

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

FATHERLY TALK ON SEXUALITY, PROVERBS 5:1-23

A. Sexual impurity (1-14)

1. Its deceit (1-6)

a. Exhortation from a father to pay attention (1-2), ***My son, be attentive to my wisdom; incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge.***

- 1) Gregory of Nyssa, *We want to use self-control in our lives. We must never let our minds dwell on anything where pleasure has hid its bait,*
- 2) Tertullian, *We must strengthen ourselves ahead of time against secret and evident manifestations of sin,*
- 3) Jerry Bridges (noted Christian writer), *There is a day when a man can look at a woman and not have lustful thoughts. I haven't reach that day, yet.*

b. Warning against seduction (3-6)

1) Sexual impurity is enticing (3), ***For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,***

- a) Other sexual dangers exist, such as a woman being tempted by an immoral man, temptations to homosexual conduct, incest, sexual abuse of children, pornography.
- b) Cyril, *Temptation is like a raging winter stream that is difficult to cross.*

2) It is the way of death (4-5), ***but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol;***

- a) Lactantius, *If people seek nothing from pleasure but pleasure itself, they plan their own deaths.*
- b) Athanasius, *Don't let the desire to possess things take hold of you. For what do we gain by acquiring things we cannot take with us?*

3) Those on the path of immorality deceive themselves (6), ***she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it.***

- a) Cyprian, *Let us lift our eyes up to heaven, lest the earth deceive us with its delights and enticements,*
- b) Basil, *Beware of your own confidence, lest you fall from a height of discipline because of lacking of training,*

2. Its cost (7-14)

a. Exhortation from a father to avoid sexual impurity (7-8), ***And now, O 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,***

- 1) Augustine, *I don't know what temptations I can resist, and which ones I can't. But there is hope because You are faithful,*
- 2) Gregory Nazianzen, *It is necessary that we both master ourselves and that God saves us,*

b. The cost of sexual impurity (9-14)

1) Loss of health, self-respect, and wealth (9-10), ***lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless, lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,***

2) Personal regret (11-14), ***and at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, and you say, "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation."***

- a) Decimated body
- b) Refusal to receive instruction
- c) Rejection by the community

B. Sexual purity (15-20)

1. Exhortation from a father to find sexual fulfillment in marriage (15), ***Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.***
 - a. My responsibility is to please my spouse, 1 Corinthians 7:1-5, *Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*
 - b. Marriage is commitment between one man and one woman.
2. Considerations (16-20)
 - a. Foolishness of promiscuity (16-17), ***Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you.***
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:18, *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:21, *I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.*
 - b. True sexual fulfillment is found in your spouse (18-19), ***Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.***
 - 1) It is joyful.
 - 2) It is intoxicating.
 - 3) David Atkinson, *The verses at the heart of this chapter celebrate the joy of sexual fidelity. The Bible does not hide its delight at God's purpose for human sexuality. The erotic delight of sexual embrace is expressed in the language of refreshment and blessing,*
 - c. It is folly to seek satisfaction from a stranger (20), ***Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?***
 - 1) Sexual satisfaction is not merely physical but emotional and spiritual.
 - 2) Leo I, *When we deny bodily excess to our flesh, let our minds be invigorated by spiritual delights.*
 - 3) Augustine, *You know what you want, but He knows what is good for you.*

C. Summary 21-23

1. God knows and examines what is done in secret (21), ***For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths.***
 - a. An email received, *Discreet Affairs: Take a Break from Your Spouse.*
 - a. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Those who think they can test God's grace deceive themselves.*
 - b. Lactantius, *Remember that we are being watched at every moment by the One who will be both Judge and Witness.*
2. The wicked are ensnared by their sins (22), ***The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin.***
 - a. Sexual freedom enslaves.
 - b. Athanasius, *... if pleasure takes hold of us, we face the danger of storms and are shipwrecked.*
3. Lack of discipline leads to death (23), ***He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.***

- a. Augustine, *Who would dare to attribute their purity and innocence to their own strength when they consider their own weaknesses?*
- b. Chrysostom, *We have the power to make each part of us instruments of wickedness or righteousness.*

CONCLUSION

- A. Cyprian, *Your character should provoke everyone to imitate your life and conduct.*
- B. Origen, *Under every temptation, we have the power to endure if we properly use the strength granted to us.*
- C. Augustine, *You need the Lord's help. You shouldn't rely on yourself to live well.*
- D. Chrysostom, *How can we have victory over the enemy? By running to God for shelter.*