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Chapter 1 – Affections Have Consequences

Rejecting Enticement & Greed (vs.8-19)

Proverbs 1:8-19: Hear, my son, your father's instruction

And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head

And ornaments about your neck.

My son, if sinners entice you,

Do not consent.

If they say, "Come with us,

Let us lie in wait for blood,

Let us ambush the innocent without cause;

Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,

Even whole, as those who go down to the pit;

We will find all kinds of precious wealth,

We will fill our houses with spoil;

Throw in your lot with us,

We shall all have one purse,"

My son, do not walk in the way with them.

Keep your feet from their path,

For their feet run to evil

And they hasten to shed blood.

Indeed, it is useless to spread the baited net

In the sight of any bird;

But they lie in wait for their own blood;

They ambush their own lives.

So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence;

It takes away the life of its possessors.

Well, a father warning his son; what a great passage this is. Actually, he's beckoning the son to embrace wisdom. In many respects, one of the great themes of the book of Proverbs is really creating a taste for that which is good; having an affection for the right things; being attracted to the right things. That actually can be fostered as a child is growing up within the household. In many respects, this is what's happening within this particular proverb. There is a developing of a taste for that which is good. Pretty destructive to my body and before long, you almost become addicted to it. Within that, you begin to realize "Ok, I need to redevelop my taste." Now, it's not an easy road to go back and redevelop your taste, but you can do that. The book of Proverbs is about literally saying, "What is it that you value, son? What is it that draws you? What allures you? What do you have an affection for?" If you look in the whole Gospel of John, that's what the Gospel of John is fundamentally about. The Gospel of John is fundamentally saying, "You will always believe what you love most." That's why Jesus, at the end of the book of John is asking Peter not "Do you believe Me?" but "Do you love Me?" because you realize that God so loved you that He gave His only begotten Son. Now the question is "Do you love Me?" If you love Him, you'll put your trust in Him. No problem, but if you don't, and you love something else, then you'll put your trust in that.

In particular, the Pharisees in the Gospel of John, it's being revealed that they love the approval of men rather than the approval of God. So, why is it that they would reject a man that was risen from the dead, i.e. Lazarus, and say, "Ok, I see the reality of this, but I choose to not believe the reality. I choose to believe what I love; the approval of men." So, this is going to be a fundamental point in the book Proverbs. In particular, as he begins to portray wisdom as a she. "Wisdom calls out in the street."

(Proverbs 1:20) "Wisdom shouts in the street,
She lifts her voice in the square".

You'll see the same thing in Proverbs 8:1:

"Does not wisdom call,
And understanding lift up her voice?"

Once again, he's going to pit one against the other. He's going to say there are two voices that you hear. The one is wisdom, she's crying out to you, and the other is the harlot. "She's" crying out to you.

In Proverbs 7 he goes into some detail about that.

So, you begin to see these two forces, and you're seeing the young man having to make a decision. "What am I going to choose? What do I see as valuable? What am I attracted to?"

What allures me? Is it the honorable things that allures me, or is it the indulgent that allures me? Is it character or cash? What's more important to me?"

In Proverbs 11 you see this playing out. Of course, there's a lot of inferences about money.

(Proverbs 11:4) "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death."

Riches is going to be the subject.

(Proverbs 11:1) "A false balance is an abomination to the LORD,
But a just weight is His delight."

What is he talking about? A balance as far as weighing out integrity. Oftentimes, when they weigh out something, they would put weights on one side so that it would change the value of something. So, a "just balance" would charge you appropriately. In other words, are you more concerned about making money; therefore, taking advantage of people, exploiting them, or are you more concerned about your integrity? That's going to be the fundamental question.

He says in verse 4, "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath..."

(Proverbs 11:16) "A gracious woman attains honor..."

Are you attracted to a gracious woman, or maybe you're attracted to a woman that just looks pretty? You could put a gold ring in the snout of a pig. He says that in verse 22, doesn't he?

"As a ring of gold in a swine's snout
So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion."

"She's really pretty." Yeah, have you talked to her? She's pretty until she opens her mouth.

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

Are you looking for grace and righteousness according to verse 4? Is it generosity that you're looking for?

(Proverbs 11:25) "The generous man will be prosperous..."

Are these the things that you're looking for?

(Proverbs 11:28) "He who trusts in his riches will fall..."

Yeah, not "might", "will fall".

"... But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf."

