

“Let your wife be a fountain of blessing for you. Rejoice in the wife of your youth. She is a loving deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts satisfy you always. May you always be captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an immoral woman, or fondle the breasts of a promiscuous woman?” Proverbs 5:18-20 NLT

## lectio // Proverbs 5:15-23

Yes, I know Valentine's day was 12 days ago, but Solomon and his wisdom crew write about these “love/lust” topics A LOT. And yes, I did read these as a testosterone amped teenager like a pon farr experience out of Spock's life in Star Trek. And, if one might think this is a passage only about marriage, they'd be wrong. The key words in here are “satisfy” and “captivated.” Lust is as old as the first rib removed from Adam. It's not new, but it is dangerous and one of the seven deadly sins. It's dangerous because of the war of the legitimate and the illegitimate, the need and the want, the desire and the unquenchable thirst for more. The seven: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. Notice that lust is third in the list of unquenchables. Once any of these hook you, whether your married, single, in a “committed” relationship, or even LGBTQ it's a gravity-pull to death. You could even be non-binary, trans or think of yourself as non human - it doesn't matter. These things are all cancerous to the soul. Once bitten, your toast. Why are these so wicked? Because they, especially lust, are fakes. They are knock-offs, and like rogue cells they actually PRODUCE and reproduce themselves creating an irresistible craving for more. And once you've been infected by your own willingness to substitute, you'll happily hit them up and be-bop down the road not realizing where that path takes you. Don't be so hard on yourself, they were DESIGNED to trick, con and capture. And, we've ALL fallen for one or many of them. How do I get off the path or out of the spell or radiate the cancer - find the real and the fake won't taste or feel so good anymore. I can't write about all the real vs fake in these deadly sins, but I can tell you why Proverbs warns so much about the sexual/lust trap. Every human wants, crave and absolutely requires genuine, authentic, pure, non-transactional LOVE. And our physical bodies are completely wired up to receive and give that kind of love. You may not think you're a not hugger or a “toucher,” but our body, our skin is a gigantic antenna-like receiver to give and take physical touch that constantly communicates with our brain to help, heal, create and spread these “feelings” called love. Furthermore, our souls are also DESIGNED to give and receive that kind of love. And, you can deny being “emotional” all you want, but the fact remains your soul needs love like your lungs need air! So there's the struggle, God built us to live in the REALNESS of love. It's inescapably beautiful. But... if for a thousand reasons we can't get it, or we've been damaged or hurt by someone in this area, or an adult beat, abused or conned our innocence - we move towards what we consider SAFE - a fake, a substitute version. A version we believe we can control, a version we feel like we can receive without risking to give back, a version that even temporarily gives our physical body or soul a small dose of hormones or feelings that simulate something close to what is mislabeled as love. Proverbs warns the “young man,” but the wisdom of these verses (or chapters) tells the universal human story of what really happens in the belief, acceptance and eventual results of this fake love - death and more aloneness, abandonment and ache that you could ever imagine. This is not a fairytale, these witches in the dark forest are real!

Dad,  
 What a powerful example of our desire to find and allow (through the liar) these fake substitutes to take over our life in insidiously subtle ways. And, once we've established the regular experiences of lies, we not only try to reinforce their usage, but we want to surround ourselves with other people who will cheer us on along this dark alternate path of yearning. All along truly desiring the real, but afraid or unwilling to accept the truth, hard work and responsibility to get off that path to re-engage with what's real. Real is so risky God! Real is hard to trust when you've been hurt or misled.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root