

1 Month After the Ashley Madison Hack: What Have We Learned?

The fallout from the Ashley Madison hack has been far-reaching. Over the past month, marriages have ended, jobs have been lost and a few men have even taken their own lives.

While many people have talked about the sin of adultery and the hypocrisy of a few public figures, I think there is one lesson that all of us (men) can learn from the Ashley Madison scandal.

The lesson has nothing to do with sin and more to do with what women really want.

The first large-scale examination of the data led analysts to discover that there are very few women on Ashley Madison. We're talking about a more than 100-to-1 male to female ratio. They concluded that most of the 5 million women registered on the site were from fake email addresses created by employees of the website.

A more thorough study revealed that there may have been millions of women registered on Ashley Madison, but few of them were active. Most of the conversations that men were having with women were actually men talking to what some are calling "fembots," or computer-generated users. Ashley Madison saw a lot of real men trying to hook up with very few real women.

Even though sites like Ashley Madison are selling no-strings-attached affairs, the

reality is that very few women are buying.

Our popular culture, fueled by the easy accessibility of online porn, has many men believing that the world is full of sex-starved women who are looking for sexual encounters with zero attachments. It's just not true. Sure, some younger women might be playing that game because they feel that it is what is expected of them by today's younger men. But most women still desire a committed relationship before they give the green light to sexual intimacy.

The lesson for the married man is that sex never comes easy. It requires you to invest in the emotional aspects of your marriage, connecting in meaningful ways with the heart of your wife. There are no shortcuts to that.

Given this lesson, here are a few takeaways that husbands can immediately apply:

1. Stop looking elsewhere.

Through online porn, you can always find women who are "easy." But remember, they are putting on an act. It's not real. You can also become attracted to another woman who you are convinced won't expect much from you. It's a lie. Stop thinking that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. (If it is, it's just because there's more poop over there.) The minute you stop looking outside of your marriage for a better option, the sooner your heart will begin to turn toward your wife's.

2. Be thankful for your wife.

If you are disconnected (either emotionally or physically) from your wife, it's easy to wallow in anger and bitterness. Having a simple attitude of gratefulness can change that dramatically. Consider how your life is made better because of her. Ask God to help you to see all the ways your wife has loved you through the years. Within the journey of marriage, it is easy for any of us to become complacent and take each other for granted. Don't let that happen.

3. Stop being so lazy.

One reason online porn is so attractive is that it requires absolutely nothing from you. The woman is always "hot and bothered." Similarly, that is the draw of sites like Ashley Madison: Free sex that doesn't require you to do anything. By God's design, the desire for sexual intimacy should motivate a man to love, romance and connect with his wife. This requires daily work, but the payoff is incredible. So stop looking for a shortcut, get off your butt and begin to pursue your wife.

4. Feed the right dog.

It has been said that there is a good dog and a bad dog residing in the heart of every man, and the one you feed is the one that lives. Even men with hearts transformed by God still do war with their old selves who are prone to sin. You have to starve that dog by guarding your eyes, avoiding tempting situations, and pushing thoughts of "easy" sex out of your mind. In contrast, you must make every effort to feed the good dog by passionately loving your wife, renewing your mind with truth, and counting on Holy Spirit power in your life every day.

Great sex in marriage doesn't come easy, but it's so worth the effort.

In last month's Ashley Madison data breach, a few million men learned (the hard way) that there are consequences to looking outside their marriages for sexual fulfillment. But the bigger lesson for every man is that real women desire a meaningful relationship for fulfilling sex to happen.

We would all do well to remember that there are no shortcuts to connecting sexually with our wives. We need to get off our lazy butts and start loving our wives in demonstrative and extravagant ways. We do this because it honors God and reflects His love for us. If that results in a more electrified marriage, then so be it.

*Adapted from , a ministry founded by **Barrett and Jenifer Johnson**. After serving in the local church for 25 years, Barrett and Jenifer launched INFO for Families as a ministry designed to encourage people through speaking, personal coaching and resource development. Barrett served for 15 years in youth ministry before serving for eight years as the Family Minister at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Atlanta, one of the largest churches in the South. He has degrees from Texas A&M University and Southwestern Seminary, but he and Jenifer have received their best education through the no-holds-barred nature of everyday family life.*