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Proverbs: Sexual Immorality



Proverbs - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses the theme of sexual immorality in Proverbs and advises men and women to avoid being trapped by their desires. He emphasizes the importance of avoiding temptation and the dangers of engaging in illicit sexual behavior. Gregg also highlights the role of faithfulness, trustworthiness, and integrity in resisting temptation and maintaining a healthy relationship with God. Additionally, he discusses the issue of immodesty in clothing and the potential negative impact it can have on others.

Transcript

In Proverbs, we're now looking at a category of counsel on the subject of escaping from the world's traps, and I mentioned last time that in the New Testament we're shown that the world, in a sense that it is a trap for the righteous, is comprised of three things. The lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life. And the lusts of the flesh are not something that in themselves are always bad.

Desires of the body are built in by God and they have a legitimate purpose. But they also are that which does not discern between good and evil. The body is just an animal.

You have a soul, or a spirit that's put in you that's given to you in order to discern between right and wrong behavior. Therefore, the desires of the body have got to be governed by something other than the body's own desires. And many people don't know that and don't do that.

And they just let their impulses and their hormones and their appetites direct their behavior. And that's what is to be different if a person is to become a person who lives righteously and escapes these traps. Because to simply follow the desires of the body, undiscerningly, is to court destruction.

As we have seen in Proverbs, we've talked about the desire for food, the desire for drink. Obviously one of the great desires of the flesh is that for sex. And Solomon has a lot to say about that.

He knew a lot about it. Solomon was a rather lusty character himself. He was a very lusty

man.

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He was a very lusty man. He was We have one of his love songs in the Song of Solomon that is obviously full of passion and sexual interest. He also was a man who had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

And while we don't know that many of these women got to see him regularly, we know that he had what we might call an unusual degree of sexual outlet in his experience. And he knew also that there could be dangers in that, and he writes to his son, and so most of the instructions to his son are to avoid the dangers of women. Obviously women need to learn to avoid the dangers of men as well, but since Solomon is writing to his son rather than to his daughter, that is the way these instructions are framed.

It's obvious that people can make the connection in their head that the same thing applies going the other direction. Solomon is very much attuned to the area of sexual temptation, and he talks about what some of the factors are that lead to sexual temptation. And he also talks about how to avoid sexual sin.

Some of the factors that lead to sexual sin would be, first of all, pre-existing sin that's in the heart. So it's not simply the influence of external temptation, it's that there's something inside a person that resonates with sin. We have the sinful nature, and it says in chapter 22 of Proverbs in verse 14, The mouth of an immoral woman is a deep pit.

He who is abhorred of the Lord will fall there. Now, a pit is simply a trap. So it's talking about the immoral woman whose mouth is that which is speaking words of enticement and so forth to the man.

And we have examples of that in some of the earlier chapters of Proverbs that we'll look at, and we've seen in our survey of the book of Proverbs earlier that the immoral woman is out enticing the young man to come into her boudoir, and he doesn't realize it's a trap, and that her way, her house leads to shale. And so he says the mouth of the immoral woman is a deep pit, a trap, a snare to fall into. But it says, He who is abhorred of the Lord, the one that God already has a case against, will fall there.

This suggests that the person who falls to immorality is a person that already has made compromises and God is upset with them. And this is also confirmed sort of from the flip

side of this idea in Ecclesiastes, Chapter seven and verse twenty six, which says, I find more bitter than death. The woman whose heart is snares and nets whose hands are fetters, he who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner should be taken by her.

So the person who falls into this temptation is the sinner and the one who is abhorred by the Lord, the one who escapes is the one who pleases God. And therefore, there's already a person who is already in one of these categories prior to facing the temptation and either succumbing or conquering it. The person who has made the compromises earlier is the one who will succumb because God is in a sense giving them over.

They're making compromises that God is not pleased with, and therefore, God almost says in judgment against the sin that they're already involved in, allows them to fall into the temptation and suffer the consequences. And so the man who pleases the Lord, the person who's living to please God, will generally not fall into that because he's got better habits than that. And God isn't going to God's going to watch out for him because he's living to please God.

In chapter five and verse 22, it's talking about the need to avoid the seductress and it says his own iniquities entrap the wicked man and he is caught in the cords of his sin. So the person who is entrapped in this immorality is the wicked man and it's his own iniquities that draw him into it. He's already got something inside him.

He's already got a pattern of compromise. He's already a sinner, a sinful man, and that leads him into temptation, leads him into sin, further sin. In chapter 11 and verse six, it says the righteousness of the upright will deliver them.

