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**Series: Proverbs: Living Wisely in a Fallen World**  
**Message: God's Gift to Marriage**

**Transcribed Message**  
**June 23, 2019**  
**Proverbs 5:15-23**

For many people, when they hear the word “puritan”, they often think of a rather pejorative word that is a part of that word puritanical. Very often, the word puritanical is a rather negative purposely used word. It brings to mind the idea that there could be somebody having fun somewhere, somebody enjoying life, somebody laughing and having pleasure. To have a puritanical view of life is to be opposed to any and all of those things. I would say especially so in relation to the subject that is before us this morning, the matter of marital intimacy. We all know that the Puritans were a repressive people. They were opposed to any of those things. Any pleasure, any fun, any laughter. That is kind of the way they been characterized for all of time. But were they really that way? We have an actual historic document of a church in New England during the time of the Puritans in which a wife came to the leadership of the church and said that her husband was not fulfilling his marital responsibilities. By that, she did not mean he wasn't mowing the yard. The elders actually took this matter up and they brought discipline against this man because he was unwilling to repent and turn away from what was clearly a sin in his life.

I hope somewhere in that process that somebody read to him Proverbs 5 because that would give him an understanding at least in some measure of God's plan, of God's desire, of God's will. We looked last week at the first 14 verses of this 5<sup>th</sup> chapter. This morning we look at verses 15 to 23. We want to see that God has provided a holy and honorable place for sexual desire to be satisfied. It is within the marriage relationship between a man and a woman.

Let's start off by looking at God's perspective on sex. I simply want to begin by addressing anybody who might be here this morning who is not altogether sure that this is the kind of topic that should be even discussed from the pulpit on Sunday morning. I guess in thinking about that I would say to you we live in such a sex-saturated society.

Every day of our lives we encounter and receive so many messages, so many images, so many words, so many pictures that are by and large giving to us the world's perspective – a rather distorted one I would suggest. It often comes in unwelcome ways, unwanted ways, unexpected ways. You may be doing everything you can as a parent or as a grandparent to protect your family and your children from this onslaught that the world brings against us. But the fact of the matter is statistics overwhelmingly show that in the United States today, by the age of 11 most children have seen some pornographic picture image of some kind. So while we do the very best that we can, it's simply not appropriate to allow the world to have all of the airtime and to be expressing their view of this matter and for the church to remain silent. When God has spoken so clearly, so positively, so directly about something, we would not do ourselves any service at all by ignoring it because it might be somewhat uncomfortable on some level. So it's the responsibility first and foremost of the parents. We'll see that this morning and we'll see that again in our next lesson. God places squarely on the parents a list of responsibilities and things to do. But the church is a part of that and in support of that.

So let's begin by looking at God's perspective on this matter. Let's start off with almost a review of what we did last week by looking at sex outside of marriage and what God says about that. If we were to just generalize, it is that it is harmful and it's foolish. That's clearly the message of Proverbs, but it's beyond the message of Proverbs because it really is the broader framework of Scripture that supports that statement. Sex outside of marriage is both harmful and it is foolish.

I would just point you to three things. First of all, God says it's a sin against Him. It's a sin against God. It is contrary to God's purpose and contrary to God's design in His plan. We saw last week at the end of the chapter and we'll see it again this morning and in this 5<sup>th</sup> chapter that God has stated very clearly these matters with regard to how He wants His children within the covenant relationship and family to behave in this matter. You go back to Genesis 1 and 2 as we will in just a moment and we'll see this is the standard that God has put in place. This is the design that He has put forward. From Genesis to Revelation, this is God's message to us that we are to relate to Him and we're to relate to each other in keeping with His Word in this regard. In some of the strongest language in the Old Testament when God speaks to Israel's failure of the

nation and as a people in this matter of immorality or adultery in the physical realm, God takes that imagery and He brings it over to the spiritual realm. Some of the strongest language is the analogy between physical immorality and physical adultery and spiritual immorality and spiritual adultery. God clearly is sending a message there with regard to how He sees this as being a sin against Himself.

