

The Harlot

Father-Son Retreat 2014

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sermonaudio.com

Preached on: Friday, October 3, 2014

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I want to begin by talking about the most important thing that you need to know about the harlot because you're going to meet the harlot nearly everywhere. The most important thing about a harlot is, it really comes from another principle and that is that when you talk about impurity and harlotry, when you talk about pornography, when you talk about the things that surround this issue of harlotry, you have to recognize more than anything else that purity always implies a pure bride and you cannot talk about a harlot until you talk about a bride and you cannot talk about a bride unless you talk about a bridegroom and you cannot talk about a bridegroom unless you speak about the purity of the bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. This whole subject of impurity cannot be understood at all by us by just speaking of the matter of impurity. We have to understand the beauties of purity and the beauty of the purity of the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ as she is purified by her perfectly pure bridegroom. So any discussion about purity really needs to begin with a discussion about ultimate purity and ultimate purity is in God. God is most holy. God is most pure. God is full of glory and grace and every imaginable beauty and any unimaginable beauty to mankind, God is the source of it all and God is pure and he makes pure. His purity is the foundation of all happiness. Holiness is happiness. Holiness never deprived anyone of any good thing. So if you're going to speak about impurity, you've got to start really with the matter of purity and the purity and the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is pure and he allows the impure into his family. He loves them with an everlasting love. God the Father sends his Son to make a sacrifice for the impure. All are impure and the God who is holy calls men and women who are unholy to believe that his holy Son is the only source of true happiness and that in him one can know a holiness and therefore a happiness that is truly satisfying. So the first thing that we need to recognize is that you can't talk about impurity unless you first lay a foundation in purity. This is where we must begin.

The second thing that we must do is we must understand love because when we speak about impurity, we're talking about something that contradicts love. You cannot understand how bad impurity is until you understand how damaging it is to love; how it makes objects of others; how it incites selfishness; how it makes a man of God unto himself who only serves himself and his eyes only look for what would seem to satisfy him. So you have to contemplate the whole matter of love in order to see impurity in its proper framing.

Then finally, you would have to understand gain. You cannot understand impurity until you understand gain. Obedience to Christ is gain. There never has been and never will be any loss in obedience. Obedience is always gain. Always. Those who would think that there is some kind of gain in the pleasures of sin are deceiving themselves. No one ever touches what is impure without being harmed. No one ever touches what is impure without losing gain and so we have to understand that there is zero loss in obedience and everything else in impurity is a downgrade because Christ is supremely pleasurable and satisfying. He is a fountain of living water. He is the constant source of the sweetest and most nourishing bread. He is the most pleasant light. He is the wellspring of all true happiness. Nothing makes anyone happier than when one who is found saying, "Not my will but thine be done."

So we have to understand these three things. First, that impurity, any talk of it, has to be seen in the backdrop of the beauty of holiness and purity and the value of love and how love is so downgraded when there is impurity and then finally, gain, when we do not understand that there is only gain in purity itself. So that's the first thing that I wanted to establish here is that there is something so important that we must understand if we're going to even talk about this subject. When we talk about this subject, we also have to admit something. We have to admit the myth of secrecy with the harlot. When we engage in this subject, we need to say that we should not deceive ourselves about secrecy. Ezekiel chapter 8 gives us a window into this.

You know, I'm reading through the Bible in about seven months with our interns and recently we were in the book of Ezekiel and there were a number of astonishing things in Ezekiel. One of the things that gripped me, I've not been able to get it out of my mind, is this scene that happens in Ezekiel chapter 8. I'd like you to open your Bibles to Ezekiel chapter 8. The year is September 592 BC and Ezekiel is in his house and there is this scene happening in Ezekiel's own home. There he is, he is sitting in his house and he's with the leaders of Judah. They are all there gathered in his house and Ezekiel is charged by God as a prophet to reveal the malignant tumors that are upon the nation. He is revealing not just the external sickness but if you read Ezekiel, you'll see how he goes to the heart of the matter. He goes subterranean and he speaks of the things that go on in the heart, the things that go on in the secret place, in the dark places that are hidden. What happens to Ezekiel in chapter 8 is that the Lord comes to him in his house and he takes him by the hair and he raises him up above everything that's going on and he reveals to Ezekiel what is going on in the darkness, in the lives of the leaders of Judah. God gives him this vision and the vision spans from chapter 8 to chapter 11. We certainly can't examine this remarkable vision that God gives Ezekiel but God takes Ezekiel up and let's begin in verse 2 and you see the vision.

