

A Wisdom of Sexuality

Proverbs 5

Proverbs 5:1-21

My son, pay attention to my wisdom,
turn your ear to my words of insight,
that you may maintain discretion
and your lips may preserve knowledge.

For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
but in the end she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.

Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.

She gives no thought to the way of life;
her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know
it.

Now then, my sons, listen to me;
do not turn aside from what I say.
Keep to a path far from her,
do not go near the door of her house,
lest you lose your honor to others
and your dignity to one who is cruel,
lest strangers feast on your wealth
and your toil enrich the house of another.
At the end of your life you will groan,
when your flesh and body are spent.
You will say, “How I hated discipline!
How my heart spurned correction!
I would not obey my teachers
or turn my ear to my instructors.
And I was soon in serious trouble
in the assembly of God’s people.”

Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.
Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?
Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.
May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.
A loving doe, a graceful deer —
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love.
Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife?
Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?
For your ways are in full view of the Lord,
and he examines all your paths.
The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;
the cords of their sins hold them fast.
For lack of discipline they will die,
led astray by their own great folly.

Sexuality lies at the center of the spiritual life. A healthy sexuality is the single most powerful vehicle there is to lead us to selflessness and joy, just as unhealthy sexuality helps constellate selfishness and unhappiness and does nothing else. We will be happy in this life, depending upon whether or not we have a healthy sexuality.

One of the fundamental tasks of spirituality, therefore, is to help us to understand and channel our sexuality correctly. This, however, is no easy task. Sexuality is such a powerful fire that it is not always easy to channel it in life-giving ways. Its very power, and it is the most powerful force on the planet, makes it a force not just for formidable love, life, and blessing but also for the worst hate, death, and destruction imaginable. Sex is responsible for most of the ecstasies that occur on the planet, but it is also responsible for lots of murders, and suicides. It is the most powerful of fires, the best of all fires, the most dangerous of all fires, and the fire which, ultimately, lies at the base of everything, including the spiritual life.

Ronald Rolheiser, *A Holy Longing, The Search for a Christian Spirituality* 193

Proverbs 5:3-6

For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
but in the end she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.
She gives no thought to the way of life;
her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not
know it.

The word sex has a Latin root that literally means “to cut off,” “to sever,” “to amputate,” “to disconnect from the whole.” To be “sexed,” therefore, literally means to be cut off, to be severed from, to be amputated from the whole.

It's important that we know the difference between having sex and having a sexuality.

**Sex is the energy inside of us
that works incessantly against
our being alone.**

Rolheiser

“There are three things that are too amazing for me,
four that I do not understand:
the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a young woman.”

Proverbs 30:18-19

Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.
Should your springs overflow in the streets,
your streams of water in the public squares?
Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.
May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.
A loving doe, a graceful deer —
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love.
Proverbs 5:15-19

Bible talks gloriously about sex.

However, we must avoid the popular contemporary view that “having sex” somehow can carry all the things that “sexuality” is supposed to carry.

While having sex should never be denigrated and seen as something that is not spiritual or important, it should not be asked, all by itself, to be responsible for community, friendship, family, and delight within our lives.

Rolheiser

Sexuality is not simply about finding a lover or even finding a friend. It is about overcoming separateness by giving life and blessing it. Thus, in its maturity, sexuality is about giving oneself over to community, friendship, family, service, creativity, humor, delight, and martyrdom so that, with God, we can help bring life into the world.

Rolheiser

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10