What are you looking for? All the way through, “Are you looking for character?”, “Are you looking for cash?”, “Are you looking for a good name, or are you just looking for a good time?”

How does Proverbs 22 start off?

(Proverbs 22:1) “A good name is to be more desired than great wealth, Favor is better than silver and gold.”

What is it that draws you? What are you attracted to? He will actually get into the realm of “would you rather go integrity or intoxication?”

How does Proverbs 20 start off?

(Proverbs 20:1) “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, And whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise.”

As you go on, he begins to describe what it is to be drunk.

(Proverbs 23:31) “Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup..”

You can sense it’s calling you.

“It goes down smoothly,” but it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. (Proverbs 23:32)

(Proverbs 23:33) “Your eyes will see strange things And your mind will utter perverse things.

(Proverbs 23:34) And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, Or like one who lies down on the top of a mast.”

I get seasick anyway. So, just reading that bothers me.

(Proverbs 23:35) “They struck me, but I did not become ill; They beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.”

Here again, what is it that attracts you? I knew some friends that I was growing up with, and oftentimes they would be very bright individuals and have a lot of promise, yet they were allured to all the wrong things that led to their demise.

When Paul talks with Timothy, he says, “I know you’re going to do the right thing because you value what your mother said.”

He says that he’s longing to see him in 2 Timothy 1:4.

Then in verse 5, “For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.”

In some way, Timothy was drawn to the sincerity of their faith.

If you look in 2 Timothy 3, it reads,

(2 Timothy 3:1) “...in the last days difficult times will come.

(2 Timothy 3:2) For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful...”

Everyone is doing the wrong thing, basically. It's going to go onto say that things are going to get worse, but he turns to Timothy, and he goes,

(2 Timothy 3:14) “You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

(2 Timothy 3:15) and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings...”

From his childhood? Who taught him? His mother. Paul not only says, “I want you to remember what they taught you,” but he wants him to remember who taught him. He knows that the relationship that was near and dear to Timothy would sustain him through the difficult times. It's one thing to hear a particular message, it's quite another to know that it came from a particular person. When you begin to realize that this person that cares for you, loves you, and was sincere in that love and care told you to do something, you go, “They would never steer me wrong.” So, he was attached to that message because Timothy actually valued the right things.

That's how Proverbs 1:8 will start off, here again, as he talks to his son, and he makes reference to the mother. He's saying, “We're two people who care for you. What do you think we're going to steer you wrong? We've invested in you. We've shown our love to you. We have a reputation for such. Listen to us. The things that we're telling you are good.”

Now, when he lists the father and mother, he actually shows in many respects the difference in roles that they have. It doesn't mean that one can't do both, but the emphasis of the roles is actually conveyed within this first verse.

(Proverbs 1:8) “Hear, my son, your father's instruction...”

If you would underline the word “instruction”, it means “correction.” It can sometimes be translated “discipline” or “chastisement.” It's conveying that it's the father's job to take the hard stands. I know that there are some weak fathers, and they go, “Listen to your mother,” but your mother should be saying, “Listen to your father.” He should be the one taking the stand. He should be the one leading the way and being the heavy, not the mother. When it says “hear”, it's actually saying “heed.” It's saying that when your father chastises, disciplines, or corrects, you should embrace this. Now, we're going to see this as we go through Scripture. In

fact, Proverbs 4:9 makes reference to this as well as other passages, but if you look, he will not only start off by saying, "Hear, my son, your father's instruction..." but what's the next phrase? "... And do not forsake your mother's teaching".

Now, the word for "teaching" that is used within the text is "*tôrâ*" which is the Old Testament. It's an interesting point because it is conveying that the mother is going to be more pedagogical or more a teacher in this respect in bringing the lessons to the children. Once again, it doesn't mean the father can't do that, but the father is going to tend to be more the heavy and you need to embrace when your dad corrects you. Then, the mother is going to be the one that sits down with you and goes over the lessons with you of what you need to do and "what does it say?" So, you need to not forsake what she's telling you. I think oftentimes the perception is, especially as a guy grows older, there's a tendency to go, "It's just mom." Moms are a little bit more easily manipulated. At least they were when I was growing up. It's because they're (mine was) softer and more compassionate. One of the great values of having a dad in the home is that he won't let the mom be taken advantage of and he'll say, "Respect your mother." Unfortunately, a lot of times instead of doing that, the father doesn't and he's trying to be the "good guy," but he should be the heavy in this.

