

Wisdom for Relationships and Sexuality

Proverbs 5:1-23

- INTRO
 - This chapter is about relationships and sexuality and, like everything else in the book of Proverbs, is about two paths: folly and wisdom
 - Folly leads to destruction. Wisdom leads to joy.
 - KIDS - God made you either a man or a woman, a boy or a girl. He made the first people, Adam and Eve, man and woman, to be his representatives on earth.
 - Your gender - being a boy or girl - is part of your design
 - It is not an accident how people were made - God's job, not ours
 - God made men and women to go together as one, which is marriage
 - The result of that union of heart and body is generally speaking, children
 - This is God's gift of being a man and woman together in marriage and we refer to it as your sexuality
 - Today's topic of relationships and intimacy carries the tension of freedom and framework.
 - God puts us in his backyard with a fence and a playground and encourages us to run around and be creative, but to stay within the boundaries he has established.
 - To play within the boundaries will lead to joy and fun
 - To climb the fence and go outside God's intention leads to danger and destruction
 - As people, we were created to fall in love, be romantic, and God gave us marriage, between a man and a woman, as the playground for that
 - When we walk in God's ways, listening to what he has to say about relationships, we can enjoy that good gift and it can bring the greatest of joys.
 - After all, marriage is designed to look to Christ
 - When we disregard God, it is a disaster and ends with problems
 - After all, marriage is designed to look to Christ!
 - To put it another way, "Your relational intimacy is like fire. In the fireplace it keeps you warm. Outside the fireplace it burns the house down." - Ray Ortlund

Proverbs 5:[1] My son, be attentive to my wisdom;

incline your ear to my understanding,

[2] that you may keep discretion,

and your lips may guard knowledge.

[3] For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey,

and her speech is smoother than oil,

[4] but in the end she is bitter as wormwood,

sharp as a two-edged sword.

*[5] Her feet go down to death;
her steps follow the path to Sheol;
[6] she does not ponder the path of life;
her ways wander, and she does not know it.*

- The author, a dad, is speaking to his son. He is warning him and encouraging him to listen to what he has to say. He has a lot to say about being tempted to sin, and he has a lot to say about sexual sin. Solomon had like 1000 ladies.
 - You don't need 1000 wives to be tempted to sin sexually and relationally
- Sexual temptation, indeed all temptation, looks like honey, but it is actually poison
- The temptation here is w/ an adultery. That is, going outside of God's intended playground of marriage between a man and a woman for relationships and intimacy
- In adultery, people step outside God's created order and want to play by their rules instead of God's (think Genesis 3)
 - The tempter knows how to talk in such a way as to make sin appear sweet and worthwhile, but once the person partakes it is like swallowing a sword
- When it comes to sin - any kind of sin - Don't be fooled by the appearance of the moment, the momentary satisfaction, the temporary pleasure.
 - Why? The aftermath is chaos. What follows is terrible.
- The forbidden relationship is seductive, charming, feeds you to think you are special, but the sweetness will turn to ash → even threat of death
 - One commentary reminded me of Titans' quarterback Steve McNair being shot to death by the girl with whom he was having an affair.
- Why do we need to hear these warnings from Proverbs 5? We are vulnerable and none of us is above sexual stupidity. Indeed, none of us is above sinful stupidity
 - Sin always looks like, "This isn't a big deal. Just take what you want. Ask for forgiveness later. Cover up your decision."
 - These verses warn us - it doesn't work that way! Don't choose the way of death.

*[7] And now, O sons, listen to me,
and do not depart from the words of my mouth.*

*[8] Keep your way far from her,
and do not go near the door of her house,*

*[9] lest you give your honor to others
and your years to the merciless,*

*[10] lest strangers take their fill of your strength,
and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,*

*[11] and at the end of your life you groan,
when your flesh and body are consumed,*

*[12] and you say, "How I hated discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!*

*[13] I did not listen to the voice of my teachers
or incline my ear to my instructors.*

[14] I am at the brink of utter ruin

in the assembled congregation.”

