

Two Voices in the Streets – Bill Jouppi

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her maids, and she calls from the highest point of the city.

"Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of understanding." - Proverbs 9: 1-6



At the age of twelve, I first heard the beckoning call of Wisdom. She called to me in the form of a book, "Mr. Jones, Meet the Master" written by Peter Marshall. I read it and determined that Jesus had truly risen from the dead and that I should follow Him. I have been inconsistent in that determination, but have always returned to him over the last forty years.

The women Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. She sits as the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way.

"Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!"

But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave. - Proverbs 9: 13-18

Also at the age of twelve, I first heard the seductive call of Folly. She called to me through magazines shown to me by a friend in the back of a bowling alley. I began feeling badly, after looking at the dirty magazines, and I determined to never do that again. I was to make that same vow hundreds, if not thousands of times after that over a span of time that lasted forty years.

My inner life has been a continual struggle with both Wisdom and Folly pulling me one way and then the other. I know it was only God's mercy that has saved me from joining the dead that are the guests of Folly. Through these years I have heard her call getting more and more blatant, and increasing seductive. I think that her purpose is not only to bring death to individuals such as myself, but also to destroy the fabric of our entire society.

Wisdom and Folly both call to the simple (that's us) from the highest point of the city. Both promise satisfying food. One promises a feast of meat and mixed wine, the other promises stolen water and secret food. One has prepared a way of life, the other is the way of death. Both are compelling. We have all heard them both call to us.

Solomon wrote about Wisdom and Folly thousands of years ago. However, his words speak even more clearly to our society today. At the highest point of our cities now are broadcast antennas. From these antennas, and from the technology they represent, both Wisdom and Folly call today. Wisdom calls as truth, the Good News of Jesus, and sound teaching are proclaimed more clearly and in more ways than ever before. But Folly with her loud ways tries to drown out Wisdom with blatant seduction. She calls with every form of perversion over all the media available.

Pornography is perhaps the most sinister form of Folly. She uses this to trap the hearts, minds, and imaginations of men and women who would otherwise hear the voice of Wisdom and walk continually in the way of life.

Pornography is sinister in that it...

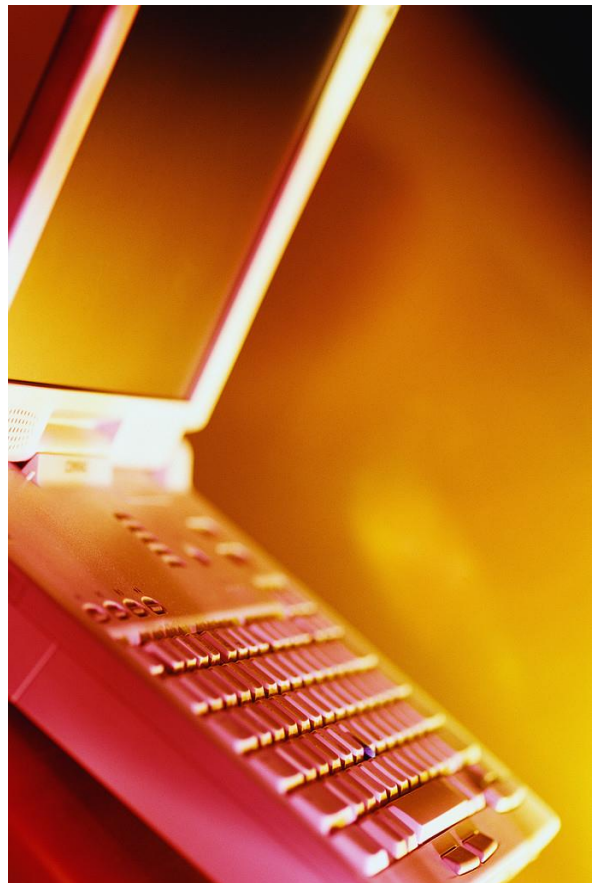
- a.) Is available everywhere.
- b.) Seems to be victimless.
- c.) Does not seem to be addictive.
- d.) Does not seem to have serious harmful repercussions.
- e.) Is easy to "get away with" without detection.
- f.) Does not seem to effect our relationship.

In actuality:

a.) That which used to be called pornography, is now on prime time television. More potent forms of pornography are available at most video stores, at the corner drug store, on cable TV, and especially on the Internet.

b.) The victims of pornography are first those who view it. Those who are the actors and participants are often used by the pornographers and also become victims. The spouses and families of those who are involved with pornography are often innocent victims and almost always suffer the most.

c.) I have come to believe that pornography is probably at least as addictive as the most treacherous of the drugs our society outlaws. Few can escape its clutches after partaking.



d.) The repercussions of pornography touch every area of life. Pornography both directly and indirectly drains finances. Pornography attacks and consumes creativity and self-confidence. (two important ingredients for success at nearly anything) Eventually secondary addictions and pornography itself bring poor health, and in some cases death.

e.) The fact that it can more easily be used in secret makes pornography more and more potent. Its power is in the darkness and in secret.

f.) Pornography erodes all our relationships. It especially effects our relationships with God and with our families.

