

Avoiding the Adulteress

Proverbs 7

Proverbs 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, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, and among the simple, I perceived among the youths a young man devoid of understanding passing 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 night. And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious. Her feet would not stay at home.*

At times she was outside, at times in the open square, lurking at every corner. She caught him and kissed him. 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, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry, colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning. Let us 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 the appointed day’

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 a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would cost his life.

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 paths, for she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.”

Background Notes

In His sovereign wisdom, God chose King Solomon, with all his experience and wisdom, to write a lot about sex in the Bible. In the Song of Solomon, he describes sex as God intended, within the boundaries that God has established: one man and one woman, in marriage. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon gives many warnings against sex outside the boundaries that God has set up. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon continues to hammer away at the subject of sexual sin, because of its potentially devastating consequences.

Here in chapter 7, a vivid description is given of the naïve fool who throws caution to the wind and departs from the way of wisdom. For momentary pleasure he sins, and reaps the bitter consequences. That is why it’s so important for believers

to keep the Word of God and the way of wisdom very carefully and very close - like the pupil of your eye (v2), on the tablet of your heart (v3), and as your sister and close friend (v4).

Some people have asked, “Why Solomon does always talk about seduction to sexual sin being caused by a **woman**?” Why do women get all the blame? It’s helpful to remember from previous chapters that Solomon was giving advice to his **sons**, so naturally he speaks to these young men about avoiding a seductive **woman**.

Keep in mind that what is said here includes all temptation. Departing from the way of wisdom can be applied not only to sexual sin, but certainly to other sins as well.

Doctrinal Points

1. The barriers against sin are lowered when our physical senses are strongly attracted.

Beginning in verse 6, Solomon records what he sees as he’s looking out a second floor window: *“For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, and saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, a young man devoid of understanding,”*

And now comes the description of a naïve young man who is led step by step into the trap of an adulteress. It’s evening, and we’re not sure whether the young man knew where he was going or was ignorant of where the adulteress lived. But notice how the woman appealed to all his physical senses as she leads the young man into a trap.

As to his eyes, she is dressed, with craft, in the attire of a harlot. Her sensuous dress is designed to allure and arouse men (v10). As to his ears, she flatters him and makes him feel special: *“I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you”* (v15). I wonder how many other men had heard her speak these same words. With her enticing speech she caused him to yield. She seduced him with her flattering lips (v21), and told him everything he wanted to hear.

Even that physical sense of scent is used: *“I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon”* (v17). As to taste, she invites him to join her in eating a meal made from the portion left from the peace offering: *“I have peace offerings with me. Today I have paid my vows.”*

As to touch, she holds him and kisses him: *“She caught him and kissed him”* (v13). She’s convinced he’ll take another step down the slippery slope as she appeals to the physical sense of touch: *“Come, let us take our fill of love until morning. Let us delight ourselves with love”* (v18).

The barriers against sin are lowered when our physical senses are attracted. That's true with sexual sin – and it's true in other areas as well. The sin of materialism is in large part the result of the eye seeing what it can't refuse. I must have that outfit, or vehicle, or piece of furniture, or sports item - because it looks so great, and it will make me look great! And I don't know about you, but I'd be more likely to buy something I don't need if a store is serving free strong coffee, with that great taste and aroma! The barriers against sin are lowered when our physical senses are strongly attracted.

2. The barriers against sin are lowered when our moral conscience is subtly allayed.

To “allay” means “to soothe, or calm, or soften,” or “to subdue or set aside.” God has given everyone of us a moral conscience. We know the difference between right and wrong. We were born with our God-given moral conscience. But our moral conscience can be hardened and warped and desensitized, and we can deliberately set our conscience aside, and refuse to listen to its wise advice. Satan knows if he can subtly allay or desensitize our moral conscience, the barriers against sin are lowered.

Notice how the woman makes a successful attempt to allay the unsuspecting man's moral conscience. She says, “*I have peace offerings with me. Today I have paid my vows*” (v14). Part of her sinister plan is to put him off guard by pretending to be religious. She says that she has just come back from the House of the Lord where she offered a peace offering. She has some of the meat of the sacrifice, and under the regulations of God's Law she and her friends and family are required to eat the meat that same day. So she appears to be inviting him to simply share a meal. Whether or not she had really been to the House of the Lord and offered a peace offering is beside the point. The point is that his moral conscience is allayed when she deceptively placed her temptation in a religious context.

His moral conscience is further soothed and subdued when she assures him that no risk is involved: my husband is on a long business trip (v19); he's only interested in money; he's not interested in my needs or what I do. Her tactics were exactly what the enemy of our soul uses today to set aside our moral consciences.

Remember - ignoring our conscience doesn't occur only in the area of sexual sin. Again, take the sin of materialism. Putting this sin in the context of religion “justifies” all kinds of materialism - and not just by self-indulgent TV preachers, but by many average Christians as well. A religious context desensitizes and subdues the moral conscience. Believers justify materialism by saying, “We can use all these things for the Lord!” The barriers against sin are lowered when our moral conscience is subtly allayed.

Practical Application

Do as I say, not as I do.

Did you ever say that - as a parent, or as a teacher, or as a preacher? As we read the book of Proverbs, we'd have to conclude that Solomon would certainly have to tell us, “Do as I say, not as I do.” We can be sure of this, because the

Bible tells us that Solomon did not follow his own counsel. He departed from the way of wisdom - especially in the area of sex, where his barriers against sin were lowered.

1 Kings 11:1-8: *“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites—from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love.*

He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.”

So Solomon, the author of Proverbs, would have to say to us, “Do as I say, not as I do.” Unfortunately, too many of us as Christian parents and teachers have to say, “Do as I say, not as I do.” Sadly, our lives speak more clearly than our words.

We can do better! Let’s set our hearts and minds to follow the way of wisdom. Let’s determine to set a good model for our children and our grandchildren, and for young believers in our church or fellowship.

Let’s strive to be able to echo the words of the Apostle Paul: *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).*