical love, it is more intense than affection.
3. Now we will see that there are different ingredients to \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ love. . .

## ***Beware of Cheap Imitations!***

*"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."*

**John 15:13 (NKJV)**

4. This statement of Christ's, not only encompasses possible physical death in the cause of others, but it involves continual \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . To lay down means to surrender.

The Greek word for "life" is ***psuché*** (this is the word from which we get our English word - psychology) which is most commonly translated "soul", which encompasses the entire person- body and spirit.

- 5. Paul warns that merely physically dying for others may not be \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ love (1 Cor. 13:3).
- 6. Knowing the Scriptures, moving in the gifts of the Spirit, and having the ability to exercise great faith, are not the measures of a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ Christian. (1 Cor. 13:2)

*Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*

**First Corinthians 8:1 (NKJV)**

Matthew Henry wrote-

*There is no proof of ignorance more common than conceit of knowledge. Much may be known, when nothing is known to good purpose. And those who think they know any thing, and grow vain (proud) thereon, are the least likely to make good use of their knowledge. Satan hurts some as much by tempting them to be proud of mental powers, as others, by alluring to sensuality. Knowledge which puffs up the possessor, and renders him confident, is as dangerous as self-righteous pride, though what he knows may be right. Without holy affections (love) all human knowledge is worthless.*

## **15 Secret Herbs & Spices**

Paul lists 15 attributes of agape love (note the verse, and then a brief description of each).

- 1. Patient \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Kind \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Does not envy \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Does not brag or boast \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Is not proud \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Is not rude \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Is not selfish \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Does not get upset with others (is not easily provoked) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Keeps no record of wrongs \_\_\_\_\_

10. Is not happy with evil \_\_\_\_\_
11. Is very happy about the truth \_\_\_\_\_
12. It protects, and accepts responsibility patiently \_\_\_\_\_
13. It always trusts \_\_\_\_\_
14. It always hopes \_\_\_\_\_
15. It always remains strong \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Obligations***

1. In John 15, Jesus describes us as branches, and Himself as the vine to which the branches are attached. He said that if we follow Him we will love, and as a result be filled with the Father's love.
2. As we love, we will be filled with joy (John 15:11)
3. Do a spiritual check-up against the 15 ingredients of agapé love. Real Christian maturity is measured by our *love*, not our *degrees*, or our ability to work miracles.

*Amen.*

**Next Study:** *Smells From The Home, Hospitality and Ministry*

### **ANSWER KEYS**

1. perfume 2. selfless 3. agapé 4. serving 5. agapé 6. genuine

## Fragrances, Study 4

# **SMELLS FROM THE HOME. HOSPITALITY AND MINISTRY**

*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.*

**Romans 12:10, 13 (NKJV)**

## **Recap**

Love is closely associated with sweet smelling fragrances (as pictured in the Song of Songs). As we love, we become spiritually fragrant. Agapé love is made up of at least 15 different aspects, as mentioned in First Corinthians 13. Agapé love is not a thing to be used for our own ends.

## **Love In The Home**

Agapé love relates to the home. The husband and father is the one responsible for setting the tone of agapé love in his family. The nucleus of this agapé love within the family is founded on the relationship between a husband and his wife. And together, a Christian family shines like a beacon of love within a community of darkness.

## **“Entertaining Strangers”**

*“Throughout the Mediterranean world, hospitality toward strangers was recognised as a sacred duty. Among the Greeks hospitality was a decisive mark of culture. The civilized were ‘those who love strangers and fear the gods’ (Homer Od. VIII. 576; ix. 175). Zeus himself was the ‘Friend of Strangers’ (2Macc. 6:2). In Egypt the practice of hospitality assured a favourable*

*existence in the next world. For the Romans entertaining strangers was considered a sacred obligation."*

**THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPAEDIA, Volume 2, page 105**

Entertaining strangers began as a way of welcoming nomadic businessmen. It was customary for the village or town to take care of strangers by giving them food and lodging, even if the traveller arrived late in the town.

