

The Street Near Her Corner

MLC Men's Breakfast

Introduction

One of this season's buzzwords is "intentional", or its cousin, "intentionality", which I'm not sure was even a word until recently. In fact, the word "intentional" will soon wind up on the list of over-used words and phrases, to share ignominy with these additions from 2017. Last year's list, the 43rd annual from Lake Superior State University includes "let me ask you this," "unpack," "impactful," "nothingburger," "tons," "dish," "drill down," "let that sink in," and the top vote-getter, "fake news."

So, we may get sick of the word itself, but the concept of intentionality, especially as it concerns living as Christian men, is the "secret sauce" (previous list item) of victorious living, so we need to have a conversation about how problematic it is to live aimlessly. As it concerns personal holiness, especially in the area of sexual purity, a lack of intentionality can lead to the destruction of our relationships and testimony. I say this with no hyperbole whatsoever.

We read this from Proverbs 29:18:

Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.

I've titled this discussion based on a phrase we will read in Proverbs 7, but I just as easily could have, or should have called it, "**Stuff I wished I didn't have to learn the hard way**".

Introduce testimony

So without further ado, let's drill down into the Bible and unpack Proverbs 7 in an impactful way, praying that the Father will cause it to sink in, that this morning will not be a nothingburger.

Turn to Proverbs 7, as it will serve to frame and inform our discussion this morning. It provides a comprehensive prophetic vision to men in regards to sexual purity. From it we can learn principles that apply to any age, historically and chronologically speaking, and every man, practically speaking. If we fail to incline our spiritual ears to this passage of Scripture, we fail to hear the very voice of the Holy Spirit. Let's read and heed God's word.

Be Mindful! Proverbs 7:1-5

Read aloud as a group and ask...

- What is the main point of this passage? How should it inform us as Christian men?

Realizing that sexual purity is won through Spirit-empowered preparation and practice, we will examine a biography of a man that failed, from the continuing narrative of Proverbs 7. We will do so with an eye towards learning from his mistakes so as not to repeat them ourselves, or if having already succumbed to sexual temptation, recognizing where we fell and what we can do to walk in purity in the future. Our time together will be spent simply hearing what the Lord has to say to us through His word, discussing what it means, and encouraging each other through its practical application in our own lives.

As we have done in past meetings, we will examine a part of the text at hand and discuss at each table it's meaning, impact, and implications, always with an eye towards application. We also want to take a few beats to pray for the Lord's Spirit to quicken what we discuss into action, that we would be doers as well as hearers of the Word.

Necessary Points

The Man (Proverbs 7:6-9)

- From this passage, what do we know about this man?
- How might he have wound up where he was, physically, mentally, or spiritually?
- What could/should he have done differently?
- As it relates to sexual temptation, what are places or circumstances that we may encounter, or have encountered?
- What can we do to keep from finding ourselves in these places or circumstances?
- Who might the "unseen seer" in verse 6 be?
- Can we relate in any way to the "unseen seer"? If so, how?

Verses 6-7 There is nothing that we think, say, or do that is beyond the gaze and knowledge of God. Remember as well that when we are discerning, we can see others heading for potential problems. We need to be vigilantly aware for our brothers as their keepers in our roles as "seen seers".

Proverbs 24:11- Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.

Verses 8-9 We need accountability with at least one spirit-filled brother and engagement in a faith based community. Isolation and "directionlessness" are recipes for disaster. The young man had seemingly planned this excursion, going where he should not have gone at a time when he should've been elsewhere. Or he could've simply been killing time in an ill-advised way and place. Lest we think

we are above falling into sexual sin, consider this familiar event in the life of King David, a “man after God’s heart”.

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. (2 Samuel 11:1)

1 Peter 5:8- Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Matthew 26:41- “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

1 Corinthians 10:12- Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

What is today’s most prevalent “street near her corner”? Quite simply, it is the Information Superhighway, AKA the Internet.

The Woman (Proverbs 7:10-20)

- From this passage, what do we know about this woman?
- What can be inferred about this woman based on other biblical passages?
- What did she say or do to entice The Man?
- What aspects of her enticement are especially insidious or tempting?

Verses 10-13 She is everywhere (at every corner she lurks) and she is proactive. In a virtual sense, she prowls as a Facebook friend, a Twitter or Instagram profile, or even as a provocative ad on an otherwise innocuous website. She could be a coworker, neighbor, employee at a business or restaurant, or even a church member. She may not have any evil intent, but may simply be available or vulnerable.

