



# gracefellowship

Series: Letters to My Children  
Date: November 6, 2022

Title: Avoiding Adultery  
Passage: Proverbs 5

Following Communion: Interview with Owen and Jamie Grove  
National Adoption Awareness Month

Owen and Jamie just adopted two twin boys, Caleb and Jesse

1. What led you to adopt?
2. What kinds of emotions did you deal with as you were considering adopting?
3. How did God bring the child(ren) into your life?
4. What did adopting teach you about God?
5. What would you say to anyone who is considering adopting a child?

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 5

This morning, as we continue deeper into the book of Proverbs, I want to take a minute and let you know some of today's content will be rated PG-13. If you have young kids in the room I just want you to know we will be talking about some sensitive material and discussing sexual relationships. We are looking at the first 7 chapters of Proverbs in this series because they are letters Solomon was writing to his son, and we can see the parallel of God writing to us as His children so we can know how to live with wisdom in this world.

**Wisdom knows how to apply knowledge and understanding in a God-honoring way in our daily lives.**

I really liked what Nathan said last week when he talked about wisdom having a God-listening heart. We want to be people who operate in wisdom. In each of the next three chapters Solomon is going to warn his son- and God is warning us today- about a major pitfall that affects a huge percentage of people: he's going to warn us about adulterous relationships.

Before we dive into that conversation I want to say this: many people believe that the church has a negative view of sex. Either the church you grew up in didn't talk about sex at all, or when they did, it was always discussed as something you should avoid because it was evil...until you were married, then you were supposed to magically flip a switch and erase all the negative images about sex

you were brought up believing and immediately begin to enjoy sex. The truth is, sex was God's idea! He created it on purpose! And like everything else God made, sex between a man and woman in marriage is deemed to be very good! Sex is not dirty and it isn't evil.

**“Pleasure is God's invention, not the devil's.” – C.S. Lewis**

We should talk about sex in light of God's goodness and we should celebrate sex within God's boundaries. But when sex is taken out of the context it was designed for, it can be dangerous. I'm a bit of a pyromaniac; I love fire! I love to watch it burn, I love the sound wood makes as it crackles, and I love the ambiance it creates. And fire is good as long as it is in my fireplace, but if I take a burning log out of the context it is designed for and place it on my couch, it can burn my house down!

Now, you might be thinking, “Earlier you said a huge percentage of people are affected by adultery- are you saying the vast majority of the population engages in adulterous relationships?” Well, it depends on how you look at it. My experience tells me that the vast majority of people do not have extramarital relationships where they are sleeping with someone who is not their spouse. But in the New Testament, when Jesus talked about adultery he took it out of the realm of a physical action and brought it to a heart level when He said...

**:: Matthew 5:27-28**

**27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’**

**28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

This message from Jesus wasn't just relegated to men...nor is the warning we are going to hear from Solomon only for men- although both are addressed that way in their cultural context. Lust in the heart is not something only men deal with. But before we talk about the trap of adultery in Proverbs, we need to understand what Jesus says and how it impacts us today. It's one thing to say, “I haven't gone outside of my marriage vows and slept with another person, so I haven't committed adultery.” It's something else entirely to say, “I've never looked at someone else with a lustful thought to commit adultery.”

We have to fight against lust all the time because things are super-sexualized in our culture. And lust may be different for men and women- God designed us very differently. Men tend to be more visually stimulated, so the beach or swimming pool may be a dangerous place for us when it comes to sexual temptation. But we can just as easily lust over someone fully clothed! Ladies, you may be tempted by a guy with his shirt off at the beach, but you may lust for different things:

- the security you believe another man provides his wife that you don't feel
- the financial provision you see another man providing his family

- you may lust after a man who sits and has deep conversations with his wife

And then a final warning for all of us as we get ready to jump into Proverbs 5: men and women are both at risk to lust as it invades our lives through pornography and sexually explicit movies and TV shows. Here are some unreal statistics about pornography in our country and how it damages marriage:

1. There are around 42 million porn websites, which totals around 370 million pages of porn. (pornography is easy to access)
2. The porn industry's annual revenue is more than the NFL, NBA, and MLB combined. It is also more than the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC.
3. 68% of church-going men and over 50% of pastors view porn on a regular basis. Of young Christian adults 18-24 years old, 76% actively search for porn.
4. 33% of women aged 25 and under search for porn at least once per month.
5. Only 13% of self-identified Christian women say they never watch porn—87% of Christian women have watched porn. (It's not just a male issue)
6. Pornography use increases the marital infidelity rate by more than 300%.
7. 56% of American divorces involve one party having an "obsessive interest" in pornographic websites.