But the unfaithful will be taken by their own lust. Now, very important here, the righteousness of the upright will deliver them. That is, if a person is morally upright already, it has developed character.

It has developed a pattern of self-discipline in the ways of God. That person's righteous character will be their strength in the day of temptation and will deliver them. But the unfaithful will be taken by their own lust.

Now, a person who is unfaithful is a person who has not learned to govern their desires. A faithful person is a person of character, really, basically. A person with character governs his lusts.

A person who is faithful has all the same drives toward misbehavior, but has something in them called faithfulness or trustworthiness, integrity, we might say. That prevents them from succumbing because they build a habit of being faithful, faithful to their spouse, faithful to God. And those who are unfaithful already are described in a sense that their character is flawed.

They don't have integrity. And therefore, there will be nothing to prevent them from going with their desires, with their impulses. Faithfulness or character is that which governs your impulses and the lack thereof is that which will cause you to fall and just be ensnared by your desires and your lusts.

There's something more that contributes to the phenomenon of sexual immorality, and that is that people, ever since the fall, it would seem, and maybe even before the fall, have had something inquisitive about them when it comes to that which is off limits. We can see that Eve herself was drawn in by this lure of the illicit, this attraction of what is off bounds. Things that would not be attractive in themselves particularly are made suddenly attractive when there's a rule made against them.

Paul felt he had not known covetousness if there had not been a law that says you should not covet. And Adam and Eve may never have had any interest in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil if it had not been forbidden to them. It was a matter of curiosity to them, inquisitiveness.

I wonder why. Why am I not supposed to do this? And why should it have to be forbidden? Would it be something I'd want to do if I wasn't forbidden? Is that why they have to forbid me? Because I'd otherwise want to do it. Is it something desirable? Is it something good? And is something being withheld from me? There's always that strange little curiosity that kills the cat.

And Proverbs tells us that what is illicit is sometimes the more attractive because of it. In chapter seven and verse 11, speaking of the seductress to say she's loud and rebellious. Rebellious means wants to break the rules.

She's not just full of lust. She wants to rebel. She wants to do what is wrong.

She wants to be free from restraint. Rebellion is someone who breaks the rules. And so there's something about this innate quality of wanting to rebel that can lead persons into sexual temptation.

In chapter nine and verse 17, we have the words of the woman speaking to seduce. It's actually the foolish woman in verse 13, but she says to her targets who she's trying to seduce in verse 17, she says stolen water is sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. Water is a colorless, odorless, flavorless substance, but if you stole it, it's sweet.

Stolen water is more enjoyable because you feel like you got away with it. Now, this is not something that righteous people are necessarily going to feel, but this is how human nature, fallen human nature is to feel that you've broken a rule, that you've gotten away with something is makes it somehow more alluring. Makes you feel more independent and more ungovernable by outsiders.

The laws are there to be broken. And so if water, which would ordinarily not be sweet, is

stolen, then it becomes sweet. Bread that's eaten in secret is pleasant, which is why no doubt so many young people enjoy illicit sexual behavior before they're married.

And then after they're married, it becomes more blasé. They become bored with each other and they start looking for something outside the marriage. They were very attracted to each other before they were married.

But once they're married, they're not off bounds anymore. And then often they start looking for someone that is off bounds because that which is forbidden appeals to our innate rebellious nature. We have to be aware of that, that tendency within us.

It's also possible that a person becomes involved in sexualist behavior because they're angry. It's not just lust, not just sexual desire, sometimes anger. Sometimes there's a desire to punish somebody.

In chapter 2 and verse 17, it says that the woman who is a seductress and immoral woman is one who forsakes the companion of her youth, apparently her husband, and forgets the covenant of her God. Now, this doesn't say that she's angry, but she's cheating. She's punishing.

She's doing something hurtful to her companion, even to God. It may be that she has a complaint against her companion and doesn't mind hurting that person. You usually don't want to hurt people unless you've got something steward, some offense against them.

If you don't have an offense against your spouse, you're going to feel mighty bad about bringing pain upon them and harm or same thing toward God. And so the woman who forsakes the companion of her youth is become alienated emotionally, probably is upset with him and may have been alienated by some kind of offense that she's angry about. In chapter 7 and verse 19, the woman who's trying to seduce the man walking down her street says, My husband is not at home.

He has gone on a long journey. Now, this is more or less her way of saying he won't be back for a while. But there may be a hint that she says he's he's he's always gone.

He's on a long journey. You know, he leaves me alone. I need to find some entertainment somewhere else.

He's not here for me. There may be no actual anger implied in these sentences. But we do find that the woman who commits immorality is said to be betraying her spouse.

