

A Proverb A Day

Warning of Adultery

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Proverbs 5 and 6

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

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All right. It's going to get really quiet in here for a moment, all right? It's going to be some awkward silence. I want to share with you some statistics. I want you to know where these come from because I know that there are statistics all over the place, but these do come from Barna Research Group. And so some of you are familiar with them. Some of them come from Josh McDowell Ministries. Many of you are familiar with that. And others come from a ministry called Church Leaders. They put out a magazine.

Often many pastors, church leaders will subscribe to that magazine. So let's look at some of these statistics. Are you ready? 55% of Christian men view pornography at least once a month. Some new surveys put this as high as 70%. 35% of Christian men admit to cheating on their spouse. That's more than one out of three.

At least one in four women admit to struggling with sexual temptation. So this is not just a male problem. It's a female problem as well. 57% of pastors and 64% of youth pastors admit to struggling with pornography at some point in their life. So pastoral staff are not excluded from this either. Between 30 to 60 percent of all married individuals will engage in some type of infidelity in their marriage, 30 to 60 percent.

The internet, social media, and email have all made it much easier for people to engage in infidelity. Of course, that's the truth. Nearly half of young adults say they come across porn at least once a week, even if they aren't seeking it out. Meaning you're not even trying to see it, but it ends up being on your screen, whether it's through social media or something else, that it just pops up even when you're not trying to actively search for it.

62% of teenagers have received a sexually explicit image on their phone, 62%. That's getting up to three out of four, close. 47% of American families admit that pornography is a problem in their home. That's half. And the other half are probably lying, okay? 47% admit that it is an issue.

Of young Christian adults ages 18 to 24, this is college and slightly after, 76% actively search for pornography. That's three out of four, 18 to 24-year-olds. And this is not just men. This is women as well. Over 40 million Americans are regular visitors to porn sites, 40 million.

The porn industry's annual income, how much the pornographic industry makes, is more than the NFL, NBA, and Major League Baseball combined. The amount of money that they make even more, it's also more than ABC, NBC, and CBS combined. That's why there's so much of it. Pornography use, of course, increases the marital infidelity rate by 300% if pornography is in the home.

56% of American divorces involve one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites. That's enough of the statistics. I told you it would get quiet. And so here's the question. Are we ready to talk about this yet? Are we ready to talk about this yet? I mean, this is an issue, not just outside the church. It's an issue inside the church.

And this is not necessarily something that I look forward to talking about or addressing in a church on Sunday morning, but I'm not necessarily the one doing it. We're in the book of Proverbs, and Solomon knows this is such a huge issue. 3,000 years ago, it was an issue that he spends all of chapters five, six, and seven talking about adultery, pornography, sexual sin. Isn't that crazy? Five, six, and seven.

And so as we continue in our series on Proverbs, we have to address this topic. We should address this topic. The Book of Proverbs is written during the golden years of Israel's reign, God's special, chosen people. Most of it is written by Solomon. As we talked about last week, Solomon was granted wisdom that was above the wisdom of anybody else up to that time. He became known for his wisdom all throughout the ancient world.

And Solomon, even with his wisdom, knows the struggles of this life, and he writes how to avoid them. How do we overcome temptation? How do we walk in the way of wisdom in our world? How do we survive in a world that is corrupted by sin?

And so Solomon shares with us in the book of Proverbs, advice from his personal experience, including his failures, which is why I said last week, "Sometimes I do admit that it's strange to be taking advice about purity and marriage from a man who had over 1,000 wives and concubines, right? Why are we listening to him?" Well, if nothing else, I guess that he had experience and he knows what not to do.

And so we can follow from his bad example, from the advice of what he tells us. You see, for thousands of years, if this was written 3,000 years ago, the enemy has used the same tactics to drag us down. The same tactics. They were struggles that Solomon had 3,000 years ago, and there are struggles that we have today. And you and I are foolish if we think we are the exception. We say, "Well, it's not us.

It doesn't have anything to do with us if we believe that we don't need help or support." And so Proverbs chapters 5, 6, and 7 are dedicated to the wisdom concerning these issues. So if you have your Bible, I encourage you to open up to Proverbs chapter 5. Of course, I can't read all three chapters, so we're going to skim through. I encourage you to read it later. Proverbs chapter 5, we're going to begin with the first 10 verses, but before we do, I just want to pray and ask for God's wisdom as we talk about this topic.

I also want to pray for healing, and I want to pray for an openness that we would be honest if this is a struggle, which it is, that we would work through it. So let's pray. Heavenly Father, there is not a single person here that is not guilty of sin. We all are guilty of sin. Lord, Your Word commands us that we are to admit our sins one to another because there's healing that comes with that.

