

“INFIDELITY’S COST VS. FIDELITY’S BLESSINGS”

**I. Introduction**

- A. As we can see from this and many other passages, the Bible has no qualms about speaking directly to the subject of human sexuality.
1. It certainly does not sensationalize sex, but it does not ignore it either.
  2. It does not deny the goodness of sex, but it is also up front about its dangers.
  3. One commentator sums up the Bible’s perspective quite well when he says that “Sex is like fire. In the fireplace it keeps us warm. Outside the fireplace it burns the house down.” [Ortlund, 90]
  4. Scripture makes it clear the only God-ordained context for sexual expression is marriage.
  5. To use the commentator’s analogy, marriage is the “fireplace” for sex, and God wants us to keep the fire in that fireplace burning hot.
- B. This is the message that the father is conveying to his son in Proverbs 5.
1. He wants his son to know both the dangers and the blessings that are involved in our sexuality.
  2. It should not surprise us that the book of Proverbs would have a lot to say about the sexual dimension of human life.
  3. While sex is by its very nature one of the most private aspects of life (at least it should be), it is also one of the most powerful drives that we experience.

4. If we want to live wisely, we are going to have to learn how to handle this part of our lives.
  5. As powerful as sexual desire is, the Christian is commanded to submit it to the Lordship of Christ and to the standard of purity that is set forth in God's Word.
- C. One other thing that should be said before we begin our study of this passage is that while it is addressed to a young man the teaching that it sets forth applies to all people of all ages.
1. Women need to be on guard against sexual temptation just as much as men do.
  2. Moreover, many of the principles that are taught in this passage can be applied to all sorts of temptation, not just temptations of a sexual nature.

## **II. The Misleading Appeal of the Forbidden Woman**

- A. The chapter begins with the father once again urging his son to listen to his instruction.
1. Here is a grown man speaking frankly to prepare his son for the temptations that he will encounter in this world.
  2. We get a clear sense that this father knows what he is talking about.
  3. He has experienced the temptations of which he speaks.
  4. He has witnessed the destruction that sexual sin brings about in a person's life.
  5. For this reason, the son would be a fool to disregard his father's teaching on this matter, and so would we if we disregarded it.
- B. In addition to listening to wise instruction, this son also needs to guard his speech.

1. As it says in verse 2, his lips need to guard knowledge.
  2. And notice how this is directly followed by a reference to the lips of the forbidden woman.
  3. This shows us that we can protect ourselves from the dishonest speech of sexual temptation by cultivating pure and honest habits of speech in our own lives.
  4. If we guard our lips, we will be guarded from the alluring lips of the forbidden woman.
- C. As the father begins to describe this seductress, he does not hide the fact that she is alluring.
1. Her lips drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil.
  2. But the father also pulls back the veil to reveal that this woman is not at all what she appears to be.
  3. What seems to be sweet in the beginning will prove to be bitter in the end.
  4. What seems so exciting at first will actually lead to death.
- D. The father makes the same point again in chapter 7, where he tells this story to illustrate the danger of sexual sin: "For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart. She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home; now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, 'I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows; so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; I have perfumed my

bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home.’ With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life. And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.” (vv. 6-27)

- E. The amount of attention that Proverbs gives to this theme makes it clear that God wants us to be prepared for sexual temptation.
1. We need to train ourselves so that we are able to see through the allure of things that are seductive.
  2. The things that appear so attractive in the heat of the moment are really only a thin veneer, covering over something that is so repulsive that you would immediately recoil from it if you saw it.
  3. We need to develop the skill of being able to see this.
  4. Wisdom sees a temptation in light of what it will produce in the end.
- F. One thing that we should learn from the example of the father in this passage is that Christian parents need to prepare their children so that they will be able to live upright lives in a sexually confused and sexually chaotic world.
1. You don’t have to look very far to see how confused our society is when it comes to sex.
  2. The world celebrates sexual license, but it has no idea that it is playing with fire.

3. What the father says about the forbidden woman is true of so many in the world today: “she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.” (v. 6)

### **III. The Brink of Utter Ruin**

- A. In the second part of our passage, the father continues his warning by telling his sons to keep away from this forbidden women.
  1. He says, “do not go near the door of her house.”
  2. This is pretty straightforward, but it is a principle that is often ignored.
  3. When it comes to sexual temptation, as well as other kinds of temptation, one of the best things that we can do is to avoid things that are sources of temptation.
  4. If there are websites, television programs, or movies that entice you into impure ways of thinking, you should avoid them.
  5. If there are places or people that prove to be sources of temptation, you need to stay away from them.
  6. It may not seem very heroic, but in this matter the way to victory is the way of flight.
  7. As Charles Spurgeon once quipped, “the best antidote to a temptation is very often a good pair of legs and the king’s highway.”
  8. This was the tactic that Joseph employed when he was tempted by Potiphar’s wife.
  9. He got away from her fast as his legs could carry him.

