

Proverbs 23-02-01b

We are in the midst of finding the meaning of the parable of the crafty harlot for ourselves in Proverbs chapter 7 and extending into 8 and 9, where this type of worldly deceit and distraction is contrasted with God's way, God's wisdom, which is freely available to those who will choose it. So in looking at our outline and seeing that going down the path with her is a choice in verse 8, which is our fourth point of 12, our fourth point of observation, we see Paul giving us the solution. How can we avoid making this mistake ourselves? And it is in Romans chapter 8, we have seen verses 5 through 8. And in verse 12 of Romans 8, therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, this is the key, accessing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, which is a two-part power. It is the word and the spirit.

One without the other doesn't work. Trying to cultivate the spirit without the word of God, the spirit has no voice with which to speak. He cannot create thoughts within us.

He cannot impel us or guide us in a mystical and unconscious way. The Holy Spirit uses God's word to empower us, to guide us, to give us mastery over sin and to lead us in right paths. We have to have the word of God for that to take place.

Knowledge of the word of God without the active ministry of the spirit, without submitting to the spirit, without keeping in step with the spirit, being filled with the spirit, winds up being knowledge that puffs up instead of love that builds up. So we are debtors to not live according to the flesh. Romans 8, verse 14, as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are the sons of God.

Paul is not talking in mundane terms here. To be a son indeed. Is to be led by the spirit of God.

You did not receive a spirit of bondage again to fear. We were formerly under bondage to sin. We are not under bondage to the spirit.

Sin controlled us and we could not escape its power in Romans chapter seven. My mind might want to serve the law of God, but my flesh is going to serve the law of sin because I'm in bondage to sin. We have been set free and now who we serve is a choice.

We have not been placed in bondage. Calvinists think that perseverance of the saints means that we're under a new slave master. We're now in bondage to God and whatever he predestines is what we're going to do.

They somehow got stuck in Romans with Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated and miss that our free choice has been restored. We can now choose to serve God or we can

continue to serve sin. It's a choice.

This is what Romans 8 tells us. You did not receive another spirit of bondage to be under fear. I'm being controlled by forces beyond my control.

You receive the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out Abba father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. He doesn't brand us.

He doesn't stamp us. He tells us he bears witness in our spirit and if we are children we are heirs heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ if indeed we suffer with him that we may also be glorified together choosing to suffer. Remember in Hebrews 11 where it says Moses chose rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season in Egypt.

Moses chose the path of hardship the path of suffering because it was service to God. Look at the place Moses occupies in the plan and purpose of God because he chose voluntarily to endure affliction with the people of God. God gave him a choice.

We have a choice. If children we are heirs we are potentially inheritors. Those many brethren among whom Christ is first born if indeed we suffer with him that we can be glorified together with him.

It is a choice. Skip down to verse 18. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Remember this glory revealed in 18 is a part of the conditional clause of 17. If we choose to suffer with we will be glorified with and that glory to be revealed in us isn't worthy to be compared with the suffering but we choose to endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. Remember Timothy we just saw this on Sunday.

Endure hardship as a good soldier because there is a higher principle at stake. It is a choice. Choose you this day whom ye will serve said Yeshua to the people of Israel as for me and my house we choose to serve the Lord.

Well that brings us to our ninth verse of Proverbs chapter 7. Proverbs 7 verse 9. She is waiting in the darkness in the twilight in the evening in the black and dark night. One thing you notice about the way the world works is it's daytime followed by night time followed by daytime. We do not have unless you live north of the arctic circle or somewhere up in Alaska northern Canada you don't have perpetual night or perpetual day.

In the normal godly places to live on the planet you have the regular shifting between light and dark between day and night. This is what God established and therefore there are times when we can choose to work and there are times when we can choose to rest. There is a time for everything.

There is a season to every purpose under heaven according to Ecclesiastes and when there is a time of darkness it is a time to choose to be at home with family indoors in our parable. This is in the evening in the twilight in the black and dark night this simple naive inexperienced young man is walking the street. He has stayed out too late.

He made a bad choice. He ought to be home. There is always the dilemma to what extent is the victim at fault or to be blamed or unwise at a very minimum.

