

Dragons 3:

Introduction:

1 Corinthians 10:6-13 ESV-

(11) Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.

(12) Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

(13) No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

The verses that precede this one talk about the sins that kept the children of Israel out of the Promised Land.

Idolatry, sexual immorality, tempting Christ, murmuring.

Dealing with these sins is something that we all have to deal with....they are recorded here as an example.

What we don't deal with will ultimately defeat us and keep us from fulfilling the dream God has placed in our heart.

They are common to all of us...we all have to deal with these things at one time or another.

There is no temptation that can beat us.
No challenge we can not overcome.

We just need the spiritual character and the mental fortitude to see it through.

Sexual sin can derail your future and abort God's plan for your life. We all acknowledge this and talk about this, but this morning I would like to touch on another area of infidelity that I believe is just as bad. I want to touch on the area of marital infidelity today.

I want to discuss with you that I believe infidelity involves more than just sex.

And I want to deal with the whole area of what I call visual and emotional pornography.

Let's start this morning in the book of Proverbs at a verse that talks to me about having a passion for your spouse that lasts a life time.

Proverbs 5:18-19 ESV

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

You love what you give your focus to.

Passion and love are emotions that are intentional and deliberate.

You have to make the decision to engage in activities that ensure longevity of passion, longevity of love.

The wife of your youth.

The one that has had your children.

The one who has walked through the journey of life with you.

Let her breast fill you at all times – let there not be a time where the wife of your youth does not satisfy you.

Where you do not find her sexually alluring.

Where you do not delight in how she looks....you are stimulated and moved, you find her hot.....this is obviously a passage written by a man to men.

This wife...gentleman...the one who are you are sitting next today, regardless of your marital past, is the wife of your youth.

And this verse tells us we are to be intoxicated always with her love.

You should be drunk with passion for her.

She should make you giddy.
Uncontrollable.
Unable to restrain yourself.

This is not written about someone on the first night of their honeymoon, this is written for someone celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

Comparisons Destroy Intimacy:

One of the biggest impacts of pornography on marriage is that it causes unfair expectations to be placed upon how a woman looks and how sex is conducted.

Every encounter portrayed is with a wanton woman between the ages of 18-22 years who has never had children, and every encounter always ends in ecstasy.

And we all agree this sort of material degrades our little girls. It gives them something they could never live up to. It makes them objects of lust and not love.

And for our wives who have borne our children who wrestle with us through life who don't have the advantage of makeup, a script writer, and mood lighting, we can all recognize that pornography is destructive and detrimental, that women cannot live up to the comparisons and expectations.

A man who watches pornography in the day time goes to bed with comparisons and expectations of a night time that no woman could or should have to live up to.

Furthermore, a man who watches pornography withdraws himself from intimacy with his wife because he has already had his fill of sexual interaction.

I think we would all agree with my conclusions.

I think we would all agree that these are real dangers to marriages and are real dangers to authenticity and intimate communication.

Testimony one:

I want to read you a testimony that I received from someone when they found out I was planning this sermon.

Growing up, I loved books.

A day well spent was one where I found a quiet spot and read a novel from cover to cover.

I read my own books, checked out books from the library, and whatever else was at hand.

In our house, that meant I read my mom's romance novels over and over.

Nothing I saw in real life lined up with what I read in books—I saw no happy endings and no romance in my broken home, or in my early adulthood.

As a result, I had this warped ideal, this fantasy of what love, and marriage, and life should really look like.

I did meet a wonderful man and got married, but because he could never possibly live up to the characters read about,

I never gave my heart fully to him.

I was never fully his.

It started innocently enough.

We were assigned to the same project at work—a new project that would require some long hours.

There were little comments in the beginning that should have sent up red flags...he seemed to notice my appearance a little too much, and he would say things that were a little too familiar for a single man to be saying to a married woman.

I brushed them off, thinking I was probably making it up, and frankly, I liked the attention.

It wasn't long before a few hours at work on a project turned to instant messaging on the computer, staying late to put in even more hours than necessary on the project, and emails and text messages.

I was starting to misplace my attention and affection.

