

Proverbs Week #50 (5:3-5)

“For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of hell.” Prov 5:3-5

We continue to hear the words of a father to a son in these verses. The advice given comes in the form of a warning. This is not the first time this message is taught to us in the book of Proverbs. In chapter 2:16-19 this same theme of warning is given. So, today’s lesson is somewhat of a review.

At what age do we prepare our children to be careful in relationships? I want to suggest that we learn, put into practice, and teach the principles of right relationships from the start. As I taught my daughters when they were young I tried to emphasize that the things they were learning should be seen in the possible light of them teaching (Lord willing) their children yet to be born. Their learning to do the things that God teaches would prepare them for the life He had in store for them. What our children do when they are young is intimately connected to how they will be when they are older. While these lessons that we hope our children are learning may appear to be small seeds they are the very source for the fruit which God may allow to flourish as they live their lives before Him. I struggled, again, 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.” (Prov 2:1 NIV) As Joseph stored 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.

In Psalms we read, “Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together.” (Psalm 131:1) Earlier in our Proverbs study 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 on 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.