

LIVING MORAL IN AN IMMORAL WORLD

TEXT: (Proverbs 23:26-28, LEB)

²⁶ My child, may you give your heart to me, and may your eyes delight in my ways. ²⁷ For a deep pit is a prostitute, and a narrow well is [an adulteress]. ²⁸ She *is* also like a robber lying in wait, and the faithless among mankind she increases.

INTRODUCTION

1. “Don’t love the world’s ways. Don’t love the world’s goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity” (1 John 2:15-17, MSG).
2. “I discovered that a seductive woman is a trap more bitter than death. Her passion is a snare, and her soft hands are chains. Those who are pleasing to God will escape her, but sinners will be caught in her snare” (Ecclesiastes 7:26, NLT).
3. “All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants” (John 3:20-21, NLT).
4. “Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.
Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. Don’t participate in the things these people do. For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true” (Ephesians 5:3-9, NLT).

I. GIVE YOUR HEART TO THE LORD

1. “My child, may you give your heart to me, and may your eyes delight in my ways” (Proverbs 23:26, NLT).
2. “I’m sorry—forgive me. I’ll never do that again, I promise” (Job 42:6, MSG)!

A. Fulfilling God’s Purpose

1. “My child, may you give your heart to me” (Proverbs 23:26, NLT).
2. “My child...may your eyes delight in my ways” (Proverbs 23:26, NLT).
3. “May it be to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38, NIV).
4. “‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May it be to me as you have said’” (Luke 1:38, NIV).

B. Not Contending for Personal Rights

1. "Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins'" (Matthew 1:19-21, NIV).

C. Mary Surrendered Her Control to God

1. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body" (I Corinthians 6:19-20, NIV).
2. "Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother" (John 19:25, NIV).

II. A DEEP PIT AND A NARROW WELL

1. "For a deep pit is a prostitute, and a narrow well is [an adulteress,]" (Proverbs 23:27, NLT).

A. Source of Temptation

1. "But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed" (James 1:14, NIV).

B. Steps to Death

1. "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15, NIV).

C. Five Things You Can Do with Temptation

1. "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, NIV).
2. "Flee from sexual immorality" (I Corinthians 6:18, NIV).
3. "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16, NIV).
4. "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11, NIV).

III. TROPHIES OF THE WORLD

1. "She *is* also like a robber lying in wait, and the faithless among mankind she increases" (Proverbs 23:28, NLT).

A. The World Seeks to Destroy Your Christian Heritage

1. "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it" (Daniel 1:1, NIV).
2. "They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there" (II Chronicles 36:19, NIV).

B. The World Seeks to Deconstruct Your Faith and Reconstruct Your Values

1. "He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials" (II Chronicles 36:18, NIV).
2. "These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god" (Daniel 1:2, NIV).
3. "Then the king ordered Ashpenaz...to teach them the language and literature of, the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service" (Daniel 1:3-5, NIV).
4. "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he, asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way" (Daniel 1:8, NIV).
5. "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand'" (Daniel 3:16-17, NIV).

C. The World Seeks to Undermine Your Identity

- 1 "The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego" (Daniel 1:7, NIV).
2. "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world" (Romans 12:2, NLT).
3. "Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking" (Romans 12:2, MSG).
4. "Do not be shaped by this world" (Romans 12:2, NCV).
5. "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould" (Romans 12:2, Phillips).
6. "Finally these men said, 'We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God'" (Daniel 6:5, NIV).

CONCLUSION

1. "Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?" (Proverbs 6:27-28, NIV)
2. "King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done" (I Kings 11:1-6, NIV).

Questions:

1. What does the word moral mean to you?
2. Describe what the word “world” means from a Christian perspective.
3. How do we avoid falling into that deep pit and narrow well?
4. How might the world deconstruct your faith and reconstruct your values?
5. What does it mean not to allow the world to press you into its mold?