I was giving my attention, my focus, to this relationship, and whatever we give our focus to grows in us.

Things continued to develop, until eventually I had an inappropriate emotional attachment to a man who wasn't my husband.

Even though nothing inappropriate had happened physically, I was having an affair.

I justified myself, because culturally speaking, I hadn't done anything wrong yet.

I knew that I was in over my head, yet I didn't know how to stop.

I had somehow started down a track, and I didn't know how to jump off.

It was like I was addicted now to the feeling of flattery that came with the compliments, and the romance of thinking that a man wanted me when he couldn't have me.

From all outward appearances, I had it all, and I had it all together. Yet here was this relationship that was on track to destroy my marriage.

I had pretty much decided that maybe my husband would be better off without me, that he deserved better than me, that I could not be and do what a good wife should be able to be and do.

I was so deceived, and my position was precarious.

I took a new job that somehow just fell into my lap, eventually severed all contact with the man, and decided to put my marriage back together. God, in His mercy, saved me.

My husband is the greatest gift I have ever been given, there is not a day go by that I do not regret my foolishness and regret the pain I caused him.

Let's talk about Visual Porn verses Emotional Porn:

The sole purpose of visual porn is to stimulate its viewers, sexually. Viewers of porn often have a physical reaction to what they see.

Now, I don't want to generalize and label all women as emotional, but I do believe women are by and large more emotionally driven and have different emotional needs than men.

This isn't to say men aren't emotional, it is just that men are moved by what they see, women by what they hear and feel.

I think a big reason why women enjoy chick flicks, romance novels, soap operas etc, so much is because they appeal to their emotions. They are deliberately targeted and written to stir emotions and draw out an emotional response.

Just as regular porn stimulates the body sexually - and sets up unrealistic expectations of the female body and what some women would be willing to do in bed, so emotional porn sets up a man to fail every time.

There are a range of things that stimulate the female mind to desire and expect unrealistic things from a man or a relationship and this whole genre of media I call emotional porn.

Now, I am not saying that all so-called Chick flicks do that, or that all novels do that.

But I am saying that there are large amounts of media that go unnoticed and unguarded, and if allowed to be unchecked are as destructive to women and a relationship as visual porn is to men.

Now I am not just talking movies.

I am talking soap operas, romance novels, country and westerns songs, TV shows- anything that enwraps emotions and sensuality in such a way as to present unobtainable expectations.

I was at the gym and they were playing country music videos. Every time I looked up at video clips in a 60 minute period they were sexual in the presentation and emotionally unobtainable in the wordage.

It is not the medium that is the concern, it is the message that it conveys.

While traditional pornography appeals to men's visual instincts and creates a false physical ideal of the female body, chick flicks create in women a false emotional ideal of romance and marriage.

Beth Spraul in her book "*When Chick flicks lie*" explores this whole concept of chick-flicks-as-emotional-porn idea. She writes that *women end up comparing men to fictional heroes and disregarding the qualities that are actually important — faith, character, regard for others — in favor of physical attraction or chemistry.*

Any time we say, or even think, "I wish I could find a guy like that" I wish my husband was more like a Mr. Darcy, Hector of Troy, Gerry in PS I Love You, I wish my husband was the silent type, the reader of poetry, the mystery.

We are buying into a dangerous ideal of romance and marriage that just does not exist.

Just as women do not want to be compared to a porn star, guys don't want to be compared to some scripted, surreal, emotionally unobtainable fictional character.

I spoke with a guy this week...and after I told him of the concepts of chick-flicks-as-porn he said "That is so true, I just thought I had to be perfect".

Some men feel like after working all day they come home to a wife who is detached and disinterested with nothing else to give because she has had her emotional fill.

She has had her emotional highs.

She has been romanced,
moved,
seduced
and he stands there in the door way, and can not compete with emotional porn star.

Elizabeth Gilbert talks about the proliferation of what she calls the "Soul Mate Complex" in our modern culture and how the lines in films like Jerry Maguire "You complete me" serve only to perpetuate a myth.

The thought that if you are not perfectly happy where you are with whom you are, with whom you have you don't work on it; you just disengage yourself and move on.

