

Counterfeits that Cheat Us



The Key to a Successful Marriage (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again today. Yesterday I spoke about the end purpose of marriage—union that leads to knowing. I explained that the end purpose of God in ordaining marriage is to allow two persons to know one another in the innermost depths of their total personality. That is not merely a physical relationship or an emotional one or an intellectual one but two persons knowing each other in all their fullness. And I said also that human personality is the most precious and wonderful thing created in the universe and so God has set very careful boundaries so that one person may know another but never exploit another and those who ignore these boundaries and try to get the benefits without meeting the conditions are deceiving themselves. They're being cheated.

So, today I'm going to speak about the opposite side of this theme, "Counterfeits that Cheat Us"—human substitutes for marriage that do not produce God's result.

First, let me point out to you that people only counterfeit things that are valuable, and this applies to marriage. If it weren't so valuable, there would be no counterfeits.

When the Old Testament speaks about a man having sexual relationship with a woman it uses two distinct phrases. Some places it says the man "knew" the woman. In other places it says the man "lay" with the woman. If you care to trace this you will see that there is a careful distinction maintained. The Bible only says that a man "knew" a woman if the relationship was legitimate—if it was in line with God's ordinance for sexual relationship between a man and a woman, if it was based on a covenant commitment. But if a man merely had sexual relationship with a woman without making a covenant commitment to her, it does not say that the man "knew" the woman, it only says he "lay" with her. And I believe that this contains a deep truth that God does not open the way for that kind of interpersonal relationship where one person truly "knows" another unless it is preceded by covenant commitment. There can be physical relationship, there can be some kind of sexual pleasure, but the real purpose of marriage, the deep inner knowing of two persons, one of the other, is possible only on the basis of covenant commitment.

Let me read to you what it says in Hebrews 13:4:

> "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

I want to point out to you that that is a statement that cannot be challenged. God is going to judge fornicators and adulterers. Let me explain to you simply the difference in this context between fornication and adultery. Fornication is having sexual relationship without a covenant commitment. It is more or less promiscuous sex. But adultery is what happens when a person makes a covenant commitment in marriage and then breaks the commitment by having a relationship with someone outside the marriage. Of the two sins, adultery is a greater sin than fornication because it is the breaking of that most sacred thing—a covenant. But in each case, the sin consists in the wrong attitude to covenant commitment. One is trying to get the relationship without the covenant commitment, the other is making a covenant commitment and then breaking it.

I want you to understand that God's requirements are designed to protect us from being hurt and any person who indulges in illegitimate sex is desecrating or violating his or her own personality. And the end of that ultimately is not satisfaction, it's not joy, it's not peace, it is frustration and hurt.

Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:18:

> "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body."

I don't believe that merely means that a person who indulges in promiscuous sex is liable to get venereal disease. That is one aspect. But I believe that a person who indulges in illegitimate sex is misusing and abusing his own body. And I believe our bodies protest against that misuse. And the results are in our total personality which come from the abusing of the sexual relationship.

We sometimes speak about people breaking God's laws. I want you to understand that that is not accurate. We never break God's laws. God's laws break us. This is true in the physical realm, where no one ever yet broke the law of gravity. A person can step out of a fourth floor window, what happens? They don't break the law of gravity, the law of gravity breaks them. And that's exactly how it is in this matter of sexual relationships. We don't break God's laws. God's laws break us.

The essence of lust is using a human personality as a means, not appreciating the personality in itself but simply exploiting it for some other purpose. Now God never deals with human personality in this way. God always respects the personality that He himself created.

I want to read you two vivid descriptions of what lust is and what it does. The first is taken from the Bible. The second will be taken from a well-known, secular author. The Bible passage is from Proverbs 7:6–27. I am reading from The Living Bible.