These are not theoretic conclusions. The first chapters of Proverbs, along with the rest of the Bible, describe in detail the ramifications of listening to the woman Folly. I bear witness to the truth of the scriptures in my own life. By the grace of God and by the grace of my wife who has been the Lord's saving gift to me, and with the help of brothers and sisters who have helped me in my weakness, I have not been consumed. I have learned however that as it says in Job, "Those who cling to worthless idols, forfeit the grace that could be theirs." I have forfeited much grace on earth and who knows how much potential reward in heaven.

That was then, this is now. Our Redeemer is in the business of redeeming. That's why we call Him that. Though my sin was great and its clutches powerful, His grace is greater and the power of His love can overcome the power of the enemy.

For me, the search for a way out lasted a long time and took many avenues. Along the way my search included confession, accountability, scripture memory, deliverance, and counseling, more confession, more counseling, discipling, prayer, therapy, and various support groups. All of these helped to a degree, but even with all this help, I never got to total victory. I had all but given up hope, not only for my own life, but I also was seeing the enemy overcome many around me. Something was seriously wrong in what I knew of Christianity. I didn't doubt Jesus, but felt there was some sort of disconnect in His power to change me. I was seeing the same disconnect in others also.

It was then, approximately five years ago, that I became acquainted with Reconciliation Ministries. I thought at the time that Reconciliation was primarily for ex-gays. That wasn't my problem and I didn't know very much about gays. I thought I knew that homosexuals were the people that the rest of us saints could look down on in righteous indignation no matter how steeped we ourselves were in our own failings. I figured, however, that if Reconciliation with its Living Waters program could help homosexuals overcome, perhaps it could help me also. I was willing to try anything. I approached Tom Cole, the director of Reconciliation who had become a friend the church we both attended, and he assured me it could help heterosexual pornography addicts also. I eventually signed up and went through the program. After some initial trepidation, I began to learn that although the sins of those in the program took different forms, the root causes were not so very different. When I saw my own sin on the same par or worse than anyone else's, the Lord could begin my healing.

I would like to say that with one round of Living Waters, I overcame my problem and never had to deal with it again. That however was not the case. I can say that the Living Waters program helped more dramatically than anything I'd done before that. Also, it was the beginning of an ever-increasing victory over pornography. Days between falls, became weeks, which became months. When I have slipped it has not been as severe and the recovery quicker. Now I am walking in a cautious and fragile victory. Accountability and avoiding situations of temptation help keep me away from falling. I look forward to the day when I just wake up and know that I have permanent victory. I'm not there yet. I am at a place of sufficient victory to know that my Savior not only paid the price for my sin, but also has provided the where with all for me to walk in victory. Reconciliation has been a significant part of that. Still, the victory I've begun to know is not in a program. It is in a person. The person of Jesus who loved me enough to find me and showed mercy on me even after years of my turning from him to pursue the idol of pornography.

I am now in the process of repairing the damage in the rest of my life left in the wake of pornography addiction. Most important, trust and loyalty to my wife and family need to be restored. Finances need to be straightened out. My weight and resultant health problems need to be reversed. I now see that all of these were related to my disobedience in holding on to pornography. By God's grace, I believe that he can help me to overcome in all areas and even to receive back some of what has been lost. Indeed in many areas I am seeing this happen.

I think the voice of Wisdom is the same voice we hear in the person of the Holy Spirit. She leads us to walk with Jesus, the embodiment of Wisdom itself. I believe if we stand in the street and listen to both voices, that of Wisdom and that of Folly as well. We will do as I did for so many years. We will heed one for a time and then run to the other. The way, I think to silence the voice of Folly forever is to enter the door that Wisdom invites us to. To feast at the meal she has prepared and to abide with Jesus there. At the feast of Wisdom, Folly cannot enter, nor can she be heard.

I would that others would come together with me and that we would eat the food prepared by Wisdom and drink the wine she has mixed. Together we will leave our simple ways and we will live; so shall we walk in the way of understanding.

If you would like more information about Reconciliation Ministries, or any of the ministries we offer, visit us on the Web at www.recmin.org, or call (586) 739-5114. You may also e-mail us at info@recmin.org.

All correspondence will be kept strictly confidential.

Reconciliation Ministries is a member ministry of the [Restored Hope Network](http://www.restoredhope.org).