

“Don’t Say I Told You So”
Proverbs 6:16-32 (NIV/MIV*)

- 16** There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
- 17** haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
- 18** a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
- 19** a false witness who pours out lies
and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.
- 20** My *children*, keep your father’s command
and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.
- 21** Bind them always on your heart;
fasten them around your neck.
- 22** When you walk, they will guide you;
when you sleep, they will watch over you;
when you awake, they will speak to you.
- 23** For this command is a lamp,
this teaching is a light,
and correction and instruction are the way to life,
- 24** keeping you from your neighbor’s *spouse*,
from the smooth talk of wayward *persons*.
- 25** Do not lust in your heart after their beauty
or let them captivate you with their eyes.
- 26** For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread,
but another *person’s spouse* preys on your very life.
- 27** Can you scoop fire into *your* lap without *your* clothes being burned?
- 28** Can you walk on hot coals without *your* feet being scorched?
- 29** So are *those who sleep* with another one’s *spouse*;
no one who touches her *or him* will go unpunished.
- 30** People do not despise *thieves who steal to satisfy their hunger when they are starving*.
- 31** Yet if caught, they must pay sevenfold, though it costs all the wealth of their house.
- 32** But *those who commit* adultery have no sense;
whoever does so destroys *themselves*.
- (*Mike Imperiale Version)

Introduction

Don’t you just love it when someone gets to say to you, “I told you so!” As we read through passages in the Book of Proverbs, there would be numerous times based on his wisdom sayings that King Solomon would say, “I told you so!” Another wisdom quote comes from P.T. Barnum of circus fame. He was fond of saying, “A sucker is born every minute.” The Bible agrees! Every one of us was born gullible, easily

deceived or convinced. Barnum saw this as an opportunity for profit as so many others do. God sees it, our fallen nature, as something to be corrected, to be redeemed, to be re-created.

A first step to practical living as taught in Proverbs is to identify the gullibility, self-deception or foolishness in ourselves. We would probably all agree that children are easily molded one way or another because of their innocent, inborn naiveté. We would probably all agree that all of us remain that way in some way. And don't make me say, "I told you so!"

I. Six Things; No, Seven (vs. 16-19)

In Proverbs 6, we read, "There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 1) haughty eyes, 2) a lying tongue, 3) hands that shed innocent blood, 4) a heart that devises wicked schemes, 5) feet that are quick to rush into evil, 6) a false witness who pours out lies, and 7) a person who stirs up conflict in the community, someone who sows discord. "Six things, seven" is a common poetic way of emphasizing the seventh. The first six point to the effect of seventh.

The Lord wants us to know that the community of faith is of paramount importance to him. Old Covenant Israel and New Testament Church are God's primary way of showing himself to the world, the world he wants to save.

The haughty eyes of disdainful, cynical, arrogant, nose in the air people have driven many away from the church. More adjectives from the thesaurus: blustering, swaggering, overbearing, contemptuous. An intrusion on his sovereignty, God rejects this. In Isaiah 2, it is said, "The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted. And they will be humbled... The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day" (Isaiah 2:11-17). As another proverb says it: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (16:18).

The lying tongue is deceitful and deceptive, plays loosely with the truth, is fabricated and fraudulent. In Ephesians 4, we read how believers are "Created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body... Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:24-29).

The murderous hand here in Proverbs 6 is deadly. This may describe violence of many kinds. Along with the heart devising wicked plans, hands and hearts can sow discord and destroy community. Of course, this happens in the world all the time, but should be avoided in the church.

David Hubbard, Old Testament scholar and former president of Fuller Seminary, noticed the involvement of the whole person plotting to harm others: the eyes, the mouth or tongue, hands, heart and feet.

II. The Way to Life (vs. 20-23)

As in Proverbs 3 last Sunday, the wise father says, “My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them always on your heart; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.” Psalm 119:105 has it: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.”

III. An Affair: a perennial problem (vs. 24-32)

The wisdom of Proverbs addresses a perennial problem in human behavior. In Proverbs chapters 5, 6, 7, 22 and 23 you will find the warnings about adultery: “keeping you from your neighbor’s *spouse... those who commit* adultery have no sense; whoever does so destroys *themselves*.”

