

Liberty Online Ministries



Strengthening Your Purity Proverbs 7



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All-Natural and Organic

Strengthening Your Purity – Introduction – Proverbs 7

Organic or non-organic? That is the question!

Have you ever sat back and considered what is left today that is pure? It is interesting that retailers have to tell us what products do not have all the added chemicals and hormones, which apple was made the old fashioned way and which apple was given some help. Of course, the retailers charge more for the organic even though they do not use added chemicals. Does that really make sense to charge more for less? It's confusing. How would you define purity?

To call something pure is to say that it is spotless, untainted or clean. What are some things that you would consider pure?

Purity is hard to come by. There are not too many things that could be called pure anymore. Whether it is impure food, impure materials, impure motives, or impure thoughts, impurity runs rampant through our culture. This is not a new problem. Scripture tells us that purity was attacked as early as the Garden of Eden in Genesis. Satan attacked the purity of Adam and Eve's heart and mind. He convinced them they were missing out on something. Satan tainted their innocence and introduced the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

God calls us to be pure and holy, set apart, and this is especially true in the area of sexual purity. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 that we need to flee immorality and keep ourselves pure. Immoral acts and behavior are sins against the body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Why is sexual purity so important?

The temptation to give in this area is everywhere. It may be ads on the television or pictures in the stores, but sexual purity is challenged at every corner. An average of 75% of unmarried "twenty-somethings" are sexually active and this figure is not too far off in the church. About half of church goers feel it is okay to be sexually active outside of marriage. One of the most sacred of institutions created by God is threatened because of impurity. What have you done to develop sexual purity?

There are many who just hope that they will be able to stay sexually moral, but to hope is not enough. Jack Hayford gives ten reasons why sexual sins are worse than any other kind. Read through these and consider the implications.

1. They stain the deepest part of a person's identity.

"Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. "

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

I Thessalonians 4:3-5

“But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”

Ephesians 5:3

2. They exploit the deepest aspects of our emotion being.
3. They pollute the fountainhead of our highest creativity
4. They produce guilt that cripples our confidence in God’s forgiveness.
5. They expose us to the risk of begetting an unsupported child.
6. They compromise the foundation of life’s deepest relationship – marriage.
7. They increase the probability of multiplying the spread of disease.
8. They give place for appetites that can only beget further unnatural behavior.
9. They break trust with the whole body of Christ.
10. They assault the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

This is a pretty intense list of reasons. Which one sticks out to you more? Why?

Paul explains in I Thessalonians 4:3-5 that we need to run from youthful lusts and desires and stay far from sexual immorality. This is easier said than done. It seems like no matter where we go, we will run into sexual immorality. Sometimes I wonder if it would be better to pack up my things and head off into the mountains with my family where it is safe, but then reality sets in and I realize that it won’t solve anything.

So instead, we can turn to the wisest man in the world for wisdom on how to strengthen our sexual purity. Proverbs 7 provides us with principles to develop and live by in strengthening and protecting our purity.

- Internalize the teaching of God’s Word.
- Learn life’s lessons.
- Commit to live in righteousness.
- Do not flirt with fire.
- Desire the light over the darkness.

These principles are being taught by a father to his son, but can be received by any who would want to strengthen their sexual purity. Remember, Paul tells us that there is not even to be a hint of immorality and impurity in us (Ephesians 5:3). The strengthening of our sexual purity is not an option to be considered, but a necessity to be embraced.

Is there a hint of impurity in your life? What is it?

Our world would have us give in to the pleasures and desires of sexual impurity. It seeks to convince us that there is no responsibility, but only pleasure and joy. Solomon explains otherwise. Those who do not strengthen their sexual purity will walk the path of the fool.

I do not want to be a fool and I imagine you feel the same, so let’s see what Proverbs says.

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

Can't Get Enough!

Strengthening Your Purity – Strength in the Word – Proverbs 7

It has been said that one can never get enough of a good thing.

