

Proverbs 5:15-23 Commentary

PREVIOUS

Proverbs Overview						
Purpose of Proverbs 1:1-7	Proverbs to Youth 1:8-9:18	Proverbs of Solomon 10:1-24:34	Proverbs of Solomon (Hezekiah) 25:1-29:27	Words of Agur 30:1-30:33	Words of Lemuel 31:1-31:31	
	Father's Exhortations	First Collection of Solomon	Second Collection of Solomon	Numerical Proverbs	Wisdom for Leaders 31:1-9	Virtuous Wife 31:10-31
Title: Proverbs 1:1	Precepts of Wisdom	Proverbs of Solomon	Proverbs Copied by Hezekiah's Men	Proverbs of Agur	Proverbs of Lemuel 31:1-9	Capable Wife 31:10-31
Theme: Proverbs 1:7	Wisdom for Young Men	Proverbs for Everyone		Personal Notes from Agur & Lemuel		
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NEXT

Proverbs 5:15 **Drink water** from your own **cistern** and **fresh water** from your own **well**. (NASB: Lockman)

- Pr 5:18,19; Hebrews 13:4
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

METAPHOR OF DRINKING WATER

You have your own spring and your own well which flow with clear water. So drink from these sources! (German Common Language Version)

Do not go to the well of another man. Stay with your own wife and sleep only with her, just as a man drinks water from his own well. (UBS)

Note: Verbs in **bold red** indicate commands, not suggestions! [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) (or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!") See also chart comparing [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#).

Bridges - A restless dissatisfaction with our present blessings cherishes the lust for forbidden pleasures. Where contentment is not found at home—drinking out of our own cistern, it will not be found abroad. Thus conjugal love—the greatest earthly blessing—is the Divine remedy against incontinence. (1Cor 7:2, 36) 'First—choose thy love; then love thy choice.'⁸ Quench thy thirst out of thine own, and lust not after thy neighbor's, well. 'Enjoy thou the lawful delights and contentments of thine own wife.' (Bishop Hall) Let the streams of a happy issue derived from thee, as little fountains, or springs from the fountain (cp Nu 24:7, Deut 33:28, Ps 68:29, Isa 48:1)—be dispersed abroad, fertilizing the streets (cp Zech 8:5) with their godly influence—children whom thou knowest to be thine own, and canst acknowledge without shame (Ps 127:3-5, 148:13). Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. (Dt 24:5, Eccl 9:9) ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

In Proverbs 5:15-21 Solomon offers his "remedy" calculated to counter the temptation to commit sexual immorality with a strange woman. His remedy - delight yourself in fidelity to your own wife, your covenant partner, your one flesh. The world ridicules faithfulness, but God honors and blesses it. One wife for one life and one partner to enjoy sex with for all of your days. That is God's "old fashioned" plan!

In context Solomon is speaking in highly metaphorical language, using cistern, well and fountain as pictures of one's wife. Notice that that possessive pronoun precedes each description and that is Solomon's emphasis -- sexual relations with your OWN wife, and

no one else's! That is his main point in this section and to heed such sage advice will keep one far from the paths of the adulteress woman.

The best way for a man to avoid sexual misconduct (including indulging in pornography and the fantasizing and self-gratification that naturally accompany this sin) is to (1) have a loving relationship with your Creator and (2) secondly a loving relationship with the wife of your youth. In short, to experience the expulsive power of a new affection! ([Click Thomas Chalmers famous sermon on The Expulsive Power of a New Affection.](#))

Explorer the Bible notes adds that "the institution of holy matrimony has been designed by God as the only place for the expression of sexual love. It is also quite clear that a satisfying and intimate marriage is a powerful safeguard against sexual temptation. Again, from the perspective of the male, the text calls upon the young man to find his fulfillment in his wife alone. With plain, yet appropriate, language the man is exhorted to be thoroughly satisfied with his wife's sexual intimacy and to ever be **exhilarated** or, more literally, "intoxicated" with "her love" (Pr 5:19). This command places a holy responsibility upon both partners in the marriage. Each should be sensitive and attentive to the needs of the other so that any temptation to violate the marriage bond is effectively repelled (cf. 1Cor 7:5). ([Be Wise About Sexual Purity](#))

The UBS Handbook on Proverbs observes that...

Pr 5:15-20 use a number of images such as water, cistern, well, springs, fountain, hind, and doe to appeal to the learner to be satisfied with his own wife rather than going after another person's wife.

A cistern is an underground chamber used to catch rainwater for storing. Cisterns, like wells in the next line, were often dug in the ground and lined with limestone plaster to keep them from leaking. They were also sometimes hollowed out of rock. The scarcity of water made it essential to guard cisterns and wells closely. The emphasis in this verse is on the private use of water from a cistern. The thought expressed here is "Just as you drink water from your own cistern, so you should have sex only with your own wife." (Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. New York: United Bible Societies)

W A Criswell comments that "These verses use frankly erotic language as is found in the Song of Solomon in expressing that sexual delight in marriage is by divine design (Pr 5:15), as is the joy of procreation, in which husband and wife join hands with the Creator God to produce the next generation (Pr. 5:16, 17, 18; Ge 1:28). The wife is compared to a "cistern" and "well" (Pr 5:15; Song 4:12). This figure enhances her value in the eastern world, in which water was scarce and valuable. The terms "fountains" and "streams of water" are references to children who are victims of marital discord. They suffer from lack of a proper home, either abandoned or raised by "strangers" (Pr 5:17). ([Criswell, W. A. Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version. 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

Drink water - A command, not a suggestion! Drinking is a normal God given desire but even it is to be gratified in an appropriate way. Solomon here uses this normal physical need to picture a man's sexual need which is also God given and is only to be fulfilled by one's spouse. In other words the idea is be faithful to your own wife, just as you drink water from your own cistern and well. Let her be your "cistern" and "well" with her companionship alone will a husband find total satisfaction and the quenching of all his sexual thirst.

Constable agrees writing that "The figures of a cistern and well refer to one's wife (cf. Song 4:15) who satisfies desire.

In first Corinthians **Paul** writes that...

because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1Co 7:2, 3, 4, 5)

Adam Clarke writes that we are to "Be satisfied with thy own wife; and let the wife see that she reverence her husband; and not tempt him by inattention or unkindness to seek elsewhere what he has a right to expect, but cannot find, at home.

Proverbs 5:15-21 Reminders for the Married

THERE IS ONE JOINING - Marriage is Exclusive Pr 5:15, 16, 17

THERE IS ONE JOY - Marriage is Ecstasy Pr 5:18, 19

THERE IS ONE JUDGE - Marriage is Evaluated (by God) Pr 5:20, 21

Related Resources

- Ephesians 5:3, 4ff Exposition
- Proverbs 4:23 Exposition
- [2 Corinthians 7:1 Exposition](#)
- Jehovah Nissi: Exposition of Exodus 17:8-16
- Exodus 17 Commentary - where Amalekites are likened to our fallen flesh
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3ff Exposition
- Galatians 5:16ff Exposition
- 1 Timothy 4:7ff Exposition
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 - Exposition
- James 1:13; James 1:14; James 1:15 - Expositions

George Lawson - Pr 5:15–19. Children are in the language of Scripture sometimes compared to waters*. We find Solomon in this passage comparing both wife and children to fountains; for there is as great a difference between the joys of lawful and unlawful love, as there is between the waters of a clear spring, and those which are drunk out of an impure and poisonous stream.

Let every man, to avoid fornication, have his own wife. Then may he reasonably expect to have children who shall be like olive plants around his table, or like fountains dispersed in the streets, pleasant to others, and likely to become one day comforts to their neighbours as well as to their parents. Is not this far better than to have a bastard progeny imposed on him, which he does not know, and yet cannot deny to be his own?

Husbands ought to praise God for virtuous wives, and to observe their good qualities, and call them blessed. They ought to love them as themselves, to wear a cheerful countenance in their company, to take pleasure in them as the companions of their youth, to rejoice in their love, and to treat them with the tenderest affection. They ought to view them with feelings of delight. The pleasant roes are the delight of their masters, who are charmed with that bland and insinuating manner of behaviour which nature teaches them. Much more may it be expected, that this human creature will be dear to our souls, whom God has given us to be the solace of our lives. In old age, when their beauty fades, the kindness of youth is to be retained for them, more especially if they retain those amiable virtues which fade not with the complexion of the countenance.

Wives are to be hated in comparison with Christ; but for the sake of Christ, they are to be loved with an affection so ardent, that other women, however beautiful, may appear in their presence like painted flowers (Eph. 5:25–32).

It is the duty and the interest of wives, to be adorned with those beauties which will render easy the duties which their husbands owe them. It is indeed the duty of husbands to love their wives, for the sake of God's command, and Christ's example; but it is very difficult to love, where this pleasant affection is not engaged by lovely qualities in the object. Why should husbands and wives tempt one another to sin against God to their own prejudice?

This cordial love in the married state, will produce pleasures far sweeter than were ever found in unlawful love; and what chiefly recommends them is, that they have no sting attending them, and give no offence to God, our Witness and our Judge. ([Lawson's Exposition of Proverbs](#) - Spurgeon said "A thoroughly sound and useful commentary. Lawson wrote popularly and vigorously.")

Proverbs 5:16 Should your [springs](#) be [dispersed abroad](#), [streams](#) of [water](#) in the [streets](#)?

- Deut 33:28; Ps 68:26; Is 48:21) (Ge 24:60; Jdg 12:9; Ps 127:3; 128:3
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Constable notes that "The Hebrew text favors taking Proverbs 5:16 as a positive statement ("Let your streams ... ") rather than as a question, as in the NASB. The meaning of Pr 5:17-18 then becomes, "The influence of the faithful man (His 'springs') become a blessing to others." [Kidner] Another view is that the springs and streams in view belong to the man being warned who might share them with a woman of the street."

Your springs dispersed abroad - This metaphor is more difficult to understand. Some understand it as a metaphor for offspring or children (see below). However in context it is at least possible that **your springs... not for strangers** (Pr 5:16, 17) continues the metaphor of sexual activity and presents a contrast with the **water** metaphors in Pr 5:15. In that verse the picture is of the husband experiencing the quenching of his sexual appetite the good way, God's way, with the wife of his youth. In Pr 5:16, 17 the word **strangers** (Hebrew = zur, used in Pr 5:3, 10, 17, 20, 7:5) could certainly be the strange woman with whom one's **springs** are **dispersed**. I do not mean to be dogmatic, but offer this as an alternative interpretation of these two difficult verses (Pr 5:16, 17).

Ryrie - The idea is, should you beget children by an adulteress, a woman of the street? (and that)**your springs** (is) a reference to one's children.

Matthew Poole...

Thy fountains; thy children proceeding from thy wife, called thy **fountain**, Pr 5:18, and from thyself, as the Israelites are said to come from the **fountain** of Israel, Deut 33:28; Ps 68:26. Compare Is 51:1. And **fountains** are here put for rivers flowing from them, as it is explained in the next clause, and as it is Ps 104:10, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect. And this title may be the more fitly given to children, because as they are rivers in respect of their parents, so when they grow up, they also become fountains to their children.

Be dispersed abroad; they shall be multiplied, and in due time appear abroad in the world to thy comfort and honour, and for the good of others; whereas whores are commonly barren, and men are ashamed to own the children of whoredom.

W A Criswell feel that "The terms **springs** and **streams of water** are references to children who are victims of marital discord. They suffer from lack of a proper home, either abandoned or raised by "strangers" (Pr 5:17). ([Criswell, W A. Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version. 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

John MacArthur feels that "The euphemism refers to the male procreation capacity with the idea of the foolish as a fountain scattering precious water—a picture of the wastefulness of sexual promiscuity. The result of such indiscriminate sin is called **streams of waters in the streets**, a graphic description of the illegitimate street children of harlotry. Rather, says Solomon, "let them be only your own" and not the children of such immoral strangers.

Some commentators like **Expositor's Bible Commentary** feel that "Channels of water in the street would mean sexual contact with lewd women."

Proverbs 5:17 Let them be yours **alone** and not for **strangers** with you.

- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

John MacArthur feels that **them** relates to children and thus Solomon is saying "let them be only your own" and not the children of such immoral strangers."

Adam Clarke agrees writing let them be "the offspring of a legitimate connection."

Proverbs 5:18 Let your **fountain** be **blessed**, and **rejoice** in the **wife** of your **youth**. (Eccl 9:9; Mal 2:14,15)

- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Your fountain be blessed - A metaphor referring to one's wife and continues the idea that sexual pleasure must be fulfilled at home. In an arid land like the Palestine, where water was precious, this aqueous metaphor should be especially powerful to the male readers.

Bridges - Receive her as the gracious gift of thy God. (Pr 19:14) ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

Matthew Poole - she shall be blessed with children; for barrenness was esteemed a curse and reproach, especially among the Israelites. Or rather, she shall be a blessing and a comfort to thee, as it follows, and not a curse and a snare, as a harlot will be.

A Handbook on Proverbs explains that "A **fountain** is not an artificial jet of water, as may be seen in city parks or gardens, but rather a spring of water flowing out of the ground. Your **fountain** refers to the man's wife, who is here the source of his pleasure. The sense of **blessed** is seen in the parallel word in the second line rejoice. **Blessed** has the sense of joy or happiness. This happiness is to come from the man's wife." (United Bible Societies)

NET Bible - That it should **be blessed** (the passive participle of barak) indicates that sexual delight is God-given; having it blessed would mean that it would be endowed with fruitfulness, that it would fulfill all that God intended it to do.

Rejoice in the wife of your youth - An excellent command indeed! Do not seek **strange** women but rejoice in the **same** woman (... that you married).

The **Apologetics Study Bible** notes that "Critics sometimes argue that passages extolling the pleasures of sex are inappropriate and should not be in the Bible. The book of Proverbs, though, sees sex as a gift from God that is to be enjoyed in the context of the commitment of marriage. An intimate relationship with one's spouse and the physical delight such a relationship can bring is commended by Proverbs and is seen as a powerful antidote to the temptations that can lead to unfaithfulness and immorality.

Michael Griffiths wrote that "there is no end to the richness that springs out of that exclusive relationship, and the warmth of the welcome that reaches out from his home to bless others. (Take My Life)

As **Al Martin** says "God never intended that man could find the true meaning of his sexuality in any other relationship than that of the total self-giving involved in marriage.

Proverbs 5:19 As a [loving hind](#) and a [graceful doe](#), let her [breasts satisfy](#) you at [all times](#); Be [exhilarated always](#) with her [love](#).

- Song 2:9; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14
- **Be exhilarated** - 2Sa 12:4
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

This verse is treasured in one's heart ("control center"; cp Ps 119:9, 11) and obeyed under grace (Ro 6:14-note), gives the husband a powerful "aphrodisiac" and a strong shield impeding wandering eyes and "wander-lust"!

Loving hind - Hebrew reads "the hind of loves". The language in this section is obviously what we might term quite "erotic", and it serves to show that God, the "Inventor" of sex, is not ashamed to speak openly about it, extolling it as a good gift (James 1:17) to be enjoyed with the wife of one's youth. Paul amplifies the goodness of sexuality within the bounds of marriage, emphasizing that in fact it is a prophylactic which serves to protect one (husband and/or wife) against improper sexual dalliances (in thought [fantasy life], word or deed) explaining that...

because of immoralities (porneia), let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband...**Stop depriving** (present imperative with a negative = stop something already being practiced!) one another, except by agreement...for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt (present tense = continually tempt) you because of your lack of self-control. (1Cor 7:2, 5)

Bridges - Cherish her, not with a sensual, doting, passion, but, as the loving hind and pleasant roe (Ge 24:67), with gentleness and familiarity. (2Sa 12:3 - The hind and the roe were objects of special delight - Song 2:17, 3:5 - and were treated with most tender endearment--a beautiful picture of the lively delight, which the wife naturally engages.) Count thyself most happy, as ravished with her love. Never err in giving liberty to thy passion, save in her society. It is not the having, but the loving of, the wife, that covers the soul. A man chained to an uncongenial wife is in imminent temptation. It is when she is as the hind and the roe, that the pleasures of lawful love preserve from lust—pleasures without a sting—yes truly—shadowing out the great mystery; "loving and cherishing our own flesh, even as the Lord the church (Eph 5:25, 29)." ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

Constable - The erotic language of Proverbs 5:19-20 may be surprising, but it shows that God approves sexual joy in marriage and it is a prophylactic against unfaithfulness (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Corinthians 7:9). A man can either find his exhilaration (Proverbs 5:19, i.e., sexual stimulation, also translated intoxication in Proverbs 20:1 and Isaiah 28:7) in his wife or in another woman. The same Hebrew word reads "go astray" in Proverbs 5:23 b. The issue is self-discipline empowered by God's Spirit.

Sexual desire is natural and marriage is provided for its fulfillment. - Norman Hillyer

Hind and... doe - Animals that picture the graceful delicate nature of a man's wife. It is interesting that women were often named for graceful or attractive animals - cp Tabitha, Dorcas.

Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Hind](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Hind](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Hind](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Hind](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Hart](#), [Hind](#) [Hind](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Hind](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Hind](#)

- Wilson's Bible Types [Hind](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Hind](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Hind](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Hind](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Hind](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Hind](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Hind](#)
- Nave Topical Bible [Hind](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Hind](#)

Matthew Poole on **hind... doe** - as amiable and delightful as the hinds are, either, 1. To their males, the harts; Or, 2. To princes and great men, who used to make them tame and familiar, and to take great delight in them, as hath been noted by many writers

Exhilarated ([07686](#)) (**shagah**) primarily meant to stray, go astray or wander. In the present context the verb signifies a staggering gait expressive of the husband's ecstatic joy over his wife's love. Some interpret this verb as indicating that he is "intoxicated" by her love.

Shagah - 19v - commits error(1), committed a error(1), erred(2), exhilarated(2), go astray(1), goes astray(1), intoxicated(1), leads the astray(1), misleader(1), misleads(1), reel(3), stray(1), unwittingly(1), wander(3), wandered(1).

