

PROVERBS: WISDOM FOR LIFE

5. The Truth About Adultery

Exodus 20:14; Proverbs 5:1-21

Exodus 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.

We live in a world where SEX is THE sin! EVERY medium known to our society plays to the sensual. Sex is used to sell everything! Even computer code is called “sexy”

In a culture that has **made an idol** out of **sensual pleasure** the average man and woman thinks of the 10 commandments — and **especially the 7th** commandment as an outdated — repressive — Victorian morality.

But every one of these commandments — and this 7th commandment — begins with — is wrapped up in — and ends with the redeeming love of God.

Exodus 20:1–2 And God spoke all these words, saying, ²“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

The 7th commandment, rooted in the story of God’s amazing redeeming love — IS A BIG DEAL! It’s a radical declaration of how our sexuality matters profoundly to God. The one-flesh union between a man and a woman not only has the potential of producing new life; but when it is framed by the covenant of marriage it reflects something far greater — our union with Christ. THAT is why our sexuality matters so much to God — and THAT is why it should matter so much to us.

We’re going to start by saying that we are desperate for God’s wisdom concerning sexuality and sexual desire. If we want wisdom concerning human sexuality, we have to depend upon the designer of human sexuality. If we want wisdom concerning what is good or bad, right or wrong concerning sexual behavior, we can’t refer to our fallen desires, fallen emotions or fallen passions. Christopher Yuan articulates this brilliantly:

Christopher Yuan — *“Our nature has been corrupted by sin.... This corruption is pervasive, impacting the entire human race. “None is righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). This corruption is also pervasive in affecting the entire person. For each of us, sin affects all our faculties: actions, words, thoughts, and desires—including our sexual desires.”*¹

We are desperate for our sexuality to be shaped by the wisdom of God in the Word of God. The Scriptures tell us that God is the creator of sex. He created sex not only for reproduction but also for enjoyment. He not only created sex, He informs us that He created sex to be experienced and enjoyed in the context of a lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual union. And within the marriage relationship He even defines sexual intimacy as being primarily about the other persons joy and pleasure. The husband’s love for his wife is expressed in his desire to give his wife sexual pleasure; and the wife’s love for her husband is expressed in her desire to give her husband sexual pleasure. It’s radical to think that we can actually please God and glorify God in our sexual behavior. God also informs us that premarital sex is destructive. It’s not an act of love. It’s an expression of idolatry — self worship. It’s an act of taking pleasure at the expense of the other! Extra-marital sex (sex outside of marriage) is destructive. It destroys the bond of marriage, it destroys homes and children’s lives. THAT is why God says, “You shall not commit adultery.”

The big question for each of us when it comes to our sexuality and our sexual behavior should be: *God, what do You have to say about this?*

If you're a man — the big question should be: *God, How do you define my sexuality as a male?* If you’re a woman — the big question should be: *God, How do You define my sexuality as a woman?* If you’re single — the big question should be: *God, How do You want me to live and act in light of my sexual desires?* If you’re married — the big question should be: *God, How do You want me to deal with sexual desire in relationship to my spouse? How do You want me to deal with sexual attraction from someone who’s not my spouse?*

DON’T MISS THIS — *Those* questions are at the very core of our human existence; at the core of what it means to be human! Here’s why: God made us to depend

¹ Christopher Yuan; Holy Sexuality and the Gospel.

upon His wisdom and instruction. To live without the Word of God and the Wisdom of God informing us, defining us, and directing us is to assign ourselves to a sub-human existence. That's especially true regarding sex.

God made man and woman to live on the platform of His Word and His will. He intended us to build our sexual identity and sex life on the platform of His Word and wisdom. Rather than build their lives on the platform of God's revealed Word men and women have chosen to build their lives on a platform of lies. That platform cannot support real human life — and THAT'S why **everything's** broken in this world!

Think of the countless broken lives and broken hearts in the world because men and women decided to build their sexuality and the sexual behavior on the platform of their own fallen desires and feelings rather than the Word of God. Just think about middle school, high school and college. Guys use girls to gratify their sexual desires. Girls use sex to get guys in the hope of gratifying emotional desires — and the result is that everything's broken! Broken hearts, broken promises, broken bodies, broken lives.

Think of the countless marriages and families that are broken because men and women chose to be informed by and directed by their own fallen wisdom, desires and emotions concerning sexual and emotional desires in marriage. Some of you here tonight are broken and limping because of sexual sin and adultery.

That's why God the Holy Spirit inspired Solomon to write this portion of Proverbs to his son.

