

This Satanic Snare Can Slowly Drain the Life Out of Your Relationships

"I know we said, 'Till death do us part.' But I just don't love him anymore."

Those are painful words, spoken in a marriage counseling session. How can that be?

How is it possible for a man and a woman, deeply in love and passionately committed to one another at one time, to stop loving? How is it possible for a child raised in a Christian home to stop loving their parents?

The apostle Paul wrote in "the love chapter" the amazing words, "Love never fails." **Yet, we know love does fail.** Did the Scripture lie or did someone make a mistake?

Jesus gives us clarity in Matthew 24:12: *"Because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold"* (MEV).

This is a difficult verse, at best. Let's try to unpackage it.

"Iniquity" (anomia) is disrespect for the law or someone who chooses to live above the law. It is living without law, or wickedness.

"Grow cold" (psugeesetai from psuchoo) means to breathe cool; blowing cool air; or the loss of temperature. A culture or an individual who chooses to live lawlessly will experience the cooling of natural love in their heart, even to the point of rigor mortis.

How does Jesus' explanation help us understand the failure of love in a marriage, between a child and their parent, or between a child of God and the Lord?

A heart of iniquity is self-focused and full of envy. They ask, "What do I need? What am I missing? What do others have that I don't have? What am I missing out on? What should I be experiencing that I am not experiencing?"

Their thoughts are focused on what their mate is not doing.

The believer's heart is fixed on what God has not done for them or on prayers God has not answered.

The child is offended by the parent's failure.

The words of a self-focused person are filled with, "You never..." and "You did this to me."

The result of such focus is loss of joy and a lack of desire to serve. Those things that used to bring joy become irritating or frustrating. Little tasks that were a delight or pleasant to do because they brought pleasure to the other person are now resented. Feelings of expectation rise up and they begin thinking, "It is not fair. They shouldn't expect that of me."

Control of the imagination is compromised.

Thoughts of what it would be like with another person creep into the mind throughout the day. Eyes begin to wander, looking at other men or women and fantasizing about being with them. Memories of old times and the fun experienced begin wandering through. Feelings of missing those times flood in. Slowly the attachment and attraction to your mate weakens.

The joy of being a Christian weakens. Pleasure in movies with compromising scenes and the soft pornography of pop culture becomes attractive.

The imagination is awakened even more.

Fantasizing about another person becomes greater.

Now you are becoming emotionally attached to another person. They may not even know you are having such thoughts. Transference is happening. Emotions that rightfully belong to your marriage partner, your parents or your Lord and Savior are given to another.

Opportunity to speak with that person is sought. Conversations are extended. Greetings are friendlier. Handshakes become friendly hugs. Emotional attachment becomes stronger and the imagination is fired up even more. Love for your mate is weakened and emotional estrangement is becoming obvious.

Spiritually, less time is spent in prayer and Bible reading is overlooked. Church attendance is not as attractive.

The emotional estrangement leads to wrong behavior. Friendly hugs become more intimate and lingering. Words of endearment enter the greeting. Suddenly, one or the other cross the forbidden line and express the hidden affection and emotional adultery is entered into. This will eventually lead to physical adultery.

Jesus sternly warns the believer about allowing their love for the Lord to become "lukewarm". Such a believer will be deceived, ***thinking their walk with the Lord is still good and yet they are lost.***

The apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual son, Timothy, *"Now the goal of this command is love from a pure heart, and from a good conscience, and from sincere faith"* (1 Tim. 1:5).

The child of God must carefully guard their moral purity and discipline their imagination. Love will not grow cold in the heart of one that diligently maintains a spirit of mercy; that extends grace to their mate; and that gives forgiveness even when it is not deserved. Authentic trust is crucial to maintaining a heart of love.

When trust is breached, even secretly in your thoughts or

emotions, it gives opportunity for the enemy to “breathe cool” on your heart of love.

Jesus modeled unfailing love. His words are anchors for our soul.

“A new commandment I give unto you. That you love one another as I have loved you.” {eoa}

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