Secondly, sex outside of marriage is to sin against others. Once again you stay within the confines of the covenant community, this wonderful plan that God has designed for how it is that we are to relate to Him and to each other within the family of God. Being under the Old Covenant in the Old Testament or under the New Covenant in the New Testament. What does God say in particular in the Old Testament? You can simply turn to the 10 Commandments. In the 10 Commandments, God gives to us what we might describe or think of as certain rights and privileges that we have as people within this covenant and how we relate to each other. For instance, God says in the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment that you shall not murder because everybody has the right to life and nobody has the right to take another person's life. We know that in the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment within the context of marriage and the family, God says you shall not commit adultery. There is that protection that God has built in, that right that a husband and wife have with regard to this relationship to each other. You have a right to property. So God says in the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment there shouldn't be any stealing. Don't take what's not yours. In the 8<sup>th</sup>, He says don't be ruining somebody's reputation. You have a right to a good reputation. When you just think through in the 10 Commandments, God says there are ways that we sin against each other and certainly one of those is in this area. Look at the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Proverbs in verse 29: "So is he who goes into his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished." It is a sin against God. It's a sin against others.

Then notice thirdly, we would realize that it is a sin against ourselves. It's a sin against oneself. In that same 6<sup>th</sup> chapter verse 32: "He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself. He will get wounds and dishonor, and his disgrace will not be wiped away." That is very similar, Paul is drawing on the wisdom of Proverbs 27 in 1 Corinthians 6 right. As he talks about various sins, he then comes to the sin of sexual immorality. He said all of these other sins are what they are, but this

particular sin is not only a sin against God, it is not only a sin against others, but in some measure he says that is even a sin against yourself. It is the very nature of what sexual sin does. It is what he is speaking to. So the bottom line is God has established certain boundaries. You can just think of marriage and -there are these four boundary walls. God says within that boundary of marriage is where this matter of marital intimacy is to be enjoyed. Now if that sounds kind of negative, and I suppose in some sense those are all “don't do that”, right? But there are positive things that God says.

So let's look at that side, but let's look at the other side of it because there are things that God says specifically we are to do in this area. So let's look at sex within marriage and in that regard we see that God says it is wonderful and it's mysterious. The 30<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Proverbs a man by the name of Agur starts off by telling us he's written that particular proverb. He is going to say later on in that 30<sup>th</sup> chapter that there is something wonderful and mysterious in that which God has created in the issue of marital intimacy and in the sexual relationship within the family. To understand that, let's go back to the beginning. If you go back to the beginning, you go back to Genesis chapter 1. Let's do that because this is where it all started. This is where God regularly has the writers of Scripture go to when he wants to elucidate this point further in differing contexts. What you find in that 27<sup>th</sup> verse of Genesis 1 is God saying: “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” It speaks simply in this general all-encompassing statement to the work of God in creating humanity. He created the man. He created a woman. He created a male. He created a female. He created one who was masculine and one who was feminine. They are distinctly different yet there is a necessary clear correspondence. One simply has to look at the anatomy of what God created to realize that there is that matter of correspondence that God has in mind with regard to the man and woman. That was God's intent from the very beginning. So in verse 31 of that chapter when you come to the end of the chapter, God is going to summarize all of His creative work. He has repeatedly said before that what He had made was good. Then you come to verse 31 and God saw everything that He made and behold it wasn't just good, behold it was very good. God's evaluation of all that He had done, including the

creation of man, including the creation of woman, including their corresponding sexual relationship, He says that is very good.

Then you look at chapter 2 and verse 24 and you have that wonderful statement of the two becoming one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed. The two become one flesh. He is not talking simply about an act. He is not talking about a moment of time. He's talking about that of course but there is much more in view. There is a whole process that is in view in that 24<sup>th</sup> verse. It is the coming together. There is a uniting not just of bodies but there is the uniting of hearts and souls and emotions and wills and minds, and all of that is encompassed in that 24<sup>th</sup> verse. You have these two personalities, these two intellects, these two wills, these two emotions, and of course these two bodies coming together. Here's the interesting thing. When you end the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the book of Genesis and that 24<sup>th</sup> verse, that's the last look at the world without sin. Isn't that interesting? The last statement that God makes: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed." That's the last commentary that God gives. Two sexual beings standing there in correspondence to each other, naked and unashamed.

Now what do we learn from that? Let me make two observations. First of all, you can't read Genesis 1 and 2 from the vantage point of someone who believes this is God's revelation to us and come away with any other decision than it is clear that sex has been designed by God. Sex has been designed by God. The world would have us think somehow that Hollywood thought this up, that this is a pop-culture idea, that Hugh Hefner came up with this idea or 100 other distortions. Yet the reality is it is God who created it. They want us to think that God is against it and they're all for it. The reality is what they have done is they have distorted it and God is the one who is all for it.

