

AFFAIR-PROOFING YOUR MARRIAGE  
Pure Sex, Part 6  
February 10-11, 2007

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One layer after another. Dump after dump. Shovels and shovels full of twigs, branches, leaves, and wood. It grew and grew into a compost mountain. And then, on a warm south Texas Christmas Day, when the heat was high and air was still, it erupted.

A flame danced deep within and spread until a cloud of smoke and ash hovered over San Antonio, and entered our lungs. A regional disaster erupted because the pile grew too big.

Extra-marital affairs erupt for the same reason. Infidelity is born, not out of random, inexplicable combustion, but day-to-day mismanagement of marriage. Layer after layer of “stuff” piles up until the heat is high and guards are down. The flame and smoke cause massive devastation; the kids inhale it, friends can’t avoid it...and most of all, the marriage is inflamed. Anger scorches the hearts of two human beings. A relationship born in bliss is, quite possibly, ripped apart. But yours doesn’t have to be one of them. With God’s help, you can affair-proof your marriage. Heb. 13:4 gives direct preventive care: “Honor marriage and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy. God draw a firm line against casual and illicit sex.” (Heb. 13:4 MSG)

Let’s zero in on two phrases: “honor marriage” and “guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy.” Honor the plan and protect the privilege.

Do you want to

I. Honor the plan of marriage? Begin by accepting God’s order of events. “Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh. The two of them, man and wife, were naked but they felt no shame.” (Gen. 2:24-25 MSG)

Marriage begins with “leaving”—a man leaves his father and mother. Marriage begins as we turn away from the old strength and support system and engage in a new one. We call this “dating” or “courting.” According to God’s plan, sexual intimacy is not a part of the dating phase. Most movies and books will tell you it is, but don’t listen to them.

Premarital sex does more damage than good. Jimmy Evans’ research led him to write: “People who live together before marriage experience more abuse, more infidelity, more

break-ups, more disappointment, more problems in every category—than people who do not cohabit before marriage. A couple that lives together before getting married is 50% more likely to divorce after marriage than a person who did not cohabit.”

It’s easy to understand why. Courtship sex stunts healthy relational growth. It shifts the attention from the study of the soul to fascination with the body. Necessary friendship creation is neglected. Essential communication tools go underdeveloped. Most of all, spiritual intimacy takes a back seat to physical intimacy. The purpose of courting is to know each other’s souls, not bodies.

Honor marriage by courting with care. And, once you are married, keep courting. What you did to fall in love, keep doing so you’ll stay in love. “Let your mate’s affection fill you at all times with delight.” (Pro. 5:19). If there was more courting in marriage there would be fewer marriages in court. The real problem with many marriages is that what was done to win the mate’s love has not continued to keep your mate’s love. You’ve stopped courting.

“Enjoy life with your wife whom you love.” (Eccl. 9:9). Enjoy your spouse. Encourage each other. Remember, it takes 20 positive statements to affect a negative one. So do more of the former, less of the latter. Compliment your wife on her new shoes, your husband on his hard work. Look into your spouse’s eyes and say, “My life is so much better with you.” Each day this week pick out something you like, big or small, and be thankful. You’ll find out that your spouse is 90% awesome and 10% under construction. You have a great spouse. Tell him or her.

Never criticize your spouse in public. When you make fun of her cooking or his snoring, you are hitting below the belt. Let others mock their mates, not you. You signed on for better or for worse; if you can love the worst, things will get better.

When you fight, fight fairly. Don’t hide stones in snowballs. Don’t harbor grudges or dredge up the past. Avoid unnecessary absolutes like “never” and “always.” When a fight starts, be quick to listen and slow to speak. Honor each other. When you do you honor God and marriage.

Most of all pray.

Scripture gives a second admonition: first we honor the plan. Then we

## II. Protect the privilege.

Guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy. The big point is the most obvious one: God regards marital sex as sacred. A gift that is unique and set apart for a special purpose. Marital sex is not dirty, not a duty, but a gift from God to strengthen a marriage.

Here are some ways to keep sex sacred in your marriage.

