

“Accursed Adultery” (Prov. 5)

1. Words of Warning (1-7)
 - a. Truth for Life (1-2)
 - i. Wisdom (1a) cf. ‘understanding’ & ‘discretion’ (1b-2a cf. 1:2-4).
 - ii. Words (7) indicative of instruction, authority, and integrity. If you don’t have your ‘word,’ what do you have? The instruction also connotes pursuing righteousness as failure to do such leads to the grave. Phil. 4:8-9 echoes vv. 6-7 here.
 - b. Deception to Death (3-6)
 - i. Contrary to the stern words of warning which demand attention, contemplation, and adherence (sacrifice), the lips of the immoral woman promise sweet honey and soothing oil. “Her lubricious, seductive speech, says McKane, “draws her victim irresistibly towards mystery, excitement and delight.”⁵⁹ Her smooth tongue (6:24), smooth words (7:5), and “lips” connote that one enters easily into her company.”¹
 - ii. Rather than preserve and enjoy wisdom’s fruit (2), partaking of the alluring honey results in the bitterness of wormwood (4). The luscious lips (as it were) are lying lips.
 - iii. Ultimately, the result of adultery is death! As mentioned before, these speeches and statements are not just instructions for practical living but for living life abundantly – for eternal life. All sin is spiritual adultery, and thus to heed the instruction of the “father,” is to heed the Law of God.
2. Woeful Wages (8-14)
 - a. Avoid the Allure (8). “Far from her” don’t even approach or walk by her door, so to speak. We can’t legitimately pray “lead us not into temptation” while we put ourselves at temptation’s door. The battle is rarely won when the soldier “wanders” (6b) into the enemies lines. The battles are won before they start. Cf. v. 6 “unstable” or “wander.” If we do not have our foundation of discipleship/accountability, we will be unstable, thus stumble into sin.
 - b. Reprehensible Results (9-10)
 - i. Lose your honor to others (9a). Will you let sin steal your trustworthy name?
 - ii. Lose years to the “merciless one” (9b). Will you lose your life to sin? Lord Byron was the bad boy of the nineteenth century whom everyone secretly envied. He was in Greece on his thirty-sixth birthday, all alone. Here is what he wrote: My days are in the yellow leaf, The flowers and fruits of love are gone; The worm, the canker, and the grief Are mine alone!⁴ In other words, “I’m thirty-six, and I’m already old. All I have left is VD and depression. Where are my drinking buddies now, when I need them?”²
 - iii. Lose wealth to foreigners (10a) I think of how presumptuous Israel was in her spiritual adultery, hence she has lost the greatest Treasure to the Gentiles (Mat. 13:44; 21:43).
 - iv. Lose your labors (10b). How tragic a life of labor with only wages of death? Hence vv. 11-14 →
 - c. Realize & Repent (11-14)
 - i. Realize (11). Sin’s wages are destruction and death and thus war must be waged. Sin perverts the beautiful design and intent of God. It steals our dignity. It makes our labor in vain. It is a disease that utterly consumes our person.

⁵⁹ McKane, *Proverbs*, p. 314.

¹ Waltke, B. K. (2004). *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15* (p. 308). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

⁴ *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, Vol. II (London: John Murray, 1879), p. 415.

² Ortlund, R. C., Jr. (2012). *Preaching the Word: Proverbs—Wisdom that Works* (R. K. Hughes, Ed.; p. 92). Crossway.

