

Sweet Lips? – Proverbs 5:1-13

INTRODUCTION

The world is full of sin and sinners. There is nothing more deadly than the words that come forth from a sinner's mouth. Words can be as poison from the forked tongue of a poisonous rattler. The intent is to destroy and kill with no regard for righteousness and the lives that may be irreparably destroyed. History is replete with words spoken out of turn which have resulted in wars and many lives lost. Jobs have been lost because of a word spoken at the wrong time and to the wrong people. Recently, an actress lost her job because she compared the director with Hitler. No number of apologies could take the words back. The damage was done. She had to sow what she had reaped.

However, deadly words will lose out to seductive words from a woman's sweet lips. Men like Samson who could withstand tortures have been reduced to whimpering little puppies because of a woman's sweet lips. Was it not the lips of a woman who caused the first man, Adam, to fall into sin, which in turn plunged the whole world into spiritual darkness which has yet to recover after thousands of years? In fact, sinful men have become worse and worse with every passing generation. The world might have advanced in modern science and technology and medicine but in terms of morality sinful men have deteriorated into global lasciviousness and debauchery which it will never be able to come out of. It only awaits the final judgment of its Creator God.

Will man ever learn to mind his words? Will he heed the wisdom of God so that he will not become the prey of sweet but evil lips? As long as there is sin in this world, evil deceptive words will continue to spew out of sinners' mouths. There is no word more deadly than when it comes out of a strange woman's mouth to lure foolish man into sin. Solomon had 1,000 women in his life who ruined him. His worldly wisdom was no match for the lust of his eyes and lust of his flesh in his heart. Compounded by the pride of life, Solomon paid the painful price of being the king who caused the division of the kingdom of Israel. He committed many sins, including the sin of idolatry! What can the child of God do to keep himself from succumbing to these age-old snares that have gone through a metamorphosis into "new shapes" to entrap new fools? Proverbs 5 gives us the answer.

I. The Protection – 5:1-2

Appealing from the perspective of a father to his child with tenderness and genuine love, the Bible warns us to pay close attention to God's wisdom. The imperatival command is used twice in verse 1 to emphasize the importance of the point in this synonymous parallelism. The urgency of the warning probably points to the frequency of the sin committed by foolish men. The protection is to heed or pay close attention continuously to God's teachings. It is called wisdom and understanding here. It is not about memorizing God's Word but always about obeying God's Word. It will make one wise and he is called a man of understanding. This is emphasized placing the phrase "unto my wisdom" first in the first line and "to my understanding" in second line of this verse. The way to do it is to bow or incline one's ear close to the Word of God. Complete focus and deliberate determination to obey God's Word will protect the believer from the danger of sweet lips!

The fruit of this obedience is a discreet life. The synonymous parallelism used here also points to a strong emphasis on the blessing of discretion. The believer knows when to speak and what to speak and to whom he ought to speak. This is a rare virtue nowadays even in Christian circles. The words "regard" and "keep" have the similar idea of "to protect or be circumspect" in one's conduct. To be known as a man who is circumspect is a man in great demand. He can be trusted. He makes a good counsellor. His life is carefully ordered. He ensures that his life is pleasing in the sight of God. The Bible is his only guide Book in life. No matter how confusing the circumstances of life might be, he knows the answer from God's Word and responds accordingly in

righteousness. When temptations confront him, he is able to apply the Word of God and foil temptation's snare the way Christ delivered Himself from the Evil One after 40 days and 40 nights of fasting in the wilderness. No persecutions or seduction from Satan can penetrate his protective shield as long as he pays close attention to God's wisdom which is the perfect Word of God!

