

AFFAIR-PROOFING YOUR MARRIAGE
Ten Values That Build Strong Families - Part 7
Exodus 20:14
Rick Warren

If you were to see an "off" ramp sign on the freeway that says "do not enter" would you resent it or would you appreciate it? If you were trying to find your way on to the freeway and you didn't know if it were an on-ramp or an off-ramp you would appreciate the fact that somebody put up a sign that said "this ain't it."

God has given us Ten Commandments in His word that we've been looking at the past seven weeks. Whenever God says a negative He always has a positive purpose behind it. He always has a reason. It is not to cause you pain. It is for your protection. God says when you play by the rules you win.

Exodus 20:14 -- our seventh commandment -- "You shall not commit adultery."

Nothing destroys a family faster than adultery. God says this is My protection plan. I don't want you committing adultery. Even the mere mention of this word causes some of you pain and memories and shame. The purpose of today's message is not to resurrect your past. If you have confessed a sin to God and you've been forgiven God has forgiven it and forgotten it and you need to too. If you feel guilty over sin that you have committed and confessed to God that guilt is not from God. It's from Satan. Don't let Satan condemn you for things that are in your past and have already been forgiven and forgotten when you've changed from it.

Today we're going to focus on the future. God is no kill-joy. God invented sex. But like everything it must be controlled. He wants us to use it not abuse it. All of God's gifts have limitations on them. God has given us the gift of water. You can't live without water. But too much of it and you'll drown. God has given us fire. Fire can either warm you or burn you. It's how you handle it.

God says I've given you a drive called sex. Properly controlled and expressed within a marriage it's beautiful and fantastic. But outside of marriage it is destructive and detrimental to your health as a human being -- emotionally, spiritually, in every way.

Today, what I want us to look at is how do you affair proof your marriage. Notice God wants us to use sex as a tool for building a marriage not destroy it. In Hebrews 13:5 "Husbands and wives

be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and commit adultery."

It's easier to get married than it is to stay married. In today's world where there are permissive values that basically says anything goes, and an entertainment organization obsessed with sex, and sex is used to sale everything from cars to bananas and there are more women in the work place, and there is birth control and constant bombardment by the media, you don't stand much of a change of remaining pure unless you establish some guidelines for your life. Readers Digest did a study and said fifty percent of all husbands and probably 35% of all wives have committed adultery. This is happening even among Christians.

For a number of years Kay and I have been very concerned about this issue and we began speaking on this issue together because a lot of people weren't talking about it. For the past several years we've traveled all over America talking about how to affair-proof your marriage. It's about a three hour lecture but this morning we're just going to try to hit the highlights of some of it and deal with it.

In order to save time we're going to pass over the part here of what causes affairs. The Bible says it's a trap.

Let's go directly to the six steps on how to affair proof your marriage.

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO GOD'S STANDARDS.

Regardless of your past, regardless of your failures say today, I'm going to make a commitment to maintain God's standards. That means you agree with God about what He says about sex. God's standards have never, never changed. The Bible says that sex is for marriage only -- not before marriage, not outside of marriage.

Ps. 119:9 "How can a person keep his way pure?" The answer is by living according to..." culture. No! but "by living according to Your word." God's standard is very clear in His word.

Adultery is never an option, under no circumstances is it OK, there is no justification for it, no matter what your background is. Joseph in the Old Testament was seduced by Potipher's wife.

he had every reason in the world to give in to that temptation -
- I'm young, I've viral, I'm single, I'm in a foreign country, it's an acceptable practice in this society, she wants it, my desires want it, I've been abused, my mother died when I was young, my father was over-indulgent to me, my brothers hated me

and sold me into slavery -- he had a terrible family life, he was deprived of love. Instead he said "I will not sin against my God." The Bible says when he was tempted he turned and ran. Maybe that's what you need to do too.

You say "but my wife/husband is not meeting my needs." It is not excuse. In 1985 when Kay was pregnant with our third child Matthew, it was a problem pregnancy, she was flat on her back, bedfast, for months and months -- I thought it was never going to end. There was no way she could meet all of my needs in that period of time. But that was no excuse for me to go out and sin. None at all.

