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Proverbs 6:20 - 7:27



Proverbs - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg explores Proverbs 6:20 – 7:27 in this profound discussion. He explains how the text focuses on a man seducing a woman and emphasizes the importance of a happy marriage. Gregg uses biblical references to explain the right path to prosperity and happiness as one's choices ultimately determine their fate. The text warns against allowing sexual desire to become a business transaction, which can lead to destruction of one's soul.

Transcript

We should turn to the sixth chapter of Proverbs and we'll continue our rather slow survey. It might seem like we're going verse by verse and we sort of are in this section because this section of Proverbs is not like most of the book. The first nine chapters are really not just a random collection of individual verses that each contain a separate proverb.

But there's somewhat more extended consideration, sometimes many verses long, of one theme. The overall theme of this section is the advocacy of obtaining an appreciation for the value of wisdom and seeking wisdom as the chief thing that you value and that you want in your life. Solomon has made application to the value of wisdom in practical areas.

As we saw last time in the earlier part of chapter 6 to financial behavior among other things. Finances obviously are a very important part of life since they involve eating and having shelter and the things necessary for life. Having finances, obtaining them, distributing them, managing them are all issues that are major concerns of everyone's life.

And so wisdom has to dictate all those things and Solomon frequently returns to that subject. But now he returns to another subject that is commonly on his mind, especially as he's advising his son. We don't know what age his son was or even which son he's advising at this point.

Probably a real bone, but we don't know that. But one thing Solomon knew from personal

experience is that a man, a young man especially, but any man can get into trouble with women and with the unbridled sexual desire. And so he keeps returning to this theme to warn his son.

This is not simply a moral instruction, this is part of wisdom. It is immoral to commit immoral sexual acts, but it is also unwise. It is the fact that it is unwise that warrants his frequent return to the subject in this particular section because wisdom will deliver you from this, he says.

If you're wise, you will not walk into the traps and seduction of the immoral woman. And of course, as I said earlier, he's addressing his son, so he's warning about the seductions of a woman. If he is writing to his daughter, he might say similar things about the seductions of a man because of course, seduction can go either direction.

But what is said to a son in warning him about women can be also applied in many cases. Most cases, most of the details would also apply to a man seducing a woman. He says in verse 20 of chapter 6, my son, keep your father's command and do not forsake the law of your mother.

This is very similar to what he says many times. He's saying, listen, your mother and your father have taught you the right way. Don't go off with the young fools who are innovating their own morality and their own reinventing the wheel as it were.

But listen to the longstanding traditional wisdom of your parents. Now, we just need to remember, of course, our parents aren't always the wisest. It may be that we have parents who are the products of some rather innovative thinking in their generation.

And sometimes you have to go back to earlier, more sound foundations than those that you got from your parents immediately. Because frankly, a lot of kids who were raised by baby boomers may have gotten very unsound advice. Can't remember how many Christian women have told me that their mothers taught them never make yourself dependent upon a man.

And the reason is because in our age, there's so much divorce and men have abandoned their families so much. It just seems like a wise thing for a woman not to put her confidence in a man. But that's not really the way things are supposed to be.

Men are supposed to be trustworthy husbands. Women are supposed to be able to safely trust in them and put their confidence in them and even make themselves dependent upon their husbands. That was the way it was for centuries.

But obviously things change. But that doesn't mean that we should perpetuate the change, the new arrangement. It should be that somehow that which is right should be followed, whether it is the most recent philosophy or a more ancient one.

And so in Solomon's case, his parents, that is Solomon's son's parents, Solomon and his wife, were passing along ancient wisdom. Not the kind of thing that some people might get from their parents if their parents are not godly and not, you know, like say, if the thinking of your parents was the modern ideas that departed from ancient wisdom, then of course don't follow it. There's a whole generation right now being raised in a society that's going to say that marriage is just, you know, a union of two people who care about each other.

It doesn't matter what their sex is or anything like that. Our parents and our generation was raised on the idea that marriage is dissoluble. You know, if you're not really happy in a marriage, well, you ought to really not.

You only have one life to live. You might as well get out and find happiness before it's too late. Obviously, that was the new paradigm of marriage in the last generation or two.

The new paradigm for the next generation is it doesn't matter what sex your partner is. And then, of course, there'll be stranger and newer paradigms further on down the line. So it can't always be said that the instruction your mother and father give you are going to be of the highest caliber.

Because mothers and fathers could have deviated from the wise counsel of their ancestors. So Solomon, at least, is confident that what he is passing on to his son is the ancient wisdom and the ancient morality, which, of course, belongs to Israel through the laws that God has given. And that's what he has in mind.

And he says about these commands and laws, bind them continually upon your heart, tie them around your neck. When you roam, they will lead you. When you sleep, they will keep you.

