

Still Standing//Message #9//The Sex Talk//Proverbs 7:1-27

Intro: This is our 12th and final message on Proverbs (3 in the spring in a series called *Sabotage* and 9 this go-round in *Still Standing*). We've been here for a while studying Proverbs, but today marks the end.

These last two are on the subject of sex. Little disclaimer... the subject matter, we know, may mean that some of you parents might choose not to have your children in here for this. I will tell you that today will be fairly tame, and we would recommend, if not encourage this, for 6th grade and above. (However, you know it is never our desire to make things more difficult for you, and we know that you have to make the choice about what is appropriate for your own child. We have some great kids stuff going during this time at each of our campuses if that would be more helpful for you. **Just please don't scream out "you lie" during the message**).

If you are going to take them out, though, let me at least tell you why we talk about this. I told you this last week: the Gospel speaks to us perhaps *most* in our sexuality.

It is in their sexuality that most people express their rebellion and unbelief.

It's where most people say to God, "My way is better." I don't trust you with this, I am going to live this out my way.

70% of Christian singles

Sex and romance are the idols that most people replace God with... they think that really what they most need is someone to really love them, and then, and only then, could they be happy... and so novels and music are filled with the worship of romantic love, promising that it will do what only God can do... and, consequently, it is sex and romance that have left more people broken and disappointed than any other!

It is in sexual issues where most people have a real, tangible sense of the need for forgiveness. For many of you that struggle with guilt, it is over a sexual sin, a pornography addiction.

I want to say to those of you who struggle with guilt, and who, when we talk about this are tempted just to despair because you have messed up... I want you to know that what God says, He says in love. Jesus always spoke truth, and sometimes it was painful for us to hear, but it was never to condemn, but to heal. If you read the Bible the right way, what you'll walk away from it with is not a sense of how impossible its demands are but how extravagant the love of God is in it. Sin is tragic but God's love is more powerful..

Listen, if you struggle with guilt issues related to sex, here's what I want you to do today: As I go through this I

want you to receive God's forgiveness, and I want you to pray while I'm talking that others will listen to what I'm saying and be preserved from some of the mistakes you made. And maybe God will put you in a place in the near future where you can speak to some of them and tell them what you learned through the mistakes you made. You can be God's instruments in helping them avoid the pain of some of these mistakes.

It is regarding sex that we are most bombarded by our culture with lies. It's not often that our Hollywood spews out a direct lie about some doctrine of God... but ***multiple times*** every hour on **television and music and talk shows** there are lies given about sex.

So, that's why I talk about it here...

Parents, you need have this talk; *and don't just have it once and feel like you're done.* Most parents have one awkward conversation and they feel like they've fulfilled their duty

One of our pastors, Pastor C told me that when he was 14, on the way to soccer practice: "OK, son, why don't you start by telling me all that you know about sex and then I'll fill in the details." Awkward. That was the last they ever spoke of it.

Don't just have it once, because, let me tell you, our culture isn't just having this talk with them once. Every day our culture is talking with them about it. And don't think your kids will just come to you. *O!* magazine this month said that 78% of women think their daughters feel comfortable talking to them about sex, but in reality only 39% of daughters actually do.

That probably contributes to the fact that 70% of Christian singles engage in premarital sex.

Plug: Read the Bible together as a family.

Proverbs 7:1-27

1 My son ... **2** keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye;

Apple: Pupil... let it be right there so you see all of life through them

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,

In Hebrew, the word for sister and bride are closely related, which may be a little disturbing, I know, but it's just that once married your bride becomes like your family.

5 to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress 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.

You don't have to be a Bible scholar to see where this is going, right? If there is one thing Solomon knew about, it was trashy women. In this guy's mind... there's a soundtrack playing... on his IPOD he's listening to "Party Like a Rock Star" or, if he was into classic rock, "Born to be Wild!" or if he's into country, Alabama's "Feels so Right," or if he's a rap guy "In the Club" by Usher or "Successful" by Drake, or for our Latin campus, "Besame Mucho"... **but from Solomon's perspective, it's the Jaws theme.**

Now, this young guy is about to be seduced.. but do you see that **he** knows what he is doing? He took the road to her house it says. He **wants** to be tempted. **Illus.** Ryah and being tickled... she pushes away, yells, throws punches even.. but as soon as you put her down she sidles back up to you

9 in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness.

