

Life Notes *Family Matters with Pastor Cory*

9. **Guard Your Heart**

INTRODUCTION

One evening when Easton was three, I took him out of the bath. I sat him in the living room to watch television and went in the other room. A few minutes later, Joy walked in to see him screaming while clawing his throat! It was terrifying! We rushed him to the hospital. After an x-ray, we got the news. Easton had swallowed a screw. True story.

Needless to say, we learned many lessons that weekend. But none more obvious than this: some things do not belong inside of you. The same can be said of marriage. There are some things that should be inside a marriage and some things that shouldn't. One of the things that shouldn't be in any marriage is a third party!

Growing up, my family was split due to an affair. It not only damaged my childhood, but has affected my relationships, my trust in others, and stirred insecurities. Not to mention the difficulty that comes when explaining the dynamics of a broken family to young children. Unfaithfulness has a rippling effect on many that often lasts a lifetime. In this segment, I want to encourage you with a few ways to affair proof your marriage. Though this isn't exhaustive, it will give you a solid start.

GUARD YOUR HEART

Jeremiah tells us that our hearts are deceitful and wicked. He was well aware that our feelings and emotions are not always the most reliable. With that, Proverbs 4:23 instructs us: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it determines the course of your life." Guarding your heart is guarding your marriage is guarding your kids is guarding your life.

THREE TYPES OF AFFAIRS

Any affair is a multi-layered issue. And unfortunately, it affects far more marriages than we realize. At its core, an affair is a condition of the heart. It begins when a wife detaches from her husband and attaches to someone else. Or vice versa. Below are the three different types:

A Physical Affair

These affairs happen anytime a spouse touches another person in an inappropriate manner. This may be a touch, a kiss, or sexual act. There doesn't seem to be much confusion with this type.

An Emotional Affair

This kind happens anytime a spouse has an inappropriate emotional attachment to another person. As Pastor Darren says, this is giving someone too much of your time, talk, or thought. This exchange may

happen in person, text, or online. Many wouldn't consider this "cheating." Be assured, this can be just as damaging as a physical affair.

It's been said, "An affair happens in the head before it happens in the bed." My advice? If anyone stimulates you emotionally, stay away! One day you will look back and be grateful you did.

A Digital Affair

This may sound odd, but I believe this type is the most common. It is an affair with pornography. Though it may seem physically and emotionally detached, it's far deeper an issue than many want to believe. As a matter of fact, I believe this type is destroying more families than any other.

Pornography isn't just a male issue. According to xxxchurch.com, 33% of women view porn monthly. Men 64%. And this isn't just among unbelievers. 47% of Christians admit this is a major problem at home. As fantastic as technology is, it has poured the pits of Hell into our palms.

We must take action to protect ourselves! For instance, I have installed accountability software and filters on Joy's phone and laptop. I know all of her passwords and the like. She has the same for me. Is that because I am guilty of viewing pornography? No. It is to deter me from viewing it.

HOW TO GUARD YOUR HEART

1) **Ask The Lord For Help**

2) **Use God's Word As A Weapon**

3) **Have Brutally Honest Conversations**

4) **Deal Violently With Sin**

5) **Ask Yourself Difficult Questions:**

- Do I ask others to hold me accountable for my use of technology?
- Is anyone being too touchy with me? Am I being flirtatious with anyone?
- Do I entertain inappropriate thoughts? Or make war with them?
- Am I honest with myself about things that tempt me?
- Do I need to cut off communication with anyone immediately?

CLOSE

If your marriage has not gone through an affair, I sincerely applaud you! Thank you for being so faithful and fighting the good fight. Keep it up!

If your marriage has suffered through this, I want to encourage your heart. There is hope! God has healed many couples that vowed to repent, forgive, and work through the process. I promise. There is hope!