

Quenching our thirst for love

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. Right, we're reading from Proverbs chapter 5. My son, be attentive to my wisdom.

Incline your ear to my understanding, that you may keep discretion and your lips may guard knowledge. For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil.

But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps follow the path to shield. She does not ponder the path of life, her ways wander, and she does not know it.

And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house. Lest you give your honour to her, and your years to us.

Lest strangers fill your hands. And your labours go to the house of a foreigner. And at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed.

[1 : 0 7] And you say, how I hated discipline. And my heart despised reproof. I did not listen to the voice of my teachers, or incline my ear to my instructors.

I am at the brink of utter ruin, in the assembled congregation. 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 dear, a graceful doe.

Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight. Be intoxicated always in her love. 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.

[2 : 1 8] He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly, he is led astray. To start with, I just want to share a picture with you that I found on the internet while I was doing some research for this.

Joel Ferguson's going to bring it up, and it's a picture that describes Proverbs along with some other books. Look, obviously it's not an accurate representation.

It's a bit of a tongue-in-cheek. But I guess this is probably, you know, to be honest, having a go at the other books about how they're all going, life is meaningless, it's worthless, et cetera. I actually think in reality Proverbs should look a little bit different to this.

So I've had a crack at trying to fix up this photo for us. This is probably a little bit more what I think Proverbs should look like. But the reason I think Proverbs should look like this is because that Proverbs is about a book that is about contrasting two ways to live your life.

And as you read through the book of Proverbs, you really do get this sense of, on the one hand, if you embrace wisdom, then that's good. Life will go well for you. But on the other hand, if you embrace folly, then life is going to go really bad, and there'll be a lot of terrible consequences.

[3 : 35] And Martin last week spoke about two paths to take in your life, essentially the same thing. One is the wisdom path, the life that leads to happiness and joy, and the other is folly that leads to pain and death and destruction.

Another way that you would have heard it is Wilco and Marty both talked about the fact that wisdom and folly are like two women, so lady wisdom and lady folly. And up until this point, Solomon's coming, talking about the concept of wisdom, this idea of wisdom, that, you know, you can get wisdom to chase after wisdom.

The wisdom of God is fear of the Lord. But it's still these two choices that we're given in this concept. Well, in today's passage, the rubber really hits the road.

Solomon goes, okay, that's the concept. You've heard the concept of what wisdom is. Now let's get to the practicals. Let's talk about adultery. It's a little bit like, you know, he could have eased us into it and said, I don't know, you know, wisdom is brushing your teeth and folly is not flossing.

What's an Old Testament example? Maybe like shear your sheep in the summer and not in the winter. I don't know. But something like that to kind of get up to it. But he doesn't waste breath. He goes, okay, let's tackle adultery.

[4 : 53] And on the one hand, he says, adultery is folly. And faithfulness is wisdom. And I've been actually super lucky with the kids talk this morning because Jen did a great job of summarising that for us.

She messaged me earlier in the week and said, you know, what are we going to be talking about? And I said, oh, adultery. So good luck making that into a kids talk. But she's done a great job. But those are the two options.

Wisdom is faithfulness and folly is adultery. And then instead of looking at this as two ways, two paths to go down or two women, I'm going to take a slightly different approach.

I'm going to say that there are two ways to quench your thirst. And that's the question I'm going to be asking from here is, what choice will you make to quench your thirst?

Now, something that the chapter here has assumed when Solomon wrote this is that we should be looking for satisfaction or that we will want to look for satisfaction in relationships, in sexual relationships.

[5 : 56] It's who we are. Humans are made that way. We're wired that way. We're created for relationships with each other. We desire to be loved, to be valued at our very core, to be significant to someone else.

And so the question I'm going to be asking is, where will you look to have that thirst quenched? Now, in the immediate sense, this passage presents us with two options.

The first one is that we can quench our thirst through the drink of honey and oil. The honey and oil of adultery or the second option is that we can quench our thirst in the water of our marriage relationships.

Now, I'm going to recognise here that I'm talking to a large group of people, probably who more than two-thirds aren't married. And this passage is heavily geared towards married people.

So if you aren't married, then please don't tune out. Please don't turn off and go, oh, look, this isn't for me. I think the points I'm going to be making along here are going to be helpful, even if the applications aren't necessarily focused on you.

