



Who’s Who in this Lesson

- Husband = the offender
- Wife = the offended
- Mistress = the adulteress

Adultery Committed Two Ways

The 7th Commandment

You shall not commit adultery. (Ex. 20:14)

Adultery in the Heart

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matt. 5:27-28)

Adultery in Body

*... The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ **Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body?** For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ **But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.** ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, **but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.** ¹⁹ Do you not know that **your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Cor. 6:13b-20)***

General Differences in Responding to Adultery¹

Wives who have been sinned against	Husbands who have been sinned against
More likely to try to restore the marriage	More likely to end the marriage and remarry
Tend to get depressed and strike out at themselves—negative thoughts and escape with alcohol or food (too much or too little)	Tend to get angry and strike out violently at others, if only in their minds
Are more apt to attribute affair to their general unworthiness	Are more to attribute to the sexual inadequacies
Dwell on the significance of the affair and take longer to heal	Compartmentalize their pain and “move on”

Those Involved Need To ...

- Know how to navigate through the blast and the aftershock
- Know some “typical” responses of wife and husband, but don’t think “one size fits all.”
- Remind wife not to make an irreversible decision when she is in this shattered state.
- Be Warned:
 1. Don’t be triangulated—a spouse may want you on their side. You **HAVE** to stay neutral and minister Christ to both.
 2. Don’t think their marriage depends on you.
 3. Don’t bear the burden alone. They need more than just you.
 4. Be aware of the relentless spiritual warfare. The devil wants to distract, divide, and destroy.

¹ Adapted from *Staying Together: When an Affair Pulls You Apart*, Stephen M. Judah, PhD. Pg. 96-97.



Disclosure

- Is both traumatic and relieving
- It is crucial for wife to ask questions about the adultery as soon as she is able. The longer she waits, the more difficult it becomes because of the intense thoughts, emotions, and pain associated with finding out more information. Prolonging the process of disclosure also prolongs the battle of mistrust with her husband.
- The husband may try to hold back from answering questions because he doesn't want to hurt her more. He is embarrassed and ashamed. He thinks the more he tells, the less she will trust him and the longer it will take for reconciliation to happen.

What To Reveal²

The husband will find it most helpful to be prepared to reveal information simply and factually:

1. **Who?**
 - The husband should reveal the name of the mistress.
 - Failure to reveal the name of the mistress undermines trust. Is the husband protecting his mistress or keeping the door open to continue the affair?
2. **What happened?**
 - How did the relationship develop? What lead up to the first encounter?
 - Did it involve intercourse?
 - If not what did you do? (e.g. kissing, fondling, oral sex)
 - Was it an emotional affair?
 - Did you imagine and desire a life with this person or make plans for the future?
3. **When?**
 - The husband needs to reveal when the incident(s) occurred.
 - How many occasions? What kept the affair going?
 - What was going on in our own marriage when you were out doing this?
4. **Where?**
 - This question is important if the affair occurred on the turf of the wife such as the marital home or bedroom, or the family car.
 - Replacement of whatever articles associated with the adultery is appropriate when feasible; it provides a fresh start and eliminates a potentially large and negative trigger for both the wife and husband.
5. **Current status?**
 - It only makes sense to disclose whether the affair is ongoing, is terminating or has terminated.
 - Each situation requires a significantly different response because each represents a level of risk and complexity.
6. **Who else knows?**
 - The wife needs to know who else knows. This may cause additional hurt and shame.

The Community

When someone in our family has a traumatic event happen in their life or are faced with a terrible trial, we all want to help and should help. It is our privilege to journey with those in our church family / CG so that we can minister to them and serve them in their (deepest) times of need.

The "best" help and care comes from the gospel. We need to make sure we don't allow our **past experiences** or our own **personal thoughts** guide our counsel to those who have been entrusted to our care. The only hope that we have in any trial, situation or circumstance is our hope in Christ. We must have a gospel perspective as we journey with one another, if we don't, our counsel will be just like that "of the world."

² Adapted from *Staying Together: When an Affair Pulls You Apart*, Stephen M. Judah, PhD. Pg. 96-97.



Communication

- Inform a Sojourn pastor as soon as possible. (even in the case of emotional adultery)
- Listen to the wife. There is so much swirling around in her mind.
- Feel free to ask her questions to explore her heart—her thoughts, emotions, desires.
- The husband should not communicate more to his accountability partners than to his wife.

