

Proverbs 5,6,7

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Preacher: Paul Levy

[0 : 00] There are only two ways to live and so there are only two ways to have sex. There are only! two paths through life and there is the wise life and there is foolish life and there are only two! paths to the bedroom. There is wise sex and there is foolish sex. And what we have here in Proverbs 5-7 is we have father to son advice. Can you see that? 5 verse 1. My son, 6 20. My son, 7-1. And it's a father to son chat. It's man to man advice about how to have truly satisfying sex. And I hope that by this time in Proverbs you're not surprised that sex should feature so prominently in a father's lecture to his life about how to navigate life well. Sex is very prominent in Proverbs.

living wisely in God's world by fearing him and honouring him and loving him and treasuring his words so that we are truly spiritual people. What does that mean? To be truly spiritual people takes very seriously that we are sexual people and our sexuality.

and what we do with it goes to the heart of our identity. And this dad has got a very simple message for his adolescent son. Sexual foolishness devastates. Sexual foolishness foolishness destroys. But sexual wisdom satisfies. And it causes flourishing. To be foolish sexually is like bitter honey. Did you notice that arresting image in chapter 5 verses 3 and 4? Honey that becomes bitter gall.

It's the exact opposite, isn't it? It's the exact opposite, isn't it? Of what honey is meant to be like. And sexual wisdom is like sweet water. Those beautifully sensual images in verses 15 and 16.

So this sermon is a father's urgent protection for his son. And I want you to notice his strategy for protection. The father's strategy for protection is he paints a powerful picture of sex and desire.

[2 : 24] And he paints it so powerfully for a very strategic reason. Look at the power of the picture. This is not a father saying, son, there are wild women out there. Stay away from them. Instead, find yourself a nice quiet Jewish girl, get married and live happily ever after. Oh, and yes, well, maybe kids might come along, but your mother will talk to you about that. Now the next thing, the really important thing is vital study and prayer. No, look what he does.

He paints a lot.

Stunningly beautiful. She's got captivating eyes. She's dressed to kill, literally, to show you that she's got only one thing on her mind. And she makes the first move.

And in chapter 7, he gives you a description of her beds. Do you notice what that's like? He says, verse 16, the bed's got Egyptian linen on it and arousing rovers. Only the fabulously wealthy could afford boon bars like this.

So it's not just sex. So it's not just sex that's on offer. It's the kind of sex with the kind of woman in the kind of environment to make a man think you've hit the jackpot.

[4 : 00] This is part of the Bible's erotic literature. The depictions of sex and desire here, they are explicit. And they leave very little to the imagination. So when was the last time you heard a father have a talk with his son about the birds and the bees like this?

But of course that raises a massive question, doesn't it? Because I've studied this. A question that's gone in my mind. How will you warn his son of something by giving such a graphic depiction of it?

It's so graphic. It's precisely the kind of depiction that piques his interest. Well, here's the answer to that. The father knows that sex and lust and temptation, they are never, ever problems out there.

But always in here. And what the writer of the Proverbs does in a masterful way is he goes after his son's heart. And here's how he's doing it.

What the father wants the son to feel in Proverbs 5 to 7 is he wants you and I to feel the seductive power of this woman. So that she becomes utterly repulsive to him.

[5 : 17] And the point of the power, the point of it is to show his son that foolish sex will scold you, it will burn you. And it will harm you, more than words can.

And wise sex will satisfy you and please you, more than words can say. And it's only if the son sees the power of sex will he be able to grasp its terrible capacity for both pain and pleasure.

Reaching the heart is everything. How we deal with our hearts is how we deal with wanting sex too much, too often. Not wanting it enough, not wanting it at all.

It's in our hearts. The source of all our sexual problems is in our hearts. Because our hearts are the root of our desires and our drives, including our sex life.

Our guilt, our self-esteem, our self-worth. Our view of our bodies and our marriages, our parts of them. And this father knows that reaching the heart has everything to do with how we deal with sexual temptation.

[6 : 29] So some men use pornography and they defend their use of it. Some men oppose porn, but they use it anyway. Kicking themselves every time afterwards.

Others oppose it, don't use it, but really wish they could. And what looks like virtue is actually just cowardice more than anything else. They think, what if someone else found it? And when it comes to sex and desire, the father knows that one thing in particular will change the heart.

