

] Her Paths unto the Dead [

Proverbs 2:16 – 3:22

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~ The Psalmist says, “.... if we acknowledge God in all of our ways He shall direct our paths.” Our last report from our Spiritual Safari took us down a path of realization regarding Solomon and Rehoboam that I don’t think very many people ever come to terms with; and that report reveals a troubling and sobering truth that is hard for most of us to digest. If you haven’t read our last report, I suggest you go back and do so now. Before we move along in this report, we must keep in mind that we are standing on Jewish soil at the time in which we are studying — and the Mosaic Law was in full effect at this time; and the children of Israel were forbidden from inter-marrying with women from the surrounding nations. These commands given to the nation Israel have a tremendous significant spiritual importance for us today. Remember, all these things happened to them as examples unto us.

The young man starting out in life has two natural enemies: the evil man and the strange woman. It doesn’t take any effort whatsoever to get mixed-up with this wrong crowd. The ilk of the world intentionally seek out and find the vulnerable and weak in understanding. The evil man is, naturally, a fool and hypocrite – and that is Satan’s man. You cannot avoid this person today in society. The evil man is in your workplace, in your school, and in your neighborhood. Nothing good will ever come from trying to befriend or associate with this man. The stranger woman is the whore – and don’t blame me for the language – God says that, not me; she is unsaved, and she can destroy a man faster and more completely than the devil himself. So, this is where the young man is being warned specifically and repeatedly about her....

II

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;

17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.

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18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.

19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.

20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous.

21 For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it.

22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

~ If you associate with this woman, you will lose your health, probably your wealth, and you will lose your life; and not maybe or sometimes – every time. Most people do not think too much about the sin of sex outside of marriage today. Our contemporary culture views acceptance of all sexual sins as being “modern,” “advanced” and “progressive thinking” – but it is really as old as the hills. Physical sexual diseases are currently an epidemic in this world. So, let’s be very clear: even if you do not catch a physical sexually transmitted disease, you *WILL* catch a spiritual sexually transmitted disease. They’re the worst kind, by the way; and cannot be avoided any more than the law of gravity can be avoided.

One indiscriminate escapade may ruin a life and testimony for Christ, friends; make no mistake about that. The spiritual diseases that you *WILL* contract from sexual interactions outside of marriage can never be recuperated from – they will literally kill you. God warns heavily, explicitly and unmistakably about this – right here in Proverbs. Obviously, I understand Jesus can forgive us our sins — if we confess them — but most people aren’t interested in confessing them once they are caught up in the cycle; and, if we do not judge ourselves and repent, then the Lord is going to judge these sins. Let’s not kid ourselves about this; it’s serious business — and if God judges your sins with the stranger woman before you do, then

it will be very harsh, very tragic, and the ramifications will last a lifetime. You can just write all of that down....



1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

~ Here are two well-known and shop-worn verses of Scripture comprising a solemn admonition in verses five and six. Whenever someone is called upon in a church meeting, or in a Bible study to quote Proverbs, these two almost always end up being cited. These are definitely from a rich vein of assuring truth regarding studying the Word of God – but these two verses do not and cannot stand alone; we’re told to “.... *study to show ourselves approved unto God.*” That guides us in peace; and the contrast is that which says, “.... *he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.*” The atheist claims he doesn’t need God to love him — because they love themselves. The atheist says he doesn’t need to trust God because they trust themselves. The atheist says sin is not real, that it cannot be proven to be real, and they deny being sinners. So, friends, verses five and six are marvelous, no question; but, they just happen to be inseparable from verse seven. See, this Book of Proverbs isn’t just for the young man; it’s for the young woman, married couples, the middle-aged person and the senior citizen, too....

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

~ Trusting in God brings good physical health! Resting in the Lord, and not in our own abilities, is when we can name the Name of the Lord and depart from iniquity. This is the *O-N-L-Y* way we'll ever get away from sin, friends. This is the only way to avoid complete corrosion of our spiritual life – *AND* our physical life, too. We're talking about total commitment now.

Moreover, when God placed Israel in the Promised Land, God told them, *"this is My land, but I am giving it to you to live in as long as you obey Me."* For the nation Israel, that meant proper sacrifices and tithing. There were, actually, three tithes that accounted for roughly forty percent of their total possessions; but, be that as it may, the very beginning of tithes was brought to the priests for no other reason than to acknowledge God was the Owner of everything.