The person who said this must not like pumpkin pie. When October and November roll around, I am ready for some pumpkin pie. Give me a huge slice and load it up with whipped cream. That is what I call a good thing, but I can also get too much of it. My mind tells my stomach that it will all be okay so I can enjoy one more piece. Of course, it is too late when my stomach finally gets word to my mind that enough is enough and then I suffer for several hours.

When has too much of a good thing been bad for you?

We have all had those times. It may have been with food or money or fame, but it all comes down to the fact that too much of a good thing does not bring us joy or satisfaction. There is, however, at least one exception. Here in Proverbs 7 Solomon helps us to understand that we can never get enough of God's Word. He even goes as far as to explain that it is our strength in the Word that will determine our sexual purity.

How well do you know Scripture? Think of the verses you have memorized. How many can you quote?

Why do so many people struggle at memorizing Scripture?

In the first verses of Proverbs 7, a father gives his son the first key to strengthening purity. We must become strong in the Word. In these first four verses, this father talks about Scripture eight different ways. Let's take a look and understand how to become strong in the Word.

The father says to his son, "Keep my words and treasure my commandments within you." The Hebrew word used here for "keep" carries the idea of building a hedge, guarding, or protecting. Think of the cities of the Bible. Rulers would build massive walls around their cities to protect and guard. The father is saying to his son that he must take God's Word and allow it to protect him and guard him. He must memorize Scripture. He then encourages his son to treasure or horde God's commands. It is the idea of gathering up more and more of a valuable thing. The father then repeats himself in verse two.

Why do you think Solomon repeated himself in the first two verses?

Often, Hebrew writers would use repetition as a key to learning and emphasis. This father wanting to make sure the son was hearing what he was saying. I am sure all of us have had a similar experience growing up. Our parents tell us

"My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, and my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister,' and call understanding your intimate friend."

Proverbs 7:1-4

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”

Psalm 119:9-11

something and then repeat it again to make sure we got it. Sometimes I did and sometimes I didn't, but there is something more here than just memorizing Scripture.

Why is it that sometimes we remember memorized Scripture and other times we do not?

Many times, it comes back to value. This father knows that memorizing things is not the fix-all of sexual purity. Just because a son can quote Scripture does not mean that he will stay sexually pure. There is the aspect of treasuring these things or valuing God's Word. David explains in Psalm 119:10 that we should value and treasure God's Word with the whole heart.

So far, in order to become strong in the Word we must first memorize the word, secondly, value the Word; but there is another aspect. We must also review the Word.

I always appreciated the teachers who would plan a review class just before the test. Those were so helpful in seeing what all would be on the test. I was much more prepared for the test after reviewing. Don't you think the same principle can be applied here in regards to being tested in sexual purity? This father does. In verse three, he explains to his son the need to bind them top his fingers or have reminders posted everywhere. Take the opportunity to have verse cards ready at stop lights and while standing in line. Etch God's Word into our hearts and continue to program our minds to think "God" rather than "self".

What are some ways that you can practice review?

There is one more aspect of becoming strong in the Word as seen here. We must memorize, value, review, and also relate. This father explains to his son the need to develop a relationship with wisdom and understanding. This, in many regards, flows out of the first three steps in growing stronger in the Word. It is important to develop an intimate relationship with Christ through the Word. It is like a favorite book you may have, or a favorite sports star. Some of you may immerse yourself in the book and read it through several times or you may read all that you can about that sports star or celebrity. You eventually get to a point where you feel connected. This is what the father is explaining to his son, and then it all comes to a promise in verse five.

Scripture, when it is memorized, valued, remembered, and related to, will keep you sexually pure. Not only does Solomon say this here, but David also answers the question of purity in Psalm 119:9-11. David explains how God's Word will keep us pure and guard us from sin. It takes an intentional, purposeful workout schedule to strengthen yourself in the Word.

- Memorize God's Word
- Value God's Word
- Review God's Word
- Relate to God's Word

This is one good thing that you can never get enough of. Are you getting it?

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



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?

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?

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

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 naive, 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

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

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

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?

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?

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.

