

Chapter 1: Through the Lattice

A study of Proverbs 7

Introduction

Sin is irresistible in the moment but detestable when you step back and see the full picture. If you picked up this booklet, chances are you are sickened by how irresistible pornography is to you. You hate it, but you love it. You never want to look at it again, but you know you're going to. This is the agony that so many men face on a regular basis.

I hope that you're looking for an answer, and I'm overjoyed to tell you that the Bible has that answer. But before we look at the remedy, there is one important step we need to take. We need to take a good, long look at ourselves. In a way, we need to step outside ourselves and look at that man in a dark room, huddled over his glowing laptop screen, glancing over his shoulder, and clicking from site to site. We need to see how sinful we are and how serious our problem is. Only then will we see the glory and hope of God's Word.

In Proverbs 7, Solomon tells a story to his son. It's a story about someone he sees through the lattice of his roof. As you read this story, put yourself in it. Consider how Proverbs 7 helps you come face-to-face with yourself.

Pause and read the whole chapter of Proverbs 7.

The Vulnerability of the Simple Man – Proverbs 7:6–9

After Solomon's introductory exhortations in verses 1–5, he describes the character of the story. In this description we see red flag after red flag, yet the man obliviously continues down the path. As we read and study this passage, ask God to shed light on your own life and on the red flags that you are ignoring.

Who do you see? Read Proverbs 7:6–7. How do these verses describe the character of this story?

This is someone who is full of passion (youthful lusts; 2 Tim 2:22) with no discernment or self-control. This is a foolish person—one who has not treasured wisdom and knowledge, but lives for his own appetites and does little to control them.

What is he doing? Read Proverbs 7:8. Do you think he is innocently wandering the streets or intentionally marching toward the woman's house? Perhaps a little of both?

When is he doing it? Read Proverbs 7:9. Why do you think this simple man chose to go at night?

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Although this passage is talking about adultery, it is very applicable to the struggle of pornography. After all, the lust of the eyes is the adultery of the heart (Matt 5:27-30). Place yourself in the shoes of the simple man. You might not be passing along a street corner at night, but you may be surfing on the web in your bedroom. Imagine how Proverbs 7:6-9 would read if Solomon applied to your specific struggle:

*For at the window of my house,
I have looked out through my lattice,
And I have seen among the youths,
(Your Name) lacking sense,
Surfing through the internet,
“pointlessly” browsing the web
In his bedroom, with the door closed,
At the time of night and darkness.*

And behold, the woman meets him....

The intensity of the temptation – Read Proverbs 7:10–20

This is when temptation is the strongest. All three conditions are met: **a vulnerable person, a vulnerable place, at a vulnerable time**. It is moments like these in which we are most likely to fall. Our flesh is ready to give in to the slightest pull. But temptation doesn't pull slightly in these situations—it pulls savagely and intensely. List some ways that these verses describe the intensity of temptation:

When you are in a vulnerable state in a vulnerable place at a vulnerable time, you are likely to fall for this onslaught. The allurements and enticements are almost too strong for you to resist in that moment. The temptation calls to your fleshly desires and promises their fulfillment and satisfaction. It promises secrecy. It promises to make you feel good about yourself. And the result is often disastrous.

As you look at yourself through the lattice, a vulnerable person in a vulnerable place at a vulnerable time; as you consider the strong pull of pornography as it promises you so many things and calls to your strong desires, it's time to take a step back and look further down the road. It's time to look at the part of the equation that is usually invisible in the moment of temptation: The disastrous end.

The Disastrous End – Read Proverbs 7:21–23

This is the part of the equation that we often ignore in the moment. But as we look through the lattice on ourselves, we must look at where this encounter leads:

- He is both persuaded and compelled to give in (v. 21)
- He follows her “all at once” (v. 22) –no thinking things through, no stepping back and considering the consequences; so often, we give into temptation “all at once.” It just “happens” before we even think about it.

