

Dangerous Affairs

The Quest for Hidden Treasure – Part X

Proverbs 5-7

Introduction

A little over a year ago, three young men were driving home after spending an evening at a bowling alley just outside Tampa, Florida. Kevin was driving his white Camaro; his friend Brian was riding in the front passenger seat, and Randall was sitting in the back seat.

Even though it was dark, they knew they had the right of way as they drove through an intersection on Keyesville Road – or they assumed they had the right of way since there was no stop sign visible at the intersection. The trouble was that the stop sign had been stolen earlier as a prank to cause traffic congestion and confusion.

Only this time, the driver of a two-ton Mack Truck approaching the intersection thought he had the right of way as well because his stop sign had also been stolen at that particular intersection.

The collision in that intersection could be heard blocks away and all three young men in that Camaro were instantly killed.

An investigation followed and some young men were caught, who admitted to stealing dozens of street signs and dumping them in the river outside of town.¹

Evidently, stealing road signs is a popular prank these days. In fact, I read this past week that in the state of Texas alone, 50,000 road signs are vandalized every year – costing the state more than two million dollars annually. I also learned that all around our country, the favorite sign to steal or remove is the stop sign.

Just outside Tampa, Florida, it cost much more than dollars and cents; it was more than an innocent prank – it cost the lives of three young men.

I happen to believe that in our world there is another road sign being removed from the landscape – another kind of “stop sign”. And they are being removed with alarming speed and with equally alarming results – the casualties are everywhere.

Frankly put, our culture has removed the stop signs whenever and wherever sexual issues are encountered. Even worse, the stop signs have been replaced with “Speed Up” signs, or even, “Congratulations for Not Stopping” signs.

Our culture has now labeled sexual behavior outside of marriage as “alternative lifestyles” or “legal acts between consenting adults” or “rites of passage,” or says words like, “You know people,” or “Boys will be boys.”

Our generation has even come up with the word, “safe,” and attributed it to sex outside of marriage.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no such thing as safe sex outside of marriage. This is like:

- going to an area of the ocean where sharks have been sighted and rip tides observed and hammering up a sign that says, “Safe Swimming”;
- going to the edge of the fast lane beside Interstate 440 and posting a sign that says, “Safe Crossing”;
- going to the edge of a drainage ditch next to an industrial plant and posting a sign that says, “Safe Drinking Water”.

There is no such thing as safe sin.

I have been challenged by the writing of one author who gave some powerful warnings about promiscuity and infidelity that came from his own past home life. He had seen what it had done to his own dad when his dad had failed and had an affair.

This author's dad, in fact, had gotten involved with the wife of one of his employees. He had sort of pushed his weight around – you know, he was the boss – but she willingly went along thinking this just might boost her own career. When she became pregnant, he was furious. His dad did not want anyone to find out – it could ruin him at the office and in the business world. So, he swore her to secrecy and then, without her knowing about it, he had one of his security detail make sure her husband did not make it home from work alive. His dad later married this woman and this author happened to be their second child.

His name, by the way, was Solomon.

He had seen the devastation first hand. He had learned of his father's cover-up. In fact, Solomon would follow the same path to utter ruin. But while he was still pursuing purity and integrity, his collection of Proverbs spells out warning after warning after warning regarding sexual immorality to his own son and, by virtue of God's inspiring decree, to every one of us as well.

Solomon was troubled by stolen stop signs as well. With his words, he is effectively running around putting up signs all over the place. If Solomon's words were converted to road signs they would read:

- Danger Ahead!
- Dead end!
- No trespassing!
- Make a U-Turn!
- Stop!

It occurred to me that this is the only subject that Solomon devotes two entire chapters to as well as portions of other chapters.

In broad terms, it is the word "fornication". The Greek word is "porneia," from which we ironically get our English word "porn". It is illicit sexual activity, often translated "immorality, adultery, fornication". And throughout the scriptures, the believer is consistently warned.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

. . . The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. (I Corinthians 6:13b)

He writes later, in I Corinthians 6:18-20,

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

for you were bought with a price [a dowry]. So glorify God in your body.

In this audience, I am convinced that I am speaking to someone who is either involved in immorality with another that is not their wife or husband, or is on the verge of involvement, or is just beginning to recognize that with a few more conversations the dye will be cast and the door will be opened.

