

Steps to Effective Seduction – Proverbs 7:1-27

INTRODUCTION

Prostitution is commonly said to be man's oldest profession. There is some truth in this remark. The role of the prostitute is usually occupied by the woman. The man is usually the one who pays for sexual services. The sinful nature of men in particular argues convincingly that the victim is normally the man and the bait is usually the woman. This weakness of the man is perennial. There is no denying this as we see in Holy Scriptures many examples of men having many wives (Solomon had 1000 women in his life – 700 wives and 300 concubines) and not a single example of a woman having many husbands at the same time. This being the case, it is important that men take special note of their weakness as there are many women out there who know of this weakness and will take advantage of it to satisfy their own ends.

The problem with men today is that they allow themselves to be seduced. They do not see fornication or adultery as wrong, least of all a sin! Today's society lacks moral uprightness and families are destroyed because of this moral decay. Lives are ruined and children's hearts are broken when they see their parents break up and go their separate ways. Parents who deceive themselves to satisfy their own lusts decry their responsibilities and sever their conscience by telling their children that it is not their fault. Slogans like "it is not the child's fault" or "mom and dad just can't get along" are lame excuses that can never stand up under the search light of God's truth!

The saddest part of today's moral decay is the failure of the church. Professing Christians are behaving like unbelievers. These so-called Christians commit fornication without any compulsion and definitely demonstrate no fear of God in their lives. Some of these "believers" who are far worse are married leaders in churches. Being pastors and elders do not immune them from committing these sexual sins. Long term service in the ministry and the mere possession of head knowledge of God's Word will also not immune them from the seductive snare.

One of the ways that can help against seduction is to be forewarned. The believer needs to know the steps of seduction so that he will realize from the onset that he needs to get out of it. Ignorance is not bliss in the matter of seduction. The believer has to be acutely and conscientiously aware of the dangers he is constantly in wherever he goes. Not even his home is safe from the seduction of women. It is reported that even during Bible Study, this sin can capture the hearts of fools and lead them into sin. I was told of two husbands who ended up exchanging wives in the course of having Bible Study. Fornication and adultery is not a light sin even though it is a very common sin today. Those who are persuaded into thinking that it is not a sin are deceiving themselves. The one who calls himself a Christian and lives the life of a fornicator or an adulterer is not born again. The perfect Word of God makes this truth abundantly clear. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (KJV) "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." [Emphasis added]

Every believer must be warned against committing this grievous sin! Even if the whole world says that it is not a sin, it will always remain a sin to believers because God will always regard all sexual relationships outside of marriage as a sin. The holiness of God will never change! Therefore, since prevention is better than cure, the believer must take careful note of the steps of effective seduction from God's Word so that he will not fall into any sexual sin.

I. Target the Fool – 7:6-9

Fools will be targeted. No matter how alluring the seduction might be, the onus remains entirely on the man who chooses to succumb or not. If he ever succumbs, he has no one to blame but himself. He cannot even blame the woman who has seduced him. The Bible says that the father looked through his casement, i.e. leaned forward, and saw through his casement window the simple ones. The word “simple” refers to one who is “silly” or “seducible”. It has nothing to do with his IQ. It appears that the simple ones are easily found. The use of the plural here means that there are definitely more than one. Out of these simple ones, there was one whom the father discerned, i.e. understood to be void of understanding. The word for “understanding” is the same word that is often times translated as “heart.” From this usage, we know that it is not about the IQ but the heart condition of the person. This means that his heart was empty. He was also described as a youth - young and a male. Remember that the father saw through his window this young man who was void of understanding. This means that the conduct of the young man revealed how foolish he was.

Verse 8 describes what he did that made him a fool. The first thing he did was that he passed through the street near her corner. The seductress has a “corner” that belongs to her. She stands at the corner to “catch” her victims. This foolish young man crossed the street where her corner was, and he went near it. The second thing he did was that he went the way to her house. The word for “went” describes a person who walks step by step, like a soldier on the march. The direction and movements are deliberate. He purposefully headed in the direction that he wanted to go. The foolish young man marched toward the way of the house of the seductress. The use of synthetic parallelism here highlights the progressive actions of the young fool. He did this in the darkness of night. It appears that he was ashamed of what he was doing and so he needed the cover of darkness to conceal his deed. It is noted that the word for black in verse 9 is the same word that is translated “apple” in verse 2. The contrast is clear. Verse 2 describes the necessity of keeping the law of God at the centre of one’s eye. One provides cover for protection and the other refers to covering for destruction. When the sun sets in the evening, the Jews begin a new day (the Jews count their days from 6 pm to 6 pm), which should be spent with family at home and then sleep; but this young fool chose to go out in the cover of darkness to sin! What a fool! He went out to search out sin.