Two elements I think you see here: **Independence; secrecy.** Those are the conditions that allow the real you to come out. You see, most of us live constrained by social conventions, or maybe by the control of our parents, or what others will think about us if we do a certain thing. So, it's when we're away from those people that the real us comes out.

Pretty common knowledge where I lived in Indonesia that Muslim men, who were very respectable at home, on business trips would turn into somebody else. I've always been familiar with hypocrites, but the difference between how they were at home and how they were on the road was so stark it was mind-boggling... and the reason was that in Islamic society when you don't live right the community shames you mercifully, so a lot of the men acted good at home not because they were good but because of what others thought..

It's basically the same for us. The real you comes out "at night"—when you are alone and in secrecy.

Illus. College students and freedom. The real you comes out.

For high school:

It's what on the *facebook* page that your parents can't see... parents try to request to be your friend and you are like "denied," I don't want them looking at my page, or, it's when you're with your friends away from your parents.

A kid will get messed up and say, "Problem is I hung out with the wrong crowd." There's a reason you hung

out with the wrong crowd... that's because the wrong crowd simply allowed you the freedom to be who you really wanted to be. You found it more comfortable to be yourself in the wrong crowd than you did the right one. You hung out with the wrong crowd because you were the wrong crowd.

10 *And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.*

She's got on these little tight black shorts rolled up at the top with something written across the butt of them, "Diva," or "Go Heels"; she's got on a skin tight low cut tube top and clear heels. Everywhere she goes there's this little.. techno music... in the background... or maybe ZZ Top's "She's got legs..."

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.*

BTW, this is where you begin to see that obviously that is a metaphor, not a real story. She's everywhere.

You see that phrase in vs. 10, she is "wily of heart"? That is the Hebrew word "crafty" and it is the same one used to describe Satan in Genesis 3. She's everywhere, she's crafty... she lies in wait, like a lion ready to devour. Who is this woman? This is more than just a sexy woman, this woman represents the devil himself.

What Solomon is saying to his son is "you have an enemy who waits for you at every corner, plotting to destroy you."

I know the idea of a real Satan, real demons is not really popular in our culture.. but, if the Bible is true, then that whole world is very real, whether you believe it or not. "Yeah... but I've never really seen a demon, and people in the old days used to believe in it because they were superstitious and didn't understand science and medicine." Well, if you think about it, Satan's most effective strategy in this culture would be to work low-profile, behind the scenes. In our culture, the thing that keeps most people from God is unbelief in the supernatural at all, and so for Satan to show himself in wild, Exorcist-style, demon possession would be counter-productive in most cases..

But that doesn't mean he's not there and is not working

He (or in his case, she) is as real as he's ever been and he's everywhere, and, as this passages shows you, on every corner. And he doesn't always use sex either—this is a metaphor, because different people are weak at different points.. We'll come back to that.

13 *She seizes him and kisses him, and with a bold face she says to him,*

At this point, the tempo of the story shifts... Up until this point, you're following him as he kind of stumbles half-heartedly into this cage; but there's nothing half-hearted about her intentions, or the intentions of our enemy...

14 *"I have offered my sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows;*

This is odd thing for her to say, right, after just kissing him? She's talking about having just gone to the temple?

You see, after the seductive kiss, she senses in him hesitation.. his conscience is probably telling him, "Danger. You probably shouldn't do this. This is wrong."

So, she says, "Are you worried about God? Don't worry about that." God forgives, right? I've already offered sacrifices.

Various Christian traditions:

Catholics: go to confession, get a clean slate, go out and sin.

Protestants: you can skip confession, go right to the source... just ask God! If we confess our sins... like a VISA card.

Celebrate Recovery... group we run here for people who struggle with addictions of various kinds. They've told me that all kinds of people come once, unload this burden about what they've done and are struggling with but never come back. They just want the catharsis of telling someone, but they don't want to do the work of really changing.

Repentance, however, is not an emotion; it's not even the feeling of regret, not a ritual you go through to absolve yourself, it is a change of life. John the Baptist said, "Show me your repentance not by your tears, but by your deeds." Emotional catharsis may make you feel better, but it doesn't do anything for anybody, certainly not God.

Who is the one who really repents? The one who weeps an ocean over their actions but goes and does them again, or the one who doesn't shed a tear and then changes?

Repentance is a choice, not an emotion. Meta-noia.

I'll deal with this later...

15 *so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.*

What's she doing? She's flattering him. **You see, listen:** The temptation is not just physical. She meets a deep soul need he has for attention. He wants to be praised.

With most temptations, there is also a soul dimension to the appeal. The *soul* craving fuels the bodily appetite.

A lot of women hear a voice that says, "You deserve more from marriage than you're getting. So, it's ok to flirt with this guy."

Men hear a little voice that says: "You deserve more credit at work, so it's not that bad to not report these things on your business account."

Or, "You have a stressful job. This drink, this hit, looking at this on the internet is just a little stress relief.. that's all. Not that bad."

17 I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; (exotic); **17** I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. (those were the kinds of fragrances used even in worship) **18** Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. She's got lotions. Scented candles. Enya is playing. Got to hand it to her... she has done her work to make this like a little taste of heaven on earth.

19 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; Did this need to be said? At this point, I think he would have said, "I certainly would have hoped not."

20 ...and he took his purse with him;

This used to throw me off. What kind of man is this, carrying around a purse? He must be European. Maybe it was a fanny pack. He took his manbag and he left.

...at full moon he will come home."

What's she saying? There's no harmful effects of this. You can spend the night; have breakfast; stay the weekend.

Nothing but pleasure, no effects.

And God, "Don't worry about God. Remember, I paid my vows. He'll forgive you; you can always get things right later!"

Watch this: **21** With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him.

With what? What was it that snared him? Her tight dress? The seductive kiss? No, it was her speech. Listen: **It is not the physical urges that ensnare most people, but the lies that surround them.**

22 All at once he follows her,

That little phrase scares me to death... Suddenly, all at once. A lifetime of resistance just evaporates in a moment.

It's why I want to try and stay as far away as possible. I don't even want to be on the path near her house..

None of this would have happened if he hadn't been walking by her house, or even if he'd had a friend with him; or if he'd done at 12noon rather than 12midnight. I do not go to lunch with girls who are not my wife; I don't have a lot of close relationships with girls who aren't my wife; I try not to spend a lot of time chatting with them on the phone; going on business trips. My philosophy: If I'm not alone with a girl, it's really hard to have sex with her.

But this guy is trapped now. He doesn't know it. He's on cloud 9. He's thinking, "Man, this is too good to be true. If only

my friends could see me now." That soundtrack is playing loudly now, "Born to be Wild..." It's so loud now that even if Solomon, who is watching from the upstairs, started yelling at him, he couldn't hear it!

...and so, as an ox goes to the slaughter, If this guy could have heard this he would have said.. Uhhh... wait, don't you mean like a celebrity to a nightclub? Aren't I just like Brad Pitt?

*...or as a deer is caught fast by a noose ²³ till an arrow pierces its heart; 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 highway to hell...*

Highway? Yes... a big 4 lane one way highway w/ heavy traffic an HOV lane with fast moving cars and no good exit ramps

...going down to the chambers of death."

7 laws you should right down and keep on a little card in front of you..(that really summarize all of Proverbs)

1. Your enemy is everywhere (v. 12)

He's on every corner. Again, he doesn't always use sex.. different people are weak at different points. He knows you.

For some of you, how he gets to you is materialism (he's always allowing you to see things that would make you jealous of others; or, he shows you ways you can get ahead by cheating, by overworking, or failing to give)

For some of you, his main entry point is pride. Satan is always in your heart telling you that you're better than other people in some way. He shows you when you compare yourself favorably to others; he points out to you when you're not getting the recognition you deserve. When you do well, he whispers to you about how well you've done. This is me... It's amazing to me how quickly, after just about anything, my enemy comes to me and gives me a reason to be proud. **Sometimes I'll be in a group of pastors where our church is the biggest one** and I'll be proud about that. Sometimes I'll be in a group of pastors and our church is the smallest one, and I'll think, **"Probably they don't focus on discipleship like we do,"** and so I'll have this smug sense of pride about having the smallest church in the room. I'll preach a good sermon and everyone will tell me how good I did and I'll feel proud about that; I'll preach a sermon that everyone criticizes and I'll feel proud that I had the courage to preach it and because their criticism doesn't bother me. I feel proud about my humility; and I probably feel a little pride in the fact that I have the courage to confess all of this to you today.

