



BACK TO THE BIBLE SERIES: Win the Day!

By Pastor Bryan Clark

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Back in the early 1990s, there was a lot of debate in our culture about whether or not what you do in private has any relevance to what you do in public. The reason we were having that discussion had to do with President Clinton's sexual affair with Monica Lewinsky, and there was a lot of conversation about what he's doing in private, and does that affect then his judgment and what he does in public? I remember when those discussions were going on, I was quite shocked by how many people felt like what was going on in private is private; it has no relevance to what he's doing in public. I couldn't disagree with that more. I think who you are in private is who you are, and without question it dramatically affects what you do in public, your ability to fulfill whatever job description, whatever role you fulfill in public. For example, if a man will cheat on his wife and lie, I have absolutely no doubt that same man would not hesitate to cheat and lie to a customer, to a client, to an employee, to an employer because that's ultimately who that person is. So, who we are in private bleeds out in so many ways to who we are in public, and that's the way the Proverbs are written.

Verses 16 through 19 are a very familiar part of the Proverbs:

**There are six things which the LORD hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:**

That's just kind of a poetic way of saying this isn't meant to be an exhaustive list. Here's just some examples—starts from the eyes, works all the way down to the feet.

Haughty eyes,

Basically, eyes filled with pride. If your mode of operation in life is to disadvantage others in order to advantage yourself, somehow, someway, you've convinced yourself you're entitled to that. That's the idea of **haughty eyes**. Somehow, I believe I am entitled to that.

...a lying tongue,

The Hebrew is really strong here. It's the idea that you lie, that you deceive as a way of life. This is just now how you live your life—whatever's necessary to get what you want.

**And hands that shed innocent blood,
A heart that devises wicked plans (or schemes),
Feet that run rapidly to evil,**

So, you start at the eyes, work your way all the way down to the feet.

Verse 19:

**A false witness *who* utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.**

So basically, it's just kind of a summary of the discussion of the sluggard and the con man or the con woman.

Verse 20 then:

**My son, observe the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;
Bind them continually on your heart;
Tie them around your neck.
When you walk about, they will guide you;
When you sleep, they will watch over you;
And when you awake, they will talk to you.
For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;
And reproofs for discipline are the way of life, (Vs. 20-23)**

Now this is very Proverbs 4-ish, and these reminders come up throughout the Proverbs—that the key to skillful living is to understand and believe the truth, so that it becomes part of you. You live it; you breathe it; you walk around with it. This is what you need to live skillfully in a very confusing world. In this particular conversation, verse 24:

**To keep you from the evil woman,
From the smooth tongue of the adulteress.**

Now again, remember this is a father talking to his son, so the seductress obviously is a woman, but it's just an imagery. At the end of the day, it represents any sexual immorality outside of God's design. In other words, God's design is one man, one woman, in a lifelong one-flesh sexual relationship. Any sex outside of that boundary is included in this idea of adulteress or seductress or the idea of sexual immorality.

Verse 25:

**Do not desire her beauty in your heart,
Nor let her capture you with her eyelids.**

I just want to talk about those two verses for a couple of minutes because basically the idea is that she has made herself look very beautiful, very attractive. She is intending to tempt you, to seduce you in order to destroy you. That's kind of the meaning behind those two verses.

There is no question that we live in a sexually-pornified culture. **We talked about this a lot last week.** This is put forth by the enemy. Ephesians told us that the god of this world is Satan himself. He's a liar; he's a deceiver, and his number one mission is to destroy you. It may well be that his primary weapon of choice in 21st century America is a sexually toxic culture, a pornified culture. He is destroying millions and millions and millions of lives through this strategy.

Just to give you some frame of reference, the pornography industry just in America alone is \$13 billion a year. Worldwide it is \$97 billion a year. Now just think about that—that is absolutely staggering! Try to imagine how many people this \$97 billion industry has taken in, used and abused, and spit out in the

name of pornography and making money. I would suggest to you that there is no greater social injustice in the world today than sexual immorality.