<https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/15-mind-blowing-statistics-about-pornography-and-the-church>

With those statistics in mind, it's good to know that God, our loving Father, wrote a letter through the hands of Solomon which warns us against adultery and encourages us to a path that can preserve His gift of sex and our marriages.

If you're someone who struggles with lust, or you're wrapped up in a secret, adulterous relationship, or you're considering having an affair, I want you to listen closely as Solomon warns you this morning. To the teenagers and college students in the room who will wrestle with opportunities to have sex before you get married, listen to the warning of Solomon this morning.

**:: Proverbs 5:1-14**

- 1 My son, pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight,**
- 2 that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge.**
- 3 For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil;**
- 4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword.**
- 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.**
- 6 She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it.**
- 7 Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say.**
- 8 Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house,**
- 9 lest you lose your honor to others and your dignity to one who is cruel,**

**10 lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich the house of another.**

**11 At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent.**

**12 You will say, “How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction!**

**13 I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors.**

**14 And I was soon in serious trouble in the assembly of God’s people.”**

There are a few things I want us to focus on in what we just read as a warning to us. These things will help us understand that the excitement we think is going to come from an affair isn’t all it’s cracked up to be.

### **1. Immorality is tempting and packaged as sweet and healthy.**

3 For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil;

- Honey is sweet to the taste and is desirable
- Olive oil is a major product in Israel and has a lot of health benefits

Solomon is trying to tell his son, and God is warning us, that while something looks good, it is not good for you. Look at the next verse!

4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.

6 She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it.

### **2. What looks enticing ultimately leads to death.**

Solomon says the adulterous woman promises sweetness and health, but is really bitter and sharp, like a double-edged sword; she will cut you no matter which way you handle her. And her path leads to the grave.

This may not mean physical death will result from you having an affair...although your spouse may kill you! But it might take your marriage to the grave. It might result in soul death. You’ll see the death of some other relationships. Affairs are nasty business when they come into the light.

So Solomon is going to give his son some advice to avoid getting wrapped up in an adulterous relationship- you can apply this to lust as well- remember, this goes deeper than a physical relationship, Jesus said it was a heart issue. Actually Solomon says the same thing in Proverbs 6.

### **:: Proverbs 6:25**

**25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.**

Here’s what you need to know and always remember:

**Adultery begins in the heart and mind prior to any physical action being taken.**

So, what is Solomon's warning to us? How do we avoid stepping out of our a God-honoring marriage relationship and pursuing an affair?

**:: Proverbs 5:7-8**

**7 Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say.**

**8 Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house,**

**The best defense is distance!**

When we get to Proverbs 7 we are going to spy on a young man who flirts with sexual temptation and we are going to watch him intentionally take steps toward the house of a prostitute. Solomon's strategy to avoiding sexual sin is to keep off a path that leads in the direction of adultery.

Do you have any unwise relationships with a co-worker of the opposite sex that is getting too familiar? Or maybe you have a neighbor that you've gotten too close with and your conversations have drifted into inappropriate areas. Do you find yourself alone with a person of the opposite of the sex that could threaten to harm your marriage?

- I don't ride alone in my car with women and I don't go out to meals with women by myself.
- I never counsel women in an isolated location. A few months ago I accidentally scheduled to meet with a woman at the church during a time no one else was here, so we sat in the Gathering Area where there are multiple cameras watching!
- When I travel alone and stay in hotels by myself I have at least one person, and usually two, who I ask to text or call me every morning and every night to make sure I didn't do anything stupid or watch anything stupid on TV.
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Why do I take those measures? Because I don't want to do anything to jeopardize my marriage or ministry and give my wife or anyone else cause to think I may be doing something inappropriate.

