



Resisting Temptation





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CHRISTIAN FOCUS





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Setting the Scene

Because of the increasing prevalence of infidelity and immorality in Christian circles, I have decided to write a few words on this important subject. They are words of warning, not from a lofty tower of inaccessibility but from a man among men.

Robert Burns said long ago, 'A man's a man for a' that.' All are vulnerable; all can fall; all can face ruin because of improper sexual relationships. Compromise in morality can sabotage our ministry. No-one is immune from attraction to someone else. Sadly, across the lives of some who were in the Christian ministry has been written that tragic word 'fallen'. I point no finger. I thank God for His gracious hand of protection on my life keeping me clean, but I bow humbly and pray, for I also am a



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man, and 'a man's a man for a' that'. May God protect us all.

First of all, it is necessary to establish biblical principles. The Bible gives absolute standards: 'You shall not commit adultery' (Ex. 20:14). According to Levitical law, 'The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death' (Lev. 20:10). The New Testament is also clear: 'Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators...nor adulterers...shall inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor. 6: 9,10).

By definition, adultery is voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man or a married woman and someone outside of the marriage bond – an extra-marital sexual relationship.

Fornication is voluntary sexual intercourse between unmarried people – a premarital sexual relationship. This immorality has left the dark caverns of censured wickedness and has become largely the accepted norm in modern society. The Church in its turn has become conditioned to the lowered standards.

We have become so used to hearing of people in immoral situations that it no longer offends us. The standards of the world invade the church merely eliciting disapproving shrugs or sighs accompanied by the remark, 'Well, that's how it is these days!' But God has not changed, and His demands for moral purity have not changed. The world may have



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eroded biblical standards but the inexorable command is still there, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery!' To Him we must give account.

Nothing so destroys the foundation of marriage as immorality. Its disastrous power demolishes a person's worth. It nullifies trust, destroys respect and integrity, brings shame and grief, and devastates self-esteem. It defrauds people, reducing them to objects of use, not love. An immoral relationship is not an expression of love, but a revelation of selfish lust. Lust is a beast that can devour us. Love desires the best for another person, and endures pain, sacrificing selfish gratification for the good of the other. We live however, in a selfish world that demands that self must be gratified whatever the cost to others. Immorality takes place; the families suffer, the children suffer, the Christian witness suffers, Christ suffers!

Immorality does not occur overnight. We are not paragons of virtue one day and engaging in immorality the next. We are gradually conditioned to it by the media until it becomes inoffensive. Then inappropriate dress, unwise demeanour, provocative talk and subtle teasing lower further our defences.

Slowly protective values are eroded and improper bridges are built. The lingering look, the telling touch, the long handshake, the overlong arm squeeze, the hand on the shoulder, the close-con-



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tact conversation, the understanding and sympathetic friendship, each act contributing to building an improper relationship.

The heart quickens, fantasies chase one another through the mind, the imagination runs riot. Mental images and reveries accumulate and dominate. Slowly the net is spread; gradually, imperceptibly, the line is crossed. Conversations of a personal nature increase. Dependence upon one another increases. The warning lights flicker but grow fainter and dimmer. Excuses are made to be together; lies are told. The inner warning voice has been effectively stilled. You rationalize your behaviour: 'He/she needs me'; 'We minister together'. You argue away the improper attitudes and conduct, pretending they don't exist: 'There is no damage'; 'We are Christians'; 'The Lord is protecting us and blessing us'; 'It's so helpful to the work of God for us to work together in this way.'

A good and friendly relationship has advanced to inappropriate emotional dependence. You are emotionally involved. You live in a painful world between fantasy and reality. It is a kind of spiritual adultery. It is moving relentlessly forward.

One day, one fateful day, the desires and the opportunities coincide and what was conceived by contact and conversation, by fantasy and foolishness, now actually takes place. Thoughts have





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inevitably led to actions and now the consequences must be faced.

Another devastating tragedy takes place. The church must live through it somehow. Another crippling humiliation, another series of broken lives and grief-stricken hearts. What a sad and sickening calamity.

May God help us in some small measure to stem the tide of Satanically-inspired infidelity.