PROVERBS 5

¹ My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, ² that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge. ³ For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, ⁴ but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

God calls this woman **forbidden**. The **KJV** reads it as **strange**. She's **forbidden** because she is not the man's wife. She's **strange** because she's a stranger to the

realm of deep personal intimacy that he knows and enjoys with his wife — and **she should be.**

Men — your emotional and sexual intimacy is to be **derived** from and **given to** your wife alone. (The converse is true for the woman.) You cannot consider another woman on this planet as a PLAN B for emotional and sexual intimacy (and wives, you cannot consider another man)! When your fallen emotions and desires say you can go to another woman for emotional and sexual intimacy remember that God calls that woman FORBIDDEN — STRANGE!

In the light of **Proverbs 4:23** (Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life) we understand that the lips of the forbidden woman are **not the cause** of adultery. Sin is not rooted outside of me. Circumstances and relationships are merely **the location** in which the sin in my heart is revealed. The origin of sin is the heart.

WE NEED TO GET THIS — In this example in **Proverbs 5** the husband *worships* his way into adultery. He loves something more than God. He has bought into the lie of lies — he believes he can find life apart from God. His wife's heart will be crushed and broken, his family is going to be wrecked **because** God's will and God's glory are trumped by his desire to have a taste of the lips of a woman that is not his wife! **That** is more important than the will of God for him as a husband. He has decided that he does not need his identity to be defined by the love of God. He's decided that he doesn't want to find his joy in living for the glory of God. He has decided that he will find his identity and joy in a few minutes of sexual pleasure experienced outside of the clearly revealed plan of God concerning marriage and sex.

³ For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,

We said that the words of this woman are not the cause of a man committing adultery. They simply **play to the idol** that he has set up in his own heart. Those words **play to the desire** for emotional and physical gratification that he has set up in his heart — a desire that actually trumps the love of God and the will of God.

To desire emotional intimacy, respect and affirmation is natural. But God has said that it's the husband's business to be placing the needs of his wife **before** his own desires. The alluring lips and words of this woman are only effective because at some point the husband's **desire** became a **demand** — *"I MUST have the emotional and physical gratification I desire."*

By this point your wife is no longer the object and recipient of your sacrificial love. By this point your wife has become the obstacle to your desire. It changes the way you perceive her words and actions. It changes the way you treat her. It changes the way you look at her. You're suddenly blinded to the beauty of her life and all you can see is her flaws.

KNOW THIS MEN — The enemy of your soul will be glad to place a woman in your path who will play to the idol in your life! She will offer you everything you *believe* you NEED! She will be right there telling you that you **deserve** that desire you've allowed to become a **demand**. She positions herself to satisfy whatever the thing is that is greater than your need for God! (AGAIN — the same came be true for the wife concerning a man who is not her husband).

We'll pick up in verse 4

⁴ but

in contrast to how she looked and sounded

⁴ but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

⁵ Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol;

⁶ she does not ponder the path of life;

she does not ponder the path of life — Wrapped up in the word **ponder** is the concept of scales — the kind of scales that were used to determine something's true value. The woman who plays *to* and plays *on* the idolatry in a husband's heart weighs out the value of her wardrobe, her body, her make-up — weighs out her options as to which man she wants and how to get him. She **ponders** all of that. **But she doesn't ponder** the path of life

QUOTE: Pulpit Commentary — (She doesn't ponder) the way that has life for its object, (She doesn't ponder) the way which in itself is full of life and safety.²

She doesn't put those things in the balance to see their value in the light of eternity — in the light of relationship with God. She's not interested in spiritual things. She's interested in one thing, having a man — regardless of what it will do to the man, the man's wife — the man's kids.

By the way — the man isn't interested at all in where her life is headed. He isn't thinking about her soul — her eternal destiny. He sees her as the thing that will serve his desires that he has set up over and against God.

⁶ she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.

Solomon makes it clear that the person who **does not ponder** is **going to wander!** The woman has refused to be informed, defined and directed by the creator. In her value system the Word of God and the Wisdom of God carried no weight — was of no value. As a result, she's clueless. She has no idea that she is wandering on the ledge of the abyss.

⁷ And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. ⁸ Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house

Keep to a path that's far from her. Don't even go near to her doorstep. We might say — Don't even go near to her desk or her office. Don't go to your favorite coffee shop if she's there.

⁹ lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless, ¹⁰ lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,

DON'T MISS THIS — One of the great themes of the Book of Proverbs is the importance of **looking ahead** to see where your **actions** will **lead you**. When it comes to our sexual identity and our sexual behavior, we must let God define us

² *The Pulpit Commentary: Proverbs*. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (109). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

and inform us and direct us **in the little moments**. That choice, that decision, that course of action in that little moment is headed towards God or away from God; into life and safety, or emotional, spiritual and even physical devastation. Solomon gives a clear description of a man who destroyed his life for an adulterous relationship.