If you make foolish choices and then something catastrophic happens to you it doesn't seem fair that a small bad choice should have a large bad consequence. Someone stays out dressed immodestly, hangs out with the wrong people at the wrong time and ends up paying with their life. You think well dressing in a racy fashion and getting inebriated shouldn't cost you your life.

It shouldn't but sometimes it does and the way to avoid the risk of catastrophe is to make good small choices all the time. If this young man had not chosen to be out after dark at night on lonely streets by himself he would not have been waylaid by the crafty harlot but he has left himself vulnerable to an attack which may or may not come on any given evening any given night. Satan can roam seeking whom he may devour.

You may be out there in a devourable state. Maybe you didn't get devoured today but you might be devoured tomorrow. Consistently good choices reduce our vulnerability to attack and compromise.

So our fifth point, seduction, deception, deflection from the right path is opportunistic and sometimes it is happenstance. You can do an unwise thing 49 times and get away with it. You can run a stop sign.

You can cut a corner. You can leave late and speed to get there and it works 49 times and on the 50th time all of a sudden something bad happens. You say but I always do this.

Bad things never happen when I do this small indiscretion, this small unwise choice. I've gone away with it so many times I'm just to it now and I think it has no consequence. Diligence in details, being righteous in the small things is what builds us up and protects us from catastrophe in larger things.

It may not seem like it matters to stop at an empty intersection but we stop on principle. It may not seem to matter that there is a school zone and we say well but there's no cops that ever watch this school zone and I never see any kids here so I'm gonna cheat it. I use traffic as a metaphor because I am as guilty as the next guy of deciding when and how I'm going to observe traffic guidance.

I call it guidance and not hard and fast. It really annoys me that they put stop signs on roads I've been driving for 50 years and in places where I think they make no sense but I

do my best to still stop because of this principle. We train ourselves to be faithful in small things.

What did Jesus say? He who is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is much. God entrusts us with small things and laying aside traffic think about other small seemingly insignificant moral choices that we make and training ourselves to not be untruthful about small things will help us to be truthful in large things. Being diligent to do what we said we would do and be where we say we will be and not be sloppy and not be slack because sloppiness spreads.

It's infectious. It's contagious. We get sloppy in one area of life we begin to get sloppy elsewhere and when it comes to our moral choices and doing what we do heartily as unto the Lord if I was doing this with the Lord for the Lord on account of the Lord how diligent would I be? How careful would I be? How many extra miles would I travel if it was for the Lord himself? Well remember what he says let your moderation be known unto all the Lord is at hand the Lord is nearby the Lord is observing and watching and there is a record being kept of how faithful and how diligent and how dedicated we choose to be.

So that is the application this opportunistic crouching and springing out of sin and of deception and of deflection and neutralizing us is met with setting our minds on those things that partake of the light we walk in the light we find sin in the camp we dig it up dig it out and expunge it the hand that offends gets cut off the eye that offends gets plucked out because this opportunistic thing hits us when we're not looking, I have listed here Jeremiah 17- 9 the heart is deceitful you also have John 3 19 when you think John three you automatically know that Jesus is speaking with Nicodemus who came to him by night. And in John 3, 19, "This is the condemnation. Light has come into the world and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

Darkness and evil go together. If you spend much time in contact with darkness, those who dwell in darkness are going to perpetrate their evil, whether it is the spiritual forces of wickedness or human individuals." Coming in contact with darkness, fellowshiping, when the scripture says, "What fellowship has light with darkness? It shouldn't have any.' But when we compromise, when we excuse, when we rationalize contact with darkness, that darkness is going to find a way past our defenses." So, John 8, verse 12. Jesus spoke, "I am the light of the world.

He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." Light is associated with following Jesus. Darkness is associated with sin, evil, and all of its concomitants. The application, Ephesians chapter five, verse eight and following.

You'll notice chapter five begins, "Stand fast therefore in the freedom by which Christ has made us free." Back to this idea in Romans, we were in bondage to sin. We're not in bondage to God. We are free to choose to serve God or not.

