

# Lessons From Petraeus Scandal: Guarding Against Sexual Sin

The continuously unraveling scandal that has toppled the director of the CIA **David Petraeus** and has entangled the top NATO commander in Afghanistan as well as an FBI agent sounds more and more unfathomable by the minute. But, really, it's a prime example of the severe consequences of immorality.

It only takes a small pin to burst a balloon. When trust is gone and when there is a leak in the integrity and character of a person, the explosion is quick and even startling. What has taken a lifetime of hard work to build disintegrates swiftly with an act of immorality, an act of indiscretion. You sacrifice your integrity, lose your credibility, and forfeit the right to lead.

I often speak to men about the sin of adultery and perversion because of the seemingly tolerant attitude in society toward this sexual misbehavior. And once you cross that line, once you go over the boundaries into sexual sin and engage in immorality, it becomes easier and easier to justify it.

*There are 12 points I share on how to maintain moral purity.*

**1) Recognize your potential for moral failure.** Don't say, "It can't happen to me." Don't say, "I'm immune to this" because you're not. And if you're not careful, if you don't watch and pray, if you don't develop spiritual disciplines in your life, you're more than vulnerable.

**2) Realize you don't have to give in.** Don't say, "The living Christ is in me and yet I couldn't help myself." You have the power of God's Spirit; the Spirit of the living God lives in

you and will enable you and empower you.

**3) Resolve to be pure; purpose in your heart not to defile yourself.** And if you have fallen, you can start over again. And you can say, "From this day forward, God, make me pure and make me clean."

**4) Remove all bitterness from your life.** Often, when a person becomes bitter, he's upset about something that becomes an excuse or a rationalization to say, "Well, I deserve this pleasure."

**5) Restrain the flesh in all areas.** Paul said in Romans 13:4: "Make no provision for the flesh." That speaks for itself.

**6) Refuse to give in even for a moment.** Fight this all the days of your life. I've known men who have lived in moral purity all their days and then at the end of their life made some foolish mistake.

**7) Run from every form of evil.** The Bible says to abstain from every appearance of evil.

**8) Resist the devil.** He's the author of these lies. He's the ultimate enemy. And in the name of Jesus Christ you can resist the enemy.

**9) Rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.** Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

**10) Renew your mind in the Word of God.** Saturate your heart and your mind. Renew your mind in the washing of the water of the Word of God.

**11) Rejoice in the goodness and the grace and the forgiveness and the love of God.** When you praise God, you are empowered to be pure. Worship Him! Praise Him! Because in the praise ... the act of praise itself, we are enabled to overcome the work of the enemy.

**12) Remember that you will give an account** before a holy God and that's a sobering thought. Paul said, "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? You were bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus."

It takes time to restore trust and credibility and integrity. It takes time, it takes counsel, it takes the Word of God working in your life and cleansing your heart and your soul and your mind and your will, and standing you back up again so that you can make a comeback in your life by the grace of God. And we're forever grateful for that grace that covers and cleanses all sin.

**Dr. Jack Graham** *is pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church, a 32,000-member church near Dallas, Texas. His popular book, A Man of God, challenges men to live with purpose and passion.*