

# **IT JUST HAPPENED / NOT LIKELY**

**Proverbs 7:1-27**

By Pastor John Carlini, D.Mn

**M.I. RUINED LIVES DON'T USUALLY HAPPEN AS THE RESULT OF ONE POOR CHOICE. RUINED LIVES ARE USUALLY THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF SINFUL ATTITUDES AND CHOICES.**

I. REJECTING A GODLY ATTITUDE (Vs. 1-9)

**THE DOWNHILL SLIDE TOWARDS DISASTER IS STARTED BY REJECTING GODLY STANDARDS AND REPLACING THEM WITH WORLDLY STANDARDS.**

- A. GODLY ATTITUDES ARE CLEAR (Vs. 1-5)
- B. GODLY ATTITUDES ARE PRACTICAL (V. 6)
- C. GODLY ATTITUDES ARE MOSTLY REJECTED (Vs. 7-9)

II. WORLDLY TEMPTATIONS PROMISE PLEASURE (Vs.10-20)

**THE DEVIL WILL ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO MARRY UP A TEMPTATION TO GO ALONG WITH OUR SINFUL ATTITUDE.**

- A. THE DEVIL IS ON THE PROWL (Vs. 10-12)
- B. THE DEVIL APPEALS TO OUR PRIDE (Vs.13-15)
- C. THE DEVIL PROMISES LOVE AND SECURITY (Vs.16-20)

III. DISASTER IS CERTAIN (Vs. 21-27)

**WHEN A SINFUL ATTITUDE IS PRESENTED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT ON IT, SIN AND DISASTER IS A CERTAINTY.**

- A. SEDUCTION IS DEADLY (Vs. 21-23)
- B. SEDUCTION IS COMMON (Vs. 24-26)
- C. SEDUCTION IS SOUL DESTROYING (V. 27)

## **IT JUST HAPPENED / NOT LIKELY**

### **Proverbs 7:1-27**

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There are times when I wonder why our society is so sexually perverted. I am tempted to think that modern day Western civilization is unique in its obsession with, and perversion of sex. However, as we have studied through this first section of Proverbs, we can see that sexual perversion has been a favorite tool in the hands of the devil throughout all of human history.

King Solomon, arguably the wisest king in all history, defines the nature of wisdom in the first 9 chapters of this book of Proverbs. By the amount of material he devotes to the discussion of sexual purity and by the intensity of passion he approaches the subject with, I am inclined to believe that he thought this area of life presents us with the most temptation to leave godly wisdom behind and to follow the devil's folly to destruction, since the devil is an experienced predator, he knows where we are most easily tempted and led astray.

When I ask friends or people who have committed adultery, gotten pregnant out of wedlock, gotten a disease or some other sexually related problem, how did this happen, they usually shrug their shoulders and say, "I don't know. It just happened." But the fact is it didn't just happen, it required a series of willfully taking on wrong attitudes, of sinful choices, and sinful rebellious acts. It didn't "just happen."

I think if we were to look through the Proverbs, we can get a clue where the problem starts. Over and over again the teacher says things like, "Pay attention children listen to my words and take them to heart, etc." I think we tend to think we are smarter than we really are but based on our behavior, most of us are fools, yet we think we are geniuses.

Let me tell you a story about a genius. One day a private plane was flying over the mountains and the plane developed engine problems. There were four people in the plane: the pilot,

a longhaired teenager, a pastor and a college professor. The pilot said, "We have a problem we have to bail out of the plane but we only have three parachutes." There was some discussion and the pastor said, "Let's pray and ask God for guidance." They all agreed and bowed their heads. While they were praying, the college professor grabbed one of the packs, yelled out, "I'm a genius. I have to be saved," and with that, he jumped out of the plane. The pilot then said, "Let's get back to solving our problem," when the teenager said, "Our problem has already been solved. The genius bailed out with my camping backpack." I think our problem is that we think of ourselves as geniuses and I also think we are bailing out of planes, not with parachutes, but with backpacks filled with stupidity.