1 John says that Satan's temptations come in 3 main categories: Lust of the flesh (desire for sex, food, sleep, comfort), the lust of the eyes (materialism), and the pride of life. In the church we tend to focus on the first, lusts of the flesh and totally ignore the other two, materialism and pride. And some of you think because you are not dominated by the lusts of the flesh you are free from sin. **But just because you are not as susceptible in one area doesn't mean you are not being dominated by Satan in one of the other two.** He's everywhere, and he knows you, and attacks you at your weakest point

2. Beware the lies (v. 21)

Again, What was it that got this guy? Not the physical temptation itself, but the *words*.

Remember Satan's first temptation (Gen 3:1-5). Lie had 3 basic parts.

You know what's best for your life (the tree looks good to you, doesn't it? It doesn't look harmful).

God cannot be trusted (God knows the day you eat of it.. God doesn't want your best; you're going to have to take matters into your own hands)

You don't need to fear judgment (You will not surely die)

This is the lie that gets recycled in just about every temptation we go through. You are bombarded with these lies, from every angle by your culture.

Beer commercials don't show you the guy who has lost his family

Commercials for Vegas don't show you the guy whose wife is taking the bus to the grocery store because he lost his car in gambling.

I was watching one of those commercials the other day... every commercial on TV now seems to be an advertisement by a pharmaceutical company... they have that really annoying thing that they do at the end of commercials:

"Use of this product may cause insomnia, fainting, sterility, **and** violent, painful diarrhea. In some cases patients have been known to spontaneously burst into flames. Use only as directed."

I thought, wouldn't it be great if everything came with that kind of label? "Talking with this girl will lead to heartache, loneliness, and venereal disease. Lower your eyes and avoid all contact."

Or, "Taking this job promotion will require the alienation of your kids and your spouse."

Flirtation here will lead to adultery and a broken family and alienated kids.

But you don't get that because there is a full time liar spinning every negative thing as if it was a positive thing. **Let that sink in.** A full time, angelic, supernaturally endowed liar taking destructive things and making them appear positive and appealing.

There's only one thing that can guide you aright and let you escape the lies of your enemy. ¹ *My son ...* ² *keep my*

commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye... 5 to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words.

This is the book that God gave—the divine light from heaven. You just **know it; trust it's words more than lies down in your soul.**

Kharis and prayer... Aww... Daddy's little Calvinist. I was wanting her to say "a puppy." Oh, I pray that for you! Trust it.

And you have to know it...The **pupil** through which we see everything!

AWANAS... built on learning Scripture. I want our kids to be filled with it here.

I want to know it and be filled it. I want you to be filled with it. I want you to get into a small group where you can study and learn to think about finances and your life goals and your marriage and your retirement and your loneliness and your pain and everything through the lens of God's word.

I don't spend all my time at night watching TV... I read books—not just b/c I'm a nerd, but because I want to be so full of the Bible that when life cuts I bleed God's word, or as I've said, "**I want to be so full of Jesus that if a mosquito bit me he'd fly away singing "there is power in the blood."**

Listen again: It's the lies that kill you. Some of you ladies are being lied to right now... You are lonely in your marriage. Voice is telling you: "A relationship with this guy will change that." For some of you it's 'You can never be happy single... so, just get into a relationship at all costs. Don't wait on God's timing or do it in God's way." College students: don't worry about these 4 years. They don't count. You can get it all straight later.

3. You cannot live by desire alone (v. 22)

This guy is compared to the ox... Think about the poor ox. The ox is led to slaughter just by obeying his master. He's being led by a master who desires harm for hm.

This guy is being led by the wrong master: his desires.. his enemy uses his desires to capture him.

Heard this thing about: how they capture elephants. Take elephants who have already been tamed and offer companionship... and food.

