

The title of this morning's sermon is "*What Does Sin Do?*"ⁱⁱⁱ

If you're new to joining us, we have been reading Proverbs 7 verse-by-verse, the chapter about the harlot who lures the foolish young man.ⁱⁱⁱ

Listen to this [story radio personality Paul Harvey shared about how Eskimos kill wolves. He said:](#)

["First, the Eskimo coats a knife blade with seal blood because seals are easy to trap. He allows the blood to freeze and then adds another layer of blood and another until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood. Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up.](#)

[When a wolf follows its sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, it licks it, tasting the fresh, frozen blood. The wolf licks the blade more vigorously until the keen edge is bare. But the wolf doesn't notice the razor-sharp sting of the blade because his tongue is numb from the cold, nor does it recognize that its insatiable thirst is being satisfied by its own warm blood. The wolf's carnivorous appetite just craves more—until the dawn finds it dead in the snow."](#)

The account is grisly but illustrates sin's consuming, self-destructive nature. When we see people engaged in habitual sin, we can share this story with them and tell them to stop licking the knife.

I looked at over ten websites to determine if Eskimos do this because I don't like when pastors use illustrations that aren't true...something pastors are famous for doing. I found many websites with this story. But they were pastors' websites or websites for sermon illustrations, so I'm not sure they can be trusted.

I think an even better illustration of sin's destructiveness is found in this morning's verses. You can swap the wolf for the foolish young man. Like the wolf, he is killed because of his desires.

If you want to see just how much the foolish young man looks like an animal being hunted, notice that's the theme of verses 22 and 23:

- an ox to the slaughter
- a stag caught in a trap
- a bird stuck in a snare

But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

We have looked at verses 6 through 17, and we're going to continue at verse 18 with the harlot speaking to the foolish young man:

Proverbs 7:18 Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love.

In the same sentence, the harlot twice mentioned the word love. This is a lie: she's known this young man for about five minutes, yet she talks to him about love. She would've said the same words to any young man.

She is like a prostitute or woman on the Internet who has no concern for the men she entices.

But this is what sin does, and it brings us to lesson one:

Lesson One: Sin lies to us.

Take your mind back to the fall. God said:

Genesis 2:17 Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

When the devil tempted Eve:

Genesis 3:4 The serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

The devil told Eve the exact opposite of what God said.

Sin does the same with us.

Listen to these verses:

Romans 7:11 Sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, DECEIVED ME and through it killed me.

Paul said sin deceived him.

Hebrews 3:13 Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

We should exhort each other daily so we aren't deceived by sin.

What are some of the ways sin deceives us? What are some of the lies it tells us?

- This won't ruin your family.
- This won't hurt your friends and loved ones.
- This won't become an addiction.
- You'll be able to stop whenever you want.

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And there is one lie in particular that sin always tells us, and it's in verses 19 and 20:

Proverbs 7:19 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; 20 he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home.”

Unbelievably, right after talking to the young man about love, she talks to him about her husband, whom she's supposed to love.

All the verses we read up to this point would have led us to believe the harlot was unmarried. But now we see she was some poor man's wife. When he went out of town, she went out to hunt.

The harlot said her husband is gone, but that's not her point. She's trying to tell the foolish young man he won't get caught, which is one of the main lies sin tells us, and this brings us to lesson two:

Lesson Two: Sin says, “You won't get caught.”

If you think about it for a moment, there's almost always one thing people must be convinced of before they sin, and it's this lie the harlot was telling the foolish young man:

- *Nobody will know.*
- *You can get away with it.*

Who would have stolen, committed adultery, lied, or gossiped if they thought they would be caught?

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If you look back at verse 9, this is why he went out “in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness.”

So when we combine him going out at night with the harlot’s words, we can imagine how confident he was that nobody would know.

But as we talked about before, if you look back at verse 6, someone has been watching him:

Proverbs 7:6 For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, 7 and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense,

The man represents God. We might be able to hide sin from everyone else, but we can’t hide it from God.

That’s why we read:

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

There are not many verses that tell us not to be deceived. There are only four, by my count. We know we are not supposed to be deceived about anything, so why would a few verses tell us not to be deceived?

These verses must deal with a common area of deception. In this case, we are commonly deceived into believing two things: first, God can be mocked, and second, we can sow without reaping.

