

Illusion and Reality

The Proverbs are specifically relevant to young adult men. That does not mean that others cannot benefit from the Proverbs, but simply that Solomon had a target audience, namely, *his son*. For that reason many of the early chapters were devoted to sexual purity for young men. Solomon warned his son against the adulteress. His son could remain sexually pure only if he was faithful to his wife. Any woman who was not his wife was forbidden.

Illusion:

The father warned his son of the illusion presented by the adulteress:

**For the lips of an adulteress drip honey,
And smoother than oil is her speech.**

--Proverbs 5:3

Honey was something very desirable in Solomon's day. Consider the following biblical references to honey:

- The Promised Land flowed with milk and honey, "the glory of all lands." (Exodus 3:8, 17; 13:5; Ezekiel 20:15);
- Honey brightened the eyes of Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:25);
- Honey was presented alongside gold as something desirable (Psalm 19:10);
- Honey satisfied (Psalm 81:16);
- Solomon recommended honey (Prov. 24:13);
- The bride's lips dripped with honey; milk and honey under her tongue (Song of Solomon 4:11);
- Honey was included as a part of the pleasure of lovers (Song of Solomon 5:1).

Sweet honey describes the *lips* of the adulteress. She is able to lure the unsuspecting young man with tremendous power. In addition, her *speech* is smoother than oil, a reference to pleasant words and flattery that also lure. So, by every external appearance, the forbidden woman is very desirable.

Reality:

**But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.**

--Proverbs 5:4

Wormwood is bitter. In Scripture it is often found in the same text with poisonous water. Wormwood makes a person sick. In the book of Revelation men die from water made bitter from wormwood (8:11). Wormwood stands as a sharp contrast to sweet honey. The adulteress presents the *illusion* of sweet honey, but in *reality* she offers bitter wormwood.

A *sword* is for battle. Swords pierce, cut, kill, destroy. A two-edged sword cuts both ways, possessing even greater destructive power. The speech of the adulteress has the *illusion* of smooth oil, but in *reality* is a sharp destructive two-edged sword.

A true man of God walks by faith, not by sight. He will recognize the *illusion* for what it is. He will listen to the warning, understanding by wisdom that *reality* exists behind the *illusion*. He will refrain from chasing the *illusion*.

Men...the illusions are strong! Yet by faith in God's wisdom and the help of the Holy Spirit you can tear the illusion from your eyes and see the ugly reality of her lies. She will destroy you! Be wise to reality!