You cannot live by desire alone; you must be led by design. **God gave you your desires**, but you have to submit them to the design. We've enshrined desire in our culture (goes back to Romanticism and the Enlightenment). If I want it, it must be right. That is crazy. Lots of my desires can lead me to destruction.

The analogy I used last week is food. Just because I desire to eat a certain kind of food doesn't make it good for

me. My doctor, who has studied the design of the body, says to me, “**I know you desire to drink coffee all day long and have a Love-it-sized Oreo Overload ice-cream creation** from Cold Stone Creamery, every night, but if you do that you’re going to grow rotund and die.” He helps me bring my desires in line with my design.

(Wolf blade)

You must make a choice... live by desire or design.

4. Sin leads to death (vv. 23–27)

The most subtle lie in here is that you can sin with impunity.

First of all, it says, “Don’t worry about God, because God can be paid off. God forgives... do your vows, your rosary, ask God for forgiveness.”

And I want to be careful here because it is certainly true that God will always forgive.

There is no forgiveness without real repentance. And there is no real repentance without change.

Psalm 16:4: *The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips.* When you throw up a prayer, go through a ritual, feel regret.. but you don’t truly repent of your actions and change your behavior, there is no forgiveness.

You’re like, “Wait... I struggle with various sins. I feel like I have truly repented regarding them. But I keep falling back. Are you saying I’m not saved?” No, not at all. I have many areas like that, too, and I’ll probably always struggle with and fall face first in certain things in my wife. I’m saying there’s a difference between trying just to use God to get forgiveness and really repenting, turning away from, hating, your sin. And if you don’t really turn from your sin, there is no forgiveness.

Furthermore, sin has the effect of deadening and weakening your spirit. It deadens and callouses your heart to the touch of God’s spirit. It weakens your ability to be able to respond to God. In other words, it decreases your ability to repent. If you repent, God would forgive you, but as you sin, it weakens your ability to repent.

And sins, even when forgiven by God, have real consequences

Randy Alcorn has a book called *The Purity Principle*... in which he explains that at the beginning of his ministry he and a friend listed out the 25 or so consequences that would come into his life from immorality. I’ve chosen a few of them and got them here... I’ve personalized them for me... and I want you to listen to these.

First and foremost grieving my Lord, displeasing the one whose opinion matters most

Dragging Christ’s sacred reputation into the mud

Knowing that one day I will have to look Jesus in the face at the judgment seat and have to give an account of why I did it

Forcing God to discipline me, severely, in various ways
Following in the footsteps of men I know whose immorality forfeited their ministry and caused me to shudder
Untold hurt to Veronica
Loss of Veronica's respect and trust
Hurt to and loss of credibility with my Kharis, Allie, and Ryah (who may never understand why I traded them for a thrill)
Shame to my church family
Enabling the laughter, rejoicing and blasphemous smugness by those who disrespect God
Bringing great pleasure to Satan, the enemy of God
Heaping judgment and endless problems on the girl I committed adultery with

All those things would be the result of even a forgiven sin. Maybe, just maybe, some of you are on the brink of this.. you are flirting with a woman, or some of you ladies are beginning to delight in the attention of another man. I wonder if you are here today because of a message I am supposed to give you. And maybe you need to go to your spouse and confess what is happening, and ask for their help... as well as other people around you. I know that will be painful, but, I'm telling you, not as painful as the consequences of not doing something about it.

Alcorn: A woman I was counseling told me that a year earlier her husband came to her in tears, confessing his attraction to a co-worker. He was under constant temptation and felt himself slipping. He committed himself to back off from the relationship and asked his wife to understand and to pray for him. She was hurt, but realized that she needed to help him rather than feel sorry for herself. The result: not only did he back off, but through his wife's support, they drew closer together than ever.

In tears she told me, "two months ago, my husband died without warning. If he hadn't been honest with me that night, he would have had an affair with that woman and likely would have left me. He would have died unready to meet God and I would have lived the rest of my life grieving over his affair. But that isn't what happened. His last words to me were, 'I love you,' and I know it was true. He'd proven it by his actions. I thank God every day that I think of him with complete respect and

admiration for loving me and God enough to be honest about his struggles.”

5. It’s manly to hide from temptation (v. 6)

2 men in this story: One of them is down on the street, in the action. The other is upstairs, behind the lattice—Which one is the real man? Most of us would assume that the real man is the guy down in the street.