Lev. 4:13; Num. 15:22; Deut. 27:18; 1 Sam. 26:21; Job 6:24; Job 12:16; Job 19:4; Ps. 119:10; Ps. 119:21; Ps. 119:118; Prov. 5:19; Prov. 5:20; Prov. 5:23; Prov. 19:27; Prov. 20:1; Prov. 28:10; Isa. 28:7; Ezek. 34:6; Ezek. 45:20

The Net Bible explains that "The imagery for intimate love in marriage is now employed to stress the beauty of sexual fulfillment as it was intended. The doe and deer, both implied comparisons, exhibit the grace and love of the wife.

Proverbs 5:20 For [why](#) should you, my [son](#), be [exhilarated](#) with an [adulteress](#) and [embrace](#) the [bosom](#) of a [foreigner](#)?

- Pr 2:16, 17, 18, 19; 6:24; 7:5; 22:14; 23:27,28,33; 1Ki 11:1
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For - This conjunction introduces Solomon's explanation of why exhilaration with one's own wife is such an important protective mindset to maintain. As men, we must be continually on high alert, for our sexual desire which is God given to be gratified in a God pleasing way in the marriage covenant, will potentially seek gratification outside of this covenantal relationship if we become lax and allow our mind to wander from the path of God's transforming Word of truth.

Bridges - With such a view of the ruinous pleasures of lust (Pr 6:9-11), and the holy delight of God's ordinances; (Pr 6:15-19) surely, if the sinner were not stupified, would he leave the pure fountain for the poisoned spring? Would he slight the "honorable" state of marriage (Heb 13:4), to embrace the bosom of a stranger—'loveless—joyless—unendeared?' ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

One wonders what went through **Solomon's** mind as he penned these words in light of facts documenting his wandering mind in 1Kings 11...

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,

2 from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, neither shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned his heart away.

4 For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites.

6 And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done.

Foreigner ([05237](#)) (**nokriy**) describes that which foreign or alien and so a stranger or foreigner. The idea is not related to. In context

it describes a woman who is not related to the man by the covenant of marriage and with whom any sexual liaison is sinful. The "strange" woman may seem exotic and exciting at the beginning but the end is deadly. She is like the [back widow spider](#) that has a striking red hourglass shape on her ventral abdomen (cp striking tattoos!) which belies her venomous bite which takes the life of the male!

Nokriy - 45 verses. Translated in NAS = adulteress(2), adulterous woman(2), alien(2), aliens(1), extraordinary(1), foreign(16), foreigner(15), foreigners(5), stranger(1).

Wiersbe writes that "When a husband and wife are faithful to the Lord and to each other, and when they obey Scriptures like 1Cor 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and Ep 5:22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, neither of them will look for satisfaction anywhere else. If they love each other and seek to please each other and the Lord, their relationship will be one of deepening joy and satisfaction; they won't look around for "the greener grass."

George Lawson - Pr 5:20, 21. Is it a pleasure to men to affront their Judge, and to provoke the vengeance of an Almighty arm? Will they prefer these poor, and spiritless, and unsatisfying pleasures which he forbids, to those pure delights which are licensed by his goodness? Remember, sinners, that God is present in your close retreats of wickedness! You see him not, because you are blind, but your stupidity cannot banish an omnipresent Deity; your bars and bolts cannot exclude him who fills heaven and earth. Darkness hideth not from him of whom it is said, "The day is thine, the night also is thine." Why should men dare to affront Jehovah, their Maker and their Judge, by doing that in his presence, which they would be ashamed to do in the presence of a child? God will not be mocked. He will punish the wanton glance, and the lascivious thought. Where, then, shall they appear who indulge themselves in acts of criminality? Will a thief steal in the presence of the judge, and yet hope to escape vengeance? And shall abandoned sinners flatter themselves with the thought of escaping the damnation of hell, from Him who will come to judgment, and will be a swift witness against adulterers (Mal. 3:5. Heb. 13:4)?

Sinners think that they will repent, after having for a while enjoyed the pleasures of sin,—pitiably delusion! [Lawson's Exposition of Proverbs](#) - Spurgeon said "A thoroughly sound and useful commentary. Lawson wrote popularly and vigorously."

Proverbs 5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.

- Eyes of the LORD ([see below](#)) - Pr 15:3; 2Chr 16:9; Job 31:4; 34:21; Ps 11:4; 17:3; 139:1-12; Je 16:17; Jer 17:10; Jer 23:24; 32:19; Ho 7:2; Heb 4:13+; Rev 2:18,23
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD'S OMNIPRESENCE - COMFORTING & CONVICTING

For - Always pause and ponder this strategic term of explanation - Ask (and attempt to answer) at least one simple question - "What is the writer explaining?" Remember that when you find a "for" at the beginning of a verse, it is usually (not 100% - check the context = **Keep Context King**) a **term of explanation**. In Proverbs 5-7 there are several "for's" for you to pause and ponder. (Pr 5:3, 20, 21, Pr 6:23, 26, 34, Pr 7:6, 19, 26). As an aside there are over 9000 occurrences of for in the NASB, which should give you many opportunities to practice (and make "perfect") the discipline of interrogating the Biblical text (See **interrogate with the 5W/H questions**).

As believers we should love the comforting attribute of God's omnipresence, for as **Isaac Watts** said so poetically...

Within thy circling power I stand;
On every side I find Thy hand;
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.

Spurgeon explains "Where we cannot enjoy God's company, we will not go. Our motto is, "With God, anywhere. Without God, nowhere... There is no place so well-adapted for the discovery of sin and recovery from its power and guilt as the immediate presence of God. Get into God's arms, and you will see how to hit at sin. You will gather strength to give the final blow which shall lay the monster in the dust. Job never knew how to get rid of sin half so well as he did when his eye of faith rested on God, and he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes (Job 42:5, 6) (See study of God's omniscience)

NO SECRET SINS

BEFORE AN ALL SEEING GOD!

Before the Eyes of the Lord - **Eyes** in Septuagint = [ophthalmos](#) most often describes literal eyes and here in Pr 5:21 is an anthropomorphic description of God, Who sees all and knows all. You cannot hide, be you a saved or unsaved sinner. See also: [God's Omniscience](#)

Elsewhere Solomon writes "The **eyes of the LORD** are in every place, watching the evil and the good." (Pr 15:3+)

APPLICATION - What if we really believed that everything we did was in the sight of God (because it is)? Would that make any difference in the choices I make this week, the words that fly out my mouth, the things I allow before my eyes? And be encouraged that the same eyes that see and assess our actions are the same eyes that supply abundant, amazing grace...

For **the eyes of the LORD** move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars." (2 Chronicles 16:9)

This comforting doctrine of God's **omnipresence** is not only comforting but also **convicting**. This truth begs the question - Are you sold out to the Lord? Are you living for eternity or for time? Are you daily setting your mind "on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col 3:2+)? Or to ask it another way, do you have "Horizontal Vision" or "[Vertical Vision](#)?" And as the passage says of King Asa are you acting "**foolishly**?" If so, then the word is "Look out!" The disciplining hand of the Lord is coming (if you are a genuine believer)! Confess, repent and turn around today! Now! This very moment! Don't procrastinate, prevaricate or put it off! Eternity is too long!

Psalm 44:21 Would not God find this out? (**What?** Ps 44:20) For **He knows the secrets of the heart**.

Spurgeon: Shall not God search this out? Could such idolatry be concealed from him? Would he not with holy indignation have detected unfaithfulness to itself, even had it been hidden in the heart and unrevealed in the life? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart. He is acquainted with the inner workings of the mind, and therefore this could not have escaped him. **Not the heart only which is secret, but the secrets of the heart, which are secrets of the most secret thing, are as open to God as a book to a reader.**

Psalm 90:8 You have placed our iniquities before You, **our secret sins** in the light of Your presence.

Spurgeon: There are no secrets before God; He unearths man's hidden things, and exposes them to the light. There can be no more powerful luminary than the face of God, yet, in that strong light, the Lord set the hidden sins of Israel. Sunlight can never be compared with the light of Him who made the sun, of whom it is written, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." If by His countenance is here meant His love and favour, it is not possible for the heinousness of sin to be more clearly manifested than when it is seen to involve ingratitude to one so infinitely good and kind. Rebellion in the light of justice is black, but in the light of love it is devilish. **How can we grieve so good a God?** The children of Israel had been brought out of Egypt with a high hand, fed in the wilderness with a liberal hand, and guided with a tender hand, and their sins were peculiarly atrocious. We, too, having been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and saved by abounding grace, will be verily guilty if we forsake the Lord. **What manner of persons ought we to be? How ought we to pray for cleansing from secret faults?**

Bridges - Would not the thought—that the ways of man are before the Lord—arrest him in his course? (Job 34:21-22, Ps 94:6-9, Jer 13:25-27, 16:17, Hos 7:2) But no. Practical atheism is the root of human depravity. (Ps 14:1-3) The eye of man—even of a child—is a check upon him (Job 24:15, Isa 29:15). But the thought of an all-seeing God—even if it enters his mind (Ps 10:4)—inspires no alarm, conviction, or restraint. Oh! if men would but read—would but believe—their Bibles, how would this solemn truth—he pondereth all his goings—flash upon their consciences! Not only does he see and mark them as the Omniscient God (Ps 125:3, Job 31:4, Ps 129:1-4); but he ponders them as the just Judge (Pr 16:2, 1Sa 2:3, Da 5:27). Not one is hidden from his piercing eye. (Heb 4:13) "He will bring every secret thing to judgment." (Eccl 12:14) He "will be a swift witness against the adulterers." No unclean person shall enter into his kingdom. (Mal 3:5, Eph 5:5). ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

William Arnot wisely observes that "God announces Himself the witness and the judge of man. The evil-doer can neither elude the all-seeing eye, nor escape from the Almighty hand. Secrecy is the study and the hope of the wicked. The word booms forth like thunder out of heaven into every human heart where evil thoughts are germinating into wickedness, proclaiming that the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord. A sinner's chief labour is to hide his sin: and his labour is all lost. Darkness hideth not from God. The Maker of the night is not blinded by its covering. ([Laws from heaven for life on earth - This Resource is Highly](#)

[Recommended!](#) ([Laws from heaven for life on earth ... - Google Books](#))

The Maker of the night
is not blinded by its covering!

Matthew Poole - God sees all thy filthy actions, though done with all possible cunning and secrecy. He taketh an exact account of all their doings, that he may recompense them according to the kinds, degrees, numbers, and aggravations of all their unchaste actions.

He watches all his paths - As men we delude ourselves into thinking, that if we are just looking and not touching, it is a **'small sin'** ([See Simeon's msg on "The Captivating Power of Sin"](#)), but that is a lie when we understand the meaning of **holiness** (see 1Thes 4:3 [note] where continually abstaining from sexual immorality equates with holiness). So clearly God's will for every Christian man is **holiness**, which is manifest by our continual practice of abstaining from sexual immorality in thought, word or deed. There is no such thing as a "small sin" in the area of sexual impurity, for just as a small crack in the damn can eventually lead to its rupture, so too can "small sins" which are nursed and cultivated like "weeds" in the garden our mind. We deceive ourselves into believing that since the fantasy is only in our mind, no one knows. This verse is a wake up call which should extinguish that sort of empty delusion. God sees it all beloved believer. As such the truth of this verse should serve to motivate all of us to diligently desire to obey the charge to enjoy the wife of one's youth and not to fantasize, flirt or fall prey to strange women.

J C Ryle in his booklet [Thoughts For Young Men](#) has this to say about the **eyes of God**...

RESOLVE NEVER TO FORGET THE EYE OF GOD. - The eye of God! Think of that. Everywhere, in every house, in every field, in every room, in every company, alone or in a crowd, the eye of God is always on you. "The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good" (Pr 15:3), and they are eyes that read hearts as well as actions.

Endeavor, I beg you, to realize this fact. Remember that you have to deal with an all-seeing God, a God who never sleeps, a God who understands your thoughts, and with whom the night shines as the day. You may leave your father's house, and go away, like the prodigal, into a far country, and think that there is nobody to watch your conduct; but the eye and ear of God are there before you. You may deceive your parents or employers, you may tell them lies, and act one way before their faces, and another behind their backs, but you cannot deceive God. He knows you through and through. He heard what you said as you came here today. He knows what you are thinking of at this minute. He has set your most secret sins in the light of His countenance, and they will one day come out before the world to your shame, except you take heed.

How little is this really felt! How many things are done continually, which men would never do if they thought they were seen! How many matters are transacted in the rooms of imagination, which would never bear the light of day! Yes; men entertain thoughts in private, and say words in private, and do acts in private, which they would be ashamed and blush to have exposed before the world. The sound of a footstep coming has stopped many a deed of wickedness. A knock at the door has caused many an evil work to be hastily suspended, and hurriedly laid aside. But oh, what miserable folly is all this! There is an all-seeing Witness with us wherever we go. Lock the door, pull down the blind, turn out the light; it doesn't matter, it makes no difference; God is everywhere, you cannot shut Him out, or prevent His seeing. "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Heb 4:13-note). Young Joseph understood this well when his employer's wife tempted him. There was no one in the house to see them, no human eye to witness against him; but Joseph was one who lived as seeing Him that is invisible: "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (Ge 39:9)

Young men, I ask all of you to read Psalm 139:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12ff. I advise all of you to learn it by heart. Make it the test of all your dealings in this world's business: say to yourself often, "Do I remember that God sees me?"

Live as in the sight of God. This is what Abraham did, he walked before Him (Ge 17:1). This is what Enoch did, he walked with Him (Ge 5:22, 24, cp Ge 24:40, 48:15, Ps 26:3, 56:13, 116:9). This is what heaven itself will be, the eternal presence of God. Do nothing that you would not like God to see. Say nothing, you would not like God to hear. Write nothing, you would not like God to read. Go no place where you would not like God to find you. Read no book of which you would not like God to say, "Show it to Me." Never spend your time in such a way that you would not like to have God say, "What are you doing?"

BE SURE YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT!

Numbers 32:23

Achan experienced the truth of this passage when he took some of the the banned spoil from defeated Jericho (the spoil was to be for God) and then hid it in his tent (hidden from man but not from God!)

Joshua 7:15-21 'It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he has

committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.' " So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken. Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when (**NOTE THE PATTERN IN WORDS IN BOLD FONT**) **I SAW** among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then **I COVETED** them and **TOOK** them; and behold, they are **CONCEALED** (shame and "secret sin") in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it." ...

Joshua 7:25 Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

Compare the similar sad saga of Elisha's servant **Gehazi** whose greed prompted him to sin by taking booty from Naaman - read 2 Kings 5:15-27

ILLUSTRATION - During the 1982 Falkland Islands conflict, the British Royal Navy felt that its ships were safe from attack because of a sophisticated defense system that identified enemy missiles and shot them down. Attack after attack was repelled with no damage to a British ship. Then the unexpected happened. The 3,500-ton destroyer HMS Sheffield was sunk by a single missile fired from an Argentine fighter jet. Later, an investigation revealed that the Sheffield's defenses did pick up the incoming missile, correctly identifying it as a French-made Exocet. But the computer was programmed to ignore Exocets as friendly. So the ship was sunk by a missile it saw coming and could have destroyed.

Christians who want to have a pure heart and mind in our impure society are like battleships floating on the open sea. Constant bombardments of sensual missiles are fired our way every day. If our heart, our defense system, allows missiles that we should avoid to penetrate our mind and soul, we're in big trouble. Spiritually, we will begin to sink. Guard your heart. Realize the Lord is examining your will, your heart, your motives.

The Omniscience of Yahweh

The sage reveals God's omniscience, His knowledge of all the ways of humanity. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He ponders all his paths." "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." Not only does God see everything people do, He also delves into their hearts to judge their motives. As a smith tests the purity of gold or silver in the flames of a crucible, God tests everyone's motives.

The method of Providence for restraining evil

God announces Himself the witness and judge of man. The evil-doer can neither elude the all-seeing eye, nor escape from the almighty hand. Secrecy is the study and the hope of the wicked. A sinner's chief labour is to hide his sin, and his labour is all lost. Darkness hideth not from God. He who knows evil in its secret source is able to limit the range of its operation. There is a special method by which this is done. It is a principle of the Divine government that sin becomes the instrument for punishing sinners. His own sin is the snare that takes the transgressor, and the scourge that lashes him. The Maker and Ruler of all things has set in the system of the universe a self-acting apparatus, which is constantly going for the encouragement of good and the repression of evil. The providential laws are directed against the current of man's sinful propensities, and tell in force thereon. They do not, however, overcome and neutralise, and reverse those propensities. Retribution in the system of nature, set in motion by the act of sin, is like the "Virgin's kiss" in the Roman Inquisition. The step of him who goes forward to kiss the image touches a secret spring, and the statue's marble arms enclose him in a deadly embrace, piercing his body through with a hundred knives. Verily a man under law to God needs to "ponder his feet." (W. Arnot, D. D.)

Man's ways before God

Everybody can see the cedar of Lebanon, the pine of the forest, or the hedge with its convolvulus and wild rose. They can even see the daisy, the flower in the grass. But who sees the grass? He who made the grass to grow upon the mountain, He knows every blade of it, and for every blade has recognition, sunshine, and dew. So is it with the lowliest and humblest man in this world to-day. God's eye loves goodness; He delights in it; and there is no goodness which He fails to recognise and bless. (W. L. Watkinson.)

For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths. Proverbs 5:21

There's no point in pretending with God! There are no secrets kept from him. He knows everything you think, say, and do. You can keep things from your teachers, your parents, and your friends. They can't read your thoughts, and you can hide your actions from them. You may be putting on an act that fools everyone you meet (or at least you think it does). At times, you may comfort yourself with the thought, Thank goodness no one knows what I'm really like. What a relief no one knows what I am thinking or feeling. Don't count on it!