And when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the law is light. Reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

Then he goes on to keep it from the evil woman, which he will elaborate on in the following verses. But this business about if you bind them, the laws, and this would be, of course, God's laws, because this father and mother are Israelites. And if you bind the laws that they taught you to your heart and tie them around your neck, tying them around your neck would be probably a reference to an ornament, that it will be an ornament to you to be godly and to be obedient to God.

Although tying them around your neck could mean like one would tie a rope around an animal's neck, a little bit like what Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and be guided by me. Like an animal is guided by its master with a rope around its neck or a yoke upon its neck. It's probable he has in mind jewelry around the neck, a necklace, but not entirely clear.

He talks about binding them to your heart. Clearly, the idea is that your heart is joined to them inseparably. And if the latter phrase means something like bind it around your neck like a rope or like a guide rope, then it would be saying that you should be like an obedient cow being led by its master by a rope around its neck.

That is, be guided by the law. Let it always be on your mind. Let it always be guiding your steps.

Let it always be the thing that you count worth looking at and meditating on day and night. And when you do that, it says three things. When you roam, it will lead you.

When you sleep, it will keep you. When you awake, they will speak to you. Obviously, when you roam, they will lead you.

It means that when you're out and about doing your business in the world, you'll be guided by the precepts of wisdom if you have bound them to your heart. When you sleep, they will keep you. It's hard to know what that means.

Perhaps it's saying that you'll sleep sweetly rather than fitfully because you've lived in wisdom. You have no regrets. If you go out and do foolish things, you might not sleep all night because you'll lay in bed realizing the foolish things you've done and the repercussions that may come upon you.

Solomon often indicates that a wise or a good life is going to enhance one's sleep. And that may be what he has in mind here. And it says, and when you awake, they will speak with you.

That is, if they're always on your mind, it'll be what comes to your mind when you first awaken. I remember thinking of these verses in connection with some of my experiences when I would travel overseas when I was young. This happened more when I was traveling than when I was at home, although I did meditate on the scriptures pretty much all the time, whether it was at home or abroad.

But when I was abroad, I would often wake up and have a scripture in my mind before I was even fully awake. I remember very much having a scripture in my head just as I was coming aware of being awake in the morning and then having that scripture just on my mind. And a lot of times because I was teaching or preaching every morning and every afternoon and every night while I was in Germany, for example, when I was there the first time, I would consider the scripture that was on my mind when I woke up maybe as the scripture I should preach about or teach about that morning.

And I generally would since it's easier than coming up with something else. And so many times people would say afterwards, oh, that was just a timely word for me. And I thought, well, then it's very fortunate that God had put on my mind when I was waking up this morning, because that's how it came to be the subject of my talk.

But to know the phenomenon of waking up in the morning and having the word of God already speaking to you, even when you're barely awake, at those times I thought about this verse, when you awake, they will speak to you. And I suppose Solomon knew that experience and hoped for his son to do so also. It says the commandment is a lamp.

The law is light. This is like, of course, Psalm 119, verse 105. It says your word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path.

In other words, I wouldn't know how to walk or where to turn if I didn't have your word because it's dark out. The world is a dark place. And if you don't have the instruction from the word of God, from God's commandments and from the wisdom of God, you're kind of on your own.

And people on their own in the dark stumble, make wrong moves, bump into things, damage things, damage themselves. But if you have God's instruction, it sheds a light on your path. It is a lamp.

Now, in those days, they didn't have high powered flashlights for getting around in the dark night. They just had a lamp that threw a little bit of light around them just on the immediate ground before them, but enough that they wouldn't fall into a pit or trip over a log or something if they were heating a lamp. But the word of God doesn't always actually following.

God doesn't always give you the long view of things. Sometimes it just shows you what the next step to take is. And he says, that's how the commandment is.

Just take the next step following the light of the instruction you've received. And he says that these reproofs, these commandments will serve, verse 24, to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. He says, do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids, her winks and her blinking, I guess.

Or maybe the way she paints her eyelids. For by means of a harlot, a man is reduced to a crust of bread and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. Now, the adulteress here is not just a seductress.

She's trying to make money off the guy. She's got a side business where her husband's away. And so he's just a commodity to her.

He doesn't care about her. She reduces sex not to an act of love, but an act of a business transaction. It's just like he's a piece of bread to her.

A man is really supposed to have more honor and more dignity than just being a commodity for sale or something that she'll sell herself to gain money from. It turns the whole thing, the whole intimacy between a man and woman into mere business. And and it has more harm than it does because it preys on the very life of the of the participant.

He says, can a man take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals in his feet, not be feared? So is he who goes into his neighbor's wife. Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. Or literally should not be unpunished in Hebrew.

Now, this is interesting how he compares it with fire. Paul does, too. You know, when Paul talks about sexual desire, he refers to it as fire.

And he talks about a man who is not able to contain his sexual desire should marry because it's better to marry than to burn. To burn with lust he means, unsatisfied lust. Well, taking a man's wife, another man's wife sexually is like taking fire into your bosom and hoping that you're not going to get burned by it.