● **POINT #1: Relational and sexual folly destroys lives.**

- Married people. Young people who aren't yet married, maybe dating. Kids who are being inundated w/ what the world says about relationships and sexuality
 - You're not married? Keep your hands off and your heart on a leash.
 - The teacher's advice is clear in these verses. The relationship God designed for you to pour out your heart, your romance, and your intimacy is marriage. Not before. Not somewhere else during. It's marriage.
- Verse 8 is the key: "Keep your way far from her [the tempter]."
 - Don't tell yourself you can get involved just a little and then get clear, no big deal, and nobody will ever know. (e.g. Dating at too young an age)
 - Ex: Driving along a cliff
- As you can't casually play with blasting caps, you cannot play with sin and keep it under control. You cannot compartmentalize God.
 - He wants all of you. When it comes to sin, you humble yourself and release it to the Lord or prepare to be humiliated
- Relational and sexual foolishness complicates everything
 - The other people we hurt with our sin become hardened and bitter toward us, towards God, and towards others
 - It depletes a person financially in cover-ups, alimony and lawsuits,
 - It can destroy you socially in your reputation, emotionally in your conscience, and of course in your marriage.
 - Jealousy, hurt, loneliness, regret, insecurity - the cost is high.
- How does all sin work? Satan shows the bait, but he hides the hook.
 - The result is we can end up giving years of our life to "the merciless."
- Don't misunderstand, your gender and your sexuality are not problems but gifts from God
 - But if you used your iPhone to hammer in nails we would call you an idiot b/c that's not the designed purpose.
 - Misfocused and misused, your sexuality is much the same foolishness
 - But if your relational bandwidth and sexuality is used where God intends it to be used, it will be effective and bring you joy.
- What about those who have fallen into sexual or relationship folly? We have a hope - even a friend - and his name is Jesus Christ, the Crucified One.
 - There is a way back to healing, and that way is humility.
 - Note how the tune changes in verses 12-14
 - Have you fallen? Run to Jesus. Get ahead of your sin by owning it, confessing it, seeking reconciliation and repentance.

[15] Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.

[16] Should your springs be scattered abroad,
streams of water in the streets?

[17] Let them be for yourself alone,
and not for strangers with you.
[18] Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
[19] a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated always in her love.

- If the first half of this paragraph was what not to do, here is the advice of what to do!
- **Point #2: Relational and sexual wisdom - enjoying these things within the playground God has established in marriage - is a blessing from the Lord.**
 - Are you thirsty, the father asks his son? Are you thirsty for romance? Do you have a natural desire for a spouse that you can enjoy?
 - God's advice, "Satisfy your thirst by drinking deeply of your spouse's love."
 - God is not saying, "White knuckle your way through life until you are all pent up and angry."
 - No, God says, "Rejoice in your spouse, my son! Enjoy her and let her enjoy you! Enjoy one another as servant lovers who both desire to love and honor the other!"
 - Look, in v18 shows he prays God's blessing over the relationship
 - Let your fountain keep on bringing forth water!
 - Celebrate your wife! Don't grow tired of her or lazy toward her.
 - Enjoy her beauty and grace.
 - Even as the years go by, she will always be "the wife of your youth."
 - Verse 19 is racey.
 - Enjoy your spouse physically. All the time.
 - Paul says, "Husband, you belong to your wife. Wife, you belong to your husband. Enjoy one another physically, emotionally."
 - Be intoxicated by her love - giddy, out of control, stumbling around in love
 - God wants you to have this wisdom for sexuality and relationship because he wants you to walk in the path of wisdom, of life, instead of folly and death

*[20] Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman
and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?*

*[21] For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD,
and he ponders all his paths.*

*[22] The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him,
and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.*

*[23] He dies for lack of discipline,
and because of his great folly he is led astray. (ESV)*

- All of us are relational and sexual sinners at some level, and we all know the slavery of it, the inescapable regret and shame of it. Sin touches everything we are. None of us is perfect. None of us is strong outside of Christ.

- Why should we fight for wisdom within relationships and intimacy?
- Because God sees our ways... is that a threat? No! He doesn't want you to be ensnared! He doesn't want you to die for lack of discipline! He doesn't want you to be led astray for a fleeting, momentary pleasure.
- But what if it is too late? What if there's too much folly? What if you are sitting on a mountain of regret and shame?
 - Carl Lentz vs. Jerry Fallwell Jr.
 - Come to Christ and be forgiven. Come to Christ. Learn wisdom as a gift of grace.
 - 1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Come to Jesus, he is better than any temporal pleasure

CONCLUSION: Surrender yourself entirely to God and the wisdom of his Word (including your sexuality) and experience the joy, beauty, and freedom of his design.

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TABLE TALK:

1. What is something that you learned today?
2. What is something that might need clearing up around your table? Families, are there things that you need to talk about so that your kids understand?
3. Reflecting on this passage, what are the sins to avoid, the promises to cling to, the examples to follow, or the commands to obey? If appropriate, share what you are thinking with your table.
4. MARRIED COUPLES: What is one tangible step you can make towards improving your marriage in all of its facets? Consider this and talk about it when you have some time together alone.
5. YOUNG PEOPLE: How can you walk forward in obedience to this passage?
6. KIDS: Why is marriage important to God? How can you help your parents to spend more time together so that they can have a healthier marriage?