If you're holding on to secret sin, God sees it. It's no use trying to rationalize why you're doing it: he knows your motives as well. It can be comforting to know God is always watching over you to protect and guide you. But it can also be troubling to know that he clearly sees everything you are doing at all times. The next time you're considering something that you know isn't right, remember that you have an audience. Before you do something that you suspect is not right, ask yourself, Do I want God to watch me as I do that? For he is watching. (The Experience)

February 12th

"The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."—5:21, 22.

Interpretation.—The Lord is said to "ponder," or rather, to "mark out," to "tread" or "travel" over all the ways of man. At every step and stage of his journey, man is observed and encompassed by Jehovah. Retribution is set in motion by the act of sin, and those repeated acts which form habits become a net and cords to snare and to bind the wicked withal.

Illustrations.—The author of Ps. 139 had a vivid sense of the nearness and omniscience of God, and of the practical use of such truths. Holy Scripture abounds with teachings on the subject drawn from real history. We find Cain's downcast looks noticed by his Maker, and the murderer convicted. The intentions and motions of the Babel-builders are scrutinized and intercepted from heaven. Their "idleness" as well as flagrant viciousness is taken note of in the race of the inhabitants of Sodom (Ezek. 16:49). Balaam's covetousness, Uzziah's irreverence, Belshazzar's profanity, Nathanael's private meditations, Ananias and his wife's conspiracy,—all are before the eyes of the Lord. And who does not see in the story of Adoni-bezek, of Joab, of Haman, of Elymas, not to speak of others, clear tokens of a law of retribution, which will not suffer sinners to escape?

Application.—We shrink from an avowed atheist, but is not un-avowed, practical atheism far more common than is supposed? May it not lurk in the breast of one who imagines himself to be a Christian? So far indeed as any heart remains unrenewed by grace, it is infected with this subtle unbelief. This lay at the root of the first sin, and this alone will account for every wilful sin committed since the first. "God is not in all" (i.e. in any) "of the thoughts" of the persistent transgressor, otherwise fear, if no higher motive, would restrain him. For if I believe God's own revelations of Himself, I cannot doubt, not only that He is a spectator of all my actions, but also that He views them with the interest of a Father, and the discriminating severity of a Judge. To suppose that I shall escape His observation is either to question His omniscience or His government. But the evidence which proves that He at times interposes in a particular and special way to punish Sin, is as unquestionable as the law of retribution. And whereas he that sins against man may fear discovery, he who sins against God is sure of it, and equally of punishment to follow. (From Counsels of the Wise King; OR, PROVERBS OF SOLOMON APPLIED TO DAILY LIFE BY CHR. RIDLEY PEARSON, M.A.)

Ray Pritchard - The Reminder Pr 5:21-23

Finally, there is a warning at the end. Proverbs 5:21 says, "For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord." That means he sees everything you do. He sees what you do, where you go, who you go with, even the thoughts you think. That ought to make you stop and think. Verse 22 says, "The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast." That means that sexual sin is self-defeating. It never satisfies or brings happiness in the long run. This is the promise in verse 23, "He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly."

You want a good biblical example of what happens when a man ignores those words? Look at Solomon, the man who wrote those words. Later in his life, led astray by his many wives, he got into immorality and idolatry. He died basically a broken and ruined man. The man who wrote those words came to no good end.

First Steps in a New Direction Do you want to make a new start? I give you three suggestions.

1. Listen to what God is saying. Turn off the TV, the radio, put those books away.
2. Talk it over with another godly man. If you have a struggle in this area, and about 75-80% of men do struggle in this area, don't fight this battle alone.

3. Stay away from temptation. This is very simple. Brothers, there are some books you ought not to read. I don't know which ones they are because I don't know what you're reading. But every time you read it you know it. There are some magazines you ought not to read, some radio stations you ought not to listen to, some TV programs you ought to turn off. There are some relationships you ought to be breaking in your life right now because they are leading you in the wrong direction. It could be a group of guys just kind of pulling you that way by their talk. Or it could be a relationship with a woman in your life that you know is not going in the right direction. You need to break it off right now. If you have the Holy Spirit living inside you and you know Jesus Christ, then you know what you ought to and ought not to be doing, so stay away from temptation. If you play with fire long enough, you will get burned.

The temptation to sexual impurity is very real. A man would be a fool to deny it. The problem is very prevalent because we live in a sex-saturated society. We're told in Proverbs 5 that we have a two-fold defense.

1. Stay out of harm's way.
2. Enjoy your own wife.

I tell you this on the basis of God's word. If you choose to ignore this teaching, you will die. We'll be having a premature funeral for you, because sexual immorality leads to an early grave.

Now then, where are the men who will say, "I will be different. I will be pure. You can count on me." The women deserve to be told by the men that they can trust us. And if they can't trust us, then they need to know that as well. Where are the men who will say, "Honey, you don't have to worry about me any more. If I go on a business trip, you don't have to worry about me. When I go into that motel room and see that stuff on top of the TV and can push a button, you don't have to worry about me any more. I'm not going to do that." For the sake of your wife, for the sake of your children, for the sake of your mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and for the sake of the unsaved multitudes out there who expect us to be different, where are the men who will say, "By God's grace I will be pure. I will be clean. I will be different."

I have spoken to men, but many men are single. Some are in high school, junior high, students at Moody Bible Institute or others colleges and universities in our area. Some are career professionals who are single. What are you supposed to do? That's another sermon. But let's understand this. God doesn't have two standards. He doesn't have a high standard for married men and a low standard for singles. You are still called to purity, faithfulness, holiness, and abstinence. I am not saying it is going to be easy. God set the bar, not me. Singles have to make the same commitment as married men.

There is a certain category of people who have dirty hands, dirty bodies. They would say, "You don't know where I've been, what I've been doing." I am not that interested where you slept last night. I want to know where you're going to sleep tonight. I am not interested in what you read last week, I want to know what you are going to read this afternoon and tomorrow morning. I am not that concerned with what you watched on TV last week. I want to know what you will watch in the weeks to come. I am not too concerned about your past. I am concerned about your future. I want to know where you are going to go from here. If you are feeling guilty, the Lord can take that guilt away and you can have a fresh start.

If you don't know Jesus Christ, your deepest need is to know him.

I want to know where are the men who are willing to stand for purity and righteousness. Let's stand together in the name of Jesus Christ

What God Sees

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. 2 Chronicles 16:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Chronicles 16:7-9

Early in the morning, I quietly pad past a family-room window overlooking a wilderness area behind our house. Often, I notice a hawk or owl perched in a tree, keeping watch over the area. One morning I was surprised to find a bald eagle boldly balanced on a high branch, surveying the terrain as if the entire expanse belonged to him. Likely he was watching for "breakfast." His all-inclusive gaze seemed regal.

In 2 Chronicles 16, Hanani the seer (God's prophet) informed a king that his actions were under a royal gaze. He told Asa, king of Judah, "You relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God" (v. 7). Then Hanani explained, "The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him" (v. 9). Because of Asa's misplaced dependence, he would always be at war.

Reading these words, we might get the false sense that God watches our every move so He can pounce on us like a bird of prey. But Hanani's words focus on the positive. His point is that our God continually watches and waits for us to call on Him when we're in

need.

Like my backyard bald eagle, how might God's eyes be roaming our world—even now—looking to find faithfulness in you and me? How might He provide the hope and help we need? By: Elisa Morgan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Why is it vital for you to regularly look to God for direction and guidance? How does it encourage you to know that God awaits your calls for help?

O God, may You strengthen our hearts that we might be fully committed to You.

His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps. Job 34:21, Proverbs 5:21, Hebrews 4:13

New techniques to detect and identify fingerprints are making it easier to apprehend and convict criminals. One of these methods uses a laser, which causes latent prints to glow when scanned by a laser. Body oils and perspiration, even on porous materials, leave traces that respond to laser light to such an extent that they can be photographed. Variation in color helps to determine the age of the prints, revealing the time sequence of a crime. Even very old prints that cannot be detected by powders and chemicals can be seen clearly by this new technique. For example, a forty-year-old fingerprint was detected on a postcard written during World War II.

If finite man can invent such methods of detection, what must be the infinite capacities of our God? He sees and knows everything! It is a frightening discovery to the sinner to realize that every thought and deed is known to God. But how reassuring to the child of God who is under the loving eye and gracious hand of his heavenly Father! —P R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

KNOWING THAT GOD SEES EVERYTHING WILL EITHER GIVE CONVICTION OR CONFIDENCE

"He Knows"

Pro 5:21—For the ways of man [are] before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

The writer of proverbs tells us something that we often forget, he reminds us of something that often we desire to forget. That something is this, the Lord knows the way of man. our steps are taken before his eyes, he ponders every move that we make. Often we fail to realize that our God is an omniscient being, nothing gets by him, and nothing is ever hidden from him. The writer is trying to stir our minds up and get us to focus on the truth that truth is that he knows. He not only ponders our good deeds, he also ponders our evil deeds, he records them, he remembers them, and sometimes he reveals them.

In our hometown they have just posted cameras on certain traffic lights, most of the time people forget about these lights. In the process of time it is business as usual around these traffic lights, those in a hurry run through the red lights, some even turn without stopping. As this happens from day to day no patrolmen are around, it seems as if everyone is getting by with doing wrong. Then as they go to the mail box they find a written citation with a picture, sometimes the pictures reveal things that the recipient would never want anyone to see. Those that thought they were getting by only fooled themselves; there was a price to pay for violating the laws of the land.

As you and I go from day to day, dare we forget that our God is an all seeing God? He is in total view of our going and our coming, our sitting and our standing, remember he knows, nobody else may ever know but my dear friend he knows. It may make us feel awkward, but nobody will ever have to answer for not going where they shouldn't have been, don't go, don't do it. The best way to live is to live clean, the best way to not get dirty is to stay away from dirt, and the best way to stay pure is to shun impurities, right?

1. The Eyes of God Are Always Searching
2. The Eyes of God Are Never Shut
3. The Eyes of God Are Absolutely Sure

We need not get the wrong idea of our heavenly father, he is a God of abundant love, but he always stands on the truth. He will not overlook sin, he will not willfully tolerate sin, and he can never bless sin. We must do our part, we should live right, and we should always strive to walk upright. As the Lord ponders our steps, we should always walk in a way that is pleasing to him. In the space below ask the Lord to help guide your steps _____. (Donald Cantrell)

A Walk In The Woods

Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. —Romans 6:12

Romans 6:11-14

A friend of mine wrote to me about certain “reservations” in his life—areas of secret sin that he reserved for himself and into which he frequently withdrew.

These “reserves” are like the large tracts of wilderness in my home state of Idaho. It may sound exciting to wander around these untamed regions by oneself, but it’s dangerous.

So too, each journey into sin takes its toll. We sacrifice our closeness with God, forfeiting His blessing (Psalm 24:1-5), and we lose our influence on others that comes from purity of mind and body (1 Timothy 4:12).

The wild areas in us may never be fully tamed, but we can set up perimeters that keep us from wandering into them. One perimeter is to remember that we are dead to sin’s power (Romans 6:1-14). We do not have to give in to it.

The second perimeter is to resist temptation when it first attracts us. Initial temptation may not be strong, but if we entertain it, it will in time gain power and overwhelm us.

The third perimeter is accountability. Find a person who will commit to ask you each week, “Have you ‘taken a hike in the wild’? Have you gone where you should not go?”

Impurity is ruinous, but if we long for holiness and ask God for help, He will give us victory. Press on! By: David H. Roper [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Lord, help us to recognize
When we begin to compromise;
And give us strength to follow through
With what we know is right and true.
—Sper

Beware—the more you look at temptation, the better it looks!
(ED: Compare Job's advice Job 31:1 - see [Commentary](#))

He's Watching - In this age of electronics, we have all become aware of bugging devices. A person's office, hotel room, or telephone can be monitored so that every sound is picked up. This is accomplished through highly sensitive microphones that are so small they can easily be hidden. Heads of state, government officials, and business people in strategic positions must be exceedingly careful of what they say, especially when entering a strange setting. The awareness that they might be overheard is sure to make them think twice before they speak.

Did you ever stop to think that God sees everything we do and hears everything we say every moment of the day? Hebrews 4:13 says that "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

This truth is both comforting and sobering--comforting because God stands ready to deliver us when we are in trouble (Ps. 33:18-19), and sobering because "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). What a profound effect this should have on the way we live!

The next time you are tempted or in trouble, remember that God is watching and listening. —Richard De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

There is no time of day or night,
No place on land or sea
That God, whose eye is never dim,
Does not see you and me. --DJD

To know that God sees us brings both conviction and comfort

EYES OF THE LORD

PASSAGES

Spend some time [meditating on](#) these passages

Proverbs 15:3+ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

2 Chronicles 16:9 “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.”

Job 31:4 “Does He not see my ways And number all my steps?

Job 34:21 “For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And He sees all his steps.

Psalms 11:4; The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD’S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.

Psalms 17:3 You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

Psalms 139:1-12 For the choir director. A Psalm of David. O LORD, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. 3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. 5 You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. 11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,” 12 Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You. (Then finish off by praying Psalms 139:23, 24!)

Psalms 16:17 “For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.

Jeremiah 23:24; “Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 32:19+ great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds;

Hosea 7:2 And they do not consider in their hearts That I remember all their wickedness. Now their deeds are all around them; They are before My face.

Hebrews 4:13+ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Revelation 2:18+ “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

Revelation 2:23+ ‘And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

Proverbs 5:22 His own [iniquities](#) will [capture](#) the [wicked](#), and he will be [held](#) with the [cords](#) of his [sin](#).

- Pr 1:18,31; 11:3,5; Ps 7:15,16; 9:15; Je 2:19; Ho 4:11, 12, 13, 14; Gal 6:7,8
- **Held** - Ec 7:26
- **Sin** - 1Co 5:9,10, 11, 12, 13; Gal 5:19, 20, 21; Ep 5:5,6; Heb 13:4
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Be sure to read [William Arnot's insightful comment below on this verse.](#)

Beloved, as you **meditate** on the principles in this verse, note that the foundational issue being addressed is the condition of one's heart. It therefore behooves us to be knowledgeable of what it means to watch over our heart with all diligence. Toward this end let me recommend a work by the esteemed Puritan writer John Flavel, a short book entitled **Keeping The Heart (online source)** which has been called one of "*the greatest Christian books of all time*". The short time you invest (since it is an older work, the English is a bit more laborious to read for most of us) in this endeavor will yield not only temporal but eternal dividends. (**Hint:** Natural Reader is a great little tool [I get no recompense] for converting any text file to an Mp3. I convert my Memory Verses to Mp3 and sometimes add my own notes and then can ponder while I pedal my bike and listen to my Ipod. I was able to listen to 1/2 of Flavel's book this morning in my 1.5 hour bicycle ride. Some text doesn't lend itself to listening while you ride or drive but Keeping the Heart was able to keep my attention the entire time. If you want to maximize the use of your time while traveling, running, biking, walking, etc, I encourage you to try Natural Reader Personal Version [I ordered Paul's voice which is excellent. Note that the free version does not have a natural voice.] which sells for about \$50 for the PC version and \$60 for the Mac version. Go to [Natural Reader](#). Enjoy!)

Bridges - But if no regard to reason, or to the All-seeing eye, will restrain the sinner, let him think of the trouble that he is bringing upon himself. He may go on awhile without trouble. God needs no chains or prison to bring him under his hand. Wherever he goes, his sins go with him, as cords to hold him for judgment. (Pr 11:3, 5, 6, 29:6, 1Sa 28:5, 20) Does he think that he can give them up when he pleases? Repetition forms the habit. The habit becomes a ruling principle. 'Every lust deals with him, as Delilah with Samson—not only robs him of his strength, but leaves him fast bound.' ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

As (presumably) an old man **Solomon** wrote this wise warning (quite possibly based on personal experience [cp 1Ki 11:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9])...

And I discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are chains. One who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be captured (**lakad** = same Hebrew verb as in Pr 5:22; Greek verb is *sullambano* = seize, apprehend, grasp, used of taking prisoners into custody, catching animals or fish, figuratively of the union of lust conceiving - Jas 1:15-note;) by her. (Ecclesiastes 7:26)

A little sin will add to your trouble,
Subtract from your energy and
Multiply your difficulties.
--Anonymous

His own - Not someone else's. This man is not a passive player in this destructive drama but is rightly reaping the "rewards" of his own godless choice(s).

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.
—Samuel Smiles

The words of **John Owen's** famous admonition resonate with those of Solomon...

the choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought yet to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin... Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you. Your being dead with Christ virtually, your being quickened with him, will not excuse you from this work." (John Owen's - [Of the Mortification of Sin](#)) ([Index to "Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers" - Although not an easy project. Owen's treatise is a Highly Recommended Read for all believers who seek to wage war with Sin victoriously in Christ!](#))

All sin hardens the heart,
stupefies the conscience and
shuts out the light of truth.
--William S. Plumer

His own iniquities will capture the wicked - Although the context deals with sexual sin, the principle is universally applicable to all sins (anger, unforgiveness, covetousness, slander, etc). **There is an important principle** in this verse that is impossible to sin without being captured and bound. One of the deceitful things about **Sin** (Sin -- the Sin principle or propensity inherited from Adam) is that it promises freedom but only brings slavery.

Peter in his description of the false (and destructive) teachers (2Pe 2:1, 2) said "For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, promising them freedom while they themselves are **slaves of corruption**; (**Here is the principle**) for by what a man is overcome, by this he is **enslaved**." (2Pe 2:18, 19-see notes, cp "lusts of deceit" Ep 4:22 -note, Titus 3:3-note)

Iniquity (05771) ('avon - word study from verb 'avah = to bend, twist, distort) describes the iniquity, evil, punishment or guilt which is associated with a twisting of the standard or deviation from it. Since there is a deliberate twisting or perverting, 'avon describes sin that is particularly evil. It may also describe the punishment or disaster that befalls those who practice wickedness.

The sad words **captured** and **held with cords** would be a fitting epitaph for the greatly gifted **Samson** (**Read** the decadent declension into degeneracy in the life of a greatly gifted Spirit anointed judge -- Jdg 13:24,25-note, Notice the "*direction*" in Jdg 14:1, 2, 3-note, note "*direction*" again in Jdg 14:7, 8-note, Jdg 14:18, 19, 20-note, Jdg 15:18, 19, 20-note, Jdg 16:1-note, Jdg 16:4-note, Jdg 16:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31-note)

It's "little" sins that trip us up
And cause an unexpected fall;
That's why we need to stay alert
To every sin, both large and small.
—Sper

Earlier **Solomon** had described **sinner**s as those who...

lie in wait for their own blood. They ambush ("booby trap" NLT) their own lives. (Pr 1:18) (Beloved sin is a deceptive trap - cp Heb 3:13- note)

One leak will sink a ship;
And one sin will destroy a sinner.
--John Bunyan

Sin (Sin principle) is not just something we commit but is a king that desires to reign in our lives and if given full sway will not hesitate to take the throne. **Spurgeon** described "King Sin" this way -- "*Sin will reign if it can: it cannot be satisfied with any place below the throne of the heart.*" **Jesus** alluded to the power of sin in John 8 when He answered the unbelieving Jews (who had initially "*believed*" in Him - compare Jn 8:31 with Jesus' verdict in Jn 8:44, 45 and their actions in Jn 8:58, 59) declaring...

Truly, truly (Amen, Amen - a call to be especially attentive!), I say to you, everyone **who?** who commits (present tense = as their habitual practice) sin is the **slave [word study]** of sin." (John 8:34, context = Jn 8:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, cp Ro 6:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22-note) (Praise God for Jn 8:36 "So if the Son **makes you free [word study]**, you will be **free [word study]** indeed"!)

Christian, walk carefully, danger is near!
On in your journey with trembling and fear;
Snares from without and temptations within
Seek to entice you once more into sin.
--Anonymous

Capture (03920) (**lakad**) means to take possession of as by capturing or catching, as of men capturing a town (1Sa 14:47), figuratively of men caught in snares laid by enemies (Jer 5:26, 18:22 Ps 35:8, 9:15 - speaking of the "trap" of divine judgment, as in Ps 59:12, Pr 6:2, 11:6). **Lakad** was used in Pr 6:2 of a sinner ensnared (captured) by the words of their own mouth.

The Lxx translates **lakad** in Pr 5:22 with the verb **agreuo** which was used in " hunting or fishing (and meant to) take, catch; figuratively in the NT, of taking advantage of someone in an unguarded moment (and so to) catch in a mistake, try to get someone to make a wrong statement (Mk 12.13)" (Friberg)

Here are some other uses of **lakad** in the context of sin...

On account of the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, Let them even be**caught** (**lakad**) in their pride, And on account of curses and lies which they utter. (Psalm 59:12)

If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been**caught** (**lakad**) with the words of your mouth, (Proverbs 6:2)

The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the treacherous will be**caught** (**lakad**) by their own greed. (Proverbs 11:6)

Lakad translated in **NAS** = capture(9), captured(57), captures(4), captures at all(1), catch(2), caught(12), clasp(1), imprisoned(1), seized(1), take(6), taken(13), taken captive(2), takes(3), took(8).

Lakad - 113v in the NAS -

Num 21:32; 32:39, 41f; Deut 2:34f; 3:4; Josh 6:20; 7:14ff; 8:19, 21; 10:1, 28, 32, 35, 37, 39, 42; 11:10, 12, 17; 15:16f; 19:47; Judg 1:8, 12f, 18; 3:28; 7:24f; 8:12, 14; 9:45, 50; 12:5; 15:4; 1 Sam 10:20f; 14:41f, 47; 2 Sam 5:7; 8:4; 12:26ff; 1 Kgs 9:16; 16:18; 2 Kgs 12:17; 17:6; 18:10; 1 Chr 11:5; 18:4; 2 Chr 12:4; 13:19; 15:8; 17:2; 22:9; 28:18; 32:18; 33:11; Neh 9:25; Job 5:13; 36:8; 38:30; 41:17; Ps 9:15; 35:8; 59:12; Prov 5:22; 6:2; 11:6; 16:32; Eccl 7:26; Isa 8:15; 20:1; 24:18; 28:13; Jer 5:26; 6:11; 8:9; 18:22; 32:3, 24, 28; 34:22; 37:8; 38:3, 28; 39:1; 48:1, 7, 41, 44; 50:2, 9, 24; 51:31, 41, 56; Lam 4:20; Dan 11:15, 18; Amos 3:4f; Hab 1:10; Zech 14:2.

(Prov 5:22) His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin.

(Prov 6:2) If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth,

(Prov 11:6) The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the treacherous will be caught by their own greed.

(Prov 16:32) He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Waltke - Lakad is used more often in warfare for capturing territory from an enemy (cf. Nu 21:32; 32:39, 41, 42; Pr 16:32) or from a person (Jer. 48:7), but the parallel and with the cords (*ûbehablê*) shows that it has its less frequent use in capturing an animal in a trap (Job 36:8; Ps. 9:6; 35:8; Pr. 6:2; Ec 7:26; Isa 8:5; Jer. 18:22; 48:44; Amos 3:5). (Waltke, B. K. The Book of Proverbs)

The **Septuagint (LXX)** translates the Hebrew word for "**capture**" using a rare Greek verb *sphiggo*, which means literally to tie up in a bundle (as used in 2Ki 12:11) or to be bound tight or fast. *Sphiggo* is in the **present tense** which emphasizes that the binding is continual! The **passive voice** indicates that the person is bound by an outside "force" (**Sin** -- the Sin principle or propensity inherited from Adam).

Considering the captivating power of **Sin**, Puritan **Thomas Watson** warned that...

There is in **Sin** a commanding and a condemning power.

It was the renowned **Bishop J C Ryle** who rightly put it that...

Sins begin like cobwebs,
but become iron clamps.

John Calvin was correct declaring that "When the will is enchained as the slave of **Sin**, it cannot make a movement towards goodness, far less steadily pursue it."

Os Guinness adds that "Our use of reason itself is not only wounded and weakened but made willful and wrong by sin."

In Pr 1:18 the wicked person ambushes his own life, whereas in Pr 5:22 iniquity is personified as the agent which sets and springs the trap which leads to death! God does not have to send a bolt of lightning. As discussed above, the moral order of the universe is clearly seen in this verse where one's sowing of iniquity, results in a reaping of enslavement by that same iniquity! Could God have been much clearer!

As **John Butler** - Sin is so beguiling. It is extremely deceitful. It looks so appealing, but it is simply a trap to ruin, to destroy, and to bring you into captivity for the devil. Notice it is "**his own iniquities**" that entrap the sinner. It is not the sins of another. He cannot blame others (**Ed**: He cannot even say "The devil made me do it!"); he must blame himself for playing the fool. This does not mean that our sins do not adversely affect others, but rather that our own sins, not the sins of others, are the main problems in our lives. We like to blame others for our troubles, but this verse says the main blame lies with our own iniquities. ([Butler's Daily Bible Reading](#))

Freedom is not the right to do as you will,
But the power to do as you should!

Held([08551](#)) (**tamak**) means to take hold of, to grasp, to uphold, to support, to hold fast. **Tamak** conveys the basic idea of grasping securely and is used often in the context of moral issues as here in Pr 5:22 (See below and **meditate** on all the uses of **tamak**, especially those in Proverbs).

Swanson - 1. (qal) take hold of, grasp, hold secure, i.e., make physical attachment to an object by grasping (Ge 48:17; Ex 17:12; Pr 31:19; Am 1:5, 8); (nif) seized (Pr 5:22), note: this may in some contexts refer to control or restraint, 2. (qal) control, restrain, i.e., place an object under the power or control of a person or entity, as a figurative extension of grasping an object (Job 36:17); 3. (qal) uphold, make secure, i.e., give aid and help to an object so as to have a successful outcome of an event or action, as a figurative

extension of a hand grasping and holding up an object so as not to fall or fail (Ps 16:5; 41:12; 63:8; Pr 28:17; Isa 41:10; 42:1); 4. (qal) accept, be faithful to, formally, grasp, embrace, i.e., be trustworthy to adhere to a person, event, or principle, as a figurative extension of grasping an object by the hands or arms (Ps 17:5; Pr 3:18; 4:4); 5. (qal) accept, receive, i.e., gain or acquire an object or benefit by payment or gift (Isa 33:15); 6. (qal) gain, i.e., have an object come into one's possession (Pr 11:16; 29:23), note: this can refer in some contexts to an elevation of status and honor; 7. (qal) be certain, be inevitable, formally, grasp, i.e., have an event happen for sure, and with certainty, as a figurative extension of keeping a sure grip on a path (Pr 5:5) ([A Dictionary of Biblical Languages w- Semantic Domains- Hebrew](#))

Baker - A verb meaning to grasp, to hold; to support. It means to grasp, seize something, to take hold of a person's hand (Ge 48:17); a person (Isa 41:10); a scepter or a pole (Amos 1:5, 8). It refers to grasping and supporting a person's hands and arms (Ex 17:12). It is used figuratively of supporting someone, as God supports His people (Ps. 16:5; 41:12; 63:8); or of holding on firmly to God's ways (Ps 17:5; Pr 4:4). Those who hold to wisdom find her a tree of life (Pr 3:18). Its passive sense refers to being held tightly, firmly, e.g., the evil person held fast by his sins (Pr 5:22).

Tamak - 20v in the **NAS** = attain(1), attains(1), grasp(1), grasped(1), held(1), held fast(1), hold(1), hold her fast(1), hold fast(1), holds(2), obtain(1), support(2), supported(1), take hold(2), uphold(3), upholds(1).

Genesis 48:17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he **grasped** his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

Exodus 17:12 But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur **supported** his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set.

Job 36:17 "But you were full of judgment on the wicked; Judgment and justice **take hold** of you.

Psalms 16:5 The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You **support** my lot.

Psalms 17:5 My steps **have held fast** to Your paths. My feet have not slipped.

THOUGHT - What's the antidote for not slipping spiritually?

Psalms 41:12 As for me, You **uphold** me in my integrity (Could we do it in our own strength? Clearly not!), And You set me in Your presence forever.

Psalms 63:8 My soul clings to You; Your right hand **upholds** me.

Proverbs 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who **hold her fast**.

Proverbs 4:4 Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart **hold fast** my words; Keep my commandments and live;

Comment: How do you "**hold fast**" God's Word today? You can read it daily, but by far the best way is to **Memorize His Word!** Are you actively "eating" the Word, treasuring in your heart so you won't sin against Him (Ps 119:9, 11)? If you are not, then you are without one of the major defenses to keep you from sinning against Him! Begin to memorize the word daily and devotionally and diligently, disciplining yourself for godliness which "is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and [also] for the [life] to come. (1Ti 4:7-8-note) If you need something to "jumpstart" your memorization see **Memory Verses by Topic**. And remember the key to retention is repetition, repetition, repetition! I know from (painful) experience!

Proverbs 5:5 Her (an adulteress) feet go down to death, Her steps **take hold** of Sheol.

Proverbs 5:22 His own iniquities will capture the wicked, And he will be **held** with the cords of his sin.

Proverbs 11:16 A gracious woman **attains** honor, And ruthless men **attain** riches.

Proverbs 28:17 A man who is laden with the guilt of human blood Will be a fugitive until death; let no one **support** him.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will **obtain** honor.

Proverbs 31:19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff, And her hands **grasp** the spindle.

Isaiah 33:15 He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they **hold** no bribe; He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil;

Isaiah 41:10 'Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will **uphold** you with My righteous right hand.'

Isaiah 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I **uphold**; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

Amos 1:5 "I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, And cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, And him who **holds** the scepter, from Beth-eden; So the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir," Says the LORD.

Amos 1:8 "I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, And him who **holds** the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, And the remnant of the Philistines will perish," Says the Lord GOD.

The **Septuagint (LXX)** translates **held (tamak)** in Pr 5:22 with the Greek verb **agreuo (64)** which was used to describe the hunting of wild animals and thus meant to catch the prey. Figuratively, **agreuo** meant to take advantage of someone in an unguarded moment so as to catch them in a mistake or to try to get them to make a wrong statement ("They *sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him [Jesus], in order to **trap** [agreuo] Him in a statement." = Mk 12:13). **Agreuo** is used 6x in 6v in the Old and NT - Pr 5:22; 6:25-26; Job 10:16; Hos 5:2; Mark 12:13. The other two uses of **Agreuo (64)** in Proverbs are instructive, both serving to amplify the warning of Pr 5:22...

(1) Proverbs 6:25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, nor let her **capture** (Hebrew = laqach = take, grasp, take hold of!; Lxx = agrueo) you with her eyelids.

(2) Proverbs 6:26 For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress **shunts** (Hebrew = tsud; Lxx = agrueo) for the precious life.

In short, **agreuo** gives us a vivid picture of the power of **Sin** to "hunt down" and "capture" man like prey, whether "the deadly hunter" be sexual sin or any other sin we continue to practice and from which we refuse to repent. Remember that "*Sin is like seed—to cover it is to cultivate it.*" (Anonymous)

Cords (02256) (chebel) carries the most basic meaning of a cord or rope (by which the spies escaped Josh 2:15 - Note the fascinating dichotomy = one cord brought escape while the other brings bondage!) or the cords used to literally bind Jeremiah (Jer 38:11, 12, 13).

Harry Ironside writes that "Certain retribution will follow the disobedient. The very sins he delights in are the links of the chain that will bind him forever. Having refused instruction in life, he will die without it; he will be left to go astray in the folly his soul loved. Dying in his sins, he goes out into the darkness, where the light he refused will never shine on him again!

**Sin will take you further than you ever intended to stray.
It will keep you longer than you ever intended to stay.
And it will cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay.**

Sin (02403) (chattat/chattath - word study) describes that which is an offense to God's moral standard. The basic meaning of the root is to miss a mark or a way. In Jdg 20:16 the left-handed slingers of Benjamin are said to have the skill to throw stones at targets and "not miss."

Sin is a little word with only three letters,
but the biggest is I.
--A S Wood

This picture of a full grown person bound by a **tiny sin** brings to mind the picture of **Gulliver** and the **Lilliputs** who were able to bind him because he fell asleep (cp the repeated NT warnings to "Be sober" - 1Th 5:6, 8; 2Ti 4:5; 1Pe 1:13; 4:7; 5:8). Tiny sins are far more deadly than tiny Lilliputs!

In Acts **Peter** describes **Simon** the Sorcerer declaring...

For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the **bondage** (*sundesmos* = bound together much like a tendon is to the adjacent bone; it is interesting that a related word *desmotes* = a prisoner, which is a good picture of the captivating power) of **iniquity**. (Acts 8:23)

Albert Barnes commenting on this description of Simon writes - Or, that thou art bound by iniquity. That is, that it has the rule over you, and binds you as a slave. Sin is often thus represented as bondage and captivity. Sinners are represented as chained to it, and kept in hard servitude, Ps 116:16; Pr 5:22, "He shall be holden with the cords of his sins;" Ro 7:23,24. These expressions prove conclusively that Simon was a stranger to religion. (Albert Barnes. Barnes NT Commentary) (**Comment:** While not everyone agrees

that Simon was unregenerate, the weight of evidence certainly strongly suggests that conclusion that Simon was "bound by the cords of his iniquities".)

Wiersbe rightly warns us that "The **cords of sin** get stronger the more we sin, yet sin deceives (Heb 3:13) us into thinking we're free and can quit sinning whenever we please (Ed comment: We need to pray Ps 25:14b!). As the invisible chains of habit are forged, we discover to our horror that we don't have the strength to break them. Millions of people in our world today are in one kind of bondage or another and are seeking for deliverance, but the only One who can set them free is Jesus Christ. "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36, NKJV).

Sin is sovereign until sovereign grace dethrones it.

C. H. Spurgeon

Capture... held with the cords of sin - The one engaged in sexual sin was given over to that sin so that he was in bondage. We might say he was now "addicted" to this sin. Notice that he has no one else to blame ("his own iniquities"). James teaches that we cannot blame God (James 1:13) and we can't even blame the Devil. We have ourselves to blame because as James says...

each one (Greek *hekastos* means every single one) is **tempted (word study)** when he is **carried away (word study)** (like a fish is drawn out from the safety of the rocks) and **enticed** (then the fish is lured by the bait which hides the hook!) by his own **lust (word study)** (In this context the meaning is a strong desire to do evil, this evil disposition emanating from the fallen **flesh (word study)**, which is inherited from Adam [Ro 5:12-note] and which is still present in believers [Gal 5:17-note], albeit it's power to reign has been broken - [Ro 6:6-note]).**15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**16 Do not be deceived** (present imperative + negative = stop being deceived, implying some were being deceived), my beloved brethren. (James 1:14, 15, 16-see notes)

Alexander Maclaren paints a dismal picture of the **indomitable** (untamable) **nature of indulged sin...**

We all know that anything once done becomes easier to do again. That is true about both good and bad actions, but 'ill weeds grow apace,' and it is infinitely easier to form a bad habit than a good one. The young shoot is green and flexible at first, but it soon becomes woody and grows high and strikes deep. We can all verify the statement of our text by recalling the tremors of conscience, the self-disgust, the dread of discovery which accompanied the first commission of some evil deed, and the silence of undisturbed, almost unconscious facility, that accompanied later repetitions of it. Sins of sense and animal passion afford the most conspicuous instances of this, but it is by no means confined to these. We have but to look steadily at our own lives to be aware of the working of this solemn law in them, however clear we may be of the grosser forms of evil deeds. For us all it is true that custom presses on us 'with a weight, heavy as frost and deep almost as life,' and that it is as hard for the Ethiopian to change his skin or the leopard his spots as for those who 'are accustomed to do evil' to 'do good.'

But experience teaches not only that evil deeds quickly consolidate into evil habits, but that as the habit grips us faster, the poor pleasure for the sake of which the acts are done diminishes. The zest which partially concealed the bitter taste of the once eagerly swallowed morsel is all but gone, but the morsel is still sought and swallowed. Impulses wax as motives wane, the victim is like an ox tempted on the road to the slaughter-house at first by succulent fodder held before it, and at last driven into it by pricking goads and heavy blows. Many a man is so completely wrapped in the net which his own evil deeds have made for him, that he commits the sin once more, not because he finds any pleasure in it, but for no better reason than that he has already committed it often, and the habit is his master...

Whoever steps on to the steeply sloping road to which self-pleasing invites us, soon finds that he is on an inclined plane well greased, and that compulsion is on him to go on, though he may recoil from the descent, and be shudderingly aware of what the end must be. Let no man say,

'I will do this doubtful thing once only, and never again.'

Sin is like an octopus, and if the loathly thing gets the tip of one slender filament round a man, it will envelop him altogether and drag him down to the cruel beak.

Let us then remember how swiftly deeds become habits, and how the fetters, which were silken at first, rapidly are exchanged for iron chains, and how the craving increases as fast as the pleasure from gratifying it diminishes. Let us remember that there are many kinds of evil which seem to force their own repetition, in order to escape their consequences and to hide the sin. Let us remember that no man can venture to say, 'This once only will I do this thing.' Let us remember that acts become habits with dreadful swiftness, and let us beware that we do not forge chains of darkness for ourselves out of our own godless deeds.

The Cords Can Be Loosened

Bitter experience teaches that the imprisoning net clings too tightly to be stripped from our limbs by our own efforts. Nay rather,

the net and the captive are one, and he who tries to cast off the oppression which hinders him from following that which is good is trying to cast off himself. The desperate problem that fronts every effort at self-emendation has two bristling impossibilities in it: one, how to annihilate the past; one, how to extirpate the evil that is part of my very self, and yet to keep the self entire. The very terms of the problem show it to be insoluble, and the climax of all honest efforts at making a clean thing of an unclean by means within reach of the unclean thing itself, is the despairing cry, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?'

The Breaker

But to men writhing in the grip of a sinful past, or paralyzed beyond writhing, and indifferent, because hopeless, or because they have come to like their captivity, comes one whose name is 'the Breaker,' whose mission it is to proclaim liberty to the captives, and whose hand laid on the cords that bind a soul, causes them to drop harmless from the limbs and sets the bondsman free. Many tongues praise Jesus for many great gifts, but His proper work, and that peculiar to Himself alone, is His work on the sin and the sins of the world. He deals with that which no man can deal with for himself or by his own power. He can cancel our past, so that it shall not govern our future. He can give new power to light the old habits. He can give a new life which owes nothing to the former self, and is free from taint from it. He can break the entail (in logic = that which has a necessary consequence) of sin, the 'law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus' can make any of us, even him who is most tied and bound by the chain of his sins, 'free from the law of sin and death.' (Ro 8:2-note) We cannot break the chains that fetter us, and our own struggles, like the plungings of a wild beast caught in the toils, but draw the bonds tighter. But the chains that cannot be broken can be melted, and it may befall each of us as it befell the three Hebrews in the furnace, when the king 'was astonished' and asked, 'Did not we east three men bound into the midst of the fire?' and wonderingly declared, 'Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods.' (Da 3:24, 25-note) **(The Cords of Sin)**

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

(Play Charles Wesley's great hymn

[O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing](#)

The sinner self-imprisoned - At one time many convicts were employed in building high walls round the prison grounds at Portland. Soldiers posted above them with loaded guns watched them at their work. Every brick laid rendered their escape more impossible, and yet they themselves were laying them.

William Arnot has a picturesque, poignant and powerful comment on Proverbs 5:22...

The Maker of the night is not blinded by its covering. He who knows evil in its secret source is able to limit the range of its operation; and there is a special method by which this is done. It is a principle of the divine government that sin becomes the instrument of punishing sinners. Both for restraint in this life and final judgment at last, this is the method employed. It is not only true in general that the wicked shall not escape, but also in particular that his own sin is the snare that takes the transgressor, and the scourge that lashes him.

The Maker and Ruler of all things has set in the system of the universe a self acting apparatus, which is constantly going for the encouragement of good and the repression of evil. The providential laws do not, indeed, supply a sufficient remedy for sin and its fruits; another physician undertakes the cure; but these laws, notwithstanding, exert a constant force in opposition to moral evil.

The wind may be blowing steadily up the river, and yet a ship on the river's bosom, though her sails are spread and filled, may not be moving up, but actually dropping down the stream. Why? Because the stream flows so rapidly down, that the breeze in the sails, though a force in the opposite direction, cannot overcome it. The wind does not, in spite of the current, give the ship momentum upward, but it makes the ship's progress downward much more slow. That force does not make the ship move upward, but it prevents the ship from rushing down with such a headlong velocity as to dash itself in pieces.

The providential laws are directed against the current of man's sinful propensities, and tell in force thereon. They do not, however, overcome, and neutralize, and reverse these propensities. They were not so intended. They impede the stream's velocity, and restrain its fury. The providential laws prevent the present system from dashing itself into chaos, but they do not supersede the redemption by Christ, and the renewing by the Spirit.

"His own iniquities shall take the wicked." This is an evident and awful truth. Retribution in the system of nature, set in motion by the act of sin, is like the "Virgin's kiss" in the Romish Inquisition. The step of him who goes forward to kiss the image touches a secret spring, and the statue's marble arms enclose him in a deadly embrace, piercing his body through with a hundred hidden knives. Verily a man under law to God would need to "ponder his path," for the ground he stands on is mined beneath his feet,

and the first step from virtue's firm footing aside into the yielding slough of vice, set ; unseen swords in motion which will tear his flesh, and enter the marrow of his bones. **"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."** (Ps 97:1 [note](#)) Praise Him for his righteousness; his judgments will go into a song as well as his mercy. ([Laws from heaven for life on earth \[online\] - This Resource is Highly Recommended!](#)) ([Laws from heaven for life on earth ... - Google Books](#))

George Lawson - Pr 5:22. Sinners will find, when too late, if wonderful mercy prevent not, that the sorrow which springs from self-love, is a very different thing from repentance, and that it is not so easy a matter as the devil told them, to venture their salvation in the hands of a Redeemer. They look upon saints as slaves who live an unpleasant life, but time will convince them, since admonition cannot, that themselves are the slaves, bound in the strongest and most ignominious chains. They are fettered by vicious affections, and they have neither power nor will to assert their liberty. The cords of their own sins shall hold them fast, till they are cast into that prison from whence there is no release.

This is a wretched condition, but they may thank themselves. Their own hands forged the chains which are rivetted upon them. They refused that glorious liberty proclaimed to them in the word of Christ.

The sinner flattered himself that he did not refuse redemption, he only delayed the acceptance of it. But such delays are refusals in God's estimation. To the sinner they are for the most part fraught with ruin. ([Lawson's Exposition of Proverbs - page 96](#) - Spurgeon said "A thoroughly sound and useful commentary. Lawson wrote popularly and vigorously.")

Matthew Poole - In vain doth he think to disentangle himself from his lusts by repenting when he grows in years, and to escape punishments; for he is in perfect bondage to his lusts, and is neither able nor willing to set himself at liberty; and if he do escape the rage of a jealous husband, and the sentence of the magistrate, yet he shall be infallibly overtaken by the righteous judgment of God.

A W Pink - We are ourselves so infected and affected by sin that we are altogether incapable of estimating its due merits.

Adam Clarke rightly says that "Most people who follow unlawful pleasures, think they can give them up whenever they please; but sin repeated becomes customary; custom soon engenders habit; and habit in the end assumes the form of necessity; the man becomes bound with his own cords, and so is led captive by the devil at his will."

Charles Bridges encourages all men to...

Ponder this chapter – **ye that know not the poison and corruption of fleshly lusts.** Perhaps painful experience (1Ki 11:1-8. Ec 7:26) had given the wise man (Solomon) wisdom and understanding. Therefore attend to it with **fear** and **trembling**.

Man's own strength, the restraint of education, or self-discipline, is powerless, as the green withs (willow twigs) to bind the giant. (Jdg 16:9) Engrafted wisdom is the only effectual safeguard. This heavenly influence teaches us, both to **regard discretion** for the covering of our souls, and to **keep knowledge** for the warning of our fellow-sinners. (Pr 2:10,11, 16; 6:20, 24; 7:1-5. Ps.17:4; Ps 119:9, 11).

As a very little dust will disorder a clock,
and the least grain of sand will obscure our sight,
so the least grain of sin which is upon the heart
will hinder its right motion toward God.

--John Wesley

Our Daily Bread - Everybody longs for freedom. But for many people its pursuit leads to bondage. Beloved Bible teacher Henrietta Mears knew the secret of true freedom, and she wanted her students to know it too. With young people in mind, she said, "A bird is free in the air. Place a bird in the water and he has lost his liberty. A fish is free in the water, but leave him on the sand and he perishes. He is out of his realm. So, young people, the Christian is free when he does the will of God and is obedient to God's command. This is as natural a realm for God's child as the water is for the fish, or the air for the bird."

Wise King Solomon urged his son to understand that true freedom is possible only within the sphere of God-centered living, for which He created us. By contrast, bondage predictably and inescapably comes to anyone who ignores God's truth. Proverbs 16 describes the liberty and satisfaction that come from practicing humility, trust, careful conversation, and self-control. But it also warns about the inevitable bondage that comes into the lives of people governed by willful rebellion, pride, arrogance, strife, and malicious trouble-making.

The New Testament introduces us to Jesus—the ultimate source of our freedom. He, our Creator and Redeemer, said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). —M. R. De Haan II ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**True freedom is not having our own way,
but yielding to God's way.**
(cp Jn 8:34, 35, 36)

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SUBTLE, CORRUPTING EFFECT OF SIN: What happened to the great city of Ephesus? Often mentioned in the New Testament, it was one of the cultural and commercial centers of its day. Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, it was noted for its bustling harbors, its broad avenues, its gymnasiums, its baths, its huge amphitheater, and especially its magnificent Temple of Diana.

What happened to bring about its gradual decline until its harbor was no longer crowded with ships and the city was no longer a flourishing metropolis? Was it smitten by plagues, destroyed by enemies, or demolished by earthquakes? No, silt was the reason for its downfall—silent and non-violent silt. Over the years, fine sedimentary particles slowly filled up the harbor, separating the city from the economic life of the sea traders. Little evil practices, little acts of disobedience may seem harmless. (Song 2:15) But let the silt of sin gradually accumulate, and we will find ourselves far from God. Life will become a spiritual ruin. In the book of Hebrews we are warned of the danger of “the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13-note). James said that the attractive pleasures of sin are really a mask covering death (Jas 1:15-note). God forbid that we let the **"silt of sin"** accumulate in our lives!

**Little sins add up to big trouble.
There is no sin so little as not to kindle an eternal fire!**

Sin Is Like An Insect! - It was reported recently that an enormous pine tree in the mountains of Colorado had fallen victim to a pine beetle and died. According to locals, up to that point the tree was thought to be indestructible. It had survived fourteen lightning strikes and many years of Colorado winters, including avalanches and fires. But it was eventually brought down from within by a tiny insect that did its work silently. That's the way it is with sin in a person's life, be they a Christian or a non-Christian. Watch over your heart with all diligence. (Pr 4:23-note)

We must deal with the seeds of sin in our hearts.
If neglected the seeds soon become weeds.
--Vance Havner
(Compare the progression in Ge 4:5, 6, 7, 8)

John Blanchard says that...

Sin has two great powers; it reigns and it ruins.

Sin is not a toy, it is a tyrant.

Rousseau's "Self-Ruse" - The deceitfulness of sin is vividly seen in the life of the French philosopher Rousseau. He declared, “No man can come to the throne of God and say, ‘I’m a better man than Rousseau.’” When he knew death was close at hand, he boasted, “Ah, how happy a thing it is to die, when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach.” Then he prayed, “Eternal Being, the soul that I am going to give Thee back is as pure at this moment as it was when it proceeded from Thee; render it a partaker of Thy felicity!”

This is an amazing statement when we realize that Rousseau didn't profess to be born again. In his writings he advocated adultery and suicide, and for more than 20 years he lived in licentiousness. Most of his children were born out of wedlock and sent to a foundling home. He was mean, treacherous, hypocritical, and blasphemous. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Two theological students were walking along a street in the Whitechapel district of London, a section where old and used clothing is sold.

What a fitting illustration all this makes!" said one of the students as he pointed to a suit of clothes hanging on a rack by a window.

A sign on it read:

**SLIGHTLY SOILED—
GREATLY REDUCED IN PRICE.**

"That's it exactly," he continued. "We get soiled by gazing at a vulgar picture, reading a course book, or allowing ourselves a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thoughts; and so when the time comes for our character to be appraised, we are greatly reduced in value. Our purity, our strength is gone. We are just part and parcel of the general, shopworn stock of the world."

Yes, continual slight deviations from the path of right may greatly reduce our usefulness to God and to our fellowman (see **notes** on "vessel of honor... useful to the Master" - 2Ti 2:21,22-2Ti 2:21; 22). In fact, these little secret sins can weaken our character so that when we face a moral crisis, we cannot stand the test. As a result, we go down in spiritual defeat because we have been careless about little sins. (Source unknown)

Tiny Evils, Big Fall READ: Eccl 9:16-18, Eccl 10:1-10

Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour. --Ecclesiastes 10:1

It started as a seedling on the slopes of the Colorado Rockies some 500 years ago. For centuries it had stood tall, enduring violent winds, lightning strikes, blizzards, even avalanches. Now, however, the once-towering tree is just a mound of decaying wood. What caused its demise? A horde of beetles had attacked it, gnawing away until that skyscraper of nature surrendered to those tiny pests and toppled over.

That's also the tragic story of many Christians. For long years they stood tall for God. They resisted temptations, weathered crises, and were bold in the strength divinely provided. But **little sins** began to eat away at their lives--**little lies, little compromises** with greed or lust, sins that gradually eroded their **character**. And suddenly they fell.

Song of Solomon 2:15 states,

"Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines."

This colorful Old Testament verse should sound a loud alarm in our consciences. We must not tolerate the little evils that eat away at the roots of our lives. Otherwise, our once-strong witness for Christ will become a silenced casualty of sin. Let's confess those "tiny" evils to God now, before they lead to a big fall. — Vernon C. Grounds

Nothing between, like worldly pleasure,
Habits of life, though harmless they seem,
Must not my heart from Him ever sever--
He is my all! There's nothing between.

--Charles Tindley

([Play this great hymn](#))

A big fall begins with a little stumble.

(I would add a blessed life can begin with what may seem like a little obedience!)

SIN IS LIKE A BOA CONSTRICTOR! - Are you being deceived by sin and tolerating it like a **pet**? If you are, then you need to remember the fate of the man with the **pet boa constrictor** (Do a Google search - use the following three words in your search keeping the quotation marks as written >> "pet boa" killed). After 15 years of living with his owner, one day the "pet boa" would not let its "owner" out of its grip resulting in the owner's tragic death. Wild animals remain wild and so does **Sin**. Do not be deceived (Stop being deceived)!

A slight sore, neglected, may prove of fatal consequence,
and so may a slight sin slighted and left unrepented of.

--Matthew Henry

No Small Deviations in God's Economy! - In St. Louis there is a railroad switchyard. One particular switch begins with just the thinnest piece of steel to direct a train away from one main track to another. If you were to follow those two tracks, however, you would find that one ends in San Francisco, the other in New York. Sin is like that. Just a small deviation from God's standards can place us far afield from our intended destination. Don't be deceived by the world, flesh or devil who say "It's no big deal!" Wrong!

The way of sin is downhill.

A man cannot stop himself when he will.

--Matthew Henry

Entanglement by the Cords of one's own Sin - Not long after a wealthy contractor had finished building the Tombs prison in New York, he was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to several years in the prison he had built! As he was escorted into a cell of his own making, the contractor said, "I never dreamed when I built this prison that I would be an inmate one day." (cp Nu 32:23)

No sin is small.
It is against an infinite God
and may have consequences immeasurable.
No grain of sand is small in the mechanism of a watch.
--Jeremy Taylor

According to sociologist **Robert Bellah** - One of our current psychological gurus says that 98 percent of Americans are dysfunctional. No doubt he is right. He has just discovered original sin, though he is mistaken if he thinks 2 percent are without.

SIN'S POWER - Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman told of a distinguished minister, Dr. Howard, from Australia who preached very strongly on the subject of sin. After the service, one of the church officers came to counsel with him in the study. "Dr. Howard," he said, "we don't want you to talk as openly as you do about man's guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin. "The minister took down a small bottle and showing it to the visitor said, "You see that label? It says strychnine -- and underneath in bold, red letters the word 'Poison!' Do you know, man, what you are asking me to do? You are suggesting that I change the label. Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, 'Essence of Peppermint'; don't you see what might happen? Someone would use it, not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die. So it is, too, with the matter of sin. The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison!" (Source Unknown)

The Danger of "Small Sins" Illustrated - Imagine all the obstacles a person might have to overcome if he were to walk from New York City to San Francisco. One man who accomplished this rare achievement mentioned a rather surprising difficulty when asked to tell of his biggest hurdle. He said that the toughest part of the trip wasn't traversing the steep slopes of the mountains or crossing hot, dry, barren stretches of desert. Instead, he said, "The thing that came the closest to defeating me was the sand in my shoes." - Our Daily Bread.

Slavery to Sin - Radio personality Paul Harvey tells the story of how an Eskimo kills a wolf. The account is grisly, yet it offers fresh insight into the consuming, self-destructive nature of sin. "First, the Eskimo coats his knife blade with animal blood and allows it to freeze. Then he adds another layer of blood, and another, until the blade is completely concealed by frozen blood. "Next, the hunter fixes his knife in the ground with the blade up. When a wolf follows his sensitive nose to the source of the scent and discovers the bait, he licks it, tasting the fresh frozen blood. He begins to lick faster, more and more vigorously, lapping the blade until the keen edge is bare. Feverishly now, harder and harder the wolf licks the blade in the arctic night. So great becomes his craving for blood that the wolf does not notice the razor-sharp sting of the naked blade on his own tongue, nor does he recognize the instant at which his insatiable thirst is being satisfied by his OWN warm blood. His carnivorous appetite just craves more--until the dawn finds him dead in the snow!" It is a fearful thing that people can be "consumed by their own lusts." Only God's grace keeps us from the wolf's fate. - Chris T. Zwingelberg.