II. Target the Eyes – 7:10-12

Now that the young fool has found himself in the presence of the seductress, the focus shifts to her strategies to lure in her prey. The young fool met a woman who dressed like a harlot and possessed a subtle heart. The fool will surely meet such a woman because he went out of his way to look for her. Now he has found her. What is the attire of a harlot? The harlot dresses to draw attention to her body with revealing and tight fitting clothes. She begins by casting her alluring eyes in the fool’s direction. Wearing tight fitting clothes is not modesty. Modesty is an enemy of the world’s fashion. Christians must not dress immodestly. The heart condition is the key. The harlot possesses a subtle heart, i.e. a heart with a hidden agenda. She wants your life! The man’s weakness is his eyes. By sight alone, the man can lust after a woman in his heart and sin against God! The many dirty magazines published throughout the ages have enabled a man like Hugh Hefner (founder of Playboy Magazine) to make millions and sinfully live his life in his Playboy mansion!

Verses 11 and 12 are in parenthesis and describe her conduct. The dressing and the conduct go hand in hand. The seductress is loud and stubborn. What it means is that she talks a lot and she talks loudly, drawing attention to herself. The word “stubborn” means “rebellious.” She rebels against God and her husband. She is wilful and does what she likes. Instead of staying home, she chooses to go out to do mischief outside of her home and in the streets. The word for “streets” refers to “a broad or wide place.” It was not a narrow deserted street that the seductress was found in, but a wide place where human traffic abounded. Please also note the use of the plural form for the word “streets.” It is not just one wide road but more than one where she waited to ambush her victim! The Bible describes her as waiting at every corner. She is very mobile in her pursuit of a young fool! She knows where to find her prey.

III. Target the Senses – 7:13-15

Now that she has his attention, the next step is to convince the young fool that succumbing to her seduction is not a sin! What is the best way to convince a religious person that a sin is not a sin? Firstly, catch him. The word “caught” means “to seize” or “to fasten upon.” She latched onto him and refused to let him go. Then she kissed him which was meant to arouse him sexually. She removed his guard by her touch. The fool has no chance to escape her clutches. With him in her arms and sexually aroused by her kiss, she said to him with an impudent face (an unashamed face), “I have peace offerings with me; this day I have payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.”

She presented herself as a religious person. She has with her, her peace offerings. Peace offerings were only brought after the sin and burnt offerings have been given to the LORD. In other words, she gave the impression that she was a godly person who kept her religious vows regularly and that she walked closely with the LORD. This is a most effective way to lower the fool’s guard.

Pastors and elders are prime candidates to use the seductress’s ploy of religiosity to deceive the flock. The cloak of religiosity is a powerful method to seduce anyone. The seductress employed it very effectively as the victim allowed himself to fall into her web of deceit. To ensure immediate success, she inflated his ego. She said that she had come to seek diligently someone just like him! She praised him and made him so desirable. The fool was the one she had been seeking. The word “seek” means “to rise up early to perform a task.” The emphasis is on the early rising without delay or procrastination. The fool would obviously feel very good about himself. Inflating his ego was the obvious next step after the religious talk. Which man does not like to be told that he is “the one” being sought after? From the eyes to the senses, she slowly reeled the fool in.

IV. Target the Heart – 7:16-20

She followed up her religiosity and flattery with a tantalising thought of her bed being decked with coverings of tapestry and carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. These point to a woman of substance. She has perfumed her bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. These were mentioned (especially the bed) to inflame his lusts which she had already ignited with her touch and kiss. These ointments indicate that she was not poor but quite well off. She knew that she had snared the foolish young man and verse 17 tells us that she was very desirous to have him. The word “come” is in the imperative. She said to him to have his fill of sin to its fullest and not be inhibited in any way. The word “solace” means “to delight oneself.” She wanted him to be like a man with a voracious appetite who is urged not to stop eating until he is stuffed and can eat no more!

