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## God's Twitter: Wisdom for Sex Proverbs 7

Scripture reading: Proverbs 7

Well, I'm not sure exactly how it happened, but here I am preaching about sex again. Some of you probably remember the first time I gave a sermon about sex. It was only my second time to preach on Sunday morning; it just happened to work out that the other pastors were 'out of town' that weekend. There were lots of reasons to be nervous that day, and to top it all off, my in-laws were sitting in the front row. Well, today, my father-in-law happens to be here again AND my oldest brother is here with his family. When people heard that I was preaching about sex again they started to call me the 'sex pastor', but I just want to nip that in the bud right now ... only Diane can call me that.

Actually, I'm glad to talk about sex today. It's hard for me to imagine an area of life in our culture and in our church in which wisdom isn't more necessary. Remember, one way to define wisdom is that it's recognizing that all of life is connected and that your decisions today will impact your life tomorrow. There are no isolated events or decisions. Just imagine if everyone had wisdom about sex. Do you think it would change things? The answer is YES. If everyone had wisdom for sex it would impact just about everything. It would impact poverty in our inner cities, our health care system, and our prisons. It would impact our court system, it would reduce the need for foster care, and it would mean more little boys and girls being tucked in by both mom and dad at night instead of bouncing back and forth. If you're still not convinced how important it is, just think about all the pain and devastation and turmoil that could be avoided in churches, even in our church, if we simply had wisdom about sex.

On top of all that, for many of you, your most shameful memories are sexual – either because of something that happened to you, or something you did. Sex is more than just physical, so its wounds run deep and can last a lifetime. Our world is desperate for God's wisdom about sex, and so are we. If you don't have God's wisdom for sex, as taught in the scriptures, it could ruin our church, it could ruin your family, and it could ruin you. So let's beg God to open our minds and hearts to His truth today that we might be transformed by it.

Prayer for Illumination

So, what is wisdom for sex? I think our scripture today is all about that, so look back at Proverbs 7. Starting in verse 1, "**My son, keep my words and store up my commands within you. Keep my commands and you will LIVE.**" Remember, the Proverbs are written from a father to his son – and the father is saying here "If you can soak up my teaching into your heart and mind so that you live according to it, you will really experience life in fullness." The Message translation says "Do what I say and you'll live well." The Hebrew word for 'live' is *chayah* and it means more than just staying alive. It means living well. Don't you

want to live well? That's how the father introduces this whole chapter of Proverbs about wisdom for sex – keep my commands and you will live – because he understands something that is so important. And if we don't get this, we'll miss the whole point. **Wisdom for sex is recognizing that living God's way in God's world is the best way to live.** God's way leads to life; it leads to *chayah*. So often, especially when it comes to sex, we think that God's way is a killjoy, that it's stifling, that it's smothering, that it's unrealistic, and that it's boring. Beloved, THAT IS A LIE!

Is sex good or bad? It's good! Sex is amazing – not just because of the way it feels physically, but because there is a spiritual side of sex. And who gave us sex? Who created us for sex? Who made you a sexual being? God did. Praise God for sex! God gave it to us as gift. But like any gift we will only get the most out of it if we use it right way.

Last week Andrew and I went camping. One of the toys we like to play with while we're camping is a remote control truck. Andrew wanted to drive the truck off the cliff and into the lake. I said, "No." He asked, "Why?" What do you think I said? I told him that it would get ruined if we did that because it wasn't made for that. Even though it would be exciting, adventurous, and maybe even fun to see that truck fly off the cliff and into the lake, it wouldn't be good. Because even if it survived the drop from the cliff, and even if it survived the immersion into the lake, it certainly wouldn't *chayah* – it certainly wouldn't be living well.

The same is true with sex. God wants you to have the most amazing and fulfilling sex life that you could possibly imagine. Flip back to Genesis 2.24-25, let's look at the way He set it up in the beginning, "**For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.**" Imagine that for a moment. Isn't that kind of relationship you want? They were absolutely naked and they felt no shame. They were completely honest and completely transparent – knowing everything about each other and yet they felt completely safe – safe because of ultimate acceptance knowing that this person would be absolutely faithful forever - no insecurity, no fear – absolute trust. When we live God's way that's the kind of relationship we can experience, but when we go our own way it hijacks that experience. I'm not saying that you can't have great sex when you go your own way, but the best way to live well is to live God's way in God's world. Wisdom for sex is knowing this and living it out.

But the father in Proverbs knows that there are some folks in the world who aren't on the same page. Look at verse 6 in Proverbs 7, "**At the window of my house I looked out through the lattice. <sup>7</sup>I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who lacked judgment. <sup>8</sup>He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house <sup>9</sup>at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in. <sup>10</sup>Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.**" For the son to live well, he needs to know about the temptress, because she is not to be trusted; she has crafty intent ... and that doesn't mean she likes to crochet. And did you hear the deception in her seduction? . Look at verse 15, "**I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you!**" It's as if he was the only one who could meet her need, but she wasn't looking for a particular one, she was

looking for anyone. She makes it seem like a night of mind blowing sex with her won't have any consequences – that it will be an isolated event that won't make any negative impact on his life – because her husband is out of town. But look at verse 21, **“With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk. All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little knowing it will cost him his life.”** Are there consequences? Yeah. None of those are good images; the youth goes into her house not knowing it will cost him his life. That's the opposite of wisdom. The father is trying to teach his son that believing her lies is a death trap. **Wisdom for sex is not believing the lies of the temptress**

Now, many of you may never face an actual temptress or tempter in this way; you may never have another person come on to you so strongly. But all of us have to learn how to contend with the lies of the culture we live in. Pastor Andy Stanley, whose work was a great resource for this sermon, says it well. He says that the culture is always bating you to the edge of sexual sin but then mocks you when you fall off the edge. For example, when a teenage girl gets an STD, as a culture we call her names we think of her as unclean we put a scarlet letter on her. But before she gets that STD just about every message out there is encouraging her to be sexually active. The magazines that she reads, the programs she watches on TV, the movies that she watches ... she is being lied to all the time. She's being bated toward sexual activity all the time, but if she gets an STD culture thinks she's a problem child.

