



Abundant Living Ministries

Encouraging Christian Living since 1978

May 2018

I find myself writing in response to Sharon's article on the second page.

You may wish to read it first.

In responding to the question posed on the second page of this letter, Sharon emphasizes the importance of **fleeing** from temptation while **pursuing** righteousness. I want to expand on that, as it relates to marriage.

As Sharon and I got married over 44 years ago, we both wanted our relationship to be most important. We wanted to always be best friends! We wrote a list of "safeguards" which we purposed to honor... aimed at nurturing and protecting the most precious and valuable human relationship we would ever experience... our own marriage relationship!

I'm glad we developed those safeguards. In our 40 years here at ALM, Sharon and I have now talked and prayed with over 400 couples or individuals who have been involved (or their spouses involved) in extramarital affairs. We've noticed something very interesting.

Very few say they were intentional about developing the affair. Only a handful have said, "I got up one morning and decided, 'I'm going to have an affair.' So, I went looking!"

No... the GREAT MAJORITY say something like: "I never thought this would happen to ME. ***It just kinda crept up on me.*** A half dozen of us eat lunch together every day in the break room: five guys and a lady. The other four guys only talk about hunting and guns so the lady and I sit at the end of the table and chat about more interesting things. I found myself looking forward to our conversations and realized I enjoyed talking with her more than with my own wife. I was careless; one thing led to another and before I knew it I was in here telling you about a full-blown affair."

"It just kinda crept up on me!" I've heard that line so many times!

Sharon and I are glad we agreed, many years ago, on those safeguards for our marriage. Oh, we've been laughed at a few times by those who think we are narrow and confining in our Safeguard Agreement but, after about 400 It-just-kinda-crept-up-on-me stories, we are very glad we've been purposeful in this matter.

How about you? Have you discussed with your spouse how you can best nurture your relationship? What will you do and NOT do in order to protect that which is most valuable in your life? Have you considered actually writing down these guidelines as a constant reminder of your commitment?

If I owned a big block of gold, it would probably be my most-valuable material possession. I would NOT carelessly leave it on the kitchen table when I walk out the door. I would SAFEGUARD it! How much more valuable is our own marriage relationship than a block of gold!

Protect your marriage! Keep it growing!

John (for Sharon and the rest at ALM)

P.S. Sharon and I would be happy to send you a copy of our own Safeguards developed over 40 years ago. We don't suggest others need to adopt OUR Safeguards. Rather, you may look at our list just to get the idea and then develop the Safeguards which will best protect your own marriage. To request a copy, contact Chris in our front office... or you may prefer to download a copy from the website AbundantLivingMinistries.org. (At the very bottom of the Home Page, under *Read Our Newsletter*, click on "Enjoy the Latest from ALM.")





FEELINGS...

Flee and be Free!

But you, man of God, **flee** from all this and **pursue** righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:11)

Flee the evil desires of youth, and **pursue** righteousness, faith, love and peace. (2 Timothy 2:22)

When a wrong thought or feeling hits, don't ignore it... recognize that a temptation is facing you. You can choose to do nothing and let it "dock" in your mind's "harbor." This invites the temptation to get stronger. Scripture warns, "Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." (James 1:14-15).

The much-better strategy is to immediately denounce the feeling and pursue righteousness. "No! I will not harbor the thought of infidelity! I am committed to enjoying the partner God gave me. Lord, please bless my spouse today in a special way!" The teenager tempted to experiment with drugs can think, "No! I belong to God and He lives within me. I will avoid situations and companions that tempt me to do wrong."

The Bible says that truth sets us free. Calling wrong thoughts, desires or emotions what they are... temptations... and then confessing the truth, is the best route to emotional freedom. And that is absolutely the best way to live!

Sharon Charles

Question: I am struggling with a lot of troubling emotions... jealousy, anger, and even a desire to abandon my faith for a wild "fling." I've always believed that feelings aren't wrong... they're just feelings, after all. But they are making me miserable just the same. And they seem to be getting stronger, rather than weaker. Any help?

Response: While it is true that we can't always prevent a thought or feeling from hitting us, it is not accurate to assume that all thoughts and feelings are okay. For example, if a spouse is suddenly overcome with the thought, "I would love to have an extra-marital affair," that is a temptation to do wrong. It is a feeling that needs to be quickly banished. If a teenager feels like trying illegal drugs, that is a temptation to do wrong and hopefully they will have the strength and courage to resist the temptation.

Scripture warns against "harboring" evil thoughts or feelings (see Deuteronomy 15:9, Job 36:13, Psalm 28:3, Jeremiah 4:14, Ezekiel 35:5-6, James 3:14-16). When we become aware of a wrong thought or feeling or desire, we should call it what it is... a temptation to sin and get rid of it. How can we do that, practically?

*When you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. Therefore, my dear friends, **flee** from idolatry.* (1 Corinthians 10:13-14)

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Five consecutive Thursdays at 7:00pm
July 5– August 2, 2018

Taught by an experienced childbirth educator, this class covers the same information offered in a hospital course, but includes a distinctively-Christian perspective. You will meet and connect with other expectant couples and gain many practical helps as you prepare for a great labor and delivery. There is no cost for this course. Please register by contacting the ALM office (see contact information below).

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Six Monday evenings
October 1-November 5, 2018
7:00 - 9:00 PM

**\$120 per person or \$150 per couple
(textbooks included)**

Designed for those who wish to be more-effective people helpers within the Christian community.

Please register no later than
SEPTEMBER 10th by calling the ALM office.
(717) 626-9575.



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