1. Consecrate your sex life to God. Consider your bed a holy place. Kneel beside it and pray: “God, may what happens in this bed bring honor to you and joy to my mate.”

2. Put your spouse’s desires above your own. Take a servant spirit into your sex life. See the marriage bed as a place for you to honor one of God’s children rather than satisfy your desires. This happens as you

3. Accept sexual differences. Men and women are different. We love that. Men and women are different. We hate that! Love or hate the differences, let’s understand them. This goes both ways. “...you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way...” (1 Pet. 3:7 NCV). “Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your respect for Christ.” (Eph. 5:22 MSG). Wives, understand that your husband sees sex as a primary need. Men, understand that your wife sees sex as optional. When men were asked to rank the importance of sex, they consistently scored it 1, 2, or 3. (I think some scored it 1, 2, *and* 3.) Women, on average, ranked sex in the number 13 slot—right behind “gardening together.” Apparently the presence of a good garden indicates a restless husband.

Men and women are different. Men categorize the sexual experience. The husband can have a horrible day, be anticipating World War III the next, hear a tornado outside, and still enjoy sex right now. The mind of a man has compartments.

The mind of a female is spaghetti. Everything is interrelated. She doesn’t as quickly detach or disentangle from the demands of life. And she may take offense that her husband does. “How can you think about that at a time like this?”

His response: “It’s easy.”  
She thinks he is insensitive.  
He thinks she’s a prude.

4. Neither is right. Both can understand the other better. Take a servant attitude into your sex life. “Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves.” (Rom. 12:10 NCV).

Here’s another example. Men, about once a month, your wife’s body passes through an inward mutiny. Her moods can swing and body become sensitive. Her irritability is some form of internal rebooting. Be patient during these days. She endures your outbursts over lost football games or rained out fishing trips. You can be supportive, too.

Wives, when it comes to sexual stimuli, your husbands live in a Las Vegas light show. Telling him to not think so much about sex is like telling him to ignore donuts in a Krispy

Kreme shop. It's everywhere...magazines, billboards. Why, companies use curvy models to sell bass boats. Be patient and pray for him.

Let's serve one another. "Honor marriage and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy." (Heb. 13:4 MSG). If you do, you might enjoy a marriage like the one described in Ann Landers' column.

Dear Ann,

Last weekend, we celebrated my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. This morning they left on a long-awaited trip to Hawaii. They were as excited as if it were their honeymoon! When my parents married, they had only enough money for a three-day trip 50 miles from home. They made a pact then, that each time they made love, they would put a dollar in a special metal box and save it for a honeymoon in Hawaii for their 50th anniversary. Dad was a policeman, and Mom was a schoolteacher. They lived in a modest house and did all their own repairs. Raising five children was a challenge, and sometimes, money was short. But no matter what emergency came up, Dad would not let Mom take any money out of the "Hawaii account." As the amount grew, they put it in a savings account and then bought CD's.

My parents were always very much in love. I can remember Dad coming home and telling Mom, "I have a dollar in my pocket." She would smile at him and reply, "I know just how to spend it." When each of us children married, Mom and Dad gave us a small metal box and told us their secret, which we found inspiring... Mom and Dad never told us how much money they managed to save, but it must have been considerable because when they cashed in those CDs, they had enough for airfare to Hawaii, plus hotel accommodations for 10 days and plenty of spending money. Before they boarded the plane, Dad winked and said, "Tonight we are starting an account for Cancun!"

Ann, I thought you'd enjoy this story about 50 great years of intimacy in marriage!  
From a loving daughter in Abilene, Texas

Today, whether you're single or married, a child or a grandparent either make or re-affirm your allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Honor his plan of marriage.

Protect the privilege of sex. In doing so you'll discover the family God intended.

Much of the material in this message is used by permission from  
Dave Stone “What Your Spouse Wants You to Figure Out!” Southeast Christian Church  
“Sex by the Book”

(Our Secret Paradise, pg. 110).  
“The Love You Want” Harrar and Demaria Reader’s Digest Feb. 2007 P. 170

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