Just in case he might be afraid of getting caught, she now targets his heart so that the fear of being caught is allayed. Fear of being caught in sin is a good deterrent for sinning. The seductress

knew the psyche of sinful man very well. She assured him that, “the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey. He hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed.” With audacity, she addressed her own husband as a goodman in her determination to get the young fool to defile her bed. “He will not be home to catch them in their sin” was the assuring cry of the seductress. “He is away on business and will only return at a fixed date and time! Do not worry. If we don’t say anything, no one would know.” She admitted to him that she was married. This information should have been sufficient to wake him out of his sexual stupor. Sadly, he slumbered on.

This scene has played itself out innumerable times throughout the ages and more fools continue to take the same footsteps to their doom and ruination. Families are destroyed with impunity and hardened hearts are numbed to the destruction they leave behind. Deaf ears pervade our society as mothers and fathers cannot hear the desperate cries of their children for help even as they lose their childhood forever. Many fathers and mothers have had their hearts broken because their sons and daughters have treaded this sinful path. What a tragedy. Deceit and sexual promiscuity have ruined the morals of our world. There is no return unless the LORD comes and destroys everything the way He did in the days of Noah and allowed man to start afresh. Alas, this is wishful thinking. We are living in the last days. Sinful man has wasted his second try. There will be no third try.

We should be less concerned with what our fellow man thinks and be much more concerned with what God thinks of us. The fool must know that he can never hide from God. It is not what knows of his sin that he should be concerned with but rather what God knows period; and He knows everything about every man. Therefore, the ploy and the web of deceit spun by the seductress would fail immediately if only the young man had the fear of God in his heart. There is no other protection that can help.

V. Execute Without Delay – 7:21-23

The success of her seduction or rather destruction was quick and the fool would land very painfully and very hard. This is how the Bible describes the fool’s fall: “with her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.” She did not use a gun to threaten him into submission. The fool just “yielded”. He surrendered himself to the seductress who employed “fair speech” and “flattery” which refer to the abovementioned manipulation of the fool’s heart, senses and head. These “soft weapons” are more deadly than any “real weapons.” They kill the person silently and he dies willingly and probably with a silly smile on his foolish face.

The fool’s response is vividly described in verse 22. The fool went after her “straight way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or a fool to the correction of the stocks.” The word “straight way” means “suddenly and immediately.” There was no hesitation or pause to consider whether what he was doing was right or wrong. He succumbed to the charms of the seductress without any resistance. He threw away his life and everything he had in an instant of foolishness. The Bible describes this act of idiocy by comparing him with an ox on his way to the slaughter. The ox is strong and very hard working. It was considered to be one of the most expensive animals in the Jewish community. The ox was the most valuable of all the clean animals that could be used for offerings to the LORD. The fool went to be killed willingly. The second illustration on his foolishness is that of “a fool to the correction of the stocks.” This fool is truly an idiot; no one in his right mind who has not done anything wrong would volunteer himself to be chastised and put into fetters. The word “stocks” literally means “anklets.” There was absolutely no reason for him to walk this path

but he did. He went to the corner of the seductress to be caught! The fool walked there to be chastised and put himself into chains! The chains bind for a lifetime.

This is not the end yet. Verse 23 describes the fool as one who will never learn until it is too late. The Bible describes it as “till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.” The dart is like an arrow. When it strikes through the liver, the person dies instantly. The fool is compared to a bird rushing toward a snare. He is oblivious of his own peril, for he is killing his own life. He could easily get a sexually transmitted disease or father a child out of wedlock. Even after repentance and forgiveness is given to him, these consequences will remain for life. Not the least is the staining of his mind - the thought of the sin that he had foolishly committed would surface every time he looks at his wife and he would be reminded of his betrayal of her trust. O what a fool! The life of trust that he has built up with his covenant wife has been erased in an instant. It is forever destroyed, never to be rebuilt. The lives of the children and all those who trust him are shattered as well. No amount of remorse can “put humpty dumpty back together again!”

VI. Guaranteed Destruction – 7:24-27

If the fool takes this path, it is guaranteed that he will be destroyed. There is no escape for anyone, not even for a godly man like King David. David is cited many times in the Bible as the best king Israel ever had. However, not once was he referred to as a godly example to emulate of a godly husband or a godly father. He failed miserably in both these capacities! The father warned his children to hearken (imperative), which means to listen and obey. They must attend to the words of his mouth, “to prick up their ears”, i.e. to listen carefully and correctly to the words of the father.

