

## ***Being the Beloved Is Hard Work***

*“I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh’s chariots. Your cheeks are comely with ornaments, your neck with strings of jewels.”—Song of Solomon 1:9-10*

We really don’t know why God chooses us. God told the prophet Samuel that the Lord looks on the heart, not on outward appearance (1 Samuel 16:7). God, who looks into the hearts of women, must be pleased with what is visible there. Each of us knows that in some very special way we are the Beloved, just as desired as the Shulamite maiden was.

But being the Beloved is hard work. Note the verses above and consider the life of a mare among Pharaoh’s chariots. First, she runs fast! Slow runners don’t get chosen. Second, she stands bravely in war. Yes, some of us are old war-horses. Third, she’s trained not to rear or bolt. We get battered if we do. Fourth, she’s groomed and decorated. Keep those bodies fit! Fifth, she leads the procession. We’re certainly on the cutting edge, even though we’re often pulling someone else’s chariot.

So what if we're tired and the job is too hard? We can't get away because "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). And when our bones burn within us, we know there's no quitting. So, we can only fight the good fight, run the race, press on to the goal, rejoice in the Lord . . . and remember, we are the beloved of God.

*Prayer:* God, grant me courage, strength, wisdom, and beauty. Amen.

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