

“Hotel California” by The Eagles

Proverbs 7:1-27

It’s a classic rock song, “Hotel California.” Let’s listen to the first verse and chorus ...

On the surface it’s a simple song about an experience checking into a hotel late one night. But, on a deeper level it speaks to the choices we make in life and what is wrong with our society’s view of success. We’re going to look at this song in the light of Proverbs 7:1-27, the advice given to a young man who is drawn to the dark side of life.

A. All of us are followers.

Proverbs 7:1-27 (NLT)

¹ Follow my advice, my son; always treasure my commands.

² Obey my commands and live! Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes.

³ Tie them on your fingers as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart.

⁴ Love wisdom like a sister; make insight a beloved member of your family.

⁵ Let them protect you from an affair with an immoral woman, from listening to the flattery of a promiscuous woman.

-- You get to pick which woman to love: 1) Wisdom (the sister); or, 2) Immorality (the adulterous woman).

LYRICS: (verse 1) There she stood in the doorway;
I heard the mission bell
And I was thinking to myself,
"This could be Heaven or this could be Hell"

-- The song makes the consequences of our choices pretty clear. You get to pick which “girl” you’re going to pursue in life: wisdom (leads to heaven) or this girl in the song: “Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, she got the Mercedes bends.” Hotel California is about the excess of materialism the band (the Eagles) was experiencing on their rise in popularity in the late 1970’s.

“Tiffany-twisted,” refers to the high-dollar jewelery shop.

“Mercedes bends,” (note the spelling of *bends*) says the allure of high priced cars (Mercedes) has the effect of diving bends (which you get from rising too fast).

-- At the time of its release (February 1977, I was a junior in High School!), the Eagles were riding high in the music world, experiencing material success on a frightening level. Though they thoroughly enjoyed the money, drugs, and women fame threw their way, they were disquieted by it all and sought to pour that sense of unease into their music and to warn others about the dark underside of such adulation. In a 1995 interview, Don Henley said the song "sort of captured the spirit of the time, which was a time of great excess in this country and in the music business in particular." In another interview that same year, he referred to it as being about a "loss of innocence." There's another name for "innocence" ... it's "integrity."

B. Integrity happens "on the way."

⁶ While I was at the window of my house, looking through the curtain,

⁷ I saw some naive young men, and one in particular who lacked common sense.

⁸ He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman, strolling down the path by her house.

⁹ It was at twilight, in the evening, as deep darkness fell.

¹⁰ The woman approached him, seductively dressed and sly of heart.

-- Our life choices happen in the context of our unique journey.

LYRICS: (verse 1) On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair
Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air
Up ahead in the distance, I saw a shimmering light
My head grew heavy and my sight grew dim
I had to stop for the night

-- In the song they check into the hotel in a state of exhaustion. Sometimes we aren't at our best when we're tired, or otherwise "impaired." "Colitas" is a reference to marijuana use.

C. Some people plan their sin meticulously.

11 She was the brash, rebellious type, never content to stay at home.
12 She is often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner.
13 She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and with a brazen look she said,
14 "I've just made my peace offerings and fulfilled my vows.
15 You're the one I was looking for! I came out to find you, and here you are!
16 My bed is spread with beautiful blankets, with colored sheets of Egyptian linen.
17 I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning. Let's enjoy each other's caresses,
19 for my husband is not home. He's away on a long trip.
20 He has taken a wallet full of money with him and won't return until later this month."

-- NOTE: Immorality approaches us seductively.

LYRICS: (2nd chorus) Welcome to the Hotel California
 Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)
 Such a lovely face
 They livin' it up at the Hotel California
 What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)
 Bring your alibis

Bring your alibis, because you're going to need to explain all this away. That's a hard way to live your life, waiting to be discovered, caught, or exposed. It's better to pursue integrity so you can live without regret.

D. It's a trap!

21 So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with her flattery.
22 He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap,
23 awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life.

-- "slaughter", "trapped", "piece the heart", "snare", "cost him his life." Sin is awful when unmasked ... and alluring in disguise.

LYRICS: (last verse) Last thing I remember, I was
Running for the door
I had to find the passage back
To the place I was before
"Relax," said the night man,
"We are programmed to receive.
You can check-out any time you like,
But you can never leave! "

--Trapped, you can never leave. So, recognize the trap, avoid it. DON'T CHECK IN!
The big lie about "sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll" is that is where you're really free ...
but, it's a trap, and you're not free at all.

-- The solution? (Even if you're trapped already!) ...

E. Pay attention to God's word.

²⁴ So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words.

²⁵ Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path.

²⁶ For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims.

²⁷ Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death.

-- Perhaps the most intriguing line in the song is this one: And she said "We are all just prisoners here, of our own device." There's a real honesty in that lyric: We get ourselves into our own trouble.

-- So, replace "our own device" with "pay attention to my words" and you're well on your way to a life of integrity and freedom.

-- Remember, we're all followers, and you get to pick your leader.

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, we would hear from You Lord, Your Words, Your insight, Your direction in our lives. Show us how to live fully and forever free. We submit ourselves to You, completely and without reserve. In Jesus' name, amen."

"Hotel California" lyrics, by The Eagles

On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair
Warm smell of colitas, rising up through the air
Up ahead in the distance, I saw a shimmering light
My head grew heavy and my sight grew dim
I had to stop for the night
There she stood in the doorway;
I heard the mission bell
And I was thinking to myself,
"This could be Heaven or this could be Hell"
Then she lit up a candle and she showed me the way
There were voices down the corridor,
I thought I heard them say...

Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
Plenty of room at the Hotel California
Any time of year (Any time of year)
You can find it here

Her mind is Tiffany-twisted, she got the Mercedes bends
She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys she calls friends
How they dance in the courtyard, sweet summer sweat.
Some dance to remember, some dance to forget

So I called up the Captain,
"Please bring me my wine"
He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since nineteen sixty nine"
And still those voices are calling from far away,
Wake you up in the middle of the night
Just to hear them say...

Welcome to the Hotel California

Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
They livin' it up at the Hotel California
What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)
Bring your alibis

Mirrors on the ceiling,
The pink champagne on ice
And she said "We are all just prisoners here, of our own device"
And in the master's chambers,
They gathered for the feast
They stab it with their steely knives,
But they just can't kill the beast

Last thing I remember, I was
Running for the door
I had to find the passage back
To the place I was before
"Relax," said the night man,
"We are programmed to receive.
You can check-out any time you like,
But you can never leave! "