Proverbs says "Be faithful to your own wife. Give your love to her alone." This is not a suggestion. It is a commandment. I want to suggest to you that you need to publicly affirm God's standard. That's the first step if you want to protect your marriage. You need to first say to your mate, I have decided that by God's grace regardless of what you do, the decisions you make the choices you make or what happens in our marriage, I will never be unfaithful to you. It's my choice. It's my decision. Regardless of what you do, I will never be unfaithful to you. That's the starting point.

Then I think you need to affirm that same thing to your friends, your relatives, the people you work with so that there is no doubt about where you stand on this issue with the people around you. You need to say to those you work with "I intend to be faithful to my husband/wife."

Most of you know I am hopelessly in love with my wife. It wasn't always that way. We've been married 17 years, 15 wonderful years. The first two years were hell on earth. But I am hopelessly in love with her. I want there to be no doubt where I stand and I want you to say to the people around you, "I'm not available. I'm off the market. It's non negotiable. Don't even think about flirting with me."

I got a card one time from a lady in the church that was suggestive. She's no longer here. When I get that kind of stuff I just hand it to Kay, "I want you to answer this." She never wrote again.

2. MAGNIFY THE CONSEQUENCES

Remind yourself of the devastation and destruction that is caused by sexual sin. Prov. 6:32 "The one who commits adultery is an

utter fool for he destroys his own soul." Nothing damages emotions like sexual sin. Nothing. There are other sins that don't damage as much. But sexual sin leaves permanent scars. The shame just doesn't seem to go away. The sense of loss to everyone involved is enormous. I can't tell you as a pastor how many people I've talked to that have said, "I wish I could just turn the clock back. I wish I could just erase it and start over." Jesus said if your eye causes you to sin it's better to loose an eye than loose your soul. The one who commits adultery is an utter fool; he destroys his own soul.

Prov. 6:26 "Adultery will cost a man all that he has." Remember Esau who was hungry in the Old Testament and he sold his birthright, his inheritance, for a bowl of porridge. I know people today who are selling their life away for one moment of pleasure.

Many of you are in difficult marriages. You're struggling and having a tough time. It's not satisfying and you're looking around. The cost of maintaining and restoring and repairing your marriage and making it work no matter how high the cost, the cost of adultery is always higher. Always higher. It just doesn't pay in the long run. Everybody loses. God put this in here for our benefit. He says, I don't want to cause you pain.

I've been married to my wife for 17 years and by God's grace she is the only woman I have ever known. By God's grace I intend to be faithful to her for as long as I live. Why? Three reasons:

1. I love Jesus Christ. I owe Him my life. He died for me. He's my ticket to heaven. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." There's no doubt that God says no to sex outside of marriage.

2. I love my wife and kids. The thought of hurting them and what that would do to them is almost unbearable for me to even think of.

3. I fear the judgement of God. I think it is a healthy fear that you ought to have. The Bible says, you don't do this and get away with it. You may think you do but you don't. You reap what you sow. One day you will explain to God why you chose to do what He said not to do. "God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery." You don't get away with it.

You say, God wants me to be happy. Yes, that's why He gave this rule. He knows better than you do. Adultery is ultimately

selfishness. It's not love, it's selfishness. It's saying "I'm going to put my needs and what I think is right, my pleasure ahead of everything else -- ahead of what God says, ahead of what it will do to my husband or wife, ahead of what it will do to my family, ahead of what it will do to her or his family, ahead of what it will do to his/her wife/husband." It's basically saying forget the world, I'm doing what I want to do. That is selfishness. That is not love.

I'm worried about America. If they taught drug education today in our schools the way they do sex education they'd be passing out needles and showing kids how to shoot up. They're saying we know you're going to do this anyway so let me show you how to do it safely. Kids aren't that smart. They need to be told what God says is right and wrong.

So you make a commitment to God's standard and you magnify the consequences.

