

PROVERBS | DIRECTIONS FOR LIFE: WISDOM AND WICKED WOMEN
PROVERBS 6:20-35; 2:10-11, 16; 5:15-23
2ND STREET COMMUNITY CHURCH
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www.2ndstreet.org

Welcome to 2nd Street. It's good to be back together. I am glad that many of you were here last Sunday to hear Dave Edwards' excellent teaching on the topic of *Frustration*, and his instruction to us out of the life of Joseph from **GENESIS 39-41**.

If you weren't here, or even if you were, and you want to hear this teaching again, you can go to **www.2ndstreet.org / bible teachings / elders | guest teachers** and listen to it, or download it. Or there might still be CD copies of it at the Community Center that you can buy for \$1.00. But what solid, practical teaching from God's Word. I think you can see why Dave is one of my favorite Bible teachers.

This morning we're heading back to **PROVERBS** for the eighth of our twelve teachings from Solomon's instruction to us centered on the topic of wisdom ... and how it's connected to many other aspects of life that you and I will have to deal with between the crib and the grave.

Then the first Sunday of May we'll begin a verse-by-verse study of *The New Testament* book of **EPHESIANS** that will take us through the end of 2010. Gang, God wants His Word to become the foundation and the wellspring in our lives ... the place you and I learn to go to, and depend on first, for ***DIRECTION, WISDOM, STRENGTH, COUNSEL, and REFRESHMENT***. Do you see this happening in your life? Do you?

As the lead pastor-teacher of 2nd Street, this is one of my greatest hopes, goals and desires for us. And if it's not happening, then either you or me, or both of us are doing something very wrong, and we need a course correction before things stop getting worse and start getting better. God is expecting us to grow and mature in Him. So how's this God-ordained ***TRANSFORMATION*** in your life going? Oh, we're good at expecting to see spiritual fruit in the lives of other people, but I'm asking you this morning, to be attentive to the spiritual fruit in your own life. What do you see?

I'm committed to studying and teaching God's Word with clarity and passion - and if you want to grow up before you grow old, if ***YOU*** want to be equipped to live out what you say you believe, and if together, ***WE*** want to become the growing, maturing body of Christ I believe God is calling ***US*** to become - then the study of God's Word has got to become and remain a consistent priority in ***OUR*** lives ... ***BOTH*** when we're gathered together on Sunday mornings, ***AND*** also throughout the week when we're going about the day-to-day stuff of our lives.

Throughout the book of **PROVERBS**, Solomon uses the term **wicked men** to highlight that there are two different ways of thinking and living in this world ... the **ways of wicked men**, and the **ways of God**. This morning we're going to focus on the wisdom Solomon offers us in **PROVERBS** about **wicked women** ... and I believe that he's using this phrase similarly to how he used the phrase **wicked men**, but now he's focusing more specifically on the ways he sees sexuality being misused and lived out according

to the **ways of the world** instead of in the **ways God** intended it to be experienced, which is exclusively between one husband and one wife.

In **PROVERBS 5-9** Solomon talks specifically about three kinds of women that wise men and women will avoid hanging out with and getting entangled with. And as we go through some of the verses from these chapters, we'll look at a **NATURAL VIEW** and at a **SPIRITUAL VIEW** of Solomon's descriptions, we'll look at the different kinds of sexual sin Solomon is talking about, and also at the fruit of making these choices. And juxtaposed to the **wicked fruit** we'll experience when we take our sexual cues from the world instead of from God, we'll also look at the **godly fruit** God wants to see growing in us instead ... the **godly fruit** we'll see when we follow **Godly ways**.

Gang, the only way you and I will make the shift away from **wicked ways** and **wicked fruit**, to **Godly ways** and **Godly fruit**, is to wake up to what's really going on around us and inside of us in terms of the temptation we're experiencing, and the choices we're making. Because the **GREAT DECEPTION** is that we so easily assume that the lure and the temptation of sinful, wicked sexual choices, are stronger than God and His power to help us make sexual choices and live sexual lives that are honoring to Him, and that put the broken pieces of our lives back together instead of continuing to tear us apart. And it's here that I see our **FIRST FAITH LESSON** this morning ...

FAITH LESSON ...

Being in a Community Group, studying our Bibles daily, getting involved in *Celebrate Recovery* and in accountability relationships are some of the main options that will make the difference between staying trapped in the wicked ways of the world, and making core changes in our thinking and in our behavior so that we're taking on more of the character of Jesus Christ, and being equipped to live out the will of God in the day-to-day circumstances of life.