And it's this. It is painting the power of sex and desire in such a way that the drop of honey quickly becomes bitter gall. So you don't drink any more of it.

That is the point. That is when he paints this woman so palatantly. The father is squeezing a drop of bitterness onto his son's tongue and saying, now close your eyes and taste that scent.

And remember what that tastes like. And remember what that feels like. For it is just a tiny sample, only a taste, of what would be left in your mouth if you go off for this woman.

[7 : 34] And so it's a profound truth, isn't it, that sometimes we need to chase the bitterness of the ugly to feel in our hearts the power and the attraction of good.

We need what we think is beautiful to be made exceedingly ugly to us if we're ever going to think differently about it. The best book that I've read on this, and I've been kind of in preparation for this, is a book called *The Dirty Little Secret*, uncovering the truth behind porn.

It is not a pleasant read at all, but it is a remarkable book. Craig Gross and Carter Krummich. And I'm going to read you a comic graphic section. In one chapter, they describe a male journalist being invited to the set of a pornographic film to see behind the scenes.

And the journalist describes how he imagines this is every man's dream, a day of free porn. Yet as the day goes on, he describes his descent into shock and horror and anger and despair.

As he watches the star, Ariana, begin the day bright and pleasant like any other 21-year-old, and end the day curled up in the fetal position, cradled up like a ball, sucking her thumb.

[8 : 49] And needing to be comforted by another woman on the set before being prepared again for the final scenes. Uncurled out of her fetal position, and led by the hands of the male actor to perform again.

The journalist describes, I could take it no longer. My legs were shaking. I felt suffocated. I had to leave. I ran to my car, and on the way home the tears came. That ride home was the saddest I'd ever been.

The major part of my tears for what I'd lost that day. But I also cried for Ariana. She was so young, and my heart went out to her. All my numbness just unraveled into a depression.

You see, seeing the truth behind what is being offered is the only way either to decrease the desire if what is being offered is wrong, or increase the desire if what is being offered is right.

Seeing the truth behind it will either lead to foolish, destructive sex, or wise and healthy sex. So two points. The design of unmarried sex, and the design of married sex, will be in this notice each.

[9 : 57] First of all, the design of unmarried sex, and I'm playing with the word design, there's a double name there. For the unmarried sex in this passage is designed.

This is a woman with designs on a young man. And all illicit sex is like that. It is designed sex. Packaged sex.

Dress up sex. Held out as something which it is not. It is designed to seduce and to addict and to achieve its own gratification, not that of someone else.

And yet, of course, how God himself has in a certain way designed sex to function in a certain way. When it happens in marriage, then God has designed sex to do one thing.

But when sex happens outside of marriage, he's designed it to do another thing. Do you get that? Do you see that? So sex within marriage has a purpose that God has put into it.

[11:00] But sex outside of marriage, God has put a purpose into it as well. Let's see. Let's look how it works. Unmarried sex, first of all, is designed to be deceitful. Unmarried sex is designed to be deceitful.

The whole point of what the father is saying to his son is that with a woman like this, what you see is not all you get. It is never, ever all you get.

And there's much more to her and much more to her than what she gives, than what meets your lips. Feel the power of this picture before we learn the lesson.

She deceives with her body, doesn't she, hungered lips which leave the taste of poison. She deceives with her words. Smooth speech becomes a slicing sword.

Sex now but a payday in the future which is never mentioned as being part of the deal. And her words are crucial. Look at chapter 7 verse 10. She's not a prostitute but she's acting like one.

[12:08] And she's full of crafty intent. Look what she says in verses 14 and 15. She says, I had to offer sacrifices and today I paid my vows so now I've come out to meet you, to seek you early, eagerly, and I've found you.

She says to me, listen, I know you're a bit religious. I know you go to church and look, I've done all that for that today but now look, you are the one that I've been looking for. And what she's saying is that your special features have singled you out.

You must be the man I need. Be my special guest for the special occasion. But in fact, of course, this young man, he is the right man, not because he's special but because he's an idiot.

He's brainless. He's a dimwit. Look at verses 6 and 7. From the window of my house, I've looked up from my lattice and I have seen among the simple. I have received among the news a young man lacking sense.