1. Note how this was expressed in Luke 11:5 and following verses-

---



---

No expense was extreme when entertaining strangers (travellers). Luxurious banquets were frequently prepared for the traveller who was treated as an important guest.

2. Note Abraham's comment about his generous provision (Gen. 18:5).

---



---

Eventually villages began the practice of maintaining a guest room for visitors. The expense was shared by the entire village. Note Mk. 14:14.

## ***Entertain Strangers!***

3. What does the Old Testament command in these Scriptures? Lev. 19:33f.; Dt. 10:13f.; 24:17, 19

---



---

This was because Israel were strangers in the land of Egypt (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Dt. 10:19). Abraham entertained strangers as a matter of courtesy (Gen. 18:2f). Reuel was amazed his daughters did not extend hospitality toward the stranger who assisted them water their flocks (Ex. 2:20). Being a host often meant going without to ensure that your guest didn't. We see this with Elijah being offered the last bit of food left in the house by the widow of Zarephath (1Kgs 17:10f).

## What Jesus Taught

Jesus frequently received hospitality (Mtt. 13:1, 36; Mk. 1:29f; 7:24; 9:33; 11:11; 14:3; Lk. 7:36f; 8:3; 10:38f; 14:1f, 12f; 19:5; Jn 4:40; 12:1f)

4. What did Jesus expect based on Luke 9:51 and following verses?

---



---

He referred to it as a commonly established custom by His reference to it within certain parables (Lk. 11:5f; 14:12f). He sent out the 12 and the 70 on the assumption that they too would be shown hospitality (Mk. 6:8-11; Lk. 10:1-12).

5. What did Jesus say about the hospitality shown toward His servants? (Mtt. 10:40; 25:43; Jn. 13:20)

---



---

## Hospitality in the Early Church

The family home formed a vital part of the early church's ministry (Acts 2:46). A great emphasis was placed upon the entertaining of strangers (Rom. 12:9-13; Heb. 13:1-2; 1Pt. 4:8-9). It was a pre-requisite that elders be hospitable (1Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8). In ancient Rabbinic literature (*T.B. Kiddushin 39b*) five acts are listed as bringing future reward- (i) honouring parents, (ii) deeds of love, (iii) hospitality, (iv) establishing peace, (v) studying the Torah [the Law]. But some rabbis [*T.B. Shabbath 127a*] thought the practice of hospitality was more important than the study of the Torah (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, page 106*).

The early Church considered the hosting of visiting ministries as a great privilege and essential to the propagation of the Gospel. To be hospitable toward visiting preachers was to be a partaker in their ministry (3Jn 5-8; Rom. 16:3)

We note that Paul & Peter were greatly aided by the hospitality of the early church (Acts 10:6, 18, 32, 48; 16:14f, Philemon 22).

# ***Obligations***

1. Our homes should be a warm loving atmosphere where visitors are made to feel welcome.
2. God actually gifts some families with the ability to be hospitable.
3. Our homes should reflect love for strangers and visitors.
4. Have a sinner for dinner; is not as corny as it sounds.

Amen.

**Next Study:** *Untampered Love*

Fragrances, Study 5

# UNTAMPERED LOVE IN THE CHURCH

*"Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days."*

**John 11:5-6**

## Recap

The love depicted in the Song of Solomon is poetically associated with sweet smelling fragrances. The Song of Solomon is a picture of Christ, the Shepherd, patiently waiting seeking for His betrothed (2Cor. 11:2) while she resists the alluring temptations of the world (which Solomon is a type of). The church's relationship with Christ is based on loving intimacy.

The very nature of God is love. Everything He does reflects love. The Father's love is a predetermined spontaneous decision which produces a beautiful spiritual fragrance. As we love, we too become spiritually fragrant. The kind of love which produces the sweetest spiritual fragrance is *agapé* love which is made up of at least 15 different aspects, as mentioned in First Corinthians 13.

Now we will see that *agapé* love is not something that can be manipulated...

