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**Forbidden Women
Prostitutes
Whores and Harlots**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Bible
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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Forbidden Women, Prostitutes, Whores and Harlots.

Topics.

- Forbidden and strange women, and the meaning of harlot.
- The son of a prostitute, and the forbidden woman sinks down to death.
- The lips of a forbidden woman, and smooth tongue of the adulteress.
- Prostitutes and a loaf of bread, and come let us take our fill of love.
- A prostitute increases traitors amongst mankind.
- A companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.
- Israel the wife of God, and God Israel's husband.
- Israel played the whore, and not all prostitutes are morally corrupt.

FORBIDDEN AND STRANGE WOMEN

A forbidden and strange woman refers to a married woman who is an adulteress, in Scripture she is also called:

- An Evil Woman - A Whorish Woman - A Prostitute.

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(Prov. 2:19-19) (Prov. 5:3-23) (Prov. 6:23-35) (Prov. 7:1-27) (Prov. 23:27).

For those who have fallen into adulteries destructive path there is forgiveness in Christ, everyone is a sinner before God. Even the woman at the well who had five husbands the Lord Jesus Christ forgave, because of her honesty toward him, and no-doubt her broken spirit when she saw such a caring man without sin protecting her from her enemies and able to show her kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. (John 8:3-11).

THE MEANING OF HARLOT

The word harlot and prostitute come from the Hebrew word (*zanah*) and can, with limitations apply to any of the following:

1. Mostly to those who commit adultery. Though the focus is usually upon the female, adultery is not limited to her only since a married man having an affair with a woman other than his wife is also guilty of adultery.
2. Sometimes it applies to fornication (i.e., consensual sexual intercourse between a man and a woman not married to each other).
3. It can apply to rape, but it is rarely applied to any type of sexual assault involving sexual intercourse against a person without that person's consent.
4. Figuratively, it carries the idea of committing idolatry (especially the Jewish people who were regarded as the wife of God).

THE SON OF A PROSTITUTE

- **Judges 11:1:** Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute (harlot in KJV), Gilead was the father of Jephthah.

The words, the son of a prostitute (harlot in KJV), are translated in all versions in this way, which means it is very unlikely that it has any other meaning. However, some feel it carries the following ideas:

- He was the son of an inferior wife, or a concubine, or a Gentile woman who his father should not to have married.
- It is used in a harsh degrading sense to imply an inferior type of marriage or whatever dishonour might be attached to the son's birth.

But none of these are sufficient to designate her as a harlot, which means its best to take the words, 'the son of a prostitute' literally. During the Old Testament era it seems that even though a prostitute woman lives a lifestyle outside of God's moral laws she was accepted at some level as concubines were, but if a prostitute enticed married men into her bed she was seen as an evil woman and spoken of in the harshest of expressions (i.e., whorish, harlot and forbidden woman). This of course would be because by her sensual enticements she is destroying a marriage and a family. In all the following verses recorded in the book of Proverbs:

(Prov. 2:16-18) (Prov. 5:3-20) (Prov. 6:24-32) (Prov. 7:5-19) (Prov. 23:27-28).

A prostitute is spoken of as an evil woman when she has sex with a married man, or she is a married woman herself having sex with other men. It should be mentioned here that a married man who has sex with another woman, and a single man who has sex with a married woman are both counted as being equally guilty, and both are an offence before God.

NOTE: for those who have fallen into adultery there is forgiveness in Christ, everyone is a sinner before God. Even the woman at the well who had five husbands, the Lord Jesus Christ forgave because of her honesty toward him, and no-doubt her broken spirit when she saw such a caring man without sin protecting her from her enemies, and able to show her kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. (John 8:3-11).

THE FORBIDDEN WOMAN SINKS DOWN TO DEATH

- **Proverbs 2:16-18:** So, you will be delivered from the forbidden woman (strange woman in KJV) from the adulteress (the stranger in KJV) with her smooth words (flatters in KJV),¹⁷ who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; ¹⁸for her house sinks down to death, and her paths to the departed.

The focus of these verses is a woman who has forsaken the husband of her youth to commit adultery.

THE LIPS OF A FORBIDDEN WOMAN, STRANGE WOMAN IN KJV

- **Proverbs 5:3-20:** The lips of a forbidden woman (strange woman in KJV) drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil,⁴ but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.⁵ Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; ⁶she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it --- NOW GO

TO VERSE EIGHTEEN --- ¹⁸Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, ¹⁹a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. ²⁰Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman (strange woman in KJV) and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?

