

“Taking Care of Our Most Important Relationships”
“How to Affair Proof Your Marriage”

Pastor Randy Orndorff
February 17, 2019

Key Text: II Samuel 11:1-17
 James 1:13-18

I. Introduction: As People We Are All Vulnerable to Sin!

It’s pretty amazing to me that a man God looked upon, who would not have been the one anyone else but God would have selected to be king, and saw that his heart was a heart after God, could suddenly find himself making not one, not two, but three grievous mistakes. It only goes to show us how vulnerable, or how easily tempted anyone of us can be. When is it most likely that anyone could enter into either an emotional or physical affair? Precisely the moment you think you are not at risk.

There is no other way around it. David had an affair with Bathsheba. His eye was attracted to her physical beauty. David’s position also gave him power, which I think he abused, and it is easy for affairs to occur when people are vulnerable in life. A woman who loses a husband at a young age will have men offer to console her and that often leads to places she does not want to go, but the pain and heartache and need for love and affection are so great it’s easy to cave in and then the guilt comes.

II. Affairs/Divorce Are Real Issues We Face

As we think about taking care of our most important relationships let’s be open and honest and talk about how to affair proof our marriages. Look, I may not say everything correctly. I also think it’s dangerous to talk about hard topics. My goal is not for anyone to feel judged or condemned. If anyone feels any conviction I trust it is from the Holy Spirit, not me. I only know the statistics suggest affairs happen quite frequently. The Institute for Family Studies found men cheat on their spouse more than women—20% to 13% and this will vary between ages. Other studies reveal 45-55% of married women and 50-60% of men have engaged in extra marital affairs in their lives. No matter the statistics, let’s think about how we can affair proof our marriages and in general maintain healthy, God-centered, growing, loving relationships. Even from biblical times we see this is not easy. From earliest times people were divorcing. Jesus said it is God’s will that a man leave his father and mother and join unto his wife and they should be one flesh.

And yet, because of infidelity, abuse, not getting along, and an eventual hardening of the heart, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away. It was because of your hearts that Moses wrote this law.” (Mark 10:2-12) That’s what Jesus says.

It’s not God’s plan or hope that people separate. Malachi 2:16 says, ““The man who hates and divorces his wife,” says the Lord, “does violence to the one he should protect.” So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.”

III. King David’s Temptations and Sin

Now, back to King David. As was the norm in his day, David had 6 wives. Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacha, Hagith, Abital and Eglah while he was in Hebron. It was when he moved to Jerusalem he saw, slept with, and then married Bathsheba.

So, while it may seem David as king had a “right” to Bathsheba, he had no right to take another man’s wife. After he sleeps with her and she returns home she sends word she is pregnant—now the cover up and lies begin, ending in Uriah’s death because David has him put on the front line in battle so that he will be killed.

Then the prophet, Nathan, comes to David to confront him about all this. He tells a story of a rich man taking a ewe lamb from a poor man to offer food to a man who was hungry. David’s anger burned that anyone would take

advantage of another man's ewe like this and says, "this is wrong, that man deserves to die and must pay for the lamb 4 times over because he had no pity." (I Samuel 12:1-7) And then Nathan makes it very clear. "David, you are that man!"

And the saving grace in this whole adulterous affair? King David repents and acknowledges his sin before God and, isn't it amazing, God forgives David. But his sin does not come without consequences.

Bathsheba's son dies after 7 days, and calamity will come to David's household as time unfolds. Later he and Bathsheba have a son named Solomon who becomes king and from there, of all the kings that reign in the Northern and Southern kingdoms only 2 are considered good kings.

IV. What is Adultery?

At the heart of the matter, adultery is the weakening of a healthy bond by the intrusion of another person into the marriage. It can happen in the bedroom or the chatroom. Many affairs occur with past relationships and more and more on social media and in the work place. Adultery does not have to be sensual, it can and often is emotional.

Jesus speaks a harder word in Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard it said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart."

Adultery, even on an emotional level, will suck the life out of your bond with your spouse, and it is a trap.

The best way then to affair proof your marriage comes in how a couple takes time to bond. Bonding on a regular basis helps overcome temptations both men and women have to have a "fling" and in most cases get their needs met temporarily by another person.

Let's just say it. Fornication puts a price tag on intimacy and there is no bonding that takes place. And the biggest thing that will help affair proof one's marriage is couples need to travel up and down the bonding ladder several times each week to form a healthy, strong bond that will help guard against an affair.

V. Bonding and Challenges to Bonding

Let me say and admit this. It is easy to get so preoccupied with so many other things couples get stuck and, in many cases, have periods of weeks and months where no work is being done at all to bond. Work or sports becomes one's mistress. Crazy to think, but when these things become our mistresses our spouse is sitting around not getting their needs met and guess what? Appetites grow and people go searching. Temptations will arise and if there has been no bonding or when some of life's challenges come crashing down and one is vulnerable, it is easy to give in.

Let's think about some ways to protect the bond of marriage.

