

“For a prostitute is a deep pit; a wayward woman is a narrow well.” Proverbs 23:27-28 (ESV)

Question: What is the meaning of this verse?

Answer:

This passage from Proverbs warns about the spiritual dangers of sexual immorality, specifically using the metaphors of a “deep pit” and a “narrow well” to illustrate the perilous nature of involvement with prostitutes and wayward women.

In biblical context, a prostitute (Hebrew: *zanaḥ*) is a woman who has sexual relations with men who are not her husband. She may be involved with many men, either for physical pleasure or to cause harm or destruction in others’ lives. Importantly, she is not passive; she actively seeks to ensnare men.

A wayward woman or harlot often refers to a woman who engages in sexual immorality primarily for material benefit money, favors, or social advantage. This term can also extend to any woman who consciously chooses to practice fornication or prostitution, as described in passages like

1 Corinthians 6:15-16 (NIV):

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ

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himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!”

The metaphors used here emphasize the spiritual consequences:

- A deep pit (Proverbs 23:27) signifies a place of no return a trap that swallows a person whole, symbolizing eternal destruction or separation from God. Spiritually, falling into this pit means being overwhelmed by sin, leading to bondage and despair.
- A narrow well (Proverbs 23:27) refers to a trap dug to catch wild animals deep, narrow, and covered with leaves to conceal it. Once the prey falls in, escape is nearly impossible. This illustrates how involvement with a harlot entangles a person in sin, making freedom very difficult without divine intervention.

The Bible further warns in Proverbs 22:14 (NIV):

“The mouth of an adulterous woman is a deep pit; a man who is under the LORD’s wrath falls into it.”

This warning applies equally to men and women. Sexual immorality is condemned universally because it defiles the body, which Scripture teaches is the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, ESV). Sexual sin is unique because it is a sin against one’s own body, not just an external act (1 Corinthians

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6:18, ESV).

The consequences are severe. Besides spiritual separation from God, sexual immorality opens the door to physical diseases and curses. The AIDS epidemic, for example, can be seen as a manifestation of the spiritual consequences of sin. The Bible indicates that such diseases may have a spiritual origin as well as a physical one (see Deuteronomy 28:27, 35, NIV). The early carriers of the disease experienced it as a judgment related to sin.

Therefore, these metaphors are serious warnings: falling into the sin of sexual immorality is like falling into a deep pit or narrow trap escape is difficult and the consequences are grave.

But there is hope.

Through Jesus Christ, deliverance is possible. Only Christ can give the power to overcome these sins. This is affirmed in

1Corinthians 10:13 (NIV):

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted

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beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

To receive this power, one must repent fully genuinely turning away from sin and receive water baptism by immersion as a sign of new life in Christ (see Acts 2:38, ESV). Following this, the Holy Spirit is given to believers to empower them to resist temptation and live holy lives (see Galatians 5:16-25, NIV).

- Sexual immorality is dangerous and leads to spiritual death (Romans 6:23).
- Proverbs uses vivid imagery a “deep pit” and “narrow well” to warn about its destructive nature.
- Both men and women are called to flee from sexual sin.
- Jesus Christ alone offers forgiveness, cleansing, and the power to overcome.
- True repentance and baptism are essential steps toward freedom.
- The Holy Spirit enables believers to live victorious lives.

May God bless you as you seek His truth and live in His grace.

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