There's accountability that comes with that. And yet in our church today, I think we want nothing more than to hide our struggles for those around us to think that we don't have any problems. Lord, that is alive from the enemy. Would we be open today? Would Your Spirit work in hearts and lives? We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Proverbs chapter 5, starting in verse 1, Solomon says this.

Now, he's going to be addressing a son. But if you are a woman here today or watching online or listening on the radio, of course, you can flip this around. We know this is not just a male issue. It's also a female struggle. So here we go. "My son," Solomon says, "Pay attention to my wisdom. Turn your ear to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion, and your lips may preserve knowledge. For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil.

But in the end, she is as bitter as gal, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death. Her steps lead straight to the grave. She gives no thought to the way of life. Her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it. Now then, my sons, listen to me. Do not turn aside from what I say. Keep to a path far from her.

Do not go near the door of her house lest you lose your honor to others and your dignity to one who is cruel. Lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich the house of another. As we read these first 10 verses of chapter 5, you can hear Solomon pleading with his son, pleading with us. He is speaking from experience. Do not even go near the door of her house.

Nearly every parent understands the tone that Solomon is using here. You have pleaded with your children to avoid certain things because you know the consequences are harmful. You know that whether from personal experience or you know it because you've watched it happen in so many others' lives. And so we all tell our children, "Don't get hooked on drugs, don't get hooked on alcohol, unhealthy relationships, being lazy." All of

these things we say, don't even start down that path because we know where the end leads and nobody wants to see their children end down that path.

But the problem is the sins of this world are appealing, aren't they? They're appealing. If they weren't, we wouldn't be tempted. If they didn't look fun or didn't seem enjoyable, we wouldn't be tempted. And so what we find to be true is that the enemy often takes that which our Father has created for our enjoyment and manipulates it into something hurtful. Something that was meant for good within parameters, within guidelines.

But when it's taken out of that, it leads to harm. It leads to pain. And so the promise of sin's delight, Solomon said, ends in death to our bones because sin always leads to death. So what is Solomon's advice concerning this? For us, for his children, what is it? How do we overcome this? Solomon says, "Run. Run like your life depends on it.

Do not go near her house. Keep to a path far from her." In other words, don't put yourself in a situation where making the wrong choice is even possible. Run away from it. Set up guardrails to protect yourself. What does this look like today? What are some practical things that you and I can do? Number one, when it comes to all of our electronic devices, our phones, our iPads, our TVs, all of that stuff.

Our computers, put a filter or accountability software on them. You have to. You have to. Number two, if you are married, allow your spouse to have all access to your emails, to your texts, to your social media accounts. I even know some that when it comes to social media accounts, and I love this, some people even on staff. Instead of them each having a social media account, they share it. So there's just accountability.

They each know what's going on. Number three, do not be alone with someone of the opposite sex ever under any circumstance unless it's your spouse. Just don't do it. Under any circumstance. There's no excuse. There's no reason. You don't need to do that. And because of the world in which we live today, I also need to expand that a little further. If you struggle with homosexual tendencies, you are attracted to people of the same sex.

Don't put yourselves in situations even with people of the same sex where you could be tempted. Don't do it. These are the guardrails. You must have a plan. You must make these decisions in a time of strength to protect you in a possible time of weakness.

Meaning today, on a Sunday morning, surrounded by family and friends and in a church, today when the pastor's talking about it, today is the day to make a plan so that when you get in that moment when you're alone and everybody's gone and you have your phone and you pull it out so that you have guardrails that are in place to protect you when you're most vulnerable because we all are vulnerable. And so the decisions need to be made today to put up those guardrails.

Sexual sin in every form will leave you empty. Proverbs 5:7, Solomon says it this way, "At the end of your life, you will groan when your flesh and body are spent." Sexual sin and impurity is a cheap replica. It is a fake of God's best for you. Do not allow folly to ensnare you, to steal your true freedom.

In Proverbs chapter 5, jumping to verse 22, Solomon says, "The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them. The cords of their sin hold them fast. It's literally like chains that are wrapped around their arms and their legs. For the lack of discipline, they will die. They will be led astray by their great folly. As we talk about this idea of true freedom that comes in Christ, I can't tell you the countless conversations I've had with teenagers or individuals that say, "What is your biggest struggle in giving your life to Christ?" And they say, "I don't want God to take away my fun.

I don't want God to take away my freedom." Look at what Solomon says in chapter 6:20. This idea of learning from those that have gone before you, he says, "My son, please keep your Father's commands and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them always on your heart. Fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you. And when you sleep, they will watch over you. When you awake, they will speak to you.

For this command is a lamp. This teaching is meant to be a light and a correction and an instruction. They truly are the way to life. True freedom. True freedom in this life comes in the form of healthy boundaries. What do I mean

by that? You say, "Well, if I put up guardrails, how is that freedom? I can only go so far and that guardrail is going to stop me. That's not freedom." Let me give you an example.