Might as well put coals in your shirt pocket that are live coals or walk on them with your bare feet and hope not to be burned. Sexual desire is like fire. And preachers have made this point forever.

As far as I know, like I said, Paul used the imagery of burning. And preachers always point out that fire is not a bad thing. Fire is a really good thing when it's in its proper place.

If it's contained in the place that fire is supposed to be contained, it is a useful tool. It warms and enhances our lives. Man is much better off than the animals in that man knows how to make fire and animals do not.

Man can warm himself. He can control the environment. He can cook his food.

He can sterilize things. Fire is very good. But if it gets out of control into the areas it doesn't belong, then it is extremely destructive.

More destructive than almost anything else in nature. And so going to your neighbor's wife is taking the fire out of the fireplace and putting it where it doesn't go. And you're going to get burned.

You're going to suffer for that. Those whoever touches his neighbor's wife will not be unpunished, it says. Verse 30 says people who do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he's starving.

Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold. He may have to give up all the substance of his house. Now, this is a reference to the law in Exodus that says that if a thief is found, he has to restore what he lost and more.

The extra is like the penalty for the theft. Returning the item itself is simply restoring things to square one. But there's a penalty besides.

If a man stole a sheep or an ox and was caught with it, and he could return it to the

owner, he had to do so with another one. 100% penalty on it. But if he had sold it or eaten it or dispensed with it and could not return the original, he had to repay even a higher penalty.

For a sheep, he had to repay four sheep. And for an ox, five oxen. That is, the more the value of the item stolen, the greater even the percentage of the penalty.

Obviously, to strongly discourage people from stealing things, there is a stiff penalty. Now, here it says if a man is found stealing, he'll have to restore sevenfold. Sevenfold is not what the law says.

The law says fourfold or fivefold or twofold, depending on the circumstance, but never sevenfold. But seven is a number that in the poetic literature, in Israeli thinking, seven is the number of completeness. And it is used so in Proverbs from time to time.

For example, we shall find in chapter nine, verse one, that wisdom has built her house. She has hewn out her seven pillars. The house of wisdom has seven pillars.

It would be tempting to try to identify seven things that would be the pillars of the house of wisdom. But I don't think it can be done. Certainly, the Bible doesn't identify them.

What it means is that the house of wisdom has as many pillars as it's got a complete number of pillars. It's not missing any. Seven is the number of completeness, of wholeness.

And a pillar is that which makes a building stable. So, wisdom's house is entirely and completely strong and stable. Earthquake proof.

It's got seven pillars. It doesn't have to be literally seven, because seven carries with it a value in the Hebrew mind more than its mathematical value. And that is, it's an impressionistic value.

Seven is completeness. Likewise here, when the thief is said to have to repay sevenfold, it just means he'll have to pay the full restitution. It's just a manner of speaking.

It doesn't mean he'll really have to give seven times as much back, but he'll have to make the complete restitution that his deed would require. Now, he's saying thievery is one thing. It's not okay.

But no one despises a thief when he succumbs to the temptation to steal a piece of bread because he's starving or his family's hungry. He can't be allowed to get away with it. It is a crime and he should be punished for it as the law would require.

But people do pity him. People don't despise him for it. They exact justice from him because that's what the law demands.

But without any disdain for the man, he did something that's quite understandable. But by contrast to that, he makes it clear that the man who commits adultery is in a different category. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding.

He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, probably from the jealous husband. And his reproach will not be wiped away.

Actually, he should be put to death according to the law, but we don't ever read of that ever happening. There are a lot of things in the law that are said to incur the death penalty, but we never read of any instances of it happening. It's possible that Israel sometimes did not carry out the penalties that were required by the law.

We know, for example, that Israel did not do so in the days of Jesus. Although they came to Jesus with an adulterous and said, well, the law says we should put her to death. What do you say? And Jesus, we know, you know, discouraged that.

But one reason that they did this was it says to test him and they were looking for something to accuse him of. You see, if he had said, no, don't stone her, he would be saying, don't obey the law of Moses. Now, it might be that the law was not always followed, but no one could overtly say the law was wrong and should not be obeyed.

And so Jesus said, no, don't stone her to death. That's not the right thing to do. They could accuse him saying he's defying the law of Moses, which he indeed would be doing.

But if you said, yes, do stone her, which is the only other option they gave him, then he would be defying the Roman authority. Because the Romans, when they had conquered the region, had given the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court, authority to punish criminals with the exception of capital punishment. Rome had withheld from the Jews the right to punish people with death.

And that is why when the Sanhedrin condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy, they couldn't kill him. They had to take him to Pilate, the Roman authority, and try to convince Pilate that Jesus had done something worthy of death. Jesus was crucified only after the Romans had given their approval because the Jews, as they even said to Pilate, we have no authority to put a man to death.

The law doesn't permit us to, the Roman law. Now, Jesus, when he was asked, shall we stone her? If he said no, he's defying Mosaic law. If he said yes, stone her, then he's defying Roman law.

