Discipleship Groups — Level 8
WEEK 2
Wisdom for Living: Sexual Purity

Word to Our Pathway Family

Welcome, Pathway SFV family, to this next session of our discipleship groups. We are continuing our journey through Proverbs, and today we are going to talk about something that Proverbs itself talks about a great deal: sexuality, sexual temptation, faithfulness, and the things we crave that can pull us away from the life God has given us. Our cravings really come down to two things: “Sex and Stuff,” because the Bible connects our cravings and the idolatrous value we put on our desires with sex and all the other things we want, covet, chase, and think will finally make us happy.

There are a few things I want to say as we begin. First, I understand that this lesson will hit people very differently. Some of you are married and doing well. Some of you are single and trying to walk faithfully with the Lord. Some of you have been wounded by someone else's sin. Some may be struggling right now with pornography, fantasy, secrecy, an emotional relationship that is going too far, or decisions that have brought real pain and shame into your life. Others may be thinking, “This does not really apply to me.” We do not all have the same story, the same season of life, or the same struggles.

That said, this still needs to be talked about. In fact, if the church will not teach God's way of sexuality, the world certainly will teach its way—and it teaches it loudly, constantly, and without any concern for where it will lead us. So, I am not speaking today to embarrass people, nor am I trying to pile shame onto anyone who is already carrying a burden. I want to teach God's wisdom plainly and lovingly, because His wisdom is the way of life. It is for our good.

The Bible is wonderfully honest about sexual desire. It does not pretend that desire is imaginary, weak, or easy to manage. It tells us the truth: sexuality is a gift from God, powerful enough to bless a covenant marriage and powerful enough, when it is pulled outside of God's design, to wound the soul, damage others, divide homes, and lead us down paths we never thought we would walk.

The reality of the way God created sex and the desires that come with it is either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence. C. S. Lewis said that: “Christianity is not hard because it demands what is naturally impossible, but because it demands what is naturally possible, but we find very difficult.” That is a hard word in our world. God’s commands are not there to deprive us of life; they are the boundaries that protect life.

Our discipleship groups are studying Proverbs because Proverbs gives us a worldview. It gives us a way to define life, live it, and pass it on to the next generation. Wisdom is not merely knowing religious information, wisdom is learning to recognize God's voice, order our

affections, and choose the path that leads to life. And in Proverbs 1 through 9, sexual integrity is one of the clearest tests of whether we will actually listen to Wisdom.

A Major Theme in Proverbs

There are 256 verses in Proverbs 1 through 9. Depending on exactly how we classify a few of the passages, roughly a third of those verses directly address the forbidden woman, adultery, sexual temptation, and sexual unfaithfulness. In other words, nearly one out of every three verses in these opening chapters is dealing with sex in some way. Solomon gives extraordinary attention to this subject. It is not a side issue. It is one of the chief proving grounds of whether a person will receive wisdom and walk in the way of life. These chapters also repeatedly call us to seek wisdom, listen to instruction, fear the Lord, and receive the life that comes from obedience. When you place the two emphases together, the message is unmistakable: listen to Wisdom, and do not give yourself to sexual sin. Solomon does not treat sexual temptation as a private weakness unrelated to wisdom. He presents it as a competing voice of wisdom: a false invitation promising pleasure but leading away from covenant, clarity, life, and the fear of the Lord.

> *"For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps lay hold of hell."* —Proverbs 5:3-5 (NKJV)

The temptation begins with sweetness. It looks appealing. It speaks smoothly. It promises relief, excitement, intimacy, validation, immediacy, gratification, availability, and escape. But Proverbs insists that we look beyond the first moment. Wisdom asks, "Where will this lead?" The road may begin with honey, but it ends in bitterness. It may begin with pleasure, but it leads to death.

Again and again, Proverbs describes sexual sin as a road toward death. In the major warnings of Proverbs 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9, the language of death, Sheol, the grave, destruction, wounds, loss, and ruin returns repeatedly. Proverbs tells us at least eight times, in direct and closely related ways, that sexual unfaithfulness is a path toward death. That is why Jesus' words matter so much: "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." THE NARROW WAY IS NOT THE MISERABLE WAY. It is the way of life.

