

6 Principles to Keep You Off the Road to Sexual Disaster

The road to trouble is well-traveled and well-known. It has been traveled by millions of men over thousands of years in every culture.

Solomon wrote of a young man's road to trouble in Proverbs 7 where a young man "finds" a woman and is seduced by his lust and her skills. Over my 25-year career, I have had the unique experience of counseling thousands of men who have traveled this road to trouble and sexual disaster.

Here are six principles to keep you off the road to sexual disaster. I will share more of these on Monday in Part 2 of this two-part series:

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 (Prov. 8:13). Hating evil is a result of fearing God. When you were a teenager, there were certain things you knew not to do because you knew your dad's stance, and you knew he would implement consequences.

Today in the luxury of our lives and churches, we don't hear much about fearing God and respecting Him. I, in fact, can't think of the last time I heard a sermon on fearing God. I highly recommend at some point you do a word study on the fear of the Lord. There are so many benefits for a heart that fears God. One of these is that you would run from evil, not entertain it or be entertained by it.

2. Be honest. Being honest about your sexual past can bring healing to it. Also, when you review your sexual past, you learn about cycles that can help you to break patterns in your life now. Being honest is essential if you want to avoid going

or staying on the road to trouble. Honesty can get you off this highway or keep you from ever getting on it to begin with.

3. Talk to your wife. The women 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 the happily ever after.

In most cases, women respond well to truth, especially when shared early on. If you are hiding a secret porn life, it will hurt her, but not nearly as much as after your involvement with another woman.

No marriage is perfect. Talking to your wife about issues in the marriage is healthy and a sign that 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 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 itself” 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 flabbergasted at how many men believe in secrets. They think that within a secret, the truth will magically remain hidden. 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 (see Luke 12:3).

Revelation 2:23 teaches us that God knows our hearts, thoughts and deeds. Hebrews 12:1 states we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. 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.

I know some guys think they may be more clever than their wife or others. However, you are not brighter than God. He is very creative, and if you refuse to be honest, He can create circumstances that force the truth to be known. Trust me; for 25 years I have seen His handiwork. I have heard stories from wives having dreams of exactly what their husbands were doing, children finding dad's pornography site or emails to girlfriends and the other woman repenting and seeking forgiveness from the wife of the man with whom she cheated.

I could go on for hundreds of pages of stories about how husbands who believed in secrets got caught. Sometimes they were big businessmen with hundreds of millions of dollars, professional sports figures, top ministry leaders, politicians, doctors, lawyers, you name it, men at the top of their field who believed in secrets.

What I have taught my children is to believe 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 and 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, I have them list all the people it would affect if they found out. This list should include past, present and future. People you grew up with, friends, family members, children, grandchildren, coworkers past, present, and future, neighbors, pastors, church members, people you ministered to and so on. This list can easily get to a hundred people, especially when you recognize each of them will be telling their friends and hairdressers. If they didn't already list Him, I have them 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, inability to go to college, loss of respect from your son, STDs or unwanted pregnancies.

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 fall would not just be placed on people close to me helps me desire to protect them from that pain and stay away from the road to trouble.

6. Exit and entrance signs. Every public building you walk in has exit signs over the doors. Many, if not all states, require exit signs to be lit so they are easy to see. Many buildings will also have entrance signs on the door they want you to enter. The building may have many doors, but usually just one is marked entrance.

This is a very simple concept that most men can easily grasp. Every woman, except for your wife or future wife, is an exit sign. What do I mean by this? It's simple, if you move toward another woman in a sexual manner you are exiting God's best plan for your life. If you are married, you are for sure exiting God's one and only will for your life: your wife.

So when you're at the mall, department store, restaurant or even church and you find yourself looking at someone inappropriately, just imagine an exit sign over her head. So if you're objectifying or lusting after a brunette, imagine an exit sign at the top of her head so you know you are exiting God's best and moving into the ramp taking you to the road to trouble.

The entrance sign is just as important to understand as the exit sign. Your wife and only your wife, or future wife, is the entrance sign to all of God's blessings for you. Regardless of what mood she is in right now, she is the only entrance for your romantic and sexual expression. I know there are challenging days; remember, I am not only a psychologist, but I am also a husband and father of a daughter. People are not perfect, but you can be absolutely sure you are in God's will when being romantic and sexual towards your wife.

So the next time you look at your wife, try putting an entrance sign over her head. I find that this can even shift your mood that she is a gift to you for now and the future. You deserve God's best, and that is to stay on the road with your spouse or future spouse with as good an attitude as possible. {eoa}

Douglas Weiss Ph.D. *is the president of the Association of Sex Addiction Therapy (AASAT). He is the Executive Director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he and his team work to heal marriages that are struggling with sexual addiction and intimacy anorexia through a 3 and 5-Day Intensive program. He is the author of many books, including the 5 Sex Languages and Lust Free Living.*