

Ashley Madison: Possibly Millions More Christians Have Committed Adultery Than Previously Thought

Mark 7:21-23 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, murder, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.*

I have found myself sickened and angrier than I've been in a long time over the recent controversy surrounding **Ashley Madison**, a website that makes it easy to commit adultery.

In fact, I am shocked that this can even be considered a controversy. Check out the definition of that word:

controversy: discussion marked especially by the expression of opposing views

Are there really two sides? Is it possible there are those who would argue for the appropriateness of having sexual encounters with people other than their spouse? Unbelievably yes. The darkness is truly getting darker.

Isaiah 5:20 *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who exchange darkness for light, and light for darkness.*

Romans 12:9 *Let love be without hypocrisy. Hate what is evil. Cleave to what is good.*

Ashley Madison CEO Noel Biderman recently said, "Up until the

creation of , there wasn't really a place where women could go to pursue their desires to have an affair. Now that there is, it's clear that women aren't the more faithful sex—they just hadn't been offered the same opportunities to cheat in the past."

He continues by saying, "Members are not cheating on their spouse because they're looking for divorce, more often than not they're seeking out an affair to help keep their marriage together."

Sure, go ahead and read that again. He really said that.

Matthew 12:33-37 *Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt. For the tree is known by its fruit. O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things. And an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word that men speak, they will give an account on the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

Mr. Biderman, if you are reading this I implore you to honestly evaluate the extreme destruction you are shamelessly perpetuating. Your actions are reckless and you deserve a stern rebuke. You have brought great pain upon the world and have absolutely devastated people's lives. Your supposed marital wisdom is embarrassing.

Mr. Biderman, did you know the only reason you were born was to deeply love Jesus Christ and to have a very real, intimate, powerful and holy relationship with him? That is why you are on the earth. That is why you are breathing today!

Through the current scandal God is sounding alarms and

flashing lights right at you, crying out for you to turn from wickedness and discover the amazing truth and power of the cross. Jesus was brutally, savagely murdered for you because of love. He would never cheat on you, leave you or forsake you.

I pray for you. Heaven is real and so is hell. Please consider your life and surrender everything to Jesus, no matter the cost, no matter if you lose your reputation or your millions made through immorality.

Christians in Adultery

I've heard various reports of Christians being exposed as registered users of Ashley Madison. One source revealed at least 400 pastors were named in the leak. Of course we already know about Josh Duggar, who was caught.

Yet, consider this: There are most probably millions of additional Christians who are guilty of adultery yet who have not been exposed. Your spouse very well may be on that list. You may be as well.

Before you dismiss my previous statement as ludicrous, please read the following:

Matthew 5:27-28 *You have heard that it was said by the ancients, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

That's all it takes to be as guilty of every Christian who took advantage of the filth and immorality that provides.

If you reject that as extreme, if you believe there is a significant difference between lusting after another person and actually having a sexual encounter with them, it's evidence that you don't truly believe the Word of God. It's

also evidence that the fear of God is not in you.

How many women have Christian men actually committed adultery with? What about women who have fallen for the *Fifty Shades of Grey* deception? This is so intense! If you lust over someone you have fallen into sexual immorality, and that person doesn't even know they have been violated!

A Demand for Holiness

1 Peter 1:14-16 *As obedient children do not conduct yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance. 15 But as He who has called you is holy, so be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

Enough is enough! The church has nearly entirely eliminated preaching on sin and holiness! People are living in casual, accepted sin and are convinced that all is well. Their blood is on our hands if we refuse to preach the sharp, unapologetic truth of Scripture.

Sin must stop. The casual approach to wickedness must cease!

Ephesians 4:30 *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you are sealed for the day of redemption.*

No Naked People

No naked people. That concept seems nearly ridiculous in today's sexually driven culture.

Sexual images are flashing before our eyes from every angle through media, marketing, video games and other invasive sources.

I've actually had Christians challenge me by saying it's not

possible for a man to avoid lust, as if it's an expected part of our make up! I heard about another who said that the Bible doesn't forbid lust, only lusting about married women! The culture is causing many hopeless and some defiant Christians to believe that freedom from sexual fantasy is not possible, or even necessary. God help this nation.

My wife, two daughters and I were walking through a mall in Wisconsin recently. We were stopped in our tracks right by the food court where families with impressionable children were scattered all around. There was a massive mural that stretched from floor to ceiling of a nearly naked woman. My wife immediately said, "I'm going in there to complain to the manager." So, into Victoria's Secret she went.

You might be thinking, "Where have you been the last few decades John? This type of imagery is everywhere!" Yes, that is true. Sadly. Since this is the case, do we simply surrender to the culture? My thought is that Christians are to take dominion and be the drivers of the culture. We can't sit back and give up. We must fight! However, before that battle can truly begin in the malls and movie theaters, we have to wage war at home—in our own minds.

