



“Walking on Coals”

Prov. 6:27-35

27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?

28 Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared?

29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent.

30 People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving.

31 Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house.

32 Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.

33 Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away.

34 For jealousy is a husband's fury; Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

35 He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.

The bible speaks of the sin of Adultery as consisting of all sex outside of wedlock and we are warned away from all violations of the seventh commandment, but this section is particularly addressed to the dangers that come with committing adultery with the spouse of another person, in particular Solomon is warning his children about what happens when they are ensnared by these desires.

We need to be doing the same thing:

“We do ourselves, our churches, and our children a great disservice when we pretend that infidelity is not alluring. We must speak honestly of the sometimes strong attraction of illicit sexual intimacy. Certainly, as we see in Proverbs 5:3, above, Scripture affirms that sexual temptation can be powerful.” – Anthony Selvaggio

Now in Proverbs we see water used as a metaphor for holy sexual desire, a wife is compared to a cistern or a well and sexual intimacy with her is encouraged. This is good, it's refreshing, life-giving and lust quenching. On the other hand in in Proverbs fire is used as a metaphor for sinful sexual desire. It's destructive and even fatal.

27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?

28 Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared?

The questions asked in verses 27-28 presume that the answer is “NO” and we have to ask what fool would do either thing? Unfortunately the answer is, “most people living in a fallen world” – that’s why we have so many warnings against it.

You see, like fire, sexual temptation is hypnotic, fascinating, it grabs then holds our temptation. As Selvaggio points out, *“Mankind has always been fascinated with fire. In every generation, children must be told not to play with this warming, attractive, highly unusual phenomenon.... In their foolishness, children who are not taught about fire will quickly discover it has negative, painful attributes of a severity they had never imagined.”* – those of you who were pyromaniacs as children know what he is talking about.

Now generally speaking most of us wouldn’t be foolish enough to learn about the danger of playing with fire via trial and error. We don’t wait until our children have third degree burns, we warn them about it in advance. But far too often we assume we don’t need to warn them away from sexual temptation. And I have seen far too many Christian parents (and here I’m talking about strong REFORMED Christian parents) who suddenly find that their children have fallen prey to destructive sexual temptations.

Lust in our hearts – the desire for that which is sinful and thus forbidden by God is set on fire by sexual temptation – and the result is adultery. But its not just a this worldly danger – Henry - **“The fire of lust kindles the fire of hell.”**

And it’s a danger that continues Once lust is burning it becomes something ever present waiting for opportunities for sin. In Hosea God compares the heart of the adulterer to an oven made ready to bake the bread of sin.

Hosea 7:6 They prepare their heart like an oven, While they lie in wait; Their baker sleeps all night; In the morning it burns like a flaming fire.

7 They are all hot, like an oven, And have devoured their judges;

Lust as Matthew Henry points out is an inward fire, it keeps the heat within itself; so adulterers and fornicators secretly burn in lust, as the expression is, Rom. 1:27. Waiting, waiting, waiting, ***Job 24:15 The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, Saying, 'No eye will see me'; And he disguises his face.***

And that is another reason why we must warn, they always think they’ll get away with it. And far too many think they can play with adultery without getting burned, I won’t go too far, its just a little harmless flirtation, some texting, some talking, some meeting... But we might as well expect to walk on hot coals without getting our feet scorched or rake the coals into our laps as to play with adultery and not get burned.

The Bible gives us many warning tales about how the seductress or the adulterer thinks and works, but one of the most classic is found in Genesis 39 –

Genesis 39:6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.

9 "There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside,

12 that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

She first uses flattery (v. 7), then the drawn-out enticing (v. 10), and finally the ambush (v. 12).

And it speaks well of the holiness of Joseph and his love for God that he fled, we ought to as well, **2**

Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Solomon warns of the three things that will happen if we give in to temptation here and we do commit adultery with our neighbors wife.

First we should expect no one to sympathize. Men can sympathize with the thief who steals bread when he is starving, indeed Victor Hugo could write an entire book where we are EXPECTED to sympathize with Jean Valjean.

But not the Adulterer as Charles Bridges says, **“His plea is not a cry of hunger but of lust, not want but wantonness. He does not lack bread—he lacks judgment. He is willingly given over to his sin. In this way he destroys himself.”**

Second: We will be wounded by the experience – Some wounds are honored, we salute and honor the soldier wounded on the battlefield or wounds of the Christian Martyrs, (Nicea example) but not the self-inflicted wounds of the adulterer. And people don't forget this, even in the modern world, cheat and you have marked yourself with a scarlet “A” for life. In the Christian world, people have more sympathy for HERETICAL pastors, than ADULTEROUS ones.

As Thomas Watson warned – *“Wounds of reputation no physician can heal. When the adulterer dies, his shame lives. When his body rots underground, his name rots above ground. His base-born children are living monuments of his shame.”*

Third: The Jealousy that it kindles often leads to physical injury or death, to this day, spouses still frequently kill or try to kill those who sleep with their spouses, even here in Fayetteville.

Applications:

You can be super spiritual all you want and expect to avoid this sin. It won't work. Lust and Adultery, which is the result of the fire of lust being inflamed, is so commonplace that you will need to actually put into practice positive and negative practices in order to avoid it.

This sin has always been a problem amongst the members of Christ's church: Augustine wrote *"Oh, how great iniquity, is this adultery! How great a perverseness! The soul, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, is thus for the pleasures of an hour given to the devil, a thing much to be lamented and bewailed; when that which delighteth is soon gone, that which tormenteth remaineth without end."*

Therefore the first thing we must do is NEVER think we are above this sin and always be ready to flee from it like Joseph was -

As Paul writes in *1 Cor. 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

SECOND - Pray against this sin. Watson writes - *“Luther gave a lady this advice, that when any lust began to rise in her heart, she should go to prayer. Prayer is the best armor of proof; it quenches the wild fire of lust. If prayer will “cast out the devil,” why may it not cast out those lusts that come from the devil?”*

THIRD - Watch the way you speak - Look to your lips. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” 1 Cor. 15:33. Do you swear, do you tell dirty jokes, do you engage in dirty or edgy talk with members of the opposite sex? Remember, **“Impure discourse is the bellows to blow up the fire of lust. Much evil is conveyed to the heart by the tongue. “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.” Psalm 141:3.”** – Watson

FOURTH – Watch your company – You can't walk a straight course with crooked friends! Watson - *Sin is a very catching disease; one tempts another to sin, and hardens him in it. There are three cords that draw men to adultery: the inclination of the heart, the persuasion of evil company, and the embraces of*

the harlot; and this threefold cord is not easily broken. "A fire was kindled in their company." Psalm 106:18. The fire of lust is kindled in bad company.

FIFTH – WATCH THE GATES - WATSON – watch the internet use in particular – get filters and an accountability partner! *If we would be kept from actual sins, let us be careful to avoid all the inlets and occasions of sin. Run not into evil company. He that would not have the plague will not go into an infected house. Guard your senses, which may be the inlets to sin. Keep the two portals, the eye and the ear; especially look to your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye; the eye is often an inlet to sin; sin takes fire at the eye; the First sin in the world began at the eye. 'When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was pleasant to the eyes, she took of the fruit thereof.' Gen. 3:6. Looking beget lusting. Intemperance begins at the eye.*

SIXTH - Avoid drunkenness – the young and college bound are particularly prone to this, it removes inhibitions, inflames passions, and makes you prone to stupid decisions.

SEVENTH AVOID opportunities: SET UP HEDGES. Watch to avoid all occasions, and resist temptations to the sin of uncleanness. "Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house" (Prov. 5:8).

EIGHTH Avoid Idleness: 2. By diligence in our callings, when our bodies and minds are busily employed, both may be preserved from those unclean practices and desires which idle persons are more prone unto

NINTH POSITIVELY USE: God's Provision – *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*

1 Cor. 7:9 but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

What if we fall prey to this sin?:

TENTH WHEN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY FLEE TO CHRIST! -

John 8:3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst,

4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.

5 "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"

6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.

7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Jesus knows us and understands and freely offers forgiveness to the repentant believer!

Selvaggio encourages us – *“If you have been unfaithful in marriage, mentally or physically, see yourself as that adulterous woman. For when all her accusers had gone, something remarkable happened. Jesus turned to her, forgave her, and presented her with this command, “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). As you turn to him in repentance, Jesus will freely forgive you, too, and will give you the very same command. “Go now and leave your life of sin.””*