Men tend to have strong sexual desires that are aroused by visual images.

Women tend to have strong emotional desires that are aroused by stories that appeal to the emotions.

Therefore, both chick flicks and porn meet these separate, but equally powerful needs in men and women.

And both can be dangerous, because they can cause obsession and addiction.

After obsessively watching too many chick flicks, soap operas or romance novels, some women may start to think that true love always happens the way they see it in the movies.

When these expectations are not met, disillusionment depression and disappointment sets in.

Our children:

Kids eventually understand that pumpkins don't turn to glass carriages and Fairy Godmothers don't grant wishes, but many girls never grow out of the idea that one day they will be rescued from reality by some magic and a fictitious prince.

And little boys never live up to the fantasy of the mind, or that they're supposed to be that prince, and that their spouse is an all-fulfilling princess.

I was speaking to a lady last week, she found a particular actor cute and attractive. How he was so dreamy and soooo sexy.

I ask her if she read any articles on his personal life, she said she never did, she said it spoils the image of him.

I pointed out that he was an adulterer, an unfaithful man, had a reputation for being late to every movie shoot and of being a weak Prima Dona man of no character.

She was stunned....my point being if we don't challenge the lie, we live with it

Fantasy is fantasy.

What happens on the screen in every context is fake.

Yet women transfer these images, these fantasies to men and boys and ask them to fit into it.

It is unrealistic and impossible for any man to compete with these images.

Now I live in a house filled with women who love Jane Austen.

I am not saying you should stop watching all these sorts of movies or reading all these sorts of books.

What I am most definitely saying is that if you are in denial about the effects that certain things have over you, you will serve them, they will not serve you.

And your husband will continue to never meet your expectations.

Being infatuated with a fictional character, sitting day dreaming about him, lending your heart to him, is the same as doing it real life.....as a man thinks...as a women thinks, in her heart so is she.

Infidelity is more than just sex:

Infidelity is more than just sex.

Infidelity means being disloyal, it means unfaithfulness.

When we hear the term infidelity, we immediately run to the concept of sexual immorality, yet emotional infidelity in a relationship is more devastating and potentially harmful than a sexual affair.

In the April 2007 issue of *Chatelaine*, psychotherapist M. Gary Neuman shared his expertise regarding emotional cheating.

He states, "It's easier for a couple to get over a one night stand than an emotional affair.

This is because a one night stand is meaningless and doesn't involve true feelings or personal thoughts.

An emotional affair, on the other hand, occurs when deep connections are forged.

It's more loving and connected than the physical act of sex."

"Most women prefer emotional contact above all, so if their partner is having emotional contact with someone else, it can feel very threatening," says Neuman.

I am not suggesting that you can not have friends of the opposite sex, but I am definitely suggesting that there are warning signs that you should be aware of.

A platonic friendship, such as those that grow at work or church or in a sporting club, edges into an emotional affair when three elements are present:

a) Emotional intimacy.

Transgressors share more of their "inner self," their frustrations and their triumphs with their "friend" than with their spouses.

b) Secrecy and deception.

They neglect to tell their partner, "We meet every morning for coffee." Or "I had lunch with so and so today."

Once the lying starts, the intimacy shifts further away from the marriage.

c) Sexual chemistry.

Even though the two may not act on the chemistry, there is at least an unacknowledged sexual attraction.

Emotional infidelity ranges from "innocent" meetings around the office water cooler, to talking until 2 a.m. in a lounge or computer chat room.

Emotional infidelity is about sharing deep thoughts and feelings with someone other than your partner – and about keeping emotional secrets.

You can be in the same room as your spouse and have an emotional affair with someone else!

Testimony #2 – before she was saved:

I meet him at work.

He was attractive guy and married.

It started out we would email each other.

Nothing serious, just being funny.

Then he would come by my desk on his breaks just to say hi.

We would joke around and be playful.

I remember when he left my desk I would feel good about myself.

It was flattering that a good looking guy, even though married, would flirt with me.

It was almost like it was more flattering that he had a wife because it meant I had something she didn't have, it was a competition.