I found you, just you, you special, special man. Yet, of course, the woman is lying. Look at verse 19. My husband is not at home. He's gone on the long journey.

[13:17] She's spoken to another man in just the same way. This is a woman who will fame fidelity to her husband while he's at home but flatter her lover as her only true love while her husband is away.

And the truth is, she uses both and she loves neither. Do you see what is happening? She promises sexual love without restraint but she refuses to make a fundamental commitment to herself, to either man that is required of true love.

And this sort of eroticism always leads to serious problems. To say physically, I am giving myself to you, which is what sex is, while emotionally and spiritually holding back from a covenanted commitment is in fact a live lie.

It is a split in the personality which is ultimately stressful and destructive. Here's a woman who's giving herself to entrapment and to cover up and to intrigue and she's saying one thing with her body but meaning another.

To promising herself to both while giving herself to neither. And here's the lesson for the son and for us all but particularly us men. unmarried sex is always, always lying to you.

[14:44] When a woman offers you her body but not her whole life then you are believing a lie. And I think this is particularly helpful when it comes to pornography.

Here is a vital truth that it's sent into your heart. The woman in the images is lying to you. Not loving you. And here's how she's lying to you.

You think that she's telling you that she wants you and is for you and that she adores you and loves you but she neither knows your name she doesn't know anything about you nor does she want to.

The woman in pornography neither love you nor need you and if they could see you looking at the images of them they would neither like you nor want to be anywhere near you.

so they're lying to you. Pornography works on the basis of deception. It tells you a lie. And not just a lie that this is what sex is really like but the lie is that you matter and you are valuable to them.

For worth and love is what every man who uses pornography is looking for. And all you will find there is the bitter taste of believing an empty promise.

[15:57] that the father presses people the second point is unmarried sex is emasculating sex. It is emasculating sex. So in our culture if you listen to the radio shows the more women that you sleep with the more masculine you are.

I know it's a terrible stereotype but actually if you watch TV and listen to the radio stations that is what they think. And it's a staggering fact that despite all the development of feminism and through

society and the very very right removal of so much sexism and male chauvinism from the way we speak in public seconds a man who can reveal the number of notches on the bedpost is revered while the woman who does the same is denigrated.

In some way we have that wired into our psyche that the strength of masculinity is tied up with the number of conquests. Proverbs says it's the exact opposite. So the man who gives himself to unmarried sex proverb says that not much of a man is left at all.

Look at chapter 6 of verse 26. For the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread but a married woman hunts down a precious life.

I'm going to read you a section from Doug Wilson's book Fidelity being a one woman man. It is terrific. I've lent it to a number of you and more of you will want to borrow it up to tonight.

[17:32] Listen to what it says. Many men like to flatter themselves thinking that the ease with which they may be seduced is somehow a masculine trait. In reality it is quite the reverse.

At the heart of masculinity is the possession of authority and the taking of initiative by creation. is quite the reverse.

At the heart of masculinity is the possession of authority and the taking of initiative by creation design a man is intended by God to be a head. A head willing to sacrifice himself but when a man is seduced out of marriage he is being led and when a woman seduces out of marriage he is leading. So when a man is seduced led by a living woman or a pornographic woman as immaterial when a man is seduced he is relinquishing and abdicating his assigned role while he may still perform the male role in intercourse he is no longer masculine in the relationship.

He remains biologically male but he is no longer being covenantally masculine. That is exactly what Proverbs 7 shows us. Look at the explicit downward progression of the man into a masculine.

[18:48] nation. He is a young man but he lacks judgment. He's run off with this woman. Look what he's become. Verse 22 of chapter 7 what's he become?

Strong man, powerful, vigorous, capable, authoritative, a man of dignity and worthy of respect, a hero amongst the lads. Is that right? Verse 22 is like an ox, like a deer, like a stag, like a bird. The man has become a brute beast, caught in a trap, slain as a prey. It's the same I read in preparation for this.

Pleasing a multitude of sexual partners is no crown to male strength for a dog can do that. But pleasing one sexual partner for life, there's an adventure worthy of a real man.

Proverbs 31 verse 3 Do not spend your strength on women, your vigour on those who ruin kings. Sex can train a man into a weakling and destroy a kingdom.