Secondly, when sin entered the world, human sexuality was definitely impacted just as everything else was impacted. Sex wasn't a result of the fall. It was there before the fall. We saw that in 2:24, 25 but it was certainly impacted by that fall. How we view God was impacted by it. Every part of our being in body and mind and heart and soul has been greatly impacted and affected by the fall and by sin and is led to a distortion of what God offered as a wonderful gift. Genesis 2. The end of it. There was Adam, and

there was Eve. They are naked and they are not ashamed. You come to Genesis 3 and how do you find them? They are now clothed of their own doing and they are afraid and ashamed. What is that? That is the impact of the result of sin. Satan knows that sexual sin touches us at the very core of our being. He knows it touches us at the essence of our humanity. That is the point Paul is making in 1 Corinthians 6 when he says it's not just a sin against God. It is not just a sin against another person. It's a sin even against oneself.

When you go to Romans chapter 1 and you have Paul beginning this amazing theological treatise and what we so often do as we look in our world and we see things going on in our world, we spend all of our time talking about and trying to deal with the symptoms. What Paul does in Romans 1 is he gives us symptoms but he also shows us very clearly the underlying cause. The underlying cause of it all is the failure, he says, of men and women to acknowledge and worship and honor God. That's the source of all of this. It is only when you understand that every sin is a rebellion against God. Then Paul can say when you understand that, when you understand that sin is at its core a rebellion against God, so that all the perversion that we see in our world with regard to this gift that God has given to humanity of marital intimacy, of the sexual relationship, all of the perversions that we see in our world today are explained to us in Romans 1. Paul says it is a failure to acknowledge God as being God. It is a failure to acknowledge and give glory to God. I understand that within the human dilemma and within human experience there are many things that contribute to the issues that people face in this regard. I'm not minimizing that, but I am saying that ultimately Paul does point us to the source of it all.

Let's look secondly at the purpose of sex. Before we get into Proverbs chapter 5, I want to suggest what is probably the most obvious purpose of all and that is that it is to provide for parenthood. When Moses says in Genesis 1:28 be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, that was God's command. We're all here this morning because somebody obeyed that command, right? That command has not been rescinded. It was a command that was repeated after the flood. God said to Adam and Eve be fruitful and multiply fill the earth. We know the outflow of all of that sinful behavior brought God to

the point of judgment in Genesis 8 with the flood. In Genesis 9, God says again to Noah and his family to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

So much that we could say here at this point, but let me just make this comment. Even this, what seems to be the most obvious, is under assault today in our culture. I read what to me was an incredibly sad article this week. This is the title, but immediately it will give you the understanding of the author's perspective. So we think of first of all the sexual relationship has been given by God as a gift for the purpose of procreation. This is the title of the article: "Is an Unborn Child a Parasite Living off Another Person's Body Without Permission?" That is where we are. That's the understanding that people would have even of that aspect of the gift. You may have seen that statement by Bill Maher this week. He congratulated himself for 13 years of his late-night show. He said this: "We went on the air in 2003. Since then, weed has become increasingly legal, religion in America is on decline, and less people are having children. You're welcome, America." That's his perspective. That's the good that he thinks he has brought to us.

Even the most obvious of reasons why God would've given the gift of marital intimacy is mocked and undermined in the way that it is. Some would stop right here, even those who would say this is a very good and beneficial thing. This is the outflow of this relationship. The church of Rome during the time of the Puritans, one of the things that the Puritans were reacting against was the view of the Church of Rome with regard to sex. It was the Roman church that believed that it was all negative, that it shouldn't be enjoyed, and all kinds of other things. It was the Puritans who said no, it's the Word of God that speaks to these issues and in a totally different way. They are pushing back against even the things of their time.

It is for parenthood but secondly, and here we turn to Proverbs 5, secondly it is to promote and express mutual love and affection. To promote mutual love and affection. After God had put Adam to sleep and created Eve and brought her to him, he said "At last!" At last. Here is one who is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. I'm pretty sure our translation misses a whole lot of what he said there and the enthusiasm with which he said it. But that's the best we can do in our English. It is him saying at last. Do you know what he's saying? Do you remember? God had paraded all of the animals before him to give him an

understanding that there wasn't anybody for him. He was all alone and then at last he sees Eve. That "at last" was an expression of here is one who corresponds to him, corresponds to him in every way, including and I believe implicit in that statement is his understanding that here is someone who corresponds to him with whom he will be able to enjoy this aspect of God's creative work. He expresses himself in that way. Someone said it was not Satan who made sex pleasurable to push us toward sin, but God who made it pleasurable to push us toward fulfillment.

