

Affairs



Guarding Your Marriage

by Reg Alderman

Those of us who have chosen to take the vows of marriage make them with every intention of keeping them "until death do us part." However, in today's society, it is increasingly common to hear of broken vows and the all too often occurrence of extra-marital affairs.

While none of us wants or expects an affair to affect our marriage, there are some steps we can take to protect ourselves and our relationships. The first step in prevention may be to understand why affairs happen and to dispel some of the myths regarding them.

There are several factors which may increase the likelihood of one spouse being unfaithful. These include:

- Personality disorder of the unfaithful partner
 - Sexual addiction of the unfaithful partner
 - Developmental crisis
 - Temptation-filled situations
 - Unrealistic expectations of the unfaithful partner
 - Failure to meet ego needs of the unfaithful spouse
 - Codependent behavior of the faithful spouse
- There are also several popular myths about affairs including:**
- The majority of affairs start because of lust.
 - A strong faith inoculates a person against affairs.
 - Affairs rarely happen in good marriages.

❑ Most affairs result in the end of the marriage.

❑ Friends will not betray each other through affairs.

❑ An affair indicates that the straying mate is not adequate.

❑ An affair can improve a boring marriage relationship.

Dispelling these myths can help arm you and your mate against involvement in any relationship that has the potential to develop into an affair.

Although there is no one particular cause of most affairs, there are some preventative measures which can be taken. First understanding the ego needs of men and women and then relating those to understanding needs of your partner is one method of strengthening your own marriage. Studies have

found that people's basic ego needs are as follows:

Admiration: knowing that your spouse is proud of you.

Affection: using actions and words that say to your spouse, "I love you. I'll take care of you and protect you. You are important to me, and I don't want anything to happen to you."

Attractiveness: making yourself as attractive as you reasonably can. Include weight control and cleanliness.

Honesty and Openness: avoiding any kind of dishonesty with your

spouse. Nurturing trust by being truthful.

Family Commitment: being involved in parenting, committed to being a good parent.

Conversation: taking time to show that you are interested in your partner's life and being willing to share your own through conversation.

Domestic Support: handling the household and children in an efficient manner.

Financial support: being involved in providing enough money to live comfortably.

Recreational companionship: finding ways to play together that both enjoy.

Sexual fulfillment: giving and receiving sexual pleasure in a pleasant way.

© **Reg Alderman** is the former Pastor of Hillsdale Baptist Church in Hillsdale, N.C. He has also worked on the staff of Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.