

Proverbs

WARNINGS AGAINST FOLLY





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“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis 1:1

I bought a diesel. At the time, diesel was cheaper than gasoline. The car came with a BORING and LONG manual, which I only thumb through when I absolutely have to.

It also came with severe warnings from my husband and my father.

“Don’t ever put gasoline in this car,” they both warned. “Diesel only. If you do, your engine will explode.”

The car itself also has bright yellow warning stickers around the fuel cap. “Diesel only. Do not use gasoline.”

The manual, too, warns repeatedly: “Diesel only.”

Now, despite sometimes being a little air-headed, I have not messed up and put gasoline in. I took all the warnings and bright yellow stickers seriously. I believed that my husband and father were right, that they spoke the truth, and wanted the best for me. I believed the carmaker also knew what they were talking about. Volkswagen made my car, so they get to write the manual. They know what they have made and how it operates best, which things are harmful or helpful, and what maintenance is required.

Now, I don’t have to obey any of that.

I could argue, “The manual is outdated! It was written years ago! The world is different now. They didn’t know when they wrote it how expensive diesel would be.”

I could say of my father, “He’s old-fashioned! He doesn’t understand how people drive today!”

I could say of my husband, “He’s just being controlling. Just because he had a problem doesn’t mean I will.”

And you would know my foolishness by my car engine exploding all around me with what is described as “uncontrolled detonations.”

Yet that’s what many argue about the Bible. They say it’s outdated, too restrictive, and that the world has changed. But people haven’t changed, and God hasn’t changed. My car will remain a Passat made by Volkswagen all its days, just as humans will always be people created by God.

Likewise, the Bible is our manual. The Bible is God’s Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It has great authority and wisdom for us because we were made by God. It tells us what works best for our lives. It warns of harmful things that can cause damage and gives us instructions on best practices. Its intent is not legalism, any more than my car manual.

In addition, I also listen to the wise people in my life. My father loves the Lord. When he warns me of a danger, or speaks a truth, I hear, because he has far greater experience than I. It would be nothing but



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foolishness and pride to assume him wrong and not listen when he speaks. I respect and accept that he knows things I don't know yet, and has a perspective through years lived that I have yet to gain.

In Proverbs 5-7, Solomon addresses his son. He speaks both out of personal experience and knowledge of God's Word. And just as Solomon charged his son to "*pay attention*" (Proverbs 5:1) and "*obey His commands and live*" (Proverbs 7:2), we too are given the opportunity to learn which things bring joy and life and which things are harmful to us.

Choose what you believe. Were you created by God? Does God seek the best for your life and know what He's talking about?

Then trust His Word to be true. God never changes, and you are still His creation. Let His Word be the manual for your life.

Proverbs 5 - Dealing with Temptation

Read Proverbs 5, then answer the following questions.

1. Who is Solomon speaking to?
2. What is Solomon doing (1-2)?

Verse 1 opens with Solomon entreating his son to listen to his wisdom—to learn from his own experience. Solomon takes time to teach his children and warn them against dangers, and Solomon does not shy away from difficult subjects.

3. How might a child feel if a parent does not take the time or build the courage to teach them? What is the message and danger of a parent's silence?

4. In verse 2, Solomon gives the outcome of paying attention to wisdom and listening to wise instruction. What is the result?

5. What is the definition of **discretion**?

Wisdom preserves discretion—the freedom to decide what should be done in a situation. We all begin with discretion, but wisdom is needed to preserve our freedom. Sin is incarcerating. With wisdom comes liberty.



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6. How does the immoral woman appear in verse 3?

Temptation is always attractive, and Satan cunningly gift-wraps sin in desirable packages. The purpose of temptation is to draw you in, allure, and woo you into sin. It is intentionally designed to capture. It mimics good gifts from God. But as a decoy is used to lure ducks into the net, so temptation is a forgery of God's good, designed to lead you into a trap.

Not all things that please are things that profit, and we must gain enough wisdom to stop being surprised that temptation is always tempting! Just as an ad is designed to get you to purchase, sin is designed to get you to participate.