1. **Thinking you are not at risk.** First is to think you are not at risk. We are all only humans. We all have needs and don't forget others have needs as well. An affair is most often a 2-way street.
2. **When your emotional tank is empty.** Second, when your emotional tank is empty is when you are most vulnerable. That means as a couple you have to be spending time together, communicating, doing things, praying, worshipping, serving together.
3. **Watch extended times of separation.** Third, watch extended times of separation. Those can come because of work travel and, in our experience, when Lee Anne spent those final 6 months with her mom. It meant being even more intentional in talking and being together when we were together. Talking openly is a big key to maintaining and strengthening your bond.
4. **Couples are vulnerable when grief strikes.** Fourth, couples are vulnerable when grief touches your life. The loss of a child, brother, sister, parent, friend. In times of stress we are susceptible to an affair, especially emotionally.

5. **Watch intimate conversation with the opposite sex.** Fifth, watch if you are having intimate communications with the opposite sex especially in times of struggle or if you start talking about your spouse in negative ways or you start sharing about your personal pressures. Those are warning signs.
6. **Watch working privately with the opposite sex.** Sixth, pay attention if you are working privately with a member of the opposite sex. Set some boundaries. No touching! No lying to your spouse about where you are or what you are doing. Lies will lead you straight to a trap. Don't we know that's what the devil wants anyway? The enemy has come to kill, steal, and destroy what God intended for good. Date your spouse! Set a date night each week.
7. **Watch being exclusive with another couple.** Seventh, watch having an exclusive relationship as a couple with another couple. Expand your relationships.
8. **Don't allow your heart to be hardened.** Eighth, don't allow your heart to get hardened towards your spouse. Be thoughtful and kind. Lee Anne and I do not always agree on everything. I tend to say and do dumb things occasionally—not always! One thing we have are soft hearts toward each other and we've had to work through a lot of things, especially the grief of losing a child. But we keep fighting the good fight of faith and have needed God's grace to soften our hearts, so love can grow, and our bond be strengthened.

And bonds broken can also be redeemed if we can keep our hearts open and tender to one another. In two weeks, we will talk more about Rekindling the Passion—Don't blush yet! Next week Being Present!

VI. The Story of Hosea and Gomer. God and Israel.

In the Old Testament the prophet Hosea's wife, Gomer, chases after many loves. She is unfaithful to him and this is compared to Israel's idolatry being like adultery. Israel was unfaithful to their God. The temptations were very seductive and promised love and love of power and prestige and fulfillment. They mixed Baal worship with worship of God in pursuit of military might. As a church are we first and foremost loyal to God, remaining completely faithful and having no other loves? Amazingly, even after Gomer is unfaithful, Hosea takes her back and loves her and amazingly, even when Israel is unfaithful, God takes his people back who repent.

Do we recognize that both spiritual, emotional, and physical adultery tend to happen because we are feeling dissatisfied or disappointed with an already existing relationship? That it normally does not happen suddenly, but over time? That it is a process of deterioration, not an impulsive decision? That it is a creation of fantasy about what a new object of love can do for you?

Falling in and out of love again! What is the best advice I ever heard is that we have to fall in love with our spouse over and over and over again. Just like our relationship and bond with God takes intentional work, the same is true for our spouse, our families.

God forgives us and takes us back. I heard in Disciple Bible study that a sheep does not normally get lost all at once. Instead, it's by one nibble at a time until the sheep looks up and wonders what happened. Even then, the shepherd comes looking for the sheep. Know that no matter where you've been, what you've gone through, the pain of inattention, affairs, divorce, for whatever reason, God will not leave or forsake you.

When Hosea was uncertain about taking Gomer back, God said, "Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods." (Hosea 3:1-5)

VII. Watching the Temptations—Working on Connection

Friends, temptations will come for various reasons. Scripture says, "When we are tempted"—and most will be—"God will also provide a way out." (I Cor 10:11-13)

Here's the hard Question to ask: Does your spouse today know that if you had to choose between them and anybody else, that you would choose them without hesitation?

Tonight, we get to come and be part of Comedy Night to laugh at ourselves and all the funny things we do in our relationships. It also affords us an opportunity to grow and learn and do better, be better people. It's actually all part of growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Let me say that it can be so easy to lose connection in marriage. Suddenly, you realize you are coexisting. Life gets busier—communication becomes transactional—who's getting the kids? The connection and affection and being present with each other gets nibbled away and you look up and say, "What in the world happened?" One of our favorite books is The Circle Maker about prayer and how God answers our prayers. A brand-new book out this year is Praying Circles Around Your Marriage. We want to be better and build a stronger bond. What is it you want? Are you willing to work at it? Are you willing to work at building a stronger bond in all your important relationships?

VIII. Closing Prayer

Let's Pray:

God, this is no easy subject. So many of us have had rocky relationships, have gone through divorce, are children of divorce, and may not have it together as much as we think we do. God, we are all vulnerable to temptation. We know in the temptation we can choose to call on you to help us. Help us to be able to draw close to you and closer to those we love and who love us. Use the challenges, and the struggles to unify us with You and our spouse. Help us grow in faith, love, communication, kindness, care, faithfulness, and not allow the enemy to take away the good things you have in store for us.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen.