

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

PROVERBS 5-9

Someone once observed, “Behind every successful man there are two women – a good wife and a surprised mother-in-law.” That may be true.

But Solomon counts two other women in every man’s life – not his wife and mother-in-law - but **the immoral woman** and **Lady Wisdom**.

In tonight’s chapters Solomon tells his son that he should shun the immoral woman at all costs, and embrace Lady Wisdom.

Chapter 5 begins, “My son, pay attention to my wisdom; lend your ear to my understanding, that you may preserve discretion, and your lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil...” She’s like a fly trap. She’s sweet to the taste. But once you land on her you’re stuck. It’s a fatal attraction.

Verse 4 “In the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.” The word translated “wormwood” means “bitterness”.

The Hebrews used a poisonous herb to keep moths out of their clothes. It was this same word, “wormwood.” Solomon is warning his son that kissing an immoral woman is like cuddling up to a box of mothballs.

Understand the deception involved with illicit sex. There is an initial promise of pleasure... but in the end there’s deep, severe bitterness.

Here's a quotation that appeared in "*New Woman*" magazine.

Listen to one lady's heart-wrenching confession, "I am 35 years old and have only recently come to terms with the fact that my free attitude about sex has been destructive. After many lovers, three serious affairs with married men, two marriages, one abortion, and herpes, I wish someone had suggested that my casual attitude was wrong."

It reminds me of how a polar bear hunts for seals – *his favorite food*.

Polar bears can hold their breath for incredible periods of time – nearly 12 minutes. They swim under the ice and start scratching at the backside of the ice. The seals hear the noise and think it's a school of fish. They think, "*Holy Mackerel,*" and dive into the jaws of a hunger polar bear.

Sexual temptation scratches an itch. It looks fun. It offers an escape from the boredom or the pressure. You're tempted to think, "*Aw, there're no consequences for folks in the movies.*" The end result though is not happiness or blessedness - but bitterness... wormwood... mothballs!

Solomon continues to describe the immoral woman, "**Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of hell. Lest you ponder her path of life - her ways are unstable; you do not know them.** Beware of her intentions!

In the beginning lust has a way of looking like love. How often has a girl given in to a guy's advances just because he said he loved her? In the end, all he did was use

her up and throw her away.

A woman won't have too high a view of herself if she allows her body to be used by a man for his selfish gratification. What happens to her self worth when all she becomes is someone's sex toy - a sexual pacifier?

No wonder our society is plagued by a gross lack of self-respect.

Verse 7 **“Therefore hear me now, my children, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.** Teenagers like to learn through trial and error.

Yet sex is one area where the stakes can be too high. Illicit sex causes great damage – physically, emotionally, morally, and spiritually.

It's better to listen to someone wiser, and take heed to God's Word.

“Remove your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house...” Here's the golden rule for unmarried male and female interaction: **“Time plus Opportunity equals Trouble.”** Take a normal, healthy male and female – give them enough time – and provide them enough opportunity - and sparks will fly. It's a given. The two are headed for serious trouble.

And I don't care how committed they are to purity. Given *enough time* and *enough opportunity* and they won't be thinking spiritual thoughts.

They may start out *praying for each other*, but they'll end up *preying on each other*. Always remember, **“Time plus Opportunity equals Trouble.”**

If you're a single guy I advocate kissing your girlfriend all you want - just as long as the two of you are in front of her mom and dad and brothers.

Protecting sexual purity involves time and place. **If there's opportunity make sure there's no time. If there's time eliminate any opportunity.**

As Solomon says, **"Do not go near the door of her house..."**

"Lest you give your honor to others, and your years to the cruel one..."

Here's what's missing from the world's attitude toward sex – honor has been lost. *Honor, self-respect, dignity...* should be at stake when you give yourself away sexually. Sexuality is the most intimate part of our identity.

Once a four year-old boy went with his dad down the street to see a new litter of puppies. When he got home he was so excited.

The little boy said to his mom, **"Mommy, there were two boy puppies and two girl puppies."** The mother asked him how he knew there were two boys and two girls. He answered, **"Well, Daddy picked them up and looked underneath. I think it was printed on the bottom."**

Our sexuality does say a lot about who we are as people.

Sex is not as Lenin said, **"Like drinking a glass of water."** Sex is more than a biological function – it's the deepest part of who we are.

Sexual expression is the most intimate statement we can make.

