

# Proverbs 5:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman,  
and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

## Analysis

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Why be ravished with a strange woman and embrace an adulteress? The rhetorical question expects negative answer: it makes no sense. When marital satisfaction is available, why pursue adultery? The Hebrew 'nekhar' (foreign/strange) describes the outsider, while 'zarah' (strange woman/adulteress) emphasizes covenant violation. Adultery is irrational - forsaking legitimate pleasure for illegitimate destruction.

## Historical Context

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Proverbs consistently portrays adultery as supreme folly, not just immorality. Wisdom literature emphasizes adultery's irrationality: it promises pleasure while delivering destruction, offers excitement while producing disaster. The question format invites readers to recognize adultery's absurdity rather than merely commanding abstinence.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What makes sin appealing despite its irrationality and destructive consequences?
2. How can you strengthen appreciation for legitimate pleasures to reduce illegitimate temptations?
3. What rhetorical questions might you ask yourself to recognize folly before committing it?

## Interlinear Text

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וְלִמָּה	תִּשְׁנֶה הַ	בֶּן י	בְּזִכְּ הַ	וְתִחַבֵּן קִ
H4100	be ravished	And why wilt thou my son	with a strange woman	and embrace
	H7686	H1121	H2114	H2263
קִ	נִכְרִיהַ:			
the bosom	of a stranger			
H2436	H5237			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 6:24** (Parallel theme): To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

**Proverbs 7:5** (Parallel theme): That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.