

Proverbs 6v20-35

17th February 2019 am Hill and Arcadia

Protecting your family - Part 2

Sometime ago one of our members needed to undergo some **serious surgery**. Instead of going ahead immediately with the operation - he waited, giving enough time to be able to have some of his own blood drawn and available.

He did this **just in case** there was a need for blood during the operation.

Why did he do this? He took this preventative step to ensure there would be no risk to himself using donor blood.

He believed that with the possibility of **AIDS infected blood** from the blood bank at the time – it was safer to donate his blood in advance.

In the same way it makes good sense to take some proactive action to avoid the risk of an affair or getting entangled in any kind sexual indiscretion. It makes good sense to have a plan to avoid sexual sin.

Christians have **no automatic immunity** against or adultery, or fornication or pornography or even homosexuality. The battle for purity is real and needs to be faced head on.

Last week we considered the importance of **firstly**, recognizing the possibility of falling into the snare of sexual sin – and **secondly**, we considered the very serious price tag attached to sexual sin.

Today we will look in more detail at...

1 The pathway into the snare

People don't just **instantly fall** into immorality, especially committed Christians. The road to immorality involves a process.

Being aware of the pathway into the trap is a **clear antidote** to being a blind victim. We have already seen that in some measure recognizing the possibility of an affair creates an awareness of caution.

But understanding the process puts a 'face' to the 'ushers' or 'escorts' who are so willing to lead you in to the bed of an adulterer.

Lois Mowday in "The Snare" identifies **four steps in the process**.

1.1 Mere thoughts

The teacher in the book of Proverbs goes to great lengths **to ensure the mind** is so well informed – that there has been the digesting of the instruction and word.

Proverbs 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light,

Do not **underestimate** the power of the mind. The mind must continually be kept in check. Your mind is not a precast bit of concrete but a dynamic, impressionable organ influencing decisions and actions.

Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,

Think about times when you are **watching a movie**. It is so easy to be caught up with the misery of a woman or a man with a lousy spouse who then falls in love with a knight in shining armour.

It's not long and we who **hold to faithfulness** in marriage find ourselves sympathetic to a break in the marriage to make way for the beautiful budding romance.

My point, the affair or any kind of sexual sin **begins in the mind**. Potiphar's wife probably had many fantasies about Joseph before she invited him to her bed.

Look at David...

2 Samuel 11:2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. 3 And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

The **road to destruction** begins inside your head. Every thought must be taken captive and made obedient to Christ. Not once but again and again...

Daydreaming or escaping in to a world of make believe or **fantasy** - perhaps prompted by a combination of present vulnerability in the relationship or the perfection portrayed in the media – this is all first step stuff in the process of an affair.

Proverbs 6:25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;

You must **ask yourself** again and again – Is there someone you find yourself thinking about more than you should.

1.2 Emotional, non-physical involvement

As Christians we often **confuse** the words 'sexual' and 'physical'. We say nothing sexual is going on in the relationship when we really mean nothing physical is going on.

We are sexual beings and something involving the sexes is going on all the time when we relate to the opposite sex (sometimes with same sex attraction or leanings).

An **emotional entanglement** can be developing under the umbrella of legitimacy.

It is not uncommon to hear that an illegitimate relationship had its beginnings when a man or woman shares their troubles and concerns with a colleague or friend.

The thoughts and fantasy of the mind begins **to grab hold** of the heart.

Naively we convince ourselves that because there is **nothing physical**, there is nothing sexual, but two people sense beyond voice or action 'a connection'.

You begin to find there is **always a reason** to be in the company of this person. Even arranging family "Get togethers" You may even be involved in the most honorable service like a visitation team or some kind of ministry.

(PMB beautician - choosing a specific route on a run)

You'll find the **signals** – waiting for a response, maybe body language especially the eyes. The connection is strengthened by the long stare. **Mowday** calls this *a kind of grey area where much game playing occurs*.

This is then followed by '**proper**' compliments, teasing and all the while a growing willingness to share deep feelings and problems.

And it won't be long and **an emotional connection** is established. And it's all justified, after all nothing physical is happening. There is a false sense of safety and well being because no actual transgression has taken place.

But then **one day** – the touch and then the innocent hug or peck on the cheek and then the line is crossed into the third step

1.3 Physical involvement

One thing leads to another and the **law of diminishing returns** begins to apply. Each time pushing the boundary more and more until finally you go all the way.

After the first time, **guilt pervades** and even crushes and there are promises of 'never again' that are exchanged. But it happens again and again.

Its then that the fourth step is taken

1.4 Rationalization to live with the Affair

Our emotional lives are like **a scale** – the scale must be maintained in equilibrium.

The 3rd step fills the one side of the scale with **guilt**. The guilt now piles on tipping the scale horribly out of balance.

But life must go on and **in order to cope** with the guilt every attempt is made to maintain emotional equilibrium.