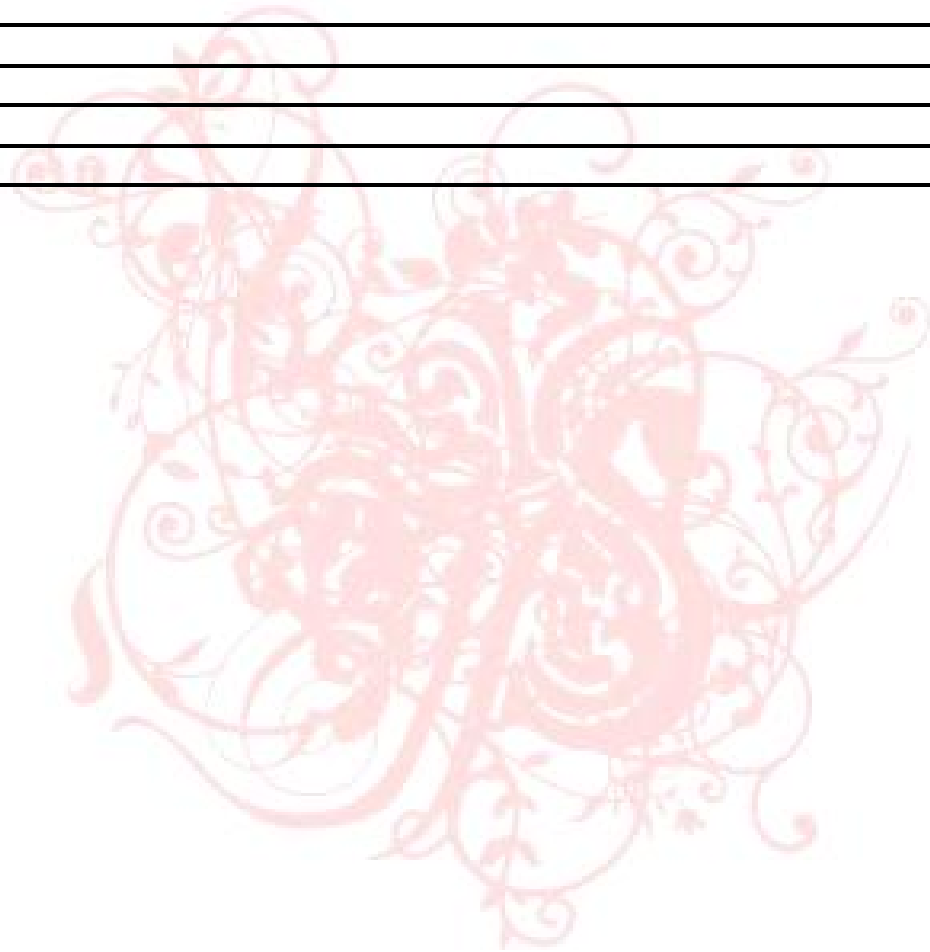
The father in Proverbs is helping his son see that you need to make the commitment to do right before the challenge comes. You need to determine now who you will follow beforehand. Joshua said it this way, "Choose, today, who you are going to serve." The idea was not to wait; make the choice now!

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?



Hot Potato, Hot Potato

Strengthening Your Purity – Flirting with Fire – Proverbs 7

It seems like kids have all the fun.

Sometimes I wish I was able to go back to being a kid. It seems like life would be a lot less stressful and busy. Kids get tired at night because they played so hard during the day. Sounds like a good thing.

What was a favorite childhood game that you played?

The toy industry comes out with new games every Christmas and convinces you that your child needs the game. A walk down the game aisle will show that there are a lot of games out there, but many of them are remakes of previous games. It makes me wonder how much money I would have made if I had just patented some of the games we played back in the day.

I am sure there would have been a safety recall for one game, Hot Potato. I could think of many different fun ways to play it, but it would not be safe. I do think there is a water balloon version which works well. The idea of the game was to continue to pass around a ball or bean bag while music played. The item was imagined to be hot and the person holding the “hot potato” when the music stopped was out. The same idea is used in word games, charades, and others. The person holding the “Hot Potato” lost. Eventually, all but one person would get burned.

