

5 Key Principles to Keep Chaos Out of Your Marriage

Adultery and fornication are real, and according to Scripture have many consequences for you and your family. Your future, in so many ways, can be destroyed in this specific area.

As a psychologist who hears about these tough situations every day, I have seen families, careers, ministries and fortunes destroyed by men who traveled this road to trouble, never believing there would be a toll to pay for being on it.

I want to give you five principles that can keep you from getting on the road to trouble, or provide an exit if you are already on it.

1. **Fear God.** God is love, and He is to be ultimately respected for creating you and giving you the blessings in your life. It is God who is to be feared. When we fear God, we hate evil (see Prov. 8:13). Hating evil is a result of fearing God. I highly recommend at some point you do a word study on the fear of the Lord. There are so many benefits of a heart that fears God.
2. **Be Honest.** Being honest about your sexual past can bring healing to that past. Also, when you review your sexual past, you learn cycles that can help you to break patterns in your life now.

Being honest is really important if you want to avoid going or staying on the road to trouble. Honesty can get you off this highway or at least keep you from ever getting on this highway to begin with.

3. **Talk to your wife.** The women that God gives us to be our wives are amazing. In most cases, they are on our side. They want their marriage and family to work out and last

a lifetime. They married us looking for a happily ever after.

In most cases, women respond well to truth, especially the early-on truth. No marriage is perfect. Talking to your wife about issues in the marriage is healthy and a sign you also want the marriage to work. If you run into issues bigger than the two of you can handle, seek out a mentor couple, a pastor or a Christian counselor.

Often the presence of another person can help clarify the issues that are currently on the table, and it also offers more minds to create solutions. Having others involved can have an element of accountability that “all by ourselves” can’t offer, and can change the dynamics in a positive way to solve the issues at hand in a marriage.

4. **Don’t believe in a secret.** I am absolutely flabbergasted at how many men believe in secrets. They think that within a secret, magically, the truth will not be exposed. This is like the dog that puts his head under his paws thinking that because he can’t see us, we can’t see him. Jesus taught that what we do in secret will be shouted from the rooftops (Luke 12:2-3).

Revelation 2:23 teaches us that God knows our hearts, thoughts and deeds. Hebrews 12:1 states that a cloud of witnesses surrounds us. Let me tell you plainly—there is no such thing as a secret, period. You may have a season of lust and sin, but like a seed in the dirt, it will pop up.

What I have taught my children is to believe that you will be caught at every secret and every lie. Believing you will absolutely get caught is a better and healthier way to live and would keep every man off the road to trouble whether it is fornication or adultery.

5. **Imagine the worst.** I find this exercise helpful, especially for the guys who dabble with fantasy,

pornography and masturbation, who think they will never cross the line as they pave their way on the road to trouble. I say to them, let's just suppose you did fornicate or commit adultery.

First, list all the people it would impact if they found out. This list should include past, present and future. People you grew up with; friends; family members; children; grandchildren; co-workers past, present and future; neighbors; pastors; church members; people you ministered to and so on. This list can easily get to 100 people, especially when you think that each of them will be telling their friends and hairdressers. If you didn't already list them, I will have you add Jesus and God to the list.

Then take each person and imagine two things. First, imagine how they would feel the moment they heard the news of your falling. They might feel sad, mad, disappointed, betrayed, defrauded, conned, insignificant and unimportant.

Second, write down the consequences you might have in your life because of your behavior. Your consequences may be financial because your business was impacted, your children may be unable to go to college or you may lose their respect.

That's the power of one man's decision. It's helpful to see the mega impact your decision can have. Knowing that the impact of my falling would not be placed just on people close to me, it helps me desire to protect them from that pain and stay away from the road to trouble.

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