The focus of these verses is a married man having sex with another man.

THE SMOOTH TONGUE OF THE ADULTERESS

- **Proverbs 6:24-32:** Preserve yourself from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adulteress. ²⁵Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; ²⁶for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life. ²⁷Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? ²⁸Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? ²⁹So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife --- NOW GO TO VERSE THIRTY-TWO --- ³²He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself.

The focus of these verses is a man having sex with another man's wife.

PROSTITUTES AND A LOAF OF BREAD

- **Proverbs 6:25-26:** Do not desire her (the adulteress) beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; ²⁶for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life. (Proverbs 6:25-26).

Solomon tells his son no matter how beautiful a woman is if she is married do not go near her sexually. Solomon would fully understand what he is saying, because no doubt his father David would have told him the story of Bathsheba and Nathan, and the murder of Uriah and the death of Bathsheba's first born. Even when I was a teenager it was the common language amongst the secular world of our era to say, "She is out of bounds," meaning she is married, even the secular world (in my day) had a consciousness, that to take a married woman sexually was forbidden.

The price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread: (25-26), Solomon is telling his son, if he is going to have sex with a woman it is better to go to a prostitute, because all that will cost him is a loaf of bread, but to sleep with a married woman is likely to cost him his life, because the woman's husband will hunt him down, and it will destroy other precious lives, especially if there are children.

NOTICE: the price of a prostitute was a loaf of bread, not every prostitute would have been working as a sex worker because they were evil lustful woman, or for the pleasure of sex, for many it would have been the only way they could feed their family, especially if she was a mother whose husband had died or been killed.

During these ancient years, there was no social welfare programs run by governments, if a woman did not have a family, or a husband to look after her, or she was divorced, she had no means of supporting herself or her children. It was very hard for a woman under these circumstances to survive, on her-own. This is one of the reasons the Bible is so full of instruction to care for the widows and orphans, because it was almost impossible for many of them to survive without help. Even in third world countries today it is much the same as it would have been in Solomon's era. Sadly, in poor countries today, many parents will send their young teenage daughters out as sex workers to support the family.

A good lesson: we can all learn from this, is that it is an enormously dangerous thing to harshly judge another person by their outward lifestyle, when we do not know their motives, or their tragic circumstances.

COME LET US TAKE OUR FILL OF LOVE

- **Proverbs 7:5-19:** Keep you from the forbidden woman (strange woman in KJV), from the adulteress with her smooth words (flattering words in KJV), ⁶For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, ⁷and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense --- NOW GO TO VERSE TEN --- ¹⁰And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, (the attire of an harlot in KJV) wily of heart (subtle of heart in KJV). ¹¹She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home --- NOW GO TO VERSE EIGHTEEN --- ¹⁸Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. ¹⁹For my husband (goodman in KJV) is not at home; he has gone on a long journey.

The focus of these verses is a married woman having sex with another man.

A PROSTITUTE INCREASES TRAITORS AMONGST MANKIND

- **Proverbs 23:27-28:** A prostitute (whore in KJV) is a deep pit (ditch in KJV); an adulteress (strange woman in KJV) is a narrow well (pit in KJV). ²⁸She lies in wait like a robber and increases the traitors among mankind.

The expression, "a prostitute and an adulteress wait like a robber," means they take a man's money and ultimately ruin his marriage, his family, and his life.

The expression, "a prostitute and an adulteress increase the traitors," means they cause men to betray their wives and lie to them.

A forbidden woman or strange woman refers to a married woman who is an adulteress, she is also called an evil woman, a whorish woman, and a prostitute.

The focus of these verses is a woman who has forsaken the husband of her youth to commit adultery.

A COMPANION OF PROSTITUTES SQUANDERS HIS WEALTH

- **Proverbs 29:3:** He who loves wisdom makes his father glad, but a companion of prostitutes (harlots in KJV) squanders his wealth.

Since this proverb is teaching that men who regularly visits prostitutes are spending a lot of money on something that gives them no financial reward and are therefore squandering their wealth the word prostitute and harlot refers to woman who offer sexual favours for money. Sons who have good sense and the ability to make sensible decisions and good judgments make their parents happy by investing their money wisely, while sons who lack wisdom waste their money to gratify the lusts of their flesh by spending it on woman who sell their body to men for sexual favours.

