

The Book of Proverbs, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 4: Faithfulness in Marriage; the Snare of the Adulteress

Proverbs 5:1–7:27

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

The doctrine at stake in these chapters is nothing less than God's design for human sexuality and marriage, and behind that, the trustworthiness of God as a good Creator. From the beginning God made humanity male and female and joined one man and one woman in a lifelong, one-flesh covenant (Genesis 2:24). Proverbs 5 through 7 defends that design from two sides at once. Negatively, it exposes adultery and immorality as a path that leads to bitterness, bondage, and death, lived out before the all-seeing eyes of the Lord (5:21). Positively, it celebrates faithful married love as a fountain of real and lasting joy (5:18–19). Teachers should resist two errors here. The world treats sexual sin as harmless or even healthy; Scripture calls it deadly folly. A misguided religiosity treats sexuality itself as shameful; Scripture calls married love a gift to be delighted in. Hold both truths together. Note also the nature of a proverb. These are general principles of wisdom under the fear of the Lord, not magic formulas, and purity is meant to flow from a reverent love for God rather than mere rule-keeping (6:23).

Be careful, too, to keep this study free of doctrinal distortion. The young man's ruin in chapter 7 is his own chosen folly, not an inherited corruption or an unavoidable fate; each person bears his own sin and is genuinely able to choose the path of wisdom (Ezekiel 18:20). The warnings against presuming on our own strength (6:27–28) and the reminder that sin binds the sinner with cords (5:22) together refute any false comfort that one who has been brought into covenant with God cannot fall away. Purity is not preserved by a one-time decision but by a daily walking in the light of God's word.

The formational aim is to leave the class both warned and won. We want every person, married or single, young or old, to flee immorality with their whole heart, not out of fear alone but out of love for God and trust in His good design. We want husbands and wives to treasure one another and guard their covenant. We want the single to see purity as a beautiful and honorable calling, not a barren waiting. And for any who carry the weight of past sin in this area, we want to point clearly to the hope of forgiveness, repentance, and new life in Christ, so that no one leaves in despair, but rather resolved by grace to walk wisely from here forward.

Question 1

Student Question:

In Proverbs 5:1–6, the father urges his son to attend to wisdom so that he may discern the deceptive sweetness of the forbidden path. What does it tell us about the nature of temptation

that her lips drop honey yet her end is bitter as wormwood (5:3–4), and how does wisdom train us to see past the surface?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 5 opens the way a wise parent always begins, by calling for attention before giving the warning. My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding (5:1). The goal is discretion and knowledge, the trained ability to tell the genuine from the counterfeit. Wisdom here is not abstract; it is the survival skill of a soul learning to read the world rightly.

Then comes the portrait of folly, drawn with unflinching honesty. The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil (5:3). Scripture does not deny that temptation is sweet to the taste at first. That is precisely what makes it dangerous. But the father immediately follows the taste with the aftertaste: her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword (5:4). The path looks level but it inclines steadily downward, her steps take hold on hell (5:5).

The deceptive quality is underscored in verse 6, lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. The very nature of this sin is that it keeps you from thinking clearly about where you are headed. It scatters attention so the cliff edge is never quite in focus. Wisdom, by contrast, steadies the gaze and forces the long look.

For a mixed audience, frame this opening pastorally. Everyone in the room knows the pull of something that promises sweetness and delivers regret, whether or not it is sexual. The text teaches a transferable lesson about the difference between how sin advertises itself and what it actually pays. We are not naming anyone or dwelling on lurid detail; we are learning to see clearly.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Temptation is genuinely attractive at the outset; Scripture does not pretend otherwise, and honesty about this builds credibility with hearers.
- Sin's deceit works partly by clouding our ability to think about consequences (5:6); wisdom restores the long view.
- The strange woman functions as a personification of folly throughout these chapters, the counterpart to Lady Wisdom in chapters 8 through 9.
- This is general wisdom teaching, addressed first to a young man but applicable to all; the principle of discerning hidden bitterness behind sweet appearance is universal.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask the class to name ways our culture today makes the bitter end of sin invisible while advertising only the sweet beginning.
- Invite reflection on what spiritual habits help us keep the long look that wisdom requires.

