

Sermon on Proverbs 6:27-28 (Children/Youth Sermon)

Reading: Proverbs 6:20-7:27

Singing: 261:1-3 – 415:5 – 1:1-5 – 322:1-4 – 89:1-5

Choices have Consequences

This morning we will listen to God's speaking through the Book of Proverbs.

Young people, you especially are addressed in Proverbs. Value this book and use it as you journey through life.

The book is so practical as God speaks to you about how to use your money wisely or how to turn your mouth in a means of comfort.

He also spells out how not to lose your temper or how to avoid the danger of pride.

He illustrates the benefits of friends who tell you the truth, but He also tells you how not to lose your good friends.

Today you are to listen to God's instruction on how to make wise choices.

How many choices do you remember making today already?

If you try to answer that question, you will notice that your life is full of choices.

Even now you are making a choice: will I listen to God speaking to me in His Word?

And after having listened, will I obey God?

Upon coming home, you will again make a choice: Will I pray about what I heard?

Will you seek to improve what you learned by reading more on this or discussing it with your parents and siblings?

Moving on to tomorrow, you will face more choices at school or work.

Will you follow others in being sneaky or disrespectful during class?

Or will you choose to stand up and be courageous to defend a classmate who is being sidelined or teased?

Will you refuse to follow your feelings in being lazy and wasting your time and opportunity to learn?

Or will you instead choose to follow the ant's example and be diligent in your study? Will you aim to excel?

Looking at the future, you will face critical choices that will influence the rest of your life.

For example, will you study further at a university to qualify yourself more in an area God has skilled you in, or is it the right time for you to enter the work force?

If you are thinking about deepening a relationship with a young man or woman, will you seek your parents' advice or wisdom?

It is easy to see that during your life you will be making many choices.

Some choices have little consequences, but others will stick around for life.

The choice of a one-night party may lead you astray into sexual compromise which you cannot wipe away.

What we read in Proverbs 7 is one of the most intense descriptions of a life lost by a foolish choice.

Notice how Solomon ended the choice the young man made when he bit into a temptation.

Verse 27 informs us that he ended in the chambers of death!

Having to make choices can be very scary; yet God expects you to make many important choices.

Gladly, He did not leave you without His Divine guidance to make wise choices you need not regret.

In this message you and I will listen to God on the subject of choices in two main thoughts,

1. God expects you to make good choices which He has promised to bless.
2. God expects you to make your choices by following His directions

First, then, God is expecting you to make good choices which He has promised to bless.

As I said earlier, God expects you to make choices.

Listen to what God says in Deuteronomy 30:19, *“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: **therefore, choose** life, that both you and thy seed may live.”*

In 1 Kings 18:21, God called the Israelites to make a choice. The same call comes to you: *“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”*

They did not want to answer and so they thought the safest was just not to say anything.

Sound familiar?

But that did not relieve them from the call God issued.

Never entertain the thought that you are excused from making the right choice because you cannot do it.

Perhaps you hear the whisper inside, “But I cannot make this choice by myself. We are fallen people. It needs to be given.”

So true. Our moral depravity is total. You cannot change your heart. You cannot save yourself.

You cannot even love God and your neighbour according to the letter of the law for a moment.

But your ‘cannot’ does not cancel God’s command, ‘Do this.’ Your inability does not release you from God’s call. Actually, the fact that you cannot do God’s will only makes your case worse. For you were not originally created in the condition you are now.

Your ‘cannot’ today is rooted in the insane and wicked choice of your original parents to rebel against God.

God charges us mankind that our total inability is our guilt. No amount of arguing will change this fact!

Oh, how I wish we all would finally see it in that light and be humbled before God our Creator instead of arguing or resisting or even denying the raw facts.

However, God is still expecting you to make good choices which He has promised to bless.

And there are still many good choices you can make!

When we fell from our original glory, we did not become a cold stone in a riverbed being tossed around by the current.

You continue to have a mind—though it is darkened. You still have a will—though it is no more free.

