

## *Craving What is Forbidden*

(Examining the Heart of Adultery)

#2 in Series – *Proverbs: Wisdom for the Ages and Now*

### Proverbs 5:3-6

Being a book of wisdom – Proverbs offers us a myriad of examples where God’s wisdom is needed in our lives... Throughout this series, we will be considering subjects ranging from friends to family, and from stewardship to sex... Some subjects you may find to be very encouraging and others you may find to be difficult to consider.

For many – today’s subject is difficult to consider... We are going to look at what God says about adultery.

As we approach what the book of Proverbs has to say about this issue – we will begin with an explanation of the term and the nature of this topic. Then we will consider a simple exposition of Proverbs 5:3-6 and conclude with all of us examining ourselves, in light of this issue.

### **1. An Explanation of the Term**

Adultery occurs when a married person engages in a sexual relationship with someone other than the person to whom they are married... To be more specific – **John MacArthur** says – “In its most technical sense, committing adultery refers to sexual intercourse between a man and woman when one or both of them is married (to someone else).”

The term adultery, adulterer, or adulteress – appears 58 times in the Bible... It is a term that our current culture hardly recognizes... It is fastly becoming an antiquated term – like its cousin term – fornication – which speaks to the same sin, only among those who are unmarried...

The Bible is clear in its condemnation of this act:

Exodus 20:14 (NASB) “You shall not commit adultery.”

Adultery violates the commitment made in marriage to be faithful to one’s spouse.

Heb. 13:4 (NASB) “*Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*”

It is written of God that –

Eccl. 3:11a (NKJV) “*He has made everything beautiful in its time...*”

– and the time that God has established for sexual intimacy is within the marriage relationship of a man and a woman... To have this relationship before marriage (fornication) or with another partner after marriage (adultery) is in direct violation to the will of God.

God commands us to –

1 Cor. 6:18 (NASB) “*Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.*”

Adultery is a word that provokes deep emotions in many of us... For many who have experienced the infidelity of their spouse – they are left to contend with anger, distrust, guilt, deceit, and the deep sense of betrayal...

Such an experience often brings thoughts of brokenness, pain, isolation, and fear... And because of all these negative consequences – and so much more – one is forced to deal with the issue – one way or another...

Because of this, it makes sense that the concept of adultery would saturate the text of the book of Proverbs...

When we think about the brokenness of our world – among the many consequences of the fall – is our common experience of brokenness that this particular sin brings upon everyone remotely affected by it... That is not only goes for those who are directly involved in adultery or fornication – but it also gravely affects family members and friendships... All sin affects not only our selves – but all of those around us as well...

That is a simple explanation of the term and why it is so devastating to all who are affected by it...

## 2. An Exposition of the Text

Proverbs 5:3-6 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> For the lips of an adulteress drip honey  
And smoother than oil is her speech;  
<sup>4</sup> But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,  
Sharp as a two-edged sword.  
<sup>5</sup> Her feet go down to death,  
Her steps take hold of Sheol.  
<sup>6</sup> She does not ponder the path of life;  
Her ways are unstable, she does not know *it*.

### ➤ The Appeal that Deceives

<sup>3</sup> For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech;

Wisdom is being aware and avoiding the enticement of being drawn to another person's spouse... There is deception in that attraction!

### ➤ The Consequence of that Deception

<sup>4</sup> But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

Here is advanced warning! The end result of being drawn away into an adulterous relationship is bitterness and injury!

Pro. 6:32 (NASB)

<sup>32</sup> The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense;  
He who would destroy himself does it.

### ➤ The Path to Destruction

- **Destructive Lifestyle**

<sup>5</sup> Her feet go down to death,  
Her steps take hold of Sheol.

Notice the imagery of a slow progression... “feet” make “steps” and head down a road toward destruction... It pictures a slow descension – and a necessary quick decline...

This passage calls Ps. 1:1 to mind:

Psalms 1:1 (NASB) “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked”

When you see someone “fall” into sin – the reality is – you didn’t see him “fall” ... you saw him “hit” ... He’s been “falling for a long time”... He’s most likely been “walking down that road” for a while, before he fell off into the ditch...

- **Faulty Thinking**

<sup>6</sup> She does not ponder the path of life;  
Her ways are unstable, she does not know it.

The path to destruction not only involves action (steps) – but it actually begins with a lot of thinking!... “She does not ponder the path of life”

Going down the destructive road of adultery begins with the simple step of “stinking thinking”... when one fails to focus their thinking on the road they should be on – the “path of life”...