He could be taken to court and they could say this man is advocating that we put people to death for crimes. They thought they had him on the horns of a dilemma, but he instead affirmed Moses' law, but said whoever wants to stone her should make sure they're qualified. He didn't say don't stone her.

He said whoever is without sin be the first to cast the stone. Actually, he said go ahead, throw rocks if you're qualified. He did not say she shouldn't be stoned, but he did tell her I'm not going to condemn you.

Go and sin no more. Now, here's a case where Jesus did not carry out the law of Moses, and yet probably no one did in this respect in those days. When Joseph found that Mary was pregnant, and all the evidence indicated that she had violated the betrothal in a sexual manner, that was punishable by death under the Jewish law.

But Joseph didn't even consider putting her to death. He considered putting her away privately, divorcing her, because apparently Roman law would not allow her to even consider putting her to death, even though the Jewish law required it. So, the other thing to do would just be to divorce her.

And that may be why Jesus, too, indicated that divorce is allowable on the grounds of fornication, because under the law of Moses, they would have been put to death for that, and you'd be out of the marriage. If your spouse was put to death for adultery, then you're out of the marriage. But in a land where you're not allowed to put them to death, at least divorce is permitted.

Well, the point here is that sometimes the law was not carried out, and it may be that the law of stoning adulterers and adulterers may have never really been carried out consistently. We don't know of any case in the Bible where it was. However, a husband might retaliate against a man who had slept with his wife, and that's what is probably suggested here.

He who does so destroys his own soul, wounds and dishonor he will get. His reproach will not be wiped away, unlike the man who steals to satisfy his needs and will be penalized but not hated. The man who commits adultery will be penalized and hated.

The thief's violation is understandable, and it was in other sense to sustain his very life. A man does not sleep with his neighbor's wife in order to survive. It is simply to be reckless with his lusts, to violate his neighbor's trust, to violate God's standards.

Everything about adultery is completely evil, and the man who commits it will have a reproach that will never be wiped away, unless, of course, he's a celebrity. For jealousy, but even if he's a celebrity politician, he'll be reproached. If he's a movie star, maybe not, but there are different kinds of people who seem to be immune from society's judgment about these things.

But certainly we have found there are certain politicians who have ruined their careers this very way, you know, through cheating. And when you think of that person, you think of that thing, and you think what a jerk that is to think we might have elected such a man as that. His reproach is permanent upon him.

For jealousy is a husband's fury, so that's where the wounds and dishonor are likely to come from. Therefore, he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, nor will he be appeased, though you give many gifts.

You sleep with a man's wife, he finds out, he gets angry, you say, listen, let me pay you this much money and we'll be friends again. He's not going to accept any money for that. He's not going to be appeased for that, if he cares about his wife.

By the way, the husband whose wrath, whose fury is jealousy, is not considered to be a bad man here. He's a man who loves and values his marriage. And to say that he's jealous is not to say a bad thing about him.

Now, when we as Christians think of the word jealousy, we think of a bad thing most of the time. Actually, jealousy is used in a very negative way sometimes, especially in the New Testament. In the Old Testament, jealousy is almost always a positive thing.

In fact, in many cases, it's youth of God. God is a jealous God. Jealousy is not always wrong.

Jealousy is wrong when it's a matter of you simply envying somebody else's position or possessions or what they have that you wish you had. And it becomes a matter of you despising them when, in fact, you don't have any particular right to what they have. You just wish you had it instead of them.

That's certainly a sinful form of jealousy. But when God is jealous over Israel, it's because she is his. There's a covenant between them.

Nobody has any right to violate that. A covenant is a sacred thing. And if anyone intrudes in that covenant, God is jealous and furious, as we can see in the Old Testament.

And Solomon indicates that's the way a husband is. Now, he's not saying that's right or that's wrong. He's just saying that's the way it is.

But we need to be careful about saying that it's wrong. A man who can see his wife out having affairs and not get angry is a man who doesn't care about his wife. Just like I was talking about anger when we're talking about Jesus and his anger.

And I said not all anger is sinful. Not all jealousy is sinful. It can certainly lead you to do sinful things.

A jealous husband, if he goes out and seeks to wreak vengeance, it may be that he will go beyond the thing that God wants him to do. I mean, we should forgive, of course. I had a wife when I was young who committed adultery with someone who I thought was one of my friends.

And that was a huge disappointment to me. And I forgave him. I talked to him about it.

He repented and I forgave him. But I felt that as a Christian, if a man repents, I'm supposed to forgive him. But that doesn't mean I wasn't jealous.

It doesn't mean that I wouldn't. I shouldn't have been jealous. If you don't mind how many men your wife sleeps with, you just don't care about your wife.

You don't care about your marriage. If you understand and value the covenant relationship, then of course you're going to be jealous over it. If you're not, then you're not like God.

