

# Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

## Subject: THE VALUE OF WISDOM IN PRESERVING FROM ADULTERY: Proverbs 5



The Book of Proverbs is a collection of sayings, intended to serve as a guide for daily life. The sayings cover many different topics, exploring attitudes and relationships, and evaluating such things as wealth, poverty, and power.

The Proverbs reflect a kind of literature that was common in ancient times. Many of the sayings in this book were written or collected by Solomon, some 950 years before Christ. Proverbs 25:1 suggests that the collection as we have it was completed in the days of King Hezekiah, about 700 B.C.

The word proverb comes from a Hebrew word meaning to rule or to govern. Thus Proverbs are sayings designed to rule or govern our conduct, and may be called Heaven's rules for men on earth.

Let's examine some key thoughts in this chapter:

1. The recklessness confronting all men. 2. The remorse common to all men. 3. The result coming to all men.

Proverbs 5:19- But, because a man's ways are examined by the Lord, evil deeds always ensnare a person so that:

Proverbs 5:23 He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.

Specific instruction is given concerning the dangers of the adulteress (vv. 1-6), the final price of infidelity (vv. 7-14), and the delights of married love (vv. 15-20). Then a reminder is given that sin is ultimately an issue with the Lord (vv. 21-23). As in 1:14-19, chapter 5 portrays against the immediate pleasure of sin its long-range consequences. If a person is wise, he sees this long-range view.

5:1-6. This chapter, like other portions in Proverbs, begins with the exhortation that the son pay attention and listen (cf. 4:1,10,20; 5:7; 7:24) to his father's words, for doing so gives discretion (cf. 1:4) and knowledge. Speaking (lips, 5:2) wisdom helps the son ignore the words (lips, v. 3) of an adulteress (zarah; see comments on Prov 2:16). Her deceptive, seductive words are persuasive, sweet like honey, the sweetest substance in ancient Israel, and smoother than (cf. 6:24; 7:21) olive oil, the smoothest substance in ancient Israel. But what seems attractive at first becomes bitter and sharp later. Involvement in adultery is like tasting gall, the bitterest substance known (from a plant), or like being cut by a double-edged sword. The adulteress leads men to death (cf. 2:18; 7:27; 9:18). Her sin makes her unaware that her ways are crooked (lit., "staggering or unstable"), in contrast with the "straight paths" of 4:11.

5:7-8. Again Solomon urged his sons (cf. comments on Prov 4:1) to listen (cf. 4:1,10,20; 5:1; 7:24) and adhere to what he said. He urged them not to turn... from his teachings, but to turn from the adulteress. They were not even to go near... her house (cf. 2:18) because of the danger of succumbing to her temptations.

5:9-14. Failure to keep away from the adulteress can result in many losses: loss of strength (which may mean losing one's health, self-respect, or both), loss of a long life (v. 9), loss of money (cf. 6:26; 29:3 b) - by paying the adulteress, paying her husband, or paying child support - and loss of health (5:11). Falling prey to lust also brings remorse when a person recognizes too late that he did not heed his parents' (here called teachers) instructions which inevitably leads to ruin and disgrace before others.

5:15-18. The rewards of chastity are a further encouragement to moral purity. A cistern ... well ... springs ... streams, and fountain control water, keeping it from being dissipated in the streets. Similarly, marital love with one's wife (v. 18) is pictured as enjoying one's cistern or fountain (cf. Song of Solomon 4:12,15). Sexual desires should be controlled and channeled in one's marriage, not wasted as described in Proverbs 5:7-14. Some commentators say the word them (v. 17) refers to children; others say it continues the metaphor of streams picturing one's sexual desires. As a person would not get water from his neighbor's cistern because he had his own (2 Kings 18:31), so a man should have his physical needs met by his own wife, not someone else's.

5:19-20. The breasts of a man's wife are soft to the touch and graceful in appearance like a deer (cf. Song of Solomon 4:5; 7:3). Therefore, a husband should be captivated (cf. Proverbs 5:20; the verb

šagah means "go astray," cf. v. 21; but it may also suggest the idea of being captured) by her love, not the affections of an adulteress. By two rhetorical questions (v. 20) the author pointed up the folly of being captivated (cf. v. 19) by an immoral woman and loving someone else's wife.