[7 : 07] So, yeah, stick with me and hopefully you'll get something out of it at the end. But let's tackle the first option. The first option to quench our thirst is the silky smooth drink of honey and oil.

Adultery. And what is the answer that Solomon gives us here to that? Folly, folly, absolute folly. Let's take a look at verse 3.

If you've got your Bible open, it's Proverbs chapter 5, verse 3. For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smooth than oil.

But in the end, she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death. Her steps follow the path to Sheol, to the grave, essentially.

She does not ponder the path of life. Her ways wander and she does not know it. See, Solomon doesn't mince words here. He says, Adultery, the act of breaking your vow with your spouse and sleeping with someone else who is not that person, is adultery.

[8 : 18] It's folly. It is stupidity. But that's the thing about adultery, isn't it? The attraction is there. That's the thing with adultery. It's not like we can look at this drink and see, you know, there's little chunks floating around in it and it smells like vomit.

It's not like that. It's attractive. It's aromatic. It smells good. It's smooth. It's silky. And that's, you know, the analogy of the woman that Proverbs uses here is actually very helpful.

The woman's lips drip with honey. It looks good. But the reality is that it is bitter as wormwood, as bitter as gall.

It's disgusting. It's rancid. It's not smooth as it looks. It's razor sharp. You know, we think that this will quench our thirst, but it actually leaves us gasping for something else.

It gets stuck in our throat and it chokes us up. You see, adultery is the drink that leads to death. Now, Joel's going to play a song for us here in a second.

[9 : 24] And it's a song that's based on these exact verses, actually, by a Christian rapper called Lecrae. Now, as soon as I say that I'm about to play Christian rap, I recognise I'm alienating anyone over the age of 35 and anyone under the age of 25.

And I've just insulted anyone who is outside of those age ranges and does enjoy Christian rap. But the point of this is try not to pay attention to the style of the music.

If you like it, great. If you don't, then what I want you to do is try and focus on the words. There'll be slides that have the words coming up. And he does move through them pretty quick. But I think this really accurately portrays to us the mirage of adultery.

So Joel's going to hopefully play that for us now. Kinda.

Cada. Br multooky. Bella. Bella.

[10 : 30] Bella. Bella. Bella. Kill out, kill out I know it's gon' kill me, but I just can't let it go And the taste of appeal has got a grip upon my soul These honey dip lies mesmerize me Cry's got its crooked fingers twisting all inside me Fools walk the path I'm on, never to be seen again Sipping on seduction while we eating on some secret sins Says a whisper in my ear And I know I should be over this, but I ain't seeing clear And I ain't leaving here, unless somebody save me Walk into my grave, letting evilness enslave me Evil looks so lovely, covered in her lace of lies And a silky smooth seduction just manipulates my mind Her fabric of fabrication is fueling my fascination

While I'm intoxicated, she starts her assassination Losing all my honor and my years to the merciless Giving all my life away, but I'm just so immersed in this Baby, that's a reason Yeah, you're moving hard a little bit Yeah, I'm only here for your benefit I'm here, I'm here, I'm here, I'm here Baby, that's a reason You're moving hard a little bit Yeah, I'm here, I'm here You're moving hard a little bit Yeah, I'm here Hold your eyes and let's get lost tonight Yeah, I'm here, I'm here You're moving hard, you'll see my mind Yeah, I'm here Her feet go down the drift So don't let her consume you Even though her heart is black Her exterior is beautiful She'll take your life away And strip away your joy Pretend that she don't build you up Or she just gon' destroy you My friends fell low When they were so high Got me running scared of myself

No lie, and I know I'm gon' die I try a cold turkey But when I'm feeling worthy Satan's sure I'm trying to murder me I'm doing myself dirty Flirting with what's perverted I should follow the word But I guess I'd rather be murdered Excuse me, I mean martyr Cause I'm killing myself My sin conceived a baby Your name or death Breath, take it She take my breath away Replaces it with poison And I'm so swept away I need some bread today Hope I wake up before they start my wake up Somebody make me break up I'm dating her Girl, you're just a reason You're not leaving how to live it You're not I'm only here for your benefit I'm here every place I'm on a land Killer Everything just as innocent Killer You're not leaving how to live it Killer Hold your eyes and ask your life tonight

Can't be a rest You're still in my life Killer How good are those words?