And you think that betrayal is something that good people, ordinary people wouldn't even do unless there was some kind of grudge or gripe they had against the person they're betraying, stabbing in the back. Now, sexual sin occurs many times not by people among people who aren't intending to commit sexual sin because they toy with

temptation too closely and too carelessly. In chapter 6. In verse 25, talking to his son again about the evil woman, about the seductress, it says, Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

This is talking about, of course, flirtatious behavior and has to do about where you're looking. If she's winking at you, sparkling at you, and she's not available to you, she's not legitimately someone that you can pursue, then she's flirting with you. Take your eyes off of her.

Don't let her allure you with her eyes or her eyelids. Job said in Job 31.1, I have made a covenant with my eyes. Why then should I look upon a maid? He was a married man.

He shouldn't be looking at other women. So he said he made a covenant with his eyes not even to look upon a maid. That was Job's commitment.

That was his faithfulness speaking there. He made a covenant with his eyes to not look at a maid, not to toy with the temptation that comes. Of course, men, I'm sure women too, but men especially are allured through visual stimuli.

And so where a man looks is very important because looking at a woman is that which can arouse him an interest in a sexual relationship. Whereas a lot of times women, although they might find a man attractive, are not necessarily immediately thinking about sex when they think of an attractive man. Women are usually looking for something a little deeper in a relationship and men often are very shallow and just are attracted to what they see and what they like with their eyes.

That's sort of the way they're wired. And so there's the warning. Don't look at that which is not available to you.

You're toying with temptation when you do. In chapter 7 and verse 8, it talks about this young man who succumbed to the seductress prior to doing so. It says he was passing along the street near her corner.

He took the path to her house. That is, he went into her neighborhood. She had to come out and seduce him, but he was an easy mark.

He was taking a stroll in the red light district. And so he was, in a sense, playing around with the idea, maybe even looking for trouble. He was not being careful.

He fell because he took some terrible steps and perhaps thought it would be interesting. Just curious. Just curious to know what that pornographic website would be like.

You know, just curious to know what some of those, what other people are looking at. You know, just toying with it. You know, I'm not interested.

I don't want to do anything wrong or anything like that, but I'm just curious. Might be

interesting to just see what's out there. Or to act flirtatiously towards somebody who would be improper to go further with.

In a sense, one is advertising a product that they're not offering when they are flirtatious. And there are many things in our society that encourage this temptation. The whole practice of dating is one which has to be looked at very carefully by a Christian.

Because in the society, dating is really kind of, for most people, just a recreational form of cheap romance. Now, romance is supposed to be in the realm of marriage. God made people to be romantic toward a partner.

But that romance is supposed to be in the context of marriage. Obviously, romance often is present leading up to marriage. But the point is that where romance is encouraged between a couple, it should be encouraged because they are to be married.

Because that's the intention. A romantic relationship between a married couple is a good thing. But romantic relationships between many people who are not going to be married to each other is a heartbreaking thing, and it's a dangerous thing.

Because romantic sparks encourage chemistry. Actual, literal chemistry. You know, hormones.

And hormones are consciousness-altering chemicals. And just as we wouldn't want to put into our minds, or into our bodies, chemicals that alter our consciousness and make us less in control of our moral choices, we should be careful about anything that we're encouraging in a relationship with somebody else that may release chemicals that alter our consciousness, alter our judgment. And people have those.

All people have those chemicals in their body. But they should be kept under control and not encouraged unnecessarily, where they will lead to compromise and temptation. And dating rituals in our society often are situations where young people or older people simply encourage a romantic sense and arousal of those chemicals and those impulses without any intention of marriage.

It's just a weekend. It's just a Saturday night. It's just something to do.

It's just recreational. It's just having fun. And there's nothing wrong with having good, clean fun or innocent fun.

But the problem is that God didn't make men to be playthings for women, or women to be playthings for men. It's a dangerous thing to play around with romance. Because it often will lead, almost always will lead to sexual temptation, and often will lead to sexual sin.

And so there's a danger when a person goes walking down the street of the immoral

woman, or putting themselves in any situation which is likely to arouse inappropriate desires that will lead to something and not marriage. And also in our culture, entertainment and advertising capitalize a great deal on people's sexual lusts, and seek to arouse sexual lust. That's how they sell products.

That's how they sell tickets. Because there are people who know that when they go through a certain form of entertainment, whether it's a movie or something, that it will be something that will entice them, that will titillate them, and will arouse them. And they're just toying with temptation.

They may not intend to do anything wrong. They may not intend to go out and spin afterwards, but they're just kind of getting the chemicals going. Because it kind of feels good.

