

# How Marriage Works in One Word

He has a habit of leaving for work early. His wife thinks it's because he's a "go-getter." The reality is he's a "go-get-her." Every morning, he drives over to his co-workers home so they can carpool together. She's young. She's beautiful. She's always shows just enough to keep his imagination stirring. He's hoping if he keeps showing up early, she'll be late getting ready. "Maybe," he thinks, "she'll just be getting out of the shower. She'll answer the door wrapped in a towel, invite him in to wait, and one thing will lead to the next and they'll have a quick romp before work. At least that's the way it worked in that porn I watched last week."

Here's the picture of a man who has cheated. Not literally. So far it's just been daydreams. And a few nighttime dreams. But the dreams are always good. He imagines reality would be even better. That's why he cannot tell his wife about his carpool. Or her. Or his fantasies.

But this man has cheated on his wife. Maybe it's better to say he cheated on the promises that he gave to his wife. He has not been faithful, loyal, true, or as the Bible calls it, a "one-woman man" (*cf. 1 Tim 3.2*). In our story, the scenario involves a real woman. This same story could be true of fake women. The lewd woman in a magazine. Or the nude woman on the computer screen. Pornography is a huge problem in our world today. We could have told the story differently by saying the woman left for work early so she could have a short time with the screen of her mobile phone, looking at the muscular, naked men on its screen. Of the man left for work early so he could look at women on his computer screen at work with no one else around. Pornography entices with the undelivered promises, unfulfilled fantasies. The lewd and nude always disappoints and can easily destroy marriages. In any of these scenarios, the people are missing the one word we are speaking of today: Commitment.

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5.27-28).*

So many have warped this passage through the years to make it a cause for divorce. I know women who feel they have a justified divorce because their husband has gotten enticed into pornography. Or men feel justified in divorcing their wife because they were too close of friends with another man or had lustful thoughts about another man. Jesus is not, in this context, justifying divorce. The context makes this clear. Admittedly Jesus does move directly on, after talking about the seriousness of giving into temptation, and mention that marriage is permanent, with the exception of sexual immorality (*cf. 5.31-32*). But sexual immorality is the idea of sexual acts committed in an illicit relationship. One has not "had sex" with a woman based on fantasy or pornography or 93% of boys and 62% of girls enter into marriage not as virgins (those are the statistics regarding the number of boys and girls who have viewed pornography by the time they turn 18 years old).

The context of **Matthew 5.27-28** is the preceding statements from the Sermon which sound similar. These two ideas (hate and lust) are structured the same way and are argued similarly. Jesus teaches that anyone who is angry with a brother will be compared to someone who has committed murder in their heart. This person will be liable to judgment. We don't send

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people to jail for anger. We don't take people to court because they raised their voice or because they called someone a "fool." If that were the case, then we'd need to cart off Abigail (**1 Sam 25.25**), David (**Ps 14.1**), Solomon (**Prov 15.2**), Isaiah (**Is 32.5**), Paul (**Gal 3.1**), and Jesus (**Matt 23.17**). Jesus is using hyperbole to show the seriousness of sin. He is showing that if anger is stopped before it turns into action, then the man will not be guilty of the greater sin. Likewise, if lust is stopped in the heart, then the man will not become guilty of the greater sin. He will not act on his desired adultery. If he is willing to cut out his eye to stop his lustful sight, or cut off his hands to prevent any lustful touching, he will have saved himself from hell.

Maybe a better verse for us to turn to is the words of Job when he is describing his own character and devotion of God and righteousness.

***"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman"* (Job 31.1).**

Someone once pointed out to me that if **Proverbs 31** shows the character of a godly woman, then **Job 31** shows the character of a godly man. And this description begins with Job saying that he has made a covenant with his eyes to view and be attracted only to his wife. He was guarding his heart against lust and his body against adultery. He was displaying commitment. He was faithful to his wife. And by being faithful to her, he was being faithful to his God (which is the real point he is making in this chapter). Job understood the importance of commitment.

Men and women need to get back to a commitment to commitment. We need to remember our promises that we made in marriage. At our ceremonies, in front of God and many witnesses, we promised commitment. Men probably have promised to love their wives. Women probably have promised to submit to their husband's leadership. Men probably have promised to be satisfied with her love. Women probably have promised to remain married and faithful no matter how rich or poor. Men probably promised to love her sacrificially, as Christ loved the Church.

No matter how the promises were uttered or worded, the fact is that when you married, you made vows. You promised to remain committed. And this is what God wants out of you in your marriage. This is the key to longevity. This is the one word that has to exist in a marriage: Commitment.

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