I appreciate the fact that a lot of people today are really into social justice. I think that's a good thing, but it's very important to understand: If you're out talking about all the social injustices in the world and come home and are involved in sexual immorality, you're rather the hypocrite, because on one hand you're speaking about all this social injustice; on the other hand you are contributing to probably the greatest force of social injustice in the world.

Do you understand that the pornographers are strategically coming after your children? This isn't an accident. This is very much on purpose. They fill the internet with words and phrases so that innocent children when looking for something on the internet hit a porn site. This isn't an accident. It's by design. Their understanding is if we can get your child, we have you, and we can make more money before we destroy you.

Statistics show that 50% of children that accidentally come upon some sort of graphic pornography on the internet will never forget that image for the rest of their lives. Statistics also, studies are showing that if you just take what children and teenagers up to the age of seventeen—children and teenagers up to the age of seventeen—what they are searching for on purpose on the internet, the fourth leading search by children and teenagers up to the age of seventeen is sex. Number five is pornography. If you are a parent or a grandparent, you need to understand they are coming after your children hard. This is an absolute war. The number one consumer of a 97-billion-dollar industry are those between the ages of twelve and seventeen. Studies show that before their brains are even close to being formed normally, this pornography is so dramatically altering the formulation of their brain, there are lots of questions as to whether those brains will ever form correctly.

I understand in a very uncertain world we can be frightened by ISIS. We can be frightened by disease. We can be frightened by terrorists, but I would suggest to you as parents and grandparents, the number one concern for your children is this sexually-pornified culture, and you'd better take it seriously because *they* are taking it very seriously. They make everything look so alluring and so attractive, but at the end of the day, the enemy wants you destroyed.

**For on account of a harlot *one is reduced to a loaf of bread,*
And an adulteress hunts for the precious life.**

Verse 26 is rather confusing, but in an ancient culture the writer of Proverbs is simply drawing a distinction between the consequences. He's not saying visiting a harlot is a good thing, but what he is saying is if you go and visit a prostitute, it costs you about the equivalent of a loaf of bread— probably end of story. But if you sleep with your neighbor's wife, her husband, your neighbor, will hunt you down and make your life miserable consequences possibly for the rest of your life. That's the idea of verse 26.

Verse 27:

**Can a man take fire in his bosom?
And his clothes not be burned?
Or can a man walk on hot coals
And his feet not be scorched? (Vs. 27-28)**

That just as there are natural laws in the universe such as gravity, there are moral laws in the universe. These aren't just God's rules that you can somehow summarily change or ignore. They are laws—they are moral laws! You can believe whatever you want about gravity, but if you go up and jump off the

building, gravity wins. You can convince yourself you can beat the system, that you can operate outside of God's moral laws and somehow make that work in your favor, but you are fooling yourself. You cannot break God's moral laws without consequence. That's what the text just said. You can't sleep with your neighbor's wife without serious consequence. So, he says, "Do you actually think you can take burning coals and put them on your lap (lap obviously has sexual overtones) and somehow that's not going to burn you? Do you think you can walk barefoot across burning coals and somehow your feet aren't going to get burned?" In other words, you can't beat the system.

So, let me just be as blunt as I can be. I gave you my best shot from Proverbs 5—to convince you that sexual immorality, any sexual behavior outside of God's boundary, will ultimately have serious negative consequences. You can't beat the system. And some of you, you listened, and this week you were right back at it. I don't know what to tell you. You obviously think somehow, somehow, you're the first person in the history of the world that's going to beat the system—that you can operate outside of God's moral laws without consequence. I don't know what to tell you other than to tell you again: you can't do that. You can't make it work in your favor. You can't put burning coals in your lap without getting burned.

Verse 29:

**So is the one who goes into his neighbor's wife;
Whoever touches her will not go unpunished.**

I don't know what's unclear about that.

**Men do not despise a thief if he steals
To satisfy himself when he is hungry;
But when he is found, he must repay sevenfold;
He must give all the substance of his house. (Vs. 30-31)**

In other words, if somebody is starving to death and so they steal a loaf of bread in order to survive, people understand that. They don't say it's right, but they understand that. But the person that stole the bread still is required to repay seven times over, which would be the Hebrew law. That is contrasted with the fact, with the neighbor—you slept with the neighbor's wife—the neighbor isn't going to see it the same way, but he is going to track you down for the rest of your life and make you pay. That's basically what the proverb is saying.