But it's dangerous. And when people toy with temptation, very often they succumb to it. We should flee from temptation, Paul said.

Not flirt with it. One of the things that is a feature of the man toying with his temptation is that he maintains something like secrecy. In chapter 7, verse 9, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and the dark of night, he went down the woman's street toward her house.

It was in the twilight, in the dark of night. That's mentioned on purpose. Because he's going at a time when he hopes he will not be seen.

Now, in this case, he was quite mistaken. Solomon saw him. Solomon was looking out his window and saw this whole drama go on.

But the man thought he was keeping secret. He thought he was maintaining privacy and secrecy. Because you will be more tempted to allow yourself to do things that are wrong if you feel that that's a total secret.

If you think people are watching, you're obviously going to be on your better behavior. And therefore, that's a good argument for having people watching. Especially since we all understand there are temptations that are... that could be larger than we are.

We'd better realize that. And that's the other problem. Sometimes people don't realize that.

They're quite self-confident. They say, well, I can do this. I can handle this.

I can play around with this. I won't fall. And, you know, sometimes you get in and out of the situation without falling outright.

But that's a dangerous thing to have that kind of self-confidence. It says in chapter 5, verses 12 and 13, the man who has fallen to the sexual temptation will be afflicting his

conscience about it later. He'll say, how I have hated instruction and my heart despised reproof.

I've not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me. He's saying, I didn't think I needed to pay attention to people's counsel about this. I thought I was strong enough.

People told me to avoid this, but I didn't do it. I just ignored it. I didn't think this would happen to me.

I was overconfident. I ignored counsel. In chapter 7, in verse 26, about the immoral woman, it says she has cast down many wounded and all who were slain by her were strong men.

So a man who thinks that he's strong and that he won't be, he wants to come to that temptation, should realize that everyone who falls was a strong man, in his own eyes, at least. It's very few people think themselves to be weak. I don't know, maybe a lot of people think themselves to be weak, but a great number think themselves strong and get themselves cast down in this temptation anyway.

So secrecy and overconfidence and toying with temptation, these are things which lead to a person succumbing to sexual sin. Now, of course, there's also the activity of the seducer or the seductress also. In Proverbs, it's always the seductress because it's the son who's in danger.

It's the son who's being warned. But the activities of the seductress are not much different than a male seducer trying to seduce a woman. So women can take heed to the same warnings.

In chapter 7, in verse 21, it says with her enticing speech, she caused him to yield. With her flattering lips, she seduced him. So the man had already been toying with temptation.

But there was another factor that drew him in, and that was her and her approach and her designs upon him. And she came and she enticed him. She seduced him.

And so this is another part of sexual sin to watch out for. It may be that you're intending to be pure and to avoid falling. And yet there's another person whose appeal weakens your resolve and causes you to succumb.

And so this is something to be aware of for those who wish to remain sexually pure. And there's several aspects of the temptress, of the seductress. One is that she appeals to the man's pride.

In chapter 2, in verse 16, it says that if you follow the proper instructions, it will deliver

you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. Flattery is an appeal to your pride. And there's other references to her flattery.

Chapter 6, in verse 24, to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of the seductress. And also chapter 7, verse 5, that they, that is the instructions you've received from your parents, may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. So, it is repeatedly said that the seductress, the person seeking to win somebody over to a sexual immoral relationship, uses flattery.

That is, they appeal to the ego. And this is obvious, of course, when men are seeking to seduce women. They're always flattering them.

And women, I don't know if women are suckers for this or not. They must be, because men still use that means to get what they want from women. My impression is that women should be able to see through this, should see through men's intentions.

And maybe they really do, but they're not that eager to avoid the sin. They might actually be attracted to the man, and so they take his flattery as more or less an indication that he's equally willing. I don't know if women are fooled by flattery so much.

I'm sure some of them are, but I would imagine a mature and discerning woman would be on to it. Men also can be seduced through flattery, and that's, of course, the scenario that Stalin has in mind. I remember when I was young, a friend of mine, a Christian friend who had been a Christian only a short time and was a very good-looking man, very attractive to women, had not been sexually pure prior to his Christian life, but he had now become a true Christian and was trying to live a sexually pure life.

He said that I saw him one day, and he said that that week, a woman he knew, just a friend really, an attractive woman though, had called him on the phone and said she was going through a crisis and could he come over and counsel her. And so he went over to her house and knocked on the door. She said, come in.

And he went in, and she was naked. And she was seeking to seduce him, and he was stiffening and resisting against it and seeking to make his way to the door. And she went in the bedroom and started calling to him, and he was trying to make it to the front door, but he was very drawn to her.

She was very, he said she was very perfect looking and very attractive and so forth. But as he was making it successfully to the door, she started saying, if you are a real man, you come in here and make love to me and just appealing to his ego. And that was the hardest part for him.

He did make it out the door. He didn't succumb on that occasion. That's why he was telling me the story.

But I thought it was interesting because I'd never had a woman seek to seduce me at that time, and I had never known the ways. I thought, well, isn't that interesting that she would appeal to the ego like that. If you are really a man, you'd come in here and fall to this temptation.

And that is one of the things that the devil uses and people who are seeking to seduce other people use, is an appeal to your ego, to your pride. That's one aspect of how a person tempts another person. Obviously, another aspect is simply through being immodest and flirtatious.

Now, immodest doesn't necessarily mean that a person has a lot of skin showing or that their clothing is entirely form-fitting or something like that. Even a person who doesn't dress in the traditionally immodest clothing can be immodest if we understand that modesty is not merely related to sex. Modesty has to do with just not seeking to draw the wrong kind of attention to yourself in any way.

You see, a person who's got a modest opinion of himself is someone who doesn't try to draw special attention to themselves. They don't really think that it's necessary for everyone to notice them. And so, immodesty can be in behavior, it can be in clothing, it can be in many things.

People behave and dress and conduct themselves in ways that are immodest any time that they are just trying to bring special attention to themselves and attract people to themselves. Not necessarily sexually. I believe that a lot of women who are immodest and who want male attention are not looking to get them in bed.

Of course, many of them probably are. But I don't think that every young girl who's wearing immodest clothing or behaving in a flirtatious or immodest way, I don't think she's thinking, I'm going to get this guy in bed. A lot of times little girls are just not even, I mean, they're clueless.

They don't know what their behavior or their styles or whatever is doing in the mind of a young man. But the fact is, every Christian should be concerned about whether they are being modest or whether their behavior, their clothing, anything about them is tending to get people to notice them and especially to notice them in a sexual way. There's references to this in Proverbs 6, verse 25.

It says, Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids. Now, this may refer to painted eyelids in his society. In the Middle East, women may have painted their eyes elaborately or it may have been her use of her eyelids, fluttering her eyelids or winking or whatever she does.

It's clear that there's some kind of attempt made on the woman's part, either the way she has painted her eyes or the way she's using her eyes that is intended to draw

attention of a sexual sort to her from the young man that's being warned. It's an immodest and flirtatious type of behavior that's referred to here. In chapter 7, verse 10 through 13, the description of the adulterous woman who's trying to seduce the young man says, There was a woman who met him with the attire of a harlot.

So, the way she was dressed was significant. And a crafty heart. Now, that's an important thing to note, that her heart had bad intentions.

She had a crafty heart. There are women who probably wear clothing that bothers men, gets men bothered, I mean. And yet, these women often don't have a crafty heart.

I've had many men tell me that it's very difficult for them to go to church these days, because the women dress in ways that make the men distracted. That the women standing up to sing, and the few in front of them, or a couple of pews in front of them within their view, are alluring them, inadvertently, no doubt, by the way they dress. Different styles come and go, but for the most part, popular styles are designed in order to accentuate sexiness.

And in church, many people, to say nothing about in the office, or in school, or on the street, any place, but in church, many men are distracted by the way women are dressed. I'm sure that the church women are not trying to get that kind of attention. I'm sure their heart is not crafty.

They didn't dress that way hoping that they would distract the men in the church. Now, there could be some women in the church who are there for that very reason, but I'm thinking more of the average Christian woman who is simply wearing whatever styles are attractive, because they're popular styles. Now, a woman who hears that a man is bothered by the way she's dressed, may be inclined to say, well, there's nothing wrong with my clothing.

Let him deal with it. That's his problem. And it's true, it is his problem.

And yet, if we know that we are stumbling somebody else in that area or any other area, if we are causing somebody to fall because of their weakness, then we are being unloving toward them. And Paul has a number of chapters in 1 Corinthians and Romans about things that are actually okay to do in the sense that they're not in themselves immoral or illegitimate things, but because they stumble somebody else. A Christian should be mindful of that and should avoid doing that, which stumbles somebody else.

That is, we should be concerned not only about our own rights, but about the well-being, the spiritual well-being of the people around us and how we may be acting or dressing or speaking is affecting them. Because if somebody is sinning because of something I'm doing, then I should be concerned about that. Maybe I'm not doing anything that is wrong, but if it's making somebody else sin, then I should be concerned about that.

