

Proverbs Ch6v20-Ch7v27 - Two Highways

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning, everybody. Like Johnny said, we're going to continue our series in Proverbs today.! If you could all open please to Proverbs chapter 6 in your Bibles.
- ! Proverbs chapter 6, we're going to start at verse 20. And that's actually page 640 if you're using the Red Church Bible. Page 640. Proverbs chapter 6.
- So two weeks ago we looked at Proverbs chapter 5, and King Solomon in that chapter warns his son about the dangers of adultery. And he also put on full display the beautiful gift that sex is within the context of marriage.
- Now two chapters later, well actually one chapter later, Solomon is back on the topic of adultery. Okay, now we believe this is God's word, okay, written by Solomon, but he was carried along by the Holy Spirit as he wrote this.
- So Solomon wanted to spend a second speech warning his son about adultery, and ultimately God wanted to warn us about adultery again too.
- [1 : 3 2] So today we're going to look at this text from two perspectives. The first one is just reading the text as it is. It's a warning against adultery.
- But secondly, we're going to read it as a picture of how we relate to God. Because throughout the Bible, God actually uses the picture of marriage and adultery to describe how his people have related to him, and in fact how we have failed to love him.
- So those are the two perspectives we're going to look at this text with. Number one, physical adultery and the warning against that. And secondly, spiritual adultery and what that will teach us about our relationship to God.
- Lord, Chris is going to come and read the text for us. Thanks so much, Chris. Before she does, I'm actually going to pray as we come to read. Lord, as we come to read your word to us now, we confess that we need your help.
- We don't want this word to go in one ear and out the other. Father, Holy Spirit, we need you. Convict us of sin. Challenge us in ways that we need to change.
- [2 : 5 6] Give us insight as to what your word means for us today. We know there's a purpose why you brought up this topic of adultery again so soon after chapter 5.
- We pray that you would achieve that purpose in our lives today. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen. Thanks, Chris. Thanks, Chris.
- When you walk, they will guide you. When you sleep, they will watch over you. When you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp.
- This teaching is a light. And correction and instruction are the way to life, keeping you from your neighbor's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman.
- Do not lust in your heart. Do not lust in your heart after her beauty, or let her captivate you with her eyes. For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread. For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread.
- [4 : 1 9] But another man's wife preys on your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?

So is he who sleeps with another man's wife. No one who touches her will go unpunished. People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.

Yet, if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery has no sense.

Whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away. For jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.

He will not accept any compensation. He will refuse a bribe, however great it is. My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you.

[5 : 28] Keep my commands and you will live. Guard my teachings as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers. Write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, you are my sister.

And to insight, you are my relative. They will keep you from the adulterous woman. From the wayward woman with her seductive words. Thank you so much, Chris.

So we live in a world that affirms sexual exploration and adultery in large part. If you watch the latest movies, Netflix series, you'll see it.

I know what you were watching a medical drama series at the moment at home. The storyline is excellent. There's just fantastic characters with many admirable traits.

Compassion, kindness, sacrifice, care for the most vulnerable in society. But there's this whole sexual ethics framework kind of beneath the show, which normalizes sexual exploration.

[6 : 44] The characters are implied as having multiple sexual partners over time. And committed marriage is the exception on the show. So it seems that sex with whoever you want, whenever you want, is the highway to pleasure, according to this world we live in today.

Come this way for intoxicating thrills. Indulge yourself. Just let your hair down. Don't worry about it. But is adultery and sexual freedom really the highway to pleasure?

What does wisdom say about that? Well, if you look at chapter 7 and verse 24, the father speaks to his son about an adulteress.

Just look what he says. Now then, my sons, listen to me. Pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.

Many are the victims she has brought down. Her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

[8 : 00] How could the father have made it any more clear, right? Adultery and sexual freedom may seem like the highway to pleasure at first.

But it's really a highway to the grave. How do we know this? Well, look back at chapter 6 and verse 27. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?

Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife. No one who touches her will go unpunished.

That's saying to us, don't play with fire. Don't even go there. If we indulge in sexual sin, we will get burnt. The father uses another picture.