"Then I looked, there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire – from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber. He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where

the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the flame. Then He said to me, 'Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north.' So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance."

In verse 6, there is this remarkable thing that God shows him.

"Furthermore He said to me, 'Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations.' So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. Then He said to me, 'Son of man, dig into the wall'; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door. And He said to me, 'Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there.' So I went in and saw, and there – every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then He said to me," and verse 12 is pivotal, "'Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.'"

And then after that, the Lord reveals to Isaiah various elements of this idolatry and it begins with this immoral story, this idolatrous story of Tammuz and they are weeping for Tammuz and they have become engulfed in the culture. They love the stories of the culture and those stories are immoral stories. But what you find here is that God is revealing to Ezekiel what the elders of Judah are doing in the night in the secret place, what they are doing in the dark and they are saying, "No one sees." But God is saying, "No, I see." I think if we're going to deal with the matter of impurity, we must face that God sees. God has seen it all. There is no one that looks at anything that God is not observing and here what we find is that God reveals these sins done in darkness to Ezekiel, the prophet himself. What we must recognize is that God will reveal sexual sin. He will most always reveal it on earth. He almost always reveals it on earth but he always reveals it in his own presence and he often reveals to godly men the sins of other men so that they would be exposed and so that there would be cleansing and repentance and turning and a line would be drawn against the impurity. So it's important that we recognize the myth of secrecy and the harlot.

The third thing that I would like for us to consider is that it is very important that we understand what the Bible says about these matters. We should understand the biblical language that speaks of matters of harlotry, of impurity, allurements, immorality, fornication, all these things that come under this heading of the harlot. So we're going to spend actually most of our time in a passage of Scripture, Proverbs chapter 5-7, so please

open up your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 5. In Proverbs chapter 5, we find the words of a father to his son and when we read these words about the harlot, it should help every father understand what he ought to do with his son. He should do with his son what this father was doing with his son. This is a father who is explaining the very details of matters of impurity and he is very clear, he's very graphic and it tells us here that by implication, parents must protect their children from sexual sin. They need to speak clearly about it. There actually is a father here who I know very well has spoken very explicitly, very honestly with his son. They spoke about sexual temptations in significant detail and it was a great help to their souls and I'm very grateful that they were honest. On the other hand, you often find fathers and sons who have never really talked about it. They've never dealt with it. You'll have fathers who have not asked their sons explicit questions and pressed them on matters regarding purity and particularly the great danger that is upon our own culture now and that is Internet pornography and the allurements that are there that are served up to our sons and our daughters so easily that it is terrifying. But parents ought to be experts in instructing and here in Proverbs chapter 5 through 7, you fathers have a blueprint for how to speak to your sons about this matter. I know many of you do have sons. You're here with your sons. This is your blueprint. It's not the only blueprint in Scripture but it is indeed a very significant blueprint that you should use. This should be your roadmap in dealing with this matter of your son.

I want to, first of all, define sexual sin before we move into this passage of Scripture. Sexual sin is any activity, any sexual activity that is not with your heterosexual spouse and it includes matters of adultery, fornication, lust, pornography, masturbation; it includes bestiality and forms of sexual relations that are defined in Scripture. For example, in Leviticus 18, sexual intercourse with close relatives; relations with those who are divorced in Mark 10:11. It's interesting that this term, porneia, which encompasses all these things that I just mentioned, is also related to idolatry and the worship of idols. So there are many passages of Scripture that we could go to. We could go to 1 Corinthians 5:1; 1 Corinthians 6:13 and 18; 1 Corinthians 7; 2 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5; Ephesians 5:35; Colossians 3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3 through 5; Revelation 9:21. There are many, many places in Scripture where we encounter this word "porneia" which encompasses various kinds of sexual sin. This word "porneia" from which we get our English word "pornography" is used metaphorically in the Bible actually for the worship of idols and you find that in Revelation 14 and Revelation 17 and in John 8 as well. It is true that pornography or porneia as is defined in its use in the word of God, is linked with idolatry and when we think of idolatry, we should never disconnect it from matters of purity, pornography, lust, fornication and various matters like that.