- B. Another point that the father raises as he instructs his son in this matter is the wide-scale devastation that sexual sin brings about in a person's life.
1. In verses 9 and 10 we see that infidelity causes a person to neglect his responsibilities.
  2. The energy that should have been invested in things that would bring him honor are spent instead on things that will bring him disgrace.
  3. In verses 11 through 13, the emphasis is upon the regret that can settle in when a person finally realizes the error of his ways.
  4. It is a sad picture of a man who is condemned by his own conscience.
  5. And then in verse 14 the father shows how sexual sin often leads to public humiliation and ruin.
  6. We have seen so many sad examples of this in recent years.
  7. I am sure that we can all think of a number of politicians, sports figures, and televangelists who have fallen into disgrace because of sexual sin.
  8. Such examples should serve as strong deterrents for us, opening our eyes to see the folly of giving in to temptation.

#### **IV. Drink from Your Own Well**

- A. In the last section of our passage, we have a good example of how the Bible not only warns us against sexual sin but also encourages us to express our sexuality in the proper ways.
1. This is what the father means when he instructs his son to "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well."

2. God did not create us as sexual beings so that we would have to constantly suppress the desires that he gave us.
  3. He intends for these desires to be fulfilled in the proper context: the relationship between husband and wife.
  4. The biblical attitude toward sexual desire is not one of absolute suppression but one that tells us to wait until those desires can be properly expressed.
- B. This passage shows us that marital love is a source of fulfillment and happiness.
1. It also tells us that the proper expression of sexual love within the context of marriage protects us from trying to satisfy our sexual desires in sinful ways.
  2. The father tells his son to “rejoice in the wife of your youth.”
  3. This is something that applies to both husbands and wives, and it applies even when husbands and wives are no longer young.
  4. Marriage is not a perpetual honeymoon, but this does not mean that the youthful passion of newlyweds should be viewed as a phase that eventually fades away.
  5. Instead, husbands and wives should continually cultivate their love for each other so that it blossoms and grows deeper and stronger with time.
- C. This is what the father is talking about when he tells his son to be intoxicated always in his wife’s love.
1. As you can see by the footnote in the ESV, the term translated as “intoxicated” in verse 19 is the same word that is translated as “led astray” in verse 23.
  2. The Bible tells us that we should allow ourselves to be “led astray” by the love of our spouse.

3. In other words, we have God's permission -- in fact, his command -- to be swept away by our spouses.
- D. Notice also that the father says that this is something that we should do "always."
1. It is not always easy to cultivate this kind of love.
  2. It takes effort.
  3. You have to work at it.
  4. It is all too easy to allow the things that irritate you about your spouse to become the things that determine your general attitude toward him or her.
  5. But that is a serious mistake.
  6. Not only will it open you up to temptation, but it will also result in a joyless marriage, which is not at all pleasing to God.
  7. This passage makes it clear that if you are married, God commands you to strive to be as happy as you can be in your marriage.

## V. Conclusion

- A. Sexual sins are among the most painful and consequential sins that a person can commit.
1. At the same time, the romantic and sexual realm of human experience has the potential to bring immense happiness, pleasure, and fulfillment.
  2. This helps us to understand why the Bible often uses sexual metaphors to describe our relationship with God.



3. On the one hand, spiritual unfaithfulness is likened to prostitution and adultery.
  4. On the other hand, the communion that exists between Christ and his church is compared to the loving bond between husband and wife.
- B. This should help us to keep our sexuality in proper perspective.
1. The reason why we have to flee from sexual impurity is because it is inconsistent with our identity as God's beloved people.
  2. The reason why we need to work at cherishing our spouses is because marriage is a picture of our relationship with Christ.
  3. That being said, we also need to remember that even when marital love is at its best, it is never to be viewed as the supreme good.
  4. After all, Jesus told us that the institution of marriage would not exist in heaven.
  5. This does not mean that the joy that is found in a good marriage will be lacking in heaven.
  6. Heaven will be the ultimate experience of everything that marriage stands for, both for those who were married in this life and for those who were not.
  7. This is why it is so important that we not handle our sexuality in a careless or selfish or exploitative manner.
  8. Sex should be treated with both solemnity and joy, because it has been given to us in order to help us understand what it means to be united to Jesus Christ.