Solomon provides three vivid illustrations that depict the gullibility and destruction of those who give in to temptation:

- “As an ox goes to the slaughter”: A dumb animal being led along, not knowing his final destination.
- “as a stag is caught fast”: Once the trap is set, the stag is rendered helpless, simply waiting for the final kill shot.
- “as a bird rushes into a snare”: It doesn’t slow down to take in his surroundings.

One of the deadliest lies Satan tells is that sin isn’t deadly. We often fall into the trap of thinking that pornography won’t hurt us, and even if it did, it wouldn’t hurt anybody else. We wrongly think if it’s short of adultery, we haven’t done anything *too* bad. But Jesus told us in Matthew 5:27-30 that lust of the eyes is adultery of the heart, and for us to think that we can wallow in pornography and then arise unscathed and unscarred is foolishness.

Centuries ago, the church Father Chrysostom spoke of the incredible damage attending the immoral theater. His words are eerily applicable to us today:

“Even if you did not have intimate relations with the prostitute, in your lust you coupled with her, and you committed the sin in your mind. And it was not only at that time, but also when the theatre has closed, and the woman has gone away, her image remains in your soul, along with her words, her figure, her looks, her movement, her rhythm, and her distinctive and meretricious tunes; and having suffered countless wounds you go home. Is it not this that leads to the disruption of households? Is it not this that leads to the destruction of temperance, and the break up of marriages? Is it not this that leads to wars and battles, and odious behaviour lacking any reason? For when, saturated with that woman, you return home as her captive, your wife appears more disagreeable, your children more burdensome, and your servants troublesome, and your house superfluous. Your customary concerns seem to annoy you when they relate to managing your necessary business, and everyone who visits is an irritating nuisance.”

My friend, your struggle with pornography is destroying you and your relationships. It is eating you from the inside and seeking to gain a stronger foothold each and every day.

Do you see yourself through the lattice? Do you see the vulnerability? Do you see the intensity of the temptation? Do you see the disastrous consequences?

It’s time to reflect:

See your own vulnerability:

Proverbs 7 says the target of the temptation was one who was youthful, simple, and lacking sense. As you look at your own life (your habits, your schedule, your hobbies, etc.), are there indicators that you aren't living by wisdom but by foolish desire? If so, write some of those indicators below:

The vulnerable man of Proverbs 7 took himself to a vulnerable place, "taking the road to her house." In your struggle with pornography, what are the vulnerable places in which you are most susceptible to pornography (certain websites, rooms of the house, social media profiles, etc.)? Be as specific as possible.

Have you ever "innocently" visited certain websites, all the while knowing that you fully intend for it to lead to lust?

The vulnerable man was at a vulnerable place at a vulnerable time: "at the time of night and darkness." During which times are you most vulnerable to pornography (time of day, state of mind, circumstances)?

See Temptation's Intensity

Temptation to indulge in pornography truly does lie in wait "at every corner" (v. 12). In a given week, how often are you faced with the temptation to look at porn?

What are the lies that you believe when you give in to the temptation?

See your disastrous destination

Pornography is leading you toward a destination. Like the slaughter house for the ox, the kill shot for the stag, and the snare for the bird, pornography only leads to destruction. In what ways will it damage your relationships?

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In what ways will it damage your attitude toward sin and holiness?

In what ways will it damage your walk with God?

Conclusion

It's not a pretty sight, is it? Our sin and its consequences truly are detestable, but it was necessary for us to be honest with ourselves—to frankly and bluntly confront the foolishness of our own thinking. If you're struggling with porn, you're heading toward destruction. To sugarcoat the issue would be of great disservice to you. If you're dabbling in or addicted to pornography, you are being simple-minded and foolish, you are believing the lies of the Devil, and you're acting like an ox being led to the slaughter house.

If we want to bask in the light that Christ provides, we need to open our eyes, look through the lattice, and see ourselves and our sin. Only then, will we desperately look to Christ.

Before next time...

- **Ask for grace.** Ask God to give you a clear vision to see your own sin. Ask him to break your heart as you honestly confess your sin to him.
- **Read Proverbs 8.** Write ways in which the woman of Proverbs 8 is contrasted with the woman of Proverbs 7.