

A Helpful 4-Step Strategy to Steer Clear of Adultery

Unfortunately, in the family of God, we are experiencing more adultery than ever. Why? Well, it's no surprise with cultures worldwide being seduced into a sexually addicted culture. All our media outlets are tainted with sexuality, and we haven't even talked about the internet. This porn store isn't blocked in many churches or spiritual leader's homes.

So what can the average person do to avoid being tempted into giving their heart and body to another's spouse? I want to give you principles here so that you are not one of our immoral fatalities and also so you become an agent of salt, helping others to avoid the pitfall of shame that the devil is laying for so many.

1. Fix the Foundation

Everyone starts off in the first role that leads him or her toward marriage. That role is lover and friend. You spend quality time together; you're connected emotionally and spiritually, dating, having fun together. This was the foundation leading to marriage. Then you became married, taking on more responsibility. This is when the temptation begins to start moving into a functional relationship and away from a real relationship. Children come, and if you're not careful, the foundation of lover/friend erodes, and now you're just paying bills and being responsible and tired.

Let's walk through the cracks that could be occurring. Here is a list of the core blocks of the marital foundation. If you see a weak area that applies to your relationship, get on top of that issue immediately!

Dating: At least two times a month. When dating, make it fun by rotating the responsibility of choosing the activity for

the date. One week, he chooses; the next time, she chooses. Also, follow the guidelines of 1) not running errands, 2) not shopping unless both agree, 3) do not discuss problems on a date.

Socially: Having couple friends. Having friends is important. About once a month or so, have another couple over or go out together. It is good to encourage each other.

Spiritually: Pray together daily. It is not enough just to go to church but as a couple be connected spiritually at home. Many Christians fail here; pray, worship, read together and connect. When a couple doesn't pray together, they believe that marriage is only between a man and woman. A Christian definition of marriage is triune. It is between God, a man and a woman. Practicing the presence of God is really helpful to prevent lusting after another.

Emotionally: Share at least two feelings a day. Most couples have very little training here. If you email me at heart2heart@, I will send you a free list of the Feelings Exercises that can strengthen this area of your marriage.

Money: Be in agreement with budget and goals. Tithe; if you don't tithe, you will have financial problems that can stress your marriage. Also, save and plan for the future. Do this together so you both have a part in this accomplishment financially.

It is very easy to let a crack grow. Over time, these can build into resentment and unmet needs. Unmet needs make a person vulnerable to the affection of others. If you're full, it's easy to pass up food. It's when you're hungry that temptation is more inviting. Remember the devil waited 40 days into Jesus' fast before trying to get him to make rocks into bread.

2. Set Boundaries

Have pre-thought out boundaries about relating to the opposite sex. Are there any conditions where you would need to be alone with the opposite sex? Do you eat out with the opposite sex?

What topics are off-limits? What type of humor is unacceptable? If you have clear boundaries, you'll know when you pass them up.

Write these boundaries down so you are both clear about what you expect from each other. For example:

- 1) I don't eat alone with the opposite sex.
- 2) I don't have friends of the opposite sex.
- 3) I am not in a house alone with someone of the opposite sex.
- 4) I don't text, call or email someone of the opposite sex for personal reasons.
- 5) I don't touch or hug the opposite sex unless my spouse is present.
- 6) I don't drink alcohol or go to hotel bars.
- 7) I never talk about my marriage negatively with someone of the opposite sex.

These ideas, which my clients created, unfortunately came after they had already made the mistake of adultery.

3. Accountability

We all do well, whether a plumber or a pastor, to have consistent accountability in this area. This pertains to meeting or calling someone of the same gender.

Probing questions are good for women to ask women and men to ask men. Women can just as easily commit adultery as men do these days so accountability is equally important.

4. Know the Process

Know the process of having an affair so you know if you are on your way down that deadly road. The first step toward adultery is lust. Jesus mentioned lust as adultery in the New Testament and Proverbs 7 commands a man not to lust after a woman. The tenth commandment also tells us not to lust after our neighbor's wife.

The second step is lying first to yourself about the emotions you are having around that person, the long looks, letting them behold you, feeling attractive, special, wanted or appreciated. Then there is the lying to the spouse with the secret emails, texting personally to someone of the opposite sex, phone calls or get-togethers. Lying is when you start crossing the line because you're allowing adultery to get in your heart.

Remember the Bible is clear: There are men and women who do this in the body. The church will always have male and female predators present to destroy other people's lives. Anyone who wants you to create a secret and lie is a predator.

The predator has a certain modus operandi. You clearly see it in Proverbs 7. They are quick to glue physical affection (she kissed him), and they praise you and tell you how great you are. That's like butter in the pan before they fry your life. Remember for more than 30 years I've listened to men and women who have been perpetrating and also the victims of adultery.

The predator calls sex "love." All predators are confused that way, they work the victim with love and their specialness, but they are really after the sex and destruction of a life. The predator makes it consistent, close by and attractive by saying it's different. The woman in Proverbs 7 offers incense and special sheets.

You know you're talking to a predator when they tell you nobody else will know about it and it will be a secret. I've known more than a thousand men and women who thought it would

be a secret. James says first lust, then sin, then death.

We cannot afford to be arrogant and think we can play with the devil's fire and not get burned. Each one of us is important. Revelation 2:20-26 talks about what Jesus thinks about sexual immorality in the church. He hates it, but He also gives a promise to those of us in the church who overcome this destruction. In Revelation 2:26, He states He will give us authority over the nations.

Our church globally will become more important if we stay moral rather than follow down the path of adultery. He wants us to rise up in this immoral hour of the world and be light and salt as we wait for his return. {eo}

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