7. In verses 4-5, the truth of this temptation is revealed. The woman looked enticing, but what was the reality?

This woman was all honey, oil, sweetness, and joy—until later. It didn't take long before the sweetness of honey that dripped from her lips turned into the bitterness of poison. Sin likes to dress up nice to conceal its true nature and hellish cost, but it always reveals itself later.

Decisions cannot be based on feelings but with wisdom, preserving discretion, and keeping knowledge. Ask yourself, "Where does this road lead? What does God's Word say about this?"

8. In verse 6, what does the son not know?

Character is proven by action over time, as a tree is recognized by its fruit after a season. You don't know another's motives, but you know God's.

9. Look up and pick a verse about God's character for yourself.

10. Look up, and pick for yourself, a verse that tells how God feels about you.

11. Is there a time in your life when God proved Himself good and faithful to you?

God loves us and has proven His character over time. We can trust that His wisdom is in our best interest, no matter how sweet temptation appears.



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12. What does Solomon say in verse 8?

Solomon implores his children not to go near sin. To flirt with sin is to court disaster. Sin is like a cliff with a crumbling edge. Wisdom says you don't even get close to it, lest the ground you thought was safe gives way, and you fall in. Instead, develop wise habits that lead away from danger.

13. Verses 9-11, 14 describe some of sin's consequences. What was lost and the cost?

14. In verses 12-13, four things were rejected, leaving the flood gates to sin wide open. List them.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Read Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

We are all offered the same choice—to accept wisdom, truth, and correction or to reject it. We can take steps toward life and make choices that lead us into what God has promised and prepared for us. Or, by complacency, compromise, rationalization, and pride, we can give up ground to sin, walking further and further back into captivity.

The young man's own sin traps and binds him (Proverbs 5:22), his rejection of wisdom leading to death and destruction, just as we are warned in Deuteronomy 30.

But Jesus saves and forgives. You are not your sins. You are God's creation, created for good works in Jesus. Today, and every day, life and death are set before you.

Hindsight, as they say, is 20/20—but wisdom is foresight. We are not wandering, lost, blind, and directionless. We have God's Word and His Spirit directing us which way we should go if we will only listen.

15. Is there something God has been speaking to you about? A danger you feel the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit warning you of?

Lord, give us the wisdom to recognize danger and a heart that trusts You enough to listen and obey. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.



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Proverbs 6 – Boundaries

In Proverbs 5, we dealt with the dangers of temptation. Now, let's look at the importance of having boundaries.

Solomon will address healthy boundaries in four areas:

1. Commitments/Promises
2. Time
3. Relationships
4. Sexuality

16. Read Proverbs 25:28. What is a person without self-control like?

Lacking walls, a city is wide open to attack and plunder.

17. Read Psalms 80:12. What happens to the vineyard with no hedges?

Solomon will teach his son in Proverbs 6 that the wise life has boundaries. We are not to say yes to everything and everyone.

Read Proverbs 6.

18. What do verses 1-5 warn against?

19. What does it mean to be **surety** for a friend?

David Guzik describes this **surety** as “guaranteeing someone’s open line of credit.” It takes the responsibility off of the other party—financially and legally—and places it on you.

Compassion without regulation can stifle healthy growth in others’ lives. Need often drives people to God, but we, in love, sometimes try to negate need, responsibility, hurt, and consequences in the lives of our loved ones. This is dangerous for them and us.

Solomon warns: don’t agree to everything—say no sometimes. Not every “yes” is helpful. Be careful what you give your good name to and what you promise. Have compassion, but also understanding. Establish boundaries so that your compassion doesn’t leave you wide open to attack, or breed people spiritually emaciated by doing everything for them.



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20. What do verses 6-10 warn against?

God is sending us to school in nature. The ant works hard spring, summer, and fall so that it is prepared for winter when it comes. Seasons change, and the work God has given us to do now is necessary for a later need.

21. What creeps up on the sluggard and how?

We need to establish healthy boundaries with our time.