You are about to drink from polluted water; you are about to try to swim against the rip tide. Things might be wonderful and you might be giddy inside all over again, but my friend, you are "dancing on the deck of the Titanic". Mark my words, there is a shipwreck in your future.ⁱⁱ

Solomon will show us what this shipwreck looks like. He will take us to the scene of the collision and illustrate his warning as graphically as he can in Proverbs chapters 5 and 7, and in part of chapter 6.

Dangerous Affairs

1. It starts with delight (Proverbs 5:1-3; 7:1-18).

Notice Proverbs 5:1-3a.

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 . . .

The word for "forbidden" might be translated in your version as "strange" or "foreign". Solomon is simply using a word that refers to a woman "not related to" – in other words, she is not this man's wife.

By the way, she will appear again and again throughout Proverbs – in chapters 6, 7, 20, 22, 23, and 27.

... her speech is smoother than oil,

Solomon writes in Proverbs 5:3b.

Turn to Proverbs chapter 7 and listen in as Solomon watches a man race toward an intersection, ignoring God's warning signs to "Stop!"

Notice Proverbs 7:6-15.

For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice,

and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense,

passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house

in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness.

And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.

She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home;

now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait.

She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him,

"I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows;

"so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you."

The truth is that this woman really does not care who he is – he will only be used for her own sensual cravings, and quite frankly, he will use her for the same – although the implication is she already knows him or knows about him.

She says further, in Proverbs 7:16-17,

I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen;

I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

When I read this, the first thing I think of is hay fever.

Why are these details of linen and spices included? The Egyptian linen actually refers to linens of red color – a luxury exported by ancient Egypt. Color was a sign of status, so she specifically mentions colored linens in verse 16. Furthermore, these perfumes had to be purchased from merchants

who traveled great distances and because of it, perfumes like these were prized and even displayed as part of a king's treasury.ⁱⁱⁱ

This woman is portraying herself to this man as if she were a queen. In other words, she is not some low-life; she is not from the wrong side of the tracks – she is wealthy, connected, sensitive, industrious, sophisticated, and even religiously minded. Did you notice Proverbs 7:14? She says, "I'm all caught up with my sacrifices and religious vows."

She is not there for just anybody – she has waited for this guy. And she has not waited for just any guy – she flatters away in Proverbs 7:15, "I have been looking all over for just you! *You* are the one worthy of my love!"

People involved in adultery have convinced themselves and each other that they are worth more than their spouse can see and the person they are with is someone able to truly appreciate them. The problem is that the foundation for appreciation is integrity and trust and truth; which means, they have become involved in something that is destined for disappointment because it lacks integrity and trust and truth.

Listen to some statistics from a study of men who were involved in an adulterous relationship and who, because of it, left their spouse. These men were interviewed ten years after their affair and the breakup of their home.

- 33% were intensely angry with life;
- 50% ended up divorced again – most of them from the woman they had believed was the answer to all their problems;
- 80% experienced the same or lower quality of life financially;
- 50% under the age of fifty were unhappily remarried;
- 66% over the age of fifty were unhappily remarried;
- 80% [note this percentage] would remarry their former wives and regain what they lost if given the chance.^{iv}

That which begins with honey and sweetness, eventually turns harmful and sour. It begins with delight, but the second stage is reached soon.

2. The delight turns to disgust (Proverbs 5:4-6).

Look at Proverbs 5:3-4.

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.

In other words, the taste of honey is replaced with the taste of wormwood – a small, flowering bush in Palestine from which a bitter drink was made.

*Oh the sour taste of jealousy;
the loss of respect;
the inner sense of betrayal;
the intuitive knowledge of guilt;
it all started out with excitement
and it moved on to bitterness.*

Look where it is ending up!

Warren Wiersbe, commenting on this text, wrote, “Solomon is suggesting that a wise person checks out the destination before buying a ticket.”^v

Delight turns to disgust and then moves to the next stage.

3. The disgust digresses to dishonor (Proverbs 5:8-10; 6:27 & 33).

Notice Proverbs 5:8-10.

*Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house;
lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless,
lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner,*

What a perfect description of alimony. What a vivid description of the frustration brought about by sin. Perhaps it is not even your sin; perhaps for you, it is your spouse’s sin that now pulls your years and your labor and your money to someone else’s bank account. To you, I say, “Remember, one day God will finish the books and settle the score. You keep doing what’s right.”