There's an interesting passage, and I've even thought about it in particular with my mother, now being 97 almost 98, in my home with me. There are things as she grows older that are failing her. The other day she said, "Thank you so much for letting me stay here." I said, "Mom, why wouldn't I?" I said, "That's the most ridiculous statement you could ever make. Why wouldn't I let you stay here? I want you to be here." Oftentimes the perception in our society is that they're basically throwaways because they're not contributing to us in any way. There's a particular verse that's kind of haunted me through these days, Proverbs 23:22. I won't necessarily have you turn there, but it reads this way,

"... do not despise your mother when she is old."

That's a great verse, isn't it? That verse is oftentimes in my mind because there are times when you go, "Oh mom." Then, you go, "You can't do that." You need to respect her and what she says. Let her say things that maybe don't make sense at times, but that's your mother. On many occasions, I can hear my voice going, "Respect your mother and father." It's a good instruction that I need to hear, and I need to embrace that. One of the misnomers or misconceptions that people have is that when your mother gets older, you're supposedly getting smarter. So, she'll say things that you're going, "Ok, that doesn't make any sense," or it doesn't make any sense to you for whatever reason, and your thought is to maybe demean it or criticize it in some way. However, what you don't understand is that God's not telling you to listen to your mother's instruction because she's always right or knows what's good in every situation. It's not saying

that; it's saying this is good for you because what you're doing in this respect is you're learning something called "honor" and "humility." Both of those are necessary ingredients to reign as a king. Submission to authority and recognizing that the authority may not always be right; it's not the issue whether they're right or wrong. It's the issue of what are you going to do to be more like Christ. The very fact that we read in Hebrews that Christ, God Himself, Emmanuel (Scripture calls Him "God with us") learned obedience. Why would He have to obey? If anybody was worthy of saying, "I already know that," He would have been the one, but He didn't. He goes, "I was doing my Father's business." It says that He goes and submits to His parents. Now the question is "who was right?" Well, God's always right. I've never known God to be wrong, but He submitted to that authority showing that honorable trait that was necessary for Him to reign.

God is preparing our hearts through these. Let me just say this, submitting yourself to the authority in your house will prepare you to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior. This is why Galatians will say that the law is a tutor to lead us to Christ. In other words, the law makes you subservient and humble so that when you hear the gospel, you submit to it. This is why Paul will say in 2 Corinthians that you need to obey the gospel. If you've been used to obeying authority, when you hear God say, "Receive. Believe." You'll do it. You're more bent on receiving if you have respect and honor for authority. When God speaks, you'll have more of a tendency to receive His command that He gives you. It's saving to your soul.

He's going to start off this way because obviously, you have these two forces. You have a force of enticement and greed which we're going to be looking at in the next few verses. Then, you have the force of awe and aspiration in which he starts off, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In other words, what's going to allure you? As he goes on, he begins to talk about the fact that this obedience is actually going to be something that ingratiates you in certain respects; displays a sense of gracious ornament upon yourself.

(Proverbs 1:9) "Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck."

You see that repeated as well.

(Proverbs 4:7) "The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding."

(Proverbs 4:8) Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her."

What is it talking about? It's talking about the prize that you're getting by honoring and humbling yourself to the authority of your parents. What is that? It's going to exalt you. It's going to bring honor to you.

(Proverbs 4:9) “She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty.”

The word “crown” is a picture of honor that is given.

The picture as well, if you go back to Proverbs 1:9,

“Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head And ornaments about your neck.”

In some translations, the word “ornaments” is translated as “chains.” You see that in the book of Daniel; in which a chain was placed around his neck. Of course, that was a picture of authority that was given. Scripture is basically saying that if you know how to take orders, you’ll be able to give orders. If you can’t humble yourself, you’re not fit to rule. So, it’s an interesting picture that it starts off with.

(Proverbs 1:10) “My son, if sinners entice you...”

So, the two that are playing against each other are the enticement of greed in this particular setting and the awe and admiration that you have for God. What are you allured by? What are you listening for? What are you looking for? What do you love?

The word “enticement” makes reference to opening a door wide. That’s one of the problems of “enticement”; it’s really easy to go that way. It’s one of the things that make “enticement” enticement. When you read in Matthew, the road is broad and “the gate is wide,” (Matthew 7:13) it’s talking about that it’s not only easy to do it, but most people are doing it. We don’t think in terms of integrity or what is honorable; most people don’t. They think in terms of expediency and immediate gratification, but they don’t think in terms of what’s really valuable.