Here's a couple charts that lay out for us the differences Solomon is calling us to acknowledge and live into ...

This morning we'll look at the first two kinds of women Solomon talks about, the **adulteress** and the **harlot** and how on one hand, in the **NATURAL VIEW**, they represent the sexual wickedness of our world today, **AND** how, on the other hand, in the **SPIRITUAL VIEW**, they also represent how you and I as Christians so easily compromise our relationship with Jesus Christ as our first love, and our bridegroom.

PROVERBS 5, 6 & 7

**THE NATURAL VIEW
THE SPIRITUAL VIEW**

**THE FRUIT OF WICKEDNESS
THE FRUIT OF GODLINESS**

**THE ADULTERESS & THE HARLOT
SELLING OUT OUR ETERNAL FAITH
FOR TEMPORARY PLEASURES
DECEPTION, ISOLATION, AND POLLUTION
CLARITY, HOLINESS AND BEING
PARTNERED WITH GOD**

PROVERBS 8 & 9

**THE NATURAL VIEW
THE SPIRITUAL VIEW
THE FRUIT OF WICKEDNESS
THE FRUIT OF GODLINESS**

**THE FOOLISH, UNREPENTANT WOMAN
COMPROMISING OUR FAITH
DEPLETION AND RUIN
FULFILLMENT AND HEALING**

Then next Sunday we'll deal with the foolish, unrepentant woman, and see Solomon's comparison of her to the woman of wisdom and blessedness. And while looking at this second comparison of two kinds of women, we'll also look into a fascinating story in *The Old Testament* about a man named Hosea, and his wife, who had the curious name of Gomer. So before next Sunday I'm asking you to read *The Old Testament* book of HOSEA, which is found in between DANIEL and JOEL.

But remember, as we go through these descriptions from Solomon, we're going to look at them in two dimensions, in a **NATURAL VIEW**, and in a **SPIRITUAL VIEW**. And while the **NATURAL VIEW** is actually speaking about the sexual immorality that God is telling all of us, men and women to stay away from ... the **SPIRITUAL VIEW** asks each of us to examine our lives and ask ourselves, how what Solomon is calling us to stay away from is part of the struggle we're going through in our own life of faith.

PRAYER ... God, as we dig into these verses this morning show us the deception and the pollution of sexual sin, and reveal to us the price of any sexual sin we've allowed to creep in and take root in our lives. And God, reveal to us how we may have allowed sin of any kind to move us further away from You. Because, Lord, we don't want to be distant from You, we want to be close. Amen.

Please take out your Bibles and turn with me to PROVERBS 6 ...

PROVERBS 6:20-23 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

²⁰ My son, observe the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

²¹ Bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck.

²² When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you.

²³ For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life ...

Solomon begins this section of teaching about sexual sin and about the methods and the price of sin in our lives, by revealing three things everyone of us has to do to avoid falling into the traps of sin.

1. Listen to the wise instruction of our parents, and the other people in our lives in whom we see the character of Jesus Christ.
2. Keep God's Word close to us, not far away. Read it, wrestle with it, believe it, trust it, and live it.
3. God wants to use His Word like a light in our lives - guarding us as we walk ... bringing God's discipline and instruction to us.

PROVERBS 6:24-26 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

²⁴ To keep you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

²⁵ Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her capture you with her eyelids.

²⁶ For on account of a harlot *one is reduced* to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life.

Remembering that the sexual sins that Solomon is talking about here can be entered into by both men and women, Solomon talks in vv. 24-26 about two different kinds of sexual wickedness. The harlot, **SELLS** her body for money. She does whatever she thinks she has to do to make a living without thinking about the fact that her choices are killing her soul. But the adulteress **GIVES** herself to another person who isn't her spouse. What the adulteress, does is prompted by a different motive than the harlot; she either wants to satisfy her own lustful desires, or she simply wants to exploit and control someone with her charms.

The harlot, **DEGRADES** people; but the adulteress, seeks to **DESTROY** them. And Solomon says that people of wisdom, people who are seeking to live life with God and not self, at the center of who they are, will avoid both of these kinds of sexual sin. And I see a **SECOND FAITH LESSON** for us here this morning ...

FAITH LESSON ...

Sexual sin always *degrades* and *destroys* us, *deceives* and *pollutes* us, and *isolates* and *uses* us. But sexual purity is the pathway to being honorable, being built-up, being healed, and to living life in partnership with God.

The person of wisdom chooses God's ways in the small choices of their life, **AND** in the big choices in their life.