And I should think of ways I can change that so that I'm not stumbling somebody else. And so, not all women who have the attire of a harlot necessarily have a crafty heart. And when I say the attire of a harlot, I have to realize that ordinary styles today are styles which not very long ago would have been considered the attire of a harlot.

I mean, if you look at the pictures of your mother or your grandmother when she was 40 or 50 and the way she dressed, it looks very frumpy to us. I'm sure it was stylish at the time, but it looks very frumpy to us because our tastes have changed, the styles have changed, and the way that the decent men and women dress now would be considered immoral 40 or 50 or 60 years ago. I mean, guys today, young men with their pants down and their butt crack showing, how would that have been viewed 50 years ago in society? And similarly, the ways that women dress.

I'm talking about good women, ordinary women, not bad women. Not women who are trying to seduce, but women who are just keeping up with the times and dressing with the normal styles. In many cases, the clothing that innocent women are wearing can be a problem to men.

Now, the seductress, of course, is not innocent. She has the attire of a harlot and the crafty heart, it says. She's intending no good.

It says in verse 11 of chapter 7, she is loud and rebellious. Her feet would not stay at home. At times she was outside.

At times she's in the open square lurking in every corner. She caught him and kissed him with an impudent face. She said to him, I have peace offerings with me today.

I paid my vows, etc., etc. Her face, her speech, she's loud and rebellious. The bit about being loud means, of course, she's speaking in a way that's intended to draw attention to herself in a crowd.

She dresses in a way and she speaks in a way. Her face is so, her expression is such that it's all calculated to attract this young man. This is flirtatious behavior.

This is immodest behavior. In verse 16, 17, she says to him, I spread my bed with tapestry. I've colored coverings of Egyptian linen.

I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Now, she's appealing to his imagination here. He hasn't seen this yet or smelled it, but she's appealing to his senses and his imagination.

She's painting a picture in his mind. This is flirtatious. This is the immodest, seductive behavior.

And then, of course, the other thing here is in this temptation is that she indicates that

there's no danger. I've heard of men, young men, who are able to seduce young, naive women into having sex with them by saying, well, as long as you don't have an orgasm, you can't get pregnant. There are women who are, young girls, who don't know any better than that.

And they say, oh, okay, as long as I don't have an orgasm, it's fake. All kinds of lies are told to people to give them the impression that your concerns about this, about the dangers, are not to be credited. Your concerns are without warrant.

This is a safe thing. We now have the expression in our society, safe sex. And what that means, of course, is not about marital sex.

That's the only safe sex there is. But safe sex is almost always referring to outside of marriage. People having sex safely usually means to avoid disease, venereal disease, or possibly pregnancy.

And so they're talking about certain technologies that are now available to make sex unnatural and unpleasant, but safe. And it's always this promise that there will be no danger. You'll get away with it.

You can do this with impunity. We see this in her seducing the young man in chapter 7, verses 19, 20. She says, my husband's not at home.

He's gone on a long journey. He's taken a bag of money with him. He'll come home on an appointed day.

I know when he's coming back. It's not today. He'll be gone a long time.

He's told me when he's returning. He's got a lot of money. He won't have to come back soon.

She's saying we won't get caught. Tonight is the night where he won't be here, for sure. And she promises him that it's going to be safe in that respect.

She also says in verse 14, I've paid. I have peace offerings with me. I've paid my vows.

I went to church yesterday. I paid my tithes. I'm all paid up with God now.

Now we can have some fun, you know. It's amazing how many people think that's the case, that you can just do what you want to and then go to church, say a prayer, now some kind of repentance, pay your tithes, whatever, do a good deed. And that sort of absolves it.

And so people, a lot of people just feel like it doesn't really matter how they live as long as they go to church and kind of make up for it on Sunday. And that's what she's basically saying. God won't, we won't get in trouble with God because I've already paid

my offerings to God.

I've done that. So it's faith. My husband won't catch us and God will not be upset about this because it's been taken care of, already paid up with God.

In chapter eight of Ecclesiastes and verse 11, it says, because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily. Therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Ecclesiastes 8, 11.

It's saying that men are more inclined to do evil because they see that the punishment doesn't come immediately. Because the sentence against an evil work is not immediately executed against them. Therefore, they are emboldened to do evil because it seems like they get away with it.

And many times, and almost always, of course, when a person succumbs to sexual temptation, it's because they have been convinced in their own mind or by the person seducing them that this is faith. They'll get away with it. There'll be no punishment and therefore people's hearts give in.