I want to go on record saying this: I think a real man recognizes his weakness, and loves his family and God enough that he doesn’t play Russian roulette with his weaknesses. I care too much..

6. Don’t do life alone (v. 9)

This guy was away, by choice, from anyone who could speak into his life. This has been a huge theme in Proverbs. None of this would have happened if somebody had been with this guy or if this guy could have had Solomon speak into his life.

“Things in a secret garden almost always grow mutant.” David Powlison. It’s true.

We want you to be in a SG’s where you can know and be known.

HS Students, special note to you: This whole book is written to you guys. You ought to be in a place where people, and your parents, can speak into your life. I know that you guys think your parents don’t know what’s going on.. but Proverbs says part of being young is lacking perspective, and there are some things your parents can see; they are God’s gift to you.

You say, “How?” Look at how they’re dressed! They may not have fashion sense, but they have perspective.

If this guy’s mom could have seen from the window, she’d be shimmying down the gutter going “Don’t trust that trashy ho-bag!”

I’ve told them to talk to you about this; if you are wise, you’ll talk to them, too. If you’re wise, you’ll let them see into your life.

7. You can only escape falling for ‘the woman of sin’ by being in love with the *More Beautiful Woman* (vv. 4–5).

7:4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call insight your intimate friend, *5* to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words.

Solomon offers his son a choice in life he must make between 2 women.. (if you’re a girl, change the metaphor to between 2 men). One represents God; the other an alternative to God, sin.

All sin begins as a worship disorder. The woman offers him heaven: physical delights that resemble heaven; she flatters him and meets his soul needs.

How do you escape that? Being loved and satisfied by the more beautiful woman! Knowing and being filled up with passion for God drives out the cravings for sin.

A lot of strategies to overcome sin try to get you away from the sin without ever really fixing the real problem, and that is your soul is craving things because it is not in right relationship to God.

That's the question: What am I looking for in this idol that I should be finding in God?

The guy sitting at a bar, drinking... he's learned to take his stress to alcohol. He needs to learn to take his stress to God.

The lady who struggles with materialism who gets depressed and goes not to the bar, but to the mall..shopping.. needs to learn to find her identity and comfort in God.

(A lot of times when people are addicted to something they get off of it by getting addicted to something else.. Guy quits smoking so he turns to overeating, and to quit overeating we go to drinking, and to quit overdrinking we go to gambling. Or maybe even something that looks more harmless. First ever center opened up in Seattle this year for Internet addicts. I don't mean people who are addicted to pornography, but people addicted to the distraction of the internet. Never fixed the real problem, and that is we are not going to God.)

It is only the experience of being loved by God is what drives out sin. **Titus 2:11-14:** *For the grace of God has appeared... 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives... 14 Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem and purify us...*

What trains us to "avoid worldly passions"? Not discipline or rigid rules... not even quoting verses or avoiding temptation. Those things can't change you, they can only contain you. What transforms you is learning the grace of God; to be captivated by it; to be overwhelmed and enthralled by the fact that Jesus Christ, the God of the Universe, loved you and gave Himself for you.

Discipline and rules can only contain you; it is only the beauty of the Gospel that transforms you. I don't want you to be contained; I want you to be transformed. I don't want you to feel locked up in rules and laws of religion; I want you to have the freedom as the sons and daughters of God, who love and serve God because it is your desire. **And that desire comes from knowing the love and grace of God to you in Jesus Christ**

So that's a good place to end our whole series. **Jesus Christ is the OTHER WOMAN** of Proverbs. He is the wisdom of God for us. By choosing to live for Him and follow Him, you experience God's plans for your life.

But listen, Jesus' wisdom was not simply methods and techniques for living. You see, our real problem is that our sin has separated us from God. Jesus main ministry was not teaching us, but saving us.. This is what separates Christianity from

other religions. Other religions give you a great teacher. But that's not what Jesus' main work was. He was a Savior: He lived a perfect life, a life of wise choices, the life you should have lived, and then died the death you should have died, in your place.

Biblical wisdom is not a philosophy, it is a relationship.

To be saved means you let Jesus take control of your life, completely. The moment he does, he can forgive you, wash away your sin, and start the healing process.