When we're playing with sin, it doesn't always seem that dangerous. But things aren't always what they seem to be ... are they?

ILLUSTRATION ... The story is told that two Orange County women went shopping in Tijuana, Mexico. As they were returning to their car with their packages one of them heard a nearly silent whining, whimpering sound. She looked around her and saw a little Chihuahua lying in the gutter. It was breathing heavy and looked rather swollen. She knew it would die if she left it there, and so she went to her car, got a towel, came back to the dog, lovingly wrapped it up in the towel and took it with her to her car.

Afraid that they wouldn't get it across the border, she hid it under her packages in the trunk. And when they were safely across the border, they stopped and brought the sick dog into the car and laid it on the back seat. Then the woman dropped off her friend at her house, and went home with the dog. She knew she'd have to take

care of it through the night and she planned on taking it to the vet first thing in the morning.

It was a long night. She made a bed for the poor little dog on the floor next to her bed, but it was wheezing and coughing really hard ... and kept scratching it's feet on the side-rails of her bed, and so finally she put the little bed she'd made up on the end of her bed ... and once it was closer to her it slept the rest of the night.

In the morning, while rubbing it's stomach and head, it was hot and she knew it was even sicker than it had been the day before. And so she bundled it up and took it to the vet. When she arrived at the vet's office she lied - telling him that she'd been taking care of her friend's dog and that while they were gone it had gotten sick.

After the vet had heard her story and examined the dog he stood by the door and said, "Lady, you're not getting out of here until you tell me the truth. Where did you get this animal?" Finally the woman told him the whole truth – and he told her, "Lady, this isn't a Chihuahua. This is a Mexican River Rat. And it has rabies!"

Things aren't always what they seem, are they? Gang, let's stop flirting with the wickedness of sexual sin. Let's not be deceived and destroyed by it's flattery and perverted praise. Because behind the fluttering eyelids and the conniving mind of all sexual sin, is a desire for our destruction. And just like the harlot wants to **DEGRADE US**, and the adulteress wants to **DESTROY US**, sin always warms up to us, and entices us with it's feverish shivers before it lunges at us and destroys us.

Solomon goes on in **PROVERBS 6:27-35** to tell us how to keep ourselves from **polluting our faith** with sexual sin.

PROVERBS 6:27-31 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

²⁷ Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned?

²⁸ Or can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?

²⁹ So is the one who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her will not go unpunished.

³⁰ Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he is hungry;

³¹ But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold; he must give all the substance of his house.

Solomon is saying that we can't play with fire without getting burned, and that we can't entertain sin without paying a price. He's saying that, in the **NATURAL VIEW**, just like a person can't have an emotional or a sexual affair with someone they're not married to and not walk away unscathed, so too, in the **SPIRITUAL VIEW**, spiritual infidelity also comes with a high price tag.

In **ROMANS 7:1-6**, the Apostle Paul tells us that before we're in a relationship with God, it's as though we're married to our sin nature ... and that our evil sin nature is like a nasty husband or wife who tells us to evil, and we just loyally obey. But then

Paul says that when we come into a relationship with God, it's as though our loyalty to our sin nature begins to diminish, because we're united in a **covenant of marriage with Jesus Christ**.

And now, instead of being bossed around by our sin nature, when we've made the decision to be a follower of Jesus Christ, then Jesus Christ is the One Who's able to tell us what to do ... but His directions to us are always rooted in love and purity, instead of in control and wickedness. And then Paul goes on to tell us something startling: That when we make the choice to sin after we're a Christ-follower, it's as though we're committing adultery against God. Wow! Wake up and take notice on that one!

So when we break the vows of sexual fidelity we've made to our spouse, and when we break the vows of relationship and fellowship we've made to God, the price will always be high ... in fact, it will always be higher than we ever imagined. I'm reminded of a statement by pastor-teacher Hugh Barbour that I've shared with you many times in the past 3 ½ years now ...

1. **SIN WILL TAKE US FARTHER THAN WE EVER THOUGHT WE'D STRAY.**
2. **SIN WILL KEEP US LONGER THAN WE EVER THOUGHT WE'D STAY.**
3. **SIN WILL COST US MORE THAN WE EVER THOUGHT WE'D PAY.**

Gang, despite what society tells us, there's no such a thing as a "victimless crime." Sin always has a price. Look back with me at **PROVERBS 6:32-35** ...

PROVERBS 6:32-35 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

³² The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it.

³³ Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out.

³⁴ For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

³⁵ He will not accept any ransom, nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.

