

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: November 7, 2010

Title: “He Who Would Destroy Himself Does it” -- **The Sin of Adultery**

Text: Proverbs 5, 6, 7

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2010

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

“He Who Would Destroy Himself Does it”

The Sin of Adultery

Proverbs 6:20-34

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths

Read: Proverbs 5, 6, 7

It is with resolve and violence I speak against an unyielding predator. Tragically this particular sin is relentless and devastating. It is indifferent to color, creed or culture. It cares little as to gender or social standard. As an individual I am confronted by this cruel foe, and as an Elder I see the sins of the sheep and it is heart wrenching. There are those who for various reasons find themselves in morally compromising consequences. Others are out there, like the devil, prowling for their next conquest and victim. I wish to speak to both situations. John Owen correctly asks and then comments,

“Do you [kill sin]? Do you make it your daily work? Do not take a day off from this work; **always be killing sin or it will be killing you.** We must strike it as an enemy until it ceases living. Sin is laboring to bring forth the deeds of the flesh. When sin lets us alone, we may let sin alone. Sin is always acting, conceiving, seducing and tempting. There is not a day but sin foils or is foiled. There is no safety but in a **constant warfare** from sin’s perplexing rebellion. Sin will not only be striving, acting, rebelling, troubling, and disquieting if not continually mortified, it will also bring forth great, cursed, scandalous, and soul-destroying sins. Every unclean thought would be adultery if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression; and every thought of unbelief would be atheism [emphasis added].”

It is impossible not to sense the urgency in which he writes. All who have seen its devastation and tasted of its bitter dregs and **smelled its sulfuric repugnancy** will speak to the urgent need to be ever vigilant. It is my desire that the Holy Spirit would use His Word to awaken within all of us the need to be equally determined in the fighting for our very souls and those of our fellow Christians and their families and their children. It is with this in mind we read Proverbs 5, 6 and 7 and beg the Holy Spirit to enable this text to wash over our minds and souls.

There are six relevant features embedded in this text as found in Proverbs 6:20-34. Each stands as a sentinel guarding our souls, positioned as vigilant sentries lest we find ourselves lulled into the silent stupor of unguarded exposure. Listen carefully and let us heed their counsel lest we find ourselves in hell’s domain.

- I. First, this text presupposes that instruction has been given and the recipient knows better (v. 20; See also Prov. 7:1-4).

The language of Proverbs 7:1-4 is one of intimacy and internalizing of this instruction. It is not enough to simply know, but one must weave such thinking into the fabric of life. This can almost be stated without explanation, but what was once common knowledge is now becoming rare and trivial. All families must teach their children morality. This is proverbial.

Fathers and mothers are to be engaged in teaching their children life. It is the consistent message of the biblical text. When God cut covenants with His people, His intent was to set them aside for Himself. We are not our own and thus we are to “flee immorality” (1 Cor. 6:18, 19). It is wrong to have any kind of sexuality outside the context of marriage (Prov. 5). Being morally pure is right and respectable. Being a physical and emotional virgin is proper and biblical for the unmarried. It is tragic that such qualities are becoming rare, but let us not kid ourselves. We want our young ladies morally and emotionally pure and we want our young men living abstinence. We should be ashamed for accepting as normal moral indiscretion. We should not be comfortable with the standards of this age. God did not save us to be morally licentious.

The instruction received is apparent and open. They are bound around our hearts and wrapped around our necks. It is as plain and public as one who wears a scarf. I wonder why we wear our wedding ring on our left hand and not the right. I looked into this and found various explanations, but perhaps the best is this, “The most widely accepted explanation is that because the majority of people are right-handed, wearing the ring on the left hand makes it less likely to be damaged or lost during everyday activities.” I find the idea practical where heavy labor is involved, but most of us are not involved in heavy labor. The ring reminds us of our covenant with our spouses before God. When we sin, we sin with our right hands and that ring should sit in plain sight of our transgressions. It should be as prominent as a scarf around our necks.

- II. Second, this text presupposes that the instruction given is preventative and powerful when heeded (vv. 21-24).

Proverbs 7:5 speaks of “hedging us in.” The truth of moral discretion acts as a thick wall of protection, a fortress against the besieging armies of moral indiscretion. Friend let us once more realize that **placing the safeguard at the top of the cliff is far better than putting a hospital at the bottom.** Kids and parents need to stop watching sexually explicit movies on TV or the internet. Unless and until we say no, we will continue to give ground and thus say yes. Kids, you must listen to the counsel of your parents as they counsel you toward moral purity. Parents, stop playing with fire. It is time to heed the Scriptural admonition and put a guard on your eyes. It is not enough to simply speak truth, we must embody truth. As parents you must teach your children morality and you must not enable nor allow them to live loose lives in their conduct or clothes.

- III. Third, this text presupposes that evil pursues us and its appeal is seductive (vv. 24b-26).

The imagery of Proverbs 7:5-21 is graphic. I recognize that the language places the woman as the embodiment of evil, but evil is without gender. Just as many men fit this profile as women. The notable feature is evil’s pursuit. It stalks its prey and lurks in the shadows waiting to seize its next score. It is relentless and none of us are above or beyond its appeal. It invites with the intent of destroying. It is not simply relentless but seductive. The invitation is genuine and the appeal is powerful. There is something in us all that responds to the call. We

must put in play all of our allies in our fight for moral purity. Everything around us seeks to undermine moral purity. Do not deceive yourself. If you fail to plan your defense, you will plan to fail. You must be proactive in your pursuit of moral purity.