Our emails increased, and his visits to my desk increased.

Then on occasion we'd go to lunch together.

I would wear low-cut clothing that showed off my features quit nicely, and I knew it.

I also knew he looked at my features, and I enjoyed that as well.

So I found myself dressing get that attention.

At first, if we went to lunch, it was there and back.

Then we rode together.

Then one day upon returning from lunch, instead of going straight inside we sat in his car, in the parking lot to talk more.

There was more joking and flirting.

I knew he wanted to kiss me, though he didn't say it or try.

And I didn't try to imply that he would be turned down if he tried.

We never talked about his wife, except about how unhappy he was.

How much he couldn't stand her.

We were never physical with each other but I found myself emotionally invested in him.

*Day dreaming about kissing him or thinking 'what if he left his wife...'
Now, I looked forward to his emails, visits, lunches as well as his sexually suggestive comments and looks.
He became more and more blunt in his conversation with me about how he found me attractive.*

*I didn't stop him
or resist it.
Therefore I was encouraging it.*

*Somewhere in my head I thought I wasn't really doing anything 'wrong.'
We were just flirting, besides, he was married, this is safe, what's the harm.*

*Nothing would every REALLY happen.
Almost like it was a game.*

*I knew he wanted it, but he was married so he couldn't have it.
Little did I know that just because he was married didn't mean he wasn't going to try.*

*Finally one day after months of flirting and sexually innuendos, he flat out asked me if he got a hotel room if I would stay with him.
I was in shock, though looking back, I don't know why.*

*I looked like a tease.
He's was prepared to cheat on his wife...
I couldn't chicken out...I felt emotionally obligated as well.
Also there was a thrill that a married man wanted to sleep with me.
Maybe a sense of victory.*

*My answer to him was an unsure 'I don't know.'
Because of my hesitancy he walked away
But didn't ask again.
We didn't talk about it again.*

Things were awkward from then on out and we naturally tapered off talking to just occasionally.

About 6 – 8 months later I left that company and never spoke to or saw him again.

Here are 7 signs that you heading down the road to an emotional, if not a sexual affair

- 1) You discuss your marital problems with your friend.
- 2) You keep your relationship with your friend a secret.
- 3) You begin to feel an attraction toward your friend.
- 4) You turn to your friend with a problem instead of your wife.
- 5) You exclude your wife or husband from your relationship with your friend....its a work thing.
- 6) You would rather spend time with your friend than your spouse.
- 7) You think your friend understands you better than your spouse.

Testimony 3 – An unsaved Christian women:

*I met him at work at a company event.
Tall, dark, athlete. Married. With kids.*

*Then, we started emailing at work.
The more we hung out, the more frequent our emails got.
He seemed more careful in his flirting. A bit more reserved.*

I found myself with a bit of a thrill or flattered by a married man talking to me in a flirtatious manner.

*I soon developed a crush on him.
I would initiate emails or conversations with him.
I couldn't wait to see him, even if it was just at games or chat on email.*

Thankfully, it never went beyond that.

I remember the day that it ended for me, we were at another work event, and had been hanging out that day.

*Then his wife and kids showed up.
He immediately went to them. Hugged them.
It was the first time I saw his family.
I couldn't believe that I willingly lent my heart, emotions to thinking about this married man.*

Seeing his family made it suddenly very real, and no longer a game.

I realized I had gone too far, even if it was only in my head and heart.

How to keep your marriage safe and growing:

1. Stay honest with yourself.

Dishonesty and deception cause affairs to flourish.

What you give your time and attention to will grow.

Whether it's a person, books, or TV, you can build a whole fantasy life that doesn't have anything to do with reality if your focus is in the wrong place.

Have a good, solid, same-sex Christian friend with whom you are able to share these issues and ask for prayer and be held accountable to.

2. Stay honest with your partner.

You have to build a robust marriage

You can't just wish for one...you have to actively...passionately build it from the ground up.

3. Be aware of each others needs.

You have to learn to communicate about what you need both emotionally and sexual.