You can still make many good choices—if only you decide to make them.

Do you choose to set your alarm early enough to seek the Lord for a few minutes before your day starts, in reading and praying about His message?

You know it is a choice you CAN make!

Do you choose to switch off your phone or log out of Facebook or other social media and unplug for a day?

You know your life is not dependent on being digitally connected to friends and family all the time.

You know they can be distracting. To unplug for a time in order to keep your mind clear to focus on God's Word is a choice you CAN make!

To make many good choices is not outside your power to make.

Jesus sure assumed you we can, when He exhorts us in John 6:27,

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of shall give unto you: for Him that God the Father sealed."

The gift is grace and grace alone. Yet the Lord expects us to labour and the more diligent we are, the more we may count on His promised and gracious blessing.

So, my friends, to conclude this first point about God's expectation to make good choices which He promises to bless, let me ask you a few questions.

Do you choose to walk in the right way and avoid the way of sinners like in Psalm 1 which we sang together?

Will you refuse to walk in the counsel of the ungodly? That means not drinking in the thoughts of the culture around us as they are bombarding us with ungodly principles and ideas.

Will you refuse to stand still in the way of sinners, and turn away from their corrupting ideas?

I am sure if I would offer you a cup with poison, you would say, 'No, thank you! I will not choose to drink this.'

But why not make such choices when the gurus of this world drench your mind with toxic ideas?

And Psalm 1 warns us that if we do not make these choices of where to walk and where to stand, you will end up 'sitting in the seat of the scornful.'

What those toxic ideas are we cannot consider now in depth; but all that is unbiblical is toxic.

I plead with you to compare everything you hear from others if it is in line with what God is speaking to you about in Proverbs and other Scriptures.

My young friends, make the right choices you can make, for God has promised to bless those who do.

Listen again to the opening Psalm.

Blessed are all they that meditate, prayerfully, in the Law or Word of God.

Such people will experience the Lord's blessing, for He says that they shall be like a sturdy tree growing on the riverbank, *"that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."*

Obed-Edom's house was blessed when they received the ark and the whole family treated it with utmost respect.

Joseph was greatly blessed when he did what Proverbs 7: 5 promised:

He kept God's commandments as the apple of his eye, and it kept him from the strange woman who flattered him with her words.

Daniel and his friends were blessed when they drew their line defined by God's commandments.

God also gives us examples of those who ignored God's known will and chose the evil.

The Bible opens with the wicked choice of Adam and Eve. They hurled all mankind into misery and death.

Lot chose with his covetous eye and ended up destroying his own family and vexing his own soul in Sodom.

David chose to give in to his sexual lusts and lived with the consequences of sibling rape and murder, an attempt by his son Absalom to kill him, and a disgrace that clung to his name forever.

Dinah, Jacob's daughter, foolishly mixed with the daughters of Shechem and ended up raped.

Gehazi, Elisha's servant, ignored his conscience and the example of his master and ended up a leper.

Do you know that in all cases when people go astray it always begins the same?

It begins always with one small step into the wrong direction.

Therefore, with these examples of good and bad choices in mind, will you hear God's voice?

"My son, [my daughter,] keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother.

Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth" (Prov. 6:20, 7:24).

So, you are to make good choices and God has promised to bless them. But *how* do you make good choices?

God did not leave us without instruction on that question.

But let us first join together in singing Psalter 322:1-4.

In the Scripture you heard, God gives you a number of principles or guidelines.

The first principle is found in Proverbs 6:20-23 and 7:1-5. **Make God's Word part of your daily clothing.**

"My son, my daughter, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.

Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

Keep my commandments, and live, and my law as the apple of thine eyes,

You know that your clothes, jewelry and watches do not just fly onto you in the morning.

You need to put them on.

So God tells you to daily choose a time to read, re-read, memorize and familiarize yourself with His Word.

The Scriptures are His revealed will about what is good and holy.

God tells us that His Word needs to be at our fingertips, in our hands.

As with a soldier who holds his hand on his gun, so you are to hold your hands on God's Word.