The same is true with adultery. We are entertained by adultery all the time. What we watch on TV, what we read in novels, what we see in movies, what we hear about on the entertainment news, what we look at on the internet bates us toward the edge. And do you know why there's so much of it? It's because we like it. Our culture is lying to us all the time about sex. And, the fact is that many of us are just like the youth who lacked judgment; we have been seduced. We start believing the lies and soon we're like an ox going to the slaughter, little knowing that it will cost us our opportunity to *chayah* – to really live. Wisdom for sex is not believing the lies of the temptress, but rather knowing the truth and living in it.

The father in Proverbs doesn't want his son just to know about it, he wants him to do something about it. Look at verse 25: **“Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.”** The Message says it this way, **“Don't fool around with a woman like that; don't even stroll through her neighborhood.”** Flip back to Proverbs 5:8, it's the same point in a different verse. **“Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house.”** The wisdom from the father to the son can be summarized in two words: stay away. The problem is our tendency is to want to get as close to sexual sin as we possibly can. We like to walk by the temptress' house; we like to ask, “How far is too far.” But **wisdom for sex is to keep your distance from sexual sin.**

The way that I try to live that out is by having some boundaries, like never travel alone with a person of the opposite sex. It's not a sin, it's just wise because it keeps me far from sin. Another one for me is to not confide in a person of the opposite sex. Do you have some boundaries like that? Even if they're a bit extreme, I bet you won't regret them at the end of your life. If you're NOT married

you need boundaries too. I think you should have avoid traveling alone or eating alone with married persons of the opposite sex. If you're dating I think you should avoid sleepovers – even if he's sleeping on the couch and you're in your bedroom. What boundaries do you have in your life to keep you far from sexual sin? Every single one of us, whether we're single or married, young or old, mature Christians or brand new Christians, needs boundaries.

Wisdom for sex is to keep your distance from sexual sin. If you are trying to experience the wonder and fulfillment and joy of living God's way in God's world you need boundaries. But don't set up your boundaries right at the edge of sin or right at the edge of disaster. Instead, choose from this day forward to set up some boundaries that will help you to stay far from sexual sin. That's what the father in Proverbs is begging his to do – he doesn't want him to even go near the temptress. Beloved, that's how you can *chayah*; that's how you can live well.

For some of you, this has been an area of great failure. And you're sitting here today listening with all kinds of emotions – thinking about what should have been or shouldn't have been. In fact, for some of you, the guilt and woundedness of your past is keeping you from even listening to this message. But you can choose life today. Once, a woman was brought to Jesus who had been caught in the act of adultery. The men who brought her planned to use her as a tool in trapping Jesus. After they made her stand shamefully in front of everyone and pressed Jesus for an answer to what should be done with her, he invited any of them without sin to carry out the punishment. Slowly all of them walked away so that only the woman was left there before the perfect Lord Jesus. And Jesus said, **“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”** (John 8:10-11). Beloved, this sermon isn't meant to condemn you. It's meant to invite you into the wisdom of living God's way in God's world and into experiencing the fullness of God's incredible gift of sex. Today you can choose – *chayah* – to live well, from this point forward. But 'to leave your life of sin' means more than just stopping the sinful behavior; it means dealing with the wounds and unmet longings that lurk beneath the surface; it means accepting the grace of God through Christ that is sufficient, even for you; it means working together, with your church family, to present everyone mature in Christ. As you live God's way in God's world and begin to experience the fullness of relationship for which God has designed you, you will not regret the choice you made today.

So may you choose life. May you have the courage to set up boundaries that help to keep you far from sin. May you have wisdom about sex.

## **SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Sex can be a very tender subject. If you're in a group please start by praying that God gives you wisdom about how to talk about this with each other in a way that helps you grow as disciples of Christ. If you're in a mixed gender group, you might consider splitting into gender specific groups for this discussion or splitting off as married couples and then coming back to reflect on the experience as a whole group.
2. Read Proverbs 7. Take a few minutes to think about what you've read and write down any reflections you have about what it means or what you think is important. Then spend some time discussing your reflections as a group.
3. Compared to other bad decisions we make in our lives, why is it so difficult to recover from bad relational/sexual decisions?
4. Read Genesis 2:21-25. What does this text and the sermon teach us about God's view of sex? What do you think God's will is for your sex life? Why? How is that view expressed in your behavior?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. How strongly does Paul (the author of 1 Corinthians) think we should avoid sexual immorality? What does it look like in real life to flee from sexual immorality rather than to flirt with sexual immorality?
6. Think about, write down and share three very specific boundaries that you're willing to set-up in your life from now on to help you be wise about sex.