It reminds me of the old axiom, “If you play with fire, you will get burned”; and many of us play hot potato with our sexual purity.

The father in Proverbs seven is explaining this principle to his son so as to strengthen his son’s sexual purity. He has first encouraged his son to become strong in the word, then learn life’s lesson from others, and then commit to do righteousness. Now this father is explaining the principle of “hot potato”; if you play with fire long enough you are going to be burned.

Why is flirting with someone other than your spouse a dangerous activity?

Back one chapter in Proverbs 6:25-29, the author is asking rhetorical questions about playing with fire. The conclusion is that a man who flirts with a woman who is not his wife will be punished; he will be burned.

Fire can do intense damage. It can burn the nerve endings so that there is no feeling. It can leave scars or cause disfigurement. Just one touch can have a lasting effect, but whatever the case, when we play with fire we will be burned and the more we play with it the more intense and lasting the damage will be. What are some of the consequences to flirting with fire or sexual immorality?

“Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her capture you with her eyelids. For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Or can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is the one who goes in to his neighbor’s wife; whoever touches her will not go unpunished.”

Proverbs 6:25-29

The word used for *passing* in verse eight is the Hebrew *`abar*, which means "to cross over".

The father in Proverbs takes the opportunity to explain to his son that he should not play with fire. He helps his son see what it means to flirt with fire. Take a look at verse eight.

Remember that we are watching a man who has not made the commitment to do right. This man is "passing through the street near her corner, and he takes the way to her house." It is a small description, but as we have seen in previous studies the Hebrew text is full of meaning.

The action word used here, *passing*, has the understanding of crossing over. This young man did not just haphazardly walked past this woman's house, but intentionally changed his direction to cross over and meet this woman. We cannot begin to understand his motivations, but we know that he did not have a mind to do right. Something caught his eye and he changed directions to get closer.

Are you guilty of this same action? Have you ever changed where you were going or what you were doing so that you could flirt with fire? Men, have you ever changed positions to get a "better" look at a woman? Women, have you ever shared a little more intimately with a listening male?

Why are actions like the above dangerous to our sexual purity?

That is not all this man did. He did cross over to get a closer look, but he also "takes" the way to her house. The Hebrew word and construction help us to see this is a regular thing. This man changes his direction for this woman on a regular basis. It may have been "innocent" at first as they enjoyed conversation. He may walk by her house to talk and listen because later on we see her husband takes business trips. She is lonely and needs a listening ear. He is uncommitted and does not sense the danger.

They are both playing with fire and they will be burned.

If it were simply this verse and we did not have the rest of the story it would not seem like he was acting all that foolish. It would not seem like he was playing with fire. He is just going by a woman's house on a regular basis to visit. People do this all the time. A married man regularly treats his secretary out to a business lunch for the two of them. A woman gets the neighbor to help out continually with little things in the house because her husband is gone a lot. There may be the best motives in mind, but the enemy has a way of turning good motives into bad passions.

Have you ever done something for someone that was misinterpreted as a flirtatious act? How did you respond?

Just to set the record straight, this father is explaining to his son the consistency of the young man's actions. This young man is consistently playing with fire. He is regularly flirting. This is much different than the person who makes the mistake once and then steps away.

There is an interesting thing about fire. I have a fire pit at my house and sometimes we can get the fire roaring pretty well. I could stick my hand in the fire and be burned; there is no doubt about that. I could also stand close to the fire and still be burned even though I am not touching the fire. It is a more gradual burning, but there is still the danger. Therefore, I continue to back up until the sense of being burned is gone.

Imagine if we took that same perspective with sexual purity. Rather than asking “how close can I get before I am burned?”, we should be asking “how far away do I stand in order to be safe?” This perspective would strengthen our sexual purity and keep us from being burned.

The best way to win at this game of Hot Potato is not to play.

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



Alone in the Dark!