[19:56] Sex does not automatically destroy strength and honour and so believing a lie and emasculating yourself has number three deadly consequences. So we've seen it before haven't we?

The mouth of the adulteress is a deep pit. The graphic sexual image of chapter 2 All who enter her go down to the grave. So look at chapter 5 verse 5 And the whole imagery of death is heightened. It's not just that the woman is a grave waiting to consume you but she's a hunter waiting to kill you. Chapter 6 and verse 26 She prays upon your very life.

Chapter 7 and verse 22 and 23 She hoists a noose around your neck. She sets a snare. Look at verse 26 of chapter 27. Chapter 7 For many a victim is she laid low and all her slain are a mighty throng.

Her house is the way to shale going down to the chambers of death. She's like an Amazonian on a dress. She's like a mighty warrior in war.

[21:09] And the father is saying to his son her bedroom is no ballroom. Her bedroom is a battlefield where corpses lie strewn. Now of course you might want to ask what does this mean?

How does unmarried sex kill you? Of course it doesn't literally. But look at chapter 5 verses 9 to 11. Here's how it destroys you. Foolish sex destroys because of its social impact and its wider effects. Chapter 5 verses 9 to 11. Lest you give your honour to others and your years to the merciless lest strangers take their fill of your strength and your labours go to the house of a foreigner and at the end of your life you groan when your flesh and body are consumed.

It's a picture of bitter regret. The people we violate become hardened and embittered towards us because sooner or later they find out. It defeats us financially, cover-ups, losses, divorce, jealousy, hurt, loneliness, regret.

Here in Proverbs there is this very real threat of the jilgy husband. Chapter 6 and verse 33. The offence committed is insatiable.

[22 : 32] Nothing will quench the anger of the jilted lover. But back to verse 27 of chapter 6. The pain experienced there is inevitable.

So guys, we need to treat sex in the same way that we treat fire. Isn't that a brilliant speech? So you come to my house for suffice from you open the door and you pick up the fire and you walk across the room.

No you don't. Or you take off your feet because your feet are cold. You think I'll put them in the wood burning stove. You burn your feet. That's not where fire belongs, is it?

Outside of the fireplace, fire will leave you maimed. It can burn your whole house back. It can ruin your life. Fire. But in the fireplace, where fire belongs, well it keeps you warm.

So this part is part of the father's wisdom for his son. That is the truth behind illicit sex. It lies to you, it robs you of what you most want as a man which is to be respected and thought noble and it will harm you from the inside of your emotions to the outward reaches of your relationships with others.

[23 : 51] But of course the truth behind unmarried sex is only half the picture. Let's look at the design of marriage sex. God, I think this is really striking, I've been really on this stuff for the last five, six months, and the thing that's really, really striking more than anything is this, God has designed a wonderful antidote to sexual temptation.

Do you know what it is? God's antidote to sexual temptation is called sexual activity. the answer to the desire for sex is sex.

Now I want to say the church, we've been disastrous on this way. We've not been good at making this point. We tend to think that the answer to sexual temptation is any way of dealing with the temptation apart from having sex.

But this father and the Bible goes in completely the opposite direction. my son, keep your hands off all other women and keep them on one woman, your wife.

And keep them on her constantly and with delight and with joy until you're fully satisfied. Three things, three things, a bit briefer.

[25 : 08] God has designed marriage sex of a sensual nature. Private context and then a life-giving conclusion. Here's a sensual nature. Just about all commentators, all commentators think that the father takes the imagery of water and it allows it to have a wholesome double meaning which I hope tonight you don't need to spell out for you.

Fountains and streams overflowing and so on. So drinking water is a means of quenching thirst and slaking desire and having sex is the marital means of quenching the desire of sex.

This is the picture of cool refreshment on a boiling hot day that is satisfied by sex. Now verse 19 is quite simply, quite frankly erotic, isn't it?

Chapter 5, verse 19. The quality of married sex, look at the language of satisfaction and captivation and the quantity of marriage sex is always and ever.

The ESV gets it dead right in verse 19 to be intoxicated with her love. It's the same word that's used elsewhere in the Bible for a man staggering down the street in drunkenness.

[26 : 31] It means literally to go astray and consciously swerving beyond her, this is a quote, deliciously dazed in the ecstasies of love making. And I'm going to stop there to spare all our blushes from it.