- Discuss why attending and bowing the ear (5:1) must come before any warning can actually protect us.

Question 2

Student Question:

Proverbs 5:8 counsels, Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house. Where do you tend to walk close to the door of temptation rather than keeping a wide distance, and what would taking this verse seriously look like for you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Having shown the destination, the father now gives the practical strategy: distance. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house (5:8). This is among the most useful verses in all of Proverbs for daily living. The wisdom is not to test how close one can get to temptation without falling, but to keep the broadest possible margin.

Verses 9 through 14 then catalog the wreckage that follows when distance is not kept: honor lost to others, years given to the cruel, strength and wealth poured into a stranger's house, the body and flesh consumed, and at the last a bitter mourning, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof (5:12). The ruin is total, touching reputation, resources, health, and conscience.

Notice that the mourner's regret in verse 12 is not first about getting caught but about having despised the very instruction that could have saved him. The tragedy is that the warnings were available and were brushed aside. This is the father's plea in miniature: do not be the one who looks back and says, I would not obey the voice of my teachers (5:13).

The pastoral point is that small steps toward the door matter enormously. Almost no one decides in a single moment to ruin a marriage or a life. The ruin is reached by a series of unguarded approaches. Wisdom intervenes early, far from the door, while distance is still easy to keep.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The remedy Scripture prescribes for sexual temptation is avoidance and distance, not testing one's strength near the danger (5:8).
- Sexual sin has wide-ranging consequences that touch honor, finances, health, and conscience (5:9–11), not just the immediate relationship.
- The deepest regret described is despising the instruction that could have saved (5:12–13), which makes the receiving of correction itself a matter of wisdom.
- Guarding against sin is most effective early and at a distance, before one is standing at the door.

- While consequences are real, this catalog is a general warning, not a claim that every sin always produces every consequence in this life.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask the class what practical fences (in habits, technology, friendships, schedules) keep us far from the door rather than near it.
- Discuss why we are so often tempted to see how close we can get to sin rather than how far we can stay from it.
- Reflect on the difference between worldly regret over consequences and godly sorrow over despising instruction.

Question 3

Student Question:

Proverbs 5:15–19 paints marriage not as mere restraint but as a fountain of genuine joy, calling the husband to rejoice in the wife of his youth. How does this passage reveal that God’s design for marriage is a good gift to be delighted in, and why is that vision essential to understanding purity rightly?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now the chapter turns, and the whole mood lifts. After all the warning, the father holds up the bright alternative. Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well (5:15). The imagery is of refreshment, satisfaction, and life. Marriage is pictured as a personal spring that belongs to you and is meant to be enjoyed.

The heart of the passage is verse 18, Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. This is not grim duty; it is glad delight. The word rejoice sets the tone. God’s design for marriage is not a cage but a garden, a place where love is meant to grow and satisfy across a lifetime, the wife of your youth becoming the companion of your age.

Verse 19 continues with tender, affectionate language, urging the husband to find his satisfaction in his wife rather than going abroad. The point is exclusivity born of delight. Why would a man drink from a stranger’s polluted stream when he has a blessed fountain of his own? The logic of faithfulness here is not mainly prohibition but preference; the faithful path is also the genuinely joyful one.

Handle this passage with both warmth and dignity in a mixed class. We are celebrating that God Himself authored marital love and called it good. For the married, this is an encouragement to cherish and cultivate that love. For the single, it dignifies marriage as a good gift while affirming that their own calling to purity is equally honorable. The deeper truth for everyone is that God means our desires to flourish within the boundaries He lovingly set, not to be starved but to be rightly directed.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Marriage is presented as a positive good and a source of real joy (5:18), not merely as a safer outlet than sin.
- God's design locates sexual delight within the exclusive covenant of one husband and one wife, and calls that exclusivity good (5:15–19).
- Faithfulness is rooted in delight and preference, not only in prohibition; the faithful path is the truly satisfying one.
- The phrase wife of thy youth (5:18) implies a love meant to deepen and endure across an entire lifetime.
- This celebration of married love should be taught warmly but discreetly before a mixed-age audience, honoring its plain meaning without crude detail.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask married members how they actively cultivate delight in their spouse rather than taking the covenant for granted.
- Discuss how seeing marriage as God's good gift, rather than a mere restriction, changes the way we think about purity.
- Reflect on how this passage affirms that God wants our desires to flourish in their right place, not to be despised.