That's why there is a judgment, because we are accountable. Bond servants don't get the same kind of measure as free agents. "Do not be entangled in a yoke of bondage." You skip down to five, eight.

"Who hindered you from obeying?" Whoops, I'm reading Galatians. I thought that was an odd thought for Ephesians. Ephesians chapter five, verse eight.

"You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." Because this is a command, it tells us it's a choice. We're never commanded to do something we can't do.

"The fruit of the Spirit is in goodness and righteousness and truth." Goodness, righteousness, and truth. You want the fruit of the Spirit? We have to walk as children of light, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them, spot them for what they are, and don't associate.

It is shameful even to speak of things which are done by them in secret. All things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. So awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, Christ will give you light." That is a response to a command.

Wake up, you can choose to wake up or you can choose to roll over and go back to sleep. You can arise from the dead or you can remain in and with the dead. "See then that you walk circumspectly,' 5:15, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." This is Paul repeating verbatim the guidance in Proverbs 7, 8, and 9. "Do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another." Notice that when you are in step with the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit, you are with one another. "Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing, making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of Christ." One another, one another, begins and ends with one another. We ally ourselves with people who also walk in the light as he is in the light.

And two is better than one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken, as we'll see later in Proverbs. So this opportunism is to be met by actively maintaining fellowship in the light.

Of course, 1 John 1, 5 through 10 emphasizes this. We're well familiar with the content of 1 John 1. 1 John 2 also addresses it. 1 John chapter two.

"My little children, these things I write to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He himself is the

propitiation for our sins, not for ours only, also the sins of the whole world.

He who says I know him and does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him. Whoever keeps his word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in him.

He who says he abides in him ought himself also to walk just as he walked. Brethren, I'm not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.

And yet it is a new commandment I write to you which is true in him and you because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness right up to the present. He who loves his brother abides in the light and there is no cause for stumbling in him." It's interesting because this is not just about light and darkness and it's not just about love.

It is about the contact with, fellowship with a brother. This is another one another. Light, love and fellowship with one another.

This is what armors us and keeps us from falling for the deceptions and the seductions of the crafty harlot. Verses 15 through 17, do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him.

You cannot serve both God and mammon. You cannot love both God and the world. All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the father, but of the world.

So if we allow ourselves to be appealed to on the basis of pride, of vanity, of self-interest, of self-gratification, this is coming up in one of our next points. If you look down at point 11 in our outline, verse 15, the crafty harlot flatters the victim, telling him how personally desirable he is. Oh, I have waited for you.

You're so sexy. You're so attractive. You're such a prize.

And the me generation, the unholy trinity of me, myself and I, the world knows how to pander to our vanity and our pride. And you see that here, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, this is not of the father, but of the world. The world is passing away and its desires.

He who does the will of God abides forever. We transcend, we build up treasure in heaven that survives the disappearance of this heavens and earth. So that brings us to verse 10 of Proverbs chapter seven.

How is this woman plying her wares? What is her attraction? How does she seduce? She

wears the clothing of a harlot. She's got a crafty heart. She's got the attire of a harlot.

She is distinguishable from an honorable woman. If you've ever seen a Western and the women who live upstairs at the saloon dress one way and the ladies down on the street dress and conduct themselves another way. As soon as you say the attire of a harlot, there is a known appearance and you shouldn't be taken in because you know what she is as soon as you see her.

We should be able to spot a worldly seduction as soon as we see it. It's got the costume on, it's dressed that way. What is the attire of a harlot? Is it a dress buttoned up to the neck? Is it a long skirt down to the toes? Is it modest or is it revealing and seductive, salacious and so on? The attire of a harlot is designed to get your mind down in the gutter and that's what she's wearing.

And we should develop a sense of when someone is seducing us by appealing to our pride, appealing to our emotion, appealing to something other than the foundation that we have laid in Jesus Christ. If the attraction isn't something you can come right back to the Bible and right back to our New Testament identity in Christ, if the appeal of a charity, if the appeal of an activity, if the appeal of an association isn't something that I can align and put on the foundation of Jesus Christ, I need to start checking to see if this is the attire of a harlot and it's seducing me on some other basis. Well, it's a rationalization.