God is jealous over his covenant with his people. And so it's stated as if it's an axiom, not necessarily a rule to be approved or disapproved. It's just an axiom.

Jealousy is a husband's fury. A man is jealous over his wife. Of course, our society, especially my generation, I think, and probably the next one too, I don't know, kind of grew up with a different feeling of more free love and all that kind of stuff.

I mean, it was kind of a, it wasn't really, everyone in our generation didn't think that way, but that was kind of the new hippie thing to do. And it has permeated a great deal, just the mindset of the public, not entirely, but to the extent that sometimes you're like, it's uncool to be jealous. It's uncool to be possessive of your spouse, you know.

If they want to wander a little bit, well, you know, this is the 21st century. Well, that's the problem. It is the 21st century, and the 21st century has lost sight of morality.

The Christians are supposed to regain sight of it, and sometimes that puts them at odds with the mood of the age. To be protective and jealous over your spouse, whether you're a wife jealous over your husband, or a husband jealous over your wife, is not inappropriate. It is only politically incorrect, but it's not inappropriate.

And it's quite the natural response to having the kind of appreciation for covenant sacredness that God himself has. And even men who aren't very godly by nature tend to be jealous over their wives, and wives jealous over their husbands, until they just decide, well, my wife or my husband is such a wanderer, such a philanderer that there's no sense being jealous. They just live with it.

I got an email this morning from a Christian lady who sends out a prayer email to her friends periodically. Her husband's the heavy drinker, alcoholic, they say. They have two children, teenagers, and her husband just goes out and has another woman that he sleeps with and stays with, and then when she throws him out, comes back to his wife.

Now, the wife is very calm about all this. She's learned to be. I mean, it's just the behavior she's gotten used to over the years from her husband.

I'm sure it hurts, but it hurts less when you numb yourself to it and say, well, this isn't really much of a marriage here, you know. I mean, we're still married legally. And you say, well, why doesn't she divorce him? Well, she doesn't divorce him because she's afraid there'd be issues for the children legally, that he'd get some of the custody of the children.

At this point, he's willing to just go away and be with his mistress, whereas she's afraid that if there's a divorce, the courts might make her not homeschool her son and so forth. And so she doesn't want the courts getting involved, doesn't want a divorce. So she lets him come and go and come and go.

But I mean, when people get to that place, it's not really much of marriage anymore. I mean, people just have to get to the place where I don't care about the marriage. I don't care about this person anymore.

They live under my roof. We have papers that say we're married, but we're not married. That's not a healthy thing.

I don't blame this woman for getting to that place. I mean, what can you do? It's a survival mode, you know. It's emotional survival.

But what a horrendous situation that is. What an unnatural situation that is. It's more natural for a wife to be jealous over her husband when he's wandering and a man to be jealous over his wife.

I believe that's not a bad thing. As bad as jealousy can be in certain circumstances inappropriately, just like anger can be evil in certain circumstances. In others, it's simply the appropriate response of outrage to evil.

It's outrage to what is horrendous. Okay, well, going on. Chapter 7. My son, keep my words and treasure my commands within you.

Keep my commands and live. And 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 your nearest kin.

In others, embrace and love wisdom is the way that all that poetry is. That's the point they're getting across. Continue with the immoral woman that they may keep you from the immoral woman.

From the seductress who flatters with their words. Flattery is repeatedly mentioned as the activity of the seductress. Back in Chapter 4 and verse 3, it says, For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey and her mouth is smooth as an oil.

Almost certainly a reference to flattery. As she flatters her mark as she's trying to seduce him. Men are proud things.

So are women sometimes. But a man can be wooed by flattery. It's interesting that in the case of adultery, often it's not merely sexual lust that draws a man away.

He might be attracted to a woman because she makes him feel good. She seems to respect him. She flatters him.

She compliments him. And his wife doesn't do that. His wife has come to take him for granted.

And so, you know, he's kind of more attracted to this lady at the office. Or this other person he's met somewhere else who's always flattering and affirming him. And his ego is drawn into the affair.

Sometimes it doesn't even end up in a sexual affair. Just an emotional affair. But the point is he values this other woman more than he values his own wife.

Because she doesn't flatter him. She doesn't affirm or seem to appreciate him. Men want to be respected.

And women have their own things that lead them into immoral dalliances that are not always sexual things too. It might even be anger at a husband or something. To get back at him for something he's done.

Maybe he's had an affair. Sometimes men have affairs with women because they're angry at their wife or whatever. It's not always all the sexual drive.

There are other things too. And the frequent reference to the flattery of the seductress means that she has that instinct. She knows that a man can be drawn in by compliments.

By the sense that this woman respects him. Appreciates what he does and who he is and what his gifts are and so forth. And so it says he gives a case in point.

He actually watched a seduction take place as he looked out his window. In verse 6. For at the window of my house I looked through the lattice. That is he wasn't standing in plain view.

There's a lattice room so he could be kind of concealed. And the outsiders couldn't see him standing there watching. He could be sort of a spy upon what was going on outside without being noticed.