*This verse is simply saying; Adultery is on a path leading to death, and she will lead you straight to the grave. Don’t follow her. She has lost her way and does not even know it. Be careful. Stay on the road that leads to life.*

### 3. An Examination of Ourselves

**Ross Rhoads** is a contributor to *Decision Magazine*, which is the publication of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association... In May, 2006 he wrote an article entitled *Adultery – A Heartbreaking Sin*. In it – Mr. Rhoads provides some very helpful points on **Avoiding Adultery**:

How does adultery happen and how can we avoid it? Ask yourself the following questions to keep yourself accountable.

- **Discretion:** Am I allowing a relationship in my personal life to weaken or damage my marriage? James 4 warns us to keep our bodies in check. If you obey the First Commandment to love God, the Seventh Commandment will never be an issue. “This is the will of God—your sanctification; that you should abstain from sexual immorality” (1 Thessalonians 4:3, NKJV).
- **Discipline:** What am I reading, viewing and listening to? Sexual temptation is mind-centered, but it enters the mind through the senses. “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young

woman?” (Job 31:1, NKJV). The media’s sexual bombardment is incessant, and failing to discipline yourself is failing to be a disciple.

- **Devotion:** Since we are to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18, NKJV), are you stronger today as Christ’s follower than you were a year ago? Can others see any change? “... Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV). Have they?
- **Desire:** What do you really want in life? Sexual temptation is when a person “... is drawn away by his own desires and enticed” (James 1:14, NKJV). Jesus said, “He that keeps my commandments loves me” (Cf. John 14:21). What is keeping you from being fully committed to doing what pleases God?
- **Diligence:** Are you intentionally and consistently making every effort to study the Bible and to seek God’s perfect purposes in your life? Sin keeps you from the Bible, but the Bible will keep you from sin (Psalm 119: 9-11). What would be worth missing His ultimate blessing?

If you say – “Well, this message doesn’t apply to me – because I’m not married” – or – “I am single and have never committed fornication or adultery” ... let me encourage you to not check out and leave this subject unexamined in your heart...

Most of the time when we think about the concept of adultery – we think only in terms of marital betrayal and infidelity – that the Bible does say a lot about...

But we also need to realize that the Bible speaks of adultery in a spiritual sense – not just a physical sense...

The Bible will reference our idolatrous unfaithfulness to God – as adultery on our part. God made us for His purposes and glory, and when we turn to anyone, or anything, for which we should turn to God for – we are guilty of committing a kind of “spiritual adultery”... What lies at the heart of the

adulterer is the heart of an idolater – it is a heart *craving that which is forbidden*.

We all desire things we shouldn't... We all desire for things – that if we looked beyond the immediate appeal – we would see them for what they are – things that would eventually destroy us...

But why?... What is it that lies within us that would cause us to want that which will destroy?...

The answer is – deep down at the core of being – we do not find our joy, our contentment, or our satisfaction in God Himself! We are seeking satisfaction in things that can never satisfy! We are chasing things that will only end up leaving us empty...

God, through Jeremiah tells us that we “**have forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters**” and instead we have sought our fulfillment in “**hewed out cisterns... broken cisterns that can hold no water**”.

Jer. 2:13 (NASB) “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters – to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”

There are those among us who have experienced the pain and betrayal of adultery... You, were either the victim or the perpetrator... But, we must all deal with the truth – that inside of all of us is the seed for adultery...

This is why the book of Proverbs warn us so strongly. This is also why the entire Biblical record calls us to come to, and trust Jesus... He is the only One who can satisfy the deepest longings of our hearts. He is the only One Who can forgive and cleanse you of this – or any sin... He is the only One Who can give you the grace to forgive another who may have sinned against you...

Come to Jesus!

## Questions to consider in Community Group:

- How does our culture view adultery? What are some of the societal consequences that come for holding these views?
- Why do you suppose, would be the reason God's Word has so much to say about adultery and fornication? Why are those terms so disappearing from our vernacular?
- Something to quietly contemplate: We all have cravings and desires for things other than Jesus, to find our fulfillment. The weight of this sin is crushing for those in whom the Spirit of the Lord is alive and working. Knowing that Jesus is not wanting to condemn you, but waiting to free you, what "adulterous" sin against Him do you need to confess and find forgiveness for today?
- Which of **Ross Rhoads'** points resonated most in you? Which point do you struggle with the most?
- Please spend some time praying for the marriages in Norwood, for the purity of singles and for Jesus to bring His healing to hurting hearts. Pray for God's correction of our culture in this area.