Now, with reference to sexual sin, there's a negative payoff that Solomon wants his son to be aware of, and he mentions it from time to time. In chapter two, verses 18 and 19, Proverbs 2, 18 and 19 says, for her house leads down to death. Her path leads to the dead, none who go to her return, nor do they regain the paths of life.

Chapter five, verses three through five, it says, for the lips of an immoral woman drip honey. Her mouth is smoother than oil, but in the end, she's as bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two edged sword. Her feet go down to death.

Her steps lay hold of hell. And in chapter six, especially talking about adultery, where the woman has a husband, the adulterer is definitely looking for serious wounds and trouble. It says in verse 27, can a man, chapter six, 27, can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes into his neighbor's life.

Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. People don't despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he's starving. Yet when he's found, he must restore sevenfold.

He may have to give up all his substance of his house, but whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding. He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor will he get, no doubt from the husband.

And his reproach will not be wiped away for jealousy of a husband's fury. Therefore, he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He won't accept any recompense.

Nor will he be appeased, though you give many gifts. So there's a negative payoff that

the person thinks he's going to avoid when he falls into temptation. And so Solomon has these insights into the issue of sexual sin, but he also gives a number of strategies to avoid sexual sin.

In chapter 5 and verse 21, he says, well, verse 20, Why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman and be embraced in the arms of a seductress? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths. In other words, fear God. You should be aware that God is watching and pondering and evaluating.

And and if you fear the Lord, that should be a strong incentive to avoid such kind of such succumbing to such temptation. In chapter 23, verse 17 and 18, it says, Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be in the fear of the Lord all the day long. For surely there is a hereafter and your hope will not be cut off.

So when tempted, fear God. Remember that God is watching the eyes of the Lord in every place, and a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord. Then, of course, there's the keep your heart instructions.

Your heart is that which, if it is in a good place, will be able to resist temptation. If it's not in a good place, if it's weak morally, then it will succumb. In talking about the seduction of a woman, it says in chapter seven, verse 25, Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways.

Do not stray into her path. We're already, of course, noted before. Proverbs 4, 23, Keep your heart with all diligence.

Guard your heart with all diligence. Don't let your heart stray into her paths. In chapter two, verses 10 through 16, it says, When wisdom enters your heart and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you.

Understanding will keep you to deliver you from the way of evil. From the man who speaks perverse things. And also, it says in verse 16, to deliver you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with their words.

Now, what delivers you from that? When wisdom enters your heart. When you entertain wisdom in your heart. When you incline your heart to wisdom and you keep your heart from straying in the wrong directions.

That is, you have to monitor what's going on in there. When a person falls to sexual sin, it's not just out of nowhere. It's usually the result of things that have been going on in the heart, which should have been checked earlier on.

Many times we're not monitoring our hearts adequately. We're not even aware of what's going on in there. And then when we become, we can look backward and say, oh, I made

these compromises in my thinking, in my heart earlier.

And that's how I fell. In chapter 7, verses 1 through 5, says, my son, keep my words and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live in my law as the apple of your eye.

Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, you are my sister and call understanding to your nearest kin that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. How do you keep from them? By writing these instructions on your heart, instructing your heart.

Hosea 4.11 says, wine and new wine and harlotry, which is fornication, enslaves the heart. In chapter 25 of Proverbs, in verse 28, whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls. You're defenseless against temptation if you are not ruling your heart yourself, ruling your own spirit.

Now, another thing he says that is a strategy to avoid sexual sin is to be satisfied with what you have. In chapter 27 of verse 7, it says, a satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, but to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. Now, this is not true only of physical appetite, but of other appetites.

If you are satisfied, you're not attracted to something else. You're not going to succumb to temptation because you're already satisfied. If you are full of food, someone can offer you a sweet dessert and it will be loathsome to you.

Now, I just realized that's not true of everybody, but it's true that if you really are full, that suddenly you don't have an appetite for anything else, no matter how attractive it is. If a man is filled up sexually with his relationship with his wife, then it doesn't matter how attractive an option presents itself after, he's full. He's not interested.

However, to the hungry person, everything is sweet. Even bitter food is sweet if you're starving and in other appetites too. A person who is starved is in danger of succumbing to even temptations that would not necessarily ordinarily be great temptations.

In chapter 5 in verse 15, it says, drink waters from your own cistern and running water from your own well. This is actually talking about sex with your own wife. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets, let them be your own only, not for strangers with you.

Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice with the wife of your youth as a loving deer and a graceful doe. Let her breast satisfy you at all times and always be enraptured with her love. If you're enraptured with your wife, then you'll be satisfied.

There is indeed a need that God builds into people for intimacy and a strong urge to have sex as part of that intimacy. And therefore, God has created marriage. Paul said, if

you cannot contain, then marry.