## The Glory of God's Love

1. There is a relationship between God's love and His \_\_\_\_\_ (Ps. 115:1).
2. According to Ephesians 5:2 why are we to walk in \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The ultimate goal of God's love toward us, is His \_\_\_\_\_ .

*In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith; the salvation of your souls.*

**First Peter 1:6-9 (NKJV)**

4. At times we may well feel that because things aren't going the way we had \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , and that God is no longer loving us. Perhaps this is how Martha felt when she spoke to Jesus (John 11:21)
5. It was clear that Jesus loved this household. His refusal to be swayed from God's plan of love, ultimately brought God \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (John 11:4)

Agape love is not something to be manipulated. We should not manipulate anyone because of their love for us, neither should we be manipulated because of our love for others (2John)

## ***Love that brings glory to God . . . Obligations***

6. Our love for God is deepened when we \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ Him through trying times.
7. We should not seek our own will or (try to manipulate) \_ \_ \_ because of His love for us.
8. Neither should we manipulate \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , or be manipulated by others because of love.

*Amen.*

**Next week:** Family Love

### **ANSWER KEYS**

1. faithfulness 2. love (because Christ loved us and sacrificially gave His life as a fragrant offering 3. glory 4. hoped 5. glory 6. trust 7. God 8. others

## Fragrances, Study 6

# ***FAMILY LOVE IN THE CHURCH COMMUNITY***

## ***The Relationship Between Husbands and Wives***

*A good wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rotteness in his bones.*

**Proverbs 12:6**

*Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.*

**First Corinthians 7:3**

### **Recap**

Love is closely associated with sweet smelling fragrances (as depicted in the Song of Songs), As we love, we become spiritually fragrant. Agape love is made up of at least fifteen different aspects, as mentioned in First Corinthians 13. Agapé love is not a thing to be used for our own ends. The husband and father is the one responsible for setting the tone of agapé love in the family. The nucleus of this agapé love within the family springs out of the relationship between the husband and his wife.

## ***The Nucleus of a Home***

1. The nucleus of a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ is a husband and a wife.

*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*

**Ephesians 5:22-24 (NASB)**

2. Their relationship together needs to be founded not on eros or philéo love, but on \_ \_ \_ \_ love.
3. When a married couple is functioning in agapé love, eros and philéo love will \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ accordingly.
4. The basis of this agape love between husband and \_ \_ \_ \_ is found in Ephesians 5:22-33.
5. In this passage we note that wives are addressed first! They are told to \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to their husbands.

Husbands are told to nurture their wives. This is to be done like Christ does the Church.

6. As a wife do you love, honour, \_ \_ \_ \_ , and respect your husband in sickness and in health, in times of poverty and times of plenty, and keep your affections only unto him?
7. As a wife do you look to your husband as your master? Or do you look to your mother, or your father as your \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ?

*5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

**First Peter 3:5 - 7**

## **Competing or Complimenting?**

8. As a married couple, do you seek to compliment your partner's \_ \_ \_ \_ nesses?
9. As a married couple do you \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ with your spouse?
10. As a married couple do you seek to \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ your partner to help them grow as a person?
11. Do you pray together? Do you read God's Word together? Do you seek God's mind together? Do you \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ each other?

## **Rebuilding A Broken Marriage**

12. It takes \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . Genuine "I'm sorry's" are needed.
13. It takes open and \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ communication.
14. It only needs both of \_ \_ \_ (not a third party).
15. It \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ sacrifice.
16. It means starting with friendship \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

## **Building A Blessed Marriage**

1. Spend time together without interruption or distractions.
2. Talk with each other with the goal of better understanding each other's opinions, feelings, past, dreams and hopes.
3. Pray together.
4. Always seek permission from your spouse before attempting to deal with differences.

*Amen.*

### **ANSWER KEYS**

1. family 2. agapé 3. follow 4. wife 5. submit 6. obey (note, this is a quote from the classic marriage vows made by a wife to her husband) 7. authority 8. weak(nesses) 9. share 10. bless 12. humility 13. honest 14. you 15. needs 16. first