Consider how far our culture has fallen—including the culture of the church where only 3 percent of Christian men admit that they never view pornography! Per the Barna Group, 97 percent of Christian men are actively looking at porn! Eighty-seven percent of Christian women are entertained by pornography! Many believers don't "believe" it's necessary to abstain from sex before marriage.

Check out how it all began:

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was

*pleasing to the eyes and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. **Genesis 3:4-7***

The serpent pleaded his case by telling Eve that she *would not surely die* if she enjoyed a deadly fruit that promised a deeper personal experience. The fruit was pleasing to the eye, and Adam agreed. We can see the striking similarities between the first sin and today's rampant sexual sin. What is different is that they recognized their sin—and covered up their nakedness. Today? While Christians aren't joining nudist colonies, they are embracing and celebrating nudity by enjoying that forbidden fruit in their minds. Today's Christians have naked people performing sexual acts in their thoughts that are strictly and clearly forbidden by Scripture.

*Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids **Proverbs 6:25***

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's. **Exodus 20:17***

*You have heard that it was said by the ancients, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. For it is profitable that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body be thrown into hell. **Matthew 5:27-30***

I know there are many out there who will disagree with my position regarding eternity, but I firmly believe that continuing in the sin of lust (or any other sin) can result in eternal separation from God. The above passage of Scripture in Matthew 5 speaks to this very directly. The reason I want to make this point is so you don't casually dismiss this warning. Your eternity is at stake if you are entertaining lust. This is a battle we must fight with passion!

But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when preaching to others I myself should be disqualified **1 Corinthians 9:27**

The results of lust are tragic. In addition to the possibilities of destroyed marriages, illegal sexual activity and other natural repercussions, I submit the most terrible result is what Adam and Eve both experienced:

Then they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. The Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard Your voice in the garden and was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself." **Genesis 3:8-10**

Separation from God. As I stated above, we risk being separated from God forever. We also risk being separated from God now. Those who are in bondage to porn and lust would easily admit they feel that separation. Just as Adam and Eve hid because of their nakedness, Christians today are missing out on their walks with God in the cool, refreshing garden.

Intimacy Lost

Adam and Eve lost their intimacy with God. I propose they started to lose it before their banishment from the garden.

There was a void there, and they sought to fill it with something unholy.

By the grace of God I've been blessed to be free from the traps and destruction of pornography, and I am humbled to say that God has enabled me to live lust free.

Several years ago I was deep in the Rocky Mountains on a prayer and fasting retreat. It was just God and me in a cabin in the middle of nowhere. I was connecting with God about a variety of things that night and a simple thought entered my mind.

Even though I was living a sexually pure life, I had a question for God. I'll be transparent with you and share it.

If God's design for sex is the perfect model, which it is, then it should bring the highest level of satisfaction. There should be absolutely no other competing desire that's compelling enough to give in to. If this is the case, why would this happily married man who has the most amazing wife on the planet have an occasional temptation enter his mind? Why would the thought of thinking about someone other than my wife in a sexual way be the least bit tempting? Please understand, I wasn't acting out on that temptation, but the question remained. Why is the temptation even there?

I understand today that most married people fantasize about people other than their spouses. That reality caused further curiosity. Again, if God's design for sex is the best, why is there temptation for an alternative?

God spoke simply and clearly. "The one you are intimate with is the one you will desire."

Intimacy. It's all about intimacy.

That made so much sense to me! It's true! When I am emotionally connected with my wife in an intimate way, any

other competing thought would be an unwelcome invasion. It's easy to reject such thoughts when I'm connected in a deep way relationally with her. However, in those seasons where we may be a little more distant due to busyness, stress or arguments (yeah, get over it ... we argue it out sometimes!) then intimacy is negatively impacted. It's easier to desire other things and to find temptation pressing in.

Of course, the same is true with God. If we are madly in love with Him and are cultivating intimacy, the unrighteous invasions into our lives will be soundly rejected. We will guard our love connection with God jealously. This is where holiness dominates in a sin wrecked world. Can you imagine trembling before the Lord as His glory overwhelms you and then, five minutes later, watching a movie with nudity and foul language? That makes no sense.

I propose we refuse to be entertained by anything in media or in our thoughts that required the brutal torture and murder of the one we love. That unholy sexual fantasy required the death of Jesus. The cussing and sexual content in movies demanded the 9-inch nails that were driven through His flesh. The simple lustful image that tries to dance around in our heads isn't simple at all. It took a slaughtered Lamb to deal with that.

That slaughtered Lamb is the lover of your soul. His passion is for you!

You can find powerful and satisfying freedom from lust as you draw near to the Lord.

*... that you put off the former way of life in the old nature, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new nature, which was created according to God in righteousness and true holiness. **Ephesians 4:22-24***

One who cleanses himself from these things will be a vessel

*for honor, sanctified, fit for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work. So flee youthful desires and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. **2 Timothy 2:21-22***

The Command to Love

Let's talk about the call to love. This is the call that God has for us to be intimate with him. Have you ever considered this mandate? It's very, very intriguing. I can understand calling someone to serve, to give money, to feed the poor or to avoid sin. That makes sense very easily. However, a mandate to love?