So, Proverbs 5:1. We're going to walk through this passage of Scripture. We'll have to do it rapidly but I do believe that the fundamental answers that men need to have are in this passage of Scripture. I believe most of the critical matters are revealed right here and I think that you can use this text as a jump-off point to the other passages of Scripture that deal with sexual immorality. Verse 1 in Proverbs 5. If you look at these first few verses, you'll notice that Solomon, he actually begins his instruction with the end in mind. In other words, he speaks eschatologically. He speaks of the future, what will happen so for some reason, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon began with the end in this

whole matter. He speaks of the consequences of it rather than some of the other matters that you might think were more preliminary.

"My son, pay attention to my wisdom; Lend your ear to my understanding,
That you may preserve discretion, And your lips may keep knowledge.
For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, And her mouth is smoother
than oil; But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged
sword."

What I means by he begins with the end in mind is that he reveals what this woman is all about and that is though her mouth is dripping with honey, she is actually bitter as wormwood and as sharp as a two-edged sword. So what he does, he first of all declares the hope and that is, the hope is paying attention to wisdom and lending your ear to understanding. There is no hope for anyone in any era of history regarding the way that porneia is presented unless he loves wisdom; unless he loves God; unless he truly has his attention toward God and his ear is bent that way and it's in his heart to preserve wonderful things. If he doesn't have that, I don't care what kind of Internet protections he has, he is hopelessly lost. He is also hopelessly lost if he doesn't understand the end and that is that there is a sword at the end and there is poison that will put him to death. She is a poison pill with a dagger to stab you while she kisses you. That's the image.

So the prophet Solomon here begins with the end in mind. He speaks of the destructiveness of this woman. We could speak at length going all over Scripture to describe the kind of destruction. I'll give you several. Number 1: it destroys kings, we find that in Proverbs 31. It destroys relationships, number 2, you can find that in a number of passages in Scripture. Number 3: it fractures families. Number 4: it defiles your body. Number 5: it defiles Christ's body. Number 6: it destroys your labor. Number 7: it destroys your honor. Number 8: it requires church discipline. Number 9: it makes you worth a crust of bread. Number 10: it causes long-term sorrows like it did with David from one generation to another and the sword never departed from his household. Number 11: it causes an inability to have victory. Number 12: it may mean if you have no victory, that you will not enter the kingdom of heaven because the Bible states very clearly that those who continue to engage in porneia will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. This is such a massively destructive thing and here Solomon reveals it right at the beginning. It's like poison and it's like a dagger in your back, that's the basic idea.

Then in verse 5, he continues to speak of this.

"Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell."

I will never forget when I first read that as a young man. I was in my teens and our church was on the Navajo Indian reservation in Arizona and I was sitting with some of the young men and we were reading Proverbs. We were just reading one proverb and we were so amazed at what we were reading. On the one hand, we would be laughing and on the other hand, we would just be struck to the heart and I'll never forget reading, sitting on the dirt, reading verse 5. "Her feet go down to death." That's what happens. No one

can touch this fire without finding himself on a trajectory to death. If you are now, you need to recognize where you're headed. There is nothing, there is nothing that contradicts this word of truth here. "Her feet go down to death, Her steps lay hold of hell."

Verse 6,

"Lest you ponder her path of life – Her ways are unstable."

In other words, they will topple you. You are unstable. You will fall.

"You do not know them. Therefore hear me now, my children, And do not depart from the words of my mouth. Remove your way far from her, And do not go near the door of her house."

This is such a critical matter that we see in verse 8, "do not go near her house." We live now in an age that is like no other age regarding this matter of porneia, regarding the delivery of pornographic images to each individual, even from a very young age. You know, when the Internet age started, the bandwidth was too low and it really couldn't produce images and then later on it did; the bandwidth did increase and you could see images but then you had to go and find it. You had to actually type something in and proactively go there and it would be in your history. Now it's not that way at all. It is served up to you and you may as well put a pornographic magazine in your son's hand when you give him a computer. Times have changed and here we have to try to grapple with this current environment that we live in in terms of verse 8, "remove your way far from her." How do you do that? You have got to figure out how to do that and in the second clause of verse 8, "and do not go near the door of her house." Whatever you do, try to figure out a way to do that and there are many ways that have been concocted. We'll talk about that later because we will talk about technology and strategy. But you see, the strategy here is revealed in verse 8.

Verse 9,

"Lest you give your honor to others, And your years to the cruel one."