To do that, to bring the scale back into balance **the other side** of the scale is piled with all sorts of criticism for the husband or wife.

It can be criticism and **any form of self justification** that will bring back and compensate the scale back to emotional balance.

- He never speaks to me like...
- She never keeps her cupboard tidy like...
- He is always so abrasive and unfair to the children
- She is so inconsiderate
- I have prayed about this and surely God wants me to be happy.

And the person involved begins to suffer with terrible **short sightedness**; losing all sense of rational thinking.

Even the most **intelligent** man or women sinks into an irrational and illogical justification that this affair is good.

The person is overcome with a **perverted sense of responsibility**, saying, thinking and believing “surely I can’t hurt this woman – that would be so wrong”.

2 The pathway to avoid the snare

With regard to salvation **Jesus taught** *Matthew 7:13 Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

That same principles applies; as the pathway into sin is easy, whereas the road to holiness is hard...

Stick to the narrow road where ‘**prevention is better than cure**’. Here are some practical steps to take in the prevention of an affair.

2.1 Keep your relationship with Christ strong and growing

Dear friends an intimate and vibrant relationship with Christ is not about **ministry busyness** but rather about what happens in the privacy of your own life. It is not the outward and visible but the inward and spiritual.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

It is like sailing a yacht - that which is below the surface (waterline) is what really counts.

2.2 Work at understanding and meeting your partners needs

Your partner has **legitimate needs** and therefore you need to make every effort to understand and meet them. This is first and foremost even before meeting the needs of the world.

You will discover that your spouse may not have **the same needs and likes** that you have. Carol loves her feet rubbed and massaged whereas I hate anyone touching my feet...

Men need to see that women are **very different** to men and women need to see that women are very different to men.

Generally, women love to talk and be heard whereas men love to immediately identify the problem and find solutions.

Each partner must strive through **listening, talking and understanding** to meet the other partner's needs.

2.3 Be honest with your partner about the state of your marriage

It is hard thing to do; but we all need to **bold enough to ask**, *"how are we doing?"* or *"have you noticed that we live in the same house and even share the same bed but we are like two ships passing in the night?"*

In so doing avoid getting **defensive** and resort to mudslinging. The way your spouse perceives your relationship (whether it is accurate or not) is reality to him or her and cannot be ignored.

2.4 Be disciplined and discreet in your relationships with the opposite sex

We live in a world where we have **contact** with so many people. The potential and possibility is there to spark something off.

Some guidelines from Mowday:

- Avoid **provocative** questions (personal intimate issues)
- Don't listen to **complaints** about a "lousy" spouse
- Don't fish for **complements**
- Be careful about **complements** you pay – 'great hair do' is OK but 'great legs' is over the line. Flirtation may be a nice game but it is a dangerous game to play.
- Be careful about **touching**
- Avoid **the long stare**
- Guard against **being alone** with a person of the opposite sex. Travel alone and be cautious about these long hours at the office

3 The pathway back from being caught in the snare

There is **a way back**. This is not therefore license to do as you please. But for the sincere repenting person the marriage can be restored and be even better – simply because of God's grace.

It is **not an easy road** but here are some of the necessary steps that need to be taken.

3.1 Re-establish your relationship with Christ

In adultery and any form of sexual indiscretion the **relationship with God** has been affected.

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

Outwardly we can so easily fool ourselves and others but inwardly **in matters of the heart** with God things will be sour.

Psalms 32:3 For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

We must all constantly search our hearts and souls **before God**. And where sin is present and unresolved repentance from that sin and turning to Christ is the only way forward.

- **Get alone**, take a step back and take a long hard look inside – *Psalm 139 ...search me...*
- **Don't** justify yourself or blame someone else; rather take responsibility – *Psalm 51 ...its me O Lord*
- **Repent**. Accepting God's forgiveness; appealing to God on the basis of Christ
- Begin to **obey** God immediately

3.2 End the affair immediately

- Hold on to God and let go of sin and **break off** the affair immediately and totally
- Expect to **feel terrible** and expect opposition from Satan
- **Rebuild** your marriage understanding that this will take time, patience and wisdom.
 - Seek the forgiveness of your spouse without blaming or defending – no cheap forgiveness
 - The offended partner is asked to pay a price but understand that that person will be angry and wounded. Don't expect the perfect response. Allow the anger to be expressed.
 - Declare your commitment to the marriage
 - Find a Christian marriage counselor - You do need help
 - Be accountable - Allow the difficult questions to be asked and allow yourself to be monitored

- Realize that it won't be easy - Lack of trust and comparisons are going to be there - Questions
- Be aware of interference from the affair partner
- Despite the difficulty it is worth it

Conclusion

Marriage is **a beautiful gift** from God. Some of you are already married and I want to urge you to keep the marriage bed pure...

Many of you are **still single**. Marriage is still ahead for you. I would urge you to be patient; keeping yourself for the partner that God will give you. You won't regret waiting...

Glorify God in this area of sexual purity.