

Proverbs – Wisdom that Works - Part 10

Anatomy of Adultery – Proverbs 6:20-7:27

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Aug. 15th, 2021

Intro

- Our topic this morning is serious, sobering, and sensitive. Adultery is a topic I wish I did not need to address, but the fact is that it is in our world and is addressed in the Word. The command not to commit adultery is found in the ten commandments (Ex. 20:14) and was punishable by death according to the law of God through Moses (Lev. 20:10). This betrayal of trust is a sin with serious consequences. It is a sobering topic because of the devastation it leaves behind, like the aftermath of a tornado that rips through a community. It is a sensitive topic because some, if not most in this room, have been affected by it personally to differing degrees. For some of us, it is hidden. For others, it is well known.
- Because God knows what is in our hearts, and He knows what is in the world, He, as a good loving Father would, seeks to warn us to protect us from falling into this trap that causes great pain and harm to ourselves and others. Let us be wise and well warned. Let us listen to our Heavenly Father and learn to count the cost, recognize the trap, and fortify our defenses so that we would be free from this confining, life-destroying trap and embrace the good life of hope and a future God intends for us. Please open up your Bibles to Proverbs chapter six, starting with verse twenty.

Proverbs 6:20-25 NIV

My son, keep your father's command and do not forsake your mother's teaching. 21 Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. 22 When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. 23 For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life, 24 keeping you from your neighbor's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman. 25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.

- Each of these sections or speeches all start similarly with a call to listen, pay attention, and treasure these things in your heart. By living them out, they will help you, protect you, and guide you. This section is the same. These speeches start the same way, which tells us that we are prone not to listen, not pay attention, not treasure these things in our hearts, and we follow our own way. So become a student of these passages, give effort and energy to them, don't let this series and the words of these passages just slide off of you into the pool of forgetfulness.
- God's teaching and His wisdom will guide you, guard you, and be a companion to you. It will provide light on your journey and show you the paths you should take. It will point out traps and snares to you so you can avoid them. God's wisdom will keep you from giving in to the temptation of an affair. The cost of adultery is severe, it is certain, and it is unceasing. God's wisdom highlights the cost.

Count the cost

Proverbs 6:26 NIV

For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread, but another man's wife preys on your very life.

- *Severe*—using an “escort service” or seeing a prostitute does have a cost to it. It will cost you money and a whole lot more (see 1 Cor. 6:13-20, Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:5, 1 Thess. 4:1-8). Having an affair with another married person will cost you even more, for that person preys on your very life. Having an affair takes away what is most treasured and precious to you: trust—of your spouse and others; relationships—with your family and friends; honor—in your compromise, not keeping your word; lively hood—possibly losing your job and reputation; self-respect and self-esteem; sensitivity to God and others. These things will lead you to a downward spiral.

Proverbs 6:27-29 NIV

Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? 28 Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? 29 So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished.

- *Certain*—the consequences to an affair are certain. No one will go unpunished. There are no loopholes. As certain as embers in your lap will burn your clothes, or walking on embers will scorch your feet, the “fiery passion” that you feel will certainly burn you. No one involved in an affair goes unharmed.

Proverbs 6:30-35 NIV

People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. 31 Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. 32 But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself. 33 Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away. For jealousy arouses a husband’s fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge. 35 He will not accept any compensation; he will refuse a bribe, however great it is.

- *Unceasing*—someone who does not have a spouse will pay a steep price for their indiscretion. However, a person who has a spouse and then commits adultery has no sense and they destroy themselves. They set their own house on fire. Pain and disgrace and shame will be theirs. There will always be an asterisk by their name when people tell the whole story of their lives or read about them on Wikipedia (for example, King David, Bill Hybels, Bill Gates, etc.). Those who have an affair also have to deal with the wrath of the offended spouse in whatever form it will come. The cost is not just one time. It is unceasing.

“Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.” — Ravi Zacharias

- What is stated in this quote is true and insightful. Ironically, the person who penned these words was Ravi Zacharias (a world-famous Christian apologist caught in sexual sin). He knew the cost, and he, his family, and his ministry have paid dearly. What is scary about this is that he knew this, and he dove in headlong anyway. So knowing an affair will cost you by itself may not be enough to stop you. There are a couple of other things that will help.