3. MAINTAIN YOUR MARRIAGE

A growing relationship to your spouse will reduce the pull and attraction of adultery. There's not anybody I trust to talk about this than my best friend. Welcome Kay.

Kay:

I Cor. 7:3 "A man should fulfill his duty as a husband, a wife should fulfill her duty as a wife and each should satisfy the other's needs." Rick's already talked about needs and here it is in a verse. What kind of needs are we talking about?

Dr. Willard Harley, a counselor in Minnesota, wrote a fantastic book His Needs, Her Needs. He has identified through thousands of couples what he thinks are the top 5 needs of most men and the top 5 needs of most women. See if you see any similarities between these two lists:

The top five needs of most men are:

1. Sexual fulfillment
2. Recreational companionship
3. An attractive spouse
4. Domestic support
5. Admiration

The top five needs of most women are:

1. Affection
2. Conversation
3. Honesty and openness
4. Financial support
5. Family commitment

Did you see any similarities between those two lists? No. No wonder we have so much trouble adjusting in marriage. Men come in to marriage thinking for some strange reason they've married someone very much like themselves so they set about trying to meet the needs they have in their wife and feeling very, very frustrated when she does not respond the same way he does.

Most women come into marriage thinking they've married someone very much like themselves. They set about to meet the needs that they have in a man and cannot understand why he does not respond the same way she does.

Solution: Get serious and get down to the full time business of learning what it is that your spouse needs and determining that you're going to meet those needs to the very best of your ability even if they are not necessarily your needs or you don't have them in the exact same way. This will go such a long way in protecting your marriage.

Rick has already mentioned that one of the biggest problem areas for most marriages is the physical relationship.

I Cor. 7:5 "Do not cheat each other of normal sexual intercourse or you will expose yourselves to the obvious temptation of Satan." The Bible says sex is a spiritual responsibility in marriage and to deny each other or to restrict each other is to ask for trouble.

A scientific survey I read this week was done to discover what days most men like to make love. They discovered that they like days that begin with T -- Tuesday, Thursday, Today, Tomorrow, Taturday, and Tunday. We can laugh about it but we know it to be true.

When you stood before a judge or a pastor and committed your life to another person in marriage you realized maybe or not that you are committing to an exclusive relationship. You are committing yourself to a man or a woman and saying "For most of the needs I have in my life, especially these top five, I'm looking to you as the one to meet those needs." Unfortunately many men and women feel cheated. They feel like they've gotten a raw deal by the

time they've been married a little while. The needs are so different. There's conflict in their sexual relations. Here's a decision that each of us needs to make: if my mate is going to have a good lover in his or her life I'm going to be it.

Rick and I have decided that we are going to try to meet each other's needs in such a way that we would each be a fool to ever be interested in anybody else. We heard a pastor one time say that each of us should keep our lawns so green that it would make every body else's look brown by comparison.

The goal we have in our marriage is to be best friends. We talk about that a lot. Why? Why do we make such a big deal about being best friends? I heard Mary Alda, the wife of Alan Alda, the actor, one time say, "It's real easy to leave your spouse. It's not easy to leave your best friend." Rick and I are best friends because we want to stay together the rest of our lives.

How do you build a friendship?

Time
Time
Time

You cannot be best friends with someone you don't spend time with, that you don't see very often, that you don't talk and tell your heart to. We try to spend every Monday together. Sometimes it doesn't work out that way but that's what we aim for. We go on overnight trips, without the kids, just to encourage and increase the fact that we're best friends.

4. MANAGE MY MIND

People don't just fall into immorality. There is really no such thing as a one-night stand. It seems that way, but you are not a moral, upright person today and by tomorrow you fall into immorality. It doesn't happen that way. There's a process, a whole series of events:

Step one. Accepting sinful thoughts in my mind.

The battle for any temptation in your life begins in your mind. Regardless of what the temptation is, the battle begins in your mind. What you think about, you'll eventually feel and what you feel you'll eventually act on.

James 1:14-15 "Temptation is the pull of a person's own evil thoughts and wishes. These evil thoughts lead to evil actions, and afterwards to death."

