



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V21 N43 November 3, 2019

TOXIC

“The Deadly Distraction of Lust ”

Proverbs 6:25-29

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Love

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”

1 John 4:10-12



What are the consequences of adultery?

The psychological term “fatal attraction,” defined as an attraction to the very qualities in a person that ultimately lead to the relationship’s demise, as in the example, “I was completely enamored by his self-confidence and charm, but discovered it was just a *fatal attraction* to a man who turned out to be a complete narcissist,” earned the following Urban Dictionary definition after the release of the movie starring Michael Douglas and Glenn Close thirty-something years ago: “A fatal attraction basically goes beyond normal attraction for someone. It gets to the point where a person may become morbidly infatuated with their love interest to the point where it can get unhealthy even dangerous. If you find yourself *boiling rabbits*, you may have a problem” (*Urban Dictionary*, s.v. “fatal attraction”). “Boiling rabbits” is an allusion to the movie. Glenn Close’s character seeks revenge on her ex-lover by placing his family’s beloved pet rabbit in a pot of boiling water when he is away from home.

In a 1987 interview with *Good Morning America*, Michael Douglas remarked that what made the movie so scary was that the situation “could happen to anybody.” “I think that we all sometimes can have a moment of indiscretion,” he explained. “In the picture, there happened to be some extenuating circumstances that just were created at this particular moment at that time— ‘I made a mistake.’ And the picture’s about paying for that mistake” (abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/fatal-attraction-turns-30-glenn-close-hated-ending/story?id=49929926). The point of the quote is the star’s mention of the *high price paid* by his character for his indiscretion—a point not lost on his audience, some saying that it struck fear into the hearts

of many men tempted to cheat on their wives.

Proverbs 6:25-29 isn’t about love, and neither is the movie. It’s about lust, and so is the movie. More specifically, wisdom is about the inescapable consequences of having an affair with another man’s wife—fueled by lust, of course. (Herein Proverbs differs a bit from the movie’s illustration of it. Michael Douglas is the married one in the movie, and Glenn Close is not.) While not condoning prostitution, the father in Proverbs tells his son: “A woman who sells her love can be bought for as little as the price of a meal. But making love to another man’s wife will cost you everything” (CEV). One commentator writes: “The father’s first argument, that adultery is more costly than prostitution, no more endorses sex for hire than his third argument (that adultery is more foolish than theft) endorses stealing . . . Adultery, however, is worse [than prostitution] because it involves breaking the marriage vow (see 2:17), wronging a spouse, destroying a home, and as argued here, the debt is out of control” (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, NICOT, 355).

Since the passage is written from the perspective of a father giving wise advice to his son, the father warns his inexperienced son to not fall victim to the wiles of a wicked woman. Of course, flipped on its head, it’s the same advice that a wise mother would give to her inexperienced daughter, namely, not to fall victim to the charms of a married man. Adultery is sin regardless of which gender instigates it. After all, adultery takes two—or one with power over the other, at the very least. Consider the story of David and Bathsheba (2Sa 11; cf., 12:4, 10).

Proverbs 6:25-29

25 *Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes.*

26 *For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread,
but another man's wife preys on your very life.*

27 *Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?*

28 *Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?*

29 *So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished*

READ in other translations

25 *Do not lust in your heart for her beauty,
and do not let her captivate you with her alluring eyes;
26 for on account of a prostitute one is brought down
to a loaf of bread,*

but the wife of another man preys on your precious life.

27 *Can a man hold fire against his chest
without burning his clothes?*

28 *Can a man walk on hot coals
without scorching his feet?*

29 *So it is with the one who has sex with his neighbor's
wife;*

no one who touches her will escape punishment.

(NET)

25 *Don't lust for her beauty.*

Don't let her coy glances seduce you.

26 *For a prostitute will bring you to poverty,
but sleeping with another man's wife will cost you
your life.*

27 *Can a man scoop a flame into his lap
and not have his clothes catch on fire?*

28 *Can he walk on hot coals
and not blister his feet?*

29 *So it is with the man who sleeps with another man's
wife.*

He who embraces her will not go unpunished.

(NLT)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "lust" in v. 25.
- Circle "her" in v. 25.
- Circle "eyes" in v. 25.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 26.
- Bracket "for a loaf of bread" in v. 26.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 26.
- Bracket "preys on your very life" in v. 26.
- Box "so" indicating *comparison* in v. 29.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Identify which one of the *five* senses is linked to “lust” in verse 26 and any practical inferences you draw from that observation.
2. To whom does the pronoun “her” refer?
3. Use line two in verse 25 to clarify the meanings of “lust” and “beauty” in line one.
4. Describe the *relationship* of verse 26 to verse 25 indicated by “for.”
5. Explain the *contrast* in verse 26.
6. Is verse 26 *recommending* prostitution over adultery? Explain.
7. Identify the implied answer to the *rhetorical* question in verse 27 and in verse 28.
8. These two *rhetorical* questions make the same point. What is it?
9. The wise father seems certain the adulterer won’t get away with it. Are you? Explain.
10. **Discussion:** Adultery, which takes flirting to the next level, hardly gets mention as a *deadly sin* nowadays. Talk about it.

