

“I CHOOSE TO PROTECT YOU”

GUARDING AND ENJOYING YOUR LOVER’S PURITY

I enjoy hunting. Planning, tracking, positioning, and waiting. Few things match the big thrill of having those hours of waiting rewarded by a large animal guardedly wandering within range without detecting your scent or movement. With barely the ability to breathe and your heart beating in your throat, that thrill intensifies when your bullet or arrow flies into the vital organs of the animal who never saw it coming. Following the blood trail to the animal, the excitement is uncontrollable. The bigger the game, the higher the risk, the greater the pleasure of hunting and killing.

Among the most challenging and exciting game animals are Polar Bears. They are amid the largest and fiercest bears, inhabiting the harshest and most inhospitable terrains of the far north. Eskimos know they cannot hunt this massive animal in typical fashions, whose arm span is over nine feet long, and who with one swipe can remove a human head from its body—they take on a much different strategy.

Alaskan hunters find a small animal, like a baby seal, and with a large knife, kill the animal and drag its carcass several hundred yards, leaving a smeared trail of blood across the snow. When the bear picks up the scent of the blood he follows it until he reaches the animal and enjoys a light lunch. But the hunters have also left him another treat: the knife that was used to kill the animal only a few feet away from the carcass upside down in the snow, with the blade pointed upward, and the blood of the animal frozen on it, like a bloody Popsicle (much like the spoon with the cake mix on it that mom would leave in the bowl).

The polar bear, not full, because the animal was smaller, cannot resist, and licks the knife. What he does not know is that with every lick he is slicing his own tongue, adding to the blood that he is eating. Overtaken by his lust for blood, his instincts keep him licking the knife until the morning, when the bear is either dead because he has killed himself, or is so weak from the blood loss, that the hunters can easily crush his skull in with a hammer.

The principle that every hunted animal learns too late is what we must learn in relation to sin: the biggest, strongest, smartest of us can go down spiritually if we are lured in and enticed by our desires. No area of life is that more true than in the area of our personal purity. The godliest, wisest, and strongest men in the Bible fell to sexual immorality. None of us as godly as David, so wise as Solomon, or near the strength of Samson, and all of them went down...in flames. From each of their sad stories, we learn this essential principle: moral compromise is never the result of a moment. It’s the slow, subtle lure of a soul into a baited trap, which only ends in destruction. No sooner is the passing pleasure of sin savored than the crushing hammer blow of sin brought down.

The goal of this study is to learn how to safeguard against the slow and dangerous descent into sexual immorality (or any moral compromise for that matter), by listening to the man who should have listened to himself. Solomon, the author of the famed Song of Solomon, who also built safeguards into his dating and marriage relationship, failed to heed his own warnings, which are now passed down to us with double the impact: the height of urgency with which they were originally given under inspiration, and the depth to which we have seen him fall for not applying what he taught. He lived what He feared.

Consider his early years, and how he and his bride upheld purity in the beginning – write down the occasion and the response in which they were tempted but remained faithful to their purity:

- **2:7**
- **2:15**
- **3:5**
- **8:4**

Personal purity is essential to every follower of Christ. Consider what Paul said to the believers in **1 Thessalonians 4:3–8**:

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; **4** that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, **5** not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; **6** that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. **7** For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. **8** Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

A man and woman trying to discern the will of God for their own future cannot possibly hope to find it if they are living contrary to the revealed will of God in Scripture. For them to say, “We believe it is God’s will for us to get married,” while living in sexual sin, is self-deception. It is emphatically not God’s will. Clearly, based on what He already said. The only way to discover the will of God for your life is to be in the will of God according to the Bible, where it is revealed.

Selfishness and lust *before* marriage become deeper selfishness and lust *in* marriage. Nothing changes at the jewelry exchange on the altar. Patterns of sin and hard heartedness only deepen and develop without repentance. A couple who puts impurity in the foundation of their relationship, leaves cracks that upon which they must attempt to build in later years. It’s not worth it.

Any couple that wants to honor Christ and enjoy marriage should beware and be warned as to how good marriages implode and how otherwise unsuspecting Christian people are seduced into moral failure. Stated more positively, the opposite of what we learn will “affair-proof” the marriage. Proverbs 7 details the descent into pain, which Solomon himself eventually took, as easily as he walked down the palace stairs. Here’s the process:

1. TRUTH MEETS INDECISION (V. 1-7)

- A. In v. 1-4, what 5 terms does Solomon use to describe the Word of God?
- B. In v. 1-4, what does he tell his son to do with the Word of God? What does this say about how we should view the Word if we would avoid compromise?
- C. According to v. 5, what is the result of remembering and prizing the Word of God and how does Solomon’s play on words reinforce this?
- D. What does this passage teach about a person’s spiritual decline if he or she is not regularly abiding in God’s truth?
- E. According to v. 6, how is wisdom personified and what is she doing? Compare **Proverbs 24:30-32**.
- F. What can you learn from the failings in your life? The victories in your life? The failings of others?
- G. How is this principle like Hurricane Iniki on September 11, 1992?
- H. How is wisdom *unlike* the young man in the story? What is a “**simple**” person, according to the Biblical Hebrew?
- I. What does this say about his “gullibility” quotient?
- J. While do situational ethics not work against seduction?