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For the most part, I enjoy my calling and work as a pastor. However, the one thing I don't like is facing people who have ruined their lives because of sinful attitudes and behaviors. I guess it would be o.k. If they would take responsibility for their poor choices and be willing to suffer the consequences, but for the most part, their attitude is, "It doesn't matter what I have done God should bail me out and I should be able to live a happy life." It doesn't work that way. If we want to be arrogant and rebellious, then we should be willing to live with the consequences of our actions. Because of sinful attitudes, sinful behaviors, and stupid choices, we will have to give up a lot of happiness in life and if we were totally honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that God gave us plenty of chances to stop the disaster if only we had been humble enough to listen. The main idea of today's passage is: **RUINED LIVES DON'T USUALLY HAPPEN AS THE RESULT OF ONE POOR CHOICE. RUINED LIVES ARE USUALLY THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF SINFUL ATTITUDES AND CHOICES.** In other words, when we choose to do

things our own way, and when things blow up in our face, we will have to live with the consequences for a long time, perhaps for the rest of our lives.

Believe me, I don't like to have to say those things, because at heart I am a people pleaser and I like to make people happy. That's what makes this part of my job so difficult I would love to wave a magic wand and fix all the problems we have, but I can't.

All I can do is suggest this; if you have screwed up your life, take responsibility for it, don't blame others, repent, make up your mind you will live with the consequences, purpose in your heart to become humble, listen to God, and find His purpose for your life where you are, move on to God's next best for you. If you haven't screwed up too badly yet, then stop the bleeding right now. Humble yourself and submit to God. I'm sure there are many people here this morning that would stand up and tell you from personal experience to stop before it is too late.

I want to do my part to help by taking this text and demonstrating how disaster overtakes us. This could apply to finances, drugs, alcohol, gambling, whatever. However, we will follow the text and examine the downward spiral to disaster through sexual immorality. It is the biggest problem our society and the church face today. It seems to have been the biggest threat to wisdom in Solomon's day as well.

#### I. REJECTING A GODLY ATTITUDE (Vs. 1-9)

### **THE DOWNHILL SLIDE TOWARDS DISASTER IS STARTED BY REJECTING GODLY STANDARDS AND REPLACING THEM WITH WORLDLY STANDARDS.**

Verses 1-9 describe the start of the downward spiral to disaster with rejecting a godly attitude: **THE DOWNHILL SLIDE TOWARDS DISASTER IS STARTED BY REJECTING GODLY STANDARDS AND REPLACING THEM WITH WORLDLY STANDARDS.**

#### A. GODLY ATTITUDES ARE CLEAR (Vs. 1-5)

This is all not very complicated. Verses 1-5 remind us that godly attitudes are clear and there is no confusion as to what God expects of us. The teacher is speaking as God's representative he makes a strong, impassioned appeal yet one more time, "My son, my daughter, my child, keep my words, store up my commands, guard my teachings." The starting point to developing a godly attitude is to read, study, and memorize God's word, the Bible, but keep this in mind: Pastors, elders, and teachers are gifts from God to help us understand the Bible.

Here is how the Bible helps us to develop a godly attitude. In the NIV and NASB, verse 2 ends with the phrase "apple of your eye," referring to the teachings of God's word. Literally the text reads, "live my teachings as the black of your eye," referring to the pupil. Here is why this word is important, in verse 9 the poet is going to use this same word "black" to refer to the dark of night setting in.

When we look into someone else's pupil, we can see a miniature image ourselves in them. The pupil is also the part of the eye that lets light in. We can get an accurate picture of who we are and what we are doing by looking into the clear reflection of the Bible. In other words, it is the Bible that is to direct our thoughts and our behaviors -- not our friends, not television, and certainly not our culture. The word of God as taught to us by godly, inspired teachers is to govern our thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

Look further at verse 3. The poet says, "Bind them on your fingers and write them on your hearts." This learning is to be both an outward reminder of who we are in Christ and an inward attitude of love and dedication to Him.

Verse 4 goes on to describe how intimate this love relationship is to be with God and His word. We are to call wisdom our sister and kinsman. In the Hebrew culture, a kinsman was a relative who was to rescue you in times of need. If you had fallen into financial difficulty and had

to sell yourself into slavery it was your kinsman, you're relative who was to redeem you and buy you out of slavery. Jesus is our kinsman redeemer and He has rescued us from the slavery and bondage of sin and death.