Commentary On The Text

Proverbs 6:25-29 contains a wise father's warning against adultery, similar to his previous one in 5:1-23 and to his following one in 7:1-27. His second admonition begins in verse 1 and ends in verse 35; like the other two it is addressed to "My son" (6:1, 20; 7:1). One commentator unpacks it this way. He writes: "The lesson consists of an admonition not to desire the unchaste wife (v. 25), backed up by successive supporting arguments marked off by *ki* 'because' (vv. 26, 34). The son must not lust for her because the price of adultery is severe, inevitable, and unending (vv. 26-31) and because the flamingly jealous cuckold will never accept any compensation for the wrong done him less than the total destruction of the adulterer (vv. 32-35). Comparisons and contrast make the first argument. The *severity* of the penalty is established by contrasting the price of the prostitute — a meal — with the price of the adulteress — one's very life (v. 26). Its *inevitability* is illustrated by comparing adultery with playing with fire (vv. 27-29). Its *unending* duration is established by contrasting adultery with robbery: a thief can make compensation for his wrongdoing, but the adulterer cannot (vv. 30-33)" (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, NICOT, 353, italics added). Verses 33-35 specify the punishment ensuing from the liaison (cf., v. 29). "The one who touches her" *pleasurably* (v. 29), namely, another man's wife, will be touched *painfully* by her jealous husband's rage (vv. 33-35).

Verse 25 contains the father's "command" (v. 20), called a "lamp" and a "light" as well as "correction" and "instruction" that are "the way to life" (v. 23), which will keep his son from an unchaste wife (v. 24). *The Message* puts the command this way: "Don't lustfully fantasize on her beauty, nor be taken in by her bedroom eyes." In the NIV, "lust" in line one is further defined by "captivate" in line two, suggesting a compelling desire that dominates its subject. And "beauty" in line one is further defined by "eyes" in line two, suggesting the woman's seductive or flirtatious glances.

Verse 26 uses *contrast* to explicate the reason behind the command in the previous verse. The price of adultery is ever so much greater than the price of prostitution. On the one hand, sex with a prostitute can be bought for a measly sum — the price of a loaf of bread. But on the other hand, sex with another man's wife can cost everything — a

jealous husband's rage can actually be deadly — not to mention the myriad of other deadly consequences that figuratively speaking adultery brings.

Verse 27 and verse 28 contain rhetorical questions, the answer to which is assumed to be "no" or "certainly not." Put directly: "A man cannot scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned," and "A man cannot walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched." The point of the questions is obvious. Both indicate that the cruel consequences of adultery are inevitable. The adulterer, like someone playing with fire, can expect to be burned. No wonder the father tells his son "a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself" (v. 32).

Verse 29 opens with "so" indicating *comparison*. Likewise, the man who sleeps with another man's wife cannot expect to go unpunished. This man touches another man's wife for *pleasure*, but her jealous husband touches him for *pain*, striking him with "blows" (v. 33). One commentator puts it this way: "Adultery with a married woman is so lethal a business that the who perpetrates it is mentally deficient and is the agent of his own destruction . . . However much money he may have, he will find that an outraged husband, mad with jealousy, will prefer his pound of flesh to the most handsome financial reparation, and will exact his revenge in violence and in stamping the offender with an indelible stain of disgrace" (William McKane, *Proverbs*, OTL, 330, 31).

In a nutshell, the point the father is making to his son is that adultery is a deadly serious, foolhardy act. Of course, it's sin, and of course, sin has its eternal *spiritual* consequences. The father would not deny this, but his focus is on the *physical* costs of adultery in this life such as separation, divorce, financial and emotional loss, displacement, alienation from extended family and former friends, and so on. Affairs appear to cost nothing, but ironically far from being free, they cost the adulterers everything. Infidelity and adultery, have been the topics of tragic tales told in innumerable plays, novels, and films both past and present. They never have happy endings. Adulterers in these narratives never live "happily ever after."

