



[Ecclesiastes 7:25-27](#)

(25) I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness: (26) And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. (27) Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account:

King James Version

Solomon begins to relate his conclusions by listing the prostitute first, using her in three senses: The first is in the specific sense of Proverbs 7, the way of a literal street-walker. The second sense is the suggestion that she could illustrate any of the powerful but unlawful desires working within any of us. The third is perhaps that she symbolizes all of mankind being lured by the spirit of this world. In other passages, [God](#) characterizes Israel's conduct before [the world](#) in this way.

[1 Kings 11:1](#), 4-6 sums up Solomon's life in one vital area:

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. . . . For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David.

This same man advised in [Proverbs 5:3-6](#):

For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey, and her mouth is smoother

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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. Lest you ponder her path of life—her ways are unstable; you do not know them.

Failing to follow his own advice, Solomon was ensnared by many foreign women who lured him away from God and into the worship of foreign gods. The term “foreign” can apply, not only to those of a different ethnicity, but also those of a different religion and thus a different way of life that should have been alien to him. Used in this way, the prostitute symbolizes the world and its gods to the Christian. The world may be alluring to the senses, but it is deadly poison to a relationship with God.

The third sense may lead us to a positive solution. Solomon gives solid advice in [Proverbs 7:4-5](#): “Say to wisdom, ‘You are my sister,’ and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words.” Science tells us that children are genetically more closely related to each other than to their parents. With this knowledge, we can grasp why Solomon suggests making understanding one's sister. Such a close, protective relationship would serve a young man well. In addition, he writes in [Ecclesiastes 7:18](#), “For he who fears God will escape them all.”

Putting these factors together, we find that understanding, wisdom, and the fear of God are effective deterrents to any temptation. Solomon's greatest weakness appears to lie in his lack of the fear of God.

Believed and used, [1 Corinthians 10:13](#) provides a wonderful promise from our faithful God: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” Understanding and wisdom, combined with the fear of God, will enable a person to find ways to flee the temptations to fulfill evil desires, as Joseph did in Genesis 39. The solution is easily stated and remembered—but we cannot allow the impulse to give in to temptation to intensify, or we will probably lose.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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