How does a married man end up like that? Rather than worshipping Jesus and finding his joy and identity in Jesus, he set up as an idol the idea of having a woman other than his wife (the one Solomon called a “forbidden woman”) who will gratify his deepest emotional and physical needs. He goes to her door; goes to her desk at work, goes to her office at work, goes to the coffee shop or gym at a day or a time he knows she’ll be there, **because he sees this woman as his functional savior**.

DON’T MISS THIS — Adultery (or any sexual sin) is at its core idolatry. Idolatry has a total disregard for Jesus as the true savior, and a total disregard for the utter destruction that inevitably follows — because his idol can’t save him! It can only destroy him and everyone and everything around him.

Friends — without fail, idols always fail. Idols always lie! Your fallen emotions, fallen desires and fallen passions tell you that going to her is actually a right thing and that there’s a way for this whole thing to actually work. But Solomon says — NO!

The destruction is incomprehensible.

QUOTE: Wiersbe — *the most expensive thing in the world is sin.*

So costly that only the death of Jesus on the cross could pay for it! Then on the human level — another man now has his wife and his children. Another man has gotten all of his wealth. There have been men who have thrown it all away for what? For what? Don’t end up such a person. That’s what Solomon is saying. How tragic that so many men don’t think beyond their fallen emotions and desires.

¹¹ and at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed,

Perhaps sexually transmitted disease. But for sure — your soul so deeply wounded that it takes a toll on your body. There you are — You're old, alone, and your sick! And again, for what? For what?

¹² and you say, “How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! ¹³ I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors.

Your life is a wreck. Your spouse is a wreck. Your kids are a wreck! The loss is staggering — and you say to yourself, “I was an idiot!” Which in the realm of spiritual warfare — is right where the enemy of your soul wanted to get you all along — because it's there that he bludgeons you with condemnation until you doubt the love of God. It's like being caught in the impact zone in 20 foot swell at the Wedge in Newport Beach, Ca.

God was relentless in expressing His care for you while you were walking into sin. The conviction of the Holy Spirit was God caring enough to deliver you **from you**. The rebuke of godly, loving, brothers and sisters was God caring enough to help you to see yourself as you really are.

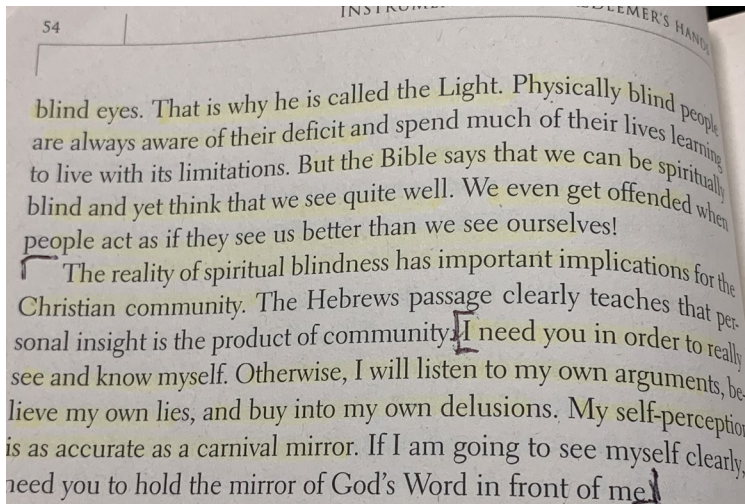
When I hear of my peers, guys in ministry, or people that I've known growing up in the Lord who have fallen into sexual sin I shudder. I look at my wife and my kids and think — “Lord, I could lose them — I'm made of the same stuff those other guys are made of.”

HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS — God **cares enough** to **warn me.....** that *I* can end up like the man in **Proverbs 5**.

¹⁴ I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation.”

TWO THINGS HERE — ¹. He is on the **brink of utter ruin** — NOT utterly ruined. There is no utter ruin for the child of God. You belong to God. But as a child of God you will sow what you reap. Wrecked — but not lost. ². All of this happened while he was in the company of God's people! This can speak to his hypocrisy (Serving, talking Jesus talk, singing worship songs while he was worshipping something other than Jesus). It can also speak of the role of Christian community as the expression of God's care leading up to his sin

QUOTE: Paul Tripp — Redeemed in the Hands of the Redeemer p. 54



Or it can be speaking of the role of Christian community in leading him to repentance and restoration.