Coordination

- Coordinate care with Campus Pastor, Groups Pastor/Head Coach, Coach, lead counseling couple (if involved), CG leaders and those “sojourners” (those journeying with husband and wife). You want to make sure everyone is on the same page with the same redemptive goals that reflect the gospel.
- You may also coordinate practical needs like housing, childcare, meals, cleaning or grocery shopping or some other form of daily need.

Confidentiality

- Even though the wife may say, “You can tell whomever you want,” this does not give you license to tell others. She is speaking out of a heart that has been devastated and impaled with hurt, shock, and distrust.
- On the one hand, as a ministry leader, you really need to emphasize the need for confidentiality to minimize shame and gossip. On the other hand, you need to prayerfully coordinate with the couple in crisis to see who needs to be brought in to meet the various needs:

Specific Needs	When Do You Share? With Whom?	What Do You Share?
Prayer Support	As soon as possible. With all in your group.	<i>General prayer needs:</i> i.e. “Please pray for John and me as we are struggling in our marriage.”
Practical Support	As soon as necessary. With all in your group.	<i>Practical details:</i> “We need help with the kids after school, grass mowing and other household repairs during this time.”
Relational Support	As soon as necessary. With those you trust & who can journey with you.	Any appropriate details so that others can minister the gospel in specific and detailed ways.

Care

- Know that she will vent out of her deep hurt and pain. Allow the wife to share as “needed” but do not allow her to keep dishonoring her husband, God or others. Her pain doesn’t give her permission to sin against God and others. You can still show that you care for her but you need to remember it is not about her suffering as much as it is about her suffering with God. You might share, “I know you have been horribly wronged but God is with you and he wants you to honor him in your suffering by doing what is right” (cf. Ps. 37:3-5).
- Remember God calls you to care for both husband and wife. A typical mistake is for the CG to rally around the wife and forget about the husband.
- Pay attention to your counsel:
 - *Pragmatic Counsel*—“How can you put up with him?” “I am so sorry he is like that, I can see why you are thinking and feeling this way.” Includes mere empathy.
 - *Personal Counsel*—“I went through it, so can you.” “It’s gets better after the divorce ... God will send you another spouse.” “I would never put up with this.”
 - *Redemptive Counsel*—
 - Remember that the Spirit’s leadership is essential. There may be times you don’t say a word. You will need to remind the husband and wife continually of the gospel.
 - Be cautious and compassionate. Your words can either help or hinder the particular situation.



- You can fall into the trap of not guiding the wife towards Christ in her anger and pain because you may think your words are “Sunday School” expressions. The real struggle is in your own heart—do you really believe that God and his gospel truths offer true hope, strength and peace?
- “God will take what was meant for evil and turn it to good” (cf. Gen. 50:20).
- “God works all things together for good for those who love him, for those called according to his purpose” (cf. Rom. 8:28).
- “God will grow each of you in ways never imagined” (cf. Eph. 3:20; Phil. 1:6)
- “God doesn’t want you to return back to the marriage you had before (if the marriage before the adultery was bad). As God grows each of you, he will develop a marriage stronger and better than before.”

Slow and Fast Track

- The wife wants to take it slow.
 - “I don’t trust him.” “I don’t want to be vulnerable with him.” “I don’t want to get hurt again.”
 - She is just beginning the tumultuous journey of suffering and redemption.
- The husband wants to go as fast as possible, even though he says he knows it will take time.
 - “When will we get over this?” “Will I ever have a legitimate complaint?” “Why does she punishing me?”
 - He has already been on a journey of fantasy, conviction, repentance, suffering and redemption.