Question 4

Student Question:

Proverbs 5:18 speaks of rejoicing in the wife of your youth, a love that deepens over a lifetime. How can you cultivate gratitude and delight in the relationships and commitments God has given you, rather than letting your eye wander toward what is forbidden?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The chapter closes by returning to the all-seeing God. For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings (5:21). Every path we walk, public or hidden, is fully visible to God, who weighs and considers all of it. This single verse dismantles the great lie of secret sin, that no one will know.

Then comes a sobering picture of sin's bondage. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins (5:22). Sin is portrayed as a trap of the sinner's own making. The cords that bind him are woven from his own choices. There is no hint here that he was fated to it; the bondage is real, but it is self-imposed.

Verse 23 delivers the verdict, He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray. The cause of ruin is named plainly: lack of instruction and the sheer magnitude

of folly. The man is not a victim of forces beyond him; he has refused wisdom and reaped its absence.

Doctrinally, this passage is important on two fronts. First, it grounds purity in the reality of living always before God, which is far deeper than fear of being caught by people. Second, it teaches personal accountability. The sinner is bound by his own sins, consistent with the truth that each soul answers for its own choices (Ezekiel 18:20). At the same time, the image of being held by cords warns us that no one is immune from falling; ongoing watchfulness is required.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Nothing is hidden from God; every path is before His eyes and pondered by Him (5:21), which is the deepest motive for purity even in private.
- Sin binds the sinner with cords of his own making (5:22); the bondage is real but self-imposed, not externally decreed.
- Ruin is attributed to lack of instruction and to folly, not to an inherited corruption or fate (5:23); each bears his own sin.
- The picture of being held by the cords of sin warns that even those in covenant with God can fall and must remain watchful.
- Living before the face of God reframes secret temptation as something never actually secret.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask how the truth that God ponders all our goings (5:21) would change the choices we make when we believe no one is watching.
- Discuss the difference between fearing exposure to people and reverently living before the eyes of God.
- Reflect on how sin can quietly bind us with its cords, and what God provides to set the captive free.

Question 5

Student Question:

Proverbs 5:21–23 declares that a man’s ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and that the wicked is held with the cords of his sins. How does the truth that nothing is hidden from God, and that sin binds us, reshape how we think about so-called private temptation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 6 opens with a cluster of practical warnings that are not directly about marriage but share the theme of folly that destroys. First comes the danger of rash financial commitments, becoming surety for another and being snared by the words of one’s own mouth (6:1–5). The

counsel is urgent: deliver thyself, like a roe from the hand of the hunter (6:5). Folly in money, as in love, must be escaped quickly.

Next is the famous portrait of the sluggard, sent to learn diligence from the ant (6:6–11). The ant, having no commander, still provides in summer; the sluggard, by contrast, sleeps a little, slumbers a little, folds the hands a little, and poverty arrives like an armed man (6:10–11). The lesson is that small habits of laziness compound into ruin, just as small steps toward temptation do.

Then comes a description of the worthless and wicked person who sows discord (6:12–15), and the well-known list of seven things the Lord hates (6:16–19): a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet swift to mischief, a false witness, and one who sows discord among brethren. This list reminds us that God's concern for righteousness is broad, touching pride, deceit, violence, and division, not sexual sin alone.

