

## Proverbs Week #17 (2:16-19)

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*Prov. 2:16-19* It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the spirits of the dead. None who go to her return or attain the paths of life.

I would like to remind you as we study these verses today that this section of Proverbs should be seen in the context of a father teaching his son. In the opening verses of chapter two we read, “My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you...” (Prov 2:1) It is in the light of these inspired words and this father/son relationship that today’s lesson should be heard. I struggled in preparing this teaching with how to present this apparent adult idea as a children’s lesson. Its themes of a woman who is unfaithful and uses her words to tempt a young man seem like a lesson without application to those who are still young. It is not until they are older that we would expect them to face these types of temptations.

The more I thought about the value of this lesson the more I was convinced that wisdom must be learned before the time comes when it is needed. The proverbial father didn’t necessarily expect his son to understand the depth of everything he had to teach, but he did urge him to “accept *his* words and store them up.” As Joseph in our upcoming Torah portions will store up grain in preparation for the famine that God foretold, we too must be wise and store up God’s instructions for ourselves and especially for our children.

Last week the verses in Proverbs spoke about wicked men and how they would attempt to draw the son away from the wisdom that his father had taught. Now this week’s verses warn the son about a woman who could draw him away from the path where true life is found. Her ways will end in death.

In Psalms we read, “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together.” (Psalm 131:1) Last week wicked men sought out the son’s companionship for evil and not for good. In Genesis we read, “The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” (Gen 2:18) This week the son is warned about a woman who is likewise wicked and takes something God meant for good and perverts it.

We as a community must always place a high value of strong marriages and families. When Yeshua was approached and questioned about the rules of divorce he taught the people about what God intended from the beginning. He said, “‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’. So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matt 19:5,6) We cannot change the past. If we have fallen short of God’s ideals we must put our trust in Him and walk in the grace He provides. Our children need to see the power of God in restoring broken relationships, but they also need to see the power of God in relationships that start in covenant faithfulness and remain faithful.

The marriage covenant is a foundational building block of community. As this proverb reminds the son, the bond of marriage is made in the sight of God. May we as parents and grandparents set the best examples we can, with God’s help, so that our children will see strong role models of faithfulness for them to follow and respect.