Look down at verse 30. He says, people do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he's starving. It's like, okay, we can understand why he stole the bread.

[9 : 05] Yet if he's caught, verse 31, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery has no sense.

Whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away. The point is clear. Adultery will destroy our lives.

If we go down its path, then do not repent. It looks like the highway to pleasure and thrills, but it's really the highway to the grave.

And it's the father's sole aim in this passage to warn his son about that. And he does it by telling a story about a young fool who traveled this highway to the grave.

And there's a second character, an adulteress. She seems to be adultery and sexual sin personified. Maybe Solomon drew inspiration from people that he had observed in his life.

[10 : 09] We don't know, but she represents everything that adultery is. And also, just to note that this is not a gender stereotype in any way. Solomon could just as easily have chosen a male adulterer tempting a young woman.

And in our world, this story applies to both men and women tempted to commit adultery. So as we hear the story, we're going to find out that the highway to the grave is like a slippery slope, which gets steeper and steeper the further you walk along it, and the ultimate end is destruction.

So the first thing that we learn about adultery is that it's easy to walk into. Let's read the story together. Chapter 7 and verse 6.

Solomon says, What do we notice here?

This guy is walking right into the danger zone. It's almost as if he's flirting with it. Oh, no harm.

[11 : 36] Just take a little look in her window. No one will see me in the dark. Isn't that how all sexual sin begins, though?

One small wayward thought. One prolonged look. One little compromise. And all of a sudden, we're walking into danger. But in another sense, we don't have to go and find adultery.

Adultery comes to find us. Adultery will lure you in with lies. Look at verse 10. Then out came a woman to meet him.

Dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent, she is unruly and defiant. Her feet never stay at home. Now in the street. Now in the squares. At every corner, she lurks.

Adultery is presented to us as a predator looking for someone to devour. Look at verse 13. Do you notice how she lures him in with a lie?

[12 : 48] Do you notice how she lures him in with a lie? That this foolish youth is the one, right?

You were made for me. She lies. But the seduction continues. Verse 16. I have covered my bed with cutter linens from Egypt.

I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come. Let's drink deeply of love till morning. Let's enjoy ourselves with love.

My husband's not at home. He's gone on a long journey. He took his purse filled with money and will not be at home till full moon. You see, adultery dangles all the pleasures in front of us, but none of the consequences.

It promises that no one else will see or know about the fun we have, but God sees. Soon enough, other people are going to know too.

[13 : 53] Adultery, like all sexual sin, it lures us in with the lies. And if we hang around long enough, listen to those lies, what's going to happen?

We're going to fall into the trap. Adultery will enslave you with pleasure. Look at verse 21. With persuasive words she led him astray.

She seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter. Like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver.

Like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it'll cost him his life. Think about this progression here. It began with the foolish youth just walking down her street.

It continued with him entertaining her lies. And now he's walked straight into her trap. He's entered into her house.

[14:54] He's lying down on her bed. He's enslaved. With illicit pleasure. He's trapped. He must obey her demands. But the last step on the highway to the grave is actually the worst one.

Because adultery, we just read, destroys this man in the end. Now why did Solomon write the story that way? Think about it.

Like he could have had the foolish young man staggering out of her house at dawn. Wondering, what on earth have I done? And fearing the coming consequences.

Solomon could have written it that the husband returned early, unexpectedly from his work trip. And the fallout that then ensued. No, that's not how Solomon wrote the story.

He simply says this. Verse 26. Chapter 7, 26. He says, Many are the victims she has brought down. Her slain are a mighty throng.

[16:00] Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death. It's pretty stark. The father wants his son to know that adultery will destroy him completely in the end, if he doesn't turn back.

Steer clear. Because unrepentant sexual sin is a downward trajectory. It's a highway to the grave.

And that is the first, most obvious reading of this passage. We are to be warned. But there is a second way to view this story.

Because in the Bible, God uses the picture of marriage and adultery to describe how we have related to him. Now I want you to please open to Jeremiah, chapter 2, and verse 2.