It's better to marry than to burn. And he said that men and women should not deprive their spouses sexually. He says this in 1 Corinthians 7. He says, so that the devil does not tempt you for your incontinence.

Paul is aware that when a couple are depriving each other sexually, they're tempting each other because their spouse is not going to be satisfied at home. Now, they might not be the kind of person who would go out and find a woman outside the home or a man outside the home, but they might. They'll be tempted to anyway.

And one thing you don't need is extra temptations in your marriage. One should be satisfied with their spouse and a spouse should be very careful to satisfy their husband or wife because there are temptations outside. There's also a number of other things that Solomon brings up.

We've almost run out of time here. Several things he suggests are what I put under the category of safe places. It says in chapter four, verses 14 and 15, do not enter the path of the wicked.

Do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it. Don't travel on it.

Turn away from it and pass on. If you have a weakness toward alcohol, don't go into the bar. If you have a weakness toward sex, don't go to places where temptation is.

Now, of course, some men said they complained that they have to go to work and in the office there's women who dress immodestly and who flirt. I was just listening to a radio show the other day, a Christian radio show, and the man was saying that he had had an affair with some woman he works with and he's confessed to his wife, she's forgiven him, and he wants to quit his job because he has to keep working around this woman, and his wife is concerned financially about that and doesn't want him to quit the job. And the host said, quit the job, which is obviously the right counsel.

Better to quit your job than quit your marriage. Better to have financial troubles than moral troubles. Avoid the place of temptation as much as you can.

Sometimes you can't help it. You might be like Joseph in the house of Potiphar. He was a slave there.

He couldn't leave, and the woman was trying to seduce him day in and day out. He still resisted, but that's not a situation I'd place my bets on the success of a young man in over a long period of time. And he was there for life as far as he knew.

For all he knew, this woman was going to be tempting him every day of his life, and he couldn't go away. But we're not usually in those circumstances. We can avoid the

temptation.

We can stay in safer places than that. In chapter five and verse eight, it says, remove your way from far from her and do not go near the door of her house. Chapter seven and verse 11, it says her feet would not stay at home.

Home would have been a safer place for her. She didn't want to be safe, obviously. So staying in safe places or finding or seeking safe places, avoiding the dangerous places, the places where there's going to be temptation.

In chapter 15, I mean 25, in verse 16, it says, have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, lest you be filled with it and vomit. This basically says you need to develop habits of self-restraint. If you can restrain yourself in one appetite, you can build character, and that character will help you to restrain yourself in other appetites.

Some people have a weakness for one thing and not for another. People who have a weakness for sex don't always have a weakness for chocolate. People who have a weakness for chocolate don't always have a weakness for sex.

But if the thing you do have a weakness for, you develop self-control in that area, then self-control will become an aspect of your character, and that character will carry you other times with other kinds of temptations that maybe are of the same sort or make the same kind of appeal. In chapter 5, verses 12 through 14, the man who falls to sexual temptation, in his regret, he says, how have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof? I've not obeyed the voice of my teachers nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me. I was on the verge of total ruin in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

Now, this man, in other words, had access to people who could steer him the right way. He wasn't living in an isolated place. He was in the midst of the congregation.

He had teachers. He had people to reprove him and instruct him, but he had hated it. He had not brought his behavior under the instruction and accountability of those that were available to him for that, and I tell you what, accountability can go a long way toward changing your whole experience of temptation.

Like I said, the man who was in the dark of night going down to Harlot Street, he was counting a lot on not being seen. He was counting a lot on not being accountable. When you know that God is watching, that's accountability, and that's the first thing Solomon says, know that the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord.

Why should the Lord see you in this compromising position, he says. That should be all the accountability a good man needs, but if he needs more, there's other accountability. It should be enough to a good man to know that God is watching.

That should keep him honest, and for a truly good man, it will, because a good man doesn't always have access to godly people to keep him honest. Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were in Babylon where there's very little accountability from godly people. Their parents weren't there.

They were strongly pagans, and yet they determined in their hearts they would not defile themselves, and that's because they feared God. A good man will be honest even if no one else is there to keep him accountable, because God is there to keep him accountable. But some people aren't strong enough in their faith in the presence of God, and they don't fear God quite in the same dynamic way.

They do have their moments where they forget God, and those times it helps to have people who are watching out for you. So there are ways that a person can avoid sexual sin if they wish to do so, and of course one of the problems is many times people don't really wish to do so, but if a person does wish to avoid it, Solomon gives some directives about how to play it safe and to play it pure.