When God's Word is so a part of us, it will lead you and keep you and talk to you in the day and night.

Then in whatever circumstances you are or whoever you run across, God will be speaking to you by the Word you have bound to yourself or memorized!

Consider it like spiritual boot camp. The drill sergeant does not ask you whether you feel like training.

You do it and you must do it for in the thick of the battle you have no time to learn how to use your weapons.

You will be dead if you are not familiar with your weapons or with your enemy.

Therefore, nothing will prepare you for the spiritual battles ahead than a daily drenching of your mind with God's Word.

So the first direction is, "Put on the Word of God every day. Listen intently to its teaching and it will guide you through the day, keeping you from paths of compromise and destruction.

The second principle is: **Be close to the Word of God and the promise is that it will keep you.**

He pictures the wisdom and understanding of the Scripture as close relatives: *"Say unto wisdom, 'thou art my sister;' and call understanding thy kinswoman" (Proverbs 7:4).*

We all want to spend time with our relatives. Our family is important to us.

They care for us and will be there for us in time of need. At least, so it should be.

In the same way we are to view the wisdom and understanding God gives us in the Scriptures.

Treat them like close family. Allow them in your life and remain open to their guidance.

Seek guidance from God's Word each time you are faced with a choice, for God is committed to guide you by His Word and Spirit, as He promises in Proverbs 3:6: *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."*

God compares His revealed will to a lamp which lights your way through the maze of choices you face.

Now more than ever before, you are flooded with choices to make.

Every value of Scripture is questioned or challenged while alternative and ungodly values are heavily promoted in schools, libraries, university campuses and even right at home, right in your hand or right in front of your eyes, on social media, websites and newsfeeds.

You are told that you have a right to be what you want to be. Is that so? Is that philosophy that guided Joseph?

You are told that a 'hook-up' for a night is a harmless activity that everyone does. Is that so? Look again at chapter 7 verse 26: "For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her."

The idols of the movie culture are telling you to explore yourself and try out whatever appeals to you.

Is that what young Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego chose to do?

Advertisements and videos show young people taking risks in dangerous stunts or sports.

The wilder the better, the closer to the edge, the more exciting and impressive.

When people die doing these dangerous activities, they say, 'At least he died doing what he enjoyed or was passionate about.'

Is that how God speaks about the value and purpose of your life?

Is your life just for having fun? Or it is about serving Him and sacrificing for others?

Is there nothing more to life than here and now?

We are here to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. That is the chief purpose of our existence.

God speaks in Proverbs 6 about the evil woman and the flattery of a strange woman who parades her beauty before you and flutters her eyelids to catch you.

With this woman God is not just warning you about women and sexual sins.

See it as the symbol of all kinds of temptations to sin.

One example is the sin of dishonest business practices that offer big bonuses or compromises that may bring promotions.

In Proverbs 7 God again pictures the tempting attractions of all kinds of sin with the picture of a harlot.

But the point God wants you to notice is *who* she caught.

In Proverbs 7:7 He describes what she saw: *"among the simples ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding."*

Did you catch that? He was young and he was ignorant.

He did not have understanding. Why not? Was that because he was young?

Or was he ignorant because he had failed to familiarize himself with the Scriptures? Was it because he had not taken the time to bind the Scriptures on his hand or on his heart?

Was it because he did not consider God's commandments as the apple of his eye?

Was it because he did not spend time with God's wisdom as you spend time with your close relatives?

Indeed, he was a youth, inexperienced but I would say it was because he neglected to use God's Word.

He is the one Proverbs 1 describes in verse 25, *“But ye have set at nought (aside) all My counsel, and would none of My reproof.”* In in verse 29, God adds, *“For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD.”*

Young friends, God is calling you to seek Him today, each day, every day!

To seek Him is to dig into the treasure of His Word so it will be bound to your fingers.

To seek Him is to dwell in His presence daily to hear what He is saying to you as you face the tempter as Adam and Eve faced him.

