

It Is Written

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The Strange Woman

By Irven Lee (1964)

Two women are contrasted in the book of Proverbs. One is described in the thirty-first chapter and the other in the seventh chapter. The thirty-first chapter gives the traits of the virtuous woman. When we see the high standard set for this woman, we can easily understand verse 10, which suggests that her price is far above rubies. Her husband safely trusts in her; she worketh willingly with her hands; she doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life; she stretcheth forth her hand to the needy; she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and the law of kindness is in her tongue; she fears the Lord or has reverence for His holy name. Certainly, we could expect her husband and children to call her blessed.

In this article, however, I want us to look at Proverbs 7, which describes the opposite type woman. Read that entire chapter. The woman in this chapter is called the strange woman.

Notice verses 4 and 5 where the wise man begs his son to call on wisdom and understanding to keep him from the strange woman who "flattereth with her words." Flattery can have a deadly influence. I call your attention now to verse 21. It says, "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him." It takes a strong character, indeed, to stand the pressure of flattery. In fact, no one is safe in its presence. Listen to verses 26 and 27. "For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Evidently, the slaying mentioned is the slaying of character, the destroying of the soul, taking away the hope of heaven. A short sentence found in I Corinthians 6:18 is very much in harmony with the clear teaching of Proverbs 7. The two words of this short sentence are "Flee fornication." The smart thing to do is run from the temptation and the power of the flatterer rather than foolishly walking into the trap. Many fall. How many of those who invite temptation by association with the type person described in this chapter remain pure? "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33). James 3:6 says, "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." Friends, a tongue that is set on fire of hell can set on fire the course of nature; it can defile the whole body; it can stir anger, arouse lust, provoke jealousy and in every possible way lead to sin. Beware of the flatterer.

Flattery is not the only trait mentioned for the character of Proverbs 7. Notice verse 10. "There met him a woman with the attire of a harlot." You may notice that the details of this style of dress are not given. One point is made clear. The attire was such as to advertise her character. It was the attire of a harlot. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 would not have been thus dressed. No normal person is ignorant of the part one's attire can have in inviting lust. I marvel at the absolute abandonment of modesty and chastity in our day. If shorts and halters are not immodest, how could one show lack of chastity? If such attire is not the attire of a harlot in our day, what would be? The lack of modesty in dress points to the fact that fornication is common. So do the many, many divorces. So do the statistics of reports arrived at by people who are willing to dig into the filthy mire for such facts. Filthy jokes and other such ways of revealing the debased condition of heart point in the same direction. When our nation is brought to repentance in regard to sex sins there will be fewer divorces. At the same time there will be less immodesty of dress.

We may admit that some who appear in the attire of harlots are not harlots. If they are not

immoral, they should not advertise as such. If they appear in the attire of a harlot, they invite temptation. They may be mistaken for one who is immoral. Why would they not?

I feel a bit like one who takes a broom to sweep the water out of the ocean. The talk looks hopeless, but someone may be helped. This land needs everyone it can find to stand for modesty, chastity, and discretion. Thank God for mothers and wives who have not lost their respect for decency in their worship of styles. Thank God for the few fine young people who are influenced more by the Bible than by Hollywood in principles of dress.

In Titus 2:5, older women are asked to teach younger women discretion and chastity. How can older women who lack discretion and who have no sign of modesty teach their daughters such important lessons? To what depth will we go before there is a reaction and a turning back? Many preachers who love praise are unwilling to give words of warning. Church members appear in the attire of harlots, but they are members who have lost their love for prayer meetings. God will not accept part time service from those who serve Mammon, the god of this world, part of the time.

Other traits are mentioned concerning this woman in Proverbs 7. Look at verses 11 and 12. "She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner." The word "loud" just means the opposite to "quiet." The one who appears in public with much noise is calling for attention. Her love for the street corner rather than the work room at home grows out of the same type thinking. There are loud girls who are not immoral, but strangers may suppose that they are. There are some who roam the streets who are not immoral, but they are likely to become such. Parents, are you asleep? Have you let your daughters be loud, gad-about, in immodest attire? If children are born out of wedlock, be not surprised. If they marry those who admire them in their behavior like the strange woman in Proverbs 7, be not surprised if they soon divorce. The Bible is written for a purpose — a good purpose — use it. Think of the contrast between the woman of Proverbs 7 and the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31.

The foolish young man who went to the house of the strange woman is called a simple one. He is compared to an ox being led to the slaughter, to a bird flying into a snare, and to a fool being led to correction in the stocks. Any wise person could have told him the disastrous results of going to her house. In sowing wild oats, one makes it almost impossible to have a happy home. A worthy companion would not want him. The wages of sin is death. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

We have only introduced this study. Continue it yourself. Notice the love of darkness for evil deeds; notice the hypocritical religion which is evident; notice her kiss by which she further tied him. It would be hard to over-emphasize the evil that comes from petting. Lust is blinding. Some say that love is blind. Bodily contact, flattery, the kiss and other such influences can lead an otherwise intelligent young man to marry one that every neighbor, relative, and good friend can see is unworthy. He cannot see because he has allowed the carnal nature to take over and lead him. Please read Proverbs 7. Then read the other side of the picture in Proverbs 31.