He says I saw among the simple. I perceived among the youths a young man devoid of understanding. Now this man's going to go into an adulterous.

But his description first of all is he's a man devoid of understanding. If he had been a more understanding man. If he'd been more wise.

More alert. Then he would not have fallen to this. He passed along the street near her corner.

And he took the path to her house in the twilight in the evening in the black and dark of night. Now a woman came out and seduced him, but he was already kind of courting disaster. He was roaming in the red light district.

He went to her street. He went to her house near her house. Kind of wandered down that way just to see if there might something come along.

He didn't use any words of seduction of her. So he might seem like the innocent target, but he was not innocent. He was putting himself in the place where there would be no temptation.

And he did it. It says in the twilight in the evening in the black and dark of night. Obviously a time chosen for it.

The ability to do things in obscurity to not necessarily be observed. The man was taking precautions not to be seen. Not enough though.

He was seen by Solomon. I tell you what, if you're trying to be private and you do things in a way that even the government can see you doing it. And he didn't have those cameras at every traffic intersection.

You know, he was he was just the guy was not being careful enough. The king himself was able to watch him. But it says there a woman met him with the attire of a harlot and a crafty heart.

Now, there's a number of things that Solomon says in describing this woman. And by the way, she's a married woman. This is not your typical streetwalker.

In fact, Solomon is always in these stories and these warnings, assuming that the woman in question is married to somebody. He always refers to as a woman who's cheating on her husband or something like that. Apparently there were women whose men whose husbands were businessmen.

They were away a lot. And these women would just, you know, they were maybe emotionally or sexually unsatisfied at home. And so they just kind of cheated on their husbands.

And this is the paradigm. But what is said about this woman is can be said about the whole area of seduction in general. The way she dressed, advertised herself as someone available to a man on the street.

She was in the attire of a harlot. By the way, a lot of women in our society wear the attire that might be so interpreted, although they don't intend it. It's just the way the styles are.

But I think girls that are more innocent than they look often are out advertising themselves as sexually available when they really don't intend to be. I mean, they might like the positive attention they get from men, but they're not particularly planning to go to bed with them. Now, maybe I'm in it.

Maybe I'm more naive than I than I think. But I think maybe a lot of girls may do plan to go to bed with guys. I really think a larger number of women who are dressed the way that harlots used to be dressed, advertising themselves as available, don't know that's what they're advertising.

They don't intend to advertise a product. They don't intend to deliver on it. But women need to be informed, and men too.

But this is much more true with women because men are the more visual. Men are the ones who are out attracted by visual stimulus more than women. It's in the wiring of men, which is not to deny that women are attracted by a man's looks at times.

But the man is so wired that the first thing he notices and the first thing that draws him is going to be a woman's appearance. And one of the primary things about a person's appearance is the clothes they're wearing. When you dress, you are sending a message.

That wasn't necessarily always the case. You could dress. Well, I guess it was.

I mean, I guess in those days, they all wore long robes that covered a great deal. I guess the message was, I'm not available. I'm not advertising.

I don't have a product for sale here. But if a woman dressed in a way that, I don't know what the style of a harlot was, probably more color, probably more makeup, probably more jewelry than the average. I don't know.

More perfume. I mean, she mentions perfumes and stuff. Different things have attracted men more in different cultures.

But the thing is, the person who dressed like a harlot was dressed differently than the respectable women. And the clothing was her hanging out a shingle, as it were, saying, I'm available for sale. And modern women, of course, have to be very careful about that very thing because styles have changed.

Men and women wear a lot of the same styles now. And I don't think that's wrong. I don't think it's wrong for women to wear pants, for example.

There are old-fashioned people who think that the Bible, since it forbids women to wear

what is clothing of a man, they think a woman shouldn't wear pants. As if pants are always the clothing of a man. I've seen women wear pants that I would never wear.

It wouldn't look to me like the clothing of a man. I don't think there's an argument to be made for women not wearing pants on the basis that that's a man's attire. Obviously, the command about the clothing is against cross-dressing.

It's something of a different concern. But, nonetheless, women's clothing styles have changed. And continually changed.

For years and years and years, of course, people tended to dress in a traditional way. And then everything broke loose, probably in the hippie days. I don't know if I'm giving our generation too much credit for that.

But, I mean, the hippies sure did some strange things with their clothes that no one was doing before that. Maybe the beatniks before that, I'm not sure. But the thing is, it's almost like once you broke the conventions that were age-long conventions of the style, it's like change is almost... we're addicted to change.

You know, the pants of guys have to get lower, and so low they effectively trip over the inseam at the crotch. You know, just because you can't think of too many other ways to change a man's style. You've got to keep changing things.