However, to the one considering adultery, Solomon writes, in Proverbs 6:27,

Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?

He also writes in Proverbs 6:33,

Wounds and dishonor will he get, and his disgrace will not be wiped away.

In other words, though confession and forgiveness are always possible for the truly repentant, the consequences will be felt for a lifetime in the lives of the men and women and children and families who endure betrayal and sin.

Adam and Eve were forgiven, but do you think they ever forgot what life was like in the garden?

Solomon says to the man or woman driving toward an intersection, “Look at the street signs – they are marked, “Freedom”; “Excitement”; “Acceptance”; “Gratification”. Oh, don’t ignore the stop sign. You are playing with fire – and you will get burned.”

These are dangerous affairs.

Delight turns to disgust; disgust digresses to honor, and continues to the next stage.

4. The dishonor leads to disaster (Proverbs 5:11).

Look at Proverbs 5:11.

And at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed.

Solomon is implicating the presence of sexually transmitted diseases.

This is the part that is not going to make it into the movies. This is not in the tabloids. This is not in the movie trailer when the guy finally gets the woman. No, hear the music swell and the affections soar as they give way to their passions and fornicate.

However, Solomon is not writing a commercial. He is not after a box office hit. He is telling the truth.

Sexual sin brings a harvest of decay and loss. And Solomon highlights several losses.

• First, there is the loss of health.

The loss of health is mentioned in this verse.

. . . your flesh . . . is consumed.
(Proverbs 5:11b)

In our age of so-called safe sex, the media is virtually silent on the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, not to mention the physical and emotional effects of guilt and betrayal and despair.

Josh McDowell writes in his book, *Right From Wrong*, that every day, more than 4,000 teenagers contract a sexually transmitted disease. In fact, while the world pushes for different forms of protection, the Minnesota Institute of Public Health reported that there are now twenty-one sexually transmitted diseases which are not prevented by contraception.^{vi}

Now, more than 25 million Americans suffer from genital herpes – an incurable disease.

Three hundred thousand people contract Hepatitis B every year, causing permanent liver damage and resulting in the deaths of at least thirteen people in America every day.^{vii}

Bruce Waltke, an Old Testament scholar, added in his commentary on this text a statistic from the United States Public Health Service's Center for Disease Control – a statistic that no one will ever see on television or in print. I quote, "A new sexually transmitted infection is diagnosed every forty-five seconds and in its wake are pain, blindness, arthritis, infertility, brain damage, heart disease, and death. In spite of half a century of penicillin and wonder drugs, millions of people are contracting new generations of disease, including incurable strains of herpes which has been linked to cervical cancer, and can be passed on to newborn babies."^{viii}

Why do we not hear about this? Because we live in a culture that would rather remove the stop signs and enjoy sin for a season than subject itself to the moral law of God.

There is the potential loss of health.

- **Secondly, there is the loss of wealth.**

One study found that 73% of the women who left their spouses for another man, reported experiencing a lower standard of living.

We do not have time to delve into all of these losses, but read these chapters in Proverbs and discover a loss of:

- security;
- friendships;
- trust;
- reputation;
- peace with God;
- fellowship with God;
- and much more.

The most expensive, destructive, dangerous thing in the world is immorality in any and every form.

Delight turns to disgust; disgust digresses to dishonor, dishonor leads to disaster, and in this exposure of dangerous affairs, Solomon uncovers a fifth stage.

5. **The disaster leads to despair** **(Proverbs 5:12-14; 7:24-26).**

Listen to the despair coming from the lips of someone who now knows the tragic consequences of his dangerous affairs. Notice Proverbs 5:12-14.

. . . "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."

Did you catch this? This person is part of God's assembly – he is in the midst of God's people. He is a prodigal who is now wishing he had never left home.

"Oh how I hated discipline . . . and reproof. I hated the stop signs of God."

Solomon ends his illustration of dangerous affairs in Proverbs 7:24-26.

And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth.

Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths,

for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng.

I remember watching an interview on a major network, a couple of years ago, of a woman who kept her own adult internet site. She said with a great deal of pride that the men who visited her site were men who probably never went beyond their moral boundaries before the internet came along. She estimated that her site had, at that time, had 600,000 men pay a visit.

Warnings **about Dangerous Affairs!**

Let me clarify a few warnings for men and women before we close this truth-telling episode of dangerous affairs.