Jeremiah is a couple books on from Proverbs. Jeremiah, chapter 2, verse 2. If you're using the Red Church Bible, that's on page 500.

[17:04] Sorry, 700. Thank you, Katrina. 756. So the background to this.

God chose Israel to be his people. God set his love upon Israel as a nation of people. Out of all the different nations in the world.

Not because they were anything special. Or because they were better. No, they were poor and undeserving. God simply chose to love them.

And to take them to himself. Okay. And how did he show this? Well, he rescued them from Egypt. That was a big way he showed it. He rescued them out of misery there. And he brought them into the desert of Sinai.

Where they made covenant promises to each other. Just like in a marriage. He would be their God. They would be his people. And they promised to be faithful to him.

[18:03] And this is what God speaks about now through the prophet Jeremiah. Chapter 2, verse 2. This is what the Lord says. I remember the devotion of your youth.

How as a bride you loved me. And followed me through the wilderness. Through a land not sown. And at first Israel did follow the Lord.

And they were devoted to him as a bride to her husband. But it didn't last long. Look at verse 5. What fault did your ancestors find in me that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols. And became worthless themselves. An idol is a substitute that we put up in place of God. Something that we find life from.

Instead of him. Look down at verse 20 then. God says, Long ago you broke off your yoke and tore off your bonds. You said, I will not serve you.

- [19 : 07] Indeed, on every high hill and under every spreading tree, you lay down as a prostitute. God says that Israel's rejection of him is like a wife's rejection of her good, loving husband. The very best husband that you could imagine. One who rescued her out of misery. Cared for her. Loved her faithfully. But she scandalously cheated on him. After all he had done. She prostituted herself to other men. That's what you've done to me. God says to his people. And it's underlined in verse 11. Jeremiah 2 verse 11. God says, Has a nation ever changed its gods? Yet they are not gods at all. But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols. Be appalled at this, you heavens.
- [20 : 12] And shudder with great horror, declares the Lord. My people have committed two sins. They have forsaken me, the spring of living water. And they have dug their own cisterns. Broken cisterns. That cannot hold water. That is what spiritual adultery is. Okay? And it's not just Israel back then. We are all guilty of walking out on this infinitely loving God. And running off to cheap substitutes. We trade in the all satisfying fountain of living water. Like it just said in those verses. For a pit of sludge. We dig these broken cisterns. They can't hold any water. These things that we look to for life.
- [21 : 07] They cannot satisfy. It's insane. And it ends in destruction. Spiritual adultery. Is the true highway to the grave. We're going to flick back to Proverbs 7. I'm going to look at the story again. From this perspective. Spiritual adultery. So page 640. Proverbs chapter 7. Now, here's the first thing that we learn about spiritual adultery. It's so easy to walk into. It happens whenever we put something or someone in the place of God in our lives. Okay? We make good things that God has given us into ultimate things. They become idols in our lives. We start drawing our life, our joy, our fulfillment from that well instead of from God. The fountain of all life. And I don't know what it is for you. It could be anything. It could be family. Money. A relationship.
- [22 : 25] Having good health. Or owning nice things. Okay? We all struggle in these ways. Saint Augustine. He actually called them disordered loves. It's a love that's out of order. Okay? We love things or people more than we were ever meant to. To the point we look to them for life. And if we don't have them, we are miserable. Okay? Spiritual adultery is so easy to walk into. But here's the second thing we learn from the story. Spiritual adultery also lures us in with lies. We hear these empty promises all the time. I've got a few examples here. Raising kids will fill the rest of your life with purpose. How about this one? A romantic relationship will complete you. All you need is love. Or this. Get that dream house and you'll be sorted for life. Or if you have your health, sure, what more do you need?
- [23 : 30] We hear all these, don't we? Right? And the thing is, they're all good things. But what they promise us is not true. None of the things or the people that we look to for life can ever come through on their promises.

Okay? Think about kids. Kids, they leave the home eventually and they start their own lives. Romance fades and disappoints. Houses grow old. You can't take them with you.

Health inevitably fails over time. All those things that we look to for life eventually let us down one by one. You see, like the adulteress lied to the young man in verse 15 saying, We were made for each other.

Spiritual adultery does the same to us. It will lure us in with lies telling us, This is what you were made for. Kids, career, family, health.

This is what you were made for, not God. And if we hang around long enough listening to those lies, Well, the third thing.

[24 : 39] Spiritual adultery enslaves us. A pleasure. Before we realize this good thing that God's given us, Well, it's actually become an ultimate thing. And now we can't live without it.

So here's three quick examples. When we replace God with money and buying more and more things, Enough is never enough, is it? We get enslaved in this endless spending spree which controls us.

Or when we replace God with a person, Our relationship with that person becomes all we think about. We are enslaved to what they think about us And how they make us feel.

Or when we replace God with a desire for good health, Our whole life becomes about self-preservation. And we start neglecting other people's needs Because all we can think about is looking after ourselves.

Can you see that in each example, We get enslaved to these things. And here's the thing that if left unchecked, Spiritual adultery destroys us in the end.

[25 : 50] You see, When we reject God, When we run after other things for life, God will eventually give us over to what we always wanted.

That is a life without him. Our money, relationships, careers, They'll all end at death.

And what will we have then? Nothing. If God is the eternal fountain of life, Rejecting him means eternal death. And separation from him.

A reality that the Bible calls hell. Spiritual adultery will destroy us in the end. What do we do? How do we escape the luring power of spiritual adultery?

How can we remain faithful to God And know life everlasting? Now here's the thing.

[26 : 53] If we look at our passage today, Wisdom actually keeps us from falling for the lies. Look at Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 20.

And here, wisdom is like a billboard At the top of the highway to the grave, Saying, Stay away. Turn back. Look at verse 20. My son, keep your father's command.

Don't forsake your mother's teaching. Bind them always on your heart. Fasten them around your neck. When you walk, They will guide you. When you sleep, They will watch over you.

When you awake, They will speak to you. For this command is a lamp. This teaching is a light. And correction and instruction Are the way to life.

Keeping you from your neighbor's wife. From the smooth talk of a wayward woman. You see, wisdom keeps us from falling for her lies.

[27 : 50] We must fill our hearts with God's promises To drown out the lies of spiritual adultery.

Now, I don't know what that means for you. Maybe it means sticking up promises around our houses. In the car. On the home screen.

On your phone. Constant reminder of who we are in Christ. Who God is for us. To fight against the lies Of those other things we look to. God's word will guide you.

Watch over you. Speak to you. If only we would let it do that. Look at verse 25. It says, Do not lust in your heart after her beauty. Or let her captivate you with her eyes.

You see, You know the best way Not to be lured in by adultery? Be captivated By an infinitely greater beauty. Think about a man Traveling abroad for work.

[28 : 51] What does he do? He puts a picture of his wife On his home screen on the phone. Why does he do that? Well, every time he looks at his phone He's reminded of her beauty.

Of her love. He doesn't even look twice At the adulteress. So also in our relationship with God The more we gaze upon his beauty The more we are satisfied in him.

The more sin and idols Lose their luster. And those good things in our lives Which God has given us They're kept in their right place.

God remains first. Our source of life. So negatively The command is Don't fall into adultery Spiritual adultery But positively The charge is to fall deeper and deeper In love with God.

By gazing at his beauty every day. By hearing him Speak to us in his word. By spending time With him In prayer In worship.

[30 : 01] But the truth is That we've all Blown it. We haven't actually Listened to wisdom As we should. We've all walked out on God.

We've all traded him in For cheap substitutes. We ignored Wisdom's warning signs. We listened to the lies And before we knew it Our idols enslaved us.

We all deserve The destruction That young man Fell into in the passage. Is there any hope For us Who have failed In this way?

Well yes there is. Because at every point Of the highway To the grave Here's the thing Jesus Reaches out his hand To pull us Back to safety.

Jesus Is pursuing us In our waywardness. Jesus calls out To all of us Who are weary Of running Come And rest In me.

