



Sexual sin:

In the first nine chapters of Proverbs there is large section warning against “the loose woman”. We are looking at only one of the passages. The temptations to give in to her seductions are real enough. However she could also be thought of metaphorically as representing folly (the opposite of wisdom).



Reflect: *“If it feels good, do it!”*

This well-worn message still speaks loudly today.

Why do you think God sets boundaries for the expression of our sexuality (as in Exodus 20:14)?

(Read Proverbs 6:20-35)

1. What indications are there in Pro 6:20-24 that God has our best interests at heart?
2. At what point does adultery begin (Pro 6:25 and Matt 5:27-28)?

Read through the article, “12 steps to an adulterous relationship” on the back of this sheet (group members could take turns reading a paragraph at a time).

Share your responses to this article.

3. What is the difference between a de facto relationship and marriage (Malachi 2:13-16 may help here)?
4. How serious an issue is sexual immorality? (Read Pro 6:26-35 and 1 Cor 6:9-11.)
5. Is sexual immorality worse than any other sin? (Discuss first, and then read 1 Cor 6:12-20)

6. *Steve has been struggling with sexual addictions for three decades. He is a Christian, and seeks, trusts and receives God’s forgiveness through Jesus. He has often asked God to help him.*

Discuss what Steve’s next step might be, if he is serious about dealing with his addiction.

12 Steps to an Adulterous Relationship

As you go through the list think about this. Two enemies of an honest assessment of our personal lives and relationships with others are *rationalization* and *denial*. We can easily rationalize that our actions are not serious, and so deny that we are doing anything wrong.

- 1 **Readiness:** We are emotionally ready (for all sorts of reasons: our own emotional baggage, unresolved conflict, communication difficulties etc). For these reasons there can be a lack of real emotional connection, romantic connection, sexual connection and spiritual connection in our marriage. We are an affair waiting to happen. On the other hand, we might have a great marriage and still be emotionally open to forming a relationship of intimacy with someone else.
- 2 **Alertness:** The second stage is the growing awareness of another person. An opportunity for an adulterous relationship begins to present itself. It may be as simple as starting to think about her/him, and could lead to us fantasizing about them.
- 3 **Innocent Meeting:** There may well be a truly chance meeting. Flirtation can start to develop here.
- 4 **Intentional Meetings:** Chance meetings happen. It is also possible for one or the other to engineer them. They may rationalize that nothing is happening, after all, we are only work mates, friends etc.
- 5 **Public Lingering:** The man and woman now spend time together in public settings. They may begin to shut out others at this stage, as their attraction for each other grows.
- 6 **Private Lingering:** More time is spent together, including time in private. Care and concern are expressed towards one another, as well as shared ideas. The couple may still deny that anything untoward is happening.
- 7 **Purposeful Isolating:** The couple spends time together to work things out - the man may ask the woman to help him with marital problems, or she may ask for help with work projects after hours. At home, the wife or husband will probably notice that their spouse has become more emotionally distant and less communicative - more detached than before (for example, phone calls may be cut short).
- 8 **Pleasurable Isolating:** Now they plan time together just for the enjoyment of it: lunches and other dates. There is a youthful exuberance about the relationship. During this time, the marriage partner will often notice that there are large blocks of time not accounted for. The couple will still rationalize that adults need good friends of the opposite sex, and there is nothing wrong with this relationship.
- 9 **Affectionate Embracing:** Longings become intense and lead to physical touching and playfulness.
- 10 **Passionate Embracing:** Affectionate touching leads to passionate embraces and kisses. The couple can even rationalize this stage by saying that it is OK to get aroused because it was innocent and unplanned. *"Besides, my wife/husband no longer makes me feel this way"*.
- 11 **Capitulation:** The couple gives in to sexual intercourse. Denial is eliminated at this stage because they can't avoid the reality of what has happened.
- 12 **Acceptance:** Here the couple admits that they really are having an affair. If they continue the relationship, they do so by mutual choice. The marriage partner is almost always aware at this stage, especially as their spouse is often absent.

Adapted from Eisenman's, "Temptations Men Face"