

Corinthians 9:24) To follow hard like this, your heart, your mind, and your eyes need to be fixed on the One you want to capture. This is the passion of David, of the deer panting for living water; this is the passion of the hart.

What would create such a thirst, such a passion for the living God? Verse 3 gives us a clue; David had already tasted the love of the living God. David had beheld the Lord's power and glory in His sanctuary, His dwelling place. He knows that life is dear, but the Lord's *love is better than life*. It's David who said *My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.* (Psalm 84:2, 10) In Jesus Christ our Lord we truly live, and move, and have our being. Nothing compares to the eternal life which abides in the presence of the living God, in the countenance of Jesus, His smile, His favor. The withdrawal of the light of His face is as the shadow of death to us. Once the love of the living God is tasted, a longing, a passion is produced; a passion to continually abide in His gracious presence in the shadow of His wings. A longing for His appearing, to be joined with Him forever. This passion of the hart; this is also the passion of the Bride for the Bridegroom.

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth — For your love is better than wine. Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; Therefore the virgins love you. **Draw me after you and let us run together!** The king has brought me into his chambers. We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine. The upright love you.*

Song of Solomon 1:2-4

From <http://net.bible.org/verse.php?book=Sos&chapter=1&verse=4>

*The verb (mashakh, "draw") is a figurative expression (hypocatastasis) which draws an implied comparison between the physical acting of leading a person with the romantic action of leading a person in love. Elsewhere it is used figuratively of a master gently leading an animal with leather cords (Hosea 11:4) and of a military victor leading his captives (Jeremiah 31:3). The point of comparison might be that the woman wants to be the willing captive of the love of her beloved, that is, a willing prisoner of his love.

After the Bride has gotten a glimpse of Christ's love, His loveliness and her own helplessness; the Bride is so captured by the love of the Bridegroom this is her cry. The cry of an awakened soul for the drawing of the Spirit. The cry to be enabled to run together, to have an intimate joining, communion with her beloved. This love is better than wine. The name of Christ is not now like ointment sealed up, but like ointment poured forth; His grace is full and free to flow. It's scent, the fragrance of life. *Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him ...* (2 Corinthians 2:14) These whom he has redeemed and sanctified, these who are in this triumphal procession, these here are the virgins that love Jesus Christ, and follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4). Is it a coincidence that the Bride's cry in the Song of Solomon expresses this intense longing for her beloved in terms of the hart the following way?

[Joyfully the radiant bride turned to him, the one altogether lovely, the chief among ten thousand to her soul, and with unconcealed eagerness to begin her life of sweet companionship with him, she answered] Make haste, my beloved, and come quickly, like a gazelle or a young hart [and take me to our waiting home] upon the mountains of spices!

Song of Solomon 8:14

There is a joy that results from even the thought of a love like this. *Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. We will rejoice in you and be glad; We will extol your love more than wine. The upright love you.* David expresses this joy by praising the Lord with His whole being.

- With his lips: *My lips shall praise thee.*
- With his hands: *... in your name I will lift up my hands.*

- With his mouth: ... *with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*
- With his memory: *On my bed I remember you;*
- With his mind: ... *I think of you through the watches of the night.*
- With his will: *My soul follows hard after You;*

As a result of praising the Lord like this, one's soul is *satisfied as with the richest of foods. For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.* (2 Chronicles 16:9) Hearts fully committed, following hard, these are upheld and sustained by His mighty right hand. This is the same hand that held back the Red Sea for the Israelites (Exodus 14:21-22, Psalm 78:13). It's also the hand that sustains the planets and galaxies (Psalm 19:1,102:25). The hollow of this hand has measured the waters, and the breadth of this hand has marked off the heavens (Isaiah 40:12).

This my favorite reason to follow hard after the Lord -- the promise to be upheld in His presence by His mighty right hand! For in His presence there is fullness of joy, eternal joy. Oh, to be upheld by His mighty right hand, pleasures forevermore. This is the passion of my heart!

Follow Hard

Karen Holland

Follow hard after the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seek Him as the deer pants/ thirsts for the living water --Psalm 42:1.

Pursue Him as to capture Him, to cling/cleave, to be joined together with Him.

Desire Him with all of your heart, for His love is better than wine --Song of Solomon 1:2

His mouth is sweetness itself; He is altogether lovely. --Song of Solomon 5:16

For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. --2 Chronicles 16:9

Follow hard after the Lord Jesus Christ.

Set the Lord always before

Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith

With perseverance run the race --Hebrews 12:1-2

Run the race, reach as if to capture the prize --1 Corinthians 9:24

Follow hard and be upheld

You will not be moved

Your heart will be glad.

Follow hard

In His presence is fullness of joy

Upheld by His mighty right hand

Fullness of joy

The Lord always set before

Pleasures forevermore.

8 I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. 10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Psalm 16:8-11