Remember, your first parents were without a flaw within. Yet, they chose to follow their eyes and their imaginations stirred by the suggestions of the master seductor, Satan, instead of heeding God’s Words.

You are now no more as Adam and Eve were. Your heart is now like a keg of gunpowder, and every temptation is as a life-threatening spark.

Oh, listen to God’s call: bind yourself with Scripture.

Let us consider the third direction God gives you in Proverbs 6:27-28.

The picture is clear, *“Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?*

Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?”

His direction is ***Think before you act.***

No healthy thinking mind would choose to do either of these things.

Only when you switch off your thinking you might be tempted to place a burning coal in your shirt pocket or step with bare feet on bed of glowing coals.

Yet young and old people do it all the time.

What about the young man or young woman who begins to hang out with a crowd of drinkers or drug users?

What about the young person who opens his or her mind to the toxic teaching that your gender is simply your choice?

What about those who buy in to the idea that progress means ‘change the old and embrace the better?’ With the old they mean ‘Biblical values’ and with the new is meant what matters to you!

What about the young person who begins to spend personal time with someone of the opposite sex who does not have a clue about Biblical boundaries or values?

You see, my dear young friends, when you begin to embrace unbiblical ideas and dispose of the truth, you are just like those who put a coal of fire in their shirt pocket or step out on red-hot coals with bare feet.

It will hurt you more than you can imagine.

God calls you to write verses 27-28 on your hands, feet, ears, eyes, and mind.

Pray God to stamp this vivid picture upon your heart so that whenever you are facing a choice, you will recall this picture of live coal in your pocket or red-hot embers under your feet.

Let us now consider a fourth direction God gives you in Proverbs 6:25,

“Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread.”

In the next chapter, God paints a similar picture as He describes the harlot’s actions,

“So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day I have paid my vows.

I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt.

Come, let us take our fill of love unto the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves."

What is the direction your Creator and Lord gives you?

Do not let your stirred feelings guided you.

Imagine what feelings are kindled by all these suggestions, proposals, flatteries, and offers?

Satan knows that the best way to make you bite in his seductive ideas is to make sin attractive.

He knows if he can stir feelings of comfort, pleasure, excitement, and importance, you become an easy prey.

His aim is to make your feelings the locomotive instead of your mind.

If you follow your feelings, you end up like the young man in Proverbs 7:22, *"He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks."*

Do you see the picture before you?

Thoughtless, careless, running after the excitement of the moment, dreaming, or fantasizing, they run to the slaughter!

Solomon pictured the end of the fool quite dramatically in verse 23, *"Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life."*

Later he warned, and we can only wonder if he wrote it with bitter remorse about his own life choices, *"For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her."*

Think of Samson. He could take on 1000 soldiers, rip out a city gate by its hinges and carry it up a hill, and tear a lion apart with his bare hands. But he could not handle Delilah. He could not handle the temptation and snare of one woman pampering his feelings.

God created us with a mind, a will and feelings. But of these three, your mind is to be the leader and never your feelings.

Listen therefore God's direction: do not be guided by your feelings.

It all went wrong in the perfect Paradise when Eve began to listen to her feelings, *"when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat"* (Genesis 3:6).

As an ox led to the slaughter, so she allowed herself to be led by her feelings and Adam did likewise.

Let us listen to God's fifth direction. It is implied in Proverbs 6:32-33 in which God describes the fruit of the sinners' doings: *"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding (i.e., doesn't use his mind): he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.*

The direction God gives you is to **think about long-term consequences.**

Is one hour pleasure (or better, lust) worth a life-long dishonour or wound?

Is involving yourself with pornography really something you can walk away from?

Is a short lifetime of being yourself and exploring all you can on this planet worth losing your soul forever in the darkness of hell?

God calls you to weigh in the balance every choice you make by asking you a weighty question,

"Where will this bring me? How will this choice look 10 or 20 or 30 years from now?"

Will I then be able to walk back from where I head to now?

A while ago I talked to a middle-aged man.