The problem is, and I have talked to so many people in the 13 years of ministry, most Christians will not get serious about their minds. They wonder what the big deal is. Why did Rick make such a big deal a couple of weeks ago about guarding your thoughts, watching certain movies, TV shows? What's the big deal? I can handle it. It doesn't bother me.

That is such a lie. You are being deceived if you think that to be true. The battle begins in your mind. You become what you think about. If you think about positive, good, happy, loving, kind things, that's the way you will act. If you think lustful, dirty, trashy, obscene thoughts, that's the kind of person you will become. It's impossible not to be affected by what you let into your mind.

I read this week that most of us have garbage disposals in our kitchens and garbage dispensers in our living rooms -- the TV. The TV is one of the biggest dispensers of garbage that we allow into our homes. It's really naive of us to do that.

2 Tim. 2:22 "Turn your back on lustful desires and give your positive attention to goodness, integrity, love and peace."

Rom. 16:19 "I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about evil." It's sad but most of us are the exact opposite. We are so wise and knowledgeable about what is evil and innocent, ignorant about what is good. That's not God's way and it will lead you in the process of immorality if you don't control your own thoughts.

Example from my own life: Rick has told you many times about how crummy our first few years of marriage were. They were truly awful. In that time period we were not happy to be married to each other. But we made a commitment and we were going to stick it out. There was very little joy. Nothing worked for us. Everything that was supposed to be great about marriage was awful. We fought about everything. We didn't know how to talk to each other. We were very, very miserable.

I was working full time at the time as a receptionist. My desk happened to set right in front of the elevator. So everyone who got off on my floor stopped in front of my desk. I hadn't worked there but a few days before the elevator doors opened and the most gorgeous man that God ever made got out on my floor. I

wondered what it would be like to be with this man. I found myself arranging my lunch hour to coincide with his, walking by his office, finding reasons to go and put a paper on his desk that he probably could care less about but it gave me an opportunity to go into his office. It was a very dangerous situation. Fortunately, by God's grace, I also quickly found out the man was a total jerk. He was rude to his wife, did not have a good relationship with her, a foul mouth, no principles, certainly not the kind of person I would ever be interested in. The attraction on my side faded.

The point I'm trying to make is this: What if my attraction for him had been met with a responding attraction from him? The story could have had a very different ending. I might not be standing here today telling you how much I love my husband, how grateful I am for my life. Those things that come into your mind, those relationships, those thoughts, they are not harmless. They are not innocent. If they are not dealt with they could lead to all kinds of trouble and heartache in your life. You need to get serious about your mind. You are the only one, you and God, are the only ones that really know what you really think. Nobody else can ever know. So you have to decide that you are going to limit the movies you go to. Other people may seem to be able to go to them. You cannot. There are some TV shows you can't watch. Some books you can't read. Some CDs you shouldn't listen to. Some concerts you shouldn't go to. Places you shouldn't go to because they feed into temptation in your mind. If you are wise, if you are smart, you will stop the battle ground right there. If you don't, it can lead to the next step.

What do Christians do with their fantasies? Deny them? Repress them? I think Scripture tells us we are to turn them into the positive. If you are married, turn that sexual energy into your marriage. If love is the motivating force behind those fantasies the sky's the limit and with God's blessing. If you're single you need to turn your sex drive to creative dynamic ways to serve God and other people.

Don't repress your sexual drive, don't release it illegitimately, but rechannel it in a way that pleases God.

Step two: Emotional non-physical involvement.

To assume that all is well between a man and a woman because there is no physical contact is a mistake. You're fooling yourself. By an emotional involvement I mean that you look to

another person other than your spouse for the deep emotional needs that we all have for understanding, support, sympathy. If you are looking to someone other than your spouse for those needs to be met you are in an emotional affair that can lead you even further into sin.

Unbelievers don't spend a lot of time here. Unbelievers move right to the physical relationship. Christians camp here. They will not deal with the reality of what is going on in their lives.