The Two Voices

Proverbs 1 through 9 gives us two women calling from the high places of the city. Lady Wisdom calls people to fear the Lord, receive instruction, and find life. Lady Folly also calls. She is loud, seductive, and persuasive. She promises stolen water and secret bread. But Proverbs 9 says that her guests are in the depths of hell.

This is the battle in front of us. It is not simply, "Will I break a rule?" It is, "Whose voice am I going to listen to? Will I listen to the voice that promises immediate gratification, or will I listen to the God who sees the end from the beginning?" Sexual sin is not merely breaking a rule, it is refusing Wisdom's path of life and giving ourselves to a promise that cannot satisfy and finally leads toward death.

Proverbs 4:23 says, *"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."* Listen, the Bible does not merely say, "Try harder," it says, "Guard your heart." The heart is where desire takes root. Long before an outward fall, there is often an inward conversation: a glance entertained, a fantasy fed, resentment nursed, loneliness hidden, a boundary softened, a secret account opened, a relationship allowed to become emotionally intimate in the wrong way. Wisdom teaches us to deal honestly with those beginnings. We need to be honest with the state of our own hearts and what is actually going on in them. If we will not honestly take these things into account, we are not taking care of the heart—and from the heart the ultimate course of our lives is determined.

Proverbs 7 gives us a vivid picture of a young man who lacks sense. He does not begin the evening intending to destroy his life, he simply walks in the direction of the house of the seductress—he flirts with the lines of what is good and appropriate. He enters the place where temptation is strongest, at the hour when he is most vulnerable, and then he is surprised by the outcome. The outcome, as Proverbs says it, was,

> *"He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap, awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life."* (Prov. 7:22-23).

This is a warning for all of us. Many moral failures are not isolated events; they are the end of a series of small permissions. Wisdom is not only asking, "Can I resist when temptation arrives?" Wisdom asks, "Why am I walking toward the place where I know temptation is waiting?" and "Am I being honest with myself and guarding what is happening in my own heart?"

For some, the corner has an address. For others, it is a private room, a late-night routine, an unfiltered phone, a social-media account, an unresolved friendship, an online search, or a conversation we know should stop. I am not saying this to be overly dramatic; I am saying it because we need to be honest about how this works. God's grace does not call us to prove our strength by standing close to the fire. The Bible does NOT say "prove you're a powerful man by looking temptation in the face and stare it down!" First Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee sexual immorality." There are battles we fight by standing firm; there are temptations we fight by running away. Running is not weakness when God has told us to flee. Psalm 136:23-24 says, *"He remembered us in our weakness. His faithful love endures forever. He saved us from our enemies. His faithful love endures forever."* God tells us to flee because He remembers our weakness, and He says "run!" and He will save us from this sin—because, as Psalm 136 says in every single verse—His faithful love endures forever.

Sex and Stuff

The tenth of the Ten Commandments reaches beneath outward behavior to the craving of the heart: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife...nor anything that is your neighbor's." It is so interesting what God defines as covetousness here: Sex and stuff. These appear together because both can become objects of desire. We can want another person, another life, another body, another experience, another house, another position, another income, or another measure of attention. Behind all of it can be the same restless voice: "More. More. More."

Proverbs 10:3 says, “The Lord will not let the godly go hungry, but he refuses to satisfy the craving of the wicked.” The point is not that God refuses to give every desire we have, it is that wicked craving never becomes satisfied by giving it more. Lust does not become full by being fed. As Ecclesiastes 1:8 says, *“No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content.”* Covetousness does not become content by acquiring more. Pornography does not create intimacy; it trains the heart to consume another person. Secret sexual fantasy does not heal loneliness; it often intensifies it. The more a person feeds a disordered appetite, the more empty that person will become.

Things are created to be used in a specific way—and this includes sex. Wherever sex is used outside the bounds of God’s ordered way of living, it will produce heartache and pain. A piano was designed and created to be played in a certain way, and it will create magnificent music. But if you strap wings on it and push it off a cliff hoping it will fly, then the thing that would have brought you joy and beauty will end up as a pile of broken parts.

By contrast, Proverbs 5:18 says, *“Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of your youth.”* God is not anti-pleasure. He created sex. He created marriage. He created the joy, affection, faithfulness, and fruitfulness that are meant to be found there. Marriage is meant to be a fountain of blessing: faithful, mutual, embodied, exclusive, life-giving love. The issue is not whether sexuality is good. The issue is whether we will receive God's gift in God's way, or seize what was never given to us.