I think verse 5 is the key to understanding this first section. If we truly love God and immerse ourselves in the Bible, we will have a deep desire to please Him and make Him happy. Therefore, if we love God, we will hate sexual immorality it won't even appeal to us. To think of being sexually promiscuous would make us nauseous. The way not to head for sexual disaster is to adopt an attitude of sexual purity. Your attitude has to be focused squarely on purity because if it is not, then when temptation makes its appearance, it will be too late, as we will see in a minute.

#### B. GODLY ATTITUDES ARE PRACTICAL (V. 6)

I often hear people say that church is irrelevant and that they don't get anything out of it. That is really too bad because Verse 6 reminds us that godly wisdom is practical and the sad thing is that most people who say that church is irrelevant and boring, are usually the same people who end up with their lives in a mess.

The poet is about to tell us a story. We would start this story by saying, "Once upon a time, I was sitting at my window, looking out into the street and saw a typical young, stupid person." The poet is telling us a couple of things here. First of all, this scenario had played itself out so many times, that it was a story he could almost predict from the beginning. This is one of the depressing parts of being a pastor, you see these things happen so often that you can almost predict with certainty that people are going to train wreck and then when they head down that course, you're tormented. You don't want to jinx them, but you know the outcome. This is the hardest part of being a pastor, watching people train wreck their lives. I think what is really the most frustrating

for me is that once they train wreck, I'd like to fix it as if nothing ever happened, but I can't at that point, it's usually too late. Oh, we can all go on, but with a lot less quality of life.

Secondly, the poet wants us to know that his teaching in the classroom is directly applicable to life on the street, right outside his window.

I don't know if a lot of you know this, but I struggle a great deal with what I am going to preach and how I am going to preach it. But my intent is not just to give you theological information. It is to give you some insight into how God wants us to live our lives on an everyday, practical level. I want God to change my thinking, my attitudes, and my behaviors every day. I come here on Sunday to present myself before God so He can change me and make me more like His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Yes, Christianity is meant to be studied but more importantly, Christianity is meant to be lived and hopefully, as we worship our attitudes and thoughts will become godlier.

#### C. GODLY ATTITUDES ARE MOSTLY REJECTED (Vs. 7-9)

That's important, because as verses 7-9 point out, godly attitudes are mostly rejected. I really believe that most people, including Christians believe that following God is boring and they feel that following the world is exciting. The teacher looks out his window, and wouldn't you know it, there is one of his students standing on the corner, this young man is described as simple. Now before I go on, let me point something out about gender because the poet used a young man to be the simpleton doesn't mean that men are just genetically stupid, although I'm sure that some of you women may think that. Just like it doesn't mean that only women are sexual predators. Women and men, young and old, are often simple when it comes to sexual purity and likewise, both men and women are out to seduce others. In fact, in our culture, you are judged as desirable and successful based on your ability to attract and seduce members of the opposite sex. Now the

teacher describes this young man as simple and lacking in judgment, this young man intellectually knows right from wrong, but he lacks the heart and desire to do the right thing.

Quickly look at the last phrase in Verse 9. The youth heads out into the dark of night. The word dark is that same word used to describe the pupil of the eye, but instead of dark of the eye, here we see the dark of night. No longer can this young person truly see who he is in God. No longer is his identity reflected through the word of God. Now this young man will let the dark of night, the world around him, the culture, his friends, and a seductive woman define his identity.

Think a moment about who we let determine our identity. We want to be cool, good-looking, and popular, on the A list. Who determines that? If you're like most of us, television, magazines, friends, classmates, and society determine our identity and so based on these sources, we determine if we are cool or uncool, if we are good looking or ugly, if we are desirable or undesirable, or if we are successful or unsuccessful. Many of us let our nationality or skin-color determine our identity. Many let parents and friends map out our identity, or in an even more perverted way, conjure up our own identity. Anything except standing in the clear light of God's word is going out into the darkness.