I met a dedicated Christian woman who told me that she was in a very unhappy marriage, unsatisfying, unfulfilling. There was a man in her church she had begun to talk to, to share her problems with. He was so kind, so tender, so sympathetic understanding the pain she felt. "But he's never touched me. If he ever does, I'm a gonner!" Some of you are in that position right now with someone at work, a neighbor, someone in this church. I'm asking you to take it seriously and understand it for what it is. It's sinful and it can destroy you. It can lead to the next step.

Step three: Physical involvement

Once you've crossed that line to where there is physical contact the pull of the sin is horrendous. To try to break out of a relationship that has crossed those physical lines, the physical boundary, will take everything you have with the grace of God to break through. People who have talked to use who have committed adultery have told us that the power of the love and the passion they feel for this person is like nothing else they have ever experienced before. To think of letting go of that is the most difficult thing they have ever had to do. Don't cross the line. They are there for your protection.

Step four: Rationalizing the affair

We are great in deceiving ourselves. We are experts at pulling the wool over our own eyes. Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" You are a pro at deceiving yourself. You can convince yourself that anything is OK given the circumstances. Some of the excuses we have heard: "If only my husband/wife met my needs, I wouldn't be doing this." "Just one more time." "We love each other." Love will never fracture another person's family. "God will forgive." "God loves us no matter what we do." Both of those are true.

God will forgive you if you are a Christian and have asked Him to and He will love you no matter what you do when you have Jesus in your heart. But I think it is absolutely arrogant to presume on the grace of God in this way.

5. MAINTAIN PROPER RELATIONSHIPS.

Most affairs occur between close personal friends, co workers or family members. Since we obviously have to deal with people every day of our lives how do you maintain a proper relationship in casual relationships?

1. Don't listen to a member of the opposite sex tell you his or her marriage problems. It is so tempting to think that you can be a good listener and sympathetic. The temptation is to think "I would never treat you like that. I would treat you much better than that." Steer them to a same sex counselor.

2. Women do not go fishing for compliments. Don't go looking for them. You may have married a man that did not notice that two weeks ago you died your hair blue and purple and has yet to comment on it. But that does not mean that you're to look outside of your marriage relationship for those deep emotional needs. They are to be given to God. It is illegitimate to seek for another man to meet that need in your heart. Men, not because of the legal possibility of being sued, but because you're a Christian and a godly man, watch what you say to women. If you're not sure what to say, it's better to say nothing in terms of compliments than to give the wrong signal off. Be careful.

3. Be aware of a sense of electricity between you and a member of the opposite sex. All of us have been in gatherings, standing around talking in a group of people and all of a sudden without meaning to you jus notice there is a kind of spark between you and another person. It's kind of scary, kind of shocks you if you're not anticipating it. You have two choices at that point: You can either be stroked by it and think "Wow! That feels good. This person thinks I'm attractive." If your own heart is hurting because you don't feel attractive, because your spouse has not led you to feel that you're attractive, it's very easy to respond to that. You can either move into it or you can pull back that signifies "No, I love my husband/wife and I'm not going to risk what I have just because you make me feel good and make me feel wanted."

4. Avoid a prolonged stare. In America there is a socially unwritten rule of how long you can catch someone's eye and hold it without it being inappropriate. This is OK for singles, it's called flirting. You can catch someone's eye, you can wink! But if you are married, flirting is over. It's a game that no longer may you participate in. It's misleading. Avoid a prolonged stare -- it signals interest.

5. Avoid a lingering touch. Again, there are socially acceptable limits in American culture of what is an appropriate touch and what is inappropriate. It's a dead give away, if a person hugs you too long, or touches you in a way that feels uncomfortable, it is a dead giveaway that they are interested. Don't do it. And beware if someone does it to you. They are signaling their interest in you.

Watch out for these behaviors in your own life. Be serious. Take this seriously, it's for your protection.

Ephesians 5:3 "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality." it takes more than good intentions to remain pure. You need a plan. Rick has some suggestions for you, to conclude with: How to keep you pure.

