

AVOIDING THE PATHWAY TO MORAL COMPROMISE

“A SUMMARY BATTLEPLAN FROM SOLOMON”

As we come to the end of the basic training for winning the war within against the world, the flesh, and the devil, we need to see the principles learned in the class applied practically to our lives if we are to be successful. This requires **implementation** – deciding what specific steps to take that apply the truths of the Word with clear action plans and goals that cover the entire process of change.

The wisest man who ever lived, next to the Lord Jesus, gave us this guide in the form of a case study. Wisdom personified appears as an onlooker to a situation in which a negative portrait is painted of a man who fails to implement the truths of the Bible in his dealing with sin. This man, by negative example, becomes not only a model of what not to do, but positively, a series of lessons, which if we learn them will brace and fortify us against the sin that so easily ensnares us.

The main lesson is this: moral failure does not happen as a result of the moment, but from a pattern of little compromises that cheapen the soul, dull the conscience, and will ultimately lead people to exchange that which is eternal for that which is fleeting. Solomon answers the question: Why do good people do bad things?

Proverbs 7 is a detailed account of the pathway and progression towards moral failure, which if you get on, will destroy you on the battlefield. On the other hand, if you are on that path, it is a compass and map that will lead you back to the narrow road of obedience to Christ.

According to **v. 1**, who is Solomon addressing? What is the context in which this chapter comes?

People who fail morally do not:

1. REMEMBER GOD’S WORD

In **v. 1-4**, what 5 terms does Solomon use to describe the Word of God?

In **v. 1-4**, what does he tell his son to do with the Word of God? What does this say about how we view the Word?

Keep –

Treasure ... within you –

Apple of the eye –

Compare:

➤ **Deuteronomy 32:45-47**

➤ **Colossians 3:16**

Bind them on the tablets of your heart –

According to **v. 5**, what is the result of remembering and prizing the Word of God?

➤ **Psalm 119:9-11**

If you are not regularly in the Word of God, what does that say about where you are in the progression towards sin?

Those who stumble badly and fall morally fail to:

2. LEARN LESSONS FROM LIFE.

According to **v. 6**, how is wisdom personified and what is she doing?

Compare **Proverbs 24:30-32 (cf. The book of Ecclesiastes)**

What can you learn from the failings in your life? The victories in your life? The failings of others? September 11, 1992?

People who do not learn lessons from life will wander further off the path because they fail to:

3. DEVELOP MORAL CONVICTIONS IN ADVANCE.

According to v. 7, what does wisdom note about this man?

Naïve...lacking sense –

What is the difference between a naïve and wicked person?

What does this say about his preparedness for temptation?

How was he dealing with guarding his heart (**Prov. 4:23**)?

What is a conviction?

Where do you get your convictions?

What kinds of areas in your life need convictions?

What is the difference between a Biblical conviction and a personal conviction?

Note the conviction that Solomon tried to instill into his sons in **Proverbs 5:1-8**:

God knows that we must establish convictions to keep us away from sin's door, lest we fall into the trap of sin's allurements. We must:

4. REFUSE TO FLIRT WITH FIRE

In **v. 8**, what conviction does this man omit that lead him into harms way?

What does this suggest about his knowledge of the neighborhood?

Why would he be going there?

How does **Proverbs 6:27-29** warns against this mentality?

What would be a modern day equivalent to this?

The question that sets up a moral collapse for many people is, "How far can I go and yet not sin?" Why is this the wrong question?

Another danger came upon this young man, in that while he was flirting with fire, he forsook the help that he needed. He did not:

5. ENLIST ACCOUNTABILITY

According to v. 7-9, when did this young man venture into her neighborhood?

Why did he not do this in the middle of the day?

**“The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, Saying, ‘No eye will see me.’
And he disguises his face.” – Job 24:15**

NOTE: In Solomon’s day, city guards patrolled Jerusalem to keep out spies and maintain curfew. In **Song of Solomon 5:6-7**, these guards did recognize the queen, seized her and struck her as she was looking for her husband following a quarrel. It was not okay to be out at this hour.

What does that tell you about this young man as he wandered through the city?

- Who are the people holding you accountable in your life?
- Are you honest with others about your struggles, vulnerabilities, and when you fall?
- Do your close friends know what you are doing when you are traveling, home alone, on the job site?

What is the most effective kind of accountability? What does it teach us?

It is consistent with the character of this naïve man to disregard the counsel and help of others and to be flippant with danger. He does not:

6. TAKE TEMPTATION SERIOUSLY

Note how he underestimates sin in v. 10-18, in the following areas:

A. Sin is aggressive – see **v. 10, 12, 15**

B. Sin is available – see **v. 12**

C. Sin is appealing – how does she attract his senses?

➤ **V. 10b, 16 –**

➤ **V. 13 –**

➤ **V. 14 –**

➤ **V. 14-15 –**

➤ **V. 17 –**

➤ **V. 18 -**

Is she lying about the pleasures that she is offering him? What does this tell you about temptation?

What is the difference between the attractions in Song of Solomon and this harlot?

What did his lust cloud his ability to discern, according to **v. 18**?

Having clouded his perception, this woman appeals to his lust, which has therefore denied him the ability to:

7. SEE WHAT IS OBVIOUS

What seems blatantly obvious to everyone except this young man?