So, let’s make sure we are not deceived about either of these. God won’t be mocked, and we will suffer for sin.

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One more verse...

Numbers 32:23 BEHOLD, you have sinned against the Lord, and BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT.

We are to behold everything in Scripture. There’s nothing we’re supposed to ignore or overlook. But when we see a verse telling us to behold, we know we’re supposed to pay special attention.

In this case, we are to behold that our sin will find us out.

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So how do we explain that some people sin, but it doesn’t seem like their sin finds them out? They don’t seem to reap what they sow?

There are two possibilities.

First, God is being merciful and giving them time to repent so that he doesn’t have to discipline them.

The other possibility is they aren’t Christians. This isn’t my opinion. Hebrews 12 spells this out for us:

Hebrews 12:7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

So, if people can sin without being disciplined, that’s evidence they aren’t God’s child.

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I will give you an example of what we are discussing, which resembles this account...

The foolish young man is tempted to commit adultery with this woman because her husband is away, and he thinks he will not get caught.

Similarly, David was tempted to commit adultery with Bathsheba when he learned her husband was away, and he thought he would not get caught.

And it looked like David wasn't going to be caught. But just like God saw the foolish young man, he saw what David did.

David's adultery and murder is recorded in 2 Samuel 11. There is no mention of God whatsoever, which makes sense because it is an incredibly dark chapter with nothing to do with God.

But listen to the very last verse:

2 Samuel 11:27 David sent and brought [Bathsheba] to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

Everything looked good for David. He could hide his sins from everyone, and nobody was the wiser. But then God finally shows up in the account, letting us know how displeased he is.

In other words:

- Just like God was looking down on the foolish young man, God was looking down on David
- God wasn't going to be mocked
- David's sin was going to find him out
- He was going to reap what he had sown

In the next chapter, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David, and he was severely disciplined.

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Let me conclude the lesson with this.

It is important to remember that even if we think:

- My wife won't find out...
- My husband won't find out...
- My children won't find out...
- My parents won't find out...
- My friends won't find out...
- My boss won't find out...
- My church won't find out...

God sees what we do and has no trouble bringing that sin to light.

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Because the foolish young man thought he wouldn't be caught, he gave in. Look at verse 21:

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;

Throughout the account, it seems like the harlot is hunting for prey. She goes after the foolish young man the way a hunter goes after an animal. But then the account spells it out for us.

I used to teach fifth grade, which is when students learn about similes. Similes compare one thing to another, and I told my students they could recognize them by the use of the words like or as.

These two verses contain three similes comparing the foolish young man with each of these animals:

Proverbs 7:22 AS AN OX to the slaughter...AS A STAG is caught...23a...AS A BIRD rushes into a snare;

Why does God compare the foolish young man to three animals?

The answer is simple but profound, bringing us to Lesson 3...

Lesson Three: Sin makes us more like animals.

Consider this verse I have brought up a few times in this chapter:

James 1:14 Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Desires are one of the similarities between humans and animals: humans have desires, and animals have desires. And many of the desires are the same:

- Animals and humans desire food and shelter.
- Animals and humans desire to protect their offspring
- Animals and humans desire relationships

But one of the main differences between animals and humans is humans have the potential to control our desires.

When we don't control our desires – when we give in to them and satisfy them in sinful ways – we're acting more like animals than humans.

Listen to this quote from Warren Wiersbe: “[*The young man*] began to act like an animal. He was no longer acting like a young man made in the image of God. Humans are the only creatures in God's creation who can choose what kind of creatures they're going to be. God wants us to be sheep, but there are other options. We can be like horses or mules:

Psalm 32:9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.

We can be like dogs or pigs:

2 Peter 2:22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.”

When we live outside the will of God, we lose our privileges as humans made in [God's] divine image.”

This young man was living outside the will of God, acting more like an animal than a human.

And when we give in to the lusts of the flesh to satisfy our desires, we look less like God and more like animals.

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And there's another reason the foolish young man is compared with animals: animals are hunted, and the foolish young man is being hunted.

Look back at verse 23:

Proverbs 7:23a till an arrow pierces its liver;

Katie and I grew up in the mountains in northern California, where hunting and fishing were common. My father-in-law, Rick, has a large number of antlers.