But you can see the feeling in those words Adultery It destroys relationships It destroys marriages It destroys churches It seems so obvious Don't do it Verse 9 to 14 It actually warns us of the consequences If you've got your Bible Have a look at verse 9 Lest you give your honour to others And your years to the merciless Lest strangers take their fill of your strength And your labours go to the house of a foreigner And at the end of your life You groan when your flesh and body are consumed And you say How I hated discipline And my heart despised reproof I did not listen to the voice of my teachers Or incline my ear to their understanding Sorry Ear to my instructors And then verse 14 is the verse I think that totally sums it up The consequences I am at the brink of utter ruin In the assembled congregation And you see that's the warning that we're given

[14 : 49] And we know that it's bad for us But it still happens doesn't it? You know it's not just enough to say Don't commit adultery Because if that was the case No Christian would ever have an affair Either men or women Obviously this isn't It often talks about Solomon's talking to a son But it can be men or women But if it was that simple No one would ever do it You see adultery Isn't about a lack of knowledge Folly is not about coming about Because of a lack of knowledge It's not like I was trying to think of some words That you know Could go in place of folly And I started thinking about Maybe like Dumb or idiot Or that type of thing But they all kind of imply that I'm somehow Logically deficient That I just don't know enough But you know if I ask my non-Christian friends They all know that adultery is bad You know it's a consensus that cheating is not a good thing You see folly is not about knowing what is the right thing

Or knowing what is the wrong thing Folly is about knowing the right thing But doing the wrong thing anyway You see adultery doesn't come because of being stupid It comes about because of a lack of discipline To act on what we know is right Verse 1 and 2 When Solomon is talking to his son He says this He says My son be attentive to my wisdom Incline your ear to my understanding That you may keep discretion And your lips may guard knowledge Verse 2 That you may keep discretion You know not that you'll get it And then once you've got it you'll have it forever You need to work to keep it That your lips may guard knowledge You know what does the word guard imply It implies that it can be lost It can be stolen It can be taken away Verse 7 Do not depart from the words of my mouth This is something that we can walk away from

We can walk away from wisdom And you know it's really ironic That the best example that we have Of someone who's done that Not just even in the Bible Probably out of everyone I can think of Is Solomon himself He had 700 wives and 300 concubines And it's kind of like you know How far could you possibly depart From what he wrote himself It's really ridiculous But it's not about staying out And not being able to resist the temptation When it's in front of you It's not about when you're in the dark room With that person Saying no to them then It's about putting in place the discipline So you never even get to that place The way to stay out of adultery Verse 8 If you have a look at verse 8 Keep your way far from her And do not go near the door of her house See this is saying Don't even get into the situation Put in safeguards Tell friends Get them to challenge you

If you know something could be an issue If you can see something coming If in your mind you know that you're starting to get it You know too close to someone Who is not your husband or wife If you're married Then stop then Now I had a bit of a talk to my wife about this Alyssa About you know what are some of the things that you can see as warning signs for women If women if you're starting to get emotionally invested In someone who is not your husband Then cut it off there and then If you find yourself dressing to get the attention of another man Maybe you're not doing it really actively and consciously But maybe subconsciously Then get help then Don't allow it to get to the point where you become so invested that it consumes your mind You know if you're instant messaging someone Facebook, Instagram, whatever it might be And you're starting to share some intimate personal things Then get help, be disciplined Remember the wisdom in these verses

His feet go down to death Don't let him consume you His heart is black but the exterior is beautiful Now married guys Unfortunately I know my own heart I didn't have to ask my wife for these ones But if you find yourself looking For the attention of a woman who is not your wife You know you're looking for ways to be around that person And your thoughts go back to her And you know you think about being around them If you try and be a little bit more funny than you normally would When you're around that person Then take action Don't let it get any further Tell someone that you trust Let them help you to be accountable Be disciplined She'll take your life away She'll strip away your joy She pretends that she's going to build you up But she's just going to destroy you Now for everyone And this isn't married specific or otherwise Don't be the one whose feet leads to death

