

DON'T GIVE IN!

Wednesday, November 19

Reading: Proverbs 5:1-14

Proverbs 5:3 *For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; 4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.*

Proverbs has a lot to say about the lure of sexual temptation. The woman discussed in these verses appears to be a married woman who is looking for excitement and gratification outside of her marriage relationship. Those who hear are presented with a choice: to follow God's wisdom to "maintain direction and your lips may preserve knowledge" or to listen to "the lips of the adulterous woman." Solomon describes both the enticement and the outcome of giving in to adultery.

SHE IS A SWEET TALKER – Honey was often used to describe something sweet and enjoyable. "Delicious words full of delectable promise flow easily from her lips to titillate the taste buds and whet the appetite of her victim until he is completely entranced and captivated by her."¹ However the end of her words are as "bitter as gall." The word in Hebrew is 'wormwood.' This was a plant that was famous for being as bitter as honey is sweet. Her words may sound good, but they end in death.

SHE IS A SMOOTH TALKER – She knows what to say to entice the unsuspecting victim. "A little coaxing, a little flattery, a little deceit, above all the assurance that it is all completely harmless, and her prey is well and truly caught."¹ But her words are like "a double-edged sword."

Unlike the "straight path" of the righteous, her path is aimless and she does not think about where she is headed. She fails to acknowledge that she is on the path to Sheol – the place of the dead. And those who give in to her will suffer the same fate. Solomon mentions several results of an illicit affair.

(1) Loss of Honor (5:9, 14) – The good reputation that took years to build up is destroyed and you lose the respect of your family, friends, and community.

(2) Loss of Wealth (5:10) – "The price of infidelity may be high; for everything one works for – position, power, prosperity – could be lost either through the avaricious demands of the woman or the outcry for restitution by the community."²

(3) Loss of Health (5:11) – There can be physical consequences for illicit sexual activity. The body can be "consumed" by sexual disease or hard living that results from our sinful choices.

(4) Guilt and Regret (5:12-13) – Too late the person will realize the folly of ignoring the warnings he was given. They are racked with guilt and bemoan the fact that they did not heed wisdom's call to lead a disciplined life.

Wisdom's warning is to stay far away from sexual sin. We must make the decision to stay pure long before the temptation comes. It is easier to resist temptation when the decision has already been made rather than in the heat of the moment. What we look at, what we read, and the places we go all have an impact on our lives. We must weigh out the temporary pleasure of sin against the inevitable consequences and ask: "Is it worth it?"

¹ Kenneth T. Aitken. Proverbs (The Daily Study Bible series), p 62.

² Allen P Ross. Proverbs (Expositor's Bible Commentary volume 5), p. 928