5:21-23. The dire consequences of adultery (vv. 7-14) should motivate a person to avoid it. But four even higher motivations are given in verses 21-23: (1) Since God sees man's ways (cf. 15:3; Job 31:1,4; Hebrews 4:13), adultery committed in secret is known by the LORD. (2) Also, God examines man's conduct (on ways and paths see comments on Prov 4:26). Man cannot escape God's scrutinizing. (3) Sin ensnares (cf. 1:17-18), and ties a person down like ropes (5:22). Though people like to talk about being "free" to sin as they wish, sin actually takes away freedom. (4) Being undisciplined (cf. v. 12) in one's moral life results in death (cf. vv. 5,11). Such living is foolish because it leads one astray from God's standards. "Led astray" is from the same word šagah rendered "captivated" in verses 19-20. Folly appears 21 times in Proverbs. To yield to sexual lust is folly.

**"You shall not commit adultery."** The Lord God spoke those words at Mount Sinai, and we call what He said the Seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:14). It declares that sexual intimacy outside the bonds of marriage is wrong, even if "between consenting adults." This law specifically mentions adultery, but the commandment includes the sexual sins prohibited elsewhere in Scripture (Leviticus 18; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:1-14). God invented sex and has every right to tell us how to use it properly.

However, on hearing the Seventh Commandment, many people in contemporary society smile nonchalantly and ask, "What's wrong with premarital or extramarital sex, or any other kind, for that matter?" After all, they argue, many people indulge in these things and seem to get away with it.

Furthermore, these activities are more acceptable today than they were in Solomon's day; why make a big issue out of it? "Life is a game in which the rules are constantly changing," says a contemporary writer; "nothing spoils a game more than those who take it seriously." So, the verdict's in: sex is fun, so don't take it too seriously.

It's true that some well-known people have indulged in sexual escapades and even bragged about it, including government officials, Hollywood stars, sports heroes, and (alas!) preachers, but that doesn't make it right. Sexual sin is one of the main themes of numerous movies, TV programs, novels, and short stories; yet popularity is no test of right and wrong. Many things that the law says are legal, the Bible says are evil, and there won't be a jury sitting at the White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:27; 22:15).

Why worry about sexual sins? These three chapters of Proverbs give us three reasons why we should worry if we break God's laws of purity: because sexual sin is eventually disappointing (Proverbs 5), gradually destructive (chap. 6), and ultimately deadly (chap. 7). That's why God says, "You shall not commit adultery."

#### 1. Sexual Sin Is Eventually Disappointing (Proverbs 5)

When married people honor and respect sex as God instructs them in His Word, they can experience increasing enjoyment and enrichment in their intimacy. But when people break the rules, the result is just the opposite. They experience disappointment and disillusionment and have to search for larger "doses" of sexual adventure in order to attain the imaginary pleasure level they're seeking.

God created sex not only for reproduction but also for enjoyment, and He didn't put the "marriage wall" around sex to rob us of pleasure but to increase pleasure and protect it. In this chapter, Solomon explains the disappointments that come when people violate God's loving laws of sexual purity.

Their experience goes from sweetness to bitterness (vv. 1-6). We've met "the strange woman" before (2:16; NIV, "adulteress") and she'll be mentioned again (5:20; 6:24; 7:5; 20:16; 22:14; 23:27; 27:13). The word translated "strange" basically means "not related to." The "strange woman" is one to whom the man is not related by marriage, and therefore any sexual liaison with her is evil. The beginning of this sinful alliance may be exciting and sweet, because the kisses and words from her lips drip like honey (7:13-20), but in the end, the "sweetness" turns to bitterness and the honey becomes poison (5:4).