II. The Seduction – 5:3-6

The tactics of the seductive woman is revealed here for all discerning young men to know and obey. The first on the list is that the lips of the strange woman are deliciously sweet, compared here with the dripping honey from a honeycomb. A honeycomb that is saturated with honey oozes with the sweet substance profusely. It appeals to the eyes and the taste buds dance even before the honey is eaten. It was the best and most delicious sweetness known to the people of Israel in ancient times. It revived the tired soul as was the case with Jonathan and Samson during their battles against the enemies of Israel. They were revived and exhaustion left them when they ate the honey. The lips of these strange women sound and look deliciously sweet and extremely tempting and might even excite every fibre of the believer's body! The key word to note in this verse is the word "strange". Who is a strange woman that could be so deadly in ruining a life? The word could mean a prostitute or a foreigner or someone whom you know but who is not the believer's wife. As long as this female tries to seduce the man, she is the "strange" woman mentioned here. How she looks like depends on what the foolish man looks for in a woman. For example, if the fool desires a woman with thick makeup and he is attracted to her, then Satan will send his way such women to entice him into sin. If he likes a natural beauty with little or no makeup, then Satan will send her into his life to seduce him. Whatever the type, women with sweet lips that cause men to sin are classified as "strange".

They use flattery to fan the ego of the foolish man. It usually works 9 out of 10 times. This is one of the most effective ways to ruin a good and honest man's life. The words sound "sooooo" very good! His devotion to his wife is tested to breaking point as he entertains the sweet lips of this strange woman. The strange woman can be found everywhere - even in a fundamentalist church like CPBPC! Pastors have run away with member's wives or even their secretaries! The strange woman's lips are also described as being smoother than oil. Her words slide from her mouth very easily. It is hard to stop and resist her words! Her words are "slippery" and work their evil every time.

Verse 4 – The end of this road is bitterness. Please note that the Bible says that "HER" end, and not the man's end, is bitterness. It is like tasting a sweet that is sweet at first but at the core of the sweet is a reservoir of bitter liquid. The strange woman will promise heaven but she will give him hell in the end!

This bitterness is compared with wormwood. Wormwood tastes like gall. It is something that is extremely bitter and perhaps even poisonous. The word for wormwood is translated as hemlock in Amos 6:12. It is a kind of poisonous plant. Many lives have tasted this bitter fruit when they succumbed to this seduction. Pastors who commit this sin will be throwing away their entire life of ministry which they have built up. They also are throwing away their families and their testimony for Christ will be completely reduced to dust and shame. How deadly this sin is. The result is a wasted life of misery and regret and great sorrow. Good testimonies are thrown away like old tea bags. The sharpness of a two-edged sword is used to describe the damage. Most swords are single edged. A double-edged sword cuts when one swings upward and downward. It is able to cut in all directions including swinging forward and backward or to the left and right. This illustration shows that the end is one of total destruction. Every aspect of the person's life is

destroyed. No area of his life is left standing. When the two illustrations are combined together, the end of the fool who succumbs to sweet lips is that of a totally destroyed life where the bitterness of his destruction is for life!

Verse 5 – Follow her ways i.e. her feet and she will lead one directly to death and Hell. The verb “to take hold” literally means “to follow closely.” This death includes physical death, spiritual death and eternal death. These are the three deaths taught in the Bible. That is why the final end is Hell. Physical death is the end of this life on earth. If a sinner does not believe and accept Christ Jesus as his personal Lord and Saviour, he is forever doomed to end in Hell. The reason is that today he is in a state of spiritual death where sin is his master and he might not even be aware of it. As long as he has not accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, this state of spiritual death remains. However, the moment he truly receives Jesus Christ into his heart as his Lord and Saviour, he is made alive in Christ, i.e. he is born again and is said to be spiritually alive. Now that he has found Christ on this earth, even though he dies physically, his spirit or soul will go immediately to heaven, which is what Jesus said to the thief on the cross who believed in Him. Jesus said that he shall be with Him in Paradise the moment he dies.