Rick:

6. MINIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

If you don't want to get stung stay away from the bees. Don't place yourself in situations where you know you're going to be tempted. Recognize the circumstances that turn you on, that weaken your standards, that cause you to be aroused, stimulated. Be alert and be aware of them.

I Cor. 10 "Be careful. If you're thinking `I'd never behave like that" let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin." You need to know the early warning signs of temptation in your life so you can bail out early.

Some of you are thinking this is a great message but I've been married so many years it could never happen to me. Who are you kidding? The fact is the Bible says, the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. We can fool ourselves very easily. When you say it can never happen to me, the fact is nobody is immune. Given the right situation, I or you or anybody else is capable of anything given the right circumstance. You have to put guards around your life and set up guidelines and standards to keep you doing what is right for the Lord rather than what society says.

One of the greatest threats to your marriage is business travel.

The more you're on the road, away from your family the easier it is. You're on the road in a foreign city, nobody there, you're in a lonely motel room at night and who's to know what you watch or what you do or what you think or whatever. You need to set up some standards to minimize the opportunity.

I try to limit my travel. When I do travel I try to take a companion with me. When I travel I take a picture of my wife and kids into the hotel room and set it up on the television. I think that's what I'm living to, that's what I'm committed to. I call to the front desk and tell them to unplug the cable pay channel. Not because I'd watch it because I wouldn't. But because I want to make a statement to the front desk, I don't watch that kind of stuff. I call home every night and talk to my wife and kids. Do the things that keep you in touch. Set up these standards to protect you.

Another thing you need to do is choose your friends carefully. "Bad company corrupts good character." It is well documented that most affairs occur between couples that already know each other. They are already good friends. You better make sure that your best friends are those who are strongly committed to their marriage as you are to yours. If not, they better not be your best friends. Choose people who are committed to their marriage.

Establish some guidelines. "Guard yourself and your spirit [Circle that phrase] and do not break faith with your wife." One of the prime places is offices. Offices are ripe for budding romances. Everybody looks good and they smell good, they're on their best behavior. You don't see them at home with curlers and diarrhea. Even in church offices this could be a problem. It is tragic, heartbreaking, the way Christian leaders are dropping like flies. I am jealous for the integrity of this church and I am determined that this is not going to be an issue in this church. In 1986 I developed what is commonly known as Rick's Ten Commandments. If they sound legalistic, they are. I intend them to be. We live by law, not by grace in this area. I would rather go overboard than be thrown overboard. There are just some things I will not allow my staff to do that may seem harmless. But the bible says an elder must be blameless, above reproach. A lot of people talk about this but I invite you to watch the lives of our staff because we are trying to live this. Talk is cheap. The Bible says leaders must be able to lead by their lives and by their model. Minimize the opportunity.

THE PATHWAY BACK TO PURITY

If you've been unfaithful to your mate there is still hope. you can come to Jesus christ for cleansing. Adultery does not have to kill a marriage. It is actually like a ship. You bring it into the dry dock, refit it, retrain, repair it and send it back out. It is more effective going out: it will go faster and farther.

Three steps:

1. Acknowledge the sin.

Ps. 51, David's prayer when he committed adultery. Stop rationalizing it and call it what it is. it's wrong. It's sin. It's not an affair. It's adultery, that's what the Bible calls it. God has never changed His standard and He never will. Premarital sex is unacceptable to God, it always has been it always will be. Living together without being married is unacceptable to God, it always has been it always will be. Adultery is unacceptable to God, it always has been it always will be. Homosexuality is unacceptable to God, it always has been it always will be. Pornography is unacceptable to God, it always has been it always will be. God does not compromise on this.

One day you will stand before Him and give your puny excuse why you did what He said don't do. If you're guilty of any of these issues, Saddleback is the church for you. This is a community of forgiven sinners. There are no perfect people in this church and it is not a place for self-righteousness. It is a place to come and get your act together and a place to come to find forgiveness and healing and a new life and break the power of temptations that you don't think you can break on your own because you can't without God's help. This is the place to do it because we're all working on it together. We all know what we're capable of and we're not kidding each other so we don't fake it or pretend. We know we need guidelines to keep us in line. Confess and receive forgiveness from God and then you can forgive yourself. Even if there were no heaven it's worth it -- get rid of the shame.