Some Sinful or Fleshly Postures

For either the Wife or Husband:

- **Posture of Power** (survival mode)
 - Self-Protection
 - Avoidance—Separation without Parameters; Don’t even want to see him or be in the same room with him.
 - Aggressive Attack—“He deserves my wrath after what he did to me!” “Don’t tell me what to do ... you don’t understand what I have gone/am going through!”
 - Defensiveness—the husband doesn’t want to keep talking about his sins.
 - Self-Provision
 - Independence—living arrangements, perhaps experiencing a freedom and independence for the first time in her marriage if her husband was controlling and unsupportive before the affair.
 - Autonomy—calling the shots
 - The husband & wife need to be reminded that they can’t make it without trusting in their all powerful, always present God.
- **Posture of Weakness**
 - Hopelessness and despair
 - Apathy and confusion
 - “I am the victim” Unspoken—“I deserve all the attention and sympathy.”
- **Posture of Self-Righteousness**
 - Total blame and condemnation towards husband
 - Not caring about how God is working in her husband—not rejoicing in the truth but rejoicing in wrongdoing (cf. 1 Cor. 13:6).
- **Posture of Justice**
 - Vengeful, Evil for Evil—attitude and actions that suggests he deserves the uncertainties, the separation, the extra financial burdens, not seeing the kids, etc.



- o The wife needs to be lovingly reminded that she can't punish, be cold, or be distant forever. It gets you nowhere but embittered and hopeless. Also your husband could give up and stop trying to re-connect.
- o The husband needs to be reminded that he started the injustice with his adultery

Difficulty in the Aftermath

Examples for Wife

Difficulty Before the Adultery	Difficulty After the Adultery <i>Pre-existing issues now amplified</i>
Lack of submission or respect of husband.	Increased lack of submission and disrespect.
Avoided conflict.	Constant conflict – feels like death.
Struggled with unforgiveness.	Bitterness and unforgiveness more of a struggle.
Idolized husband—she is expecting him to meet her expectations.	Grief and mourning amplified by the loss of her husband as an idol.
Lack of desire for physical intimacy.	Repulsed by thought of physical intimacy.
Personal Story—Parents divorced, a parent committed adultery, abandoned the family.	Envisions following the same path as parents, divorce is inevitable, a known entity.

Examples for Husband

Difficulty Before the Adultery	Difficulty After the Adultery <i>Pre-existing issues now amplified</i>
Didn't love and lead his wife in a sacrificial way. All about himself.	Doesn't know where to start. Or now that he is loving and leading his wife, he is expecting gratitude from his wife.
Didn't know how to share his heart with his wife, uncomfortable, stoic.	Really don't want to go there—shame and guilt, don't want to hurt wife anymore; don't want to get into a deeper pit.
Struggled with lust and fantasy—pornography and/or masturbation.	Cut off completely from wife, may be sleeping on sofa or another bedroom
Personal Story—Adultery in his family.	May blame upbringing, may be more shamed because he thought he was different from his family members who may have been guilty of adultery.

Practical “Next Steps”

- **Break All Ties**
 - o Break off all contact with adulterer. Even if husband is willing to break off contact, he may be tempted in the future.
 - o Discuss changing jobs within or outside the company if a co-worker or customer is involved.
 - o Change cell phone numbers for himself and wife.
 - o De-friend the mistress on Facebook and disconnect from Twitter.
 - o All clothing, pictures, artifacts need to be thrown out.
 - o Husband should tell his wife when mistress contacts him. He is not to respond.
- **Confession**—ask several times, at different times if he confessed an adulterous encounter. In most cases, all of the information doesn't come out the first time. Deeper hurt results when disclosure is prolonged.
- **STD's**—Both husband and wife need to be tested—even after kissing and oral sex
 - o Marriage bed—up to the wife where husband sleeps but no physical intimacy until test results are received.
 - o No kissing. Nothing until test results received.
- **Spiritual Battle**—They need to be reminded to fight *for* not *against* each other
- **Confrontation**—Encourage them to confront betrayal head on. This could be the first time they honestly communicate with one another and try to work through issues.
- **Separation**—for the purpose of reconciliation (cf. 1 Cor. 7:10-11)



- Separation—wife wants to get away from husband—bitterness festers. Minimize separation unless any form of abuse is involved.
- When husband demonstrates evidence of repentance over a period of time, then the wife can consider allowing the husband to move back in, but it doesn't mean he would sleep in the same bedroom/bed.
- If the husband sleeps in a different bedroom, you may need to explain the sleeping arrangements to the children.
- If the husband is on the pathway of repentance, a long separation can be detrimental:
 - Fuels the temptation of doubt, fear of the unknown and being drawn back into the fantasy world given the hours of being alone.
 - Miss redemptive opportunities that naturally arise when a husband and wife are living under the same roof.
 - Delays the husband's redemption in practical ways: the ability to listen to and care for his wife, to spend time with and care for the children, to help around the house, and to provide spiritual leadership in the home.
- **Children**—Determine when the husband can see his children.
- **Communication**—discuss who might be contacted
 - Wife's family
 - Husband's family
 - Sojourn Pastor(s)
 - Select men or women in Community Group

