



Politics, Power and Promiscuity

Proverbs Chapter 5

TO: LEGISLATORS

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This past week Americans have witnessed several more sex scandals regarding political leaders. In the past several years' political leaders from New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Nevada and California—the leader of the IMF and the leader of the PGA—have all served to illustrate this age-old problem; nothing new here. Solomon addresses the volatile combination of power and politics and ensuing promiscuity in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The counsel and commands of the wisest man to ever live conveys this to his son in Chapter 5 and 7 of Proverbs. Rehoboam would someday follow his father to the throne of national leadership, but in the end, both would possess far more knowledge than obedience in this area. (Cf. 2 Chronicles 11:21). How about you?

I have outlined the whole of Chapter 5^d in a topical way. Keep in mind the context: a father is writing to his son to fend-off future sexual sin. This helps explain why the female is portrayed as the wicked person more than the man. However, any man who uses a woman this way is just as despicable. May God use this passage to help you fend-off all sexual temptations. We will discuss practical ways to keep yourself pure when we meet together. May He empower you with His indwelling Holy Spirit, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to live a life of holiness and honor in political service. Remember: To lose your moral authority is to lose your governing authority.

I. THE CONTRASTS REGARDING PROMISCUITY**A. PRUDENCE VS. POINTLESSNESS**

VSS. 1-2; 20

My son, give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding; that you may observe discretion and your lips may reserve knowledge.

Solomon invokes the “power words” of Proverbs—wisdom, understanding, discretion and knowledge—as he launches into his thesis on promiscuity. Everything about this sexual sin runs in contrast to these virtues related to thinking and acting smart. Notice the contrasting senselessness and near-sightedness of promiscuity in light of those aforementioned character qualities:

For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress and embrace the bosom of a foreigner?

Apart from the emotions of selfish sexual lust, promiscuity as a determined plan of action for the thinking person makes no sense whatsoever. As witnessed this past week, such is pointless as a moment's tryst most assuredly leads to devastating ruin—especially for those in office.

B. PLEASURE VS. PERDITION

VSS. 3-6

For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech;

In the Song of Solomon, this same speech depicting personal, sexual pleasure is used in the context of a good marriage: "Your lips, my bride, drip honey; honey and milk are under your tongue, and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon" (4:11). But used or allured by outside of marriage these God-made pleasures for married couples always yields disastrous results.

THE HELLISH RESULTS OF PROMISCUITY HAVE BEEN VIVIDLY PORTRAYED IN THE MEDIA THIS PAST WEEK

Such manifest results of sexual sin should send shivers of shock down the spine of every statesman. Such media-frenzied perdition (def: “utter destruction:

MEMBERS WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF FIRST-VOTES-BACK (MONDAY OR TUESDAY NIGHT)

THE CAPITOL FAMILY ROOM

DINNER SERVED

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complete ruin”) awaits every offender in public life. Solomon vividly, accurately and soberly captures this wrenching drama when he states of this person:

But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of Sheol. She does not ponder the path of life; her ways are unstable, she does not know it.

As explained in an endnote to this study, Solomon herein is speaking specifically of a prostitute. Nonetheless be it the sin adultery or prostitution the results are similarly devastating when one’s sin comes to the surface—even if it is not found out for 10 years. The cost in this area of one’s life is totally beyond comprehension! Solomon is saying that to commit this sin is to experience hell on earth.

II. THE COMMANDMENTS REGARDING PROMISCUITY

A. POSITIVE VS. 15

Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well.

States one commentator on this passage, “To ‘drink’ is a euphemism for enjoying a healthy sexual relationship within the confines of marriage. That relationship is referred to as ‘fresh water’ as opposed to that which runs through the gutters in the public square.”² (cf. Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 7:2-3, 5)

States Song of Solomon 4:9-10:

You have made my heart beat faster, my sister, my bride; you have made my heart beat faster with a single glance of your eyes, with a single strand of your necklace. How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than all kinds of spices!

There is nothing wrong with sex itself. It is rather the matter of marriage. Point III will serve to illustrate the reasons why, in practicality, God prohibits sex outside of marriage.