He says that they’re going to entice you; they’ll probably say something like, “Everybody’s doing it. Why don’t you do it?”

“... Do not consent.”

“Do not yield.” It’s an interesting picture of “don’t do one inch with them.” It’s a lot like Psalm 1, don’t walk in the path of sinners or the wicked because they’re going to try to counsel you one way. Don’t listen to them.

(Proverbs 1:11) “If they say, ‘Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood, Let us ambush the innocent without cause’.”

Fundamentally, nobody’s going to know because you’re ambushing, right? Nobody knows or sees. Scripture says that you don’t want to curse a deaf man. Well, how does he know? God knows. It’s an interesting picture when you go into Isaiah as well as Psalms that the wicked man goes, “God does not see.” Yeah, He sees.

“Come with us, Let us lie in wait for blood...”

“Your gain is going to be their loss, but who cares about them?” Their life is going to be taken for your enjoyment. That’s the way it should be, right?

(Proverbs 1:12) “Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, Even whole, as those who go down to the pit”.

The names and the phrases that people use, the metaphors that they put in their discussions, maybe you ought to pay more attention to it. “Hell’s Angels.” Would it be a good idea to join that club? “Let’s go down like Sheol.” I’m going, “Ok, that just doesn’t sound great.” Cross, bones and diabolos. Isn’t it amazing how people gravitate, “Yeah, we’re going to be like the devil?” “Yeah, you know that’s not a good thing?” You feel like you have to spell it out to people.

“Let us swallow them alive like Sheol...” You almost feel the sense of aggrandizement just by virtue of comparing themselves to Sheol; death, a place of the nether world.

“... Even whole, as those who go down to the pit.” The “pit” is the worst place of Sheol.

(Proverbs 1:13) “We will find all kinds of precious wealth...”

Forget about the people and the carnage that happens, “we will find all kinds of precious wealth. Greed and avarice are something we aspire to.”

“... We will fill our houses with spoil”.

Of course, hoarding and plundering are such wonderful traits to have.

(Proverbs 1:14) “Throw in your lot with us...”

What they’re really asking you to do is make a decision. When you “throw in a lot” with somebody, you’re making a decision to do something. People say, “I don’t want to make a decision for Christ.” You’re going to make a decision for someone, and the world is not going to let you go without it. Who do you serve? That’s a good question. Where do you throw in your lot?

“Throw in your lot with us, We shall all have one purse”.

“We’re all in this together.” You almost have a sense of comradeship that comes out of this, and I think it’s one of the reasons why people join clubs. Ask yourself, “What does the club really represent?” “They’re nice to me.” Yeah, but look at the people they’re hurting. “Yeah, but they like me; they’ve accepted me.”

(Proverbs 1:15) “My son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path,

(Proverbs 1:16) For their feet run to evil...

It's strange the people will actually run to pain and sorrow; a place that would be hurtful and miserable. Why would you run to that? It seems to be a draw to them. Once again, they're loving the wrong things.

"... And they hasten to shed blood."

The shedding of blood there is a picture in the Hebrew of "flowing freely." When you consider that they think nothing of it, it's easy for them to hurt somebody else. Have you ever known somebody that throws off a railing remark and it just comes off so easy for them? You know they just crushed somebody, and they don't care. It's no concern of theirs. It just comes out easy.

(Proverbs 1:17) "Indeed, it is useless to spread the baited net In the sight of any bird".

I oftentimes think of Jeremiah 8 where God is saying, "Look, the stork knows when to fly and when not to fly, where to go for migration; even the pigeon knows what he's supposed to do. You guys are dumber than birds." That's literally what it's saying. Isaiah will say, "You're dumber than an ox and a mule." Of course, with Balaam, that was proven, wasn't it? His donkey was smarter than him, and actually, I think probably talked better.

One of the things that we need to continue to proclaim is how stupid the decisions of the world are; not tearing down the people, but how crazy it is. Unfortunately, we're not insulted enough over the evil and the distortion of truth that's being done. We need to be. Now, that doesn't mean we're going to go around being angry or hostile towards the people that are doing it, but we need to be very vocal about saying, "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard." I think it's one of the greatest things a parent can do. "Birds are smarter than that. They know what danger is. Son, you need to recognize danger." If birds can see it, and really, if you think about it, he's heightening his son to think in terms of common sense. "Does that look like a net?" "Well, yeah it looks like one, but they're telling me it's not." "Does it look like they're running every time the police come around?" "Yeah, I noticed that." Ok, so maybe a hint is given to you.