K. What are convictions and how are they formed?

2. INDECISION MEETS UNACCOUNTABILITY (V. 8-9)

A. According to **v. 8**, where does this man go?

B. According to **v. 9**, when does he go there? What four descriptions are given about the timing and what does this mean?

C. What obvious Biblical principle is violated, about which Solomon spoke in **Proverbs 5:1-8**?

D. How is this man “flirting with fire” and what warning does God give in **Proverbs 6:27-29** against it?

E. What kinds of dumb things do we say to ourselves or others when we evade accountability (cf. **Job 24:15**)?

3. UNACCOUNTABILITY MEETS TEMPTATION (V. 10-12)

A. What do you learn about the aggressiveness of temptation in **v. 10**, as modeled by this woman (cf. **v. 15**)?

B. What do you learn about the attitudes of temptation in **v. 10b** and **11a** as modeled by this woman (cf. also **v. 13b**)?

C. What do you learn about the attraction of temptation in **v. 10b**, as modeled by this woman?

D. What do you learn about the availability to temptation in **v. 12**, as modeled by this woman?

E. What should be obvious to this man, that is obvious to everyone else?

4. TEMPTATION MEETS IMAGINATION (V. 13, 16-18)

A. How does this woman appeal to his senses to stir him with her temptation?

➤ V. 10b, 16 – sight

➤ V. 13 – touch

➤ V. 14 – taste

➤ V. 14-15 – hearing

➤ V. 17 – smell

➤ V. 18 – imagination

B. Is she lying to him? How is this strategy effective?

C. How does her offer compare to the language used in the **Song of Solomon** between two righteous lovers? What’s the difference?

D. How did Satan unleash this strategy on Jesus in the wilderness (**Matthew 4:1-11**)?

5. IMAGINATION MEETS RATIONALIZATION (V. 14)

A. What statement does she make in v. 14 about her religious duties and her standing before God (cf. **Titus 1:16**)?

B. What added value does this statement bring to her seduction and his gullibility?

C. What religious justification would this give him to overcome any spiritual barriers he had to sinning with her?

D. Her “**sacrifice**” is a *peace offering*; what two things would it signal to this young man?

6. RATIONALIZATION MEETS VANITY (V. 15)

- A. What word does she use most in **v. 15** and on what does she want him to focus?
- B. How is this a powerful motivator in temptation?
- C. What kinds of things do we say to ourselves when we are in this mindset?

7. VANITY MEETS RECKLESSNESS (V. 19)

- A. What frightening truth does this man learn in **v. 19** that should send him running home?
- B. How does this woman assure him he has no reason to fear?
- C. Why is she saying this to him and how is this the same stupid thing we do when we venture out in sin?
- D. What does **Proverbs 6:32-35** warn about such recklessness?
- E. What are some examples of things we say when we want to minimize the consequences of sin?

8. RECKLESSNESS MEETS OPPORTUNITY (V. 20-21)

- A. What opportunity does she give him in **v. 20**?
- B. How is opportunity so closely tied to our temptation? In other words, what is totally removed from this situation?
- C. What is the danger of thinking we are holy when we merely do not have the opportunity to sin?

9. OPPORTUNITY MEETS IMPULSE (V. 22A)

- A. What words in **v. 22** describe his reaction to this offer?

- B. What *snapped* in this man and how did it happen so suddenly? What does this say about our passions and desires?
- C. Who is following whom in this story and why is this backwards?

10. IMPULSE MEETS DEMISE (V. 22B-27)

- A. What word pictures does Solomon use in v. 22-23 to describe the demise of this young man?
- B. What will this momentary pleasure cost him, and us, according to v. 23?
- C. What words summarize Solomon’s teaching on purity, as recorded in v. 24-27?

TAKING IT HOME AND MAKING IT REAL:

Purity is one of the greatest gifts you can ever give to God or to your marriage partner. Consider the following ideas for practical application to your life and relationship:

- A. If you are single or dating, sit down with your partner or your friends, and have a strong talk about boundaries. What is the line as to how holy you can be, how you can save yourselves for marriage, and build into your relationship now those qualities of sacrificial, selfless love that will endure. Write down a list of consequences to falling into immorality, and put them in a place where you can review them regularly.
- B. If you are married, take this list of 10 steps downward and discuss the opposite. Every one of these steps downward offers insight into how to climb upwards. Love your partner enough to “affair-proof” your marriage before it’s too late.
- C. Perhaps do a Bible study, such as the one offered at www.settingcaptivesfree.com called, *The Way of Purity* by Mike Cleveland. Give your convictions and patterns a new strength and motivation with further study.
- D. If you are caught in a pattern of immorality, get help now. See your small group leader or pastor to get off the slippery slope today.