Every practical “next step” needs to have a gospel purpose

Don't Get Lost in the Smoke. Keep Your Sights on These Truths

Illustrations

- Sift for gold from the mud and yuck of the riverbed; Looking at homes and seeing their potential
1. **One Flesh.** The husband and wife are both united to Christ and they are both in Christ.
 2. **God's Story of Redemption.** God is using the evil to redeem everyone involved.
 - a. God wants us to see our sin against him in greater ways.
 - b. God wants us to see the cross of Christ in greater ways.
 - c. God wants us to connect the sin and the cross, never one without the other.
 - d. God wants us to experience the fullness of his love.
 3. **Two Great Commandments.** God calls us to love him with our whole lives and love others.
 4. **Faith, Hope, and Love.** God is the giver of all good things—faith, hope and love—as we battle unbelief, hopelessness, and hatred/fear/escapism.
 5. **The Heart.** You need to listen and explore their hearts (thoughts, affections/emotions, will/desires.) so you know how best to minister the gospel.
 6. **Gospel Perspective:** All About Jesus (Kingdom, Cross, Grace)
 - a. God can redeem my husband, our marriage, and me.
 - b. God will take what was meant for evil and turn it to his good and glory. How? In what ways?
 - c. Spousal adultery is hugely wrong and devastating. How does it give you a deeper insight into your own adultery against God?
 - d. God is calling each of you to trust him, not each other's abilities or actions. What are you not believing about God and his gospel? What lies are you believing instead?
 - e. God calls us to put on the armor of God. (cf. 1 Thess. 5:8-11; Eph. 6:10-18)



Prayerfully Hold the Tension Between Suffering and Sin

1. The wife is so deeply hurt that she is not thinking straight but the grace of God is keeping her.
2. Hold the following **tensions** while **advancing the gospel** in good **timing** as led by the Spirit:
 - a. **Anger**—Expressing her righteous and sinful anger.
 - b. **Space**—Wanting space to sort through the chaos (still one) and wanting separation because of bitterness (now two).
 - c. **Wickedness**—Seeing her husband’s adultery as wicked and seeing her adultery against God as wicked.
 - d. **Forgiveness**—Forgiving her husband and seeing her forgiveness in Christ.
 - e. **Love**—Her loving her husband as God’s redemptive agent and Christ loving her (and him) as God’s redemptive agent.
 - f. **Marriage**—Helping her to see her marriage is not just about her, but primarily about God.

Biblical Reasons Allowing Divorce and Remarriage

1. Unrepentant Adultery (cf. Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9)
 - a. If the offending spouse expresses and demonstrates repentance, then pastors will shepherd towards reconciliation of the marriage.
 - b. If the husband is unrepentant, the gospel community and elders will still pursue—“it’s not over until it’s over.”
2. Abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (cf. 1 Cor. 7:12-16)
 - a. The passage is clear that the unbelieving husband needs to initiate the divorce.
 - b. The believing wife should not manipulate the unbelieving husband to make him leave her.

Some Summary Principles

For the Wife:

1. Entrust yourself and your husband to Christ—he is the only one who is trustworthy.
2. Do the right thing even though you’ve been wronged.
3. The sin against you doesn’t justify sin against your husband.
4. Her biggest struggle is with God. See how her relationship with God translates to her loving, forgiving and reconciling with her husband like Christ has done with her.

For the Husband:

1. Entrust yourself and your wife to Christ—he is the only one who is trustworthy.
2. Do the right thing even though you’ve been wronged.
3. Be patient with your wife. Remember you started this deeply hurtful mess. You are still called to shepherd her even now, when she doesn’t trust you.
5. His biggest struggle is with God. See how his relationship with God translates to him loving, forgiving, serving and reconciling with her husband like Christ has done with her.

For the Couple:

1. This adultery is more about their individual and marital redemption.
2. Remember that God is redeeming both husband and wife.

For the Community:

1. God is redeeming everyone involved.
2. Bring every issue and situation back to Jesus and the cross.
3. Coordinate with and follow the lead of the elder or head coach.