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- ii. Repent (12-14)
 - 1. Recollection of instruction (12). Note that the ‘father’ indeed had instructed the son/children (vv. 1, 7 respectively). It is our solemn duty and privilege to instruct our children in righteousness. Warnings must be given and projected results are appropriate, as here. How awful to hear your son say, “Why didn’t you warn me of this?” But also part of wisdom teaching is timing Prov. 25:11. Furthermore, adultery is so common today it is expected, overlooked, promoted, and even praised. “He deserved it after all.” Even believers and pastors have overlooked such and avoided necessary discipline. We have had our minds so hijacked by the media / Hollywood that some come to Scriptures with a critical attitude, yet approach adultery with an ‘open mind.’ Conversely, we need to come to the Word in humility, obedience, and faith to renew our minds; and come to the world with critical thinking. Can you discern sermonettes, messages, praise songs, etc.? Many such offer the promise of honey yet yield bitterness. However, the accurate/faithful instruction of the Word provides a wellspring of wealth.
 - 2. Admission of rebellion (12-13) Cf. Mat. 6:22-24
 - 3. Understanding of total ruin (14) Cf. Mat. 5:27-30
- 3. Wealth of Well-springing Waters (15-20)
 - a. Practical Provision (15-19). The contrast to adulterous intercourse is the pure provision of pleasure regarding wedlock. Such is:
 - i. A legitimate possession (15) cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-4
 - ii. An exclusive relation reserved for each other alone (16-17)
 - iii. A blessing of joy (18)
 - iv. A blessing of beauty and pleasure (19)
 - b. Ponder Perversion (20)
 - i. Sin and evil are a perversion of goodness and righteousness.
 - ii. Re: intimate relationships, abstinence, or biblical marriage are the two legitimate options.
 - c. Person of Purity (Jesus). He is the one to whom each of us are betrothed. Singles and Married alike owe complete allegiance to Him. He is the wellspring of living water re: v. 15 (Jn. 7:37-8). He is the faithful one re: vv. 16-17 who is closer than a brother (cf. Prov. 18:24). He is our deepest passion and joy re: v. 18 (cf. Ps. 42:7). He is the One by whom we’ll be enraptured in His unveiled presence and our glorified bodies (Rev. 4).
- 4. Willful Wayward Ways (21-23)
 - a. Paths Pondered by the Potentate (21)
 - i. To the rebel, God’s omniscience should be unsettling as they tread the path of perversion and rebellion.
 - ii. To the redeemed, such should be comforting as we walk in the light of His path albeit still warring with the flesh.
 - b. Self-inflicting Sin (22)
 - i. The wicked are ensnared by their own settings.
 - ii. Sin has temporal punishments i.e. natural consequences. Sin also has everlasting consequences as it is spiritual adultery.
 - c. Willfully Wobbling (23)

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- i. Willful (23a) “lack of instruction” is willful as wisdom calls aloud in the open (e.g. 1:20-23) and thus all are w/o excuse (Ro. 1:18-20).
- ii. Wandering (23b) “astray” is the same word as “enraptured” or “intoxicated” vv. 19, 20. The one who trusts the instruction of the Father is not drunk with wine or lust, but enraptured by the Gospel of Christ.
- iii. Consumed & Convicted? (Invitation). As v. 14 alludes (“I *was* on the verge of total ruin”), the hope of salvation is real. Jesus offered Himself to the weary (Mat. 11:28-30). Do you acknowledge God’s instruction? Do you admit that you are helpless to remedy your guilt of sin? Will you turn from it and to the Lord who created you and died to redeem you? The son in Proverbs apparently turned back to the instruction of the father, and when we trust Jesus – we do the same.

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The World is not a neutral place. It wars with God for His Kingdom (the souls of mankind). Likewise, the adulterous woman counters God’s gracious gifts with the perverted promises of pleasure. Such allure of the world and wonton woman appeals strongly to the flesh. As fallen creatures, we are too often led by our desires; for God gave us natural desires and the good gifts which fulfill them. However, evil uses God’s good gifts and perverts them because that is all evil can do. It cannot exist without goodness so it can only be a corruption/perversion of it. Hence, the one who is not abiding in the instruction of the Word is easily taken by the allure of illicit pleasures and will end accursed (v. 5 cf. Mat. 5:27-30). But the one who heeds the good counsel will prosper in the wellspring of God’s pure provisions of pleasure and blessing.