When I was young, I hunted deer with my father and grandfather. I remember being told to aim where the chest and neck meet. Then, you have the greatest chance of hitting the deer's heart. I also remember being told that if I didn't hit the deer's heart, there was a good chance it would be able to run away, and I might never see it again.

So, this verse doesn't read the way I would expect. Why would it say liver? Does God not know the best place to shoot a deer?

I am pretty sure he does. I remember at the end of the book of Job when God talks about different animals and how well he knows each of them.

So, why does it say an arrow pierces its liver?

It is worded this way for a reason. If it said an arrow pierced his heart, it would be an immediate and relatively painless death. God wants us to see the kind of death sin produces, and this brings us to lesson four:

Lesson Four: Sin produces a slow, painful death.

Piercing the liver would also be a mortal wound. An animal would not survive an arrow through the liver any more than it would survive an arrow through the heart. But the main difference is an arrow through the liver leads to a long, slow, painful death.

Here's what I read: [A liver shot is a punch, kick, or knee strike to the right side of the ribcage that damages the liver. Blunt force to the liver can be excruciatingly painful, and an especially effective shot will incapacitate a person instantly. Thus, in combat sports, liver shots often result in technical knockouts.](#)

I looked up videos of liver shots on the Internet. People were pounding each other all over the body with punches and kicks. But the moment competitors got hit in the liver, they collapsed in excruciating pain. Sometimes, the fighters even got back up to their feet but couldn't continue because they were still in so much pain.

The point is that God wants us to know sin produces a long, slow, painful death.

Finally, look at the end of verse 23:

Proverbs 7:23b he does not know that it will cost him his life.

This is one more similarity with animals: when they are being hunted, they don't know they are about to die. And that is the case with the foolish young man. He's as ignorant and oblivious as an animal.

And this brings us to the next lesson:

Lesson Five: Sin hunts the foolish.

"He does not know" are some of the best words in Scripture, describing almost everyone when they give in to temptation. The foolish young man didn't know it would cost him his life. For many others, they didn't know sin would cost them their:

- Marriage
- Children

- Job
- Finances
- Health
- Self-respect

You name it.

There's almost nothing sin won't take from us, and in almost every situation the people didn't know.

To drive this point home, the animals are described as oblivious to picture the young man's obliviousness:

1. First, he's like the ox that has no idea it's about to be slaughtered.
2. Second, he's like the deer that is completely unsuspecting.
3. Third, he's like the bird that has no idea it's about to fly into a snare.

This is what ignorance looks like and there's application for us:

- We can be ignorant sin's consequences.
- We think nothing will happen, which makes us like:
 - The dumb ox
 - The unsuspecting deer
 - The senseless bird
 - Or the foolish young man.

Think about this:

In verses 22 and 23 why is there such an emphasis on traps and snares?

- A stag caught fast [in a trap]
- A bird caught in a snare

Because sin is a trap and a snare.

Let me reference James 1:14 one more time:

James 1:14 Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

The Greek word for enticed is [deleazō](#) (pr: del-uh-adze), which is a fishing term that means "to bait, catch by bait."

And this brings us to lesson six:

Lesson Six: Sin is a baited hook.

There are two reasons fishermen use bait, and it's the same two things sin does.

First, to attract the fish. No fish is going to bite a hook without bait.

Sin works the same way. In the language of James 1:14 we are "lured and enticed by" something attractive.

The second reason fisherman uses bait is to hide the hook.

This is exactly what sin does: it hides the hook or the fact that it's going to lead to pain, regret, and even death. This is one of the worst parts of sin. We don't see it for what it is.

Listen to this quote from J.C. Ryle:

“We are too apt to forget that temptation to sin will rarely present itself to us in its true colors, saying, ‘I am your deadly enemy, and I want to ruin you forever in hell.’ Oh, no! Sin comes to us, like Judas, with a kiss. The forbidden fruit seemed good and desirable to Eve; yet it cast her out of Eden.”^{iv}

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Look back at verse 23:

Proverbs 7:23b [the foolish young man] DOES NOT KNOW THAT IT WILL COST HIM HIS LIFE.

Consider this truth...

No matter how strong the foolish young man’s desires were, if he knew it was going to cost him his life, would he have gone with the harlot?

Of course not.

So we can see why he gave in: he saw the bait but not the book.

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I would like to give two examples of how sin approaches us while hiding its intentions.

First, turn to the left to 2 Samuel 3.