Attraction to Sin - Several years ago our family visited Niagara Falls. It was spring, and ice was rushing down the river. As I viewed the large blocks of ice flowing toward the falls, I could see that there were carcasses of dead fish embedded in the ice. Gulls by the score were riding down the river feeding on the fish. As they came to the brink of the falls, their wings would go out, and they would escape from the falls. I watched one gull which seemed to delay and wondered when it would leave. It was engrossed in the carcass of a fish, and when it finally came to the brink of the falls, out went its powerful wings. The bird flapped and flapped and even lifted the ice out of the water, and I thought it would escape. But it had delayed too long so that its claws had frozen into the ice. The weight of the ice was too great, and the gull plunged into the abyss. The material possessions of this world can entrap us if we become too attached to them. They will take us to our destruction if we cannot give them up. And as Sweeting observed, "Oh, the danger of delay!" - George Sweeting

Sinners bound with the cords of sin (See [Spurgeon's full sermon below](#))

The first sentence of this verse has reference to a net, in which birds or beasts are taken. That which first attracted the sinner afterwards detains him. This first sentence may have reference to an arrest by an officer of law. The transgressor's own sin shall take him, shall seize him; they bear a warrant for arresting him, they shall judge him, they shall even execute him. The second sentence speaks of the sinner being holden with cords. The lifelong occupation of the ungodly man is to twist ropes of sin. The

binding meant is that of a culprit pinioned for execution. Iniquity pinions a man. Make a man's will a prisoner, and he is a captive indeed. Who would not scorn to make himself a slave to his baser passions? And yet the mass of men are such--the cords of their sins bind them.

I. The captivating, enslaving power of sin is a solution to a great mystery.

1. Is it not mysterious that men should be content to abide in a state of imminent peril?
2. Before long unconverted men and women will be in a state whose wretchedness it is not possible for language fully to express.
3. Is it not a wonder that men do not receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, seeing that the gospel is so plain?
4. Nay, moreover, so infinitely attractive.
5. The commandment of the gospel is not burdensome.
6. And, according to the confession of most sinners, the pleasures of sin are by no means great. Here stands the riddle, man is so set against God and His Christ that he never will accept eternal salvation until the Holy Spirit, by a supernatural work, overcomes his will and turns the current of his affections.

II. THOUGH THIS IS THE SOLUTION OF ONE MYSTERY, IT IS IN ITSELF A GREATER MYSTERY. One reason why men receive not Christ is, that they are hampered by the sin of forgetting God. Another sin binds all unregenerate hearts; it is the sin of not loving the Christ of God. What a mystery it is that men should be held by the sin of neglecting their souls! (C. H. Spurgeon.)

TWENTY REASONS NOT TO SIN!

Just for "fun" take a moment to review the following list of **20 reasons not to commit sins** (hamartano)...

1. A little sin leads to more sin.
2. Sin invites the discipline of God.
3. The time spent in my sin is forever wasted.
4. My sin never pleases but always grieves the God Who loves me.
5. My sin places a greater burden on my spiritual leaders.
6. In time, sin always brings heaviness to my heart.
7. Others, including my family, suffer consequences due to my sin.
8. My sin makes the enemies of God rejoice.
9. Sin deceives me into believing I have gained when in reality I have lost.
10. Sin may keep me from qualifying for spiritual leadership.
11. The supposed benefits of sin will never outweigh the consequences of disobedience.
12. Repenting of sin is a painful process.
13. My sin may influence others to sin.
14. My sin may keep others from knowing Christ.
15. Sin makes light of the Cross, upon which Christ died for the very purpose of taking away my sin.
16. It is impossible to sin and follow the Spirit at the same time.
17. Others more earnest than I have been destroyed by just such sins.
18. God chooses not to hear the prayers of those who cherish their sin ([Ps 66:18](#)).
19. My unwillingness to reject this sin now grants it authority over me greater than I understand.
20. I promised God He would be the Lord of my life. (Source unknown)

Sin will take you farther than you ever thought you'd stray
Sin will leave you so lost, you think you'll never find your way
Sin will keep you longer than you ever thought you'd stay
Sin will cost you more than you ever thought you'd pay

The Captivating Power of Sin

Proverbs 5:22

Charles Simeon

THE force of habit is well known: it operates as a second nature; so constant is it in its exercise, and so imperious in its demands. There is this difference however in habits of piety, and habits of sin: that the one are easily lost; but the other are with great difficulty overcome. Nor is this difficult to be accounted for; seeing that the one is against the course of nature, and the other conformable to all its propensities: the motion of the one is a continual ascent; the other is downward on a declivity. But it is not merely as a natural consequence that sin, when indulged, has so great a power: there is an additional influence given to it by God himself, as a judicial act, and as a just punishment for indulging it: so that in a judicial, no less than in a natural sense, our text is true: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself: and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."

Let us consider,

I. The declaration itself—

In a two-fold view it may be noticed;

1. As a judgment inflicted—

It is inflicted on the whole human race. There is not a sinner in the universe who cannot from his own experience attest the truth of it.

**Every sin has a power to enslave the mind,
and to lead captive him who has indulged it.**

But we will instance this in some particulars.

The man addicted to drinking previous to the formation of his habit, had perhaps no particular love to strong drink, or desire after it: but he has been drawn into company, he has there acquired a taste for conviviality, and at last, by repeated excesses, he has contracted such a thirst for intoxicating liquors, that he cannot deny himself the use of them, or use them in moderation. He can see his character sinking in the estimation of all the sober part of the community, his health impaired, his fortune injured, his family suffering, and his eternal interests sacrificed: and yet he cannot cast off the habit which he has contracted: his soul is bound with it as with a cord, and he cannot burst his bonds.

In a similar plight is he who has given himself up to the gratification of his lusts and passions. They, at least as far as the mind is concerned, are increased by indulgence, so that every object calls forth desire, and "the eyes of the libertine are full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin." (2Pe 2:14-note) His very soul, as it were, is sensualized, and, whether sleeping or waking, his imagination roves after the gratification of his lawless appetites.

Nor must I omit to mention the gamester, in whom the text is most awfully verified. Nothing can induce him to abandon his ruinous pursuits. Domestic ties of wife and children have no influence at all. The ruin of himself and family are all suspended on a card or die. Not even the experience of ruin will reclaim him. Let his losses be repaired again and again, and again and again will he return to the fascinating object, like the moth, and hover round it, till he is consumed.

I have mentioned these instances, as being more obvious and acknowledged: but the declaration is equally verified in the gay, the worldly, the profane; yea, and in the superstitious and self-righteous also. They all "feed on ashes; and a deceived heart hath turned them aside, so that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" (Is 44:20)

2. As a warning given—

[In this view more especially the declaration in our text is introduced, to guard young men against the temptations to which they are exposed (Pr 5:20). And a most awful warning it is: it shews us how earnestly we should guard against our besetting sins. Every man has some "sin which more easily besets him," (He 12:1-note) and by which he is more in danger of being enslaved. Now every man should find out what this peculiar temptation is; and should watch and pray against it; lest, by yielding to it, he provoke "God to give him over to a reprobate mind," (Ro 1:28-note) and to say, "He is joined to idols; let him alone." (Hos 4:17) We should labour to say with David, "I have kept myself from my iniquity:" (Ps 18:23-note) and, with Job, "Thou knowest I am not wicked," not deliberately and habitually wicked (Job 10:7). We should dread lest that be inflicted on us which is spoken in the text; a judgment far heavier than any other that can be inflicted on us even by God himself, as long as we continue in this

present life; because it is a certain prelude to everlasting misery, and the means of augmenting it every day and hour: for, if we are delivered over to our own lusts, we do nothing but “treasure up wrath against the day of wrath,” and accumulate mountains of guilt to sink us deeper and deeper into everlasting perdition (Ro 2:5-note). Our employment will be like that of those mentioned by the Prophet Isaiah, who “drew out iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as a cart-rope:” (Is 5:18-note) for, as a rope is spun out continually to an indefinite length by the constant addition of fresh materials, so will our sin be drawn out to an endless extent, till death shall cut it short, and the deserved punishment be awarded to it.]

It would be improper to pass over such a declaration as this without drawing your attention to,

II. The reflections which it naturally suggests—

1. How thankful should we be for the Gospel of Christ!

[Heathens are in the bondage above described, and have no conception of any way of deliverance from it. But in the Gospel a Saviour is proclaimed: who came on purpose to “preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” (Lk 4:18) His power no lusts can withstand. As he delivered Peter from prison, causing his chains to fall off, and the prison doors to open of their own accord, so can he liberate the slaves of sin and Satan from their bondage, and bring them forth into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Diseases, devils, elements, all obeyed his voice in the days of his flesh: and at his word the most deep-rooted lusts shall be plucked up, and the most inveterate habits changed. The day of Pentecost sufficiently attests the truth of this assertion. The hands of the men who had crucified him were yet reeking with his blood, yet in an instant were their hearts renewed, and they became altogether new creatures, “the wolf being as harmless as the sheep, and the lion as gentle as the lamb.” (Is 11:6)

However inveterate then your habits may have been, despair not: but look to “that Mighty One on whom your help is laid,” and who is able to save “to the uttermost all who come unto God by him.” (Heb 7:25KJV)]

[There is no death of sin without the death of Christ.]

[John Owen]

2. How watchful should we be against the first incursions of sin!

[As we know not “how great a matter a little fire will kindle,” so we know not what evils one sin may introduce. Every evil habit originated in one sin. Judas little thought in what his first act of dishonesty would issue: and millions, who are now gone beyond the hope of redemption, once thought as little to what a state they should be ultimately brought, as we now do. Say not, This angry temper is a light evil: It is murder in the seed and embryo; and may terminate in the very act of murder much sooner than you imagine. Say not, This impure thought or look is venial: it is constructive adultery; to which it lends, and in which, ere you are aware of it, it may soon issue. The same I would say of envy, hatred, malice, covetousness, ambition, and the whole catalogue of spiritual lusts: the admission of them into the heart is as is leak in a ship, which will sink it ultimately, if it be not stopped in time. A mariner will not neglect that leak, though it be but small; because he knows the consequences: he knows that if it be neglected, his efforts to preserve the ship will ere long be vain and ineffectual. It is not possible to look around us without seeing, in numberless instances, what dominion the evil tempers of men have gained, and what misery they diffuse throughout their respective families and spheres. Had they been checked in their commencement, how much sin and misery would have been prevented! If then we would not forge chains for our own souls, let us guard against the first risings of sin: for, whatever we may think, “we shall reap according to what we sow: he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Gal 6:7,8)]

3. How constant should we be in waiting upon the Lord Jesus Christ, both in his public ordinances, and in secret prayer!

[None but Christ can afford us any effectual help: for “without him we can do nothing.” (Jn 15:5) To him we must carry our every trial, and every temptation: and we must plead with him for help, as the Apostle did, till he answer us, and say, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” (2Cor 12:9-note) Let us never forget that it is in vain to resist sin in our own strength. None but God himself can subdue it in us. “Our sufficiency even to think a good thought must be of him.” (2Cor 5:5) If He help us, it is well: “We can do all things through Christ who strengthened us.” (Php 4:13-note) But if we address ourselves to the purifying of our hearts in our own strength, we shall fail, as the Apostles did, when in self-confidence they attempted to cast out a devil, which “could only be ejected through the influence of prayer and fasting.” (Mt 17:21) Let us look simply to Christ to purge us both from the guilt and power of our sins; and then we shall find, that “according to our faith it shall be done unto us.” (Mt 9:29)] ([Volume VII -- Proverbs to Isaiah 26](#))

If you are wrestling with sin, if it is becoming not just an occasional meandering into the darkness, but a habit that is growing more and more powerful in your life, then read Charles Simeon's discussion of various aspects of sin... see SIN - the links are to Simeon's various messages on sin.

Related Resources:

- [Deceitfulness of Sin](#)
- [Backsliding](#)
- [Backsliding-Quotes, Devotionals, Illustrations](#)
- Deceitfulness of Sin in Hebrews 3:13
- [Charles Simeon's discussion of Achan's sin and its deceitfulness](#)
- [The Certainty that Sin will Find Us Out by Charles Simeon](#)

See also several Discussions by Charles Simeon on **Self-Deceit & Self-Deception** (links go to page discussing the topic or subtopic)...

Self-deceit,

sources of, [XVII. 248](#)

Self-deceit, illustrated in the person of Saul, [III. 187–190](#)

The self-deceiver, exposed. [XX. 45–49](#).

Danger of self-deceit, [VII. 469](#). [XVI. 641](#).

Remedies against self-deceit, [XVII. 249, 250](#). Its importance, [250, 251](#).

Self-deception,

Danger of, [IV. 352](#).

Caution against it, [I. 333](#).

Why men are so liable to it, [XII. 389, 390](#).

How we may counteract its baneful influence, [390–392](#).

The self-deception of covetous professors exposed, [IX. 419–422](#).

Sin cannot be reduced to manageable proportions.

--Sinclair Ferguson

CORDS OF SIN

Pr 5:22

Pulpit Commentary homily on Pr 5:22...**I. The sinner is in bondage.**

Such a condition is not expected when a man freely gives the reins to his passions, and weakly yields himself to temptation. On the contrary, he supposes that he is enjoying a larger liberty than they possess who are constrained to walk in the narrow path of righteousness. Moreover, even when this shocking condition is reached, he is slow to admit its existence. He will not confess his bondage; perhaps he scarcely feels it. Thus the Jews were indignant in rejecting any such notion when our Lord offered deliverance from the slavery of sin (Jn 8:33). But this only proves the bondage to be the greater. The worst degradation of slavery is that it so benumbs the feelings and crushes the manliness of its victims, that some of them do not notice the yoke that would gall the shoulders of all men who truly appreciated their condition. The reality of the bondage is soon proved, however, whenever a slave tries to escape. Then the chains of sin are felt to be too strong for the sinner to break. He cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Ro 7:24).

II. The cords that bind the sinner are spun out of his own sins

Satan does not need to build any massive prison walls, or to call upon Vulcan to forge fetters for his captives. He has but to leave them to themselves, and their own misdeeds will shut them in, as the rank new growth of a tropical forest encloses the rotting trunks of the older trees, from the seed of which it sprang.

1. This results from the force of habit. All conduct tends to become permanent. The way wears into ruts. Men become entangled in their own past.

2. This is confirmed by wilful disregard of saving influences. If the sinner repented and called for deliverance, he might be saved from the fearful bondage of his sins. But proudly choosing to continue on his own course, he has consented to the tightening of the cords that bind him.

III. Christ alone can liberate from the bondage of sin.

Left to itself, the slavery will be fatal. The sinner will never be free to live to any good purpose. He will not be able to escape in the day of doom; his own sins will tie him to his fate. In the end they will strangle him. Inasmuch as the cords are spun out of his own conduct, they are part of himself, and he cannot untie their knots or cut their strands. They are stronger than the cords with which Delilah bound Samson, while the helpless, guilty sinner is weaker than the shorn Nazarite. But it is to men in this forlorn condition that the gospel of Christ is proclaimed, with its glorious promise of liberty to the captives (Is 61:1). Christ brings liberating truth (John 8:32), redeeming grace, and the saving power of a mighty love,—those attractive “cords of a man” (Hos 11:4) which are even stronger than the binding cords of sin. ([The Pulpit Commentary](#))

VICE SUICIDAL

Pr 5:22, 23

I. Wickedness (like goodness) has undesigned results.

The good comes back to nestle in the bosom of the giver and the doer. We never do right without invoking a blessing on our own heads. Evil, on the other hand, designed and executed, is like a snare set for one's self, a net in the meshes of which the crafty is entangled, self-overreached.

II. Wickedness and ignorance are in close connection.

“He shall die for want of instruction”—the correct rendering of Pr 5:23. Socrates taught that vice was ignorance, virtue identical with knowledge. This, however, ignores the perversity of the will. The Bible ever traces wickedness to wilful and inexcusable ignorance.

III. Wickedness is a kind of madness.

“Through the greatness of his folly he shall reel about.” The word *shâgâh* once more. The man becomes drunk and frenzied with passion, and, a certain point passed, staggers to his end unwitting, careless, or desperate. ([The Pulpit Commentary](#))

THE END OF AN EVIL COURSE

Pr 5:22, 23

There are two fearful evils in which impenitent sin is sure to end, two classes of penalty which the wrong-doer must make up his mind to pay. He has to submit to—

I. An inward tyranny of the most cruel character. (Pr 5:22.)

We may never have seen the wild animal captured by the hunter, making violent efforts to escape its toils, failing, desperately renewing the attempt with fierce and frantic struggles, until at length it yielded itself to its fate in sullen despair. But we have witnessed something far more romantic than that. We have watched some human soul caught in the meshes of vice (intemperance, it may be), or entangled in the bonds of sin (covetousness, it may be), struggling to be free, failing in its endeavour, renewing the attempt with determined eagerness, and failing again, until at length it yields to the foe, vanquished, ruined, lost! “His own iniquities have taken the wicked himself, he is holden in the cords of his sins.”

1. Sin hides its tyranny from view; its cords are so carried that they are not seen; nay, they are so wound around the soul that at first they are not felt, and the victim has no notion that he is being enslaved.

2. Gradually and stealthily it fastens its fetters on the soul; e.g. intemperance, impurity, untruthfulness, selfishness, worldliness.

