

The Truth about Temptation

Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly (Proverbs 9:1-6, 13-18)

- Both call out from the heights overlooking the city.
- Both offer a place to dwell.
- Wisdom invites to a feast, Folly invites to a funeral.

Where does the voice of “Folly” come from?

- There is a real enemy that hates God and us, and wants our destruction.
- This enemy is the voice of the temptations of the “immoral woman”/“Lady Folly” of Proverbs.
- This enemy is seen in the Bible as the serpent in the Garden, a prowling lion in 1 Peter, an angel of light in 2 Corinthians, and a great dragon in Revelation.
- The enemy goes by other names, like “Satan” or accuser/adversary, the “Devil” meaning slanderer.
- Lies are the enemy’s language (John 8:44), with an essential message that is the opposite of wisdom.
- The enemy loves to take a “good” thing and make it a “god” thing in our eyes.
- The enemy has been studying humanity since the beginning, knows our weaknesses and common patterns.
- The enemy uses world systems to pull us down paths of destruction, exploiting our desires and corrupting them.

Before we go any further...

- To be tempted is not sin. Jesus was tempted and yet He was able to live a sinless, perfect life.
- But we know that temptation often leads us to sin. Sin is choosing to do differently than what God says is right and true.
- Sin comes from the choices *within* us, has corrupted much of the world *around* us, and is an offense done *to* us.
- The enemy wants to highlight your sin, or the impacts of the sin around you, to bring you shame, defeat, and isolation.
- God wants to highlight your sin, or the impacts of the sin around you, to bring you to repentance, forgiveness, freedom, healing, and restored relationship with Him.

Today, we will look at the following three key temptations:

Money

The Truth:

- God is the creator and owner of everything. (Gen. 1:1, Psalm 50:1)
- All of our “treasures” are tools meant to be used for loving God and other people. (1 Peter 4:10)
- He calls those who follow Him to be wise stewards of the amounts they are given. (Matthew 25:14-30)

The Temptation:

- To use money to make life seem easier.
- To use money to acquire status, respect of others.
- To use money to buy what makes others seem happy.

Proverbs’ Warnings and Wisdom:

- Remember the temporary nature of riches. (11:4)
- Your relationships with others will be impacted by your stewardship decisions. (11:26)
- There are temptations awaiting those with riches and those in poverty. (30:7-9)

Consider... What influences have impacted the way you think about your money, and your other “treasures”? Do you see it as a good thing or a “god” thing? What would a healthy relationship with money look like for you in this season?

Sex

The Truth:

- God created sex to be a beautiful gift for a man and a woman united in marriage. (Genesis 1:18-25)
- Sex is intended to strengthen, unify, protect, and encourage the love of husband and wife. (Song of Songs)
- Sex can also bring forth children, ideally into a home built on love and commitment to God and family. (Genesis 1:28)

The Temptation:

- To see other people only as bodies, instead of as beloved image-bearers of God.
- To pursue “no-strings attached” pleasure without relational commitment.
- To choose fantasy to escape reality.

Proverbs’ Warnings and Wisdom:

- Husbands and wives should celebrate the exclusive bond that they share. (5:15-17)
- Sexual sin seems harmless at first, but leads to entrapment, pain, and brokenness. (7:21-23)

Consider... What influences have impacted the way you think about sex? Has shame kept you from speaking about it? What would a wise, healthy relationship with sex look like for you in this season of your life?

Power

The Truth:

- God is all-powerful, all-loving, and has created us to live in relationship with Him. (Genesis 1:27)
- Through the finished work of Jesus, we are given freedom from the bondage of sin and death. (Romans 6:5-11)
- Through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can live each day filled with mission, meaning and purpose, participating in building God’s eternal Kingdom. (Acts 1:8)

The Temptation:

- We want to achieve our own immortality.
- We want to individually establish “my truth.”
- We want to build our own kingdom.

Proverb’s Warnings and Wisdom:

- God desires to bless others through the raising up of wise rulers. (29:2)
- Physical death is an inevitability, even for those who are confident, healthy, successful. (16:25)
- Wait with patience on any promotions God may have for you to receive. (25:6-7)

Consider... What influences have impacted the way you think about power, authority, control? How much time and effort do you spend pursuing more power/popularity/influence, and what would be your reasons? How wise are you in the areas that you already have some amount of power?

How do we defeat our “Silver Chair”?

- Confess your need; ask for help. (Proverbs 2:3-5, 1 John 1:9)
- Speak the truth; destroy the lies. (Proverbs 14:25, Ephesians 6:10-17)
- Walk in freedom; stay on mission. (Proverbs 4:25-27, Ephesians 5:6-9)
- Always remember that Jesus is the One who rescues us, understands us, and advocates for us. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Further Study:

- Take time this week to look over the “Consider” questions. Ask them to yourself in the Lord’s presence and answer them truthfully. Then, perhaps sharing your answers with a friend can help you to apply any wisdom you are chasing.
- Follow along with our Proverbs 31-Day Challenge and invite others to join! You can use the paper guide to help you, and you also can feel free to use the “YouVersion” app for a reading plan if you would like, which is linked below:
- For the link to the clip from the documentary, “The Social Dilemma,” shown today, follow the QR code below:

