



“Wisdom for One-Anothering, Part 2: Chastity”  
Proverbs (see below)

29 So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife;  
no one who touches her will go unpunished.

11:22            22 Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout  
                         is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

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Introduction

1. Two Lies
  - a. Stolen and Secret Sex is Sweeter
  - b. Sex is Supremely Satisfying
2. Two Tries
  - a. Try to bless, not possess
  - b. Try to cheer, not fear
3. Two Oh Mys to Live By
  - a. Jesus is Single and Sexless
  - b. Jesus’ love is Stronger than Sex

Conclusion

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**Introduction**

We begin with a poem called “Advice to Children” by Aaron Belz (*Soft Launch*, 63).

It starts like this:

Children, do not talk to strangers.  
If you must, make sure they at least  
have candy and that it is good candy.

This is the way of the world.  
If strangers have candy or money  
you talk to them and try to get some

for yourself. Candy, money, glory;  
if a strange man promises you fame,  
you do not even need to ask his name.

See what Belz is doing? He’s showing us that the things that we lust after—candy, money, glory, fame—are *impersonal*. We can get them by *using* strangers. Are we going to live on candy taken from people? Or will our lives be full of real personal relationships?

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Jesus wants us to love one another, not *use* one another.

Let’s look today at these Proverbs for wisdom on how to do this. And specifically this week, we ask: What should we do with our sexuality in order to love one another from the heart?

Let’s look at

1. Two Lies
2. Two Trys
3. Two OH MYs to Live By

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First: two lies.

### **1. Two Lies**

#### ***Lie 1: Secret and Stolen Sex are Sweeter***

I want you to imagine that you walk past two billboards every day. Each sign has a sexy picture, and some text with a message.

#### *Sign 1*

The first sign pictures a barely-clothed, very attractive person. And the text says: (9:16) “Stolen water is sweet!”

But it’s not about water, of course. The offer is this: how about some sex, with complete consent, with someone you’re not married to. It’s not *yours*. You have to steal it. But it’s *sweet*! Candy!

Augustine’s *Confessions* has a *long* section where he talks about when he was a boy and he went with his friends to steal some pears from a neighbor’s trees. The pears weren’t better. Young Augustine had plenty of his own pears. But his friends stole pears, ate a few bites, laughed, and fed the rest to some pigs. Why’d he do this? He says: because we *loved* taking something that is not ours. Stolen water is sweet!

The advertisement on the sign is saying: Steal! Someone’s husband, someone’s wife, someone’s daughter or mother, someone’s son or father. Steal them away! That’s half the fun!

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*Sign 2*

The second sign says this: (9:16) “Food eaten in secret is delicious!”

But the sensual picture on this sign is not talking about food. The billboard is selling us sex, and the message is:

“What you do in *secret* is *private*. It’s no one else’s business!”

*A visit from dad*

Your dad is visiting. You take the day off of school or work and walk around town together. You pass these billboards. You have a habit of staring as you walk past. Dad sees you stare. Dad stops walking.

“What?”

Dad says: “That’s a stupid advertising, aimed at stupid people, selling something stupid, using stupid logic.” Verse 13: the one calling out *knows* nothing and is *simple* (foolish). Verse 15: they’re calling out for fools. Verse 16: its deceptive.

The Billboard says: “Do it in secret. Steal someone. No one will know. No one will get hurt.”

But Dad says: (17) “what he advertisements don’t tell you, is that when you secretly steal someone sexually, you’re buying sex— and the price is your own life.”

And finally Dad says: (5:21) “Look, son, there are no secret thefts. The LORD sees everything.”

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***Lie 2: Sex is Supremely Significant***

Our billboards tell us that sex is just like food and water (16): you’ve got to have it to survive. You’re thirsty? That’s because there is a thing called water. Buy it or steal it— but drink, or you’ll die. Are you hungry? There’s a thing called food. Eat or die.

And like all advertisements today, these billboards are trying to convince us that we don’t just need sexual fulfillment to survive, but we need it to *be who we really are*— which these days is almost more important than survival.

If you are a human being, you *are* a sexual being. But that does not mean that you can’t live without sex. It’s *not* water and food. Jesus fasted for forty days, but then he

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ate again. But Jesus, fully human, a sexual being like us, fasted from sex for his entire life. The rabbis said 18 was the best age to marry for men. Jesus lived till 33. You don't have to have it.

And the idea that sexual expression and fulfillment is a fundamental aspect of my very identity—this is a very new idea. As one writer puts it: “Jesus just isn't as sexualized as we are” (Z Eswine).

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### **2. Four Tries**

1. I will bless, not possess.
2. I will cheer, not fear

You've heard two lies. Now here are four *tries*.

1. I will bless, not possess.

I listened to the stories of two different Christians recently. Both were once addicted to pornography. One is married and is attracted to women. The other is single and celibate and is attracted to other men.

One of them said that when he sees someone attractive, who is not his spouse, he prays: “Thank you, Lord, for making this person beautiful. And thank you that they are *not mine*.”

The other prays: “Lord, help me not to consume and possess this person, made in your image.”

Both of them realize that, as one author says, “all sexual sin is ultimately predatory” (R Butterfield). It's *stolen* water we find sweet when we sin in this way. But both of these Christian men realize that the problem is not the beautiful people God has made. The problem is our desire to *take them and consume them as our own possessions*.