What jobs, callings, or responsibilities has God given you to do? Don't let distraction or "the tyranny of the urgent," as Pastor Rick Caldwell calls it, encroach on the assignment God has given you to do. Whatever task God has assigned is designed to fill a need. Procrastination, disobedience, laziness, escapism, and distraction lead to later poverty—the poverty of provision or relationship, poverty of purpose, maturity, salvation, or safety.

God does not speak without reason.

22. Is there something specific you feel God calling you to work faithfully in now, even if the fruit isn't seen until later?

23. What do verses 12-19 describe?

The wicked can be recognized by their actions. We are to be wise. Not taken in by every person's words, but to discern character to enough of a degree that we have healthy boundaries that keep us from being victimized by every evil.

Proverbs 6 ends with Solomon again teaching the son to have healthy sexual boundaries. Every time Solomon addresses sexual sin in chapters 5-7, he prefaces it with a reminder to pay attention to wisdom—God's Word.

24. Why is God's Word so critical to his (and our) success (v.23)?



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God's Word gives us guidance, direction, and purpose. It is light to our path, our instruction manual. Without God's Word, we are wandering aimlessly, hoping to chance upon a life of value, answers to difficulties, and wisdom on what to do next. We are lost and blind without it, using hope and luck as a life strategy.

25. What is a **reproof of instruction**?

Correction corrects course, else the ship flounders. God's instruction and wisdom help us navigate life without crashing in a bloody heap upon the rocks. It is the way of life.

26. What does Solomon compare sin to in verses 27 and 28?

As you were warned as a child not to touch fire or swallow poison, God warns us against sin. It only took me one lesson to believe my mother about hot pans; how many lessons does it take for us to believe God about sin?

Boundaries do not exist to control but to protect. The castle walls weren't designed to keep citizens in but to keep marauders out. The hedges of the fields were built to keep foxes from stealing the fruit. My manual says "diesel only" for the car's own protection.

27. In verse 32, what does Solomon say the adulterer destroys?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-19.

28. What is our body supposed to be?

Is it any wonder that sexual sin is rampant and such a powerful tool Satan uses? This sin is against the very temple of God that has been set aside for holy use and purpose! We were meant to be filled with the Spirit of God, not filled with immorality.

Sexual sin is one of Satan's anecdotes to a Spirit-filled life.

We need to trust God as I trusted my mother about hot pans. God gave us guidelines, not to limit us but to protect us. Boundaries are beneficial. They allow for our safety, growth, peace, and prosperity.

29. Is there a boundary God is speaking to you about? What will your response be?



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Lord, help us to see how great Your love is for us. Let us not be fooled, but help us recognize that Your boundaries are for our benefit and Your motives are for our good. Let Your Word be the final authority in our lives over all else, for our trust and hope is in You. Amen.

Proverbs 7 – Habits

In Proverbs 7, Solomon will again address sexual sin because it is so rampant and destructive to all the good God has designed. Solomon speaks of two habits: the habit of developing and keeping wisdom and the habit of rejecting it.

Read Proverbs 7.

Solomon begins with the call to prioritize wise counsel and the Word of God.

30. Fill in the blanks from verses 1-4.

“_____ my words.”

“_____ my commands.”

“Keep... my law as the apple of your_____.”

“Bind them on your _____.”

“Write them on the tablet of your _____.”

“_____ to wisdom...”

“_____ understanding your _____.”

Solomon shows that the wise life requires intentional pursuit, as any learning does. Solomon addresses applying wisdom to the eyes, hands, heart, mouth, and mind. The things we see, touch, feel, do, say, and think all need to be governed with wisdom.

He encourages his son to make wisdom a habit—learning, listening, seeking counsel, and obeying. “Keeping,” “treasuring,” “binding,” “writing,” “saying,” and “calling”—these are action words, not passive. These things take intentionality. They require habitually prioritizing wisdom and adhering like glue to what is learned.

This discipline of wisdom is what will keep Solomon’s sons (and us) from falling into the same traps, so many others have gotten caught up in.

Solomon begins to tell a story about such a young man.