Let me briefly introduce the two men in view:

Joab is David’s nephew and great general. There’s no record of him ever losing a battle. But he was incredibly ruthless and ambitious. He was willing to help David murder Uriah, and he even betrayed David and joined his son, Adonijah, at the end of David’s life because he thought Adonijah would be the next king.

Abner was Saul’s general who joined David, and Joab saw him as a threat.

2 Samuel 3:27 And when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the stomach, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

It looked like all Joab wanted to do was speak privately with Abner.

Abner was as completely unsuspecting as:

- the foolish young man with the harlot
- the animals stepping into the traps
- or the fish biting the hook

But Joab mercilessly murdered him, and this is what sin wants to do with us.

Turn to 2 Samuel 20.

Now we meet Amasa, another of David’s nephews, and Joab’s cousin. David’s rebellious son, Absalom, appointed Amasa as his general when he took the throne from David. So Joab sees him as a threat, too.

Look at verse 9:

2 Samuel 20:9 And Joab said to Amasa, “Is it well with you, my brother?” And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

Isn't this how the harlot approached the foolish young man? With friendly, even flattering words, and then a kiss?

And this is how sin approaches us: friendly, flattering, and attractive.

Joab grabbed Amasa by the beard, apparently to give him the kiss of greeting, and with Amasa completely unsuspecting, listen to how Joab used his other hand:

2 Samuel 20:10 But Amasa did not observe the sword that was in Joab's hand (Amasa didn't see the hook!). So Joab struck him with it in the stomach and spilled his entrails to the ground without striking a second blow, and he died.

This is how sin approaches us

- Hiding the sword or hook
- Using friendly words
- Looking warm and inviting

But with every desire to kill us.

Consider this famous quote:

“Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”

Let me conclude by showing you a verse in 1 Thessalonians 1. Please turn there.

We talked much in the sermon about what sin does:

- it lies to us
- it tells us we will not get caught
- it makes us more like animals
- it produces a slow, painful death
- it hunts the foolish
- and it is a baited hook

But our greatest motivation to resist sin shouldn't be any of these threats:

Isaiah 59:2 your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

The worst thing sin does is separate us from God, and this is the biggest reason we should resist it.

With this in mind, let me share something about the Thessalonians. They had the greatest church in the New Testament. If there's a New Testament church we should be like, it is this one. Unlike every other church Paul wrote to, he had no criticisms of them. Only commendations.

At least part of their godliness must relate to their ability to resist sin.

Look what Paul said to them in verse nine:

1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how YOU TURNED TO GOD FROM IDOLS to serve the living and true God,

This verse isn't worded the way I would expect. Generally, we think overcoming sin happens in this order: first, turning from sin and then toward God. But Paul says the Thessalonians turned first to God and then from idols.

The Thessalonians knew their sin separated them from God, and they overcame sin by focusing on their relationships with the Lord.

Hopefully, our biggest fear is also that sin separates us from God, our Creator and Father, who loves us with a love that, according to **Romans 8:38-39 neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from.**

We should resist sin for many reasons, but first and foremost, because it separates us from God. Focusing on turning to God will help us resist sin.

If you have any questions or if I can pray for you in any way, I will be up front after service, and I consider it a privilege to speak with you.

Let's pray.

ⁱ Done:

- John MacArthur
- Moody
- Nelson
- ESV commentary
- Life application
- EW

ⁱⁱ Didn't you already say how the sin is deceptive or something?? Seems similar to lesson one? I feel like one of the lessons toward the bottom where it said sin tricks us is too similar to the others

I actually love all of it. I just would encourage you to look for your other sermons to look at the lessons and make sure they aren't too redundant.o

ⁱⁱⁱ **Proverbs 7:1 My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; 2 keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; 3 bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call insight your intimate friend, 5 to keep you from the forbidden[a] woman, from the adulteress[b] with her smooth words. 6 For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, 7 and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, 8 passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house 9 in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. 10 And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.[c] 11 She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home; 12 now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. 13 She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, 14 "I had to offer sacrifices,[d] and today I have paid my vows; 15 so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you. 16 I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. 18 Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. 19 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; 20 he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home." 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[e] 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. 24 And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. 25 Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, 26 for many a**

victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. 27 Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.

^{iv} J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*, Moody Publishers, 2010, p. 30.