This is what we do when we buy sex—whether it's prostitution or pornography. In fact, as one feminist activist says: “pornography is pictures of prostitution” (E Giobbe). Another simply calls it “pornstitution” (Samantha Berg). We consume *people* like they're candy.

But when we take someone for ourselves sexually, without committing ourselves to them legally, spiritually, and financially, we're doing the same thing. In the film *Vanilla Sky*, Cameron Diaz tells Tom Cruise: “Don't you know that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise whether you do or not?”

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This is why our sexuality is not a private matter, but a community issue. If you’re consuming human bodies in secret, what makes you think you are going to be able to walk into a room of human bodies and honor them in public?

When you walk into a room with other people, you want to say— with your eyes, and your body, and your words, and your heart— “I don’t own you. But I am here to give my attitudes, words, and actions as a gift to enrich your life and help you to flourish as a creature, fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God.”

So try to bless, not possess.

### 2. I will cheer, not fear.

After your dad exposes all the lies on the billboards you’re discussing, he takes a deep breath. Then he tells you something true.

“You’re a newly married young man, son. The billboard says sex is like sweet water. It’s not lying about that. (5:15) Your wife is a cistern, a well of fresh and living water. Drink. You are a fresh spring, a stream of water. Let her drink. You know where the water is sweet? Your water is sweet to her when you share your spring (16 with her alone. Her water (15) is the sweet because her well is open to you and no one else.”

See, dad is using wells and cisterns for female sexuality, and fountains and springs for male sexuality. Nice of him to use modest metaphors, huh? But then he gets a little awkward, a little direct with you:

“Son, (19) let her breasts satisfy you. Get drunk on *her* love, and you won’t even be responsive to those billboards.” The Hebrew Scriptures are not nearly as embarrassed about sexuality as we are.

It’s like this dad is quoting Dietrich Bonhoeffer: ‘Son, I want you to avoid sin. But don’t live your life in fear. “Being a Christian is less about avoiding sin, and more about courageously and actively doing God’s will.”’

It’s our job to celebrate, to support, to cheer on, and to challenge the married couples in our church.

Try to cheer, and not fear.

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**3. Two OH MYs to Live By**

So we’ve had our two lies and our two tries. It’s a lie that you Secret and Stolen Sex is Sweeter. It’s a lie that Sex is Supremely Significant. We’ve got to try to Bless and not Possess. We’ve got to try to Cheer and not Fear.

Finally, Two OH MYs to Live By.

God doesn’t just ask hard things from us. Everything he asks of us, he provides for us.

If you’re unmarried, and you want to follow Jesus, even if that means you don’t find fulfillment for your sexual desires— guess what — first OH MY to Live By:

1. Jesus is Still Single and Sexless

Did Jesus have to walk past these same billboards as a single man? You bet. And, in fact, Jesus did not experience *weaker* temptations than us—but stronger ones. We give in to temptation. He resisted longer than we ever did. We actually don’t know what it’s like to resist temptation as much as Jesus did!

Jesus had his heavenly Father’s wise counsel, but he didn’t have a wife to be satisfied in. And yet he didn’t just avoid sexual temptation, but courageously did his Father’s will.

And you know what? He is raised from the dead and glorified— fully God, and fully *human*. The Father has given him *all authority*. And as a man, he is *still* single and has not had sex.

If you’re single and you’re sexually broken—and we are all sexually broken!—you don’t just have a Savior from your sexual sin; you have a *single* Savior who *still* knows what it is like to experience fullness of life in human flesh, but without sex.

And he’s doing ok. More than ok. This is an OH MY you can live by, because you’re forgiven in him, and your single life is hidden with him in glory. Live your life with the life of Jesus energizing you to courageous fulfillment of God’s purposes!

2. Jesus’ Love is Stronger than Sex

If you’re embarrassed reading these Proverbs, don’t read the Song of Songs! After exploring the highs and lows of broken but beautiful married sexuality, the Song says: “Love is stronger than death.”

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And of course the poet means that the sexual love of husband and wife is incredibly strong.

But, married people: you're broken sexually like all of us. And you *might* be able to experience beauty and intimacy return to your marriage if it's broken.

But even if that doesn't happen, hear this: Sexual love in marriage is stronger than death, but Jesus' love is Stronger than Sex.

Jesus was and is single. But also, he was, and is, *engaged*. We, the church, are his bride-to-be. When Jesus walked past these billboards, he didn't think “sex is not important to me.” Instead, he said “Sex is good. I created it. But my desires are infinitely more intense than sex can satisfy.”

And to satisfy his deeper desire to be one with the church, he didn't just give up sex. He gave up his *very life*. Jesus has given, and still gives, everything to us. And we, the church, give him everything in return. We are one with him. And the joy of our oneness with Jesus will go on, forever and ever, producing more joy than sex or marriage can ever produce.

Proverbs 5:21 says that the eyes of the LORD are always on us. In Christ, God's eyes are on us—body, soul, spirit—watching us grow more and more deeply committed to his Son, until we are ready to say: “We are willing to give up absolutely anything to enjoy full communion with you, because you have given up absolutely everything for us.”

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Prayer: Father, may the love of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself completely to you, and to us, compel us to give ourselves to you and to one another in genuine love. Now and forever. Amen.