15 Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.

16 Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets?

17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you.

QUOTE: Charles Bridges — *“Desire after forbidden enjoyments naturally springs from dissatisfaction with the blessings in possession. Enjoy then with thankfulness your own and desire not your neighbor’s well.”*

The cistern was a place where water was collected from rainfall in the middle east. The running springs speaks of fresh water. Your spouse is the place where God’s provision for your emotional and sexual needs are deposited. God intends marriage to be the place where sexual and emotional intimacy flow fresh and without fail.

DON'T MISS THIS — A man’s discontentment with God’s **divinely designed container** for emotional intimacy and sexual pleasure is a worship problem!

Husbands — If you start being critical of your wife’s physical flaws — that should be like the sound of a Tsunami warning siren in Hilo, Hawaii. That siren is telling

you that you have a worship problem. **You're dishonoring your wife's Creator.** You're saying that you would have made her better. (Again — this also speaks to the wife who is critical of her husband's physical flaws — dishonoring her husband's creator — saying that she would have made him better).

If you start being critical of your wife's emotional flaws you have a worship problem. You impugn the sovereign plans and purposes of God. You see, when you feel that your life is inconvenienced by who your spouse is, you have a problem with God's story for her life. If you have a problem with God's story for her life, you have a problem with God's story for your life. You don't see your marriage as the loving plan of the all-wise God to bring both of your stories together so that He might transform you for His glory. You begin to see your wife, not as God's perfect provision for your emotional and sexual needs — you see her as an obstacle to the emotional and sexual intimacy you demand. And at that point you are in the market for a new cistern — a new well. You are primed to believe that another woman can save you and give you those desires that you have set up against the desires and plan of God for your life.

**¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
¹⁹ a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated always in her love. ²⁰ Why should you be intoxicated, my son,
with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?**

Guys, I would encourage you to help her to be those things. Help her. How many of you men encourage your wife to be all that God has made them to be for the Lord's Glory and for your joy? As best as you can, spend on your wife — dote over her. But every husband can pray for his wife. Every husband can speak words of encouragement.

THINK BACK on how you regarded her when you were dating her. As far as you were concerned, she was the greatest gift of God you could ever find. I remember riding my bike over to Valerie's house thinking, *"Oh God please don't let her see me for what I am, or she'll kick me out. She's too good to be true. Lord, don't let me be a dork."* I could not imagine God having anything better for me than Valerie. Is your wife still like that for you? She should be. Let her know that SHE is the ONLY one!

I'm going to paraphrase the words of Solomon here: *Husbands — keep your eyes off any other woman's breasts.* Keep your eyes off of any other woman's body. Your eyes should be satisfied with your wife's body not another woman's.

It's not as if there's zero opportunities in the course of any given day to let your eyes get fixed on another woman's body — another woman's figure. But the more you invest your heart into your wife as the treasure of your life, the more you can't take your eyes off of her. When Valerie wakes up in the morning I will look at her and say — “You are so beautiful!” or “You're something else!” She will invariably say — “Ugh,” because she just woke up and crawled out of bed. When your wife becomes your treasure, you can look at her and think how beautiful and wonderful she is — even in what she might consider her least attractive moment.

For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths.

That can be great news or scary news! Depends on the path you're on. Depends on how you view the heart of God towards you.

²² The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. ²³ He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.

It's impossible to sin without being bound

John 8:34 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.*

Romans 6:16 *Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?*

The Bible says that sin is deceitful (Hebrews 3:13)! One of the deceitful things about sin is that it promises freedom but only brings slavery.

Sin deceives us into thinking that we can sin as much as we want and quit whenever we want. But the more we sin the stronger it binds us. This is so true in regard to sexual sin. Statistically — in a crowd the size of this Monday night study — there are a lot of men in bondage to pornography. They didn't start looking at

porn because they wanted to be in bondage. They started looking because they thought it would serve them!

There are countless numbers of men and women in one kind of bondage or another. They are seeking to be freed by all sorts of behavior modification programs or systems of religion.

We do not offer behavior modification. We don't offer a system of religion. We offer to you JESUS! JESUS IS THE HERO — the One who saves us from idols and from the power of sin.

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

I believe Jesus wants to do that in the lives of men and women reading these notes. I believe Jesus wants to do that in the lives of men and women you know and love.

Long before anyone breaks the 7th commandment they break the 1st and 2nd commandments

Exodus 20:3-4 ³*"You must not have any other god but me.* ⁴*"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind*

Repentance = the act of turning from an idol and (re)turning to God by trusting in Jesus Christ who is both **creator** and **redeemer**.