Recognize the trap

- The following section is a talk on the same subject, providing an extended illustration of an affair, starting with the dire call to listen and live. From this chapter, we learn the elements and thought processes of those who drink the poison and walk into this trap.

Proverbs 7:1-5 NIV

My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. 2 Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. 3 Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and to insight, “You are my relative.” 5 They will keep you from the adulterous woman, from the wayward woman with her seductive words.

- God’s Word in our hearts to sustain us, the gospel glasses on our eyes so we can see clearly, the ring of reminder on our finger, the relationship with the Spirit of God like a close sibling, these things will guard us against having an affair.
- He next tells the tale of Dr. Dimwit with a Ph.D. in adultery and Mrs. Marriagebreaker, who turns out to be a very lovey landmine. From their story, we will learn the ingredients of the corrosive cocktail that are found in affairs.

Direction of desire

Proverbs 7:6-9 NIV

At the window of my house I looked down through the lattice. 7 I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who had no sense. 8 He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house 9 at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.

- A person that has no sense walks down the street called desire to find what he can find and see what he can see. When it is time for the person to be “calling it a day” and head home, he chooses to move in the direction of opportunity (staying late after work, going to the bar, etc.).

Openness of opportunity

Proverbs 7:10-13 NIV

Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. 11 (She is unruly and defiant, her feet never stay at home; 12 now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) 13 She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said:

- Often when you are looking for trouble, trouble will find you. Here is a willing partner, someone who is looking and advertising for this opportunity. This is not a passive person, but someone on the hunt who will insert herself and make the first move.

Veneer of virtue

Proverbs 7:14 NIV

“Today I fulfilled my vows, and I have food from my fellowship offering at home.

- The person will most often present themselves as a “good person” with some morals, even religious morals. This person can’t be so bad . . . they are a church-going person and involved . . .

Seduction of selection

Proverbs 7:15 NIV

So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!

- No, you are not some random person. You are special. I have been looking for you. I have found you! Everyone wants to feel special, and we are especially vulnerable if we don’t feel that way. This lie is so very sweet . . .

Promise of pleasure

Proverbs 7:16-18 NIV

I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloe and cinnamon. 18 Come, let’s drink deeply of love till morning; let’s enjoy ourselves with love!

- This is a person who is ready, willing, and able. They have prepped and prepared. They have the perfect place, a palace of pleasure ready for a long deep drink . . .

Freedom of fear

Proverbs 7:19-20 NIV

My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. 20 He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon.”

- To bring more assurance that this is a “good thing,” there is assurance that you will not get caught, so there is nothing to be afraid of.

Proverbs 7:21-23 NIV

With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. 22 All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose 23 till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.

- It tastes so good, it is so smooth, but the poison will destroy you. In the state of Illinois, more than 17,000 deer are killed because they are hit by vehicles. The main time that this happens is late fall, because the deer have a one-track mind. They are so focused on finding a mate they throw caution to the wind and wind up dead. This illustration is true of us as well.

Proverbs 7:24-27 NIV

Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. 25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths. 26 Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. 27 Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

- The conclusion is to listen to wisdom and follow it, don't follow the way of adultery. Mrs. Marriagebreaker is a killer, not just any killer but a serial killer who has slain millions. (For example, the site Ashley Madison whose tag line is "Life is short. Have an affair." Which currently has 60 million users worldwide.

Fortify the defenses

- *Treasure wisdom* and wisdom will treasure you—guard the teaching, and the teaching will guard you. The Word of God will help you—listen and live!!!
- *Guard your heart*—take stock of what is in your heart. Keep tabs of what is there. Don't let desire lead you astray. Ask God and others for help.
- *Steer clear* of the person—don't walk in their direction and follow them into compromise . . .
- *Rekindle your love*—if you are struggling in your marriage, these are the steps you can take that will help you to keep the home fires burning (remember/repent/return Rev. 2:5).
- *Walk the road of redemption*—if you have gone down this road, repent and walk in the way of Christ—which does not mean you will have to pay the price, redeem the rest of the story.