Your sexuality should be so highly prized and valued you don't give it to anyone unless they back up their love with a lifetime pledge. Sex outside of marriage only degrades and cheapens who you are. This is why 1Corinthians 6 calls promiscuity, "a sin against your own body."

Verse 10, avoid the immoral woman, "lest aliens be filled with your wealth, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner..."

Here's the plight of many an adulterous husband. He violates his vow - he betrays his family - now his expensive alimony and child support are helping to buy his wife's second husband a brand new boat.

Strangers are filled with *your* wealth! And nobody here's feeling sorry for you. Solomon warned you beforehand. Adultery comes at a cost.

There's another price to pay, "and you mourn at last, when your flesh and your body are consumed..." You can get a disease. Illicit sex poses a risk to your health. *What an appropriate verse for the era of AIDS.*

Today the spread of STDs has reached epidemic proportions...

A March, 2008 report from the CDC said 26% of American women aged 14-19 were infected with a STD. One in four teenage girls has a venereal disease. Among African Americans, 48% of adolescent girls are infected. Sexual promiscuity takes a toll on your health and can eat up your body.

Today's society has broken God's laws regarding sex and we're reaping the results. **We've sowed to the wind, and we're reaping the whirlwind.**

Here's what our society has said, **"How I have hated instruction, and my heart despised correction! I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me! I was on the verge of total ruin, in the midst of the assembly and congregation."** Disregard God's law concerning sex and you'll find yourself ***"on the verge of total ruin."***

I read where the Illinois Department of Natural Resources reported that 17,000 deer are hit by motorists in their state each year. And peak season for deer kill is late fall... which is the mating season. The frisky deer are so consumed with sex they get distracted, and end up becoming road kill.

Solomon is warning us... we too will end up road kill if we don't learn to honor and control our sexuality! We need to obey the voice of wisdom.

Verse 15 **"Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well. Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets?"** Usually, adultery is defined as sex with a person who's married to someone else, but premarital sex is also adultery.

Sex before marriage is *adultery in advance*.

It's still sex with someone who's not your spouse. You sin against your future spouse when you don't love them enough to reserve yourself.

“Drink water from your own cistern...” If your spouse is the only person with whom you’ve ever had sex it doesn’t matter *what kind of kisser they are, or how frisky they get, or the complications you might encounter* – nothing dampens your enjoyment because that’s all you know.

Comparison is the killer. It slays love and enjoyment. It breeds doubts and discontent. Drink from your own well and you’ll be satisfied.

The notion today that you’ve got to try somebody out before you marry them – live together for awhile – is a lie straight from the father of lies.

Today 54% of couples who marry shackled up beforehand... The number in 1960 was 439,000 couples. Today it’s over 6,000,000.

Yet statistics prove that couples who lived together before marriage are at a greater risk for divorce than couples who do not. A Rutgers University study says couples who shack up are 48% more likely to divorce.

As Solomon will tell us later in the Proverbs - Proverbs 14:12 - **“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death...”**

“Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love.” And don't be shocked by the language! God is no prude! He invented sex. He isn't blushing.

God created sex not just for *procreation* but *pleasure*. It's God's will for you and your spouse to have a *thrilling* and *fulfilling* sex life. He knows the best environment for uninhibited expression is the security of marriage.

Only a married couple can be truly lavish in their love-making!

I heard of a movie star who appeared on a late night talk show.

He was asked, "What makes a good lover?" The host was baiting the actor for some juicy description of sexual foreplay. Instead he replied, "A great lover is someone who can satisfy one woman all her life long... and who can be satisfied by one woman all his life long. A great lover is not someone who goes from woman to woman... Any dog can do that."

"For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths." Kathy and I dated when she was in nursing school. She lived in a dorm – and in the foyer hung a portrait of a man named Sewell. We called him, "Daddy Sewell."

Wherever you were in the room Daddy Sewell was over you. It was creepy. It looked like he was always watching. Daddy Sewell definitely quenched some of the smooth moves I was tempted to try.

I should've realized it wasn't just Daddy Sewell watching. Our sexuality is not as private as we think. The eyes of the Lord are always on us.

God “ponders all his paths. His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin.” Your sin will find you out.

The Bible speaks of “the wages of sin.” Sin has a cost. Sometimes the price isn’t due until long after the purchase, but it eventually comes due.

Chapter 5 closes, “He shall die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.” He ends up deceived.

Chapter 6 begins, “My son, if you become surety (or co-sign) for your friend, if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, you are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth.”