Anyone foolish man who succumbs to her sweet lips and follows in her steps will die. The only way is to repent and turn from her sweet lips and stop following in her steps. A believer who is spiritually alive will repent if he has fallen into her seductive snare. If he refuses to repent and remains in this state of sin of fornication or adultery, then his salvation is in doubt because the Bible makes it very clear that a fornicator or adulterer has no part in God’s inheritance. **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** (KJV) pointedly warns every professing believer, “*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **10** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*” [Underline added] The sins of fornication and adultery are very grievous sins in the sight of God. A born again believer will NOT sin this sin and will not remain in this sin. He will feel genuine repentance when this sin is committed and will never want to commit the sin again!

Hell is not a place to laugh at or mock. It is real and it is a place of torment. All unbelievers who die in their sins will end up in Hell. However, Hell is not the permanent dwelling place for all unbelievers. Hell will be destroyed at the end of the Millennium by God. The reason is that Hell is the place where all who die in this life will go to if they do not have the Saviour Jesus Christ as their Mediator. At the end of the Millennium, every believer would possess the glorified body which death will not be able to touch. Furthermore, all those who have already died in their sins are now in Hell. At the Great White Throne judgement, God will empty Hell and all unbelievers will be judged according to their works and then sent to the Lake of Fire for eternity to join Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. After this judgement, Hell will be destroyed forever as there will be no more need for Hell since there will be no death. Every believer will enter into the new heaven and new earth as described in Revelations 21 and 22. **Revelation 20:11-15** (KJV) says, “*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. **13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. **14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*”

Verse 6 – Anyone who has already fallen into the strange woman’s seductive snare is called to ponder his path of life. Where does he wish to end up at the end of his life? If it is Hell, then remain in the state of fornication and adultery. However, if it is heaven, then stop sinning right now; turn from her pernicious ways; and he must turn to Jesus Christ and receive Him as his personal Lord and Saviour. There is no other way but the way of repentance. Any other way is false.

The reason is that this strange woman is like a chameleon. Her ways are moveable. She has mastered her art of seduction like her father the Devil who has had thousands of years of experience. She knows thousands of ways to shift and change her shape, approach and strategy. If the foolish man thinks that he can reason with her, she will turn the tables on him and he remains in her claws! The foolish man cannot know her thousand and one ways of seduction. The only way to stop sinning is to turn to Christ! Rationalisation and human reasoning will make the foolish man run in circles. He is like a headless chicken in his attempts to find his way out of Hell. How can he figure out her ways when she keeps shifting and changing to maintain her hold on his foolish heart? The sinner must repent and hand his heart over to the LORD Jesus Christ to free himself from her seductive snares.

III. The Action – 5:7-8

The command in verse 7 serves as a stern warning to every man, especially the Christian man. To hear is to listen carefully and accurately and obey diligently the Word of God. There is no secret formula or some extraordinary task to conquer the seductive wiles of the strange woman. As was mentioned in verse 1, God mentions it again in verse 7. Pay very close attention to the Word of God. This is the only protection. Take the necessary action to bring it to pass by ensuring that the Word of God is dutifully and lovingly studied with an obedient heart! Under no circumstance must the believer leave the Word of God. Many “legitimate” reasons may arise to justify succumbing to the tantalising sweet lips of the strange woman. It could be that the wife is now old and ugly or that she nags a lot or she is frigid and cold and unappealing to the eyes or a quarrel had occurred and she has left the house for her mother’s. There can NEVER be any legitimate justification for adultery!

Very often, the children of God hear but do not obey! This is the bane of many believers today and the price paid is high sometimes. We must heed the Word of God at all times and never allow the words of sweet lips to sway us to her side. The bottom line is: to hear and obey the Word of God or the words of sweet lips!

Verse 8 – The second imperative in this section is that of removal. Take as far away as possible the way of the believer from the strange woman. The Bible does not say take oneself away from the way of the strange woman. But the counsel is to take the believer’s way far, far away from HER! In fact, the emphasis in the first line of this verse is “from her”. Literally, it means “Remove far from her, thy way.” The life of the believer must never cross paths with the life of the strange woman. Total and absolute distancing from the strange woman is the key. This is an action every husband can take and must take to protect himself from her.