Like Solomon says in **v. 32** ... when we commit sexual sin against our spouse, or against God, we destroy a holy union and jeopardize souls. And the **DECEPTION** and the **POLLUTION** of sin always brings suffering along with it. And not just the garden-variety, "I stubbed my toe" kind of suffering. I'm talking about the gut-wrenching, rip-out-your-heart-and-your-mind kind of suffering. Some of you know what I'm talking about.

And this is why Solomon warns us so strongly here about specifically staying away from the seduction and corruption of all sexual sin, because guilt and condemnation is a high price to pay for a few minutes of adulterous "bliss". What price has sexual sin cost you or those you love?

Friends, God is serious when He talks with us in His Word about respecting, honoring, and keeping the vows we've made to Him and to other people, and especially within a marriage relationship. Here's how Job talks about this **JOB 31:1** ...

JOB 31:1 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

¹ I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.

Job is saying ... "I've taken an oath before God about my eyes. I have vowed to not even look at another woman, married or unmarried, paid for or free. I value my relationship with my wife so highly that I'm not willing to do anything to jeopardize the sanctity, the health, the sexual purity, or the longevity of it."

For the men and women here who are married, this is how seriously we've got to take our wedding vows. And for all of us ... those who are married **AND** who are not married ... this is how passionately we must protect and honor the vows we've made to God ... the vows that we'll serve Him alone, that we'll follow Him alone, and that we'll make it our highest aim, goal, and priority to do everything we can to take on more and more of the character of His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, so that we can live more fully, more intentionally, and more consistently into the will of God in the day-to-day stuff of our lives. Do you see it?

Job goes on in **vv. 9-12** to talk more about his covenant before God and his spouse ...

JOB 31:9-12 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

⁹ If my heart has been seduced by a woman, or if I have lusted for my neighbor's wife,

¹⁰ then let my wife belong to another man; let other men sleep with her.

¹¹ For lust is a shameful sin, a crime that should be punished.

¹² It is a fire that burns all the way to hell. It would wipe out everything I own.

And it's here that I see a **THIRD FAITH LESSON** this morning ...

FAITH LESSON ...

We can't take our vows lightly. Covenants are not to be tampered with or broken. The temptation of adultery, or prostituting ourselves against our relationship with our spouse, or against our spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ should shake us to our core, make us sick, and help keep us depending on God, and following God.

At times fear can be a good motivator. And this is one of those times.

No doubt. Friends, if you're tempted, or attracted sexually or emotionally to someone besides your spouse, **OR** if you're single and you're tempted or attracted sexually or emotionally to someone who is also single, or who is married to someone

else, before you cross that line, please, I beg you, to ask yourself the following two questions ...

1. If I'm married, or if I would be married in the future, would I willingly grant my spouse the same privilege I'm contemplating?
2. Would it bother me to know that my spouse (or my future spouse) was involved in an adulterous affair?

Adultery between you and another person, and the **adultery of sin** against Jesus Christ each of us wrestles with ... with our own sin natures ... are both designed by Satan to steal our joy, steal our peace, steal our loves, and kill our relationship with God because of the deception, the anger, the resentment, and the unforgiveness that always accompanies comes along with it.

Do you see why Satan entices people into sexual sin? He wants us to lose everything God has given us. Sexual sin is always costly. And not only to us, but to the Kingdom of God. Because when the people of God succumb to the price of sin, the Kingdom of God is compromised and weakened.

In **PROVERBS 5:1-14** Solomon offers instruction to his sons about staying away from the harlot. Remember that as Solomon writes to his sons, he's writing to "the builders of the family name." I think it's interesting that Solomon's instruction isn't given directly to the harlot, but to his sons, and vicariously, to you and to me. And while Solomon's instruction to his sons and to us, in these fourteen verses might seem kind of strong and blunt, like many things in life, "timing is everything."

The world introduces our kids to sex early in life though what they see and hear in music, on TV, in movies, on the Internet, and at school. So do you see how come our children need to hear the truth about these things from God's Word, and from their parents in their homes? Because if they're only informed about these things from the world, and not from Godly sources, they won't know how to live in the world and overcome the temptations they're going to face in it.

And I see our **FOURTH FAITH LESSON** here this morning ...

FAITH LESSON ...

Our children have got to know where to draw the line sexually. And God wants to use His Word to show us the difference between right and wrong, and to help us ***SEE AHEAD OF TIME*** the tremendous cost of going our own way, separate from God and His plans for our lives.