[20 : 02] You know don't allow your relationships with married men or women To get out of hand Don't let them get to the point where they become an issue It won't quench your thirst And it has the potential to do great damage Not just to families But also to our wider church family And you know if you can see the warning signs that I've talked about Then get help Be disciplined Of course there's two sides to every story You know just because I guess they're not You know they're accountable for their own actions as well But don't be the person whose lips drip honey And whose speech is as smooth as oil tempting them to the grave Don't quench your thirst for intimate relationships Don't quench your thirst for intimate relationships With the silky smooth lure of adultery Proverbs says folly, folly, folly Now the second choice presented here to quench our thirst

Is the pure life giving water of finding pleasure in your spouse Wisdom says proverbs Now verse 15 Look at verse 15 Drink water from your own system 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 dear, a graceful doe Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight Being intoxicated always in her love See what a contrast this is to folly of adultery Now you might have noticed Jen pointed this out as well There's a lot of references to water in this passage Water from a cistern Water from a well, springs, streams, fountains They're all picture words for sex essentially But this is how we can properly quench our thirst

For our desire for intimate relationships It's life giving water It's the opposite of adultery It's remaining faithful This passage says Rejoice in your wife or husband Take delight in them Again, you know, again Solomon's talking to both men and women It's not gender specific But be intoxicated with their love Be filled with delight Rejoice in them Verse 20 Why should you be intoxicated my son with a forbidden woman And embrace the bosom of an adulteress You see Solomon here says Faithfulness is the real thirst quencher And just like avoiding adultery Remaining out of Remaining faithful requires discipline See just like folly is not about knowledge alone Wisdom is not just intelligence It's not just knowing the right thing Wisdom is knowing the right thing

And then acting on it You see marriages require work They require investment A strong marriage requires discipline Verse 16 Should your springs be scattered abroad Streams of water in the streets Let them be for yourself alone And not for strangers with you You see in our marriages We need to be working on actively finding delight in our relationships Because we can lose them That's what those verses are saying They can go to someone else You see, unlike adultery Where it requires our discipline to stay out of adultery Our marriages require us to have discipline to stay in them To keep them healthy You see, we should be focusing on what actually quenches our thirst for intimate relationships Married relationships And in fact, having a healthy married relationship is one of the best antidotes for adultery in the first place

So if you're married, don't accept a bad relationship, a bad marriage as the norm If you're unhappy and you feel distant in your marriage, then don't accept it as okay Make sure you get back to the delight that you once had rejoice in the spouse of your youth If you have a healthy married relationship, then take delight in your partner Be excited by them, rejoice in them Be intoxicated by them at every opportunity Proverbs says quench your thirst in your marriage Wisdom, wisdom, wisdom Now I want you to imagine for a second that I stopped the talk here If I said thanks for coming, that's the end You know, I've given you probably 10 minutes back So you might be happy about that But what would the takeaway be if I stopped the talk here?

[25 : 12] It would probably be something like this The moral of the story is adultery is bad and marriage is good You know, and I can guarantee that if we looked back on this talk Let's say we went away for a month and you look back on this talk You'd go, really?

Is that really it? You know, if I'm married Like I love my partner, but is that really the height of satisfaction? You know, I love them and I rejoice in them and I delight in them But they let me down all the time It's hard work Is that really going to forever quench my thirst?

And if you aren't married, remember I said at the start that this is a passage focused mainly for married people Then what have I told you so far?

Essentially that you need to get married Because otherwise you can't quench your thirst for feeling loved For being significant to someone else to feel known If you're not married, then you can't have that met You see, we cannot stop here Because the ultimate answer to quench my thirst for relationships Can't be found in earthly relationships Married or otherwise Our partners can't deliver eternal satisfaction You just have to ask my wife I know she loves me But you know, I struggle to love her properly for a few hours, let alone for eternity I'm never going to be able to fulfill her need for love and satisfaction You know, if Alyssa thought that that was going to be the case Then she would be bitterly, bitterly disappointed You see, eternal wisdom, eternal satisfaction comes from having our thirst For love and significance quenched by God through Jesus Christ

John chapter 4 I don't know if you remember this story But basically, Jesus is at a well And he meets a Samaritan woman And the background is Jews and Samaritans hate each other basically They don't like to talk They definitely don't eat together And Jesus asks this woman for a drink from the well And the woman basically says You hate us, why are you asking me this?

[27 : 28] Verse 10 In John chapter 4 Jesus answers her by saying this If you knew the gift of God And who it is that is saying to you Give me a drink You would have asked him and he would have given you living water The woman said to him Sir, you have nothing to draw water with And the well is deep Where do you get that living water?

Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself As did his sons and his livestock And in verse 13 Jesus said to her Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him Will never be thirsty again The water that I give him will become in him a spring of water Welling up to eternal life You see, only Jesus really eternally quenches our thirst He is the only one who can give us eternal significance You see, our marriages are great and they are good things But they can't eternally quench our thirst for really perfectly being known and loved You know, not that we don't try though, right?

Because we are very good at looking at everywhere except for God for that satisfaction If we had to find ourselves in this Proverbs Book, verse that we've just read, chapter 5 You know, we would be the adulterous woman We have a loving, caring, devoted partner in God Who time and time again shows faithfulness to us in every way He's patient, he's slow to anger, he's abounding in love But what do we do?

We constantly turn to other things to satisfy us Things that cannot possibly satisfy us But we try anyway On Friday, in youth group, I help run the youth group We watched The Prince of Egypt I don't know if you've seen it It's basically the Exodus story, it's a cartoon It's got some banger songs, if you like Hans Zimmer, check it out The soundtrack's very good But the thing that's really good about this Is that it really shows God's power You really get that sense of awe in this movie And his love for his people You know, they're suffering in Egypt And he does everything to save them He sends fire from heaven He sends all the plagues, he gets Moses to come along And basically, the last scene of this movie Is this shot here that Joel's got up And it's Moses coming down from the mountains So he saves them, they're out of Egypt They've gone across the lake And he's on Mount Sinai He's met with Jesus, sorry, God God's given him the Ten Commandments

Well, Jesus, God, same thing, I guess But he's given them the Ten Commandments And he's coming down the hill And he's got this big swelling Hans Zimmer music behind him And he gets to this point where he looks out over the valley At the Israelites And this is literally the last shot of the movie It stops there But it's a very convenient time to finish the movie, isn't it?

[30 : 41] Because if we played even one more scene on It would completely ruin the premise of what the whole movie is Is that the Israelites are victims And that they need saving And that they've been treated terribly Because what happens in Exodus 32 As Moses is coming down the mountain He sees that the Israelites have immediately committed adultery against God They've made two golden calves Idols To worship instead of God At the very first opportunity Whilst God is in the literal process Of making a covenant commitment To them They have turned their backs on him And gone after something else But that's not just them, is it?

We're exactly the same You see, we're happy to drink the honey and oil And taste the gall When we can even see that it's gall that we're drinking We keep drinking We continually in every aspect of our lives Chase after other things To quench our thirst Instead of God Now I'm not going to go into detail here About what those things are We don't know what they are in our lives But our great God With every right to leave us With probably you would argue Every cause to not want us back Chased after the people that he created Even though we constantly Over and over and over Every single time Turning our backs on him He chased after us Adultery at every turn from our angle And on his And on his he gave up everything To have us back To remove our unfaithfulness Our rebellion

Our adultery You see, he is faithful to us We find eternal satisfaction in him And God knows that that is the only way That we can find it, is through him We can't find it anywhere else God gave us Jesus To die To bring us back To bring us back from our Our rebellion and adultery And then to rise again To prove that the punishment Had been taken And as Jesus says in John 4 Whoever drinks the water I give them Will never thirst Indeed the water I give them Will become in them A spring of water Welling up to eternal life You see, that's the story here It's a faithful God Taking the punishment For an adulterous people Through no action of ours God eternally gives us the opportunity To have our thirst quenched With the relationship with him He has been faithful to us It's why Solomon says

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge The only way to have our thirst quenched Is a relationship with Jesus To trust in his death and resurrection To trust that his actions mean that we can have a relationship with our faithful God So where do we go to quench our thirst?

Ultimately, the only place Is in God through Jesus Christ Let's pray Dear God, thanks for the wisdom that we see in Proverbs chapter 5 Thank you so much Thank you so much that you have given us married men and women partners to share our lives with Thanks that you've warned us against adultery and the folly that can be found there But God, I guess I pray that ultimately you would help us to look for the only place we can really find satisfaction And that is in your son Jesus And that is in your son Jesus Thank you for his death and resurrection That even though we at every turn Don't look to you You chase after us Please pray that you would help us as we go on our lives to Remember the importance of this That Jesus is everything It's the only way we can have our thirst quenched Amen