Word Studies/Notes

v. 25 *lust* Cf., “Do not desire her beauty in your heart,” (ESV); “Don’t want her because she is beautiful” (ICB); “Don’t be tempted by their beauty” (GNT). “The emphasis is put on the responsibility of the man. Only too often in these chapters is the woman quickly blamed. Now the teacher stresses the unruly desire of the male. He is to watch over his ‘heart,’ as well as refuse to be caught by her eyes (cf. Cant 4:9)” (Roland E. Murphy, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 22, *Proverbs*, 39).

v. 25 *her* The pronoun “her” refers to a married woman rather than a prostitute; cf., “neighbor’s wife” (v. 24); “another man’s wife” (vv. 26, 29); and “commits adultery” (v. 32; cf., v. 34). “The lesson consists of an admonition not to desire the unchaste wife (v. 25) backed up by successive supporting arguments marked off by *kî* ‘because’ (vv. 26, 34)” (Waltke, 353).

v. 25 *eyes* “Heb ‘her eyelids’ (so KJV, NASB); NRSV ‘eyelashes’; TEV ‘flirting eyes’). This term is a synecdoche of part (eyelids) for the whole (eyes) or a metonymy of association for painted eyes and the luring glances that are the symptoms of seduction (e.g., 2 Kgs 9:30)” (*The NET Bible*, 57tn on Pr 6:25). “She arouses his lust for her with the pupils of her eyes [cf., 4:25]. Probably one should assume that she used eye makeup, a mixture of black burn or crushed antimon, to enhance her beauty (cf. 2 K. 9:30; Jer. 4:30). Archaeologists have uncovered cosmetic boxes, bowls, and spoons. ‘A wife’s harlotry shows in her lustful eyes, and she is known by her eyelids’ (Sir. 26:9)” (Waltke, 354). “The warning, ‘let her not catch thee with her eyelids,’ refers to her (the adulteress’s) coquettish ogling and amorous winking” (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, vol. VI, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, 151).

v. 26 *for a loaf of bread* . . . The Hebrew be translated either as “on account of” or “for the price of.” “Most expositors take the first reading, though that use of the preposition is unattested, and then must supply ‘one is brought to.’ The verse would then say that going to a prostitute can bring a man to poverty, but going to another man’s wife can lead to death [cf., NASB, NLT]. If the second view were taken, it would mean that one had a smaller price than the other [ESV, GNT]. It is not indicating that one is preferable to the other; both are to be avoided” (*The NET Bible*, 58tn on Pr 6:26). “Either harlotry brings

poverty to a person, but adultery means death, or one pays a mere loaf of bread for a harlot compared to the high price (life) exacted by adultery” (Murphy, 36, note 26.a.).

v. 26 *your very life* Cf., vv. 32-35. “When a man goes to a prostitute, he lowers himself to become nothing more than a ‘meal ticket’ to sustain the life of that woman; however, when a man commits adultery, he places his very life in jeopardy – the rage of the husband could very well kill him” (*The NET Bible*, 60tn on Pr 6:26). “The price that one pays for harlotry is as nothing, a mere ‘loaf of bread’ – compared to the price for adultery, one’s very ‘life’” (Murphy, 39).

Other Texts to Consider

Colossians 3:5-11

“5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world. 6 Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. 7 You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 9 Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. 10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. 11 In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us ”

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Don't even consider committing adultery because any fleeting pleasure that it might bring is more than offset by its costly cruel consequences.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

My parenting success used to be measured by how well my kids behaved at school, church or extracurricular activities. One of my boys played soccer in elementary school. The volunteer coach, who might I add was a friend from church, pulled me aside and asked if anyone had ever told me that he had a hard time paying attention and talked when he was supposed to be listening. Say what?! That poor child got an ear full later: "If you ever embarrass me like that again I'll snatch you bald headed." Needless to say, that wasn't a very effective method of discipline. It wasn't until my kids were older that I heard the term "redemptive discipline" and my eyes were opened. Our job as parents isn't to enforce the right behavior but shape their behavior as an outflow of what's in their heart. If we try to control our child's behavior, we don't address the deeper need - their heart before the Lord. When we help our children align their hearts to God, the outflow is evidenced not only in the fruit they bear, but their behavior. This is a life-long endeavor that is even more important as you launch them into the teen years and help guide the choices they make. Let me encourage you today to take the focus off your child's behavior and instead work on their heart. We promise to come alongside you in this method of discipline as well as earnest prayer for your children and your family. Blessings!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Psalm 51:10, 17.

1. What two things is the Psalmist asking God to do (v 10)?
2. What is God asking for in verse 17?
3. What does *contrite* mean?

What Do You Think?

Why does God want a pure, broken, or contrite heart?

What Do You Do?

Clean half a window inside and out. Look at the difference between the clean and unclean halves. Which side is easier to see through? If your heart is pure or clean, how will that make a difference in your life?

CORE COMPETENCY: Single-mindedness

I pay attention to what God things is important for my life.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 51:10

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org