And women's styles change radically. And, of course, it makes it difficult, I'm sure, for a godly woman who wants to not be unstylish, but at the same time needs to discern, okay, this new style, what is this doing? What is this new style saying to people? Because people look at what you wear and they'll say, what is the message this woman's sending? And clearly, we all know, we older people can see it very easily when we look at the younger girls and the way they dress in the malls and stuff. And so many times, anyone in our generation would recognize that girl is advertising herself as sexually available.

The girl may be 13 years old and might not have a thought of that at all in her head. She doesn't know what she's advertising. But women need to be aware, especially about men, that men are very visual, and when they see a woman displaying herself in a way that suggests she's available, that becomes a temptation in a way that a woman who's sending a different message with her clothing does not quite tempt so much.

And women should be concerned about that. I know a lot of women say, well, I can dress this way, but I'm not going to put out. I'm not going to compromise.

Well, then that's defrauding. You're advertising a product, getting people interested in something that you're not willing to deliver. You're just playing with people.

You're teasing. But you might not know you're teasing. I say you, although none of the

women in this room seem to be guilty of this, but there certainly are a lot of women in our society who are.

And so, it's a challenge for a Christian woman, because she's continually confronted with new styles that are attractive to her and to the people around her, and yet has to kind of use discernment. Is this wholesome? If I dress like this, is this going to stumble anybody? And that is something that Christians care about more than other respectable people, because Christians know that for a man to look at a woman to left of her is adultery in his heart. It stumbles him.

And women should be aware of the kinds of things they may do or dress like that might tend to stumble their brethren. I've heard many, many, many men complain that when they go to church, they're stumbled by the way the women at the church are dressed. The woman standing in front of them and a few ahead of them is dressed in such a way that the man is having a hard time keeping his eyes on the PowerPoint.

And somehow women need to monitor themselves this way, because it's really hard for the men to speak to them about this. It's really hard for the preachers to speak to them about this. Really, the older women should speak to the younger women about this.

That's what Paul said, that the older women teach the younger women. But even so, sometimes the older women may seem outdated, the younger women may think of them as not in touch with modern attitude or whatever. That's how, of course, young people are trained to think about older people nowadays.

And so the younger women need to be self-monitoring about this kind of thing, too. Christians have to be aware of all the things they do, whichever you do in word or in deed, do all to the glory of God. And so that would certainly include what you wear.

And so just people should be aware of whether they are wearing what others might interpret as the attire of a harlot. Because the clothing of a woman is one of the things very first noticed by a man when he is being led into sin with a woman. Now, it says she has a crafty heart, so she knows what she's doing.

In verse 10, she's not innocently wearing clothes that she had no idea would allure him. She's crafty, she's doing this on purpose. She's loud and rebellious.

Her feet would not stay at home. She's not a homestayer, which is apparently the best place for women to be if they want to avoid this kind of trouble. Now, the idea of women being a homemaker has definitely fallen out of favor in our modern culture.

And some women simply can't do it. For one thing, a lot of men have abandoned their women, and the women have to go out and support the children and themselves. That's not how it should be, but that's how it is.

There's a lot of things that thrust women out of the home. Now, in the old days when women were at home mostly, and few were out in the workplace, you would sometimes hear about adultery, and there were even dirty jokes about adultery, but usually the woman met the guy because he was the mailman, or the milkman, or someone who came by the house, because that's where women would meet men. They wouldn't meet them out in the marketplace because women weren't out there.

Obviously, sin can happen no matter where a woman's vocation is, as long as a man is available. But in the old days, there weren't that many men coming into contact in the course of a day with a woman. Today, it is simply a fact, a statistical fact, that the majority of affairs that take place are between a woman and a man that meet in the workplace.

They either are, one is the client of the other, or they're co-workers in an office, or in some way or another, they have become acquainted through both of them working in the same area on a regular basis. Now, what can we say about that? We can't really change all of that. That's just something we need to be aware of the danger of, because the woman, in this case, got into trouble on purpose because she couldn't stay in the house.

She wanted to go out where the other men were available, and she was wanting to make herself available. Now, this woman could have stayed home, she just wouldn't. She didn't want to be there, no doubt because of the business she wanted to conduct.

There are women who would like to stay home, but cannot. Our society has made it harder on women that way, and harder on marriages in general because of that. It says, at times she was outside, at times in the open square, lurking at every corner.

So she caught him and kissed him. And with an impudent face, she said to him, I have peace offerings with me today, I have paid my vows, so I came out to meet you. In other words, I'm paid up with God.

I've gone and offered my sacrifices this week. I've paid my tithe, I've been to church, I've sang the songs. Now I've got six more days before next Sunday to do the things I want to do.

This is a woman living in a religious society. They go to temple, they go to synagogue, they pay their vows to God, occasionally. And then they live the rest of their lives doing the things that are inappropriate for people to do.

And so she says to him, we're in good shape with God. So I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you. I've spread my bed with tapestry, colored coverings of Egyptian linen.

I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love

till morning. Let us delight ourselves with love.

Now notice she's painting a picture. A man is a visual thing. And she's painting this picture, which apparently in that society was one of great attractiveness to a man.