In this study, touch these verses briefly and then move toward the chapter's central concern, which resumes in verse 20. The connecting thread is that wisdom governs the whole of life, money, work, speech, and relationships, and that the same God who hates the proud look and the lying tongue also guards the marriage bed. Folly is folly wherever it appears.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Wisdom addresses the whole of life, including finances (6:1–5), diligence in work (6:6–11), and integrity in speech and relationships (6:12–19).
- Small habits, whether of laziness or of compromise, compound over time into great loss (6:10–11), echoing the theme of small steps toward temptation.
- The seven things the Lord hates (6:16–19) show God's concern for righteousness is broad, not narrowly focused on one category of sin.
- These verses are secondary to this lesson's center on faithfulness and purity and should be touched briefly, not allowed to dominate.
- The unifying point is that folly in any sphere brings ruin, and the fear of the Lord governs every part of life.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask how the picture of the diligent ant (6:6–8) speaks to the small daily habits that either build or undermine a faithful life.
- Discuss which of the seven things the Lord hates (6:16–19) most needs attention in our own hearts.
- Reflect on how laziness, loose speech, and rash commitments can each leave us more vulnerable to deeper folly.

Question 6

Student Question:

Proverbs 5:23 warns that a man may die for lack of instruction and in the greatness of his folly go astray. When have you noticed that small, unguarded choices led you further than you intended to go, and how might better instruction have changed the path?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The chapter now returns to its main theme, and again it begins with the protective power of God's word. My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother (6:20). The commandments are to be bound continually upon the heart and tied about the neck (6:21), an image of constant nearness and personal ownership.

Verse 22 describes how the internalized word becomes a living companion: when thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. The word is not a rulebook left on a shelf but a guide that walks with us through every hour, awake and asleep.

The central declaration is verse 23, For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. Here is the deep logic of biblical purity. We are kept not chiefly by our own willpower but by the light of God's word illuminating the path and exposing the darkness. Verse 24 names the specific protection: to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

This is a crucial doctrinal point for a church that values truth. Purity flows from a heart saturated with God's word and a reverent love for Him, not from mere rule-keeping or gritted-teeth resistance. The lamp and light imagery teaches that the best defense against the flattering tongue is a mind and heart so filled with God's truth that the lie loses its power to dazzle.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God's word is meant to be internalized and personally owned, bound on the heart, not merely consulted occasionally (6:20–21).
- The internalized word functions as a constant companion and guide through all of life (6:22).
- The commandment is a lamp and the law a light (6:23); purity is preserved by walking in God's truth, not by willpower alone.
- A heart saturated with Scripture is the strongest defense against the flattery that leads astray (6:24).
- True purity flows from reverent love for God and His word, consistent with the fear of the Lord, not from mere external rule-keeping.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask how we can move God's word from a shelf into the heart so that it leads, keeps, and talks with us (6:22).

- Discuss why a mind filled with truth resists flattery better than mere determination does.
- Reflect on the difference between keeping rules and loving the God whose word lights our path.

Question 7

Student Question:

In Proverbs 6:23–24, the commandment is called a lamp and the law a light, given to keep us from the flattering tongue of folly. How does saturating our hearts with God’s word actually protect us, and why is this better than mere willpower or rule-keeping?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Verses 25 through 35 spell out the high cost of adultery with sober realism. The father begins at the root, in the heart: Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids (6:25). Long before the act, the battle is fought in the imagination and the gaze. This anticipates the Lord Jesus, who located adultery in the lustful heart (Matthew 5:28).

The cost is then quantified by comparison. A man driven by hunger to steal bread, though not excused, is at least understood and makes restitution (6:30–31). But the one who commits adultery destroys his own soul (6:32) and gains a wound and dishonour that shall not be wiped away (6:33). The damage here is described as deeper and more lasting than ordinary theft.

Verses 27 and 28 give two unforgettable images: Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? The answer is obviously no. The point is the folly of presuming on one’s own strength near a fire that will inevitably burn. No one is fireproof.