But do you see the desire of this father for his son? That this is actually a prayer, isn't it? For a fully satisfying sex life with his wife. This is no birthdays, anniversaries, and anything else is a bonus approach.

And if you are married, if you are married and there is no meandering time or captivating context for intoxicated sex, and all the other things in life are equal in terms of health and age, and what you have then I think all this father would be saying to you is, if that is what married life is like for you, then you've got to realise that is your choice for marriage, not God's choice.

That a sexless marriage is not a spiritual marriage. Married sex is spiritual and wholesome and healthy. I wonder if you know that the Bible says more about couples making love together than it does about them praying together.

Married sex is a private context. Notice something really wonderful here. Here is why the Bible's erotic literature is explicit and graphic, but it is always tasteful and appropriate.

[28 : 07] Did you notice there is no description given to the actual act of sex between the adulteress and the young man? When you read it, there's not a description. All the weight, when it's talking about the adulteress, falls on the defective subjection.

But here in chapter 5, the father to son to wife, there is nothing on all the trappings, and all the attention is given to this beautiful act of lovemaking. And the father is saying something here. Married sex is private sex. There's no walking down public streets and dedicated dodgy alleys and twilights because it's all private. Married sex is safe sex and all the attention is given to each other and not having to win each other or convince each other or tempt each other or weigh up in the balance whether this is a good idea or not or whether it will get you caught or not.

You just get on with it. And the reason you just get on with it is because she's your wife. Notice the language twice there. Your wife. In other words, because you've spoken words of covenantal commitment to each other.

Think about it like this. You see, here's how a marriage works. They get married in the daytime. They make public commitments to each other in a wedding service in the daytime.

[29 : 25] And at night they have private sex, not secret sex. However, loads they will be having sex. But there's public commitment on private sex.

But in unmarried sex, do you see how it works? Any words which are spoken are secret words. And any sex which follows is secret sex. And it's secret sex which leads to public disintegration. sex. I wonder if you've noticed that in verses 15 to 17. Although the image is sexually graphic, the argument has all to do with the right boundaries of public and private.

Here's the argument. Never make public what should remain private. Sex itself. But never keep secret what should be done in public.

Let me say that again. Never ever make public what should remain private. Sex itself. But never make secret what should remain public. Covenantal promises to give and receive sex.

[30 : 33] When you have a society which is loyal to its vows, that society quickly unravels and falls apart into anarchy. Isn't that true? Disloyal to words spoken leads to anarchy in every area of life.

That's why in Proverbs there's so much emphasis on words. Hear my words. Choose my words. Listen to my words. The adulterous woman is an adulterous first and foremost because she's abandoned her words to her husband.

So tonight, let me say that sex in marriage is difficult. or dead. Let's be honest. Go back to your words.

Go back to your vows. Go back to your promises. And talk about them first. What did you promise each other?

With my body, I honour you. With my body, I thee worship, some people have said. And where you have a community, whether it's a small community of husband, wife, a large community of a church, family, a nation, a world, any community which is loyal to its verbal promises will flourish and grow.

[31 : 56] And a married society of man and wife is exactly the same. Talk about your covenant commitments to each other and why you find those difficult if sex is difficult.

And with the right words in place, then the right use of your bodies will follow behind. And so the opposite of the dead-end payback of illicit sex is the high vision life.

Sex is a life-giving conclusion. Look at chapter 6 and verse 20 to 23. My son, keep your father's commandment and forsake not your mother's teaching.

What is that about? That is about sex, isn't it? These commands about sex. And then bind them on your heart always, tie them round your neck.

When you walk, they will lead you. When you lie down, they will watch over you. And when you're awake, they will talk with you. For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light. And there are proofs of discipline by the way of life.

[33 : 10] Sex in the right place, when the right person will quite literally and quite simply keep you from ruin. Personal, financial, spiritual, and social ruin.

Marriage sex creates married men and women who love God's God's word. And I think more than anything, married sex creates married men and women who love something more than even each other.

Married sex creates men and women who love God's word and esteem them and embrace them and throw the whole weight of their life on God's word.

Because they know that it is the words that God speaks which are a fortress for the heart, health for the body, nourishment for the bones, and life for the eyes.
those who must ■ those who need a heart. Let's pray. Thank you.