Tapestries on the bed, perfume on the pillows. Not the kind of things that I would imagine being particularly attractive to me. But what she's doing, she's appealing to the taste of a man at the time.

In the Middle East, she's saying, I've got my boudoir prepared in the most sensuous manner to bring delight to your senses. So come on and let's hang out, let's spend the night together. Let's make love till morning.

Let's delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home. He has gone on a long journey.

He has taken a bag of money with him and will come home on an appointed day. What she's saying is, my husband, I know when he's coming home. He's away, he's far away, went on a long journey.

He took a lot of money so he won't have to come back soon. He can stay away a long time. In fact, he's already told me what day he's coming back.

He'll be back on an appointed day. So I know I've got this much time. It's safe.

What she's saying is, we won't get caught. My husband's gone. Now, that is almost always a factor in seduction.

Whether it's the woman making the suggestion or the man who's leading himself into sin. The idea is, this will not be found out. This is the kind of thing that would be shameful to have public, but it won't become public.

I wouldn't want the husband to come home, but he won't. The idea, this is faith, is always present when somebody is doing this kind of thing. Because no one is really going to walk into something where they think they're going to get themselves shot in bed by a jealous husband.

So people have to be persuaded that this will be without risk. And that's what she's doing to seduce him. I've covered all the bases.

My bedroom is full of color. It's full of fragrance. We can make love all night.

There's no one going to find us. The husband's gone for a long time. I know the day he's coming back.

It's not now. And so these are all ways that the mind works to lead people into sins of

many kinds. Of any kind.

Almost any sin you commit, whether it's sexual or otherwise, you do it because you think you're going to get away with it. And that's the point she's capitalizing on here. We'll get away with this.

With her enticing speech, she caused him to yield. With her flattering lips, she seduced him. Immediately, he went after her as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till an arrow struck his liver.

As the bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would take his life. Now, it sounds like this man died, although it may be figurative. It may mean that he, you know, I don't know what the figurative sense would be if her husband happened to be home early and shot him.

You know, I mean, that would be an arrow piercing his liver. He didn't know he was going to die when he went there. You know, I thought it was come back on a point of day.

Yeah, that's what he said. He knew what his wife was up to. Honey, I'll be back in about a week.

Got a lot of money with me. No worries. I'll call you.

He's really in the next room. Well, you never really know. That's just it.

I mean, evil is by definition deceptive. And so its promises of immunity are not to be trusted either. Verse 24.

Now, therefore, listen to me, my children. Pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways.

Do not stray into her path. Just stay far from that district. Don't go where she is, for she has cast down many wounded and all who were slain by her were strong men.

So don't think you're too strong. Don't think you can toy with this temptation because you're strong. Yeah, all of her victims were strong.

All those that she slew were strong men in their own estimation. I can handle this. I'm not going to end up sleeping with this.

I just wanted the attention. I just wanted to see what it's like down in that street. You know, I've always wondered about these places.

Just curious. I'm strong. Yeah, so were all of her victims that she slew.

All were strong men. Her house is the way to hell. Actually, she'll, in Hebrew, death.

Not so much hell, although hell may well be also the ultimate destiny. But that's not what's being said. It's the way to die.

You sleep with your neighbor's wife. That's the way to get yourself killed. And as we saw in chapter 6, verses 34.

Well, verses 34 and 33 and 34. Wounds and dishonor the adulterer will get. Jealousy is a husband's fury.

So that's a good way to get yourself killed. Her house is the way to Sheol. Descending to the chambers of death.

Now, of course, not every Dalai Lama, not every case of adultery ends in the death of the person committing it. In fact, very few actually do. But some do.

And it's like playing Russian roulette. You know, we say if you play Russian roulette, you're going to get a bullet. You say, well, maybe not.

Some don't. But some do. And it's only because they were playing the game.

If they didn't play the game, the ones who got the bullet in their head wouldn't have gotten a bullet in their head. They could have stayed away from that game and they'd live longer. A man who commits adultery and gets killed for it.

Well, he could have avoided it. He didn't have to do that. He's putting himself in harm's way.

It's not wisdom. Now, it's not moral either. Obviously, it's not moral.

But the main focus of Solomon's concern here is the lack of wisdom involved in those who take this course. Because he's advocating wisdom and showing all the ways that a man can be unwise. There's other dimensions of this behavior besides its lack of wisdom.

It's evil. It's evil in many ways. It's cruel.

There's many things that can be said against adultery. And they're all correct. In this particular case, he's primarily focused on the fact that it's bad for you.

You're taking a risk. This is not what a wise person would do. Who wants to keep alive and keep his reputation.

So, that's where we'll stop for now. Actually, the next chapter contains a poem, a song, as it were. A wisdom singing about her own virtues.

Personified as a woman. We'll come to that next time. At this point, we've run out of time.

So, we'll stop there. Thank you. God bless.