To emphasize the point again, the Bible says: do not come near the DOOR of her house. If her house is on one side of the street, the believer is commanded to cross the street and walk on the other side. This total avoidance of the strange woman and all that she stands for, where she uses her home to ply her trade of wickedness, must be adhered to. God will do His part to grant grace for man to overcome every temptation (1 Cor 10:13). However, human responsibility dictates that every believer must take the necessary steps to keep himself pure and holy before God at all times.

IV. The Conclusions – 5:9-13

There are basically two conclusions to this problem. To succumb to her sweet lips means doom and ruination. Not to succumb by removing oneself from her means life and peace. The latter is not mentioned here but the former is starkly detailed.

The honour of the believer is handed over to others who would destroy it. They are cruel. They care not for the believer's life and well being. They definitely do not care much for the Name of Christ that the believer bears. Years of faithfulness and building up one's life is destroyed instantly by one act of foolish stupidity!

Verse 10-11 – These strangers will take everything away for the believer! His wealth and all his belongings are snatched away from him. The believer's hard labour, i.e. toil, will benefit a stranger. Lawyers come in and take the wealth of both the husband and wife when they divorce. The believer could be stricken with a sexually transmitted disease and much money to be spent to seek a cure. If it is AIDS that he is plagued with, then he spends all his money till the day he dies to keep the ill-fated disease from killing him. At the end of his life there is nothing but shame and sorrow. The believer would cry, "IF ONLY I had not succumbed to the sweet lips of that strange woman, I would still have a job, my savings, my family, my testimony and my witness for Christ." In his old age and with his body frail and weak, he dies alone with nothing save a life of many regrets and painful memories. His life is now littered by many ruined lives and the much shame he has brought to the name of Christ that he said he bore because he calls himself a Christian. What a sad tale of a wasted life.

Verse 12-13 – What could such a man say when his life has been sucked dry by the sweet lips of the strange woman? Perhaps the words in verses 12 and 13 are most appropriate, "**12** *And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;* **13** *And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!*" To not to obey the Word of God is to hate the Word of God. The word "instruction" is used here to describe the value of the Word to the young man who is now old and decrepit. When the Word of God reproved him to stop sinning, he would not listen and now he cries as he pays the price for his sins. God sent teachers and instructors to show him the way and to stop him from sinning but he refused to listen. He dies a broken man with nothing to show other than a trail of ruined lives, his own life being the first on the list!

APPLICATION

Study the Word of God diligently and pray for an obedient heart to obey the Word of God always. This is the protection God avails all His children - if only they would take heed. If they do not, they will suffer the dire circumstances of their rebellious and foolish life. Sin is deliciously tasty when it is being committed but the end of it is death, destruction and immense bitterness. Lives are ruined and testimonies are destroyed. A life's work could go up in smoke by one act of sin! Some sins have insignificant consequences. However, the sin of adultery and fornication are sins with major catastrophic consequences of tsunami proportions.

The end is death. A genuine believer will not sin this sin and if he ever does like King David, he would repent immediately and turn to God in humble repentance, promising with God's help never to sin such a sin again! Do not give your honour and the hard work of your hands to a stranger.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.** Do you have an unconditional desire to obey all the Words of God? If you do not, why not? Shouldn't this be the desire of every believer? If you do not have this desire, could it be that you are not a believer? Please explain your answers.
- 2.** How would you react to someone who rebukes you and points out your weakness or sin? For example, you serve as a pianist in church and a church member says that you do not play the piano well. Another example: you are the Sunday School superintendent. Someone tells you that you do not know how to teach children. Or, somebody tells you that your words are too sharp and are hurtful. Or, you are told that you are rude to your parents.
- 3.** What is the best way to protect a husband from the sin of adultery when he is posted overseas for 12 months and his family is not able to go with him because of the children's education?
- 4.** How can youths protect themselves from the sin of fornication especially when they go dating one on one? Please give practical suggestions.
- 5.** Who gets hurt the most when a pastor commits the sin of adultery? Please explain your answer.