This also explains why sexual sin is so spiritually serious. It is never only about bodies. It touches trust, covenant, worship, family, memory, imagination, and our ability to give ourselves faithfully to another person within a faithful, fruitful, and growing marital context. When we use another person for our own gratification, whether physically or digitally, we are learning the opposite of love. Biblical love does not consume, it gives. It does not demand another person serve my appetite. It seeks that person's good before God.

That is why the call to purity is not a call to become less human, nor to deprive us of the joy of what God created, it is a call to become more fully human and to enjoy to the max what God has created. It is the call to have our desires healed and ordered by His love. Purity is not pretending we have no desires; it is refusing to let desire become our master and to hurt either ourselves, other people, or our relationship with God. It is learning, by the Spirit, to say with the psalmist, *“Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.”* When God is first, our other loves can become healthy, grateful, and rightly placed.

God has placed this passion and desire inside the human being. But our sexuality points toward something even greater—the marriage covenant that ultimately, we, as His people, will have with Him. Sex is a deep, intimate, fruitful, and growing connection. Sex is a metaphor for the kind of relationship God wants with His people. I am NOT saying that in some strange way there is divine sexual encounters…NO! But that God wants a close, exclusive, intimate and fruitful relationship with us that mirrors what marriage should look like.

What Does This Include Today

The New Testament names “sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Galatians 5 also names sexual immorality, impurity, and sensuality. Romans 13 tells believers not to make provision for the flesh. The biblical call is not merely, “Avoid adultery.” It is a call to bring the whole of our sexual lives under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

That means we must speak honestly about the places sexual temptation comes to us today. Pornography belongs in this conversation because it turns us who bear God’s image into objects of consumption and trains desire away from covenant love. Masturbation must be addressed with honesty. Scripture does not name it directly, yet when it is joined to pornography, fantasy, compulsion, secrecy, or the use of another person in the mind, it clearly cannot be separated from lust and self-centered sexual desire.

The historic Christian sexual ethic also understands sexual intimacy as belonging within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. Therefore, homosexual sexual relations fall outside that covenant design. Questions of gender identity require particular tenderness, patience, and respect for every person as an image-bearer of God. This is not a place for Christians to mock people, speak cruelly, or act as if someone else's struggle is less real than our own. At the same time, we do not help anyone by pretending that our bodies are meaningless or self-created. We receive them as gifts from our Creator and respect the reality of how God made each of us. God does not make mistakes, nor is He so disjointed in His ability to create that He made a person one type in body, but another type on the inside. His outward creation of the body also reflects the reality of what the entire person is to be.

We also need wisdom regarding AI companions and erotic digital experiences. Technology is not automatically evil, but an artificial relationship can become a channel for fantasy, sexual stimulation, secrecy, manipulation, and counterfeit intimacy. It can teach a person to seek control rather than self-giving love. It cannot replace the reality of covenant, presence, mutuality, sacrifice, and true relationship. Do not let a screen, an algorithm, or a fantasy train your heart away from reality and holiness.

We must also remember that this conversation includes women and men, married people and single people, young adults and older adults. Proverbs is framed as a father instructing his son, but the wisdom belongs to all God's people. Women can be tempted. Men can be tempted. Married people can drift. Single people can become discouraged. Every one of us needs a community where truth is spoken with compassion and where repentance is met with practical help rather than gossip or humiliation.

More Than Willpower

It is important to say plainly that freedom is more than making a promise in an emotional moment. Many people have made sincere promises to God, only to feel crushed when temptation returned. A promise is not useless, but it is not enough by itself. We need new habits, new boundaries, new relationships, and above all, the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom is not a burst of resolve; it is a way of understanding the world and walking in it day by day with God’s grace.

Proverbs repeatedly tells us to listen, keep, bind, write, guard, and do not depart. Those are daily verbs. We listen to God's Word before the pressure comes. We store it in our hearts before the lie is presented. We make decisions about our phones, our schedules, our friendships, and our private lives before we are tired, lonely, angry, or tempted. We do not wait until the moment of weakness to decide what faithfulness will look like.

