

The Book of Proverbs

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

5:1-7:27

Picture a father sitting down with a son he loves, not to lecture him but to protect him. He has lived long enough to see good men ruined and good homes broken, and he cannot bear the thought of his child stumbling into the same pit. So he leans in close and speaks plainly about something most of us would rather not discuss in church. He talks about desire, about temptation, and about the kind of love that lasts a lifetime. That is the tone of Proverbs 5 through 7. It is the voice of a parent who wants you to be happy, who knows that some of the deepest joys and some of the deepest sorrows in this life come through the same door.

What strikes you first, if you read these chapters slowly, is how honest they are. Scripture does not pretend that temptation is unattractive. It names the smooth speech, the flattering invitation, the way sin dresses itself up to look like life. But it also tears the costume off and shows you what lies underneath. The path that promises sweetness, the father warns, leads down to bitterness, and her steps take hold on death. This is not God being a killjoy. This is a loving Father showing you the cliff edge so you do not walk off it in the dark.

And yet, in the very middle of all the warning, there is a fountain of pure joy. Tucked into chapter 5 is one of the most tender pictures of marriage anywhere in the Bible. Rejoice with the wife of your youth, the father says. Let her love satisfy you. Here is the great secret these chapters mean to teach you. Faithfulness is not deprivation. It is delight kept where God designed it to flourish. The same God who fenced the path away from the stranger opened a wide, glad meadow inside the covenant of marriage and said, in effect, here, drink your fill.

So we come to these chapters with both gratitude and reverence. We thank God for the goodness of His design, for marriage as a lifelong, one-flesh gift between a husband and a wife, and for the purity He calls every one of us to whether we are married or single. And we take seriously the danger of folly, which is never trivial because it is never private. Sin done in the dark is still done before the eyes of the Lord. Wisdom, then, is learning to love what God loves and to flee what destroys, not grudgingly but gladly, because we have come to trust the heart of the Father who is speaking.

Group Discussion: Why do you think God placed such an extended, plainspoken warning about unfaithfulness right alongside such a joyful celebration of married love, and what does holding these two together teach us about how God views our desires?

Personal Reflection: Where in your own life do you most need to guard your heart in advance, as Proverbs urges, rather than waiting until you are already standing at the door of temptation?

Read Proverbs 5:1-7:27

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?

6. 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?
7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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?
10. 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?

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Genesis 2:24, God's original design of one-flesh marriage; Matthew 5:27–28, Jesus locating purity in the heart and not merely the act; Hebrews 13:4, marriage held in honor and the marriage bed kept undefiled; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20, fleeing immorality because our bodies belong to the Lord; 1 John 1:9, the cleansing and grace God gives to those who confess and repent

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