If you've never done that, would you let Him do that today? Salvation is not where you go and try to do better and work harder, it's one moment where you let Jesus have full control and you receive His offer to save you. It's a gift you have to receive, all at once. If you've never done that, I'd invite you to do it right now:

Bow your heads: *"Jesus, today I want to give you my life. All of it. I'll follow you. And I need you to save me, forgive me, take me to heaven. I give myself to you right now. In Jesus name..." "God, as we end this series, we acknowledge that you are beauty itself. Teach us to trust and follow you. Give us the trust to trust in Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

BULLPEN:

Here we are, at the end: Proverbs leaves you with:

A choice to make. Jesus is wisdom. He's the wise way to live. He can satisfy.

Dilemma: All of us have lived foolishly. All of us have forsaken God. But God's wisdom, wisdom personified, was Jesus..

who came to earth not only to teach us to live wisely, but to heal us. Jesus' life was not one of just teaching, but healing... dying. Jesus can heal; He can forgive, He can make new. Life starts with restoring you to God. Forgiveness.

I want to close by allowing you the chance to allow Him to come in and forgive you and make your life new, and to begin to lead you in the wise ways.

Have you ever done that? Have you ever fully given your life to Christ? Want to offer you a chance today.

(One of the greatest movie scenes ever is Al Pacino and Keanu Reeves in *The Devil's Advocate*... where Al Pacino, who plays Satan, is able to ruin Keanu Reeves life by causing him to fall to materialism and sexual temptation. Totally destroys his life. Well, at the end of the movie, it rewinds to the original scene, and this time Keanu Reeves turns down the temptation. As soon as he does, this reporter comes up to him and praises him and says "This is awesome. No one ever does that!" and he invites Keanu Reeves to do a magazine article. Keanu Reeves agrees, and as soon as he does, and walks away, the reporter morphs back into Al Pacino and says "Pride is my most effective weapon.")

Titus 2:11-14: 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives... waiting for that blessed hope... **14** Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem and purify us...

What trains us to "avoid worldly passions" and to "live self-controlled"? Not discipline or rigid rules... going through 12 steps... quoting verses... having accountability partners or punishing yourself if you fail... give each other 1000

dollars... nothing wrong with a lot of that... what does it? Learning of the grace of God... Being captivated by it; being overwhelmed by the fact that (v. 14) "Jesus Christ gave Himself for you..." you're so moved and enthralled by that relationship that you don't succumb to temptations that destroy it.

Discipline and rules can only contain you, but the beauty of the Gospel can make you a new person.

80's movie called, "Dad"... Ted Danson, a really young Ethan Hawke... Ted Danson played a divorced Dad. Ethan Hawke, the son, at one point asks his dad, "Why did our family fall apart?" Ted Danson says "Making money made me feel like a man, so I made money at the expense of my family and then when my family began to fall apart.. I felt like a failure... so I turned to making more money to counteract my feelings of being a failure." See how that's working? He was addicted to making money because he had a deep need in his life. **Dorothy Sayers:** "*Sin is deep interior dislocation of the soul.*" To overcome the driving need, you need a new source of security, a new source of identity, a greater beauty and greater source of pleasure.

For years, I've been telling guys they could turn off their sexual desire like a light switch. **Illus: Girl's father walks in... sexual desire is off like a light switch.** You give more weight to the presence of her father than you do your sexual desire. Give that weight to God's authority! **In other words, we will overcome sexual urges (or any urge) NOT by learning to love them LESS, but by learning to love God MORE.**

Psalm 16... "I will not accept your offerings..."

Addicted soul

Spiritual warfare

M. Luther: "Ask and examine your heart diligently, and you will find whether it cleaves to God alone or not. If you have a heart that can expect of him nothing but what is good, especially in want and distress, and that, moreover renounces and forsakes everything that is not God, then you have the only true God. If on the contrary, it cleaves to anything else, of which it expects more good and help than that of God, and does not take refuge in Him, but in adversity flees from Him, then you have an idol, another god."