Now, the way that it ends is very poignant to me.

(Proverbs 1:19) "So are the ways of everyone who gains by violence; It takes away the life of its possessors."

"Son, you follow them, it's suicide. They're promising you all kinds of things; it will destroy you." Underline the word "life" there because it's the Hebrew word "*nepeš*." "*Nepeš*" is almost always translated as not "life," but "soul". The point that he's bringing across is that if you go their way it will destroy your soul. They have no idea that their whole being is being destroyed.

I mean, what would it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? We're not just talking about the fact that they're going to die which is going to be made evident a little further in Proverbs; in which the woman goes, "Come on, my husband's not here." Then, the husband shows up and it goes, "...and then the husband kills you." So, I mean, that would be taking your life, but it goes into the realm of destroying the character of the person. When Scripture uses this word, it deals with the individuality of this particular person; who you were and who you're meant to be. If you think about it this way, you're drinking alcohol over and over again, after a while, who is it that's talking? Not you. You've destroyed who you were, and the alcohol is talking. The drugs are talking. Greed is talking. It takes over your soul. This is why Scripture calls them spirits. It's like with fear, God has not given us the spirit of fear. Why? Because fear takes over your soul. You lose your identity and who God had intended you to be and you find yourself there.

I'm not a medical expert, but I was reading an interesting article a while back, and it just kind of stuck in my head, about sclerosis. There is this thing called "multiple sclerosis" and it's fundamentally where your nerves are being attacked and there's a calcification that comes in. From what I understand, the bottom line is doctors don't understand what makes it happen. (Here again, I'm not a medical expert, but I'm just saying what the experts say.) They say it has something to do with cholesterol, and cholesterol is oftentimes what people call "bad fat." So, what actually then begins to happen in sclerosis is that your immune system begins to attack the sheath which is the covering over your nerves. The bottom line is your body is starting to attack yourself. That's pretty interesting. Now the question is "What's causing that?" If we kind of get the bent of what they're saying, what causes that is your over-indulgence in too much bad fat.

So, when you look at Scripture, it talks about your unfeeling heart. It actually uses the word "hardening" and that's what happens with sclerosis. There is such a thing called "coronary sclerosis" of the heart. So, the heart actually hardens.

It's extremely interesting to me, when you go into Psalm 119:70, the psalmist describes it as "Their heart is covered with fat".

He's fundamentally talking about the same thing that Proverbs is talking about. Of course, God made the body. So, He's giving us examples in our body. When you worry too much you get ulcers. "I kept quiet about my sin and my body wasted away." (Psalm 32:3) We know that it's a sympathetic system because it's all attached to the way you think and your nerves and everything else. The fundamental point is that when you and I over-indulge ourselves, it creates a hardening that kills us. Your greed, your selfishness will destroy you.

(Ephesians 4:18) "... because of the hardness of their heart;

(Ephesians 4:19) and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

Do you hear the connection? They don't know when to say "no" because it's all about getting more. He's conveying to his son, "This will kill you. They're telling you it's going to make you happy. You're going to get rich, and you can hoard all this stuff, but it will take away who you are. You won't have any care for anything of value, you'll deaden yourself to relationships. Your soul will be destroyed. They'll suck your soul right out of you." That alone would cause me, as a kid, to go, "You know what, I'm not going that way."

Closing Prayer:

"Father, we give You thanks for Your word and how You begin to direct us away from the things that You have been warning us about all along. We wake up one day and we realize You love us. The reason You correct us, discipline us, and gave us the parents You gave us, even though in some cases it seems maybe too harsh or too easy, You knew what You were doing, and You were pointing us to a higher calling. You were softening our hearts. You were causing us to learn submission; embrace what is honorable even though maybe honorable things weren't done to us. If we would just receive that and embrace what is truly valuable, You will lead us to Yourself. Your wonderful Son came and became obedient even to the point of death on the cross. You're pointing the way for us.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, maybe there are some things you feel that you should be able to do; maybe pull out all of the stops. I mean, you've earned it. Something that people shouldn't take away from you, but just stop and ask yourself, "What is it you're longing for?" Is it integrity? Is it honor? Is it majesty? Is it the glory of God, or are you drawn towards the enticement of self-indulgence? A simple question.