Strengthening Your Purity – Deceived By Darkness – Proverbs 7

“Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of the night and in the darkness.”

Proverbs 7:8-9

“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

John 3:19-21

Are you afraid of the dark?

I am not afraid of the dark, just what's in the dark. Most of your scary movies are set during the middle of the night. You know the story, a group of kids get stuck somewhere at night and the lights go out. Now some monster or mad man is running about in the darkness taking them one by one. Sometimes the story ends well, but they always leave room for a sequel. Of course, the sequel is the same story just with a different group of kids, but it is still at night.

Why can darkness be so scary?

Why do the “villains” always seem to do their work in darkness?

As young teenagers, we loved to watch these movies with friends and afterwards pretend that we weren't scared. Although, we turn a light on just in case as we leap into bed so whatever is under the bed doesn't get us. There is something about darkness that scares us and something about light that encourages us.

In Proverbs seven, a father is training his son to strengthen his sexual purity through a commitment to the Word, learning life's lesson, a commitment to righteousness, and caution not to play with fire. Now this father cautions his son to not be deceived by the darkness.

I can see the conversation now.

Father: “Son, this man we are watching is crossing over to get a better look at the woman. He is playing with fire and asking for trouble.”

Son: “Dad, what if nobody sees him? What if he is able to do it during the night?”

Father: “That is just it, son. We can see him. He may think he is hiding, but we can see that he is headed for disaster. Darkness does not erase the sin. It only convinces the sinner that he is safe.”

We know that the darkness is not safe – the movies tell us that.

Okay, so Hollywood is not the final authority, but in John 3:19-21 Jesus explains that men who enjoy their evil desires like the darkness. They like to live in the cover of night because of their deeds. The light shows them what their deeds really are and they do not want to face that. Those who want to do right are attracted to the light, but those who want to do wrong run from the light and cower in the darkness.

"The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, saying, 'No eye will see me.' And he disguises his face. In the dark they dig into houses, they shut themselves up by day; they do not know the light. For the morning is the same to him as thick darkness, for he is familiar with the terrors of thick darkness."

Job 24:15-17

So Hollywood got something right after all. Darkness is bad, light is good.

Why do we find it hard to admit to sin once it has been brought to light?

In Job, Scripture tells us that the adulterous man waits until dark to venture out because he believes that the darkness will hide his actions. It is in the darkness that evil men do their evil deeds, and it later says that the morning is death to them because the light comes.

The father is warning his son that he should not let the darkness deceive him into thinking he can get away with sin. The father is trying to build up a wall of defense for his son's sexual purity. He is telling his son that if he flirts with fire, he will be deceived by the darkness to compromise his purity.

This young man in Proverbs has not made up his mind to do right. He is in company with those who are not resolved to do right. He regularly passes by a woman's house and has now come to the point of passing by this house at night.

Why do you think he took last step?

It may be that he convinced himself that the world sees him as innocent. Maybe he figured that he has been open and a man of godly integrity. He is not trying to hide anything up until now. He is not a bad person. He is not like others that he knows. Maybe he thinks,

They do not understand. I come by this way all the time. I haven't hidden that. All I've been doing is talking with this nice woman. She needs someone to talk to. Her husband is always gone and she is not able to get out much because she does a good job of taking care of the home. She tells me about how hard she works. Sure, she is good looking, but that is not what this is about. I am just checking on her to see if she is okay at night. The darkness can be scary sometimes.

I hope this line of reasoning does not sound familiar, but I am afraid that too many people have tried to make excuses. The darkness is trying to deceive us. It gives us a false sense of security and safety.

Have you ever found yourself making excuses for treating someone extra special? What did you say to yourself?

It is an easy thing to do when we have given attention to strengthening our sexual purity. Excuses are easy to come up with, but if we feel like we are trying to find excuses for what we are doing then we need to reconsider what we are doing.

Maybe ask yourself some of these questions:

“For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress and embrace the bosom of a foreigner? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.”