The book of Proverbs emphasizes the importance of looking ahead to see where your actions will lead you (see 5:11; 14:12-14; 16:25; 19:20; 20:21; 23:17-18,32; 24:14,20; 25:8). The wise person checks on the destination before buying a ticket (4:26), but modern society thinks that people can violate God's laws and escape the consequences. They're sure that whatever has happened to others will never happen to them. Sad to say, their ignorance and insolence can never neutralize the tragic aftermath that comes when people break the laws of God. "Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deuteronomy 32:29)

Their experience goes from gain to loss (vv. 7-14). Temptation always includes hopeful promises; otherwise, people would never take the devil's bait. For a time, it seems like these promises have been fulfilled, and sinners bask in the sun-shine of pleasant experiences and false assurances. This is what family counselor J. Allan Petersen calls, "the myth of the greener grass." People who commit sexual sins think their problems are solved ("She understands me so much better than my wife does!") and that life

will get better and better. But disobedience to God's laws always brings sad consequences and sinners eventually pay dearly for their brief moments of pleasure.

When you read verses 9-14, you hear the words of a suffering sinner lamenting the high cost of disobeying God's laws, because the most expensive thing in the world is sin. He discovers that the woman's husband is a cruel man who demands that he pay for what he's done, so the adulterer ends up giving his strength to others and toiling away to pay his debt. Instead of luxury, the sinner has misery; instead of riches, poverty; instead of success, ruin; and instead of a good reputation, the name of an adulterer. He looks back and wishes he had listened to his parents and his spiritual instructors, but his wishes can't change his wretched situation. Yes, God in His grace will forgive his sins if he repents, but God in His government sees to it that he reaps what he sows.

Their experience goes from purity to pollution (vv. 15-20). Solomon compares enjoying married love to drinking pure water from a fresh well, but committing sexual sin is like drinking polluted water from the gutter or sewer. Sex within marriage is a beautiful river that brings life and refreshment, but sex outside marriage is a sewer that defiles everything it touches. To commit sexual sin is to pour this beautiful river into the streets and the public squares. What waste! If you "drink deep" of the wrong kind of love (7:18, NIV) it will destroy you.

The commitment of marriage is like the banks of the river that keep the river from becoming a swamp. God's holy law confines the waters within the banks, and this produces power and depth. Extramarital and premarital affairs don't satisfy because they're shallow, and it doesn't take much to stir up shallow water. A man and woman pledged to each other in marriage can experience the growing satisfaction that comes with love, commitment, depth, and purity.

But there's something else involved here. Solomon admonishes the husband to be "ravished" with his wife's love (5:19-20); the word translated "ravished" also means "intoxicated" or "infatuated." The adulterer watches the river turn into a sewer, but the faithful husband sees the water become wine! I think it's significant that Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding feast, as though He were giving us an object lesson concerning the growing delights of marriage (John 2:1-11).

When a husband and wife are faithful to the Lord and to each other, and when they obey Scriptures like 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 and Ephesians 5:22-33, neither of them will look for satisfaction anywhere else. If they love each other and seek to please each other and the Lord, their relationship will be one of deepening joy and satisfaction; they won't look around for "the greener grass."

Their experience goes from freedom to bondage (vv. 21-23). Freedom of choice is one of the privileges God has given us, but He instructs us and urges us to use that freedom wisely. The laws of God are guideposts to lead us on the path of life, and He watches the decisions we make and the roads we take. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (15:3).

As long as we use our freedom wisely, we will mature in Christian character, and God can trust us with more freedom. But if we abuse our freedom and deliberately disobey His Word, our freedom will gradually become bondage, the kind of bondage that can't easily be broken. "The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast" (5:22, NIV). Those words could have been used as an epitaph for Samson (Judges 13-16).

It's impossible to sin without being bound. One of the deceitful things about sin is that it promises freedom but only brings slavery. "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34, NKJV). "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16, NKJV)

The cords of sin get stronger the more we sin, yet sin deceives us into thinking we're free and can quit sinning whenever we please. As the invisible chains of habit are forged, we discover to our horror that we don't have the strength to break them. Millions of people in our world today are in one kind of bondage or another and are seeking for deliverance, but the only One who can set them free is Jesus Christ. "Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36, NKJV).

No wonder the father warns his children to stay away from the adulteress. "Remove your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house" (Proverbs 5:8, NKJV). "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death" (7:27).