Note the evident omissions he makes about her:

A. Attitude – see **v. 11a, 13b, 10b**

B. Actions - see **v. 13, 11a, 19**

C. Attire – see **v. 10b**

If a person is godly, will they have to tell you? You will know them by their attitude, actions, and attire (**cp. Matt. 5:8; Luke 6:45; 1 Tim. 2:9**).

WHAT IS NOT ALWAYS OBVIOUS TO YOU WILL BE OBVIOUS TO THOSE
WHO CARE ABOUT YOU! LISTEN TO THEM!

Satan knows that for someone to fall into sin means that they must not see what is obvious; his attacks come more subtly than that. For this reason he hides the baited trap for those who do not:

8. LOOK BEYOND THE VENEER OF RELIGIOSITY

When you read **v. 14-15**, what is this woman saying?

What kinds of religious reasons do people give to justify their sin?

What does **Titus 1:16** say about people who profess religion and act another way?

Instead of focusing on the Lord and His glory, sin wants you to think about how you will be benefited by its pleasure. People who give into this trap allow temptation to feed their pride by stroking their sense of worth, rather than causing them to:

9. THINK ABOUT WHAT IS DESERVED

Notice how this woman appeals to his pride and sense of worth in **v. 15 and 21**.

Despite her attempts to massage his ego and convince him that he alone is the object of her every desire, what does the text tell us about her in **v. 26**?

People who fail morally often reason in a way that justifies their sin because they think that deserve it. What kinds of things do people say?

What in truth do we deserve?

When sin offers pleasure, it comes making grand promises to satisfy. On the other hand, it emphasizes only the delights because it does not want you to:

10. PONDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

What reasoning does the woman give to the naïve man about the freedom to sin in **v. 19-20**?

What kinds of things do people think about to eliminate the threat of consequences of sinning?

Think for a minute about what your husband's/wife's face if you fail morally. What would that look like?

The following excerpt is taken and adapted from Randy Alcorn.¹ I urge you to make your own:

Personalized List of Anticipated Consequences of Immorality

- Grieving my Lord; displeasing the One whose opinion most matters.
- Dragging into the mud Christ's sacred reputation.
- Loss of reward and commendation from God.
- Having to one day look Jesus in the face at the judgment seat and give an account of why I did it.
- Forcing God to discipline me in various ways.
- Following in the footsteps of men I know of whose immorality forfeited their ministry and caused me to shudder. List of these names:
- Suffering of innocent people around me who would get hit by my shrapnel (a la Achan).
- Untold hurt to my best friend and loyal wife.
- Loss of her respect and trust.
- Hurt to and loss of credibility with my beloved children. ("Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?")
- If my blindness should continue or my family be unable to forgive, I could lose my wife and my children forever.
- Shame to my family. ("Why isn't Daddy a pastor anymore?"; the cruel comments of others who would invariably find out.)
- Shame to my church family.
- Shame and hurt to my fellow pastors and elders. List of names:
- Shame and hurt to my friends, and especially those I've led to Christ and discipled. List of names:
- Guilt awfully hard to shake-even though God would forgive me.
- Plaguing memories and flashbacks that could taint future intimacy with my wife.
- Disqualifying myself after having preached to others.
- Surrender of the things I am called to and love to do-teach and preach and write and minister to others. Forfeiting forever-certain opportunities to serve God. Years of training and experience in ministry wasted for a long period of time, maybe permanently.
- Being haunted by my sin as I look in the eyes of others, and having it all dredged up again wherever I go and whatever I do.
- Undermining the hard work and prayers of others by saying to our community "this is a hypocrite-who can take seriously anything he and his church have said and done?"

¹ Randy Alcorn, "Deterring Immorality by Counting Its Cost: The exorbitant price of sexual sin," (<http://www.epm.org/leadpur2.html>). This was adapted only in that the names of specific people were removed.

- Laughter, rejoicing and blasphemous smugness by those who disrespect God and the church (2 Samuel 12:14).
- Bringing great pleasure to Satan, the Enemy of God.
- Heaping judgment and endless problems on the person I would have committed adultery with.
- Possible diseases: gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, and AIDS (pain, constant reminder to me and my wife, possible infection of my wife, or in the case of AIDS, even causing her death, as well as mine.)
- Possible pregnancy, with its personal and financial implications, including a lifelong reminder of sin to me and my family.
- Loss of respect, discrediting my own name, and invoking shame and lifelong embarrassment upon myself.

Ask yourself the next time you are tempted, is it really worth it?

People who dive headlong into sin think little about the ramifications of the choices they make, choosing rather to gratify themselves. You will be enticed to indulge and follow rather than:

11. RESTRAIN YOUR IMPULSES

How does this man calculate his response according to **v. 21-22a**?

What does this say about how sin wants you to react to its allurements?

In v. 22, who is leading in this relationship?

How is this man like the polar bears that are killed in Alaska?

According to **v. 22b-23**, what are the consequences of following your impulses?

What is the moral of the story? See **v. 24-27**.

TRUTH IN THE LIFE

We would do well to heed Solomon's summary. As you inventory your heart, where are you in the progression towards moral failure? Are you a moral accident waiting to happen? Is it only the grace and mercy of God that has restrained you from falling because you have neglected to heed His warnings? What steps do you need to take today to remove your soul from the path of impending danger? Make that change today!