IV. Fourth, this text presupposes that the outcome is deficiency, demanding and destruction (vv. 26, 31-33).

It was a shocking tragedy — a 15-year-old boy was strangled by the family's pet. The slender youth had gone to an upstairs bedroom to play with an 11-foot Burmese python. Nobody is sure how it happened, but the supposedly tame snake turned into a killer that took the boy's life. Friend, the Burmese python was already a killer.

Why play with a powerful snake that can turn into a horrifying agent of death? Why even bring such a potentially dangerous creature into the house?

This warning applies even more to the hazard of playing with sin — some "small" thing that seems merely to give pleasure without hurting anyone. At first it seems harmless, but feed it, let it grow, take pride in it, and **a trifling sin can become a terrible tragedy** that "brings forth death" (Jas. 1:15). The writer of the Proverbs applied this truth to the area of sexual purity. "Do not lust after her beauty," said Solomon (6:25).

Toying with a pet sin is like playing with a loaded gun. Sooner or later it will go off. – (Vernon C. Grounds *Our Daily Bread*, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved). The most deadly sins do not leap upon us, they creep upon us.

Immorality will rob you of everything you have. **It is always cost you more than you wish to pay, keep you longer than you wish to stay and take you further than you wish to go.** Everyone who has ever drunk from this empty cistern testifies to the weight of these words. In the end, it will destroy you. Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 6 speak directly to this. For those who partake of this fat-infested dish will reap significant heart damage. Listen to how Proverbs 5:22 and 23 address this.

²² "His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin. ²³ He will die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he will go astray" (Prov. 5:22, 23).

Consider the comment by Adam Clarke. "Most people, who follow unlawful pleasures, think they can give them up whenever they please; but sin repeated becomes customary; custom soon engenders habit; and habit in the end assumes the form of necessity; the man becomes bound with his own cords, and so is led captive by the devil at his will." (Adam Clarke on Proverbs 5:22)

O may we realize when lust conceives, "it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death (James 1:15)."

V. Fifth, this text presupposes that the perpetrator is illogical and lacking sense (v. 32).

Proverbs 7:7 calls him “naïve” and “lacking sense”. In the end, those who forsake instruction and drink and eat will find themselves in a place they never intended to be (Prov. 5:11-13). Moral carelessness simply makes no sense. What makes this sin so damaging is the death one dies is by degree. You do not simply wake up one day determined to commit such heinous sins. Something enabled you to become desensitized and than act out your sins. What you sowed in seed form burst forth in heartbreaking harvest. Whatever itch you attempt to scratch with the sin of moral indiscretion will never live up to its billing.

VI. Finally, this text presupposes that the outcome is inevitable, inescapable, and irrevocable (vv. 27-29, 34, and 35).

Herein lies the great calamity of this most severe of sins. You cannot cheat moral indiscretion. It will cost you your life (Prov. 7:22, 23). What you think is your servant quickly becomes your master and a cruel one at that. Forgive me if this sounds trite,

But the sin and wrong we often do,
May long be kept from human view.
But count on this as always true,
One day it will catch up with you.

You cannot cheat this sin. It will always pay its debt in full. And once you’ve committed this sin even in recovery it leaves its dreadful stain (Prov. 7:24-27).

Application: Where do we go from here?

- **First**, if you’ve never committed this sin and you are resolved to keep yourself from this sin, then praise the Lord and stay resolute.
- **Second**, perhaps you have made all necessary preparation and have placed all of the pieces in motion to commit the crime.

Right now I beg you to stop. I shout out in holy terror, STOP! It is not too late to turn back and keep yourself from reaping the whirlwind of destruction. Learn the truth of Proverbs and drink water from your own cistern (Prov. 5:15-23).

- **Third**, **perhaps** you are in it. You’ve partook of this forbidden fruit. Right now I pray you feel the full weight of its burden and can smell its dreadful stench. Hell lies before you calling out with its sinister seduction.

O may you see the gaping arms of agony opening before you calling out and welcoming you into its lair. Jesus is calling out to you, the Father is inviting, and the Holy Spirit is welcoming you. O friend, the warmth of His embrace and the power of His healing touch can set right what is wrong. It is never too late to be restored and to “sin no more” (John 8:1-11).

Consider the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32.

¹¹ And He said, "A man had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. ¹³ And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and **went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living.** ¹⁴ Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country and he began to be impoverished. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And **he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating,** and no one was giving anything to him. ¹⁷ But when **he came to his senses,** he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "**Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight;** ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" ²⁰ So he got up and came to his father. **But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.** ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² **But the father said** to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; ²³ and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ **for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to celebrate.** ²⁵ Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. ²⁹ But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; ³⁰ but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' ³¹ And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² **But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.**' (Luke 15:11-32).

Friend, if you have given away all you possess, God waits with open arms to receive you back. **Although sin is relentless and this particular sin steals much, God is more relentless and pursues with a more ardent grip. He can restore what was robbed. He can give back what was willfully given. God is greater than your sin.** Where sin abounded, grace does much more abound (Rom. 5:20). The story of your life is a part of His one Story. Do not give up; do not stop believing that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all you can possibly ask or thing (Eph. 3:20). He is the God of the impossible. What the locusts eat, He will inevitably restore. God is here, hear Him call.

Where there is darkness and death, God will bring light and life. Please in the name of Jesus I beg you to come to the healing fountain, to drink from His water and to eat from His table. Do not put yourself and your family through this darkest of valleys. It is a beating that leaves significant scars. He is not simply enough; He is more than enough. He is fully and finally sufficient for any and all needs and wants. In the name of Jesus, BE HEALED.