

Promise?
Keeping Your Promise
Proverbs 2:10-22

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Text: ¹⁰ When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
¹¹ Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you,
¹² To deliver you from the way of evil,
From the man who speaks perverse things,
¹³ From those who leave the paths of uprightness
To walk in the ways of darkness;
¹⁴ Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perversity of the wicked;
¹⁵ Whose ways *are* crooked,
And *who are* devious in their paths;
¹⁶ To deliver you from the immoral woman,
From the seductress *who* flatters with her words,
¹⁷ Who forsakes the companion of her youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.
¹⁸ For her house leads down to death,
And her paths to the dead;
¹⁹ None who go to her return,
Nor do they regain the paths of life—
²⁰ So you may walk in the way of goodness,
And keep *to* the paths of righteousness.
²¹ For the upright will dwell in the land,
And the blameless will remain in it;
²² But the wicked will be cut off from the earth,
And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

Today, we come to the extremely sensitive subject of protecting our marriages from adultery. Not a pleasant subject, I know. Perhaps, this is not a subject that applies to every person here. Nevertheless, this is a relevant subject to address from God's Word and this pulpit. The writer of Proverbs had much to say about the subject of adultery. These timeless principles can offer us some real practical help in keeping our marriages pure.

Show discernment in relationships with the opposite sex. (Proverbs 2:10-17)

- Be Alert to flattering speech.

All sin begins somewhere short of sin. This is true of adultery. We must show extreme, almost ridiculous caution in our communication with the opposite sex.

In a moment, we are going to turn to Proverbs 5, but just hear now a portion of this chapter:

¹ My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
Lend your ear to my understanding,
² That you may preserve discretion,
And your lips may keep knowledge.
³ For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey,
And her mouth *is* smoother than oil;
⁴ But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.

I have heard James Dobson say that the main reason that men succumb to an affair is the ego.

- Be Alert to your spouse.

At the same time that you are alert to what it is coming from people other than your spouse, be more in tune with your spouse. Schedule conversation, schedule dates, schedule trips. Make sure you are paying attention to your own spouse.

- Be Alert to your spiritual covenant.

As we have said over the last few weeks, most of all, remember that you are in covenant with God.

Know what your convictions and commitments are and be unwilling to compromise in any circumstance. UCLA Coach John Wooden had strict rules. He had a whole lesson on the correct way to put on socks. He had a rule against long hair and facial hair. Bill Walton came in with a beard. He said, "Coach, I have rights. I have a right to have a beard." Coach Wooden said, "That's great, son. I really admire a young man willing to stand up for what he believes in—willing to stand up for his convictions—We're sure going to miss you." Walton shaved the beard.

Be afraid of the damage caused by improper relationships. (Proverbs 2:18-22)

The writer of Proverbs is pretty specific about the result of an adulterous relationship. Perhaps, we can summarize that experience in two words:

Total Destruction

Loss of:

1. Years (Proverbs 5:9)

⁹ Lest you give your honor to others,
And your years to the cruel *one*;

2. Material Blessings (Proverbs 5:10)

¹⁰ Lest aliens be filled with your wealth,
And your labors *go* to the house of a foreigner;

3. Life (Proverbs 5:11)

¹¹ And you mourn at last,
When your flesh and your body are consumed,

4. Self-Respect (Proverbs 5:12-13)

¹² And say: "How I have hated instruction,
And my heart despised correction!
¹³ I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me!

5. Respect in the Community (Proverbs 5:14)

¹⁴ I was on the verge of total ruin,
In the midst of the assembly and congregation."

Deal seriously with the smallest of temptations. (Proverbs 6:27-29)

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.

Remember the example of Joseph!

(Genesis 39:1-12 tells the story) ¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. ² The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. ³ And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority. ⁵ So it was, from the time *that* he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. 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.

Howard Hendricks, a longtime Professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, said that he kept a notebook of all former Seminary students who had fallen into the trap of marital infidelity. He said that the common denominator in all of those students was pride and arrogance even in their Seminary days. What seems like a small thing can become increasingly large and destructive.