"when rats are fed a steady diet of this intravenously for 30 unbroken years it might cause cancer." Or the
The seductiveness and destructiveness of sin

- v. 9: Twilight (independence: college students... dictators; desire; design); secrecy (the real him comes out)
- v. 11: she's everywhere (obviously that is a metaphor...an enemy is waiting to destroy your life, he takes whatever form is your weakest point)
- Lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, pride of life
 - Pride: This will take you away from your family, but you'll be "it."
 - Lusts of the eyes: Catalogues... you can have this.
- v. 13: bold face: sin's confidence. She is in charge. This is presented, from this point on, almost as if the young man is helpless.
- v. 14: sin's innocence and harmlessness (v. 19)
- God wants you to be happy!
 - If it feels so good, how could it be wrong?
 - I had a strange peace about it.
 - God will forgive you!
- v. 15: Flattery. Sin often meets a soul need (v. 10: wily of heart, crafty).
- Eagerly... Hebrew word for "dawn"; been looking for you all day!
 - Emotionally tough marriage
 - Deserve more credit at work; tempted to cheat
- v.16–17: sin's seduction: promises so much!
- 7;21: It is her words that ultimately do the trick
- v. 22: "all at once"
- Ox is just obeying... how pitiful is that! It is the wrong master!
- v. 25: what is not to turn away is "your heart"; there are two entire ways for you to live by
- v. 27: these are two entirely different destinations

Do not live in twilight

Stay away from her corner. The rest is almost involuntary. (cf 5:8), stay away from her house.

Realize that far more is going on than you realize

- Crafty; spiritual warfare

Realize the idolatrous roots of sin

Idolatry

Deliver; keep

There is SO MUCH more happening here... conflict between Jesus and Satan. Who do you trust?

Value of others in your life: they can see. even your parents! Young=näive. "You wear that?"

End with discussion on idolatry... all addiction is a worship disorder. Many people just switch addictions without dealing with the real problem: they don't turn to God.

Guy who goes to bar... stress release.

Shopping.

Guy who gambles away house and car... wife has to take bus to get groceries. What is he worshipping? Money!

What is there you can't find in God? (Luther)

See Mahaney: worldliness

Listen to your parents... they can see! don't live in isolation

Avoid the path of sin

Ability to say no, the fear of man?

He designs temptations specifically for you

He's everywhere; He knows your weaknesses; and he will appear to you in them as an angel of light!

Real demons are "angels of light." They present themselves in attractive forms and through subtle means. They seduce us and remold us through systems that may not at first seem at all threatening. *They are teaching in our educational systems that man can do just fine without God; they appear in our movies telling us that romantic love and sexual pleasure are the keys to fulfillment; they are in an economic system that teaches us that money is the key to success and happiness; they sit the psychologist's chair who offers ultimate hope in life apart from God; they work in and through governments that coddle people into thinking that government help is the answer; they teach from our pulpits that life is about you, God wants to make you rich, that hell is not for real, and that the standards of the Bible are for a different time and place. They are in seminaries convincing pastors to stick more with traditions than they do the Gospel.* They enslave us in ways that leave us unaware that we have become slaves, ways that prove so attractive that we actually want the slavery they create to confine us. *In other words, their main instruments are not ouija boards but*

Fortune magazine, Cosmopolitan and Playboy. They are forces that make us so comfortable with evil that we are confused into thinking that what they offer is good.”

Their goal is to destroy...

Our real problem is within us

He wants to be tempted

The ox... just obeying the wrong master

Rules can contain, it can't change you

Physical pleasures:

Materialism (you need this, even if it means you go into debt). Always find yourself envying others for what they have.

Pride

Lust of flesh, lust of eyes; pride of life

8:20: By sinning in small things, you do it vs. a big thing

8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. 35 For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD; 36 But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.”

2:16 is the same as 7:5, except in 2:16 lady wisdom delivers you from the adulteress; here she keeps you from her

Illustration:

Eskimo... wolf blade. Bowie.

Elephant: uses food and companionship...changes us from within.

How far can I go?

(Then the reasoning will go even farther:

This is not hurting anybody; God wants us to be happy, doesn't he?

God wants you to be happy, doesn't He?

If it feels so good, how could it really be wrong?

Somehow “having a peace” has become the thing that validates everything. I've even heard Oprah say it. Satan's job is to give you peace about being in rebellion to God.)