3. It finally obtains a hold from which the soul cannot shake itself free; the man is “holden;” sin has him in its firm grip; he is a captive, a spiritual slave. Beside this terrible tyranny, the persistent wrong-doer has to endure—

II. After-consequences yet more calamitous. (Pr 5:23.)

These are:

1. Death in the midst of folly. "He shall die without instruction," unenlightened by eternal truth, in the darkness of error and sin; he will die, "hoping nothing, believing nothing, and fearing nothing"—nothing which a man should die in the hope of, nothing which a man should live to believe and die in the faith of, nothing which a man should fear, living or dying. He shall die without peace to smooth his dying pillow, without hope to light up his closing eyes.

2. Exclusion from future blessedness through his folly. "In the greatness of his folly he shall go astray." While the simplest wisdom would have led him to seek and find entrance into the City of God, in the greatness of his folly he wanders off to the gates of the City of Sorrow.

1. If the path of folly has been entered upon and is now being trodden, return at once without delay. Further on, perchance a very little further on, it may be too late—the cords of sin may be too strong for the soul to snap. Arise at once, in the strength of the strong Deliverer, and regain the freedom which is being lost.

2. Enter in earliest days the path of spiritual freedom. Bear the blessed yoke of the Son of God, that every other yoke may be broken. Enroll in his ranks whose "service is perfect freedom." ([The Pulpit Commentary](#))

Proverbs 5:23 He will die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he will go astray.

- Pr 10:21; 14:32; Job 4:21; 36:12
- Pr 14:14; Ps 81:12; 2Pe 2:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22
- [Proverbs 5 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

God's wounds cure
Sin's kisses kill.
--William Gurnall

Matthew Poole - In the greatness of his folly; through his stupendous folly, whereby he cheated himself with hopes of repentance or impunity, and exposed himself to endless torments for the momentary pleasures of sinful lusts.

Bridges - Shutting his eyes against the light—he dies without instruction (Pr 5:12, 1:29, 10:21, Job 4:21, 36:12, Hos 9:14, 17)—the victim of his own willful delusion—the greatness of his folly leading him astray—to perdition. (2Pe 2:14-15-note) But is there no remedy for this deadly curse? Thanks be to God, cleansing is provided for the impure (Zech 13:1, 1Cor 6:11); "deliverance is proclaimed to the captive."6 Blessed Saviour! cleanse the leper in thy precious fountain. Perform thy mighty commission. Set the captive free. ([Proverbs 5 Exposition](#))

George Lawson - Pr 5:23. He despised instruction during life, and he shall die without it. He expected, that when his mortal career should draw near its close, good ministers should attend him and pray with him. He shall either want that comfort, or it is to be feared that it will not be blessed to him. None but God can awaken a sleeping and stupefied conscience; and when it is awakened, its clamors drown the voice of him who says, "Believe in Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

In his amazing folly, he goes astray in his crooked ways, and is led forth in the first rank of the workers of iniquity (2Pet. 2:11 note).

Let those who are not yet tainted by this vice bless God, and let them watch and pray. Let the guilty tremble and mourn; yet despair not. The arm that rescued Solomon is not weakened. The blood that cleansed the Corinthian whoremongers has lost none of its virtue. ([Lawson's Exposition of Proverbs](#) - Spurgeon said "A thoroughly sound and useful commentary. Lawson wrote popularly and vigorously.")

Die (04191)(muth) means to lose one's life and in this context could refer to either literal death or "walking death", this latter reflecting the miserable state of one's soul who is in bondage to this sin.

Like a drunk man oblivious to the danger before him, he will stagger to his ruin. The thought is that he will die without a gleam of hope or satisfaction. While the teacher probably had in mind physical death, the New Testament paints an even more grim picture of the fate of adulterers as suffering eternal death, those who "shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1Co 6:9-10).

Instruction (discipline) (04148)(**musar** from **yasar** = to discipline, chasten, admonish) refers to discipline, chastening, correction, reproof, rebuke. God's chastening is always for purposes of instruction, and should not be ignored or resented. (Job 5:17 cp the "end result" for Job = Job 42:2) The **NAS** translations reflects the senses of **musar** = chastening(3), chastise(1), correction(3), discipline(18), disciplines(1), instruction(20), punishment(2), reproof(1), warning(1).

Solomon instructs us "My son, do not reject the **discipline** (Lxx = **paideia**) of the LORD or loathe His reproof." (Pr 3:11) One of major purposes of wisdom literature is to teach wisdom (chokmah) and instruction (**musar**) (Pr 1:2) Isaiah describes the divine chastisement poured out on the Suffering Messiah (Isa 53:5).

Lack of instruction is one word in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** - **apaideutos** (**a** = without + **paideuo** = instruct, correct) means unlearned, untaught, ignorant, stupid, foolish (note the gradation from unlearned to fool!) These folks simply will not accept discipline and correction and thus will reap a bitter harvest of sin's sequelae.

Musar is a **key word** in Proverbs where it is used 30x out of a total of 50 OT uses -

Pr 1:2-3, 7-8; 3:11; 4:1, 13; 5:12, 23; 6:23; 7:22; 8:10, 33; 10:17; 12:1; 13:1, 18, 24; 15:5, 10, 32-33; 16:22; 19:20, 27; 22:15; 23:12-13, 23; 24:32.

Constable observes that "People usually do not become unfaithful to their spouses because they do not know better but because they do not choose better."

His folly is not a small moral miscue but is great!

Folly (0200)(**iwweleth**) is a noun signifying foolishness which Swanson says is "a state of being devoid of wisdom and understanding, with a focus on the evil behaviors which occur in this state." **iwweleth** speaks of foolishness as a moral rather than a mental issue.

Go astray (err)(07686)(**shagah**) means to to go (lead) astray (Ezek 34:6), to err, to mislead (Dt 27:18, Pr 28:10), to be deceived (hold a mistaken belief (Pr 5:23; 20:1), to wander, to make a mistake. **Shagah** can mean to reel or to stagger; to incline or move in walking, first to one side and then to the other (Isa 28:7 of effect of alcohol). Frequently **shagah** describes a wandering or aimless flock, both figuratively and literally (Ezek. 34:6).

Ross aptly observes that "if the young man is not captivated [Heb. **shagah**] by his wife but becomes captivated with a stranger in sinful acts, then his own iniquities will captivate him; and he will be led to ruin."

Larsen adds that "There is no 'free love'-only free exploitation."

In Pr 5:19-20 **shagah** speaks figuratively of "intoxication" from genuine love (Pr 5:19 where **shagah** = "exhilarated" - enlivened, animated, giving "vigor" to) fleshly driven "love" (Pr 5:20). In Lev 4:13 **shagah** describes the sin of ignorance (unintentional). Swanson adds that in this context, **shagah** means to "be in rapture, i.e., be in an attitude or emotion of very great pleasure and fondness for an object, possibly as a figurative extension of staggering around in stunned or inebriated (Pr 5:19, 20, NIV translates "be captivated")."

Fixed habits - A rooted habit becomes a governing principle. Every lust we entertain deals with us as Delilah did with Samson--not only robs us of our strength, but leaves us fast bound.

FROZEN IN SIN PROVERBS 5:23 [The wicked man] shall die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

The story is told of an eagle perched on a block of ice just above Niagra Falls. The swift current carried the ice and its majestic passenger close to the edge of the great precipice. Other birds warned the eagle of the danger ahead. But their words were unheeded. "I have great and powerful wings," he boasted. "I can fly from my perch at any time."

Suddenly the edge of the falls was only a few feet away. The eagle spread his powerful wings to mount up over his impending doom only to discover that his claws had become frozen to the block of ice.

Scripture warns those who think they are immune to sin to be careful! They are on the verge of falling (1 Corinthians 10:12; 1 Timothy 3:6). "I never thought it would happen to me" are words which have hounded many a person until their dying day (Proverbs 5:11-14). Every Christian needs to know that yielding to temptation can happen—and will, unless the instruction of wisdom is embraced.

Wisdom says, "Hear me clearly: The road to immorality is the road to destruction." (David Jeremiah - Sanctuary)

Proverbs 5:22 Sinners Bound With The Cords Of Sin
Delivered on Lord's Day Morning, February 13th, 1870, by
C H SPURGEON
at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. - Proverbs 5:22

The first sentence has reference to a net, in which birds or beasts are taken. The ungodly man first of all finds sin to be a bait, and, charmed by its apparent pleasantness he indulges in it, and then he becomes entangled in its meshes so that he cannot escape. That which first attracted the sinner, afterwards detains him. Evil habits are soon formed, the soul readily becomes accustomed to evil, and then, even if the man should have lingering thoughts of better things, and form frail resolutions to amend, his iniquities hold him captive like a bird in the fowler's snare. You have seen the foolish fly descend into the sweet which is spread to destroy him, he sips, and sips again, and by-and-by he plunges boldly in to feast himself greedily: when satisfied, he attempts to fly, but the sweet holds him by the feet and clogs his wings; he is a victim, and the more he struggles the more surely is he held. Even so is it with the sins of ungodly men, they are at first a tempting bait, and afterwards a snare. Having sinned, they become so bewitched with sin, that the scriptural statement is no exaggeration: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."

The first sentence of the text also may have reference to an arrest by an officer of law. The transgressor's own sins shall take him, shall seize him; they bear a warrant for arresting him, they shall judge him, they shall even execute him. Sin, which at the first bringeth to man a specious pleasure, ere long turneth into bitterness, remorse, and fear. Sin is a dragon, with eyes like stars, but it carrieth a deadly sting in its tail. The cup of sin, with rainbow bubbles on its brim, is black with deep damnation in its dregs. O that men would consider this, and turn from their delusions. To bring torment to the guilty, there is little need that God should, literally in the world to come, pile up Tophet with its wood and much smoke, nor even that the pit should be digged for the ungodly in order to make them miserable; sin shall of itself bring forth death. Leave a man to his own sins, and hell itself surrounds him; only suffer a sinner to do what he wills, and to give his lusts unbridled headway, and you have secured him boundless misery; only allow the seething caldron of his corruptions to boil at its own pleasure, and the man must inevitably become a vessel filled with sorrow. Be assured that sin is the root of bitterness. Gild the pill as you may, iniquity is death. Sweet is an unholy morsel in the mouth, but it will be wormwood in the bowels. Let but man heartily believe this, and surely he will not so readily be led astray. "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird," and shall man be more foolish than the fowls of the air? will he wilfully pursue his own destruction? will he wrong his own soul? Sin, then, becomes first a net to hold the sinner by the force of custom and habit, and afterwards, a sheriffs officer to arrest him, and to scourge him with its inevitable results.

The second sentence of our text speaks of the sinner being holden with cords, and a parable may be readily fashioned out of the expression. The lifelong occupation of the ungodly man is to twist ropes of sin. All his sins are as so much twine and cord out of which ropes may be made. His thoughts and his imaginations are so much raw material, and while he thinks of evil, while he contrives transgression, while he lusts after filthiness, while he follows after evil devices, while with head, and hand, and heart he pursues eagerly after mischief, he is still twisting evermore the cords of sin which are afterwards to bind him. The binding meant is that of a culprit pinioned for execution. Iniquity pinions a man, disables him from delivering himself from its power, enchains his soul, and inflicts a bondage on the spirit far worse than chaining of the body. Sin cripples all desires after holiness, damps every aspiration after goodness, and thus, fettering the man hand and foot, delivers him over to the executioner, which executioner shall be the wrath of God, but also sin itself, in the natural consequences which in every case must flow from it. Samson could burst asunder green withes and new ropes, but when at last his darling sin had bound him to his Delilah, that bond he could not snap, though it cost him his eyes. Make a man's will a prisoner, and he is a captive indeed. Determined independence of spirit walks at freedom in a tyrant's Bastille, and defies a despot's hosts; but a mind enslaved by sin builds its own dungeon, forges its own fetters, and rivets on its chains. It is slavery indeed when the iron enters into the soul. Who would not scorn to make himself a slave to his baser passions? and yet the mass of men are such—the cords of their sins bind them.

Thus, having introduced to you the truth which this verse teaches, namely, the captivating, enslaving power of sin, I shall advance to our first point of consideration. This is a solution to a great mystery; but then, secondly, it is itself a greater mystery; and when we have considered these two matters it will be time for us to note what is the practical conclusion from this line of thought.

I. First, then, the doctrine of the text, that iniquity entraps the wicked as in a net, and binds them as with cords is A SOLUTION OF A GREAT MYSTERY.

When you and I first began to do good by telling out the gospel, we labored under the delusion that as soon as our neighbors heard of the blessed way of salvation they would joyfully receive it, and be saved in crowds. We have long ago seen that pleasant

delusion dispelled; we find that our position is that of the serpent-charmer with the deaf adder, charm we ever so wisely, men will not hear so as to receive the truth. Like the ardent reformer, we have found out that old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon. We now perceive that for a sinner to receive the gospel involves a work of grace that shall change his heart and renew his nature. Yet none the less is it a great mystery that it should be so. It is one of the prodigies of the god of this world that he makes men love sin, and abide in indifference as if they were fully content to be lost. It is a marvel of marvels that man should be so base as to reject Christ, and abide in wilful and wicked unbelief. I will try and set forth this mystery, in the way in which, I dare say, it has struck many an honest hearted worker for Jesus Christ.

Is it not a mysterious thing that men should be content to abide in a state of imminent peril? Every unconverted man is already condemned. Our Lord has said it: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God." Every unregenerate man is not only liable to the wrath of God in the future, but the wrath of God abideth on him. It is on him now, it always will remain upon him; as long as he is what he is, it abideth on him. And yet in this state men do not start, they are not amazed or alarmed, they are not even anxious. Sabbath after Sabbath they are reminded of their unhappy position: it makes us unhappy to think they should be in such a state, but they are strangely at ease. The sword of vengeance hangs over them by a single hair, yet sit they at their banquets, and they laugh and sport as though there were no God, no wrath to come, no certainty of appearing before the judgment-seat of Christ. See a number of persons in a train that has broken down. The guard has only to intimate that another train is approaching, and that it may perhaps dash into the carriages and mangle the passengers; he has only to give half a hint, and see how the carriage doors fly open, how the travelers rush up the embankment, each one so eager for his own preservation as to forget his fellow's. Yet here are men and women by hundreds and thousands, with the fast-rushing train of divine vengeance close behind them; they may almost hear the sound of its thundering wheels, and, lo, they sit in all quietness, exposed to present peril and in danger of a speedy and overwhelming destruction. "'Tis strange. 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful." Here is a mystery indeed, that can only be understood in the light of the fact that these foolish beings are taken by their sin, and bound by the cords of their iniquities.

Be it ever remembered that before very long these unconverted men and women, many of whom are present this morning, will be in a state whose wretchedness it is not possible for language fully to express. Within four-and-twenty hours their spirits may be summoned before the bar of God; and, according to this book, which partially uplifts the veil of the future, the very least punishment that can fall upon an unconverted soul will cause it "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." All they had endured, of whom it is written, that they wept and gnashed their teeth, was to be shut out into outer darkness, nothing more; no stripes had then fallen, they had not yet been shut up in the prison-house of hell, only the gate of heaven was shut, only the light of glory was hid; and straightway there was weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. What, then, will be the woe of the lost when positive punishment is inflicted? As for what they will endure who have heard the gospel, but have wilfully rejected it, we have some faint notion from the Master's words: "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them." We know that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for "our God is a consuming fire." From this platform there rings full often that question, "How shall ye escape if ye neglect so great salvation?" And yet for all this, men are willing to pass on through time into eternity regardless of the escape which God provides, turning aside from the only salvation which can rescue them from enduring "the blackness of darkness for ever." O reason, art thou utterly fled? Is every sinner altogether brutish? If we should meet with a man condemned to die, and tell him that pardon was to be had, would he hear us with indifference? Would he abide in the condemned cell and use no means for obtaining the boon of life and liberty? Yes, there awaits the sinner a more awful doom, and a more terrible sentence, and we are sent to publish a sure pardon from the God of heaven; and yet thousands upon thousands give us no deep heartfelt attention, but turn aside and perish in their sins. O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep for the folly of the race to which I belong, and mourn over the destruction of my fellow men!

It often strikes us with wonder that men do not receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, when we recollect that the gospel is so plain. If it were a great mystery one might excuse the illiterate from attending to it. If the plan of salvation could only be discovered by the attentive perusal of a long series of volumes, and if it required a classical training and a thorough education, why then the multitude of the poor and needy, whose time is taken up with earning their bread, might have some excuse; but there is under heaven no truth more plain than this, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus hath everlasting life;" "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved." To believe—that is, simply to trust Christ. How plain! There is no road, though it ran straight as an arrow, that can be more plain than this. Legible only by the light they give, but all so legible that he who runs may read, stand these soul-quickenings words, "Believe and live." Trust Christ and your sins are forgiven; you are saved. This is so plain a precept, that I may call it a very A B C for infants, yet men receive it not. Are they not indeed holden by the cords of their sins when they refuse to obey?

Moreover, brethren, there is a wonderful attractiveness in the gospel. If the gospel could possibly be a revelation of horrors piled on horrors, if there were something in it utterly inconsistent with reason, or something that shocked all the sensitive affections of our better part, we might excuse mankind, but the gospel is just this: man is lost, but God becomes man to save him, "The Son of

Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Out of infinite love to his enemies the Son of God took upon himself human flesh, that he might suffer in the room and stead of men what they ought to have suffered. The doctrine of substitution, while it wondrously magnifies the grace of God and satisfies the justice of God, methinks ought to strike you all with love because of the disinterested affection which it reveals on Jesus Christ's part. O King of Glory, dost thou bleed for me? O Prince of Life, canst thou lie shrouded in the grave for me? Doth God stoop from his glory to be spat upon by sinful lips? Doth he stoop from the splendor of heaven to be "despised and rejected of men," that men may be saved? Why, it ought to win every human ear, it ought to entrance every human heart. Was ever love like this? Go ye to your poets, and see if they have ever imagined anything nobler than the love of Christ the Son of God for the dying sons of men! Go to your philosophers, and see if in all their maxims they have ever taught a diviner philosophy than that of Christ's life, or ever have imagined in their pictures of what men ought to be, an heroic love like that which Christ in very deed displayed! We lift before you no gory banner that might sicken your hearts; we bring before you no rattling chains of a tyrant's domination; but we lift up Jesus crucified, and "Love" is written on the banner that is waved in the forefront of our hosts; we bid you yield to the gentle sway of love, and not to the tyranny of terror. Alas! men must be bound, indeed, and fettered fast by an accursed love to sin, or else the divine attractions of a crucified Redeemer would win their hearts.