Proverbs 5:20-21

1. Did I hide from my spouse what I am doing?
2. Would my spouse take offense to me conversing this way?
3. Am I doing this now so that I can hide it?
4. If someone “turned the lights on” would I be ashamed of this?
5. Am I making excuses for what I am doing?

If you find yourself answering “yes” to any of these questions, then warning lights and sirens need to come on in your heart and mind. You need to be telling yourself, “RUN AWAY; RUN AWAY!” That is exactly what Paul tells Timothy to do. He says, “Flee youthful lusts” or “get out of there; run away; escape!”

When you have gotten to this point and the alarms are sounding, you need to run. Don’t walk, don’t back down softly, just run, because you are headed straight for disaster and time is up.

This father wants his son to understand that the darkness will deceive him.

One final thought about the darkness: it really does not exist. We think it exists and that we can hide in it, but the wisdom of Solomon says otherwise.

Proverbs 5 explains the importance of a man finding pleasure and satisfaction in his own wife. As this chapter concludes, Solomon asks a rhetorical question, “Why in the world would you want to stray and enjoy a woman other than your wife?” Here is where we realize that darkness does not exist. Solomon says that the ways of man are always seen by the Lord. God sees everything! I can hear Solomon now, “Hello! God sees you!”

The darkness wants to convince you nobody will see you.

The truth is: you are never alone in the dark; God sees you.

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

The Slippery Slope

Strengthening Your Purity – Path to Destruction – Proverbs 7

Kids love snow days. Adults despise them.

Maybe you remember the times of waking up and seeing that it was snowing and snow had already deeply blanketed the earth while you were sleeping. Any other day and your mom would be struggling to get you out of bed, but on a snow day, you are racing down stairs to see the weather report. The news continues to show the list of schools. Finally, you see yours and you rejoice.

You race upstairs to get your snow clothes on so that you can be the first to sled down “the hill”. For the next several hours kids are speeding down “the hill” and having a blast. All the energy held back during school is let loose on this day. God bless snow days.

Why is speeding down a hill so much fun for kids?

Snow is fun unless you’re the one shoveling it. Sledding is fun unless you’re headed for trees.

Undoubtedly, some children will head home with bumps and bruises from the sledding. They may have been going too fast or were not watching where they were going and ran into the trees. Why is it that all good sledding hills have trees at the bottom?

Anyway, these beat up kids head home and recount the tale of their demise to their parents. Then they show the pieces of the broken sled. Unfortunately, some have had broken bones and concussions along with the broken sled. Fortunately, most will heal.

I hope you have a good picture in your mind about sledding, because this picture describes what the father in Proverbs 7 is telling his son. They are watching from the window a young man who is not grounded in the Word, not learning from life, not resolved to do right, is flirting with fire, and is deceived by the darkness. He is about to slide down a hill.

Sexual purity must be strengthened. Those who do not will find themselves on “the hill” and racing for destruction.

Why could the path to sexual impurity and immorality be seen as a “slippery slope”?

“Suddenly he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool, 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.”

Proverbs 7:22-23

The word used for *cunning* in verse ten is the Hebrew word *nāṭsar*, which means to guard or conceal.

This young man in verses one through nine has climbed to the top of “the hill”. He has put himself in a position to slip and fall. In fact, he has chosen to start sliding down the hill. Let’s take a look at this hill.

In Proverbs 7:10, we see a woman coming out to meet this man. She is dressed in provocative and immodest attire. This young man sees this, but does not comprehend because he has not strengthened his purity. The woman knows this. Notice the commentary said of her. She is cunning, which means to keep back or guard.

What do you think she is keeping back?

No matter our gender, we respond well to encouragement and praise. We like to hear people tell us how good we are. This woman knows that the young man will be aroused through her words, so she holds back anything that would discourage him or keep him from sliding. So she lets him see with his eyes what is pleasing and then lets him hear with his ears what is encouraging.

At this point, the father explains to the son the reputation this woman has. Read through verses eleven and twelve and explain in your own words her reputation.

