

Injurious Inactivity

Strengthening Your Purity – Committing to Righteousness – Proverbs 7

“And I saw among the naïve, and discerned among the youths a young man lacking sense.”

Proverbs 7:7

“You need to exercise at least thirty minutes a day!”

Has your doctor ever told you this? Did you follow his prescription? I try, I really do try, but most of the time I fail. I know that exercising will be good for me. I know that spending that time on the elliptical will benefit my quality of living. I know the facts, but I still find excuses to use the elliptical for a clothes hanger rather than exercise equipment.

Why is it, sometimes, that the things that are good for us are so hard to do?

There are those who can exercise for hours a day and love it. They run five miles a day. They are committed to exercise each and every day. Consider the words of Vince Lombardi, “The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.” These words could not ring more true, and Proverbs 7 shouts this truth.

Strengthening your sexual purity is first a matter of strengthening God’s Word within you. It then comes to learning life’s lessons from others’ mistakes. Now we see this father explaining to his son the importance of committing ourselves to righteousness.

Take a look at verse seven. The father has already explained the need to learn from others, but now we will begin to see a young man spiraling down into impurity and immorality. It is an unfortunate event, but one that can be avoided if this young man had seen the signs. The first sign is his lack of commitment to righteousness.

Why does a commitment to righteousness strengthen your sexual purity?

How has a lack of commitment affected a decision in your life?

It has been said that unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes, but no plans. We can have hopes and promises. We can give ideas and think creatively about anything, but unless there is a commitment, there will be no plans and no progress towards those promises and hopes.

The father in Proverbs 7 realizes this. Notice the first phrase, “And I saw among the naïve...”

How would you define the word “naïve”?

My good friend Webster explains this word to mean simple, uninformed judgment, primitive, self-taught, not having had experiences. We may understand this father as seeing a group of people who have not yet experienced life. I wish that were the case.

The Hebrew word here has a little more to it than just this aspect of "simple." It carries a primary meaning of being wide open and spacious. We know this group of people are young, because the father makes mention of this, but they are not ignorant. This word has nothing to do with IQ, but everything to do with the moral compass in our lives. This father is looking out and seeing a group of young people who have not yet decided what to commit to. It is not that they are doing wrong, but they have not committed to doing right either. Their inactivity to commit is dangerous.

Why, at times, when you go shopping do you bring back more than you had planned?

There is a science to the grocery store business. Most grocery stores know to put the fresh produce in the front because it attracts. Seeing the fresh tomatoes and lettuce in a display case that has just been "watered" can put people in a different mood. Also, grocery stores tend to place the most expensive item at eye level because they know people will not look at the bottom shelf where the cheap stuff is. Finally, the milk and bread tends to be placed in the back of the store so that you have to walk through to get it.

Why do they do this? They know that if you come in not committed to a list of groceries, you will walk out with more than you intended to get, and they get more of your money than you intended to give. The same principle is found here. If we do not commit to righteousness we will more than likely get what we did not want and give what we wanted to keep. Our inactivity is dangerous.

But there is more to this verse. This father explains that he saw among this group of non-committed people a young man who lacked sense.

How would you describe someone who lacks sense?

We would normally think lacking sense means that this young man does not know how to make sound judgments, but again, the Hebrew gives more insight. The word used here, *labe*, has the meaning of heart, soul, courage, or the vital principle. Taking this into account, it is not that the young man did not have common sense, but rather did not have the courage in the moment to make the right decision. He lost heart or chickened out.

Have you ever lost courage to do what is right? How did you feel afterwards?

This young man developed company with those who had not committed to righteousness. As a result he ended up not having the courage to make the right decision. He did not have the heart and did not have a commitment to righteousness.

The Hebrew word used in verse seven for the word *understanding* is *labe*, which means "the heart" or "the centre of anything."

"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Joshua 24:15

In the heat of the moment is not the time to set up boundaries for sexual purity. It is foolish to say, "If the image pops up on the screen, then I will figure out what I will do." I have heard someone say that he would walk out of a movie if it gets too bad. I asked him, "What is 'too bad'?" He could not answer. He was not ready to commit to righteousness.

The father in Proverbs is helping his son see that you need to make the commitment to do right before the challenge comes. You need to determine now who you will follow beforehand. Joshua said it this way, "Choose, today, who you are going to serve." The idea was not to wait; make the choice now!

One final thought: Mark Twain has said, "In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten second hand, and without examination." We need to commit now to do right, but the commitment to do right goes back to becoming strong in the Word.

We know what right is by reading the Word. It takes action on our part to commit to righteousness.

Are you ready to exercise?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