PROVERBS 5:8-10 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

- ⁸ Keep your way far from her [the strange woman], and do not go near the door of her house,
⁹ or you will give your vigor to others and your years to the cruel one;
¹⁰ and strangers will be filled with your strength, and your hard-earned goods *will go* to the house of an alien;

God's instruction is clear. Steer clear from the **way of the world**, and from the sexual sin it markets as permissible, or you'll lose everything you've got. Don't be taken in by its seduction. It always seems so appealing at first ... warm, vibrant, enticing. But in the end, the sweetness of the moment will turn into deep bitterness, and the temporary warmth will turn to ice.

And when we allow sexual sin to come into our lives, we'll usually end up losing our reputation, our honor, our health, and even our possessions. Everything will be forfeited over to the **wicked woman** and the sexual sin she represents here in Solomon's wise instruction. But I love the instruction Solomon gives us in **PROVERBS 2** about what will preserve and sustain us, rather than rob and destroy us ...

PROVERBS 2:10-11, 16-19 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

¹⁰ For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

¹¹ Discretion will guard you, and understanding will watch over you,

¹⁶ To deliver you from the strange woman, from the adulteress who flatters with her words;

¹⁷ That leaves the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God;

¹⁸ For her house sinks down to death and her tracks *lead* to the dead;

¹⁹ None who go to her return again, nor do they reach the paths of life.

What is it that guards our hearts and minds from temptation? **Discretion** and **understanding**. And **discretion** and **understanding** will only become more a core part of who we are as we spend more and more time in God's Word. You may think you can experience an increase in **discretion** and **understanding** some other way. But you're wrong. None of us will get the **discretion** and the **understanding** we need from Oprah, Dr. Phil, Dr. Drew, Dr. House, Dr. Oz, or even from Dr. Seuss. **Discretion** and **understanding** will only become more a core part of who we are as we spend more and more time in God's Word.

And without an increase in **discretion** and **understanding**, I promise you, there will be an increase in sin in your life ... an increase of the fruit of sexual sin which is **DECEPTION** and **POLLUTION**, and an increase in our **ISOLATION FROM GOD, AND HAVING OUR LIVES, OUR GIFTS, AND OUR RESOURCES GETTING USED BY SATAN INSTEAD OF BY GOD**. Oh friends, how God longs to purify us and partner with us.

Gang, we need to hear these truths from Solomon ... because everyone of us has compromised our vows to God and others more than we want to admit, and every one of us has adulterated our faith more than we want to admit, and every one of us has whored around on God with sin more than we can barely stand to confess.

But we've got to confess it, or else there's no hope for us. All throughout this service God has been calling all of us back to Him. And like I said at the beginning of this teaching, God is speaking to us today on two levels ... the **NATURAL** and the **SPIRITUAL**.

PROVERBS 5, 6 & 7

THE NATURAL VIEW	THE ADULTERESS & THE HARLOT
THE SPIRITUAL VIEW	SELLING OUT OUR ETERNAL FAITH
THE FRUIT OF WICKEDNESS	FOR TEMPORARY PLEASURES
THE FRUIT OF GODLINESS	DECEPTION, ISOLATION, AND POLLUTION
	CLARITY, HOLINESS AND BEING
	PARTNERED WITH GOD

What is God's Word calling you away from, and what is God's Word calling you towards? **Adulterating** our faith by allowing deception and pollution to reign in our hearts and minds closes us off from the clarity and the holiness of God. And selling out our faith keeps us isolated from God and others, and makes us a slave to sin instead of freeing us up to be authentically partnered with God in the life of faith He's calling us to. The choice is ours.

This morning God is calling you and me away from the **way of this world** - away from the way that doesn't bat an eye at **sexual sin**. And God is also calling us away from committing adultery against Jesus Christ, by saying "yes" to sin instead of "yes" to His plans for our lives.

I hope that in Solomon's words of instruction, you've seen enough of a glimpse of the fruit God has waiting for you as you say "yes" to Him and to His plans for your life, that at the end of this gathering for worship, you're seeing Him more clearly, that you're being equipped to follow Him more nearly, and that you're being wooed into loving Him more dearly. Day by day.

NEXT SUNDAY ... PROVERBS 8 & 9 & HOSEA

THE NATURAL VIEW	THE FOOLISH, UNREPENTANT WOMAN
THE SPIRITUAL VIEW	COMPROMISING OUR FAITH
THE FRUIT OF WICKEDNESS	DEPLETION AND RUIN
THE FRUIT OF GODLINESS	FULFILLMENT AND HEALING

COME PRAYING AND EXPECTING!