Now you doubt me? Let's go to Proverbs 5. Proverbs 5 beginning at verse 15 through verse 19: "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts feel you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love." If you look at this particular statement by Solomon as he's teaching his sons and perhaps even his daughters. maybe his wife as we saw in chapter 1 verse 8 is having similar conversations. You look at this and this is an expression of this very matter that God has created and given us the gift of sexual relationships for the purpose of mutual love and affection.

A generation ago, when I graduated from seminary, there was a book by a man named Dr. Ed Wheat called *Intended for Pleasure*. It was a book about marital love and was kind of the cutting edge of books at that time. The very title spoke to what he read in the Scriptures intended for pleasure. This was God's intent. God designed, He engineered, He created for this relationship to be enjoyable. He wasn't the least bit surprised. He didn't go whoa! Wait a minute! I didn't see that coming! He designed it with that in mind. He designed for there to be enjoyment and pleasure and delight in each other as husband and wife. That's the whole point of this language. This language is very expressive.

We're not going to go into all of the detail but notice in verse 15 he talks about water. He talks about water. Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. When we want water, we just go to the faucet and we turn it on. We don't think a lot about water. We don't think about the vital nature of water until we don't have it. But believe me, in that Middle Eastern culture when he talked about water, he was



talking about something absolutely essential just to stay alive. He was talking about something that they would immediately press into. It was a means of life. It was a means of refreshment. It was a means of enjoyment. Notice as he speaks this word to his sons – who knows at this point whether they were married or whether they were not married, maybe some of them were – but he said drink this water from your own cistern. Drink this water from your own well. This is this matter of our relationship to God, our relationship to each other, and our relationship to our self. It's personal. It's private. It's exclusive to each other.

Verse 18 he talks about the fact that we are to rejoice. You are to rejoice. The word literally means to brighten up. It means to be made cheerful. Be made cheerful. Delight in, brighten up, rejoice in, he says, the wife of your youth. Notice he doesn't say rejoice in your young wife. He envisions that this is going to be a lifelong commitment. There may have been a time when your wife may have been young. The wife of your youth with whom you have grown old together is really the picture that he has in mind here. So he envisions this lifelong commitment, this lifelong relationship.

Then it gets even more bold in verses 19 to 20. He talks about being intoxicated. This is the exact same word that you see all through the Old Testament for being overcome and influenced and under the influence of alcohol. It's the exact same word. You are to be intoxicated, you are to lose control in sharing yourselves with each other in marital intimacy. The writer of Hebrews has the same idea in mind when he says in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter the marriage bed is undefiled. It is a part of God's intent and purpose. He says in verse 19 fill you at all times. Fill you at all times. So he is talking both about the quantity and the quality. There is both that is in view there.

I would suggest to you that as you take that snapshot of Proverbs 5:15 to 19, if that is happening, then this third purpose for marital intimacy will surely be in play. It is to prevent immorality. It is to prevent immorality. God's desire is that He wants you to enjoy this marriage relationship within the context of your home and your family and your relationship so that you will have no desire whatsoever to be looking elsewhere. Your needs are being met. Your quenching is being met at home. You're not thirsty for something else because that need is being met. That's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 when he speaks about marital intimacy and he talks about the fact that it's a

responsibility that you have to each other. It's an obligation. In fact, he commands that this be a part of our relationship as husband and wife.

Now look at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter and I would suggest to you here we have the ultimate reason to obey. In light of what he has said to this point. Verse 20: "Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths. The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray." Here you have the ultimate reason to obey. When the father is bringing this teaching session to a conclusion, he ties together his teaching in this area with his theology. His theology is such that he is expressing to his sons the fact that God is omniscient. He knows everything. He's omnipresent. Everywhere we are, God is present. He is a God of justice. He is a God of integrity and of righteousness. He is all of the things. He brings these together and he's basically saying to us that there is a relationship of accountability between us and God. We need to live in the light of His presence. We need to be mindful that everything that we do and everything that we say, and speaking specific to this matter of our sexual behavior. All of it is open and disclosed before God. He sees you. He cares about you. He gives us this teaching, not in any way to restrict us or to hinder us from enjoying the things of life. He gives us this teaching and He gives us this understanding because He wants to bless us and He wants this wellspring that we looked at last week to be a reality in our life. He wants us to be walking on this path of wisdom in which there is this blessing. We say what we did at the beginning. God provides a holy and honorable place for sexual desire to be satisfied. It's within the marriage relationship between a man and woman.