1. **Do not justify little compromises as innocent.**

Dangerous affairs do not begin in the bedroom – they begin in the boardroom; in the classroom; at the baseball field or the local YMCA. They begin in the mind and heart before they are ever consummated with the flesh.

2. Do not just plan to fight the battles when they become really dangerous.

Fight the skirmishes early in your mind – the best place to stop is early on. It is already dangerous if you are putting it off.

3. Do not assume you are above or beyond any temptation.

Do not allow yourself to say:

- “Nothing like that will happen to me.”
- “That’s not a problem for me.”
- “Something like that isn’t all that wrong.”
- “I can stop whenever I want.”

Do not fool yourself into believing something I have heard people say – “We’re not hurting anybody.”

Yes, you are. There is a financial cost, a physical cost, an emotional cost, a spiritual cost, a character cost, and a future cost to sin. Sin happens to cost more than we can imagine.

One author said, “Sin will cost you more than you wanted to pay; it will take away more than you ever planned to give and it will lead you further than you ever wanted to go.”

4. Stay away from anywhere you would not want to be caught and from anything you would not want to be seen doing.

Listen to that voice that whispers, “You don’t belong here; this party isn’t where you belong; this internet site or chat room isn’t where you should be. What if you’re seen?”

Consider this God’s warning signal to clear out!

5. Force yourself to be honest when temptation knocks – and ask Christ to answer the door.

The power of temptation is in the pleasure of what temptation offers. If “stolen water [were not] sweet” (Proverbs 9:17), no one would steal the water.^{ix}

The enemy of your soul knows that Jesus Christ now lives in the apartment of your heart, but he still sends people over to invite you out. They show up like a pizza delivery guy who comes to your house by accident at 8 o’clock at night when you are in the middle of that diet. That is the worst time of day.

In the world of real, spiritual temptation, send your Lord to answer the door – let Him respond to all calls of temptation, “Lord, You need to respond

because I can’t. Spirit of God, intervene here because I’m weak.”

Let me give one more warning.

6. Stay alert at all times.

Just stay alert at all times.

If I had a nickel for every time I told my kids when they were driving home at night to watch out for deer, I would be rich.

We have a section of road by our home – Ten-Ten; Penney Road; Blaney Frank road – where there can normally be seen deer lying on the roadside because they got hit the night before. So, when my kids called me and said, “We’re on our way home,” I would say, “Watch out for deer – it’s 11 o’clock at night.”

A couple of months ago, I had just dropped my daughter Charity off at school at 8 o’clock in the morning. I pulled onto Highway 401 South, got up to 45 miles an hour, and suddenly, before I could even respond, a deer crossing the highway ran right in front of me – and wham! That doe rolled over two or three times – instantly killed; the front of my pickup truck splintered and scattered everywhere.

My kids have never hit a deer. But I hit a deer – in broad daylight.

Deer are not supposed to be out in broad daylight – they are supposed to be in the woods taking care of Bambi or talking to Thumper, not out on a highway.

My problem was the fact that I had decided when deer would be a problem and that deer would not be a problem at 8:30 in the morning.

You would not believe how alert I am now at 8:30 in the morning.

- Do not justify little compromises as innocent.
- Do not just plan to fight the battles when they become dangerous.
- Do not assume you are above or beyond any temptation.
- Stay away from anywhere and anything where in your heart you know you would not want to be caught or seen.
- Force yourself to be honest when temptation knocks – and ask Christ to answer the door.
- Stay alert at all times.

While you are at it, do not take stop signs down where God has put them up! He has put them up for a reason – for your health and hope and joy and progress and safety. Leave them where they are.

And ask God to help you to pay attention every | time you see one along the roadway of your life.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 2/24/2008 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ <http://www.usroads.com/journals>.

ⁱⁱ Tim Stafford, quoted by Robert Jeffress, The Solomon Secrets (Waterbrook Press, 2002), p. 103.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bruce K. Waltke, Proverbs: Volume 1 (Eerdmans, 2004), p. 379.

^{iv} Jeffress, p. 119.

^v Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Skillful: Proverbs (Victor, 1995), p. 49.

^{vi} Josh McDowell, Right From Wrong (Word Publishing, 1994), p. 159.

^{vii} Jeffress, p. 118.

^{viii} Waltke, p. 129.

^{ix} Jeffress, p. 114.