

Proverbs 2v16-19
10th February 2019 am Hill and Arcadia
Protecting your Family

A quick read through the book of Proverbs will reveal a rather **large block of material** addressing the danger of falling in to the trap of unfaithfulness and adultery.

Sexual sin is a common and devastating reality. Christians are not excluded. Even among us here today the **battle for purity** for singles and married couples is an ongoing challenge.

As a teenager or unmarried person you may think that sexual frustration ends when you get married. That can be true but it is not always the case.

Husbands and wives can face the **intense struggle** of maintaining their commitment to each other and be lured in to getting sexually involved outside of their marriage.

Over these next two Sundays we will consider the snare of sexual sin.

The intention here is not just to hold up God's call to purity, that is, faithfulness in marriage, but also to show you how the word of God provides clear guidance on **how to protect your marriage**.

How do you maintain sexual purity so as to protect you marriage? Is it possible at least in some measure to have a plan – some strategy in place to ensure that you win the battle in the area of faithfulness to your partner?

1 Recognize the POSSIBILITY of sexual sin

"*It will never happen to me*", is a common phrase we throw around in our predictions about the future.

We see car accidents daily, we hear of hijackings and robberies, we know of people who are without jobs and all the while we think and believe that this will never happen to me – and it does!

In **the same way** we know people who have fallen pregnant before marriage,. Others who have had affairs and got divorced; and we again we blindly declare that this only happens to them and not to us.

The truth of the matter is that most who have had affairs or not maintained sexual purity used to say the same thing.

Solomon recognized that **the possibility of an affair was real** in the lives of those he was teaching. He openly spoke about the possibility of adultery.

Proverbs 5v1

My son, be attentive to my wisdom...

Proverbs 6v20

My son, keep your father's commandment...

Proverbs 7v1

My son, keep my words...

And in each instance there follows a lengthy argument against committing adultery.

Solomon in his wisdom knew it to be far safer to consider that it could happen, rather than pretending that the possibility does not exist.

It is better to believe that the danger is there as it is far more likely to produce alertness to the trap. It makes good sense to have a guarded approach than walk blindly into a snare that will hurt and harm you and others as well as grieve God.

This is not a question of being pessimistic or negative but to have an approach that is in touch with reality. Here are some reasons why an affair is possible.

1.1 You are sinful

Using the example of Proverbs 7, we see a young man heading for a brothel. Notice something of his dilemma.

Proverbs 7v7 ... a young man lacking sense.

He is described as a young man who did not have sufficient understanding or discernment. The young man lacks wisdom.

Proverbs 7v21 ...with much seductive speech she persuades him

He is driven by his desires (legitimate and illegitimate or perverted desires). He is driven by fact that he wants these desires met – to have them satisfied immediately.

After committing adultery with Bathsheba David understood the problem of being sinful.

Psalms 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

In the case of an affair it is not just a growing apart from each other that leads to adultery. It is not a question of falling in and out of love – rather the core problem is that you and I have a sinful nature.

Our desires, character, emotions and motives have a 'flaw'. It's called sin resulting in a tendency to please yourself and push God and his ways aside.

This inclination of our nature to please self is sufficient reason to make an affair possible. The believer needs to realize that sinless perfection has as yet not arrived – sanctification is still in progress.

Given the "right" circumstances, a particular frame of mind and you or I could lose this battle – thus giving in to the temptation...

Proverbs 5:3 For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,

An affair is possible because you are sinful but it is useful to know specifically when an affair **is more likely possible** to happen,

1.2 It is when you are vulnerable

When are we easy prey? My Labrador watches for sleeping doves or wounded birds and then she strikes. They are easy victims.

You too are at times weary, wounded, discouraged and thus vulnerable and open to become another victim.

Proverbs 7:26 for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng.

In **times of vulnerability** a situation that might otherwise have been safe may be unsafe. Here are some of the things that may us more vulnerable.

- **Unrealistic expectations**

It is **a fallacy** to believe that your spouse or any other person for that matter will meet all the possible needs you have. (cook, clean, wash, iron, have a career, super mom, socialite, sportswoman, sexually on top form, listening ear, servant, financial wizard, intellectually stimulating, patient, able to multi task...)

Liken your personality with all its complexities and desires to that of a **keyboard**. One keyboard able to produce many beautiful tunes. No single player can play all the tunes.

Simply because your partner is **a unique individual** made by God. And like you your partner is not infinite and all powerful with unlimited resources.

Discard the notion that there is single person out there who will meet all your expectations.

If you do not have realistic expectations you will begin to **feel cheated** and expose yourself to the danger of becoming vulnerable.

- **Unmet needs make us vulnerable**

Proverbs 5:15,18,19 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 A lovely deer, a graceful doe— let her breasts fill you at all times with delight.

Or as **Paul** puts it

1 Corinthians 7:2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband.

Husbands and wives are to develop **sensitivity** to the needs of their partner.

- **Emotional pain can make us vulnerable**

Lois Mowday in her book, *The Snare*, says that "immorality is justified (in the thinking of the individual) in a time of pain to find relief"

Some **examples** of emotional pain:

Insecurity – brought about by the removal of someone or something that has provided support (employee, health, spouse in betrayal)

Loneliness – Starved for companionship and friendship and thus easily exploited.

Loss – can be of youth, a job, a loved one, can be a disappointment in a relationship, loss of self worth or status.

In each of these and there are more, if immorality is the reaction it may give way **momentary relief** but in the long term it becomes sour and magnifies guilt and pain.

Proverbs 5:3 For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil, 4 but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword..

- **Wrong attitudes make us vulnerable**

Negative or sinful attitudes are wrong and harmful.

- **Pride**

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall..

- **Ungratefulness**

The focus is on what you don't have and not on what you do have

- **Self pity**

- **Jealousy**

Note that in each instance the attitude leads to the place where everybody **owes you something**.

- **A weak commitment to Jesus Christ makes us vulnerable**

Solomon places a lot of emphasis in chapter 6 and 7 on keeping commands...

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,

Here is the **fundamental issue**

Proverbs 7:4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call insight your intimate friend,

If there is a **slackness and sloppiness** in your love for God and your worship of God then you become vulnerable.

But if there is a **love for God and his Son, Jesus Christ** then there will be a greater willingness to obey the commandments willingly and freely.

If a mouse only knew that his vulnerability was his taste for cheese – there would be many more mice.

2 Consider the PRICE of sexual sin

An affair has a price tag. Not only you and the one you are involved with; but the cost will be felt by all those around you. Your spouse, children, parents, friends and others.

2.1 There is a price to pay in this life

Proverbs 5:11 and at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed, 12 and you say, "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof! 13 I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors. 14 I am at the brink of utter ruin in the assembled congregation."

The ruin has many facets to it:

- Loss of character and self respect and the respect of others
- Loss of family, testimony, joy, peace,
- Injury to your career
- Smears your name
- Dishonors God
- Drains your finances
- May end up with disease
- Leads to a life style of deceit and secretiveness

Mowday: "no other sin so destroys the foundations of Christian marriage – it destroys the fiber of anyone's world".

Proverbs 6:27 Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?

2.2 There is a price to pay in eternity

Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Or as Solomon puts it

Proverbs 7:21 With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. 22 All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast 23 till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life. 27 Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.

Conclusion

- Recognize the possibility of an affair or any kind of sexual sin

- Consider the fact that there is a price to pay

In the OT God uses the **ugly betrayal and pain of adultery** to paint a picture of how we as people forsake Him – and yet he persists in his love and grace for us.

We need to always see and receive this **love and grace**

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 2:2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.