

Wishes

Sabotaging Your Heart

It began in her heart: subtle feelings of unhappiness gave way to greater feelings of discontentment until she found herself longing for her husband to be someone else. Every day, she saw the qualities she so desperately desired in her husband, displayed in the men that surrounded her. “Why can’t he be like them?” she questioned. “Affectionate, affirming, an adequate provider, an active father, a spiritual leader, a friend, someone I can talk to, someone I can trust?”

Her desire for a God-fearing partner was not unreasonable, but over time her desires turned from healthy aspirations to expectations, from expectations to feelings of discontentment, from feelings of discontentment to covetousness, and from covetousness to lust. To her, the grass *became* greener on the other side of the fence.

When a wife determines that her husband is not adequately meeting *her* needs or ideals, she becomes restless for improvement and change. Once she begins to entertain the desires of her heart, she sabotages her relationship with her husband, making herself vulnerable to those who *will* meet her needs and match her ideals.

Adultery begins with a desire, or a wish, for something you don’t have. Lust robs you of what otherwise should have been sweet contentment in your relationship with your spouse.

Let’s begin by reading Matthew 5:28 from a feminine perspective. At what point is adultery committed? _____

Does adultery include lusting after the qualities other men possess? Why or why not? _____

Proverbs 5:12 says, “*Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well*” (NKJV).

“He’s Not...”

To the average wife an ideal husband is one who is both affectionate and affirming. He is a friend who engages in conversation, listens, and offers godly advice. He supports his wife’s dreams and aspirations and encourages her to pursue them. He shares common interests.

He is also trustworthy, open and honest, disclosing complete and accurate information regarding his past, the present, and the future. He shares his ambitions *and* struggles with his wife, always taking into consideration the affects they will have on his family.

An ideal husband is also an adequate provider and an active parent. He is a spiritual leader, first in the home, and then in the community. (See 1 Timothy 3:2-4.)

When a husband actively pursues his God-given role, his wife feels a great sense of satisfaction. In contrast, when he fails to meet her ideals, her needs are not appeased.

Look back over the description of the “ideal husband.” Circle your most significant need.

Has the absence of one or more of these qualities caused you to feel less fulfilled in your marital relationship? If so, how? _____

If one spouse fails to support the other in the area he or she finds the most significant (i.e. faith or aspirations), the door is opened for outsiders to fulfill that need. A wife may not intend to commit adultery, but once she begins to entertain the desires of her flesh, her heart is likely to follow suit.

Describe the process of temptation according to James 1:14-17. _____

Who is responsible for following the desires of their flesh? _____

Read 1 Peter 2:11, Romans 13:13-14, and Galatians 6:7-8.

Do you believe your needs have gone unmet because your husband is unwilling to meet them, or because he is simply unaware of your feelings? _____

Discontentment says, “I am unhappy at the condition of things.” In what ways have you made your discontentment apparent to your husband? _____

How has your relationship been consequently affected? _____

Can you relate to James 4:1-3? How? _____

A wife’s discontentment is fueled by the belief that she deserves more from her husband than she is currently receiving. What once was a satisfying *relationship* now is a one-sided means to gratify her desires.

Colossians 3:5 says, “*So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual sin, impurity, lust, and shameful desires. Don’t be greedy for the good things of this life, for that is idolatry*” (NLT).