The evidence of our obedience is submitted first and foremost by how we handle money. Don't bother telling me you're totally committed to God until your bank account is totally committed to the Lord, friends. It is God that gave you every penny you have in the first place. Frankly, I don't care who you are, or how hard you worked for your money, my question is: Who gave you health to work? Who provided the work to be done? Now, don't bother accusing me of being mercenary, either – because this is spiritual, my beloved. Only those with blood-tipped ears to hear can comprehend this. True spirituality isn't the length of the prayer we make; no, it's the amount of the check we write — and who it's payable to. That is the *ONLY* genuine indicator of spirituality. See, the person who does the most talking about God usually does the least amount of giving – and that's just the way it is....

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

~ The Lord is going to chasten us in our lives. We've talked about this before on safari; but I think it bears repeating. God *NEVER* corrects the devil's children; but He does take the belt to His Own children. In fact, if the Lord *isn't* correcting us, then something is radically wrong in our walk with Him. If God loves you, He is going to chasten, correct, and even discipline you. Now, that doesn't mean punishment – not at all. The loving father instructs and corrects their children – but it *isn't* punishment. Punishment is for criminals – not children. Today, man talks about correcting a criminal and punishing children; but, they have this so far inverted they don't even know which way is up. A definitive modern tragedy....

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

~ Chapter three bids the young man farewell as he moves off into the world. This is where his steps form a path of responsibility. And this is the advice given as he comes into contact with reality. Our steps *MUST* be ordered according to the Word of God. I have said that wherever we see “wisdom” in the Bible, we can write over it. *“the Lord Jesus Christ”* — and that holds true here — even though the allegory is expressed as “she.” I believe the type has been changed for a specific purpose: because this signifies more than a mere “duty” for the Christian; it conveys the lovingly devoted relationship of faithfulness a man has with a woman. The young man needs the wisdom of the Word of God as much as he needs a woman to complete his life; just as Eve was the other half of Adam. Further, “wisdom” has a school; and the setting is in contrast to a “stranger woman.”

The Psalmist wrote, “.... Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” God said of Ezra, “he prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” See, there must be a preparation of our heart. When Jesus was with the apostles in the Upper Room He talked to them so friendly, personally and intimately about things that had never been revealed to them before. That’s when Jesus said, *“if you love Me keep My commandments.”* Well, Jesus took it one step farther when He said, *“if a man love Me he will keep My sayings.”* Friends, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ, then He wants to talk to you. The only place Christ is going to speak directly to our heart is in Scripture. Is the Bible just so much ink and paper that you read occasionally; or is it the greatest treasure you own? Our view of what the Bible is, and what it means to us, very definitely determines how much wisdom, knowledge, understanding and discernment we will attain in this life.

See, I have no obligation to write these Spiritual Safari reports. I’m just trying to do what I think God wants me to do. I am sowing the seed of the Word of God under His direction. Sitting at this old beaten up keyboard, typing these reports day after day, is only wonderful because I love the Lord Jesus Christ; and because I just happen to *K-N-O-W* that the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Remember, Simon Peter had denied Jesus and had returned to fishing for fish when Jesus appeared on the

shore of the Sea of Galilee. When Peter had swam to shore, Jesus didn't accuse him of denying Him; no, Jesus asked Peter, "*Simon, lovest thou Me?*" Loving Christ makes all the difference in the world in how our lives are going to play out. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth by Christ Jesus.

When we act out of love towards others and serve God from the lovingkindness of our heart, we will find favor in the sight of God and in the sight of men. That means the Word of God needs to be given out in all of its undiluted and unadulterated truth. What we need is a total and complete commitment to the Lord. Do you trust the Lord when adverse situations arise, and you have no control over very bad things happening to you? How often do you get alone with the Lord and just tell Him that you want to trust Him with all your heart – and with all of your life? Are you able to simply sit still and quietly rest in our Sabbath rest as calamity unfolds? Do you acknowledge God in *ALL* of your ways? It's too easy to lean on our own understanding; which will fail us every time.

It's very easy to just take each day as it comes along and say, "*there's a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune....*" – and all of that nonsense. That error collapses quickly when tested. In the good times, and in the bad times, we need to thank God for *everything*. That's not easy; don't get me wrong – I'm not saying it's easy. Frankly, I'm not even claiming I can do it. But I try! Either way, I know it is the right thing to do; and I know the more we learn to trust Christ, the more victories we will realize in our lives. It takes the average Christian a long time to discover what all of this means. Jesus said, "*if thine eye be single then thy whole body shall be full of light.*" That's an utterly remarkable and amazing statement. If you have committed yourself to God, and you are going down the paths of life with Him — obeying that which He wants you to — then it is unexplainable how everything else just drops right into place....

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck ~

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