Teach this section with restraint, keeping the focus on the principles rather than on graphic detail. The lesson is twofold: sexual sin engages the heart first, so purity must be guarded in the heart; and it carries consequences that money cannot repair and apologies cannot fully erase. This sober realism is itself a form of love, refusing to let anyone walk toward the fire believing they will not be burned.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The battle for purity is first fought in the heart and the gaze (6:25), anticipating Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:28.
- Adultery is portrayed as uniquely self-destructive, wounding the soul in ways that surpass ordinary wrongs (6:32–33).
- The fire images (6:27–28) expose the folly of presuming one can flirt with temptation and escape unharmed.
- Some consequences of this sin leave wounds and dishonor that are not easily wiped away (6:33), which calls for sober honesty.

- This section should be taught with restraint, emphasizing the principles rather than dwelling on sordid specifics.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask why guarding the heart and the eyes (6:25) is the real front line in the fight for purity.
- Discuss what the fire images (6:27–28) reveal about the danger of thinking we can handle temptation others could not.
- Reflect on how the lasting nature of some consequences should shape the choices we make today.

Question 8

Student Question:

Proverbs 6:27–28 asks whether a man can take fire into his bosom and not be burned. What does this vivid image teach you about presuming on your own strength, and where might you be tempted to think you can handle a situation that Scripture says will burn you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 7 is the most extended and vivid warning in the section, framed once more by the call to treasure God’s word. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye (7:1–2). The teaching is to be guarded as carefully as one guards the pupil of the eye, and even called a sister and kinswoman (7:4), made part of the family.

Then the father becomes a storyteller. Looking out his window, he watches the street and sees among the simple ones a young man void of understanding (7:7). What follows is a case study, a slow-motion account of how a person walks into ruin step by step. The teaching method shifts from command to narrative so the warning can be felt and not merely heard.

The first detail is telling: the young man is passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house (7:8). He has already failed the counsel of 5:8 to keep far from the door. He places himself, perhaps half-consciously, in the path of temptation. The time, too, is significant, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night (7:9), the hour when resolve is low and shadows hide.

The pastoral lesson here is that ruin usually begins not with the decisive sin but with the careless drift toward it. The young man’s first mistake was geography and timing, putting himself where he should not have been. Wisdom would have kept him on another street altogether.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God’s word is to be guarded as carefully as the pupil of the eye and embraced as family (7:1–4).

- Chapter 7 teaches through vivid narrative, a case study of one person's downfall, so the warning is felt deeply.
- The young man's first failure is placing himself near temptation (7:8), contrary to the counsel to keep far from the door (5:8).
- Circumstances such as timing and place matter; twilight and dark (7:9) picture the conditions in which we are most vulnerable.
- Ruin typically begins with careless drift toward temptation rather than with a single decisive choice.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask why the young man's choice of street and hour (7:8-9) mattered so much before any temptation even spoke.
- Discuss the times and circumstances in which we are most spiritually vulnerable, and how to plan around them.
- Reflect on what it means to keep God's word as the apple of the eye in the moments when we feel least watchful.

Question 9

Student Question:

Proverbs 7:1-27 traces a young man, void of understanding, being led step by step toward ruin, while 5:18-19 holds up the joy of faithful married love. Drawing these together, how would you describe God's good design for marriage as the lifelong one-flesh union of one man and one woman, and how does that design define what sexual faithfulness and purity mean for both the married and the single? Why is this God's gift rather than His grudging restriction?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The center of the chapter is the temptress's speech, and the father records it to expose the machinery of deceit. She is described as subtil of heart (7:10) and persistent, lying in wait at every corner (7:12). When she meets the young man, she overwhelms him with flattery and false intimacy, claiming I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows (7:14), cloaking sin in the language of religion. Sin often borrows holy words to make itself respectable.

Her seduction proceeds by stages: she tells him she came forth to seek him and has found him (7:15), making him feel uniquely desired; she appeals to comfort and the senses (7:16-17); and she assures him there is no danger, for the man is not at home and will not return until the appointed day (7:18-20). With her much fair speech she caused him to yield (7:21). The deceit is total, promising love, safety, and significance, while concealing the ruin to come.

The outcome is rendered with devastating images. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks (7:22), till a dart strike through

his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life (7:23). The animals do not perceive the danger until it is too late. So with the one who is deceived by sin.