IF SEX WERE ALWAYS CONFINED TO MARRIAGE, THINK ABOUT HOW THE FOLLOWING WOULD DIMINISH IN SOCIETY: ABORTION, ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN, POVERTY, VENEREAL DISEASE, DIVORCE, CROWDED FAMILY LAW COURTS, ETC.

Herein manifest is the wisdom of God—prohibiting sex outside of wedlock. But as verse 15 and SOS suggests, sex is to be greatly enjoyed by married couples. It is a wonderful gift of God.

B. NEGATIVE VSS. 7-8

Now then, my sons, listen to me and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Keep your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house,

States the writer of Hebrews in relation to planning ahead in order to avoid tempting situations: “make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed” (12:13). Another way to say this in today’s terms is, “do not play with fire, lest you get burned.” Exodus 20:14 states, “You shall not commit adultery.” It is not worth trading in personal integrity, family trust and a lifelong career in governmental leadership for a moment of illicit pleasure. No way is it worth it!

III. THE FIVE DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES OF PROMISCUITY

A. FINANCIAL VSS. 9-10

Or you will give your vigor to others and your years to the cruel one; and strangers will be filled with your strength and your hard-earned goods will go to the house of an alien;

The Hebrew word for **strength** or **wealth** is *koach* which in context relates to a man’s ability to produce material possessions.³ Promiscuity jeopardizes his family’s future wealth—intended by God for the benefit of his wife and family—when instead it is diverted to another person, another household.



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B. PHYSICAL vs. 11

And you groan at your final end, when your flesh and your body are consumed;

Be this a reference to venereal disease or the mental and physical despondency that results from having to resign from office—a political leader’s involvement with promiscuity will in the end consume him or her. Hebrews 11:25 says that sin has its pleasure for a season. But, cautions Numbers 32:23: “Be sure your sin will find you out.” And when one is found out, the revelation will consume his or her life. States 1 Corinthians 6:18, in possible support of venereal disease being in view here: “Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.”

C. MENTAL vs. 12-13

And you say, "How I have hated instruction! And my heart spurned reproof! I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to my instructors!"

One result in addition to severe mental anguish is a profound sense of guilt. Make no mistake here regarding the compounding nature of sexual sin: The introspection of personal foolishness can lead one to suicidal levels of depression.

D. SOCIAL vs. 14

I was almost in utter ruin in the midst of the assembly and congregation.

The Hebrew word for **ruin** *ra* means “distress, misery or calamity.” Whether the adulterer is one who names the name of Christ or a secularist, both are derided as hypocrites by society. Even in a post-Christian America, adultery still greatly damages one’s political career. Shame and social embarrassment even in secular America haunt the “outed” adulterer. Think of all the illustrations of this truth: From public stardom to shame and disgrace.

E. FAMILIAL vs. 16-17

Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you.

This continuing (from vs. 15) polite solomonic euphemism now contrasts the male procreative capacity to diffusedness. Sexual promiscuity (in that day without court orders) led to illegitimate street children. I.e. the manifestations of one’s being also live in poverty, versus under one’s roof with one’s legitimate wife and children. How ruinous! Conversely, when one has children in wedlock, they are yours alone. In summary, as it relates to the consequences of sex outside of wedlock...

WHO IS STUPID ENOUGH TO TRADE HIS PERSONAL HEALTH, FINANCIAL EARNING POWER, SOCIAL STANDING AND FAMILIAL WELL-BEING FOR A MOMENTS WORTH OF PLEASURE?

What Solomon wants Rehoboam, you and I to conclude is this: *Beloved this is way too high of a price to pay! Any one of the aforementioned consequences is devastating in itself—but all five?! And don’t think for a moment that you will get away with it. Time and truth always run hand-in-hand.*

IV. THE CONVERSE OF PROMISCUITY

A. GET MARRIED vs. 18

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.