Certainly the act of love in many ways is fully intentional and can often be void of feeling. We act in love toward others. This is also quite easy to understand. But this idea goes well beyond a call to act out in right ways. It's a call to intimacy, a mandate to be deeply intimate with our Lover.

*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **Deuteronomy 6:5***

In the original Hebrew, the word love is ahab.

It means: to have affection for, sexually or otherwise.

Additionally it means to like as a friend.

I don't know about you, but I'm not sure I can be forced to like anybody, much less have deep affection for them. But this is what Scripture is telling us. Could it mean that the call isn't for instant intimacy, but rather a determined and unwavering process of pursuit and faith toward the promise of experiencing an enjoyable God?

As we, in faith, more easily believe that being with God in a continual and significant way will result in continual and

significant enjoyment, we will allow the old things to pass away. We will not stop until we discover the joy that only God can provide.

So, if we are to understand that God is mandating us to fall deeply in love with Him, there is a disciplined process that must commence. The goal is deep and passionate intimacy with our Lover, the invisible God.

It makes sense that when we discover this ultimate of pleasures, that we will not be as inclined to pursue the human desires that demanded so much of us in years past. It's been said more times and in more ways than we know, "Our sin causes separation from God. We, in effect, trade intimacy with God for intimacy with the world."

Certainly there is truth to that statement. However, if we view the issue from the other side, we could say, "Intentional pursuit of intimacy with God carries with it the reward of perpetual discovery. Deliberate surrender of human desire coupled with a craving for the manifest presence of God Himself in our lives will lead, sooner or later, to fulfillment that cannot be measured or effectively explained. It's that extreme. It's that good."

*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you ... **Matthew 5:43-44***

In the above passage, the Hebrew interpretation of the word "love" is different than ahab. It is agapaō, which emphasizes the attitude of love. It's the moral and socially appropriate act of service and attention to others, including both mankind and God Himself.

Throughout Scripture we do see various translations of that

single word “love,” and God is the central figure regardless of the interpretation. However, it’s that unique call to ahab love that has captured my attention. It’s a mandate to intimacy.

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am faint with love. Song of Songs 5:8

Lovesick! What a word that is. As you might guess, the Hebrew translation is *ahab*. In the Song of Songs we see this amazing story of love unfold beautifully. In the following verses the word “love” is translated ahab each time. As we gain insight into the intimate longing of our God for us, our hearts melt and our understanding changes.

*I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but found him not. The watchmen found me, as they went about the city. “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?” **Song of Songs 3:2-3***

*He brought me to the banquet house, and his banner over me was love. Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples; for I am faint with love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, do not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. **Song of Songs 2:4-7***

*He made its posts of silver, its back of gold, its seat of purple; its interior was inlaid with love by the daughters of Jerusalem. **Song of Songs 3:10***

*How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, with all your delights! **Song of Songs 7:6***

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm;

*for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its fires of desire are as ardent flames, a most intense flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly condemned. **Song of Songs 8:6-7***

Read the last passage, Song of Songs 8:6-7, over and over. Its communication of passionate desire is intense. As we establish a vow with our Lover, the intentional and disciplined pursuit of intimacy with Him is alluring and strong. It is a vehement flame that even water, the fierce enemy of fire, cannot drown. It's this that we are pursuing, the fire of passion that will overcome the waters of human desire.

In the following Song of Songs passage, we discover a different translation of love.

Draw me after you, let us run. The king has brought me into his chambers.

*We will exult and rejoice in you; we will remember your love more than wine; rightly do they love you. **Song of Songs 1:4***

The Hebrew word used for "love" in the part of the passage that says, "We will remember your love more than wine" is dôd. The literal meaning is to boil. The idea is that God's love is actively boiling. It's hot and constant and intentionally set on us.

The enemy of human desire is a very strong one. A simple resolution to avoid sin and do good is far too weak to be seriously considered for inclusion in our arsenal. The burning fire of passion for God, ahab love, is our most effective weapon. The reward of the perpetual discovery of new depths of God's zeal for us is enough to keep us burning with a vehement flame that the waters of carnal human desire cannot put out.

Yes, my friend, you can be completely free from lust, and you

can live a powerful, joyful life full of desire for Jesus.

If you are struggling with lust, don't despair. Don't quit contending for intimacy with God. You can absolutely find freedom! God loves you with a passion that's deep ... and He is longsuffering. He will be with you in your journey to freedom.

I pray for radical freedom to overwhelm you as you discover wave after wave of the other worldly, immeasurable love of Jesus! You were born for this!

Let's make a decree over this nation together. We release a spirit of awakening, revival and holiness. As we go hard after God we will entertain no naked people. Not in media or in our minds. Amen!

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