- I also have software on my phone that acts as an accountability device. If I look at inappropriate things on my phone, it registers the website and every week an email gets sent to one of our Elders, who is my accountability partner, and he's able to ask me what I was looking at and why.

Keep to a path far from temptation! And that's not a fight you should take on alone. One of the best things I have in my life is men who ask me the hard questions and check in with me regularly to see if I'm staying on a path of purity.

And if I'm not, we do exactly what the Bible says: Confess your sins to one another and pray for another. Then get back on the right path again.

Alright, let's turn the page a bit because at the beginning of this message I told you most of the messages we hear in church about sex are telling us that it's bad and we should stay away from it. In the case of adultery or pre-marital sex that's true! But Solomon ends the chapter talking about another way to avoid adultery: have great sex in your marriage!

I'm going to tell you something I bet no other pastor has ever told you!  
**God wants you to have great sex with your spouse!**

Solomon takes the next four verses and encourages his son to pursue deep, passionate love with his wife.

**:: Proverbs 5:15-20**

**15 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well.**

**16 Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares?**

**17 Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers.**

**18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.**

**19 A loving doe, a graceful deer— may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be intoxicated with her love.**

**20 Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?**

Solomon is using some poetic language here to describe intercourse in marriage. Drinking water from your cistern is another way of saying be refreshed sexually in your marriage. He uses the words cistern, well, springs and streams as well as fountain to say the marriage bed should be a place of refreshment and enjoyment. But notice that he says this should be kept private- don't let your love overflow into the streets or the public squares. In other words, don't go looking outside of your home for intimacy. This is reserved for you and your spouse- but it should be a fountain!

And we all know how awkward talking about sex is with our kids, right? Some of you don't know because you've avoided it! Big mistake! Talk to your kids about the beauty of God's design for sex. Solomon is talking to his son and he says, I want your fountain to be blessed and for you to rejoice in the wife of your youth! She's a loving doe, a graceful deer- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you be intoxicated with her love.

- The word they translate rejoice in the NIV in Hebrew is the word "Enjoy." It literally means to brighten up. (From Skip Heitzig, "Smart Home" series)
- Then he says, "let her breasts satisfy you always," (that's a command!) and be intoxicated with her love- literally lovemaking.

How do you avoid having an affair and committing adultery or lusting after other people? Keep intimacy hot at home! He talks about being intoxicated with lovemaking. The imagery of being intoxicated is drinking your fill and then some! God gave us a good gift for marriage and He wants us to enjoy it to the greatest of our ability!

Then there is one final warning Solomon gives his son:

**:: Proverbs 5:20-23**

**20 Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?**

**21 For your ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all your paths.**

**22 The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast.**

**23 For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly.**

This is convicting, but it's good to be reminded of: the things you think you are doing in secret and getting away with are being seen by God. Your Father in heaven wants to share one final message with us this morning about making it to the end of your life in a happy, healthy marriage: be disciplined.

**If you want to make it to the end of your life in a happy, healthy marriage, be disciplined.**

It's a lack of discipline that kills marriages and destroys intimacy. Too many people are careless and don't have any guardrails up for their marriage. They spend their time lusting after someone they aren't married to instead of pursuing the one they are married to.

As we close this morning I want to challenge those of you who are struggling with something in this arena of sexual temptation- whether it's lusting after a person, using pornography or if you're engaging in a relationship outside your marriage- seek help. Find someone you can talk with in your Life Group or seek out one of our Staff or Elders to help you set up some guardrails for your life or to walk with you through what it means to be disciplined in getting accountability for your life.

- Connection Card

I also read a statistic this week that said 93% of Pastors see the use of pornography in the church being an issue, yet only 7% of Pastors said they have a strategy to deal with that issue. I'm going to be raising this topic with our Elders so we can come up with a strategy to help people dealing with this issue and find ways to help people break the bondage pornography causes. We want to help people be disciplined and live as disciples of Jesus who are being changed by Jesus and finding freedom in Jesus.

- Response for confession of sin and thanksgiving of God's gifts

- Pray