The warning is in the form of a synonymous parallelism. Verse 25 warns that the children of the father must not allow their hearts to decline (turn aside) to the ways of the seductress. It begins with the heart. Once the heart is purposed not to defile the temple of the Holy Spirit which their bodies are, then they will avoid and not go anywhere near where the seductresses are found. If the seductress searches them out, they would immediately see through her ploys and draw strength from the LORD to run from her. The second line of verse 25 says the same thing and it warns the children not to go astray in her paths. The father begins from the beginning. When a person sleeps with dogs, it is no wonder that he gets the fleas.. Stay away from the paths of the seductress; avoid them like the plague and all will be well. The potency of her charms and seduction is described by the father in verses 26 and 27.

Verse 26 says that she has cast down many wounded, i.e. caused many to fall. Using synonymous parallelism, he drives home the point that she has slain many strong men . A man has no defence against such temptations from the seductress other than avoidance. To confront her is to lose. Many have tried and have been slain by her. Do not think that you are different and it will not happen to you and that you are stronger than others. This is foolishness - pride comes before the fall. When a fool thinks he will never fall, then he is most prone to fall. His guard is down and he walks into his own demise. Verse 27 describes the house of the seductress as the way to hell. Her chambers, i.e. bedrooms, are nothing but chambers of death! To the question of where the way to hell is, the answer is in Prov. 7:27a. The way to hell is the house of a seductress. Death is in her house, on her soft and plush beds inside her many chambers! The warnings are given by God, will you take heed?

VII. Guaranteed Protection – 7:1-5

The first five verses of Proverbs 7 provide us with a guaranteed protection IF we listen and obey. In tenderness, the chapter begins with the father addressing the reader as “my son.” In all tenderness and wanting the best for his son, the father says, “keep my words.” The word “keep” is in the imperative which points to urgency. The word “keep” is “to guard.” This word is used three times in these 5 verses. It is also used in verses 2 and 5. The emphasis is on the value of the content one is guarding. If we do not regard the words of the father as precious, we would not guard them. Many things in life can prevent us from guarding God’s Word - when we do not obey; when we allow our spouses, siblings, relatives, children, jobs, ambitions, personal desires, etc. to cause us to disobey God’s Word, we have lost and failed to keep God’s Word. The synonymous parallelism used in verse 1 supports this understanding. It says, “Lay up my commandments with thee.” The verb “lay up” means “to treasure up.” The emphasis is in continuously laying up without stopping. The moment the child does not treasure the Words of the father, including His commandments, he will soon forsake them. It is only a matter of time before he falls into sin. The words of the father, and in this instance the very words of God, must be the most important truths in the son’s heart and life. It must be above the desires of self and the wishes of spouses, children or best friends. The highest regard for the Word of God is the starting point and must not diminish.

Verse 2 continues the same line of reasoning with an additional truth. Verses 1 and 2 are linked by synthetic parallelism. Verse 2 adds to the truth mentioned in verse 1. Verse 2 points to the blessing that comes with obedience. The son will live. This is an emphatic truth as it is declared in the imperative. The son will certainly live! The condition is that he will keep, i.e. guard the commandments of God. To what extent is he to keep the commandments of God? The next part of verse 2 illustrates by using an emblem. He is to keep God’s law “as the apple of thine eye.” The apple of the eye refers to the dark spot or pupil of the eye where the sight comes from. In other words, the first and last thing in the son’s line of vision should be the Word of God. He is to evaluate everything in his life based upon the Word of God. The Word of God will be his first and last line of defence. This is how he must keep the Word of God. He must not put the Word of God into cold storage but know it and use it as a screen or sieve to evaluate every act, every person every saying or teaching. This way, the son will know that what he does and believe in is right according to Holy Scriptures. There is no other way. This is the way of life and safety.

Verse 3 also begins with an imperative. The son is commanded to bind, i.e. tie something together, God’s commandments upon his fingers. This is a figurative way of saying that every deed of the son must be guarded by God’s Word. God’s Word will be his quality control - Is this act in line with God’s Word? If it is, he will obey and do it wiling. If it is not in accordance with God’s Word, he will not do it. Many things in his life would be a matter of black or white. There will be very little grey areas in his life. He knows what God wants from him and he does it conscientiously. The people of the world see many grey areas because they do not have the Word to guide them. However, God’s son easily knows what is right and what is wrong! The second line in verse 3 also begins with an imperative. This time, the son is commanded to write the Word of God, i.e. record them, onto his heart. When the Word of God is forever etched onto the table of his heart, it remains forever. He carries the Word of God with him everywhere he goes. It does not matter whether he is in the presence of his parents or pastors or elders. He behaves himself and he does so because he is convicted by what is right according to the Word of God. This is what happens when the God’s Word is recorded in the son’s heart! He becomes godly in heart and in life.