**The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense;
He who would destroy himself does it.
Wounds and disgrace he will find (that wounds is a term that talks about violence),
And his reproach will not be blotted out.
For jealousy enrages a man,
And he will not spare in the day of vengeance. (Vs. 32-34)**

That word **vengeance** is not a Hebrew word that means he is taking vengeance himself, but rather it's a legal term. It's a courtroom term. It basically means he will prosecute to the full extent of the law. He will make you pay.

Verse 35:

**He will not accept any ransom,
Nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.**

In the ancient culture, if you were guilty of sleeping with the neighbor's wife and it goes to court and all the way through to a conviction, most of the time you were executed. So that's kind of the background behind what's being said —no matter what you do, no matter how many times you say you're sorry, no matter how many gifts you give to your neighbor, he will not stop coming until he sees you dead. It's just talking about the consequences of stepping outside of God's boundary in a sexual relationship.

Basically, if you put all of chapter 6 together, it's talking about sexual immorality as someone who is willing to disadvantage someone else (we would say in today's language "use somebody else") in order to advantage myself. If I do that, then I'm probably likely to scheme and lie and cheat and play the role of the con man or the con woman. I'm probably likely to be a sluggard and mooch off other people and take advantage of the system, and if I do that, then I probably am not very skillful with my resources. My own personal experience would tell me that most people that I've known that struggle with sexual immorality also struggle with money. There is a deep connection that that reckless approach to life that seems to bleed into those two areas in significant ways.

We talked about this -- If you are single, there's a tendency to say, "Okay, what about me?" The solution is *not* to take a cold shower and hang in there. I frankly think that is terrible advice, and it doesn't work because it's contrary to the way God has actually made you. God has made you as a sexual person with a sexual drive, but to understand that your sexual drive is ultimately your longing for intimacy with God. Marriage offers a taste of that intimacy. As a single person, you skip the taste, and you go right to the source, and you find a deeply intimate, satisfying relationship with Jesus. I would suggest for all of us that it is critically important in a sexually-pornified culture to find a deeply intimate, meaningful relationship with Christ. If I can give my soul what it deeply longs for, it rightly equips me to walk in sexual purity in a sexually- pornified culture.

This issue is coming like a tidal wave. There has never in the history of the world, ever been a generation that has had so much access to life-destroying immorality in the palm of their hand. And we are seeing the tip of the iceberg of what is to come.

So, Proverbs six brings us back to this discussion of sexual sin. It's such an important topic. Verse 25 reminds us that the culture makes sin look so attractive. The enemy has a really good marketing plan and it's easy for people to get distracted down the path of destruction.

You know, there's a lot of talk today about social injustice and social justice. I could easily make the case that the greatest social injustice of our time is sexual sin. When you start to look at all the impact from sexual abuse, to sexual immorality, to prostitution, to pornography, to sex trafficking, to unwanted babies, the list goes on and on. I don't think there's any behavior that people engage in that has more of an impact, that creates injustice in people's lives than sexual sin. As a matter of fact, I'd go so far as to say, if we could just get this one area of our lives operating according to God's plan, we'd have more than enough resources left over to deal with every other issue that troubles people.

I think, again, our young people need help. They don't need rejection. They don't need lectures. They need people willing to roll up their sleeves and be part of the solution. The world is way more complicated than it was when we were growing up and these young people need help.

We remind ourselves in this proverb that you can't commit sexual sin without consequences. There are moral laws and you simply can't beat the system. If you play with fire, the proverb says you're eventually going to get burned. I've mentioned it before, I want to mention it one more time: If you struggle, in other words, if you'd know this is sin and you can't get it stopped, you need to talk to someone. Keeping this a secret will only create a bigger problem. Talk to a counselor, talk to your pastor, talk to a friend, talk to someone! You need to deal with it and get it stopped before it destroys your life! The Proverbs

are straight forward and, in your face, but they speak truth that we need to hear if we're going to live our lives with skill.