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## Evolution of Sin

by Bill Lockwood

By “evolution” is meant the primary meaning—*an unfolding, an opening out, a progress, development and formation*. “Sin,” of course is the violation of God’s law (1 John 3:4) of which all persons of age are guilty.

One of the under-calculated actions of sin, even by Christians, is the growth and development of sin in one’s life if left unchecked and un-repented of. This might be called the *dynamics of sin*. Solomon illustrates this evolution of sin, or folly, in his book of wisdom, Proverbs. In Proverbs 5-7 he illustrates the entire process by which sin entices and captivates persons and finally destroys them by the well-known illustration of adultery. Note the *stages of sin*.

1. A Lack of Understanding about Sin. In Proverbs 7:6-9 Solomon pictures for us a young man, *void of understanding*, who passes by the street near the house of a harlot. Lack of understanding does not refer to complete ignorance of sin, but a *failure to appreciate the captivating influence of sin*. This lack of knowledge may be the result of rejecting Bible teaching; it may be a temporary lapse; it may be a desire to “taste” sin. Whatever the cause, whether a foolish moment or a rejection of God’s warning, King Solomon watches a young man passing unwisely too near the harlot’s house. He is interested.
2. Immediate Pleasure after the Forbidden Deed. After the young man is seduced (Proverbs 7:21,22) and tastes sin firsthand, there is a reward given—pleasure. This reinforces the sin. As a fly on a Venus Flytrap which sucks the nectar, there is immediate pleasure and more luring to sin. Precisely Solomon draws the picture for us: “Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant!” (Proverbs 9:17). HOWEVER, each time the particular sin is committed, resistance to the temptation is lowered until the *behavior become habitual and the power of choice is lost*. Pleasure and appetite go together and the man begins the downward slide into the flytrap. He has cultivated his appetite and it becomes a craving. Jesus says that those who continue to commit sin become *slaves to sin* (John 8:34). Sin *reigns* over us (Romans 6:12).
3. Addiction Follows Pleasure. As in drinking alcohol, there comes an addiction. “Struck me, have they? But I’m not hurt. Beaten me? I don’t feel anything. When shall I wake up? ...I’ll ask for more of it!” (Proverbs 23:35). This addiction to sin involves *all types of sin*. Hotheads who cannot hold their tongues. Slothful people who refuse to work. Lying becomes common. Cursing becomes encoded in our hearts. Pornography which eats away our souls. Adultery which destroys right thinking. Many a man has “justified” unfaithfulness to his wife by one stratagem or another—largely in his own brain.
4. Death Follows Addiction. The last stage in the evolution of sin involves the cumulative effects of all of the former. With the analysis of adultery, Solomon summarizes: “...in the end she [Dame Folly, or Sin, personified as a harlot] is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on Sheol.” (Proverbs

5,5). Consequences are certain. Christians need understand the *dynamics of sin* in order to avoid its grasping and damning nature. Walter Porter (*King Solomon's Advice*, 115-118), a one-time professor of Psychology at Harding University, points out that this "folly process" explains more clearly what occurs in persons than the modern penchant of putting everything into a "mental illness" category. Habitual sin enslaves and warps our thinking.