Never co-sign for a debt you’re not prepared to pay yourself. “So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; for you have come into the hand of your friend: go and humble yourself; plead with your friend.

Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler.” Solomon is saying if you’ve already made this mistake, before you go to sleep - as quickly as possible - try to get out of the obligation.

Verse 6 is a famous verse, “Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.”

Solomon rebukes the lazy man, who refuses to work - or the

guy who wants to get rich quick and hit the jackpot. He's after instant wealth.

Solomon points to the ant. An ant labors long and hard all summer and stores up food for the winter. The ant saves. An ant thinks long range – not just about the immediate consequences of its actions.

Learn from the ant! He knows how to save for a rainy day.

Apparently, when Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth...” He wasn't thinking of saving, but hoarding – *stockpiling just to show-off how wealthy you are*. Saving and stockpiling are different.

The wise man saves *today* for *tomorrow's* expenses.

“How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep?” You'll always *lack* if you lie in the sack. Get up and go to work.

“A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep - so shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man.” If you don't plan ahead the future sneaks up on you.

Verse 12 “A worthless person, a wicked man, walks with a perverse mouth; he winks with his eyes, he shuffles his feet, he points with his fingers; perversity is in his heart, he devises evil continually, he sows discord.” Here's a person you should avoid like the plague...

He's an expert at double talk. She never means what she says and she never says what she means. He's the opposite of a straight-shooter.

His *body language* betrays his *verbal language*. He speaks, then he winks – implied is there’s a catch. “**Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy.**”

Verse 16 “**These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him...**” Did you know God can hate? 1John 4:8 tells us “**God is love,**” but there are some things this loving God hates.

Suppose a mad dog enters your backyard and bites your daughter.

You love your daughter – and because that love is so strong – you now hate that dog. It’s harmed someone you loved. This is the cause of God’s hatred. He despises anything that might hinder or harm one of His kids.

And here’s God’s hate list. Verse 17 “**A proud look...**” Satan fell from heaven because of pride. Arrogance is the source of all ongoing sin.

“**A lying tongue...**” God demands honesty. The only sin God can’t forgive is the sin you won’t confessed. Don’t lie, deny, or justify sin.

“**Hands that shed innocent blood...**” God hates hands that exploit the helpless. The abortionist and the child abuser fit into this category.

“**A heart that devises wicked plans...**” It’s bad enough to fall into sin, but God hates people who sit down and premeditate sin – that plan and plot.

“**Feet that are swift in running to evil...**” Run *from evil* – not *to evil*.

“A false witness who speaks lies...” Here’s a guy who perjures himself. He betrays the truth – and a fellow human being - for selfish gain.

And number 7... Solomon calls this sin an “abomination.” Here is the most sinister of sins. And you’re thinking mass murderer, serial rapist, child molester... No, *the abomination* is “one who sows discord among brethren” - the church member who stirs up friction in the fellowship...

The worst sinner in the house is the person who points out problems - nurses wounds - aligns brother against brother and sister against sister. *God hates the person who rocks the boat then blames it on the storm.*

“My son, keep your father's command, and do not forsake the law of your mother.” Listen to your parents. It’ll save you lots of trouble. “Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck.”

When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life, to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life.”

Here again is the evil woman - the harlot – or the woman who after a few drinks acts like one. Here’s a desperate

housewife - and notice her ammunition... She sets the trap with **flattery, figure, and flirtation.**

Solomon calls this **“the means of a harlot.”** Here’s the bait she uses to catch the **flounder.** She builds him up. She knows what men like to hear - even if it’s not true. She uses a *little crappie* to catch a big flounder.

Next, she paints on some skin tight pants and wears a shirt that shows her cleavage. Now, she’s hoping to catch a groper – *I mean grouper!*

Finally, she flirts and teases. A wink, a touch, a brush up against him - she’s trying to *tuna* him on. She’s fishing with *flattery, figure, flirtation...*

Let me say a word tonight to the young ladies.

You can be a Christian – devoted to God – yet still employ **“the means of a harlot”** in your interaction with the opposite sex. What do you use to impress the guys? Do you flatter? Show-off your figure? Are you a flirt?

I know you’re not a harlot – so why use **“the means of a harlot?”**

Are you not valuable enough - with a winsome enough personality - to attract a boy’s attention for who you are as a person? Why do you think you have to flatter or flirt - or show him some skin? What does that say about you? Expect a guy to be interested in you for who you are.