It's a perversion or distortion of scripture. Something is being left out. I can't go look at that scripture you're quoting in context and get out of it what you're getting out of it.

What if he even done this to the snake in the tree? I always go back to this. It's the archetype. Everything traces back to the serpent.

Quoting God imperfectly, partially, fooling someone who has a perfect relationship with God, using the word of God to seduce and deceive. So she has a crafty heart. This is a heart that is looking out for itself.

She's got an agenda. She's got a purpose. You are the means to an end.

People don't just undermine and deflect other people just for the fun of it. There is an agenda. There's something they want.

And so this is a heart that is literally watching out for itself. It is seduction using appearances for personal gain. So our application, don't take pride in appearances.

Doesn't really matter what's going on on the inside. I just want it to look like I'm successful. I want to look like things are a certain way.

This is the whitewashed tombstone of the Pharisees. This is the dish that is wiped on the

outside and inside it is corrupt. This was a big problem for the Pharisees, taking pride in appearances, making long prayers on the street corner, dropping big bags into the treasury.

We should not take pride in appearances ourselves. We need to focus on substance, not how it looks, but what it is. And sometimes we have to allow ourselves to be misunderstood because we are doing what matters, not what looks great.

We shouldn't take pride in appearances or be fooled by those who do. Second Corinthians chapter five, verse 12. Second Corinthians 5, 12.

"We do not commend ourselves again to you," Paul says. "We give you opportunity to boast on our behalf "that you may have an answer for those "who boast in appearances and not in heart." There is a clear contrast between what's going on in the heart and what people may put up by way of flim-flam, by way of facade. Second Corinthians chapter 10, verses three through seven.

"Though we walk in the flesh, "we do not war according to the flesh. "The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, "but they are mighting in God "for the pulling down of strongholds." These are spiritual strongholds, spiritual fortresses, spiritual strong points. "Casting down arguments and every high thing "that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

"Bringing every thought into captivity "to the obedience of Christ." We are not in bondage and we are not captive. We bring our thoughts into captivity for Christ. "Being ready to punish all disobedience "when your obedience is fulfilled." Verses 10 through 12.

People say, well, Paul's letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech is contemptible. "Let such a person consider this, "that what we are in word by letters, "when we are absent, "such we will be also in deed when we are present." There are people who want to diminish Jesus Christ as not being the coming one, the King of kings and Lord of lords, causing blood to run as high as the horse's bridles, coming back to destroy, to cast the goats into the lake of fire and so on. They want to minimize Jesus to just the gentle Jesus, to just the slain lamb and the one who didn't turn anyone away who came to him.

And they project this to him accepting anyone under any circumstance who happens to be poor or sinful, which is not the case, but you filter and you limit and you dumb down. And this is what people were doing to the apostle Paul. Well, this Paul of letters is not the Paul of presence.

They do just the opposite to Jesus. This Jesus of scripture isn't gonna be the Jesus of presence. And making a distinction, Paul is Paul, whether he's writing a letter or

preaching in person.

The Lord Jesus is the Lord Jesus, whether it's the first advent or the second. This same Jesus, the angels told the disciples, will come back in like manner as you have seen him go. This same Jesus, not a different Jesus, the same Jesus.

And that Jesus is gonna be doing things that he did not do when his purpose was to bear the sins of the world. So we should not take pride in appearance. We should not be fooled by those who do.

And finally here in 2 Corinthians 10, verses 17 and 18, "Let him who glories, glory in the Lord. Not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends." We don't need to keep up appearances. We don't need to be impressed by appearances.

What does the Lord command? That's what we want to be. And that's what we want to approve. What does God command? How do we find that out? Gain wisdom from his word.

Seek the insight that comes to us from the spirit. The power of God, the ability to judge that comes from God is the spirit of God and the word of God and no other way. Don't be fooled by appearances.

So what have we looked at so far? We have covered the first six points. What is our marching order? What do we take away from this to go and do for the rest of today, for tomorrow, for the rest of the week? What should we be doing? We need to be alert and watchful about who we are influenced by, whether they are speaking, as we saw in point one, whether they are putting up appearances, as we saw here in point six. We need to ascertain, are they walking in darkness or walking in the light? If it's darkness, we should separate.

