

The Proverbs

Lesson 7

Proverbs 7

Treasure the Commandments

Proverbs 7:1 My son, keep my words, and treasure my commandments within you. ² Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching 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 call understanding *your* intimate friend; ⁵ that they may keep you from an adulteress, from the foreigner who flatters with her words.

After instructing Rehoboam in the wayward effects of interacting with a harlot or an adulteress, Solomon returns to his pleading for Rehoboam to hear his words and live his life without making the mistakes he is warning him about.

Apple of the Eye

Solomon's words must be used and protected like "the apple of your eye." Solomon is using the word apple to mean the pupil of the eye which is essential to seeing, yet, so easily damaged. With Solomon's commands, Rehoboam can see dangers coming and run from them, but if he run to the danger, he will suffer the consequences in his life.

Bind on Fingers

When Solomon tells Rehoboam to "bind them on your fingers," he is instructing his son to tie them to everything he does. He should not reach out to take a harlot or adulterous woman without mentally seeing the commands of his father at the ends of his fingertips. Solomon's warnings include the reward of following his instructions and the punishment of ignoring them.

Write on Heart

Once again, Solomon is not speaking of Rehoboam's physical heart but his the soul. It is the soul that decides between good and evil. It is the soul that is clean or filthy. It is the soul that is godly or godless. It is the soul that is honest or dishonest. It is the soul that directs the path of a man to or from sin.

Wisdom and understanding must become our dearest friends to protect us from all the evil that we will encounter on this journey through life.

Entangled Senseless Youth

Proverbs 7:6 For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, ⁷ and I saw among the naive, I discerned among the youths, a young man lacking sense, ⁸ Passing through the street near her corner; and he takes the way to her house, ⁹ in the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of the night and *in* the darkness. ¹⁰ And behold, a woman

comes to meet him, dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. ¹¹ She is boisterous and rebellious; her feet do not remain at home; ¹² *she is* now in the streets, now in the squares, and lurks by every corner.

Solomon is recounting the numerous times he has watched through the lattice of his room to see the events transpiring outside his window. In Solomon's day, the windows did not close. Lattice was used to provide some privacy yet allow the wind to pass through. Hidden in the privacy behind the lattice, he sees young men pass a certain woman's home on the corner of the street. She is married but when her husband is out of town, she dresses like a harlot and enters the streets to lure into her bed some handsome young man. Remember, she had no choice as to whom she married, her father and husband made a deal for her hand in marriage. Chances are that she did not even meet her husband until her wedding ceremony. Unhappy with her home life, she seeks pleasure in young men of her choosing. She dresses like a harlot who is offering her body for pay, but her favors are free because she is adulterous. She is not looking for just anyone, she is looking for the naïve, young man who is still innocent in his heart, which means that he does not have wisdom and understanding to protect himself from the evil she intends. He is flattered by her interest and he is seduced by her in the dark. She is loudly calling him so she can accomplish what she desires. She is distracting him from his intended path. She is exposing to him what she wants and what she has to offer the innocent young man.

Lure of the Adulteress

Proverbs 7:13 So she seizes him and kisses him, And with a brazen face she says to him: ¹⁴ "I was due to offer peace offerings; today I have paid my vows. ¹⁵ "Therefore I have come out to meet you, to seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. ¹⁶ "I have spread my couch with coverings, with colored linens of Egypt. ¹⁷ "I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. ¹⁸ "Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with caresses. ¹⁹ "For the man is not at home, he has gone on a long journey; ²⁰ he has taken a bag of money with him, at full moon he will come home." ²¹ With her many persuasions she entices him; with her flattering lips she seduces him.

The adulteress catches the innocent man and kisses him to tempt him with her affections. Her confidence shows on her face. Nothing new is happening for her; it is all new for him. She is attempting to show a good, religious character. She says she has an offering that she should attend to, but that can wait, even though she has already paid her debt. She is neither good, nor religious; they are all ploys to entice the innocent young man to her couch covered with dyed Egyptian cotton. He smells the scent of oil flavored with myrrh on the bed. He sees the expensive aloe that moistens the skin. A candle with the scent of cinnamon burns on a stand. It is luxury the likes of which most men of that day could only dream. She is planning to be awake all night as she takes this innocent young man through all the fleshly desires she has imagined. Verse 18 is not a true translation. Its literal reading should be "Let us revel in the breasts and let us solace ourselves with love, let us gratify each other with love, with the utmost delights." Actually, a literal translation is more sexually graphic and not appropriate for this commentary; nevertheless, this carefully worded translation shows what comes from the character of the soul of an adulterous woman.

Fall of the Senseless Youth

Proverbs 7:22 Suddenly he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as *one in fetters* to the discipline of a fool, ²³ until an arrow pierces through his liver; as a bird hastens to the snare, so he does not know that it *will cost him* his life.

The innocent young man cannot counter her offer. Solomon has not taught the unknown man the warnings he is giving his son, Rehoboam. This man lacks wisdom and understanding which cannot protect him like the apple of the eye because it is not tied around his finger and engraved on his heart. He has no idea what the adulteress is about to do to him. He is headed for the time of his life but with the morning, he will regret his foolishness forever.

Warning from Solomon

Proverbs 7:24 Now therefore, *my sons*, listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth. ²⁵ Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths. ²⁶ For many are the victims she has cast down, and numerous are all her slain.⁵⁴ ²⁷ Her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death.

Solomon says, “listen to me and pay attention ... do not stray into her paths.” Verse 26 should literally say, “for she has cast down many wounded; yet, many strong men have been slain by her.” More than four hundred years after Solomon says this to Rehoboam, Nehemiah confirms that Solomon had been lured into the bedrooms of many foreign women.⁵⁵ By strong men, Solomon means the soldier, the warrior or the hero. The history of the world records many a man with incredible potential whose life, work, influence, integrity, and livelihood are forever damaged by a fling with a woman who is not his wife. Much of a great man’s reputation is built on perception and illusion but once cast down, he is reduced to the reality of his true inner soul. The man who knows better will run from the ways of the adulterous woman because his soul tells him it is wrong. He must not enter her house before he makes his decision. Once he has gone through the door and it is closed, the path has been taken and no matter what happens within, the rest of his days are tainted with deadly memories.

⁵⁴ Nehemiah 13:26 " Did not Solomon king of Israel sin regarding these things? Yet among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless the foreign women caused even him to sin.

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