

25 Compelling Reasons to Avoid the Seduction of Adultery

It seems not a week goes by where we don't read the account of some high-profile pastor, politician, celebrity or local leader who has succumbed to the seduction of **adultery**. Add to this the reports that flow in the office, on the campus or in our neighborhoods, and it makes you just shake your head and shudder, asking, "When is this going to stop?"

In addition to the shameful example exhibited by the **Christian** community, consider the names of key people in our culture who have gone down the path of adultery in the past couple years:

- Gen. David Petraeus—four-star general and former head of the CIA and armed forces in Afghanistan and Iraq; resigned at the age of 60 due to an extramarital affair
- Eliot Spitzer—former governor of New York; caught in an extramarital affair at the age of 48
- Mark Sanford—governor of South Carolina; caught in an extramarital affair at the age of 49
- John Edwards—former presidential candidate; admitted, at the age of 56, to having an extramarital affair that included fathering a child
- Brian Dunn—former CEO of Best Buy; resigned at the age of 52 due to alleged personal misconduct, later revealed to be a close relationship with a female employee
- Harry Stonecipher—former president and CEO of Boeing; resigned at the age of 69 due to an improper relationship with a Boeing executive
- Chris Kubasik—former president of Lockheed Martin; resigned at the age of 51 due to conducting a close, personal relationship with a subordinate employee

This is just a partial list, and only of those who got caught!

Scripture warns us that prior to the return of our Lord **Jesus Christ**, wickedness will increase. In our sex-saturated society, all of us must be on guard against the “wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11, NKJV) in the realm of moral impurity. Remember that David was not a young man when he succumbed to sexual sin. Most commentators believe his age was around 51 years old.

First Corinthians 10:12 warns us, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (NIV). Gordon MacDonald, former president of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and author of *Magnificent Marriage* and *The Effective Father*, told us after his moral failure that he neglected to heed the counsel of Oswald Chambers, who said, “An unguarded strength is a double weakness.”

Thank God that Gordon humbled himself, submitted to the discipline that was necessary, and today has been restored as an effective leader.

What about you? It doesn’t matter if you’re a male or female. We are all living in a culture characterized by an explosion of three things: 1) the elimination of restraints and sexual taboos; 2) erotic stimuli that bombards us everywhere; and 3) the pervasive encouragement to indulge yourself rather than the biblical standard to control yourself.

Personally, I have been married faithfully for more than 37 years, and my father-in-law has been married 67 years. Among the more than 60 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in our family, there have been no divorces and no cases of **adultery**—thanks be to God!

I have learned a lot from those who surround me. Besides their wonderful example, I’ve also had a healthy dose of the fear of God instilled in me. And to keep that healthy fear of God ever present, I engage in a regular spiritual discipline that I’ve

passed on to multitudes in my more than 41 years of full-time ministry and pass on to you below.

The 25 Consequences of an Adulterous Relationship

I keep handy a list of what can happen to an individual who stupidly yields to **adultery**. I read through this slowly and prayerfully on a somewhat regular basis. I make copies and pass it along to others. I'd like to share it with you and pray you do likewise. I credit Randy Alcorn and Alan Hlavka as the two Christian leaders who formulated most of this list decades ago.

The Bible and my conscience strongly warn me about going down the path to adultery. Whenever I feel particularly vulnerable to **sexual temptation** or sense I'm being deceived, I will review what effects my action can have:

1. Grieving the God who created and redeemed me.
2. Causing the sacred name of my Lord Jesus to be mocked and ridiculed.
3. Having to look Jesus, the righteous Judge, in the face on Judgment Day to give an account for my actions.
4. Following in the tragic footsteps of those whose immorality forfeited their position and reputation.
5. Inflicting untold hurt on my wife, my best friend and loyal companion.
6. Losing my wife's respect, trust and confidence.
7. Hurting my beloved children and possibly disillusioning them to Christianity for life.
8. Destroying my example and credibility with my children and probably nullifying both present and future efforts to teach them to obey God.
9. Perhaps losing my wife and my children forever through a divorce and relocation.
10. Causing a potential of lifetime shame to my wider family name.
11. Losing self-respect and a clean conscience.

12. Forming memories and flashbacks that could haunt me for the rest of my life as well as hinder future intimacy with my wife.
13. Wasting years of career training and experience should I forfeit my job.
14. Forfeiting the effect of years of witnessing to others and reinforcing their distrust for Christians.
15. Undermining the faithful example and hard work of other Christians in the Christian community.
16. Bringing great pleasure to Satan, the enemy of God and all that is good.
17. Risking very real physical harm from a jealous boyfriend or spouse.
18. Heaping judgment and endless difficulty on the person with whom I committed adultery.
19. Bearing potential physical consequences of STDs like gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, herpes and AIDS; infecting my wife and causing sterility, deformity or even death.
20. Possibly causing pregnancy, with the personal and financial implications, including a lifelong reminder of my sin.
21. Heaven forbid if the unborn baby was aborted and we were haunted by this fact all the days of my life.
22. Living with debilitating fear and guilt, maybe even blackmail, until the sin was exposed.
23. Invoking shame and lifelong embarrassment on myself.
24. Experiencing long-standing mental and emotional distress plus sexual baggage, sleeplessness, depression, migraines, obesity, etc.
25. Long-standing financial repercussions.

Let's resolve that we will not only consider these very real consequences on a regular basis but will take serious what it means to be involved in a covenant marriage as Christians.

Here's the deal, as God says it best:

“As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

“It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid **sexual immorality**; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit” (1 Thess. 4:1-8).

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