What do we take away this morning? I am not going to give you just one statement this morning. I want to touch on three things this morning because I think this particular subject requires that we do that. First of all, to those who are single God says to wait. To those who are single, God says wait. God's commands again are not arbitrary. Therefore, they are good. They're to bring blessing into our lives. On your outline, there is a resource page and in that one resource by Nancy Piercy *Love Thy Body*. Within that book, she quotes an author Donna Friedus who has done a lot of

studying of sexual behavior. I don't know that she's a believer. She just has done studies in this area and she's interviewed hundreds and hundreds of college students who openly express the fact that they are very sexually active. She makes this comment: "They feel hurt and they feel lonely. They wish they knew how to create a genuine relationship where they are known and appreciated for who they are as a whole person, not just as a physical performer." You don't get that message from the world. You don't get to see the other side of this from the world. You don't see all the hurt and the depression and the sadness and all of the emptiness of life that goes when we step outside of God's purpose and will. God has created us. He designed us. He knows exactly what's best for us. He knows what creates this wellspring of life and to those who are single God says wait until you're married. There is not to be a sexual relationship outside of marriage.

The reality is that even having said that, sex is not the sum total of all of life. Again that's the message of the world. It is a part of life. It's not the measure of life. It's not the sum total of life. After all, the most fulfilled person who ever walked on the face of the earth, the Lord Jesus Christ, was single and He was celibate. I don't think anybody who understands the person of Christ thinks for a moment that He lived a day of life unfulfilled. So there is certainly that understanding of what God has said.

Secondly, to those who are married, God says enjoy. God says enjoy. God has given us an entire book in the Bible. We've mentioned this before. The Song of Solomon. You think Proverbs 5 is filled with language that can make you uncomfortable, go read the song of Solomon with a good commentary and you will be greatly encouraged in your marriage relationship because they are expressing to each other what God intends. Here He has given us an entire book to give to us an understanding and permission and encouragement within this area.

Then lastly, to all of us, the good news of the gospel is for broken people. We all stand in need of God's grace and mercy. Anybody who is in this room this morning who understands the topic that I'm talking about, that is you're old enough to understand this matter, has failed to some degree or another in this arena. Such is the reality. We don't need to pretend otherwise. We don't need to act like it's somebody else that has fallen in this area. All of us have. It is a part of our humanity. It is a part of our fallenness. It is

the struggle that we have in our world, especially in our world today it seems. So to all of us, God's Word speaks such a word of encouragement, such a word of hope. That is the whole nature and purpose of the gospel. It is to lift up those who have fallen. All of us have fallen. All of us need to be lifted up. All of us need to come to this good and gracious and merciful God and receive His forgiveness and grace. That isn't any different this morning. That's where we all are. That is where we all need to recognize that when Jesus said in Matthew 11 come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He was speaking to every one of us. He was saying don't stay in a place where forgiveness is some way or another being denied in your mind. God's grace and mercy is there and it is available for all of us. So let's run to Christ. Let's run to the cross. Let's know that we have a God who is gracious and merciful and good and willing to extend to us that forgiveness that we so desperately need.

Let's pray. Father God, we thank You again this morning that Your Word speaks the truth into our lives in every area. Lord, thank You for this wonderful and gracious gift that You have blessed us with. Father, we pray that as a church, as this church and as the church of Jesus Christ, we would speak with clarity, we would speak with boldness, we would speak truthfully to a generation and to a world that is lost and dying and confused and lacking of understanding about the wonder and mystery of what you have given to us. Lord, enable us with that purpose in mind to be equipped and to go into our families and into our world with an understanding of the blessings that You have in mind for us. Lord, the greatest blessing that you have given to us is the blessing of Jesus, of His life, of His death, of His resurrection. Lord, we thank You that You have told us that that we don't need to work our way to heaven, but that rather You have provided that way for us through what Jesus did. I ask that You by Your Spirit would bring that word into the heart and mind of anyone here this morning who doesn't know Jesus as their Savior, that they would not leave here this morning without a conversation, without an opportunity to explore what that looks like, what that means in their life, to receive this grace, this love, this forgiveness that comes to us through Christ. We thank You in Jesus's name, amen.