When he was young, he got a girl pregnant and forced her to have an abortion.

He was trying to erase his track, but killing the baby did not erase any track. It only made it worse.

Years ago, an anonymous woman called me for advice.

Ten years earlier she had married a young man who promised her everything she wanted.

He committed to come to church with her.

Now ten years later, on Sunday mornings he gives his children a choice: go fishing or golfing with dad or go to church with mom.

After finishing her story, she asked me the question she wanted to ask, "Can I divorce my husband?"

My answer was the Scriptural one: "No, you cannot except in the case of adultery."

With a deep sigh she thanked me and ended the phone call.

Now she realized the long-term consequences of her choice. But it was not reversible.

She had to live and suffer for it.

Dear young people, God is calling you to think long-term.

He is warning you that the choices you make in your youth are the matters you will live with in adulthood.

Moses did not have a choice in the environment of his youth, being brought up in Pharaoh's court.

But we read in Hebrews 11:24, *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:*

For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

Notice that Moses did not make this choice based on his feelings, but on faith.

He knew the Word of God and believing it, he obeyed the call of God.

The pleasures of sin were but for a short time; the consequences of sins were long-term.

Moses thought long-term. He knew that there was no future in Egypt's treasures for they were earthly and temporal.

He also knew that belonging to Christ and His people, even if it brought a temporary reproach, was far richer because of God's promises.

He had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

He knew that each sacrifice for Christ's sake was worth it, even if that meant giving up a brilliant career on the highest level of the Egyptian court.

Moses knew the brilliant career was only temporal; but Moses thought long-term: a life of following Christ was eternal.

Lastly, let us observe one more of God's directions in this chapter.

It is short: **Flee temptation!**

In the closing verses of chapter 7, hear the pleading voice of God to you,

"Hearken unto Me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of My mouth.

Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths."

God knows you cannot handle sin just like fragile moths cannot handle being close to a lightbulb on a dark night.

As they venture too close, their wings get sizzled and they perish.

So it goes with any who venture too close to sin.

No, you cannot handle Satan and his temptations.

You are no match for his seductive reasoning powers.

Learn from young and vulnerable Joseph's example as recorded in Genesis 39:10,

*“And it came to pass, as she, the tempter, spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or **to be with her.***

He did all he could to avoid her instead of allowing her to be close to him.

He made that choice wisely and undoubtedly prayerfully.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 God gives this direction, *“Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*

Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

Be fearful of what appears evil and flee from it.

But be cautious, because not everything looks evil, and therefore you are to prove it.

‘Proving it’ does not mean ‘try it out to see what it is like.’

Prove it means examine it by the light of Holy Scriptures if it is right and wholesome spiritually.

And that's why God directed us earlier in this message that you need to bind yourself with Scripture.

We make choices daily.

All have short or long-term consequences that can be good or bad.

One said well, “Generally the choices you make between 15 and 25 will stay with you for life.”

Therefore, in conclusion, observe one more direction of your Creator in Proverbs 11:14,

“Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”

More heads mean more wisdom, especially if the heads are those who fear and know the Lord.

Wisdom is to use the older, more experienced, and wiser heads as you make critical decisions.

Those older and wiser counselors who fear the Lord and know His Word will not be swayed by your feelings or be led by their feelings.

Therefore, make use of these assets in your church family.

Besides your parents, confide in your grandparents, or your elders or pastor, or other godly members in your church family.

Share your thoughts and plans with them as you face the critical decisions of your life.

Listen to their experiences and be guided by their insights that they have gained through their failures and successes; but above all through their understanding of Scripture.

In the multitude of counsellors is safety.

Their wisdom may prevent that one day you will be struck with deadly dart or end up like a bird in the snare from which there is no recovery.

Finally, then, hear God about making the right choices which lead to the richest blessings in Proverbs 8:33-36:

“Now therefore hearken unto Me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep My ways.

Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

Blessed is the man that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors.

For whose findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.

But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul:

all they that hate Me love death.”

Amen