Everyone needs to understand the cruelty of immorality and how damaging it is. It looks so sweet but it is so cruel. Verse 10,

"Lest aliens be filled with your wealth, And your labors go to the house of of a foreigner."

In other words, you will lose your money. You want to be well appointed? It will not happen with this because you will be stolen from. Verse 11,

"And you mourn at last, When your flesh and your body are consumed,
And say: How I have hated instruction, And my heart despised correction!
I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined my ear to those

who instructed me! I was on the verge of total ruin, In the midst of the assembly and congregation."

I know very personally a number of young men whose lives have been harmed significantly and those same young men sat at my table and I warned them with all the earnestness that I could possibly muster, with all of the intensity that I could bring up to try to explain the death and the cruelty and yet they went to the slaughter, ignoring the instruction and they were a total ruin in the midst of the assembly and in the congregation. I've seen it, brothers, but I pray not to see it quite as much.

Then in verse 14 he says,

"I was on the verge of total ruin."

Verse 15, then there is this appeal,

"Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; And always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, And be embraced in the arms of a seductress? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, And He ponders all his paths. His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, And he is caught in the cords of his sin. He shall die for lack of instruction, And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray."

Brothers, let it not be true that our sons and our daughters die for lack of instruction because we were afraid to talk about it and let's consider this: are we afraid to talk about it because we have no moral authority to talk about it because we ourselves are entrapped? Is it possible that because you are going down to death, so your son will go down to death because you are not instructing him, because you are not hating the very garments of the flesh and rescuing him and snatching him from the jaws because you too are trapped in those jaws? Examine your hearts, brothers. I know well enough that you can talk to men about whether they are looking at pornography and things like that and I know that men will lie to you but we must ask the question and they may lie. Our children may deceive but we must not allow them to die for lack of instruction as Proverbs 5:23 declares.

Then we go on to the next chapter. The first part of the chapter is related to this in various ways but it's more specifically and clearly related to this beginning in verse 20 so look at Proverbs 6:20,

"My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your

neck. When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life."

These verses from verse 20-23, again, give you what really is the cure. At the beginning of chapter 5, there was the cure: love the instruction of God; cherish it in your heart; it's your only hope. Then in verses 20-23, he does the same thing: it's your longing; your desire; your humble obedience to your Father; your hunger to please him in all respects. This is your greatest help and security. This will preserve you. It is your love for the commandments of God and for the commandments of your father and your mother and you love them and they are like a wreath around your neck. You love them. You want to display them. You're not trying to hide them because you're embarrassed at the commands of your father and mother but you love them. It's such a great antidote to the harm of the harlot.

Then we find that the logic of Solomon here reveals this truth that it is what you love that will protect you because in verse 24, we find out what happens when you do love to keep the commands. It will,

"keep you from the evil woman."

That's your hope. It's in your heart. It's in what you love. That is your protection. It will keep you from the evil woman. It will keep you

"From the flattering tongue of the seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulterous will prey upon his precious life."

What does it mean to be reduced to a crust of bread? Another translation makes it "a loaf of bread." It's a difficult Hebrew sentence construction. It can mean a couple of things. I think it means that it reduces a man to worthlessness. It reduces him to something that is so common, that is the easiest thing to buy. It takes away his value. It makes him unprofitable. It turns him into a worthless man. I've seen this happen. I've seen men who have been entrapped either in pornography or some other form of porneia, some form of lust or engaging in a relationship with a woman not his wife. His brain goes dead. His thoughts used to be deep but now they're shallow. His value, his worth, to his brothers is almost nothing. He is not producing anything of value. When he's with his brothers and his sisters, he doesn't have anything of value to give because his value is being destroyed. The weight of the glory of God is being taken away. The glory of the Lord is departing and the heaviness of the glory of God is leaving his whole being and he's as cheap and worthless as a loaf of bread.

Then in verse 27, he gives an even more remarkable image,

"Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? So is he goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away."

What does it mean that your reproach will not be wiped away? It probably means a number of things. Here's one thing it means: it means that you'll no longer be trusted like you were. If you commit adultery to your wife, it will never be the same. Your heart may have turned, you may have genuinely repented but you can never completely erase the question, the distrust. It is so harmful. When young men engage in pornography and they engage in various kinds of lust and they get married, their wives will be concerned. Why is it that sexual sin is so damaging to a man in the ministry? Why is it that for most men, they never return to ministry. Why is it that there are many who believe that once a man falls into sexual sin, he can never return to the ministry? Why is that? One reason is that an elder must be above reproach and once an elder commits adultery, he will always be thought of possibly reproachable. He loses an irreproachability that he once had when he commits adultery. It's so dangerous for a man because it does destroy his entire reputation with his family, with his friends, with his fellow members of the body of Christ if he is a Christian and with everyone. This is the reality that is spoken of here.