The reason I fell in love with Kathy is she was the first girl I ever met who wasn’t interested in me just for my body! I was so tired of girls who wanted to go out with me just to have a trophy date on their arm.

Kathy valued me and wanted to get to know me as a person. Here's my point, if you're not a harlot - then don't use "the means of a harlot!"

Verse 27 "Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared?"

Let me get bold. Some of you are on the edge. You've already gone too far – at least in your thoughts. You'll get burned if you don't *about face!*

Right now there's a woman at work who's caught your attention. She's attractive. You took her to lunch and brushed it off as "*just business*". Last week you gave her a ride home after work - called it "*being considerate*".

But you know what it is. You're playing with fire...

Perhaps you're single. You've met a nice girl. You've been going to her apartment after dates to watch television. Supposedly, it's under control!

But you too are playing with fire, and you can't play long and not get burned. No one is immune. I don't care who you are – or how strong you think you are – "Enough Time plus enough Opportunity equals Trouble!"

"So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent. People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; he may have to give up all the substance of his house. Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so

destroys his own soul.” That’s a high price to pay for a few hours of pleasure.

But there’s more... “Wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away. For jealousy is a husband's fury; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will accept no recompense, nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.” Here’s a warning!

The adulterer is charging on another man’s account - yet eventually he’ll have to pay up. Judgment comes. There is a day of vengeance. The adulterer will have to face the fury of the man he’s defrauded.

Chapter 7 “My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye.

Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words.” The best protection from sexual seduction is to remember God’s Word. “Write them on the tablet of your heart...”

Psalm 119:9 is a favorite verse. It asks, “How can a young man cleanse his way?” He answers, “By taking heed according to Your Word.”

The only force powerful enough to tame a young man’s passions is God’s Word. The cure for sexual temptation is biblical conviction.

Here’s how this applies - whenever I see a foxy-looking lady

I view her biblically... **First**, I appreciate her beauty. God could've made her ugly, but He made her pretty, so I whisper a prayer, "**Good job God.**" Then move on.

It's not the first glance – it's the lingering, lusting look that's a sin.

Second, I remember beauty is fleeting. Baring lots of surgery and botox in a few years she'll be all bags and sags. Only inward beauty truly lasts.

Third, if I need to interact, I look her in the eye. Look into a person's eyes and it humanizes them. They're not an object. They're a person. I remind myself that this pretty girl is a person for whom Jesus died.

And **fourth**, I pray for her soul... *The point is to think biblically.*

Verse 6 illustrates the immoral woman at work. "**For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, and saw among the simple (naïve), I perceived among the youths, a young man devoid of understanding, passing along the street near her corner; and he took the path to her house in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.**"

There's an old, Danish proverb, "**No one can be caught in a place he does not visit.**" Stay away from wrong places. As Paul wrote Timothy, "**Flee also youthful lusts...**" "**Time plus Opportunity equals Trouble.**"

"And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious, her feet would not stay at home."

She's on the prowl. Here's a lady who isn't looking for a *relationship* as much as a *conquest*. She's out to prove she's still attractive and desirable.

Girls, be careful! Some guys only want to date you to prove they can.

After novelist, Susan Howatch, became a Christian she reflected on her promiscuous past, "I woke up and said, 'What am I trying to prove and to whom?' I knew exactly what – that even though my marriage broke up, I could still attract men. The fact that I could control men boosted my fractured ego." This is the attitude of the crafty-hearted woman.

"At times she was outside, at times in the open square, lurking at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him; with an impudent face she said to him: "I have peace offerings with me; today I have paid my vows. So I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you.

I have spread my bed with tapestry, colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love."

This woman falls for the ultimate deception! She provides a *religious rationale* for her sinful liaison. She was in the Temple that morning with peace offerings. God must've brought them together. This is God's will.

It's amazing how sexual passion tinkers with theological conviction. Cult leaders will concoct all kinds of religious justifications for unbridled lust.

Earl Paulk justified his adultery by calling it “a kingdom relationship.”

I heard of another pastor who told a woman in his congregation that God had appointed her as his "affection giver." It's all blasphemy!

Its tragic when *biblical truth* gets betrayed for *sexual touch*.

After telling the young man not to worry about what God will think, she tells him not to worry about her husband either. **For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he has taken a bag of money with him (he'll be away awhile), and will come home on the appointed day.**

With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would cost his life.” The cost was a lot higher than he thought.