Verses 14-20 The adulteress, sexual sin, like her father the devil, is a liar, or under the most gracious of assertions, a teller of half-truths. Satan before her tempted Eve by only pointing out the seemingly positive aspects of biting into the forbidden fruit.

4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3)

Side note- Men, when you partake of the forbidden fruit, you have in a sense given it to your wife and kids as well.

The Adulteress, or more generally speaking the world, the flesh, and the devil will only dangle before us that which appeals to our sinful nature, our five senses. She will NEVER reveal the destructive, and sometimes deadly consequences of giving in to her wiles. The internet “promises” strings free gratification without hurting anybody, and no one will be the wiser.

The Act (Proverbs 7:21-23)

- What does this passage warn us results from interaction or engagement with the Adulteress?
- What might this look like in actual, specific ways in our own lives?
- What might hinder us from recognizing the danger of the Adulteress and heeding Scripture’s dire admonition?

We read this in James 1:

14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. 15 Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

The mightiest of oaks started as an acorn, a mere seed. Most of us are familiar with the saying, proverb, axiom, bromide, whatever that asserts, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”.

Have you ever talked to a guy, or maybe you are that guy, that recounted his descent into sexual sin by lamenting that he couldn’t believe what he had done, or by how a simple mouse click, second glance, or flirtatious comment led him down the “street near her corner”, and ultimately “like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it (would) cost him his life”.

The Conclusion (Proverbs 7:24-27)

We do have an “Unseen Seer” that calls us His son. He has given us His word and Spirit to guide and empower us to live lives that glorify Him and bless others, particularly our wives. Proverbs 7 ends with a dire warning, one that we should certainly heed. But our Father is faithful to forgive us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He promises to restore the years that the locusts have eaten, to lift us from the miry bog and place our feet solidly on the Rock of our salvation.

So what do we do?

- Confess your sin
- Commune with the Holy Spirit
- Communicate with your wife and others!
- Connect in fellowship, prayer, Bible study and accountability with other men
- Continue
- Conquer!

Be Mindful

The story in this proverb could easily be an accelerated timeline of a more typical descent into sexual sin, a gradual wearing down of our defenses or hardening of our hearts.

When we delight in our own wives and love them as Jesus loves us, we experience the transcendent satisfaction and joy that marriage brings. When we are blessed at home, we will not be tempted to wander “the street by her corner”.

Time is precious. In redeeming it, we increase in us the things that matter, eternally speaking. Loving God will necessarily compel us to love others, especially our wives.

Consider the context of “put on, put off” in Ephesians and Colossians. It is always after the revealed grace, love, and goodness of God and who we are because of it found in the preceding chapters.

Most importantly, there is victory in Christ! He brings beauty from ashes! He is our resurrection and life! He has given us the ministry of reconciliation, in our own lives and in the lives of others.

I originally considered posting Scriptures that ministered to me and are helpful to encourage, strengthen, and correct men in regards to purity. I was reminded that there are dozens, if not hundreds, perhaps even thousands. But what the Lord impressed upon me was the fact that He has already done the work to secure our freedom and victory. Men, it is not in us but in Christ alone. We don't have enough desire, conviction, willpower, or strength in and of ourselves to “be holy, as He is holy”. It is a fool's errand to think that we do. And it is an affront to Jesus to tell Him that it's great that He saved us and all, but we can take it from here. Incline your ears to the following truths:

“When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” John 19:30 ESV

“Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” John 6:29 ESV

“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12 ESV

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5 ESV

“Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” Romans 2:4 ESV

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV

I would also recommend praying through and meditating on the “put off...put on” passages of Scripture, being mindful that they are written **after** those that tell us what Christ has done and who we are in Him. Grab a concordance and find the verses that relate to temptation and lust, pray and confess them. As an example, take Romans 13:11-14, which reads:

“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.”

Resources

Internet Filter: Covenant Eyes

Books:

The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin by Kris Lundgaard

Discovering The Mind Of A Woman by Ken Nair

Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires, the Respect He Desperately Needs by: Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

The Great Divorce by C.S. Lewis - specifically the part about the red lizard which is excerpted here: <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2009/04/20/cs-lewis-on-lust/>

The complete book is available here:

<http://www.thespiritlife.net/facets/exchanged/81-warfare/warfare-publications/3200-the-great-divorce-by-cs-lewis-preface>