

HALT YOUR IMMORALITY BEFORE IT BEGINS...

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

What I endeavor to promote in this essay is God-glorifying and Christ-satisfying sexual purity. In writing this, I hope to show that adultery (=immorality) does not begin when the *act* occurs. That final act may be the last — and public — sin in a long, unattended to, unconfessed pattern of sins where repentance has not occurred.

Here are some "E's" so you don't 'ease' your way into immorality¹ ...

I will attack it negatively. Here is what to *not* to do. In other words: these are the steps to fall into adultery. But to refrain from adultery and sexual promiscuity, one should desire the utmost holiness from the core, the root, the beginning, so that other occasions of sin will not build with a snowball-like effect.

So then, here are a number of "E's" whereby one may 'ease' his way into immorality.

1. Estrangement -- grow distant and discontent with your wife. This naturally and necessarily includes estrangement from the Lord as well. You cannot grow distant with your wife while keeping close intimacy with the LORD. And when blessed nearness to the Lord fades, it necessarily follows that the marriage intimacy, joy, delight, and harmony will quickly fade as well. To grow distant from your spouse can provide the beginning step to easing your way into immorality.

2. Encounter -- you 'come across' someone else. Perhaps the connection comes about online, at work, texting, even at church, a grocery store, the gym, or any other place. There he is. Or, there she is. One with whom you strike up a brief encounter. It may be brief. It may be superficial. It may be momentary. But this encounter is the beginning of deadly poison that will destroy a life.

3. Enjoy -- you have a conversation -- which may lead to more conversations -- and you like it. The key thought here is that you *like* it. This conversation seems different than those you have at home — with your *spouse*. This is actually enjoyable. They are funny. He makes you laugh. She laughs at your jokes and your unique perks. You actually finding yourself *enjoying* the conversation, the chat, the dialogue, or the social communication with the person who is not your spouse.

4. Entertainment -- you begin to tickle the idea in your heart and entertain your mind with thoughts of this person: they are nice, they have what you've always wanted, they do what your spouse doesn't do, they have what your spouse doesn't have. You find enjoyment and entertainment in *pondering* this person and how *they* seem to have what *your spouse* doesn't offer you. After all, this self-focused thinking causes you to focus more on yourself and what *you* think you deserve, what your spouse doesn't give *you*, and you sprinkle your mind with happy thoughts of this person — and how they have what you want.

¹ This idea of the 'e's' so one doesn't 'ease' his way into immorality was adapted & slightly altered from a message by Tommy Nelson — referenced by both Denny Burk and Tim Challies (<http://www.challies.com/christian-living/stopping-an-affair-before-it-begins>).

5. Expedite -- you then begin to create opportunities to be where they are. Yes, you make sure you meet them, you run into them, you communicate with them. You learn their schedule: where they go, when they arrive, when they depart, what time they meet their train, when they take their lunch break, etc. At this point, the lion has already dug his claws into your flesh and the wound is inflicted. The chain of sins has been going on for some time and true repentance is nowhere in sight. In fact, repentance has not even been considered. How could it, you have been too busy forming and fashioning ways and opportunities to meet up with this person. Oh, it's not to do anything 'sexual' or 'immoral' with them; it's simply to *be with* them.

6. Experience -- you then hang out together and experience each other; and you enjoy the experience. it's enjoyable, it's experiential, it's delighting, it's captivating, and it's trapping. When those opportunities come about where you go out together, meet together, talk together, sit together, eat together, you really enjoy the experience. Yet, it must be noted, your spouse does not know about this. It may be that the spouse is under the impression you are at work, out with friends, on a business trip, etc. But this experience — though not sexual and intimate — hammers yet more nails in your own coffin.

7. Exhilaration -- this last step surely follows close behind the experience that you continue to have with this person. It is sure to happen. It's not a matter of *if* but *when*. *When* will the exhilarating intoxication of lust-indulgence happen? This step happens when you are captivated, enamored and bonded with one another's lust and have committed the act of adultery -- which is actually the last bead in the whole necklace of immorality leading up to this point. This is not the only *act* of sin. Every step up to this point has been sinful; this just may be the only *public* act (if even that!). Guard from the entrapping exhilaration and self-focused idolatry of this kind of sensuality.

And, yet, one should also note that

- church attendance has minimized, and
- your bible reading times are less frequent as days and weeks continue, and
- you don't have time to pray; you're too busy, and
- you have little desire to talk to your wife (and children), and
- you have abandoned leading in family worship long ago, and
- you ignore phone calls from others in the church who love you, notice your absence, and sense that something is wrong --- but you ignore the calls, refrain from calling them back, and propagate excuses when they do confront you.

Yet there is, in a sense, one final step in this process. One final "e" remains.

8. Endangerment -- your soul is at stake; if you persist in rebellion and abide in an ongoing life of unrepentance you show you do not know the Lord & that the kingdom of heaven is not your future. Adulterers God will judge. The Lord says in no uncertain terms that the sexually immoral and adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. In fact, the very next verse in one text warns against being deceived (into thinking that one *could* live this lifestyle and still enter God's eternal kingdom). The wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience for such sins. Those who persist in this sin — regardless of their background, knowledge, degree, job, position in the church, or family — shall not enter heaven. Thus, one who takes no steps to halt his immorality before it begins and follows the path leading to the slaughter will surely find God's judgment awaiting him.

Yet for those who humbly confess, repent and cling to Christ, they will find God's free and full forgiveness.