Consider, my friends, you who love the souls of your fellow men, how marvellous it is that men should not receive the gospel when the commandment of the gospel is not burdensome! Methinks if it had been written that no man should enter heaven except by the way of martyrdom, it had been wisdom for every one of us to give our bodies to be burned, or to be stretched upon the rack; yea, if there had been no path to escape from the wrath of God, but to be flayed alive with Bartholomew, enduring present but exquisite torture, it would have been but a cheap price for an escape from wrath, and an entrance into heaven. But I find in God's word prescribed as the way of salvation, no such physical agonies. No austerities are commanded; not even the milder law which governed the Pharisee when he "fasted thrice in the week." Only this is written—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" and the precept of the Christian's life is, "Love thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Most pleasant duties these of love! What more sweet? What more delightful than to permit the soul to flow out in streams of affection? The ways of true religion are not irksome, her ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. What, heaven given for believing? What, heaven's gate opened only for knocking, and boons all priceless bestowed for nothing but the asking? Yet they will not ask, they will not knock. Alas, my God, what creatures are men! Alas, O sin, what monsters hast thou made mankind, that they will forget their own interests, and wrong their own souls!

Further, it is clear that men must be fast held by the bondage of their sins when we recollect that, according to the confession of the most of them, the pleasures of sin are by no means great. I have heard them say themselves that they have been satiated after a short season of indulgence. We know how true the word is, "Who hath woe? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." No form of sin has ever been discovered yet that has yielded satisfaction. You shall look at those who have had all that heart could wish, and have without restraint indulged their passions, and you shall find them to be in their latter end amongst the most wretched rather than the most satisfied of mankind. Yet for these pleasures—I think I degrade the word when I call them pleasures—for these pleasures they are willing to pawn their souls and risk everlasting woe; and all this while, be it remembered, to add to the wonder, there are pleasures to be found in godliness; they do not deny this, they cannot without belying their own observation. We who are at least as honest as they are, bear our testimony that we never knew what true happiness was till we gave our hearts to Christ; but since then our peace has been like a river. We have had our afflictions, we have suffered grievous bodily pain, we have endured mental depression, we have been heavily burdened, we have borne many trials; but we can say -

**We would not change our blest estate
For all the world calls good or great.**

"Happy are the people whose God is the Lord!" We can set our seal to this experimentally. See ye then, my brethren, these poor souls will prefer the pleasures that mock them to the pleasures that alone can satisfy. If we had to die like dogs, it would be worth while to be a Christian. If there were no hereafter, and our only consideration were who should enjoy this life the best, it would be the wisest thing to be a servant of God and a soldier of the cross. I say not it would ensure our being rich, I say not it would ensure our being respected, I say not it would ensure our walking smoothly and free from outward trouble; but I do say that because of "the secret something which sweetens all," because of the profound serenity which true religion brings, the Christian life out-masters every other, and there is none to be compared therewith. But think ye for awhile what the ungodly man's life is! I can only compare it to that famous diabolical invention of the Inquisition of ancient times. They had as a fatal punishment for heretics, what they called the "Virgin's Kiss." There stood in a long corridor the image of the Virgin. She outstretched her arms to receive her heretic child; she looked fair, and her dress was adorned with gold and tinsel, but as soon as the poor victim came into her arms the machinery within began to work, and the arms closed and pressed the wretch closer and closer to her bosom, which was set with knives, and daggers, and lancets, and razors, and everything that could cut and tear him, till he was ground to pieces in the horrible embrace; and such is the ungodly man's life. It standeth like a fair virgin, and with witching smile it seems to say, "Come to my bosom, no place so warm and blissful as this;" and then anon it begins to fold its arms of habit about the sinner, and

he sins again and again, brings misery into his body, perhaps, if he fall into some form of sin, stings his soul, makes his thoughts a case of knives to torture him, and grinds him to powder beneath the force of his own iniquities. Men perceive this, and dare not deny it; and yet into this virgin's bosom they still thrust themselves, and reap the deep damnation that iniquity must everywhere involve. Alas, alas, my God!

And now, once more, this terrible mystery, which is only solved by men's being held by their sins, has this added to it, that all the while in the case of most of you now present, all that I have said is believed, and a great deal of it is felt. I mean this: if I were talking with persons who did not believe they had a soul, or believe in the judgment to come, or believe in the penalty of sin, or believe in the reward of righteousness, I should see some reason why they rejected the great salvation; but the most of you who attend this house of prayer—I think I might say all—have scarcely ever had a doubt about these things. You would be very much horrified if any one would insinuate that you did not believe the Bible to be the word of God. You have a little Pharisaism in your soul, that you think you are not as scoffers are, nor infidels. I own you are not, but I grieve to say I think you are more inconsistent than they. If these things be a fiction, well, sirs, your course is rational; but if these things be realities, what shall I say for you when I plead with God on your behalf? What excuse can I make for you? If you profess to believe these things, act as though you believe them; if you do not, practically act so. Why do you profess to own them as the truth? The case is worse, for you not only believe these things to be true, but some of you have felt their power. You have gone home from this place, and you could not help it, you have sought your chamber and bowed your knee in prayer; such prayer as it was, for, alas! your goodness has been like the morning cloud and the early dew. I know some of you who have had to break off some of your sins, for your conscience would not let you rest in them. Yet you are unbelievers still, still you are undecided, still you are unsaved, and at this moment, if your soul were required of you, nothing would be in prospect but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation. O my hearer, you whose conscience has been at times awakened, in whom the arrows of the great King have found a lodging place, in whom they are rankling still, yield, I pray thee, yield to the divine thrusts, and give up thy contrite spirit to thy Redeemer's hands. But if thou do not, what shall I say to thee? The kingdom of God has been thrust from you by yourselves. Be sure of this, it has come near you, and in coming near it has involved solemn responsibilities which I pray you may not have to feel the weight of in the world to come.

Here, then, stands the riddle, that man is so set against God and his Christ that he never will accept eternal salvation until the Holy Spirit, by a supernatural work, overcomes his will and turns the current of his affections; and why is this? The answer lies in the text, because his own iniquities have taken him, and he is holden with the cords of his sin. For this reason he will not come unto Christ that he may have life; for this reason he cannot come, except the Father which hath sent Christ draw him.

II. But now, secondly, I pass on to observe that though this is the solution of one mystery, IT IS IN ITSELF A GREATER MYSTERY.

It is a terrible mystery that man should be so great a fool, so mad a creature as to be held by cords apparently so feeble as the cords of his own sins. To be bound by reason is honorable; to be hold by compulsion, if you cannot resist it, is at least not discreditable; but to be held simply by sin, by sin and nothing else, is a bondage which is disgraceful to the human name. It lowers man to the last degree, to think that he should want no fetter to hold him but the fetter of his own evil lusts and desires. Let us just think of one or two cords, and you will see this.

One reason why men receive not Christ and are not saved, is because they are hampered by the sin of forgetting God. Think of that for a minute. Men forget God altogether. The commission of many a sin has been prevented by the presence of a child. In the presence of a fellow creature, ordinarily a man will feel himself under some degree of restraint. Yet that eye which never sleeps, the eye of the eternal God, exercises no restraint on the most of men. If there were a child in that chamber thou wouldst respect it—but God being there thou canst sin with impunity. If thy mother or thy father were there thou wouldst not dare offend, but God who made thee and whose will can crush thee, thy lawful sovereign, thou takest no more account of him than though he were a dog, yea, not so much as that. Oh, strange thing that men should thus act! And yet with many it is not because of the difficulty of thinking of God. Men of study, for instance, if they are considering the works of God, must be led up to thoughts of God. Galen was converted from being an atheist while in the process of dissecting the human body; he could not but see the finger of God in the nerves and sinews, and all the rest of the wonderful embroidery of the human frame. There is not an emmet or an infusorial animalcule beneath the microscope but what as plainly as tongue can speak, saith, "Mortal, think of God who made thee and me." Some men travel daily over scenes that naturally suggest the Creator; they go down to the sea in ships, and do business on great waters, where they must see the works of the Lord, and yet they even manage to become the most boisterous blasphemers against the sacred majesty of the Most High, in his very temple where everything speaks of his glory. But you will tell me perhaps, some of you, that you are not engaged in such pursuits. I reply, I know it. Many of you have to labor with your hands for your daily bread, in occupations requiring but little mental exercise. So much the more guilty then are you that when your mind is not necessarily taken up with other things, you still divert it from all thoughts of God. The working man often find it very possible to spend his leisure hours in politics, and to amuse his working hours by meditating upon schemes more or less rational concerning the government of his country, and will he dare to tell me therefore that he could not during that time think of God? There is an

aversion to God in your heart, my brother, or else it would not be that from Monday morning to Saturday night you forget him altogether. Even when sitting here you find it by no means a pleasant thing to be reminded of your God, and yet if I brought up the recollection of your mother, perhaps in heaven, the topic would not be displeasing to you. What owe you to your mother compared with what you owe to your God? If I spoke to you of some dear friend who has assisted you in times of distress, you would be pleased that I had touched upon such a chord; and may I not talk with you concerning your God, and ask you why do you forget him? Have you good thoughts for all but the best? Have you kind thoughts of gratitude for every friend but the best friend that man can have? My God! my God! why do men treat thee thus? Brightest, fairest, best, kindest, and most tender, and yet forgotten by the objects of thy care!

If men were far away from God, and it were a topic abstruse and altogether beyond reach, something might be said. But imagine a fish that despised the ocean and yet lived in it, a man who should be unconscious of the air he breathes! "In him we live and move and have our being; we are also his offspring." He sends the frost, and he will send the spring; he sends the seed-time and the harvest, and every shower that drops with plenty comes from him, and every wind that blows with health speeds forth from his mouth. Wherefore then is he to be forgotten when everything reminds you of him? This is a sin, a cruel sin, a cursed sin, a sin indeed that binds men hard and fast, that they will not come to Christ that they may have life; but it is strange, it is beyond all miracles a miracle, that such a folly as this should hold men from coming to Christ.

Another sin binds all unregenerate hearts; it is the sin of not loving the Christ of God. I am not about to charge any person here with such sins as adultery, or theft, or blasphemy, but I will venture to say that this is a sin masterly and gigantic, which towers as high as any other—the sin of not loving the Christ of God. Think a minute. Here is one who came into the world out of pure love, for no motive but mercy, with nothing to gain, but though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor; why then is he not loved? The other day there rode through these streets a true hero, a brave bold man who set his country free, and I do remember how I heard your shouts in yonder street, and you thronged to look into the lion-like face of Italy's liberator. I blame you not, I longed to do the same myself, he well deserved your shouts and your loudest praises. But what had he done compared with what the Christ of God has done in actually laying down his life to redeem men from bondage, yielding up himself to the accursed death of the cross that man might be saved through him? Where are your acclamations, sirs, for this greater Hero? Where are the laurels that you cast at his feet? Is it nothing to you, is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, is it nothing to you that Jesus should die? Such a character, so inexpressibly lovely, and yet despised! Such a salvation, so inexpressibly precious, and yet rejected! Oh, mystery of iniquity! indeed, the depths of sin are almost as fathomless as the depths of God, and the transgressions of the wicked all but as infinite in infamy as God is infinite in love.

I might also speak of sins against the Holy Ghost that men commit, in that they live and even die without reverential thoughts of him or care about him; but I shall speak of one sin, and that is the mystery that men should be held by the sin of neglecting their souls. You meet with a person who neglects his body, you call him fool, if, knowing that there is a disease, he will not seek a remedy. If, suffering, from some fatal malady, he never attempts to find a cure, you think the man is fit only for a lunatic asylum. But a person who neglects his soul, he is but one of so numerous a class, that we overlook the madness. Your body will soon die, it is but as it were the garment of yourself and will be worn out; but you yourself are better than your body as a man is better than the dress he wears. Why spend you then all thoughts about this present life and give none to the life to come?

It has long been a mystery who was the man in the iron mask. We believe that the mystery was solved some years ago, by the conjecture that he was the twin brother of Louis XIV., King of France, who, fearful lest he might have his throne disturbed by his twin brother, whose features were extremely like his own, encased his face in a mask of iron and shut him up in the Bastille for life. Your body and your soul are twin brothers. Your body, as though it were jealous of your soul, encases it as in an iron mask of spiritual ignorance, lest its true lineaments, its immortal lineage should be discovered, and shuts it up within the Bastille of sin, lest getting liberty and discovering its royalty, it should win the mastery over the baser nature. But what a wretch was that Louis XIV., to do such a thing to his own brother! How brutal, how worse than the beasts that perish! But, sir, what art thou if thou doest thus to thine own soul, merely that thy body may be satisfied, and thy earthly nature may have a present gratification? O sirs, be not so unkind, so cruel to yourselves. But yet this sin of living for the mouth and living for the eye, this sin of living for what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed, this sin of living by the clock within the narrow limits of the time that ticks by the pendulum, this sin of living as if this earth were all and there were nought beyond—this is the sin that holds this City of London, and holds the world, and binds it like a martyr to the stake to perish, unless it be set free.

Generally, however, there also lies some distinct form of actual sin at the bottom of most men's impenitence. I will not attempt to make a guess, my dear hearer, as to what it may be that keeps thee from Christ, but without difficulty I could, I think, state what these sins generally are. Some men would fain be saved, but they would not like to tale up the cross and be despised as Christians. Some would fain follow Christ, but they will not give up their self-righteous pride; they want to have a part of the glory of salvation. Some men have a temper, which they do not intend to try to restrain. Others have a secret sin, too sweet for them to give it up; it is like a right arm, and they cannot come to the cutting of it off. Some enjoy company which is attractive, but

destructive, and from that company they cannot fly. Men one way or another are held fast like birds with birdlime, till the fowler comes and takes them to their destruction. O that they were wise, for then they might be awakened out of this folly! But this still remaineth the mystery of mysteries, that those sins absurd and deadly, bind men as with cords, and hold them fast like a bull in a net.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER IS THIS, a message sinner to thee, and saint, to thee.

Sinner, to thee. Thou art held fast by thy sins, and I fear me much thou wilt be held so till thou perish, perish everlastingly. Man, does not this concern you? I lay last night by the hour together on my bed awake, tossing with a burden on my heart, and I tell thee that only burden that I had was thy soul. I cannot endure it, man, that thou shouldst be cast into the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." I believe that book as thou dost; believing it, I am alarmed at the prospect which awaits the unconverted. The more I look into the subject of the world to come, the more I am impressed that all those who would lessen our ideas of the judgment that God will bring upon the wicked, are waging war against God and against virtue and the best interests of men. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Do not try it, my friend, I pray thee do not try it. Run not this risk, this certainty of endless misery, I beseech thee, dare it not! What sayest thou, "What then should I do?" I venture to reply in the words of one of old, "Break off thy sins by righteousness, for it is time to seek the Lord." But thou repliest, "How can I break them off? they are like cords and bonds." Ah, soul, here is another part of thy misery, that thou hast destroyed thyself, but thou canst not save thyself; thou hast woven the net, thou hast made it fast and firm, but thou canst not tear it in pieces. But there is One who can, there is One upon whom the Spirit of the Lord descended that he might loose the prisoner. There is a heart that feels for thee in heaven, and there is One mighty to save, who can rescue thee. Breathe that prayer, "O set me free, thou Liberator of captive souls;" breathe the prayer now, and believe that he can deliver thee, and thou shalt yet, captive as thou art, go free, and this shall be thy ransom price, his precious blood; and this shall be the privilege of thy ransomed life, to love and praise him who hath redeemed thee from going down into the pit.

But I said the conclusion of the whole matter had something to do with the child of God. It has this to do with him. Dear brother and sister in Christ, by the love you bear to your fellow sinners, never help to make the bonds of their sins stronger than they are—you will do so if you are inconsistent. They will say, "Why, such a one professes to be a saved man, and yet see how he lives!" Will you make excuses for sinners? It was said of Judah, by the prophet, that she had become a comfort to Sodom and Gomorrah. O never do this; never let the ungodly have to say, "There is nothing in it; it is all a lie; it is all a mere pretense; we may as well continue in sin, for see how these Christians act!" No, brethren, they have bonds enough without your tightening them or adding to them.

In the next place, never cease to warn sinners. Do not stand by and see them die without lifting up a warning note. A house on fire, and you see it as you go to your morning's labor, and yet never lift up the cry of "Fire!" a man perishing, and yet no tears for him! Can it be so? At the foot of Mr. Richard Knill's likeness I notice these words, "Brethren, the heathen are perishing, will you let them perish?" I would like to have each of you apply to your own conscience the question, "Sinners are perishing, will you let them perish without giving them at least, a warning of what the result of sin must be?" My brethren, I earnestly entreat you who know the gospel to tell it out to others. It is God's way of cutting the bonds which confine men's souls; be instant, in season and out of season, in publishing the good news of liberty to the captives through the redeeming Christ.

And lastly, as you and I cannot set these captives free, let us look to him who can. O let our prayers go up and let our tears drop down for sinners. Let it come to an agony, for I am persuaded we shall never get much from God by way of conversion till we feel we must have it, until our soul breaketh for the longing that it hath for the salvation of souls: when your cry is like that of Rachel, "Give me children or I die I" you shall not long be spiritually barren. When you must have converts, or your heart will break, God will hear you and send you an answer. The Lord bless you! May none of you be held by the cords of your sins, but may ye be bound with cords to the horns of God's altar as a happy and willing sacrifice to him that loved you. The Lord bless you for Jesus' sake.