The doctrinal weight here, set against the joy of 5:18–19, is the goodness of God’s design for marriage and the deceit of every counterfeit. God created humanity male and female and joined one man and one woman in a lifelong, one-flesh covenant (Genesis 2:24). Within that covenant, love and faithfulness are God’s good gift, a fountain of joy. Outside it, what calls itself love is in fact a snare that costs the soul. For both the married and the single, sexual faithfulness means keeping our hearts and bodies for the place God designed, whether in marriage or in honorable singleness. This is not God withholding good from us; it is God protecting the good He gave.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Temptation works by deceit, often borrowing religious and loving language to make sin appear safe and even noble (7:14–15).
- Seduction proceeds in stages, appealing to the desire to feel uniquely wanted, to the senses, and to a false sense of safety (7:15–20).
- The animal images (7:22–23) show that the deceived do not perceive the danger until it has already destroyed them.
- God’s design, marriage as the lifelong one-flesh union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24), defines faithfulness for the married and purity for the single alike.
- Faithfulness within God’s design is a good gift and a source of joy (5:18–19), while every counterfeit is ultimately a snare against the soul (7:23).
- This is the heaviest doctrinal point of the lesson and should be taught as God’s loving protection of a genuine good, not as arbitrary restriction.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask how temptation today dresses itself in the language of love, safety, and even spirituality, just as in 7:14–15.
- Discuss why the animal images (7:22–23) are such fitting pictures of how deception blinds us to real danger.
- Reflect together on how seeing marriage and purity as God’s good gift, rather than as restriction, strengthens our resolve to be faithful.

Question 10

Student Question:

Across Proverbs 5 through 7, the father pleads, decline not to her ways, go not astray in her paths (7:25), and instead guard the heart in advance. Looking back over this whole passage, name one specific way you sense the Lord Jesus forming you toward greater purity, faithfulness, or wisdom, and what is the next concrete step of obedience He is calling you to take?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The chapter closes with the father's direct and urgent appeal. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth (7:24). The case study is finished; now comes the plea. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths (7:25). The warning aims at the heart, the inner direction of the life, because that is where the path begins.

He sums up the cost with a final, weighty image: she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her (7:26). This is the crucial corrective to pride. The casualties are not only the weak; many strong men have fallen. No one should imagine himself too wise, too disciplined, or too spiritual to be at risk. The strongest are warned to walk humbly.

The closing verse is stark: Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death (7:27). The whole pleasant-seeming path, with all its flattery and promised joy, ends at the grave. This is the bitter end of which 5:4 first warned, now made unmistakable. The contrast with the blessed fountain of 5:18 could not be sharper.

Yet we must not leave the class only in the shadow of this warning. The same Scripture that exposes the way of death points to the God who is rich in mercy. For any who carry the wounds of past sin in this area, there is real hope. God calls us to repentance and to purity, and in Christ He offers cleansing, forgiveness, and new life (1 John 1:9). The aim is not despair but a humble, grateful resolve to walk in wisdom from this day forward, guarding the heart in advance because we have come to trust and love the Father who is speaking.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The final appeal aims at the heart and its inner direction (7:25), because that is where the path of folly or wisdom truly begins.
- Even strong and capable people have fallen (7:26); this guards against the pride that imagines itself immune.
- The pleasant-seeming path ends in death (7:27), the unmistakable fulfillment of the bitter end warned of in 5:4.
- Guarding the heart in advance, before temptation speaks, is the consistent counsel of these chapters.
- For those burdened by past sin, the message is hope, not despair; God calls to repentance and offers cleansing and new life in Christ (1 John 1:9).
- Purity is to be pursued out of reverent love for God and trust in His good design, the fear of the Lord that is the controlling theme of Proverbs.

Discussion Prompts

- Ask why the warning that many strong men have fallen (7:26) is such an important guard against spiritual pride.
- Discuss how guarding the heart in advance (7:25) is more effective than trying to resist once we are already at the door.

- Close by reflecting on the hope of forgiveness and new life in Christ for any who repent, and the call to walk in purity from here forward.