What fellowship has light with darkness? That is our point five. We need to focus on walking in the light, remaining in the light, expunging darkness by the power and blood of Jesus Christ through spotting our sins, acknowledging our sins and repenting of and separating from our sins, walking in the light. And this alertness needs to be 24 seven.

We can't relax just because we're at home. We can't relax just because we're among friends. We can't just say, well, the danger is outside in the dark street, but I've come home.

I'm safe now. We can be attacked right where we live. Well, this brings us to the seventh point.

And the final one we'll cover for tonight, which is in Proverbs chapter seven, verse 11. She is loud and rebellious. Her feet will not stay at home.

We've seen this in the New Testament. By their fruit, you will know them. Women, really people in general, ought not to be loud and rebellious.

Loudness is never held up as a great Christian virtue. Yet let your yea be yea and your nay be nay. You don't need to swear by heaven or by the gold of the altar.

Let your word be your bond. Work quietly with your hands. Don't let your good be spoken of as evil.

But being raucous, talking out of turn is bad in anybody. It's worse in a woman who is supposed to be a model of chastity, modesty, self-control. The last great fruit of the spirit is self-control.

Being loud and rebellious and not staying at home at night when all young ladies ought to be at home is an overt expression of running counter to God's design. People don't like God's design. They don't want to be modest.

They don't want to be submissive. They don't want to be observant of standards and principles and rules. They say, well, I like freedom, and I want to be free to do what I want instead of being free to do what God wants.

And this is rebelliousness. God freed Israel from bondage in Egypt, and what did they do? They pursued their own desires. They didn't, as a nation, choose to do what God wanted, and the nation was eventually gone because of that.

So loud and rebellious, refusing to stay where you should at the time that you should. You find this by flipping the page in Proverbs 9 and verse 13. A foolish woman is clamorous.

She is simple and knows nothing. This is 1 Timothy 5, 13 and 14, which we've looked at earlier. Titus 2, 4, and 5, closing passage for the night.

Paul, in giving this guidance to the young pastors, describes what is acceptable and not acceptable. And in Titus 2, 4, and 5, older women should be reverent in behavior, verse 3, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. They should admonish the younger women to love their husbands, love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, so that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Failing to do these things brings blasphemy down on the word of God, the law of God, and the embodied word of God, who is Jesus Christ himself. So you can say, well, I don't agree with this because I'm liberated. I don't agree with this because society tells me that I'm good enough and brash enough and bold enough, and I should be able to do anything I wanna do and anything anybody else tells me I should do.

It brings discredit to the word of God. The standard is clear. This is not just cultural, this is spiritual.

And it is a truth that all of us, men and women, anyone who is under authority needs to be submissive, needs to control their tongue, needs to discipline themselves, and have that self-control that reflects honor on the word of God and honor on the Lord Jesus Christ, not the opposite. All of these gendered instructions, husbands love your wives, children obey your parents, wives submit to your husbands, think of them as the same kind of parabolic instruction that we're finding with the crafty harlot. Women can benefit from the husbands love your wives exhortation because it is an example.

It is a paradigm of structure and authority designed by God. And whatever structure and whatever authority, whatever self-control is required, we can look at these examples. We look at Old Testament Israel and learn and are corrected and instructed and rebuked by looking at Old Testament scripture, God dealing with someone else in a different dispensation with different parameters.

And yet we are still instructed. We can still be educated by looking at it. The same is true for all of these.

All scripture is profitable for our instruction because it is all inspired by God. Well, we've covered seven of our 12 points. We'll pick up and see if we can cover the remainder next week, but we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for such clear and practical guidance. Our relationship with you is not an abstraction or a philosophy. It is given to us with not only clear guidance, but with the ability to carry it out.

You've provided to us the power and the wherewithal to be obedient, to fulfill these exhortations and these standards so that we can represent the Lord Jesus in this life and be prepared for the kingdom of the son followed by your own kingdom. And we pray that as we reflect on these truths, your Holy Spirit will show us where we can put them into practice in both the small and large issues of our own lives. And we pray all these things in Jesus name, amen.