And look where this young man heads out to in Verse 8, he heads in the direction of "her" house. Please feel the full force of the poet. The teacher warned his students that seductive women were out there waiting for them. The young man has been described as simple and lacking in good judgment. He stands at "her" corner and at this point, he still has a choice to make. A corner suggests four possible directions to go and there is only one bad choice out of the four. Yet, because he thinks himself cool, good-looking, successful, desirable, and wise, he takes the road that goes in the direction of "her" house. Let me suggest another reason that even though the lesson applies to men and women alike, the poet uses the women as the seductress. Wisdom is described

as a female as well. This young man is presented with two females. Which will he choose? Will he end up at Lady Wisdom's house or at the whore's house? Keep this in mind as the story goes on. First, he hasn't ruined his life yet and as he walks towards the house, he can change his mind and his direction. He can quit walking towards the whore's house and head for Lady Wisdom's house at any time. However, he has already adopted a worldly attitude and rejected a godly attitude. He thinks living a godly life is boring. All the action and excitement is found in the bars, in the clubs, at the spring break resorts, and wild parties. So his attitude sends him down a particular path: **THE DOWNHILL SLIDE TOWARDS DISASTER IS STARTED BY REJECTING GODLY STANDARDS AND REPLACING THEM WITH WORLDLY STANDARDS.** He is headed down that path of promised excitement and fun.

## II. **WORLDLY TEMPTATIONS PROMISE PLEASURE (Vs.10-20)**

### **THE DEVIL WILL ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO MARRY UP A TEMPTATION TO GO ALONG WITH OUR SINFUL ATTITUDE.**

Verses 10-20 remind us that worldly temptations promise pleasure. Listen, the devil has been around this world a long time, he knows how to spring a trap. **THE DEVIL WILL ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO MARRY UP A TEMPTATION TO GO ALONG WITH OUR SINFUL ATTITUDE.**

#### A. **THE DEVIL IS ON THE PROWL (Vs. 10-12)**

This young man thinks he is suave and cool. He thinks he is all of that and Satan will make sure to reinforce the image the young man has of himself. Verses 10-12 clearly illustrate that the devil is on the prowl. The Bible tells us that Satan is like a hungry, prowling lion, looking for some victim to devour. No sooner than this stupid young man turns the corner to head towards this woman's house, Satan has her all dressed and ready to meet him. It is like she appears magically in the story. There she is. The text says she is dressed like a prostitute she is loud and defiant. She

never stays home and she is crafty and has evil intent. Here is what the text is describing. This woman is stunning. She is dressed seductively in a tight fitting short skirt, low cut blouse, showing lots of cleavage, really flaunting it. She is hot and wild, ready to party -- just the type of woman this guy is looking for. For us it would be a woman that looks like current movie stars and singers - - really hot, really energetic, really sexy and she appears out of nowhere.

**B. THE DEVIL APPEALS TO OUR PRIDE (Vs.13-15)**

And now, it seems as old as the Garden of Eden, Verses 13-15 portrays the devil as he appeals to our pride. This hot looking woman points to this simpleton, he looks around, inquisitively looks at her and points to himself, "me?" She nods and she runs to him, throws her arms around him and kisses him passionately. As she kisses him passionately there in the alley she says, "I have been waiting for you. I came here in hopes that I might find you, and as fate would have it, I found you." The stupid guy doesn't stop to think, he thinks it's true and that he's all that and to top it off, she throws in a little religious language. She says, I went to church today, and now I'm ready to party. He thinks to himself, "a hot looking, exciting woman like that, and she believes in God." Once Satan appeals to our egos, there is no telling what we are capable of crapping ourselves with.

**C. THE DEVIL PROMISES LOVE AND SECURITY (Vs.16-20)**

But Satan doesn't leave anything to chance. Once he has appealed to our egos, he promises love and security as Verses 16-20 point out. She has set the mood she says, "I have the candles lit, the wine chilling, the music on, and the bed made with satin sheets. We will make love all night long." Because she has set this romantic mood, she calls the experience making love but actually, it is simple screwing. There is no love involved. I want us all to think about this very carefully. Satan is clever and we are very good at crapping ourselves. There is no such thing as making love