Even though polygamy is found in the narrative passages of the Old Testament, God’s standard or ideal is stated in this passage: one man is to have one wife from youth forward. What I stated in the introduction is worth repeating: Solomon and Rehoboam possessed more God-given knowledge than they obeyed. And each, the ensuing narrative passages indicate, paid a huge price for their sexual disobedience. Scripture does not sugar coat things.

B. ENJOY HER PHYSICALLY vs. 19

As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love.

The contrast to promiscuity is not abstinence or celibacy for life; it is fulfillment and enjoyment of sex! (Unless one has been given that gift by God). God’s



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gift of sexual desire is to be fulfilled in marriage. Marriage, among its other purposes, is for the continual enjoyment of sexual passion. Sexual drive should therefore be a stimulus toward getting married, not carousing. All other forms of attempted fulfillment lead to personal and societal harm.

V. THE CONCLUSION OF PROMISCUITY

A. WITH SELF VSS. 22-23

His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin. He will die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

Solomon concludes his thesis on sexual deviation with summary language. In Ecclesiastes 12:14 he states, "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." The phrase, **he will be held by the cords of his own sin** is a close cousin in meaning to "sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

This is a dangerous area for all, especially political leaders. One need greatly fear the devastation of adultery and allow that fear (healthy) to drive one away from any and all temptations in this area.

B. WITH GOD VS. 21

For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.

This concluding passage is in the context of adultery and prostitution. God knows everything. He knows if you are in sexual sin right now.

VI. THE CLEMENCY FROM PROMISCUITY

Lest there be any doubt, the New Testament writer of Hebrews says, "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (13:4). This is a good summary of all that Solomon has said in Chapter 5 of Proverbs.

If you have fallen to adultery, prostitution, fornication, homosexuality or even bestiality, there is forgiveness and restoration in the Cross of Christ. He forgives and makes one whole and new. Come to Christ today for

the washing and regeneration from any and all sexual sin. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he was addressing sexual sin when he stated, "but such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." May that be the case with those who have struggled and fallen in this area. Come to Christ today!

¹ Lest you conclude Proverbs to be overly redundant, Proverbs 5 is about the prostitute, whereas chapter 7 of Proverbs, seemingly repetitive, is about the adulteress. Both are the results of a promiscuous mindset. Both are huge temptations to people in power and therefore respectively addressed by God herein. The reasons in support of this differentiation and distinction are as follows.

First, in verse 20 of Chapter 5, the word **adulteress** occurs a second time (cf. verse 3) when Scripture states, "For why should you my son be exhilarated with an adulteress?" However, the Hebrew word in both verses 3 and 20 is *zur* meaning "a foreigner," someone "not known, a stranger." Solomon adds clarity that he is using this word in reference to a prostitute (in contrast to an adulterer) in the later part of verse 20 when he further defines *zur* therein he states, "And embrace the bosom of a foreigner!" Accordingly all English translations should say "prostitute" in Proverbs 5.

Second, in the consequence section of this study, notice that one of the results of sinning with a prostitute is financial loss: verse 10 of chapter 5 reads, "And your hard-earned goods will go to the house of the alien." A monetary exchange is usually not a part of adultery, as there are usually two consenting married adults. In Chapter 7 of Proverbs there is no such indication of a monetary exchange.

Third, in Chapter 7 the English word translated adulteress (7:5) is different than Chapter 5. It is *ishshah*, meaning "woman or wife"; another common translation of this is "married woman." With this understanding, notice 7:19. It explicitly states a characteristic of her, "For my husband is not at home, he has taken a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, at the full moon he will come home." In that this narrative is given to convince the naive young man not to fear being caught in lying with her, it evidences that this person is a married woman, aptly titled and differentiated in English as an adulteress. Such an identifying description Chapter 5 has not.

Accordingly, what seems redundant in Chapters 5 and 7 of Proverbs, both lengthy passages, are respective of two differing sexual sins for a man: the sin of prostitution and the sin of adultery, respectively.

² Kitchen, John *Proverbs, A Mentor Commentary* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications Ltd.; 2006) p 126-7

³ Stevenson, Peter A. *A Commentary on Proverbs* (BJU Press, Greenville, 2001) p 71