

Moral Purity  
Proverbs 5,6,7  
by Dellen Ludwig

Our society has been projecting ever changing rules about our morality. I was a teenager during the 60's where "free love" was proclaimed and "Make love, not war," was the rally cry. Many people bought into those radical ideas and jumped into the concept that "if it feels good, do it."

In fact, there has been a concentrated effort to eliminate the "old fashioned notion" of Moral Purity. Angry voices screamed that Biblical standards weren't just old fashioned, but harmful and offensive to society. They have tried to systematically eliminate any reference to God or the Bible from the conscience of our society.

Now, we have discovered that these radical advocates of immorality have infiltrated our schools and are teaching their poisoned ideals to our children. Elementary schools no longer reserve sex education for the purpose of teaching sixth-graders to save sex for marriage, but rather promote "sex positivity" and "inclusivity" to kindergartners. Our youth are being sexualized at a very young age.

The majority of our movies, television and electronic games include immoral life styles and rebellion against authorities as the plot of their stories. People watch with their eyes, imagine evil with their hearts and commit it with their hands and feet. The "bad guys" are now the "good guys". The world is slipping into immoral life styles without even noticing the damage it is doing. It's not until the consequences hit our neighborhood or our family that we even noticed it was all around us.

But this "new modern morality" is not new at all. The Proverbs written back in what we think of as "Old Testament Times" show an astonishingly accurate picture of what we face today. So as we consider Proverbs 5, 6 and 7, let your thoughts drift to the daily news, or the family newsletters you received during Christmas. God's plan for Moral Purity is clearly explained in His Word and the consequences of ignoring it are absolutely impacting us today.

Proverbs 5, 6 and 7 are commonly believed to have been written by Solomon to instruct his sons in living morally pure lives. As is often the case, he demonstrated that allowing the senses to lure us into sinful practices has horrible consequences. Therefore he warned his sons to keep a tight rein on those senses.

First he drew attention to the ears. “My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight.” [Proverbs 5:1] Rather than listening to the wild boasts of other youths (or of the media) Solomon urged young people to listen to wisdom. False claims may be recognized when compared to the truth of God’s Word. But false claims are tickling to the ears.

In Proverbs 7 Solomon gave a parable of the adulterous woman who tried to lure the simple youth into her home. She promised that she was just wanting to “fulfill her vows” and have a fellowship meal. But she excited his imagination by referring to her prepared bed: “I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.”

The young who listened to this enticement, had not listened to God’s Word. Proverbs 5:11-13 reveals their regret. “At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, ‘How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors.’” [Proverbs 5:11-13]

This study reminded me of a song I learned as a girl in Sunday School:

“Oh be careful little ears what you hear;  
Oh be careful little ears what you hear.  
For the Father up above is looking down in love.  
So be careful little ears what you hear.”

In Proverbs 4 Solomon had already reminded his children of the importance of listening carefully to his words. Verses 20 – 22 challenge us: “My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one’s whole body.” [Proverbs 4:20-22]

When we hear the Bible's advice and warnings, as we are doing today, it is easy to not pay attention. Even as older adults we may feel this information is not meaningful to us because we've already been there and left. However, keep in mind the Biblical examples of godly men who fell into immorality at the end of their lives. Let's "keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints." [Ephesians 6:18] Couldn't our alertness help our children and grandchildren through this battle now?

As young people we may have discounted it as words that couldn't apply to us. "Chastity is such an old-fashioned concept!" we may have thought. I'm in love and this feels so right! He says he loves me! I just want to let him know that I love him too! If we live together before we get married, then we'll know we are right for each other."

But Solomon also warned that lips can be as deceitful as our memory. Proverbs 5:3 & 4 reveal, "For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword." [ Proverbs 5:3,4]

We noticed the persuasive words that the woman used to lure the youth in Proverbs 7, but she also used false reasoning to seduce him. In verses 19 and 20 she tried to convince him that her husband would never find out. He was gone on a long journey and certainly wouldn't be back until later that month. And in verse 21 "With persuasive words she has led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk." [Proverbs 7:21]

Persuasive words easily lead those who fail to listen to God's wisdom into trouble. I John 2:16 and 17 warned believers. "For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." [1 John 2:16,17] "Oh be careful little mouth what you say."

The appeal of the world is strong, but fleeting. God can give strength to resist even our own lusts. But there are consequences for those who refuse to resist. Solomon warns of the dire consequences. As he speaks of them, he notes the feet of the adulterous woman and her prey.

“Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave, She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it.” [Proverbs 5:5,6]

In the parable that Solomon told in chapter 7, “the youth who had no sense” was walking by the house of the adulterer, and the woman came out to meet him. Both were using their feet to take them to inappropriate places. The young man should be going home after work, not wandering where prostitutes hung out. The woman should have tended to her own household, not walked down the street to catch some gullible young man.

Proverbs 6:28 asks the question, “Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?” “Oh be careful little feet where you go!” Rather than walking towards temptation, Scripture warns us to resist and flee it!

1 Corinthians 6:18 warns us, “Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.” [1 Corinthians 6:18]

Solomon also warned of the consequences that come from adultery in Proverbs chapter 5.

Verse 9: You lose your honor and dignity;

Verse 10: You lose your wealth;

Verse 10: You lose your health;

Verses 15 – 17 You lose your children.

Consider today’s results of adultery. The loss of honor, wealth and children occur in divorce. When the deed becomes known, it is very difficult for friends and family to keep friendly to both parties. By the way, who gets the children? They suffer emotionally even in the most amicable of divorces.

The loss of health can be realized by stress and venereal disease. Infidelity is just as prevalent in the church as it is outside of it. One husband I knew from a previous church had “one indiscretion” on a road trip with a prostitute. He later discovered he had contracted HIV and had to tell his wife. She was kind and forgiving and God graciously kept her from contracting the virus. But we watched and stood beside her as her husband slowly died from it.

His son carried his feelings of betrayal for years and he found it difficult to forgive his father for this act of infidelity to his Mom. I also know of a friend who had an affair with a co-worker. She now faces the loss of her husbands trust, who has filed for a divorce. She is devastated, and wishes with all her heart that she could undo what she had done.

That is why Scripture warns us about these terrible consequences. Our Father wants us to enjoy the relationship of matrimony as He designed it. Through Solomon, he admonished men to “rejoice in the wife of your youth.” and to be “intoxicated with her love.” (Proverbs 5:18 & 19)

Paul gave several instructions to husbands and wives as well as other relationships between believers in the New Testament. He emphasized love and respect in Ephesians 5 as well as submitting to each other. In verse 32 he adds, “This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.” [Ephesians 5:32]

Marriage, the way God intended it to be, is an example to the world of how Christ loves the body of believers. There is no place for an outsider in marital relationships. Proverbs emphasizes this truth.

But if there has been infidelity, is divorce permitted in Scripture? Jesus was asked this same question by the Pharisees, to test him. Jesus preached repentance and forgiveness. But Moses in the law allowed divorce. Jesus stated God’s purpose was that a marriage would last a lifetime. He said, “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” [Matthew 19:6]

But he added this verse in his answer to the Pharisees, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” [Matthew 19:8]

Marriage is a very special contract between a man and a woman in Scripture. I do not have all the answers for you about who did what and whose fault the divorce was. But I also know many of us have experienced it and have experienced the severe consequences of adultery

in one's life, or the lives of your family. It hurts everyone. (Malachi 2:14-16)

But God's love for each of us is greater than any sin. Romans 8:1&2 states, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death." [Romans 8:1,2]

His sacrifice on the cross has paid the eternal penalty for every sin. His forgiveness of our sins helps us to forgive others. He loves us and wants to help us live a life of moral purity, remembering that nothing is hid from His sight. As our memory verse says, "For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths." [Proverbs 5:21]

Our responsibility as believers is to love one another better than ourselves. We must leave the blame and regret and focus on the Lord Jesus Christ and the service we can do for Him where we are now. We ask Him to help us to be morally pure in our lives now. We confess, repent and move forward. Then in His grace, the Lord can use even our failures to give warning to others and tell them of His pure love and mercy.

His Word warns us, encourages us and guides us to a life that is full and blessed. Proverbs 6 examines other moral issues of life too: namely debt, laziness and maliciousness. Let's examine these three dangers to a blessed life before we close our lesson for today.

The first situation Solomon examined was one of giving your word to help a neighbor or stranger in their finances. Verse 2 warns that if you do this, "You have been trapped by what you said, ensnared by the words of your mouth." [Proverbs 6:2] In Deuteronomy 15 Israel was instructed to help the poor. "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land." [Deuteronomy 15:11] Also, God planned that every seventh year would be the Year of Jubilee, when debts should be forgiven.

However, this warning, against being security for another, is a little different. This is more along the line of a promissory note or co-signing so that the neighbor can make an investment or get a loan from a third

party. The temptation would be to renege on one's promise when the loan or investment goes bad.

But because the value of one's word given in promise was at stake, Solomon challenged his son never to go back on his word. Rather, he insisted that his son should, "Allow no sleep to your eyes, no slumber to your eyelids. Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, like a bird from the snare of the fowler." [Proverbs 6:4,5] But he was not saying to run away from one's promise. He challenged the promissory to be faithful to his word. He must work "to the point of exhaustion" (verse 3) to pay off the debt.

Such a reaction to this situation would accomplish two things. First, the young man would establish that he is a man of his word. In every society such a reputation brings honor to him and would help in future business dealings.

Secondly, the young man will never fall into such a shaky deal again without counting the cost. He will become wiser and consider making a gift to help the poor rather than becoming a guarantee of an open promise. It is better to investigate a business or investment deal well than to break your word because it didn't turn out profitably.

Solomon pointed to the ant as a teacher of one who preferred laziness. This may be paired with the lender of money. Perhaps it was laziness that brought the neighbor or stranger to the point of needing to borrow money for his "get-rich-quick" scheme.

Verses 10 and 11 explain, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest – and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man." [Proverbs 6:10, 11] Even in our society this is a problem. Our country has tried to help the poor and disabled to have what they need when they can't work. This is a good thing.

However, there are those who abuse this kindness. They are able to work but don't want to do so. They falsify applications and fail to seek new jobs so that they can squeeze the most they can out of unemployment payments or government subsidies. They refuse to use the abilities they have to earn their own upkeep.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 3 Paul reminded the church to avoid people who will not work. He gave himself as an example. “We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.” [2 Thessalonians 3:7, 8] As he preached the gospel, Paul also worked as a tent-maker to pay for his food and lodging.

The Lord set up the church so that each believer contributes their talents to spread the gospel. The church can serve together as Christ’s body. Each one should give their tithes and offerings also to help the mission of the church. Even the poorest among us can help in service projects and volunteer to do their God-given part. However, when some are refusing to help, the body isn’t functioning to its fullest capacity.

A second reason that laziness is immoral is that it may easily lead to maliciousness. Solomon gave his third warning, in verse 12-14, “A troublemaker and a villain, who goes about with a corrupt mouth, who winks maliciously with his eye, signals with his feet and motions with his fingers, who plots evil with deceit in his heart- he always stirs up conflict.” [Proverbs 6:12-14]

Such a troublemaker uses the down time he has - not working- but stirring up trouble. Haven’t we seen the result of young people today, who will not finish their education or get a job but run in packs to stir up mischief? They plot and signal each other to attack a store or rob pedestrians or just destroy someone else’s property.

I have often wondered how great these troublemakers could be at a job if they would put all their planning and effort into actually earning a living. But they would rather steal what others have worked so hard for than earn things themselves.

What is the result of such self-centered behavior? “Therefore, disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed – without remedy.” [Proverbs 6:15] The legal system will intervene, or the violence they have dished out will spill back onto themselves.

Solomon warned young people that for their own good, they should avoid an immoral lifestyle, always keep their word, work to pay their own way, and avoid being a malicious troublemaker.

There are social reasons to keep his instructions. However, a larger reason is that the Lord hates such behavior. We noted the seven things that God hates as recorded in Proverbs 6:16-19 in our lesson:

1. Verse 17: haughty eyes
2. Verse 17: a lying tongue
3. Verse 17: hands that shed innocent blood
4. Verse 18: a heart that devises wicked schemes
5. Verse 18: feet that are quick to rush into evil
6. Verse 19: a false witness who pours out lies
7. Verse 19: a person who stirs up conflict in the community

Did you notice how active the human body is physically in these evil practices? The eyes and tongue or mouth are involved in adultery. The feet wander to do evil under the guise of love. The heart or mind that plots and plans maliciousness then hurries to accomplish their wicked scheme with hands and feet. Then if caught breaking the law, their mouths easily pour out lies – “I didn’t do it! I’m innocent! Really it was them! They did it I just went along!”

Notice that the item on the list that verse 16 says is detestable to God is “a person who stirs up conflict in the community.” (Proverbs 6:16, 19) How easy it is to find fault in others. How quickly the words of condemnation flow out of our envy. How decimating our criticism becomes on an anonymous chat.

Conflict is a tool of the devil. From the time of the first sin, he tried to put doubt about God’s love into the hearts of Adam and Eve by making an insinuation of ulterior motives. A person who tries to point out the faults of others to stir up conflict is despicable. God hates that.

God moved Solomon to write these Proverbs to bring together communities rather than to tear them apart. Isn’t that what we most need today? Listen again to Proverbs 6:20-23.

“My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.” [Proverbs 6:20-23]

Let's keep to the life of Moral Purity God has designed for us, and be those fathers and mothers who never tire of sharing Solomon's warnings with our children and grandchildren.

Let's pray: Oh my Lord God, our lives are in your full view. Yet you have loved us and redeemed us. Please keep us walking in moral purity for your Name's sake. Please forgive us of our sin and help us to be renewed in your mercy. Please guide us to encourage our children and our children's children to also walk in the moral purity you have ordained, that they might have lives filled with Your blessings. In Jesus's Name we pray, amen."

Let's stand and sing the Doxology together.  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above the heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!  
Amen