Verse 33 says,

"Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. For jealousy is a husband's fury; Therefore he will not spare the in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts."

In other words, these wounds become so deep that they're almost impossible to heal, particularly with those who are most deeply offended, in this case, this is the jealousy of the husband's fury. You can never completely obliterate it. You may find a man who will forgive and he'll have mercy, praise God for that, but don't think for a minute that these things can completely be wiped away. There is only one cure and that is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that was shed on Calvary. The perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is the only thing that can wipe the stain away. The stain in personal relationships and in public matters will probably never be wiped away but thank God for the Lord Jesus Christ and his mercy whose righteousness is perfect; who never did lust; who never did engage in any kind of porneia. His righteousness is imputed upon the unrighteous. Thank God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We get to Proverbs 7, the next chapter. Again, we find the very same pattern that we found in chapter 5 and in chapter 6 and that is that the only real defense against a pornographic society, against lust, against the temptations that come, is love for God. It is

the only defense. You cannot software accountability yourself into purity. You can't accountability partner your way into purity. What's remarkable to me about these three chapters is that there is a very, very explicit cure. There is a very, very clear remedy and it's not "go find an accountability partner." It's something far more significant and something far more helpful: it's love for the kingdom of heaven. It's a belief that Jesus Christ is the only true Good Shepherd. It's the conviction that his ways are the only pleasant ways. It's the understanding that there is no happiness except in his kingdom and in obeying him and that you cannot get any satisfaction that way and so this is why in verse 1, Solomon begins with this same principle that if you want to be protected from the immoral woman, you must first protect your heart. That is where the battle is won or lost. You see, you might think that you can win the battle by throwing away your computer, that is an unprofitable method. You might think that you can win the battle by gathering a group of men around you to be your accountability partners and to ask you, you're fooling yourself. The Bible is very clear about how you keep yourself from the immoral woman. And I'm not saying that there might not be some men that shouldn't throw away their computers or get accountability partners or get software, I'm not making that argument. I'm just saying the Bible is very clear about what the remedy is and it's not any of those things.

Verse 1, and we begin in the same vein,

"My son, keep my words, And treasure my commands within you."

That's the answer. It's what you treasure. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If you treasure impure things, you have to recognize what that means. It probably means that you're not a Christian because if you treasured the kingdom of heaven, then the kingdom of heaven would be your treasure and that treasure would be your salvation.

"Treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye."

What does he mean by the apple of your eye? The apple of your eye is the center of your eye, it's the pupil, it's the middle of it. It's the central matter. It's the critical central issue.

"Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister,' And call understanding your nearest kin."

Here there are several imperatives: to keep words; to treasure commands; to bind them on your fingers; to write them on the tablet of your heart; to say to wisdom. These are all verbal commands, things that you ought to do and "call wisdom your nearest kin." In other words, you protect yourself from impurity by loving these things and loving to keep the command and if you don't love to keep the command, there is no hope. I have no hope to offer.

Matthew Henry spoke of these verses this way, "Solomon remembered what ill consequence it was to his father, perhaps found himself and perceived in his son that he

was addicted to it or at least had observed how many hopeful young men among his subjects had been ruined by those lusts." Here Matthew Henry is suggesting that possibly Solomon is saying this to his son either because he saw his father's addiction or his own addiction or maybe his own son's addiction or maybe even other young men in his community. Why would he be saying such things? It's because he has seen it. And there are these critical words here. If you forget everything that I say tonight, I pray that you won't forget this and that is that this is our greatest defense against impurity: the adoration of God is at the heart of all protection from the harlot and the diminishing of God is always the heart of all impurity. If you're struggling with impurity, it's because you are diminishing God and his glory and his love and his appreciation and your astonishment at his goodness and his beauty. That has gotten low and your lusts have risen above it.

Verse 5, again, speaks of how clear this principle is communicated here,

"That they may keep you from the immoral woman, From the seductress who flatters with her words."

This is why the greatest defense against the harlot is loving God and truly believing in your heart that all of his ways are pleasant ways and all of his paths are peace, that his commands are wonderful, that his kingdom is beautiful and that he is the only source of happiness. That is what verse 5 means. Do you see that? Do you see how consistent Solomon is? He is telling you exactly how you deal with the impure woman.

And the danger is identified here in verses 6 through 23.

"For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, And saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, A young man devoid of understanding."

Remember, this is a young man. Young men are particularly susceptible. It is so critical that a young man gets a handle on this early. People are saying today that the average age that young men today look at pornography is age 10. Have you got any 10-year-olds? That's the average age. That means that there are a lot that are looking at it earlier and some are looking at it later. But this is about youth and he is among the simple. Do you see that? His companions are stupid. He's hanging around stupid boys. He's among the simple.

Verse 8, he is

"passing along the street near her corner; And he took the path to her house, In the twilight, in in the evening, In the black and dark night."

He is passing along the street. He he is looking for her. He is looking for her. Have you ever gone into a hotel room and you watched the regular channel and you just kept flipping through it looking for something really bad. I've done that. It's so despicable and

it's so shameful. That's exactly what this is. This is verse 8, "Passing along the street near her corner; And he took the path to her house." You're just trying to get there, maybe legally without having to, you know, expose yourself by buying her while you're in that hotel room. "In the twilight, in the evening, In the black and dark night." The black and dark night. This is how it happens when the computer is turned away from everyone else, when you can click out of that screen when somebody walks up, you do it late at night after your wife goes to bed or after your parents go to bed and you're there in your room and you're defiling yourself just like those men of Judah who were defiling themselves in the night and Ezekiel was looking down and he was watching it happen. At night secretly.

Verse 10,

"And there a woman met him, With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart."

This has to do with the attire of a harlot. This has to do with immodestly dressed women. Men should be very careful with immodesty and they should turn their eyes from it. Men should be careful to instruct churches so that their churches are churches that understand the biblical standing of modesty so that your women are not dressed like harlots. It does happen in evangelical churches where women are actually dressed like harlots. Maybe you've seen churches like that. It's very irresponsible and very unprofitable for leaders to allow that to take place. We need instruction because we want to dress like the Gentiles. But here she's dressed like a harlot. That has to do with her clothing. Clothing matters, there is the biblical doctrine of clothing.

Verse 13,

"So she caught him and kissed him; With an impudent face she said to him: 'I have peace offerings with me; Today I have paid my vows. So I came out to meet you, Diligently to seek your face, And I have found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry, Colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed With myrrh and aloe's, and cinnamon.'"

This sounds to me like a high definition Internet connection, you know, on a pornographic film of a woman coming after you and going for your throat to give you the poison and stab you in the back. That's the picture.

"Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; He has gone on a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, And will come home on the appointed day."

This is what everybody thinks, "No one will catch me. I've got all my bases covered." Think again. It doesn't work that way. Your sins will find you out one way or another.

Then the result is in verse 22,

"Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks."

These two images, the ox going to slaughter and the fool in the stocks. This is a father talking to his son and he's giving him an image of an ox going to slaughter, a very common scene in his day or a man in the stocks, a fool in the stocks. He's saying to his son, "You're going to end up there. It will be known. Don't think you can hide it. And that woman might think she can hide it but she can't."

Verse 23 and he gives even more imagery,

"Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, He did not know it would cost his life."

Here you have an arrow and a bird and a cost and the cost is his whole life.

But then hear the terrifying consequences are declared in verses 24 and following.

"Now therefore, listen to me, my children; Pay attention to the words of my mouth: Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her path; For she has cast down many wounded, And all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, Descending to the chambers of death."

Here's the reality: you have no hope unless you believe that Jesus Christ is good. There is no help for you unless you believe that purity is better than defilement. There will be no assistance for you in your accountability partner or your software unless you believe that Jesus Christ is so pure and so wonderful and so helpful and so kind and beneficial and gracious. Unless you believe that, there is no hope for you. Unless you believe that you reap what you sow. Unless you believe that if you sow in impurity that you'll reap a whirlwind of impurity. Unless you believe that if you sow in the word of God that all of your ways will be blessed and the happiness of Jesus Christ and his great kingdom will fill your soul, you will have the joy and the satisfaction that the harlot offers but it will be eternal and it will perfect and there will be nothing at all bad in it. That's the message of these three chapters of Scripture.