> "I was looking out the window of my house one day, and saw a simple-minded lad, a young man lacking common sense, walking at twilight down the street to the house of this wayward girl, a prostitute. She approached him, saucy and pert, and dressed seductively. She was the brash, coarse type, seen often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner for men to be her lovers. She put her arms around him and kissed him, and with a saucy look she said, I've decided to forget our quarrel! I was just coming to look for you and here you are! My bed is spread with lovely, colored sheets of finest linen imported from Egypt, perfumed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come on, let's take our fill of love until morning, for my husband is away on a long trip. He has taken a wallet full of money with him, and won't return for several days.' So she seduced him with her pretty speech, her coaxing and her wheedling, until he yielded to her. He couldn't resist her flattery. He followed her as an ox going to the butcher, or as a stag that is trapped, waiting to be killed with an arrow through its heart. He was as a bird flying into a snare, not knowing the fate awaiting it there. Listen to me, young men, and not only listen but obey: don't let your desires get out of hand; don't let yourself think about her. Don't go near her; stay away from where she walks, lest she tempt you and seduce you. For she has been the ruin of multitudes—a vast host of men have been her victims. If you want to find the road to hell, look for her house."

That's plain speaking but it's the truth. Now, you might say, "Well, that's religious. That's the way religious people think," but I want to tell you the words of another man, one of the greatest masters of the English language: William

Shakespeare. Shakespeare was not, as far as we know, a religious man, but he was a master of descriptive language and a very accurate observer of human life. This is what Shakespeare has to say in one of his sonnets on lust. I don't think anybody has ever described lust more vividly or accurately than this.

> The expense of spirit and the waste of shame
> Is lust in action, and till action, lust
> Is perjur'd, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
> Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
> Enjoy's no sooner but despised straight,
> Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
> On purpose laid to make the taker mad:
> Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,
> Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
> A bliss in proof, and prov'd, a very woe,
> Before, a joy propos'd, behind, a dream;
> All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
> To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Let me read you those last two lines again:

> All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
> To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

What do you say about that kind of heaven that leads men to hell? My answer is: it's a false heaven. It's a counterfeit. It's the devil's and it leads you to destruction. How can you escape that hell? Shakespeare says, "No one knows well to sun the heaven that leads men to this hell." Today I'm telling you how you can shun that heaven, that false heaven, the false heaven of deceptive lust. The answer is simple: Order your life according to God's law. Accept what God says about the sanctity of the body, the sanctity of marriage. Let marriage be honorable in all, the bed undefiled. Don't sin against your own body by immorality. God is right. He tells us the truth. He sets these fences and boundaries to our conduct for our own good. We only rebel against them to our own destruction.

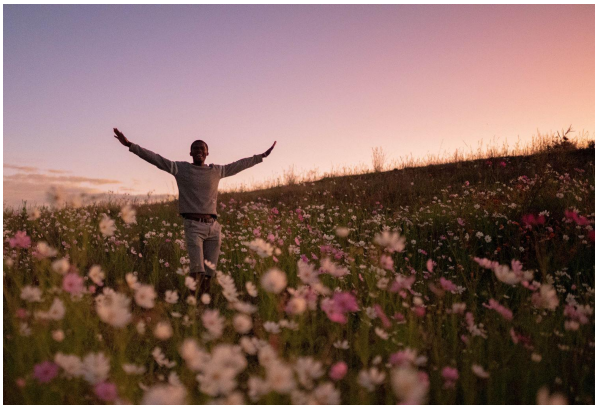
Well, that's all for today. I'll be back again with you tomorrow at the same time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about the roles of husband and wife in marriage, the special contribution that each party makes to the total relationship.

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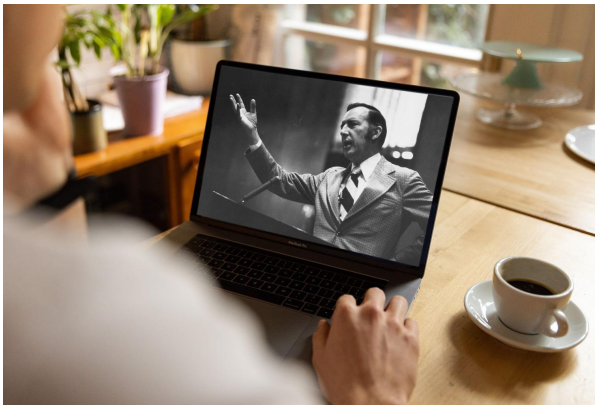
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