

Consider This—First
By Rick Ezell

“Can a man scoop fire in his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched?” The obvious answer to both questions is no. And he goes on to emphasize, “So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife; no one who touches her will go unpunished” (Prov. 6:27-29 NIV).

A leader of a Christian organization fell into immorality. Afterwards, he was asked, “What could have been done to prevent this?”

He paused for a moment, then said with haunting pain and precision, “If only I had really known, really thought through, what it would cost me and my family and my Lord, I honestly believe I never would have done it.”

A law of physics says that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. For every sin there is a consequence. One does not sin in isolation. Sin not only affects the sinner, but the offended and others. It creates a ripple effect impacting individuals and organizations.

The next time you are tempted to cross the line, rehearse the possible consequences of your actions.

Physically. You may contract a sexually transmitted disease. And perhaps infecting your spouse or future spouse, even causing death. You may possibly cause pregnancy, with the personal and financial implications of a child.

Mentally. You will relive the experience in your mind over and over again. It’s often said the mind is like a computer. The one noticeable difference, however, is that a computer’s memory can be erased. Whereas what you experience, especially sexually, is retained for life. Those memories and flashbacks could plague future intimacy with your spouse.

Emotionally. You will venture down a path that may lead to addiction. Psychiatrists and therapists who work with various addictions say that sexual addictions are more powerful than alcohol and drug addictions with a lower successful transformation rate.

Personally. You may lose your self-respect. You may invoke shame and embarrassment upon yourself. You will create a form of guilt that is difficult to shake. Even though God will forgive you, you will find it hard to forgive yourself.

Professionally. You may lose your job. You may forfeit your status. You may waste years of training and experience because of having to change a career due to impropriety and immorality.

Relationally. You will destroy your example and credibility with your family. You will lose the respect and trust of your spouse and family members. You may lose your spouse and your children forever. You may cause shame to your family.

Spiritually. You will grieve the Lord who redeemed you. You will drag his name in the mud. One day you will have to look Jesus in the face and give an account for your actions.

Periodically reviewing and rehearsing the consequences cuts through the fog of rationalization, filling our hearts with the healthy, motivating fear of God.

From *The 7 Sins of Highly Defective People*, Copyrighted 2003, Rick Ezell.