One that we also all struggle with in our world today, looking at finances as an example. You guys all know I'm a Dave Ramsey fan. I talk about finances. It's something that my parents have passed down to me. You don't spend more than you make, all of that stuff. And so I've been taught from a very young age to make a budget. And when I talk to young couples that are getting married, when I do premarital counseling, and I begin to talk about finances, and I begin to talk about a budget, I can just see them. They're like, "I'm turning off my brain right now. You know I don't want to hear it.

We want to have freedom to do what we want to do." And I try to explain to them, "Listen, true freedom comes when you have a budget. When you don't have a budget, that's when you don't have freedom." Let me explain to you. You're the one making the budget, right? You make your own budget. You can change it if you need to. It can adapt. But if you follow your budget, you will not be in debt or imprisoned to somebody else. Because when we take money from somebody else and we have to pay them back, we're in debt to them.

And if you have a budget and you don't have to borrow from somebody else, when you are spending money within that budget, there is no guilt or shame. There's none because it's already labeled for that. If I have money that is labeled Joel's fun money and I just throw it out the car door window, that's fine. It's my fun money, right? That's what it's labeled as. When I tell people that are just getting married as we talk about budgeting, "Listen, we have a budget. My wife and I give ourselves an allowance." And they just kind of chuckle like, "What do you mean?" "Well, we have fun money.

That way, if I want to go golfing, she doesn't have to get mad at me. It's my fun money." Right? If she wants to go buy a pair of jeans, she can go buy a pair of jeans. It's fun money. She always buys all my jeans, by the way. I don't buy my own clothes mostly. There's so many more fun things to buy than clothes. But you don't feel guilty because it's labeled for that. If we have money labeled to go out to eat and we go out to eat, I don't feel guilty. It's labeled for going out to eat. I'm within my budget.

But many people have believed the lie of the enemy that God wants to take away your freedom. He wants to restrict you. People say, "What do you mean? I can't do whatever I want." Well, of course, you can do whatever you want, but if you do, you're going to be miserable. God knows that. That's why He tries to protect you from doing that. Scripture is very clear that listen, you can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can be a slave to righteousness, which leads to life.

I have two options according to Scripture, and both of them involve me being a what? A slave. Sorry, bad news this morning. We're all slaves. That's how we're created. We are going to worship something. We are going to be a slave to something. And so we learn there's only two options. I'm either a slave to sin, and the end of that path is death, or I can be a slave to righteousness, and the end of that path leads to life. God has our best interest in mind. He doesn't want us to be miserable.

If I will live within the boundaries that God has set for me, I can experience true freedom and I can choose within that boundary and enjoy life without shame or guilt. I've talked with way too many people that think they can live outside of God's boundaries and enjoy life more. But somehow, their life is more enjoyable outside of God's boundaries than mine is inside of God's boundaries, to which Solomon responds in chapter 6, verse 27, "Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?

Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?" He says, "Don't be a fool. Don't think that you are different." Then we get into chapter 7. This entire chapter is dedicated to the wisdom of staying away from the adulterous woman or the smooth man, the smooth-talking man. Wisdom and understanding, Solomon says, can keep you from this vice that could pull you in only if you will follow the advice of wisdom.

Solomon goes on in this chapter to share a whole story of how a typical young man gets caught into the trap. He shares about how he walks down the road at the wrong time of the day towards the wrong house, and he gets

ensnared. It would be similar to me sharing the story of a young man whose parents decide, "Hey, you can stay home alone." And so everybody's gone, and you can have a phone in your pocket with the internet, and you can access anything you want, and you pull it out and say, "Oh, I'm just going to look at sports," and you start typing.

You're walking down the path that could potentially lead to the destruction of your life. This man in the story, this young man, wanders down the road, and he doesn't follow the advice of Solomon to run away, run in the opposite direction. He instead wanders down the road, which leads me to another truth about sin that I know to be true in my own life and I believe to be true of all of us. We don't often fall into sin.

We usually walk into it one step at a time. We know exactly what we're doing when we're doing it. We just take one small step and another small step. We know what we're doing. And then we say, "Oh, I just fell into the trap. I didn't see it coming." Yes, we did. Most of the time, we know exactly what we're doing when we do it. We know we're flirting with danger. And so Solomon in the story is watching this young man walking in the wrong direction at the wrong time of the day towards the wrong house.

This young man knows exactly what he is doing. And so then we find the result in verse 22. "All at once," Solomon tells us. He followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver. It's like a bird that is darting into a snare, little knowing that it will cost him his life. How hard is it to watch someone you care about wander into a trap that leads to death?

We all know what the outcome is going to be, but we can't stop them because we each get to make our own decisions. And I so often ask the question, "Why can't we learn from the wisdom and the mistakes of those who have gone before us?" But here's the truth. You can. You can learn from the wisdom and the mistakes of those who have gone before you. God has created us in a beautiful way. We can learn from the wisdom of those who have gone before us.

