

Lesson 5: The Dangers of Adolescence

Two dangers mentioned in Proverbs 2:

- (1) “Evil man” (plural, same gender) – peer pressure (the bad crowd)
- (2) “Strange woman” (singular, opposite gender) – sexual temptation (the bad girlfriend)

Has anything changed?

Extreme form: sex and violence

Normal form: dangerous relationships

Critical Counsel from Proverbs

The bridge between childhood and adulthood makes new patterns in relationships so critical.

Unprecedented: search for identifying with a group and looking for a spouse

Long term consequences: emotional scars, loss of virginity, even loss of life

As ties loosen with parents and tighten with peers, conversation/counsel becomes critical at age 12 (cf. Lk. 2:41-51):

Peer Pressure

Proverbs 1:8ff – the Boomerang Effect: short-term “gain” (illegal, quick) takes away your life in the end.

Proverbs 4:10-19 – these “friends” do not like you; they *use* you because they like evil

Illus. Birthday “Party” – his own “friends” left him that evening!

Sexual Temptation:

Proverbs 5:1ff – the nature of temptation: “Eyelashes Are Dangerous” (cf. Proverbs 7 – tell your stories)

Key: “Do not go near the door of her house” (v. 8)

Learn: Fight vs. Flee (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22)

Learn: Different Temptations – Emotional vs. Physical Intimacy (e.g. *I Don’t Get You*).

Aim for your adolescent’s heart: “Give me your heart, my son,…” (Proverbs 23:26-28).

Difficulties of Modern Culture

The Idea of Adolescence

The Bible and past cultures knew of childhood and young adulthood, not adolescence!

Definition: Adolescence is the gap between adult body and adult mind.

Problem: Maturity (“adulthood”) is delayed too long, even physiologically

Young men with toys and idle time (opp. 1 Corinthians 13:11 – John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life*)

Contributing factors

- (1) High School vs. college or work used to begin at age fourteen (after 8th grade)
The “tin can” syndrome: all day isolated with fools one’s own age (Proverbs 13:20).
- (2) Media and the “cult” of youth (the “glory days”)
Illus. Hair coloring vs. the “big wigs”
- (3) Sports keep youth away from work (life pursuit) and into play.

The Custom of Dating

Recreational dating and teenage pairing: Temptation, emotional hurt, practice for divorce (no commitment)
Not traditional “courting” (often too serious, too quick), but group settings and learning about friendship.

Note: Beware of placing one’s hope in a *method* rather than in *God* who changes the heart.

Dating begins when both maturity and the possibility of marriage are in place (cf. Proverbs 24:27).

Counsel: Pray for your future spouse and prepare by becoming a marriageable person.

Present Phenomenon: Too timid, scared of the opposite sex, the “safe” culture (especially relationally)

The Culture of the Smartphone

Research: Sharp change around 2011 – when smartphones became the norm (cf. Jean M. Twenge, *iGen*)

Dangers:

Laziness – “google” it or ask your phone, text vs. talk, less social development (e.g. Japanese shut-ins)

Anonymity – Facebook “friend” from India, chatrooms, arrested impersonator in Virginia

Addictions – the lust for acceptance (“likes”), pornography and “nudes”

What would you do if your son or daughter had access to drugs (cf. Hosea 4:11)?

Illus. Cassie Burnall in the Columbine shooting (1999) – cf. Song of Songs 8:8-9

The easy access of the smartphone makes an isolated teen a potential “friend” to anyone in the world.

Sum: *This is where we began—the need to monitor relationships and encourage healthy development in Christ!*