The father makes it clear this is a woman that is given to causing a great commotion or turmoil (boisterous). She is stubborn, a backstabber, and a busy body. She lies in wait to ambush anyone she can simply to gratify her own desires.

Why would a woman or man do such a thing?

It may be a control issue, or a way to enact revenge on a mate. It may be many different things, but it comes down to self-centeredness and sin. Strengthening your sexual purity has everything to do with God and others, while immorality is only about self gratification. Those involved in sexual impurity are all about making themselves feel good. This is the exact opposite of a godly relationship.

Now the woman comes to the point in verse thirteen of grabbing him and kissing him. He has been aroused through the sight of her and the sound of her. Now, she used touch to continue to entice him. This young man is racing down the slippery slope and it just picked up speed.

As the chapter continues, we see the woman continuing to use words to entice him. She is painting a picture in his mind of the bed chamber. He has already felt her body pressed against his and now his mind is going off with dreams of passion. She has already appealed to the sense of sight, sound, and touch, but she takes it a step further. She uses the smell of myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. She is hitting every one of his senses except taste.

Seize, from verse 13, comes from the Hebrew khawzak', which carries the meaning of being strong or conquering.

Why do you think she appeals to sight, sound, touch, and smell?

This young man is sliding faster and faster. He is experiencing the ride with most of his senses so it continues to build. He is experiencing a thrill that gets his adrenaline going and his heart pounding and it seems like the ride will last forever, but he knows that somewhere along the way he lost control. It is just a passing thought and he goes back to the thrill.

Back in verse thirteen, there is a key word. Scripture says that the woman seizes him. The Hebrew word there means to take charge or have courage. If you remember, the young man had not made a choice to do right. Here, the woman is making the choice for him. She tells him what to do and continues to entice and persuade.

Verse twenty-two gives us the response of the young man. "Suddenly he follows her." He committed and took the step. It is the thrill of the ride just at the bottom of the hill when the sled is at its fastest speed. The woman appealed to four of his five senses. She used all her bait and he went for it.

The word used here for suddenly is not the aspect of surprise, but more the idea of an impulsive act. The young man did not step back and take into consideration what was taking place. He did not think through what was happening. He just acted.

Why is it so easy to be impulsive in a situation like this?

It is an unfortunate sight. This young man is enjoying the ride, but has no idea what lays at the bottom of the hill. Nevertheless, there is hope.

Think of the sledding. A child is racing down a hill and sees the trees. Before he gets there, he can bail out or put on the breaks. Now granted, the faster he is going, the harder it makes it, but he can still bail. It may mean some bumps and bruises, but that is nothing compared to hitting the trees.

The same is true in sexual purity. If you find yourself on that slippery slope, you can still bail. There may be damages, but nothing compared to the bottom of the slope. This young man could have stepped away at any point and so can you.

Snow days can be fun and sledding a sport, but sexual purity is no game and that hill is not fun.

Don't lose your senses and slip!

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

Continuous Exercise

Strengthening Your Purity – Count the Cost – Proverbs 7

Doctors like us to exercise.

I try at times, but it doesn't seem to do anything. Then my doctor tells me that it has to be a consistent thing. I thought I was being consistent. I tried for a whole week!

Exercise is something that we all should do because it will benefit our quality of life. It is not something we will see immediate results in, but it will have long lasting effects. When I consider ten years from now, I want to be able to keep up with my boys in sports and outdoors stuff. When I think about twenty-five years from now, I want to enjoy wrestling with my grandkids without feeling too sore. When I think of thirty years from now, I want to still be caring for my wife and enjoying our home.

Continuous exercise is one way to accomplish those goals, but it is hard to see all that in the here and now. It is hard to count the cost when the reward is so far off, but counting the cost is vital. What I decide to do in the moment will affect my future.

Why is counting the cost so important?

Why is counting the cost sometimes hard to do?

We want the end result in the here and now. We want instant results. We want to be able to exercise one day and be fit the next. We want to invest in the morning and be rich in the evening. It is instant gratification.

