

The bait and the hook

Prov. 5; 6.20-35; 7

I enjoy fishing but I must admit I am not a good fisherman and I have not been fishing in a few years. Normally when I would show up at a pond, lake, or river, the fish would just laugh. I tell people I don't fish; I baptize crickets! But when I used to fish, I had the tackle box with all the different kinds of lures, plastic worms, hooks, all sorts of fishing stuff in that tackle box. I had several rods and reels, one I still have that was a good, stiff rod for casting plastic worms for bass fishing.

Years ago, I read an article about a Japanese fishing lure company that took the skin from real fish, stretched it over a Styrofoam shape and covered it with a clear preservative to look like a real fish. The lures were expensive because of what it took to make them. The point is, with any fishing lure, they are made to resemble something a fish would want to eat, except attached to the lure were hooks, and once hooked the fish was done for.

This is the whole point of Proverbs 5-7: the bait and the hook. Proverbs 5-7 contain clear warnings about the dangers and consequences of immorality in general, and adultery specifically. The warnings begin in 5.3: *For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and soother than oil is her speech.* Proverbs seven ends with this: *Her house is the way to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death.*

I would like to share three important points brought up in these three chapters of Proverbs:

I. The PLAN of those who lure others into immorality:

Proverbs 5-7 teach us what the sinful person has in their "tackle box":

Flattering speech (5.3);

The smooth tongue of the adulteress (6.24);

Her beauty (6.25);

Flattering words (7.5);

Her perfume (7.17);

Her many persuasions (7.21).

The goal of the sinful and/or adulterous person is simple: she wants to catch the unsuspecting prey. Now to be fair, in every place you read about the immoral woman you can just as easily substitute the man. As the old saying goes, "it takes two to tango!"

II. The PERSONALITY of those who follow immorality:

The teaching of Proverbs about the person who follows the immoral woman is clear:

They hate instruction (5.12);
They do not listen (5.13);
They lack sense (6.32; 7.7);
They are naïve (7.7);
They are foolish (7.22);
They do not pay attention (7.24).

I heard a speaker at a men's conference once give this simple yet powerful advice about what to do when tempted with immorality: RUN! Literally turn around and run the other way as fast as you can. That sounds so simple and yet we know of or read, unfortunately, often, of someone who succumbed to the temptations of the sinful person.

III. The PRICE of immorality:

What happens to those who fall prey to the temptations of the immoral person?

Death (5.5, 23; 7.22-23, 26-27);
They give their vigor to others and their youth to the cruel one (5.9);
Their flesh and blood will be consumed (5.11);
Punishment (6.29);
Self-destruction (6.32)

How can we keep from yielding to those temptations?

1. Recognize that you are not above temptation, that you have a sin nature, and you can yield just like anyone else can.
2. Ask God, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to alert you when temptation presents itself. Often, we are blinded by what is around us and are insensitive to the real danger confronting us.
3. Ask God to give you the courage and the strength to walk away *immediately*, turn and go, do not give the devil a foothold.

What if you know someone who has yielded to those temptations?

1. First and foremost, do not be condemning in your actions or attitudes towards them. You do not know how hard they may have tried not to yield; you do not know their situation. You can yield just as easily as the next person.
2. Pray that they will clearly understand the enormity of their sin, that they will be convicted, and they will turn from their sin in confession and repentance.
3. Pray they will do what needs to be done to be reconciled both to God and those who were harmed by their sin.

I joke about my ability as a fisherman but yielding to sin is no joking matter. Our world is full of baits with hooks, all kinds of baits in all forms. No two kinds of bait are the same, but they are all full of hooks, designed by our enemy to catch the unsuspecting Christian in a moment of weakness.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

(Eph. 6.11-13)

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