[31 : 01] Come home To God. But how can God Receive us In our sin In our adultery Because of Jesus.

Think about what he did. He was perfectly Faithful to God When we weren't. Yet he died For sinners And spiritual adulterers Like us Who walked out on God To run After worthless things.

All of our rebellion Past Present Future Is paid for In Christ. All we must do Is reach out In faith And trust That he paid for it For us.

But that's not all. He didn't just Forgive us For the wrong things We've done And leave us that way. No. He rose from the dead Defeating the power That sin Held over us.

We who trust in Christ Are raised With him To new life. Our old Slavery to sin Buried With him.

[32 : 09] We have a new master. We are freed To enjoy His love forever. Now that doesn't mean That the struggle With idolatry Is over.

Okay. We still fall. We still fail. But it Does mean that Sin no longer Has control over us. We are now Able to say No To spiritual adultery And yes To Christ Because of His spirit In us.

We now have Hope in the struggle. Because we know That even when we do Fall Christ has paid For every failing. Nothing Can separate us From the love Of Christ.

We keep coming Back to him again. Repentance And faith. But here's the Greatest hope I think. One day in heaven We will be made Perfect.

Johnny was actually Reading this quote out Earlier. I didn't know He was going to Read this. But this is wonderful. Just read this With me. In that day Declares the Lord You will call me My husband.

[33 : 23] You will no longer Call me My master. I will remove The names Of the idols From her lips. No longer Will their names Be invoked.

I will betroth you To me forever. I will betroth you In righteousness And justice In love And compassion. I will betroth you In faithfulness.

And you will Acknowledge The Lord. What an incredible Hope that is. We The church Are the bride Of Christ Betrothed to him Forever In love In faithfulness And a day Is coming When he's going To remove Every inclination In our hearts To run after Other things.

The idols We once Looked to Will no longer Hold any appeal For us. What a hope That is. That is going To be our New life In the new Heavens and earth.

On that day We will Entirely Treasure God In Christ And enjoy him Fully Forever. We will be Truly satisfied In him.

[34 : 42] How wonderful A hope That is. While we still Struggle here In this life Tainted with sin We have this hope Of a future Free from sin Forever.

Hear these words From Revelation Of a future Wedding Feast In heaven. Then I heard What sounded Like a great Multitude Like the roar Of rushing Waters And like loud Peals of thunder Shouting Hallelujah For our Lord God Almighty Reigns Let us rejoice And be glad And give him glory For the wedding Of the Lamb Has come And his bride The church Has made herself Ready Fine linen Bright and clean Was given her To wear She is purified From sin Then the angel Said to me Write this Blessed Are those Who are invited To the wedding Supper Of the Lamb Spiritual adultery Is the highway

To the grave Knowing Christ Is the highway To eternal life It's an upward Trajectory We were made To be His bride And enjoy Him forever He beckons Us upward To a glory So great We don't even Have the categories To understand It Let us be Captivated By the Infinite Beauty Of God And turn Away From the Lies Of spiritual Adultery All the more As we wait To be made Perfect Let's pray Our Lord Jesus

We do confess Our hearts Are so Prone to Wonder Or even Though we Have seen You In your Grace And your Mercy Yet we Still walk Out in You And we Still think That other Things in Life Are better Than you God Forgive us For our Spiritual Adultery And Lord We And Lord We just Thank you That You Reached Out to Us Despite Our Wandering Despite Having Betrayed You You came Running After us

That each Each one Of us That each One of us Will be Captivated By the Infinitely Greater beauty Of God In Jesus Christ That we Would not Listen To the lies Of spiritual Adultery That we Would treasure God More And more That we Would be More satisfied Filled With joy That we Would become Who you Made us To be We pray All these Things For your Glory And for Our good Amen Great Musicians Are going To come Up now And we're Going to Sing a Song I think That will Help us To apply What we Just Heard From God's Word Today And this Is what The words Say Turn your Eyes upon Jesus Look full In his Wonderful Face And the Things of Earth Will grow Strangely Dim In the

[39 : 15] Light of His Glory And Grace Let's Sing this Out Please Stand! To be