

*With much justifying and enticing arguments she persuades him; with allurements of her lips she leads him to overcome his conscience and his fears and forces him along. Suddenly he yields and follows her reluctantly like an ox moving to the slaughter. Till a dart of passion pierces and inflames his vitals; then like a bird fluttering straight into the net, he hastens, not knowing that it will cost him his life. (Proverbs 7:21-23).*

The above enticer is introduced to us as the "loose woman" in Proverbs 7 and is a direct opposite to her sister, the lady "Sophia" featured in the proceeding chapters. "Sophia" means wisdom in Greek.

You may be asking; how do these two women feature in my work life? Proverbs 1:20 says, "Wisdom cries out in the streets; she utters her voice in the markets". Friend, both these women are very much present within our work life arenas.

Both are clamouring for our attention and are competing urgently to befriend us, raising their voices in every boardroom meeting, arena of decision making, coffee station and office relations. Who we choose as our companion is vital: it's a matter of life or death!

Being overly dramatic? Personally, scripture persuades me no. Scripture rather sends out a clear warning to us that to embrace the "loose woman" will cost you your life. However, embracing "Sophia" will give you your life.

The counsel of these two women are like night and day, as well as their intended outcomes. The counsel of the "loose woman" justifies and entices compromise in the work arena. Her death blow is the mere suggestion that God's precepts do not work in the secular world, so don't even waste your time walking out his precepts in your work place, no one gets it here.

Scene two: A concerned and loving father (King Solomon) takes up his role to counsel his son regarding the woman he should embrace. He speaks, "My son, hear the instruction of your father" (Proverbs 1:8). "Do not forsake her, love her and she will keep you. Exalt her for in doing so, she will promote you. Embrace her, and she will honour you. Placing an ornament of grace on your head and delivering a crown of glory to you. Take a hold of her instruction and do not let her go. She's a keeper, for she is your life," (Proverbs 4:4-13).

He chooses to personify wisdom as a woman to be loved, exalted, embraced at all cost. Here he teaches his son that her instruction would keep his life. Yet we find wisdom crying out the concerns of a father, "you neglected all my counsel and would have none of my reproof" (Proverbs 1:25).

Instead of the counsel to compromise, wisdom counsels to preserve our lives. Instead of the counsel to lower standards, she counsels us to set a new standard with God. Her counsel does not allow justification but calls us up to truth. No authentic and transformative counsel can happen without word-based truth. Her outcomes beautify our thoughts and actions and are more fruitful than gold or silver (Proverbs 8:19).

I don't know about you my friend, but I choose to embrace "Sophia". I choose to navigate through the external and internal discomfort and offensiveness of her embrace. I choose not to neglect her counsel and reproof, but to let her voice and counsel call me up higher. I hope you will join me on this journey.