This is also why shame must not become our master. Shame says, “You are dirty, isolated, and beyond help.” The gospel says, “You have sinned, but Christ has come for sinners. Come into the light.” Conviction is specific and leads us toward repentance. Condemnation is vague and drives us into hiding. When the Holy Spirit exposes sin, He is not humiliating us for sport. He is rescuing us from a road that ends in death and calling us back to life.

Perhaps some listening today have carried secret shame for years. You may have been sinned against. You may have made decisions you deeply regret. You may fear that if people knew your story, they would reject you. Please hear this clearly: God's standard is holy, but His mercy is not hesitant. Jesus was full of grace and truth. He did not lower truth in order to comfort people, and He did not withhold mercy from people who came to Him honestly. In Him, forgiveness is real, cleansing is real, and a new beginning is real.

In this group, let us resist two opposite errors. Do not minimize sin by calling darkness harmless. And do not magnify sin as though the cross were powerless. We are called to tell the truth about both. Sexual sin is serious because God made us for covenant love, holiness, and life. Grace is greater because Jesus gave Himself to redeem people who had wandered far from God. Our task is to become a community where truth is spoken plainly, mercy is offered freely, and obedience is pursued together.

The Way of Wisdom and Freedom

So where do we go from here? Colossians 3:5 says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” Notice that Paul does not say, “Manage it casually.” He says, “Put it to death.” That means we stop negotiating with what is destroying us.

For some, putting sin to death means deleting accounts, removing apps, installing filters, ending private conversations, changing routines, refusing isolation, and inviting trusted believers into the battle. For some, it means confession to a spouse, pastor, leader, counselor, or accountability partner. For some, it means pursuing professional help for trauma, compulsion, betrayal, or addiction. Hiding gives sin power. Bringing sin into the light begins to break its power.

Practical obedience matters because the body learns through repetition. If we repeatedly feed lust, we make a path that becomes familiar. If we repeatedly turn toward God, seek help, pray honestly, open Scripture, serve others, and choose what is pure, a different path becomes familiar. This is why accountability is not merely someone asking, “Did you fail?” Healthy accountability asks, “How is your heart? What are you believing? What pressures are you carrying? What specific obedience is God asking of you this week?” We need people in our lives who will love us enough to tell us the truth and walk with us as we learn to walk in the light.

Do not try to replace sexual sin with mere emptiness. Fill your life with what gives life. Build genuine friendships. Serve people. Take care of your body. Refuse isolation. Worship. Memorize Scripture. Spend time in the presence of God. If you are married, pursue honest conversation, forgiveness, affection, and intentional care for one another—not using sex as a weapon of manipulation, but freely and generously giving of yourselves one to another. If you are single, do not postpone real life while waiting for marriage. God has called you now to holiness, fruitfulness, friendship, and joyful service.

But this study is not only a warning. It is also an invitation to grace. Jesus does not merely expose our sin; He forgives, cleanses, restores, and gives the Holy Spirit to make us new. There is no person beyond His mercy. There is no secret too dark for confession. There is no pattern so established that Christ cannot begin to break it. Repentance is not simply feeling ashamed. Repentance is turning around: leaving Folly's doorway, returning to Wisdom's voice, and walking again toward life.

If you have failed sexually, do not excuse it. But do not despair either. Bring it to Jesus. Receive His forgiveness. Tell the truth. Take the next obedient step. If you are married, fight for faithfulness, honesty, healing, and tenderness. If you are single, do not believe the lie that purity is an empty life. Christ Himself is enough, and He gives His people real friendship, purpose, joy, and strength.

Conclusion and Group Response

Proverbs places two invitations before us. Folly says, “Come in. No one will know. This will satisfy you.” Wisdom says, “Listen to me. Fear the Lord. Walk in the way of life.” One path promises freedom while quietly building chains. The other may require self-denial, but it leads to a clean heart, a clear conscience, faithful love, and life with God.

Today, choose Wisdom. Refuse the lie that sexual sin is harmless, private, or satisfying. Refuse the lie that God's commands are designed to deprive you. The God who calls you to holiness is the God who created joy, designed covenant love, and gave His Son to redeem you. His way is life.

As we close, ask the Lord three questions. First: Where have I been listening to Folly instead of Wisdom? Second: What practical step of obedience do I need to take today? Third: Who is a safe, mature believer I can invite into honest accountability? Take time with your group to talk about these things and pray together.