31. What adjectives does he use to describe him in verse 7?



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32. In vs. 8, there are three places this young man walks.

a. The _____

b. Her _____

c. Her _____

33. When is he out walking?

34. Who else is out?

35. What has she dressed up as?

36. How is she described in verses 10-12?

37. Verses 12-13 seem to describe this woman as having a history of restlessness. Where is she seen multiple times?

38. What does she do in verse 13?

By verse 21, it seems a foregone conclusion. She kisses, entices, and flatters, and he falls for it.

39. What does verse 22 compare the young man to?

The trap was sprung, and the young man was caught. She described her bed as a beautiful and wonderful place, but in the end, it was the “way to hell,” and he was cast down and wounded (verses 26-27).

And it all began with one massive issue. The young man was “devoid of understanding.”

Read Hosea 4:6.

40. What destroyed God’s people?



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41. What destroyed this young man?

It wasn't the dark of night, or the path he took, or even the woman who destroyed this boy. Under all of that, really, it was his stupidity.

42. In Hosea 4:6, what two things had the people done?

It wasn't that the people hadn't been offered wisdom; it was that they rejected it, and in doing so, rejected God.

43. As a result, what can the people no longer be?

44. Read Proverbs 2:6. What does the Lord give?

This young man, for whatever reason, lacked understanding. Perhaps no one had taught him, as Solomon does for his sons. Perhaps he rejected knowledge as outdated, ridiculous, or restrictive. Whatever the reason, he is a simpleton—a fool. He has no wisdom, and his steps in the night reveal it. He walks the path toward sin—making ruts; the word literally means *forming habits*. A flirtation here, a compromise there, closer and closer he gets to her door. He never checks himself, catches himself, or controls himself. He listens to no counsel, living and acting as if there is no danger or wrong. The end is inevitable.

“For lack of knowledge...”

45. What does James 1:5 say?

But without it, this man is like a dumb ox walking towards its own slaughter.

She meets him. She doesn't hide her intent. She is unhappy, crafty, scheming, bitter, rebellious, and discontent. She leaves her home, intent on betraying her husband, her misery seeking company. She minimizes and rationalizes what she's doing yet doesn't want to get caught. She is the predator, and he, lacking the healthy boundaries God's wisdom provides, is easily caught in her deceit.

She calls it “love” in verse 18. But this cannot be love when it lacks commitment or permanence. What she offered was counterfeit. Though it presented itself well at first, under inspection, it is found to be fraudulent, fake, a poor imitation. Not all “love” is love.



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Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 in the NIV.

46. Choose three things from love's description that contradicts what she is doing as being "love."

Her "love" was hurried, not patient. It was cruel to her husband and envied what she did not have. It was dishonoring, self-seeking, betraying instead of protecting and persevering—and the list continues.

She could dress up sin all she wanted, but this was lust and rebellion, plain and simple. Ultimately, she injures herself, the young man, her husband, and any witnesses and close family and friends. The cost is great.

So Solomon urges, "*Listen to me. Pay attention. This doesn't have to be you.*"

47. What is Solomon's closing advice in verse 25?

Sin begins in the heart. We can cultivate hearts that love and desire God or hearts that idolize pleasure. Without God's wisdom and Holy Spirit, we have little to no defense against temptation, and the few boundaries we might have will be weak and lacking reinforcement.

48. Fill in the blanks from Deuteronomy 10:13 NLT. "...Always _____ the Lord's _____ and _____ ... for your _____."

49. What is the definition of **deceit**?

Satan's lies always disguise themselves with a layer of truth because that is what deceit does.

50. What does John 8:44 call the devil?

"The father of _____."

51. There are many verses in the Bible about God and His Word being truth. Pick one for yourself that speaks to you.



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Reflect:

52. Which habits are you forming? What are you making ruts towards?

53. Are you intentionally prioritizing and heeding wisdom? Are you taking the time daily to learn from God's Word what is true and good and right for your life?

54. If you do not know and trust God's Word to be 100% absolute truth, what is holding you back from believing and trusting Him completely?

55. Have you become complacent? Apathetic? Lulled? We can reject knowledge by neglecting it, losing it like muscle atrophies.

56. Are you intentionally teaching truth to those God has entrusted to your care?



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57. Is there a response you need to make?

58. Write your own prayer to God.