In what way(s) have you attempted to satisfy what is absent in your marriage? _____

Adultery

In Matthew 5:28, Jesus taught that adultery is committed when an intense desire for someone else infiltrates our thoughts. He called this intense desire “lust.” Lust is a need, a personal inclination, a longing or craving, a wish.¹ Lust is fueled by the belief that one will

receive great delight, pleasure, and satisfaction in obtaining that which they do not possess. Lust is *not* merely sexual in nature.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-4 and 12:1-4 and answer the following questions:

Why did the rich man refuse to take a lamb from his own flock? _____

In reality, was the poor man's lamb more satisfactory than his own? _____

Warren Wiersbe said, "The 'traveler' whom the rich man fed represents the temptation and lust that visited David on the roof and then controlled him."²² (See Genesis 4:7.) With this in mind, what drove the rich man to take the poor man's lamb? _____

Continue reading 2 Samuel 12, starting in verse 5 and ending in verse 8. God's heart was grieved as He recalled all He had provided for David. What *has* God provided for you in your spouse? _____

Does it grieve the heart of God to know that the partner He has chosen for you is not enough? _____

Look back at 2 Samuel 11:1-4. How did David set himself up to fall? _____

How does the discontented wife make herself vulnerable to spiritual or physical adultery?

David entertained his desires before he committed the act. How does a wife sabotage herself by lusting after the qualities other men possess? _____

Bathsheba possessed a quality that appealed to David. We can assume that David did not walk out onto his roof with the intent to commit adultery, but that the opportunity presented itself and he was enticed.

When a man appears bearing the qualities her husband lacks, what is likely to happen?

David's covetousness robbed him of what otherwise should have been contentment. In the end, what he thought would bring satisfaction brought only pain and remorse.

According to 2 Samuel 12:8, who can be counted upon to fulfill the desires of our hearts?

Read Philippians 4:11 and Hebrews 13:5.

In closing, Psalm 145:16 says, “*You open Your hand and satisfy the desire (wish) of every living thing*” (NKJV).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In her book, *Adultery: The Forgivable Sin*,³ counselor Bonnie Weil warns that “affairs of the heart can be even more treacherous than the purely physical kind. Women, particularly, are inclined to leave their husbands when they feel a strong emotional bond with another man.” What safeguards can you put into place to guard your heart from forming unhealthy attachments to other men?
2. Do you envy someone else’s marriage? From the other side of the fence, it may appear that certain marriages have it all together, but in reality, each marriage has its own areas of weakness and vulnerability. How can this knowledge keep you from becoming discontented in your marriage?
3. Why is it wrong to expect your husband to satisfy your every need and desire? Can *any* man do this? If you believe he can, where did you learn this?
4. How do movies, books, and other media create discontentment in even the most satisfying relationships?
5. In John 4:1-18, we read of a woman who sought to satisfy the desires of her heart in men. While in the midst of her sixth relationship, Jesus said to her, “*Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again*” (NKJV). According to the text, where would she find the fulfillment she longed for?
6. How can God use your husband’s imperfections to draw you closer to Him?
7. Charles Spurgeon said, “Covetousness, discontent, and murmuring are as natural to man as thorns are to the soil.”⁴ If we want a beautiful garden (marriage) we must cultivate the soil to guard against the thorns. Have you neglected to cultivate the soil of your marriage? If so, how?
8. How does marital neglect cause you to become vulnerable to letting another man meet your needs?
9. What message does discontentment send to your husband? Have your words or actions motivated him to change? Why or why not?
10. Once your husband is aware of your feelings of displeasure, he may retort with anger, grief, or blame shifting. How does this provide the occasion to further justify your feelings of discontentment?
11. How does discontentment pave the way to get out of an unsatisfying marriage?
12. Read John 8:1-11. Many discontent wives share her sin, although they would not readily admit it. With this story in mind, consider Luke 12:2-3. If your heart was exposed, as the adulterous woman’s was, would you be “*caught in adultery, in the very act*”? (NKJV).

¹ Merriam-Webster, Inc. *Merriam-Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*. 9th ed. Springfield, Mass., U.S.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1985, c1983

² Wiersbe, Warren. *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament History*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Cook Communications, 2003. 336.

³ Weil, Bonnie Eaker. *Adultery: The Forgivable Sin*. Norwalk, Connecticut: Hastings House, 1994. 9.

⁴ Spurgeon, Charles H. *Morning and Evening (KJV)*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991. 94.