in any situation outside a heterosexual, monogamous, marriage. If you are not married, it is screwing. If you are committing adultery it is screwing. Let us not use any euphemisms, especially making love. That is an insult to God. People who are trying to seduce you will always use the promise of love when trying to get you to do something sexually immoral. They will say things like, "If you love me, you would do this it is a way you can show your love for me." The problem is that if we are not prepared for this, we sometimes buy into it. Let me just say this in the strongest possible way I can without offending anyone or losing my pastoral license that is, plain and simply, a load of crap! And the people who tell you that stuff are full of crap. Here is the lure. God put this desire in us to want love and to be loved however, that desire is first of all to be shared with God. He created us and redeemed us because He loves us. We find our fill of love when we first of all receive His love, and return love to Him through worship, not only on Sunday, but every moment of our lives that is passionate love. We are called on to love one another as Jesus loves us just as we are called to experience this sexual type of love with one person, in the context of a heterosexual marriage.

Satan distorts, twists, and perverts this basic God-given desire into animal lust. But he perverts another legitimate desire as well, we all long to be loved in a secure and be in a safe environment. Look what this seductress promises this stupid young man who thinks he is cool. In verses 19-20, she says, "Everything is all right we are safe here in my house, in our love palace. My husband is gone and will not be back for a month." How many men over the course of history do you think have been killed by a jealous husband? I think the number would be quite high. Listen, sex is supposed to be safe and secure. Sex involves our intellect, our emotions, our bodies and our spirits and sex is to be intimate and vulnerable. The only safe and secure place for sex is within the confines of marriage. Don't let MTV, the world, your friends, your family, or anyone

else tell you any differently. Remember how this whole section started out. The Bible is God's word. He created us. He created sex. He tells us clearly how He designed it and how it is to be used.

Please bear with me and hear this in the strongest possible terms. If someone is trying to be sexy and trying to seduce you, they are trying to kill you. And be careful about your own attitudes towards sex. Have them clear in your mind because **THE DEVIL WILL ALWAYS MAKE SURE TO MARRY UP A TEMPTATION TO GO ALONG WITH OUR SINFUL ATTITUDE.** You think that is too strong? You think I'm exaggerating? Well let's continue on with the teacher's lesson.

### III. DISASTER IS CERTAIN (Vs. 21-27)

**WHEN A SINFUL ATTITUDE IS PRESENTED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT ON IT, SIN AND DISASTER IS A CERTAINTY.**

In Verses 21-27 the teacher tells us that disaster is certain you see, **WHEN A SINFUL ATTITUDE IS PRESENTED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT ON IT, SIN AND DISASTER IS A CERTAINTY.**

#### A. SEDUCTION IS DEADLY (Vs. 21-23)

At this point, it is too late. It is almost impossible for the young man is filled with desire, lust, and filled with opportunity, to avert disaster. If we are not prepared before hand, it's almost always too late to make a stand in the heat of the moment we should never get to that point. It is almost too late to make a good decision when you're in the back seat of a car, or on a living room couch, or in a bedroom, with your hands all over each other. Look at Verses 21-23. Seduction is deadly. You may think I'm exaggerating but look at the descriptions used here. First of all, this young idiot is not persuaded by God's word to stay away and stay pure instead he is persuaded by this woman's seductive speech, appearance, and her actions. He is like a stupid ox, headed for the

slaughter. In the slaughterhouse, the butcher will smash the skull of the ox with a sledgehammer and knock him senseless then the butcher will tie his hind legs, pull him up in the air, hang him upside down, and slit his throat. The deer is in the woods, all of a sudden steps into a trap and the next thing he knows, he gets an arrow through the liver. Even the poor bird, minding his own business flying around, ends up flying into a net. When the hunter comes, he will snap the bird's neck, cut off its head, gut him and cook him.

You know what, I cannot tell you what to do. We each have to live our own lives. All I can tell you is what the Bible says; if you play around with any type of sexual experience, you are more stupid than a dumb ox you are as clueless as a wild deer or a brainless bird, you are headed for certain disaster. Those are the Bible's words, not mine.

#### B. SEDUCTION IS COMMON (Vs. 24-26)

After having said all that, I feel the frustration of the poet and teacher. In Verses 24-26 the teacher reluctantly muses that seduction is common. As I think about the culture I grew up in, and as I think about the culture we live in today, I almost feel as if preaching this sermon is about as effective as spitting into the wind. I feel as if I'm pouring my heart out but the message is probably not going to reach many and in fact the wind will simply blow it back in my face. In one sense that's o.k. because I think this is the message that has kept me out of sexual trouble during my entire career. I understand the message here, I believe it. The sad thing is that I have friends and colleagues that have not taken it seriously, their marriages are broken and their careers are lost. For what? Satan promises love, excitement, security, passion, and fulfillment. He is a liar. You would think that we would understand this by now, especially Christians, and especially pastors. Look at Verses 24-25 where again the teacher is pounding the podium, his face is red, there are tears in his eyes, and his voice quivers as he pleads, "Listen to me! Pay attention to what I am saying! Don't

let your heart stray from God and don't be enticed by the world! They are out to kill you!" The teacher knows and I know. We have seen it time and time again.

In verse 26-27 he seems to say that probably the majority will be fooled. Look at the numbers. He says, "Many are the victims... she has killed a mighty throng."

I don't know where you get your values but as you decide what kind of person you want to date or marry, as you decide what kind of job you are going to do, or how you are going to spend your money, reflect on how you make your decisions? I know for me it is a constant battle to evaluate where my thoughts and values are coming from. The Apostle Paul told us to keep a vigil on our thinking. We are to take all our thoughts and values and decisions and actions captive. We are to evaluate our thoughts and make sure they conform to the mind of Christ. There are not too many things I can say with this kind of certainty; God hates sexually immoral thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Guard your hearts and minds with pure thoughts develop godly attitudes and practice holy behavior.

#### C. SEDUCTION IS SOUL DESTROYING (V. 27)

Why? Because the stakes are enormous. Verse 27 informs us that seduction is soul destroying. Look what the author says, "Her house is a highway to the grave leading down to the chambers of death." Often times the word for grave is Sheol in Hebrew. It can also be used to describe hell. I can tell you that in all the cases of demonization that I have had to deal with over the years, sexual immorality was the most common event that allowed demons into the persons' lives. Satan wants to destroy us he wants to destroy our minds, bodies, and our souls. Turn it around before it's too late. **WHEN A SINFUL ATTITUDE IS PRESENTED WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACT ON IT, SIN AND DISASTER IS A CERTAINTY.**

I am not a dramatic preacher, and I am not a very charismatic person therefore, all I can do is tell you that I am worried about all of you. I am worried about our culture and I am worried for myself. We live in a world that the Bible describes as under the spell of Satan. We must be vigilant. Please take God's word seriously. Read it. Study it. Memorize it. Conform your thinking to that of God's. Start at the beginning, because **RUINED LIVES DON'T USUALLY HAPPEN AS THE RESULT OF ONE POOR CHOICE. RUINED LIVES ARE USUALLY THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF SINFUL ATTITUDES AND CHOICES.** There is only one way to win this battle. There is only one way to remain sexually pure. There is only one way to win the battle for holiness in all areas of our lives and that is to be prepared ahead of time and to practice holy thinking and behaving.

Listen to the great example of preparedness that Willie Willimon uses in the Pulpit Digest.

**"Philip Haille wrote of the little village of Le Chambon in France, a town whose people, unlike others in France, hid their Jews from the Nazis. Haille went there, wondering what sort of courageous, ethical heroes could risk all to do such extraordinary good. He interviewed people in the village and was overwhelmed by their ordinariness. They weren't heroes or smart, discerning people. Haille decided that the one factor that united them was their attendance, Sunday after Sunday, at their little church, where they heard the sermons of Pastor Trochme. Over time, they became by habit people who just knew what to do and did it. When it came time for them to be courageous, the day the Nazis came to town, they quietly did what was right. One old woman, who faked a heart attack when the Nazis came to search her house, later said, "Pastor always taught us that there comes a time in every life when a person is asked to do something for Jesus." When our time came, we knew what to do.'**

The habits of the heart are there when they are most needed." I would like to think of myself as the pastor in this story, preaching and teaching the word of God. I would like to think of you as the people in the story in whom the word of God lived so deep and richly in your hearts, that when faced with decisions, you have already developed attitudes of holiness.