2. End the relationship immediately.

Do it now. "Today if you hear God's voice don't harden your heart" the Bible says. Take action immediately. Don't delay. you move slowly out of fellowship but you move quickly back into it.

3. Avoid all contact with that person from now on.

You can't be friends after you've been lovers. Do whatever it takes to do. End the relationship cold turkey. No more letters, cards, visits, meetings to explain it (call them on the phone to explain it), if they keep calling you up your practice hanging up. Do whatever it takes to void that situation. If it means change jobs, do it. Better that than lose your soul. If it means changing churches, do it. Whatever it takes to break the relationship.

God thought up sex. It's His idea. In marriage it is wonderful and fantastic and a beautiful expression of Christ's love for the church, the bible says. But used improperly it destroys marriages, damages families and lives, damages self esteem, creates misery and guilt, shame and regret, depression, not to mention all the kinds of communicable diseases that are out there today. God says I've established these rules for your benefit. you don't play by the rules, you get hurt. Nothing is more devastating than to feel you were used by somebody the dumped and rejected. God's way is the best way and you can get back on tract. You open your life to Jesus Christ and say, "Jesus Christ, come in and be the manager of my life and help me manage this sex drive that You gave me in the first place." You ask for forgiveness for past mistakes and sins and receive that forgiveness and then you can forgive yourself. Then you make a commitment to be morally pure the rest of your life forward. That means you're going to have sex only to the person you're married to.

Maybe you've realized that some of those thoughts in your life weren't harmless after all and you need to say, "God, help me change my thought life." Maybe you've been involved in an emotional attachment and think there's no sex involved so it's OK. Nip it in the bud. Maybe you've had the heartbreak of an affair in your marriage. There is hope.

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Exodus 20:14
Rick Warren

Exodus 20:4 "You shall not commit adultery."

"Husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and commit adultery."

Heb. 13:4

I. THE PROBLEM: WHAT CAUSES AFFAIRS?

"Adultery is a trap..." Pr. 22:14 (GN)

- Unmet needs
- Unresolved conflict
- Unfulfilled expectations
- Undeveloped self-worth

II. THE PREVENTION: SIX STEPS

1. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO _____

"How can a (person) keep his way pure? By living according to your Word."

Ps. 119:9

"Be faithful to your own wife and give your love to her alone."

Pr. 5:15 (GN)

2. MAGNIFY _____

"The one who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul."

Pr. 6:32 (GN)

"...adultery will cost a man all he has."

Pr. 6:26 (GN)

"God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery."

Heb. 13:4b

3. MAINTAIN MY _____

"A man should fulfill his duty as a husband and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife, and each should satisfy the other's needs."

I Cor. 7:3 (GN)

"Do not cheat each other of normal sexual intercourse ... or you will expose yourselves to the obvious temptation of Satan."

I Cor. 7:5 (Ph)

4. MANAGE MY _____

How Affairs Develop

- 1st Accepting sinful thoughts in my mind
- 2nd Emotional, non-physical involvement
- 3rd Physical involvement
- 4th Rationalizing the affair

"Temptation is the pull of a person's own evil thoughts and wishes. These evil thoughts lead to evil actions and afterwards to death."

James 1:14-15 (LB)

"Turn your back on lustful desires and give your positive attention to goodness, integrity, love, and peace..."

2 Tim. 2:22 (Ph)

"I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about evil."

Rom 16:19

5. MAINTAIN PROPER _____

"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality."

6. MINIMIZE THE _____

"So be careful! If you are thinking, `Oh, I would never behave like that - let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin."

I Cor. 10:12 (LB)

"Bad company corrupts good character."

I Cor. 15:33

"Guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with your wife."

Mal. 2:15

THE PATHWAY BACK TO PURITY

1. Acknowledge _____ (Ps. 51:1-4)
2. End the relationship _____
3. _____ ALL contact with the person from now on. Do whatever it takes to do this!