This is the exact opposite of what the father is teaching his son in Proverbs 7. This father is teaching his son the importance of strengthening one's sexual purity. He gives his son principles to live by and an example to heed. The father comes to the end of this lesson and now challenges his son to consider the cost. It is not about what you can get now, but what you can give later.

The young man in verse twenty-two follows the woman into her bed chamber and they enjoy a passionate night of sex. He does not realize, as the father explains to his son, that he is like an ox being led to the slaughter or a bird to the snare. In both examples, it is his life that he loses.

How does immorality steal someone's life?

"Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth. Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths."

Proverbs 7:24-25

“Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

The young man loses his virginity, his reputation, his righteousness, and possibly his life among other things. Immorality was punishable by death. This woman was married and the husband could have them both stoned. Also, there is the quality of life. This young man will always deal with this affair. It will affect his marriage in that it lessens the sanctity of marriage. It will play a part in his parenting and raising of his own family. His quality of life has been damaged.

Verse twenty-three explains that he did not take into account what a lack of sexual purity would cost him.

The father explains to his son the importance of this lesson. In twenty-four and twenty-five he tells his son to listen his words and then provides some powerful reminders of the potential of losing his sexual purity.

He first tells his son, “Do not turn your heart aside to her ways!” This is a reminder to keep in the Word. The father is telling his son not to let himself be led into the desires and passions of her way. He is telling him to keep his heart fixed on God’s Word. Like David, we need to be like the deer panting for God’s Word. The father is saying, “Be intentional about what your heart is fixed on!”

Why is it important to be intentional about our focus?

The father then tells his son to guard against being led astray. The first is intentional; the second is unintentional. Think of it this way. The father is explaining to his son that he must be offensively going after God and defensively protecting his purity. It is being aware of the need to be offensive and defensive.

Read verse twenty-six and explain why we need to defend our sexual purity.

Too many people have damaged and destroyed their sexual purity. The father explains that we need to be offensive about our relationship with God, but defensive about our sexual purity, because too many good people have fallen. The Hebrew word for “numerous” helps us to understand that it is not just immature people who have damaged their sexual purity, but even strong or mighty men. In other words, anyone can fall.

It always comes as a surprise when someone who is a spiritual leader falls. It comes down to these two things. They may have been offensive about their relationship with God, but did not make a point to defend their sexual purity. Maybe they thought being offensive was enough, but they were mistaken.

We must count the cost because our lives are at stake, but there is a greater motivation to stay pure. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 that sexual immorality is the only sin that is against one’s own body. We were bought with a price and our bodies are not for our own self-centered use.

We must work at strengthening our sexual purity.

*"If we confess our sins,
He is faithful and
righteous to forgive us
our sins and to cleanse
us from all
unrighteousness."*

1 John 1:9

- We must strengthen ourselves in God's Word.
- We must learn the lessons of life from a safe place.
- We must commit to do right before the time for decision comes.
- We must not play with the fire of sexual impurity.
- We must not think that sin will be invisible in the darkness.
- We must understand the path to destruction.
- We must count the cost.

Have you spent time defending your sexual purity? In what ways can you better strengthen your sexual purity?

One final note, the father never tells the son that sex is not good. He never paints a picture that physical intimacy is dirty or disgusting. Physical intimacy is meant to be enjoyed according to God's rules. The author of Proverbs is the author of Song of Solomon. Sex feels good, but it is designed by God for a husband and wife to enjoy. This father is explaining how to protect intimacy in marriage and what happens when the intimacy between a husband and wife is taken out of that relationship. Sexual purity is not something that you protect until marriage, but something you defend your entire life.

If you have damaged or destroyed your sexual purity, there is still forgiveness of sins. 1 John 1:9 promises that if we confess our sins, God will forgive us and help us to live righteously. Determine today that you will strengthen your sexual purity. Commit today to play offensive and defense.

You may be laughed at and ridiculed for your commitment to sexual purity, but when you consider the cost, I would rather listen to a Father who knows best, than a world with a terrible track record.

I need to exercise to strengthen my sexual purity.

Let's hit the gym!

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



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