We don't have to learn the hard way. One of the gifts that God has given to us is the book of Proverbs, which is full of advice and wisdom based on real-life experiences. Example, if you do this, the result will be this. If you start down this path, the result will be this. But unfortunately, the fool says in his heart, "It will be different for me. I'm the exception." Let me tell you a hard truth.

You are not the exception. You are not the exception. If certain decisions have brought down 1,000 people before you and you make the same decisions, guess what? You're going to be 1,001. You're not the exception. If you're here today and you're struggling with pornography or purity in any way, I can't say it any louder but get help.

Get help. It's here. It's in the church. I know it's in the church. I know it's amongst us. I understand that. I know how the enemy works. Statistically, just looking at the statistics, that would be over 300 of us. Meaning you're not alone. The enemy wants you to think you're alone. And the truth is, the end of the path is not good. And remember, this is not just a male problem. It's a female problem. And some of you are saying, "Pastor, when are you going to be done? This is awkward. It's hard.

I want to go get lunch." Pastor, I understand. Yes, I have a problem with this, but I'm not telling my spouse. I don't want anybody to know. I certainly don't want the church to know. I am going to take care of it on my own time. Let me just tell you something. If you would have done that, you would have done it already. How many times have you done that? How many times have you said, "I'm never doing it again. I'm never doing it again." I know you feel the shame and guilt of that. I understand that. I get it.

And you say, "Man, I'm never going to do that again." Because the Spirit might be prompting you to say, "Okay, you shouldn't be doing that. You're causing pain to yourself and to others." If that were enough to fix the problem, it would be fixed already. We need help. We need to encourage each other's. We need to support each other. You need help to work through it. Please take the advice of Solomon and run in the opposite direction. And running in the opposite direction doesn't always just mean, "Okay, I'm going to sit in the pew, feel guilty.

I'm going to deal with it on my own." No, sometimes running is saying, "I can't hide it anymore. I need help. It's okay. We all need help." Solomon says, "If you play with fire, you're going to get burnt." If you're here today and

you have never struggled with pornography, don't take the first step. Flee from it. There's going to be prayer that's available here. We're going to end the service a little different. I know this is a heavy topic. I get that.

You guys know we have people on both sides that would love to pray with you and talk with you. And so that's going to be available. I'm one of them today. I just happen to be one of them. So if you need to come and talk through this, some of you aren't going to do that out of shame or guilt or whatever else. But even if you make the pew you're sitting in your altar, can you just deal with this? I'm telling you, God wants to free you from this. He truly does.

And I think there's times even in my own life where I've said, "God, I want you to bless me. Please bless my family. Bless my church." And then we have something in our life that we know is not honoring to God. And I just wonder, is God going to bless me if I'm intentionally doing something back here that needs to be dealt with? I have to be honest before God. So there's going to be a closing song. If you don't want to talk to anybody, maybe you've been affected by this. Again, not everybody that comes to the altar is the person that is struggling the most, all right?

You might come to the altar because you know somebody else is struggling with it. I just want to get that out of the way. But if you come to the altar because you don't want to talk to anybody, you can do your business with God, all right? During the closing song, that's fine. After the closing song, we're going to have communion. We've intentionally left communion for the end because communion is a celebration about our freedom from sin. Today could truly be the day that you say, "I want freedom from this." And as we take communion, we always say, "you know Make sure you're right with God.

Make sure you're right with others." This is an opportunity to do your business with God so that then you can take communion with no shame or guilt and go, "I am clean before God. I'm dealing with this stuff. I'm not perfect, okay? I'm not perfect, but I'm dealing with this stuff. I want to be right before God and right before others. One last thing before I close in prayer. Talking about this topic of sexual sin is heavy.

And I know, statistically, there are many in this room who have been affected by the sexual sin of somebody else. You've been abused. You've been taken advantage of. And my heart breaks for you. I want to publicly stand up here and say whatever was done was wrong. You were not at fault for that. You are not guilty for that.

But I encourage you to get help because it does shape you. You need help to work through that. We all would. Get the help that you need. It's okay. You're not dirty. You're not evil. You're not any of the other lies that the enemy wants to tell you.

I just got done reading a book about the presence of that sexual sin and abuse in the church, and it crushed me. It broke me. If that's you, please talk to somebody. Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, this is heavy stuff, but it's real. It's the world we live in. The enemy has been using this area for a long time to cause hurt and pain and suffering and shame and guilt. Father, we know You want us to live life to the fullest.

So help us in this area to get the help and support and accountability that we need. And Father, for those that have suffered because of the sins of others in this area, only you can heal. And I pray you would. Would you wrap your arms around them right now? Would they feel your love and your comfort and your peace?

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.