Nothing ticks me off more than a women crying about her unmet emotional needs in the last month, while she sits next to a man who hasn't had sex for a month.

Both of these are valid needs.

If a man knows that he is going to have great sex if he sits there and listens to you....he will do it for hours.

But if he knows that it doesn't matter what he does or how he does it isn't going to make a difference, he will give up trying.

But you say to me....that is manipulation
...what do you think withholding sex is?

Paul said a women dose not have the right to keep themselves from her husband; in fact he says that if she does, she is setting the marriage up for failure.

He also says.....before the feminist start stoning me....
That a man should not with hold his body from his wife...fellas, that includes you ears. That means you turn off the phone.

Turn off the TV.

Don't come home sit in the chair,
watch the TV while she cooks,
cleans,
puts the kids to bed,
washes up, and then you get up and expect to get some action.

If you act like that...you ain't too bright and she ain't that stupid.

4. Monitor your marriage.

Realize if there is something missing.
Be willing to try to fix it.

Make sure that both of your needs are getting met.

Remember that the premise of marriage is two becoming one flesh.

That means that you both have to die to at least 50% of who you are in order to make the thing work.

5. Stay alert for temptations.

Be very careful about getting involved with someone else in the first place.

Know the dangers.

You can be drawn to an affair as to a drug.

And once you are past a certain point of emotional connection, it is very hard to go into reverse.

Be aware if you find stirrings in your mind or emotions.

6. Don't flirt.

Flirting is never innocent in any friendship or relationship outside of marriage

Flirting is how affairs start!!!

Every woman I have spoken to and asked said they knew what they were doing when they flirted.

They knew when they dressed in the morning they were aiming to dress in such a way as to get a certain reaction.

Girls if you wear a demi-cup bra and a low cut top, you are knowingly

doing it for sexual reasons.

Don't lie and say it is fashion...when did fashion dictate sanctification?

I am saying you should never flirt...not at all.

Between and a man and his wife, it is on for young and old.

You should be flirtatious.

You should always be stirring up passion in each other.

Always be intoxicating each other.

With what you wear.

With what you say.

With what you do.

Because sex is a God given gift to be enjoyed not a tool or weapon to be welded.

Sex is for loving and giving, not lusting and getting.

7. Recognize that work can be a danger zone.

Don't go to lunch or take private coffee breaks with the same person all the time.

If you find yourself eagerly looking forward to their voice, their words, their affirmations – you are already in trouble!

8. Beware of the lure of the Internet.

Emotional affairs often develop quickly, in perhaps a few days or weeks online, where it might take a year at the office.

There is a sense of safety and vulnerability behind the computer screen.

You "talk" to the stranger in a way and about things you would not talk to anybody else. And it is all done in private.

Simply ask yourself this question: Would I be doing this with my wife/husband looking over my shoulder?

Exactly the same with text messages....if I got caught sending this would she say, what would he say.

9. Keep old flames from re-igniting.

If you value your marriage, think twice about having lunch with "an old flame."

Don't befriend them on FB.

Don't reach out and Google them.

9. Value the intimacy of your marriage.

Reveal as much of yourself to your spouse as possible.

You will find it less necessary to form an intimate friendship with someone else if you have intimacy with your partner.

There is nothing that means more to me when I find out than Beccy likes something.

If she likes a certain drink.

A certain type of movie.

To be held or kissed a certain way.

I want to know my wife.

I value intimacy with her on every level.

10. Get help while you can.

If you find yourself in an emotional affair or on the border of one

Here are four simple steps you can take-

1. First of all repent

2. Secondly make a list of the areas that have caused you problems.

Was it texting, instant messaging, a social event or a sport, was it flirting, what was it that start the process, there in lies your issue.

3. Make a game plan to stop the issues arising again.

Turn of chat at work.

Limit who you text.

Go to lunch in groups.

Change jobs if you have to.

Quit the team.

Do everything you can to protect everything you have got.

4. Talk to someone.

Great people in church to talk to.

Mel and Kevin

Scott and Tamara

Put your hand up, we are committed to helping you.

Books.

Resources.

We are running a marriage and family seminar for our church later on this year.