

# Watching the World Go By

## Strengthening Your Purity – Lessons from Life – Proverbs 7

It has been said, “Experience is a hard teacher. She gives the test first and the lessons afterwards.”

Did you ever cheat in school? What about in a game? Cheating is an odd phenomenon. We often try to justify it when we are doing it, but if it is done to us then there is no excuse. We open our eyes during hide and seek, but if we are hiding we make sure the other person does not peek. A person justifies cheating on his or her spouse because needs are not being met, but does not allow any excuse when cheated on by the spouse.

How have you justified cheating at times?

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Now before we go too far, I want to assure you that cheating is almost always wrong. Almost. Cheating has as its motivation a desire to get the upper hand. I propose that you cheat on life. In fact, Proverbs tells us to cheat on life. Should I explain?

In Proverbs seven, a father is instructing his son concerning the area of sexual purity. He starts out by stressing the importance of becoming strong in the Word. In fact, it is the Word of God that will keep you from sin. In verse seven, this father tells the son to cheat.

Okay, so maybe he does not use the word “cheat”, but look what the father says. He tells the son, that he looked out from his house and watched the world around him. He observed the foolishness of young men and learned from it. It is a wise thing to learn lessons from life through the lives of others.

It is a little like cheating. I am learning something about life by watching someone else. Al Franken is quoted as saying, “Mistakes are a part of being human. Appreciate your mistakes for what they are: precious life lessons that can only be learned the hard way unless it's a fatal mistake, which, at least, others can learn from.” (*Oh, the Things I Know*, 2002)

What is one big lesson that you have learned from watching someone else?

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Why is it wise to learn lessons from others rather than learning them the hard way?

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Sometimes we choose to learn the lesson the hard way. Did you catch that? We make the choice. I can think back to the harder lessons I have had to learn and each one could have been avoided if I had simply “looked out my window.”

What lesson have you had to learn the hard way?

“For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, and I saw among the naïve, and discerned among the youths a young man lacking sense.”

Proverbs 7:6-7

"I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. 'A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to rest,' Then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man."

Proverbs 24:30-34

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Was there someone who had to learn the same lesson before you? Who was it? How do you know they learned the same lesson?

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Now here is the hard one. Why didn't you learn from their lesson rather than having to experience it yourself?

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Take a look at Proverbs 24:30-34. Here the aspect of learning from others is seen even more clearly. A man walked by the field of a sluggard. He knew this because the place was falling apart. This man then reflected on what he saw and then received instruction. This man was able to learn from the mistakes and pitfalls of others and keep himself from making those same mistakes.

At dinner time, parents will often tell their kids to try the food because they never know if they will like it until they try it. Unfortunately, that mentality is perpetuated into all of life. The world says that anything is free game, so therefore try it and see if you like it. You can take that approach in regards to purity, but here is the catch. Once you "try it", there is no going back. That is why the wisdom of Proverbs is so vital, especially in the area of sexual purity.

So now we come back to Proverbs seven. The father is telling his son to look out and learn from the lives and mistakes of others in the area of sexual purity. We will see in the verses to follow several warning signs that will tell you to "watch out" because you are headed for disaster, but the first thing is to strengthen yourself in the Word and then to learn life's lesson from someone else.

Think of a well respected person who compromised their sexual purity. What effect did it have on loved ones? What about on ministry? What about you?

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Did you learn a lesson from that person's life? It is sad and unfortunate that people fail in sexual purity, but it is even sadder that their family and friends follow in their footsteps.

One final note, did you catch where the father is looking out from? It is his house. He did not go out and test things, but he did take the opportunity to learn life's lessons from the safety and security of his home. He kept a safe distance from those who failed in the area of purity. I like to learn in a safe and secure environment. It usually means I am much more likely to remember the lesson.

I would encourage you to watch the world go by and learn.

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

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