Verses 4 and 5 teach the same follow-up truth. The son is to have the right kind of women in his life. Here the father introduces the son to two wonderful women. The first one must be regarded as his sister. The son is commanded (the word “say” is in the imperative) to call wisdom his sister. The personal pronoun is emphasized. Everyone should naturally treat his/her sister with the utmost respect and protect them. We will never defile or sin against our own sisters. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. He is wise when he knows how to act correctly and say the right things to the right people at the right time. With wisdom as one’s sister, whom he respects highly and takes care of, the son will not fall into the folly of sin and succumb to the flattery of the seductress. Using synonymous parallelism, the father restates the same truth using different words for emphasis. The son is told to call understanding his kinswoman, i.e. relative. This is the second woman in the son’s life that he must have with him everywhere he goes! Knowing is not the same as understanding. To understand means to know correctly. For example, many believers have memorized portions of God’s Word such as John 3:16, but not many of them understand that verse well. Philippians 4:13 is another verse that many have memorized but do not understand.

There is nothing on earth more potent and powerful to keep a child of God holy and righteous than God’s perfect Word. This is the open secret the LORD wants all His children throughout the ages to bear in mind. If we do not hide God’s Word in our hearts, we open ourselves to many sins and nothing is more deadly than the seductive snares of a strange woman. Parents, do take note of this truth. Teach your sons well that they do not become a simpleton and fall into the charms of the seductress. Teach your daughters to dress modestly and take care of their inner beauty. The correct emphasis for both the son and the daughter is summed up by this passage in God’s Word: 1 Timothy 2:8-10 (KJV) “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.”

APPLICATION

1. The first lesson a wise Christian must do is to hide God’s Word in his heart and head. This is the protection that can deal with all sins and snares that this evil world hurls at the children of God. The Bible is able to repudiate all sins and temptations. It is able to guard and keep the child of God in the path of righteousness with the fear of God residing in his heart.
2. This must be followed closely by keeping oneself away from sinful people and places of sin. For example, if clubs and activities like clubbing are fraught with seductresses and sinful deeds, then the believer must never go near them. He must avoid them at all costs. To go near them is to play with fire and he will surely get burnt. The pain could be life-long even as sexual sins have lifelong consequences.
3. The third lesson is to teach our daughters to focus on the inner man and not the external at the earliest age possible before the world captures them with their seductive enticements. This emphasis, coupled with the gospel message, will go a long way to keep our daughters in the path of modesty and righteousness and not become an unknowing seductress. Do not forget that every seductress was a cute baby once and loved by her mother. Somewhere along life’s journey, she took a wrong turn and ended up as a seductress. This can happen to any daughter!

4. The fourth lesson is to teach our sons to pray without ceasing and lift up holy hands before God and man at all times. Heed the words of the father in Proverbs 7. Keep God's commandments and bind them on their fingers and their hearts so that His Word is inside them everywhere they go, and they will be victorious through every danger and temptation.
5. The fifth lesson is the importance of the Word of God in the believer's life. There is no substitute for the diligent study of God's holy and precious Word. Anyone who calls himself a believer and says that he is not interested in the study of God's Word is like a person who is not interested in drinking and eating. He will die on both counts, physically and spiritually. Studying God's Word faithfully and consistently, or the lack of it, is one of the strongest evidence of a person's true salvation.
6. The sixth lesson is that the consequences of sin can be life-long. Be sure your sin will find you out. Do not try to sin and cover it up. Sin can never be covered forever. It is only a matter of time before sin rears its ugly head and "bite you in the face." The only way out is sincere and genuine repentance and to turn to Jesus Christ. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can wash away our sins.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What concrete steps can parents take to ensure that their daughters dress modestly in church and when they are not in church? What is considered modest dressing in our modern world? Does this include the hairstyle? What is immodest dressing?
2. Does the rule of modesty apply to sons as well? If it does, then what is modest dressing for our sons?
3. What are some of the places or activities that every son and daughter ought not to go near for spiritual safety's sake? Please explain your reason(s) to support your answer.
4. What are some concrete ways that our sons and daughters can adopt to bind God's Word on their fingers and write God's law onto their hearts? Please explain your answers.
5. The attractions of the world are very great. How can our young people be kept from the seductive snares of the world? Is this the responsibility of the parents or the church?