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Be Faithful to Your Spouse

5: 15-23

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

At this point, **the father** switches strategy. **He** moves from warning about wicked behavior (**to see link click [Bb](#) - Do Not Commit Adultery**), to encouraging proper behavior in the context of sexuality. Again, the idea seems to be that the best defense against the charms of **the adulterous woman** is a vital relationship with **the husband's** proper sexual partner, **the wife**. **ADONAI** is not a prude. **He** created sex. Therefore, **the Torah** does not discourage sexual relations for a moment; it just puts in the proper context heterosexual marriage.



The metaphors (5:15-17): The wise father uses tasteful, but clear, metaphors

to urge **his son** toward a vital sexual relationship with **the wife of his youth**. He urges **his son** to **drink water** from **his own well** and **running water** from **his own cistern (5:15 NIV)**. These highly erotic images refer to **his wife (Song of Songs 4:10-15)**. So here, **the father** advises **his son** to find sexual fulfillment with **his own wife** rather than another **woman**. Then, in the next verse, **the father** uses similar imagery to refer to male sexuality. **Why spill the water from your springs abroad, streams of water in the streets (5:16 Hebrew)**. The father tells **the son** that sexual relations are proper in the home, not with other **women** outside the household. **His** sexual vitality should be spent on **his wife**, not on others. **Let your streams of water be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers (5:17 NIV)**. This is a picture of our wedding at the Hotel Del in Coronado, California in 1984 (you do the math).

The prayer (5:18-20): You have every right, therefore, to see by faith, **ADONAI**, our **High Priest**, raising **His** hands of **blessing** over your marriage bed (see the commentary on **Numbers Bb - The Aaronic Blessing**). Thus, **verse 18** adds a prayer. **The wise father** prays over the married sexual experience of **his son** and **daughter-in-law**. **May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth (5:18 NIV)**. Then **Solomon** further characterizes **the wife of his youth** in terms that are erotic and reminiscent of **the Song of Songs**. But, in the latter it is the male term **gazelle (Song of Songs 2:9 and 17, 8:14)** that is used rather than the female term.¹³² **The breasts of a man's wife** are soft to the touch and graceful in appearance like **a doe (Song of Songs 4:5 and 7:3)**. **She is like a loving doe, may her breasts satisfy you always, may you be lost in her love forever**, not the affections of an **adulterous woman (5:19 CSB)**. By two rhetorical questions **Solomon** pointed out **the foolishness** of loving someone else's wife. **My son, why be captivated with another man's wife? Why embrace the breasts of an adulterous (Hebrew: *zarah*) woman (5:20 NIV)?**¹³³

The decision (5:21-23): **The father** has saved **his** most powerful argument for last. He grounds **his** teaching in theology, that is, **the LORD's** omnipresence (**verse 21**) and **His** justice (**verses 22-23**). Thus far, **he** has warned concerning human dangers of adultery. **He** has told **his son** that a liaison with another **woman** looks good but has bitter consequences. That relationship leads to **death**, not **life (5:5)**. It saps strength and vitality. But the ultimate motivation for not entering into an illicit relationship is because **ADONAI** clearly sees what you are doing, **He watches all that you do (5:21 Hebrew)**. Because **God** is watching, and the consequences for **the adulterer** will be heaped upon **his** own head. **An evil man**

is held captive by his own sins, they are ropes that catch and entangle him (5:22 NLT). If he is not drunk by the love of his wife, then he will be drunk by his own stupidity, which will result in his death. Those who are unfaithful will die from lack of self-control; they will be lost because of their great foolishness (5:23 Hebrew).

Thus far, we have talked about ethics, but not theology proper. It is true that **ADONAI** is only mentioned once in **Chapter 5**. **He** is described as continuously watching human behavior in order to motivate **the son** to stay on the right path (**5:21**). However, the relationship between **the son** and **his wife** and **the adulterous woman**, when read within the context of the whole book, reflects the relationship between **the son** and **Lady Wisdom** (see [Am - Lady Wisdom's Rebuke of the Foolish](#)) and **the foolishness of the world** (see the commentary on [First Corinthians An - The Foolishness of Worldly Wisdom](#)).

The biblical argument will come soon (see **Chapters 8** and **9**), but here we will see that **Lady Wisdom** represents **God's wisdom**, and ultimately **God Himself**, while **her** dark counterpart, **Foolishness**, represents the way of false gods and goddesses, and ultimately those deities themselves. Throughout the Bible the marriage metaphor is used for relationship with **God**. The common point of reference is that they are the only two mutually exclusive relationships that humans should enjoy. One has more than one parent, and may have numerous children, friends, and so forth, but only one **spouse** and only one **God: ADONAI**.¹³⁴

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being such a wonderful and **faithful God**. **You** model how important it is to always be **faithful**. **Your love, ADONAI, is in the heavens, Your faithfulness up to the skies (Psalms 36:6). Your love and faithfulness** are something to be excited about and to share with others! **I will sing of the love of Adonai forever. To all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth. (Psalms 89:2). It is good to praise Adonai and to make music to Your Name, Elyon, to declare Your love in the morning and Your faithfulness at night, 92:1-2). Your faithfulness is the best protection. Under [Your] wings [I] will find refuge. [Your] faithfulness is body armor and shield (Psalms 91:4b-c). I can rest in the knowledge that Your love and faithfulness will endure forever. For ADONAI is good. His lovingkindness endures forever, from generation to generation, and His faithfulness to all generations (Psalms 100:5, 119:90a). We will follow your example of faithfulness for we know that You always walk in wisdom. In Messiah Yeshua's holy Name and power of His***



resurrection. Amen