“Now therefore, listen to me, my children; pay attention to the words of my mouth: do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths; for she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men.”

Notice, this woman targeted strong men – men who were committed Christians. She got her kicks out of bringing down men who God had raised up! Don't think it can't happen to you!

Solomon ends chapter 7, **“Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.”** She promises heaven, but sends men to hell.

In Chapter 8 Solomon again personifies wisdom. An “it” is spoken of as a “she.” Embrace Lady Wisdom, not the immoral woman. Wisdom is the real beauty - the girl of your dreams! Let me fix you up with Wisdom!

“Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice?

She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors: "To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O you simple ones, understand prudence, and you fools, be of an understanding heart. Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things; for my mouth will speak truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; nothing crooked or perverse is in them.”

The harlot flatters and lies, but wisdom speaks the truth.

“They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.” Be leery of the hyper-spiritual and complicated interpretation.

Over the years I’ve observed Christians who mistake complex for deep. They’ll hear a convoluted teaching or argument and be impressed.

Just because the water is muddy doesn’t mean the pond is deep.

Clear water will look shallow because you can always see the bottom. When it comes to spiritual truth, the simplest is usually most profound.

Verse 10 “Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.” *Listen to wisdom now speak...*

"I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion.

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth.

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me. Riches and honor are with me, enduring riches and righteousness.

My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice, that I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, that I may fill their **treasuries.**" Here was the paradox in Solomon's own life...

To get wisdom you have to desire it more than money. Yet because Solomon asked God for wisdom, God made Solomon rich.

It's interesting two NT passages speak of Jesus as the totality and epitome of wisdom. 1Corinthians 1:30 "He became for us wisdom from God..." And Colossians 2:3 "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge..." Thus, some scholars believe in the next

few verses Solomon will speak of wisdom as prophetic of Jesus.

Verse 22 "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth." John 1:1 says of Jesus, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God..."

"When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primeval dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep..."

Proverbs was written 960 BC. Here the Bible describes the shape of the earth as round. It took science another 2000 years before it got it right.

"When He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men."

Wisdom became Solomon's best friend.

"Now therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it.

Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my

gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD; but he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death." Here's your homework for tonight – go back to verse 22 and read it again. This time when you get to the words "me" or "My" – substitute "Jesus."

Chapter 9 continues, "Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" The immoral woman also enticed the young man to turn in to her.

But here Lady Wisdom is hosting a feast. Wisdom invites us to come.

"As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding." Drink her version of wisdom.

Don't be a know-it-all. "He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself.

Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you." Teach a fool and he'll resent your efforts. The wise man is humble enough to be corrected. He'll even thank you for you rebuke!

Did you hear of the golf pro who was giving a lesson? Every

time he made a suggestion the student had a better approach. The pro just agreed and move on. At the end of the lesson he charged \$75.

Later he was asked how he could take the money when he didn't teach him anything. He replied, "I learned a long time ago it's a waste of time to sell answers to a man who wants to buy echoes." That's Solomon's point.

Earl Weaver, the long time manager of the Baltimore Orioles, once said, "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts." It's true.

Verse 9 "Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." Wisdom never stops learning.

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." The fear of God is like the respect a football player has for his coach. When I played football, I was literally afraid of my coach. He had the power to make my life miserable...

He could run me - bench me - decide *if* and *when* and *where* I played. My football destiny was in his hands. Did I fear upsetting him? *Sure!*

But there was also a "*Fear not.*" For I knew my coach was for me. He wanted me to succeed. He had my best interests at heart.

In a sense I feared him, but in a sense he was my best friend.

And when it came to his instructions, I took them seriously.

For **one**, I didn't want to make him mad. And **two**, I knew they'd help me get better.

My attitude toward my coach was a mixture of love and fear – and that's the fear of God. I follow Jesus because there's a *fear and a fear not*.

“For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you. If you are wise, you are wise for yourself, and if you scoff, you will bear it alone.” Wisdom prolongs life. A scoffer ends up old and lonely.

“A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knows nothing. For she sits at the door of her house, on a seat by the highest places of the city, to call to those who pass by, who go straight on their way: "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here"; and as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of hell.” The myth today is that the best tasting fruit is the forbidden fruit. Don't believe the lie.

Stealing what's not yours – biting what's forbidden – produces an initial rush of adrenalin, but in the end it yields hellacious consequences.