ISRAEL THE WIFE OF GOD, AND GOD ISRAEL'S HUSBAND

Hosea pictures Israel as the wife of God, and God as Israel's husband.

- **Hosea 2:2:** God says to Judah, "Plead with your mother (Israel) plead—for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband—that she put away her whoring from her face.
- **Hosea 2:16:** In that day, declares the LORD, you (Israel) will call me 'My Husband,' and no longer will you call me 'My Baal.'

In this context, whoredom is not likened to single people having sex, but to a wife betraying her husband. by worshipping other gods (i.e., other lovers). Israel, the wife of God, is committing spiritual adultery against God (their husband). Adultery is listed in the Ten Commandments because it is an act of betrayal, deceit and lies and brings hurt and harm to the innocent (the partner, family, friends, children, grandparents etc.,) who are involved and endeared to the married couple.

ISRAEL PLAYED THE WHORE

- **Leviticus 17:7:** So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.

Idolatry amongst God's people, is often referred to as whoredom in Scripture, because it is a violation of the covenant that they entered-into with God, by which they were uniquely betrothed (i.e., married) to God, and as His betrothed they were to only have one God, unlike the pagans who had many gods. For Israel to worship other gods is the same as a husband having an affair with another woman, it is an act of betrayal, this, is why Israel in Scripture is often spoken of as playing the whore. The following shows that idolatry, especially in God's people, is commonly called whoredom and harlotry in Scripture.

- **Ezekiel 16:16:** You (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them played the whore (harlot in KJV). The like has never been, nor ever shall be.
- **Ezekiel 16:26:** You (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) also played the whore with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your whoring (whoredoms in KJV), to provoke me to anger.
- **Ezekiel 23:8:** She (Israel signified by the statement, Oholah is Samaria) (v4) did not give up her whoring (whoredoms in KJV) that she had begun in Egypt; for in her youth men had lain with her and handled her virgin bosom and poured out their whoring lust upon her.
- **Ezekiel 23:19:** Yet she (Oholibah signifying Jerusalem) (v4) increased her whoring (whoredoms in KJV), remembering the days of her youth, when she played the whore in the land of Egypt.

Israel was justly likened to practising whores and harlots, because it is a violation of the covenant, they were uniquely betrothed or married to God.

- **Hosea 2:18-20:** I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. ¹⁹And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. ²⁰I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

Idolatry is also likened to whoredom because faith toward God and His covenant is broken.

- **Jeremiah 31:32:** Not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

NOT ALL PROSTITUTES ARE MORALLY CORRUPT

Rahab was a prostitute, yet she feared the God of Jerusalem and protected Israel's spies, and is listed with God's people of amazing faith in the great chapter of the Bible that is commonly known as, "The Hall of Faith" (Heb. 11:31). Listed in this Hall of Faith are:

- Abel, Enoch Noah, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Sarah, Joseph and Moses, and Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.
- David, Samuel, and the prophets.

And in amongst these great men and women of faith is Rahab a prostitute woman (Heb. 11:31), that most would despise, yet God commends (praises and applauds) everyone listed in this chapter for their faith (Heb. 11:39). It is easy to judge and condemn a person by their outward lifestyle (especially prostitutes), but often the outward lifestyle is not a true reflection of the inward heart. Consider a woman in a third world country, no husband, no income, no job, no social security, and two children to support and feed, the only way many of these women can buy food for their children is to go against everything good in their heart, and humble themselves, just to earn enough money to buy a meal.

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It is true that in today's Western world, many women willingly live such a lifestyle for the worldly riches and materialist gifts it brings them, but it is equally true many live in such a manner just to survive, which would certainly have been case with many women in ancient times. Rather than condemn such woman they should be shown great mercy and compassion since it is because of great poverty that they are forced to deny everything that is good within themselves and surrender it all for the survival of their children. Such woman though living a morally wrong lifestyle on the outside, are not necessarily morally corrupt on the inside, in fact it is very likely many would be suffering great emotional and mental pain, as well as a sense of shame. Unless we are willing to support and provide food and shelter for such women, we have no right to condemn them.

OVERVIEW

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A PRINCIPLE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

During the Old Testament era, it seems even though a prostitute woman lives a lifestyle outside of God's moral laws she was accepted at some level, as concubines were, but if a prostitute enticed married men into her bed she was seen as an evil woman and spoken of in the harshest of expressions (i.e., whorish, harlot and forbidden woman). This of course would be because by her sensual enticements she is destroying a marriage and a family.

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As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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