You’ll notice I’ve used the NIV New International Version edited with italics from the *MIV the Mike Imperiale Version*. Because, in ancient biblical times, women were viewed and treated more as possessions than persons. The Hebrew indeed calls for the man (“my son”) to “keep from your neighbor’s wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman.” Well, men can be just as smooth talking and wayward as women. And, “Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes.” Well, women can lust after his looks, so I’m told. Don’t let him captivate you with his muscles. “Another man’s wife *or another woman’s husband* preys on your very life.” Unfortunately, this is still the misogynist practice of hating, mistrusting, mistreating women in many cultures and religions in the world. And our culture isn’t totally out of the androcentric woods.

But, I am sure that the Lord would want both men and women to “keep from your neighbor’s *spouse... for those who commit* adultery have no sense; for whoever does so destroys *themselves*.”

A book review described it as “a thoughtful, detailed discussion of every aspect of considering, preparing for, beginning, and conducting a successful and emotionally fulfilling extramarital affair.” The name of the book is *Affair! How to Manage Every Aspect of Your Extramarital Relationship with Passion, Discretion, and Dignity*. For \$2.69 plus \$3.99 shipping, you can get a practical summary of the lies author Cameron Barnes would have you believe concerning adultery.

Another tragedy is unfolding for an American mega-church. Bill Hybels is the founding and now former senior pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. With an average weekly attendance of nearly 24,000, Willow is the third-largest church in America. Planning to retire this fall after 43 years, he designated two lead pastors to take his place.

On March 23rd, 2018, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article detailing allegations of sexual misconduct by Hybels spanning decades. An internal review of his behavior led to no findings of misconduct. On April 21st, the *Chicago Tribune* and *Christianity Today* reported more allegations. On May

9th, a second investigation indicated that the Board “does not believe the stories were all lies or that all the accusers were colluding against him.” Last Sunday, the *New York Times* published allegations from another former employee of Hybels, who alleges that he repeatedly sexually harassed her in the 1980s. This week, both lead pastors, Steve Carter and Heather Larson resigned. Where does the church do from here?

Among Bill’s 51 books (I have several in my library) are: *Authenticity: Being Honest with God and Others*, *Community: Building Relationships Within God's Family*, *Engraved on Your Heart: Living the Ten Commandments Day by Day*, *Who You Are When No One's Looking*, *Lessons on Love: Building Deeper Relationships*, *Reaching Out: Sharing God's Love Naturally*, and with his wife Lynne in 1993, *Fit to be Tied: Making Marriage Last a Lifetime*.

Proverbs, the practical wisdom of God rhetorically asks, “Can *you* scoop fire into *your* lap without *your* clothes being burned? Can *you* walk on hot coals without *your* feet being scorched? So are *those who sleep* with another one’s *spouse*; no one who touches her *or him* will go unpunished.”

Conclusion

I know how difficult, even devastating this is for so many people, people in this congregation, for families and for the larger community. But, before you put yourself down or before some grow the air of superiority, adultery is one of many terrible sins. Terrible, yes; but don’t forget the 6 things, no 7, that God hates. Then add the hundreds of ways we human being rebel against the Lord.

We also read this in Ephesians 4 this morning. Do you remember? “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Let us pray for one another.

Proverbs 6 (The Message Bible)

- 16** Here are six things God hates, and one more that he loathes with a passion:
17 eyes that are arrogant, a tongue that lies, hands that murder the innocent,
18 a heart that hatches evil plots, feet that race down a wicked track,
19 a mouth that lies under oath, a troublemaker in the family. Warning on Adultery
20 Good friend, follow your father's good advice; don't wander off from your mother's teachings.
21 Wrap yourself in them from head to foot; wear them like a scarf around your neck.
22 Wherever you walk, they'll guide you; whenever you rest, they'll guard you; when you wake up, they'll tell you what's next.
23 For sound advice is a beacon, good teaching is a light, moral discipline is a life path.
24 They'll protect you from wanton women, from the seductive talk of some temptress.
25 Don't lustfully fantasize on her beauty, nor be taken in by her bedroom eyes.
26 You can buy an hour with a whore for a loaf of bread, but a wanton woman may well eat you alive.
27 Can you build a fire in your lap and not burn your pants?
28 Can you walk barefoot on hot coals and not get blisters?
29 It's the same when you have sex with your neighbor's wife: Touch her and you'll pay for it. No excuses.
30 Hunger is no excuse for a thief to steal;
31 When he's caught he has to pay it back, even if he has to put his whole house in hock.
32 Adultery is a brainless act, soul-destroying, self-destructive.

Ephesians 4:23-32

You were taught to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

“In your anger do not sin.” Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.