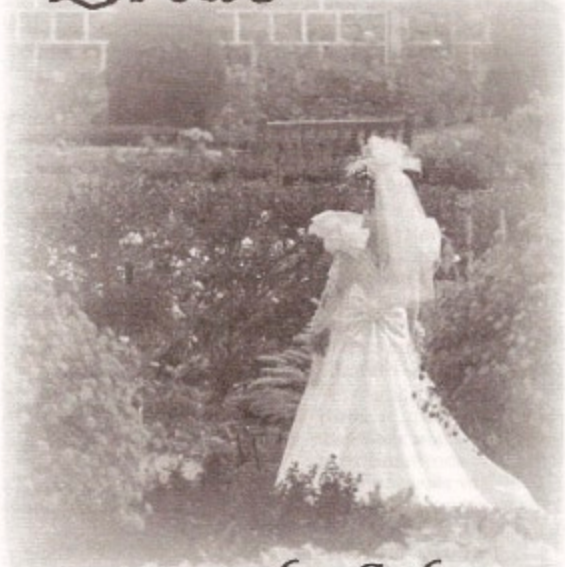


*Blemished
Bride*



spiritual adultery

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

Many times the Bible compared the husband-wife relationship to the relationship between Jesus and the Church. Christ considered the love and harmony between husband and wife so great that He used it to compare His love for us. Of course, Jesus loves the Church far more than a husband and wife could even begin to love each other. But no greater love was there on earth for Christ to compare His love than that of the union between man and woman.

The union of man and woman is strong. If the marriage is centered on Christ, it can endure all things. But there is one thing that will try a marriage more than anything else, and that is the sin of unfaithfulness of one mate against the other. That is the sin of adultery. It is the one thing that seems impossible to forgive and even harder to forget. Only through Christ can this sin truly be forgiven and forgotten. This sin tears both sides of a marriage. The one who commits adultery is often eaten up with guilt; the other one feels defiled. Other things can be forgiven with ease, but in the case of adultery, only in the name of Jesus can all things truly be forgiven. It is probably the worst sin we could commit against our mate. In the same sense, spiritual adultery is probably the worst sin we could commit against our God.

Spiritual adultery? What is that? I've never read anything about it in my Bible. Sure you have. Exodus 20:3... *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."* It's the first commandment.

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:14).

Just as a husband or wife is jealous when their mate commits adultery, so is our God jealous when we commit spiritual adultery. Just as we grieve our mate by this act, so do we grieve God. Spiritual adultery is putting something above God. We all know that much. But we need to dig a little deeper. Go back to the husband-wife relationship for a minute. When

you commit adultery in the flesh, you don't necessarily put someone else before your mate. But, if only for a few minutes, you do put someone on the same level or in place of your mate and by the very act of adultery you allow someone else to take care of the needs that your mate has vowed their life to fill. This is the very reason your mate will be so hurt by this act.

In the same respect, spiritual adultery is not only putting something above God, it is also putting something or someone in addition to, even with, or in place of God. Reading the horoscope out of the morning paper is spiritual adultery. It is having a god in addition to your one God. You might say, "I really don't believe in it. I just read it for fun." This is probably very true. You don't really believe in it. But how do you think God feels when He sees you bringing a pagan god into your life?

"It's just for fun. I really don't believe in it." Go out and commit adultery in the flesh, then come home, smile at your mate and say, "Honey, I just committed adultery, but don't worry about it. I really didn't mean it. I just did it for fun." It will be little consolation to your spouse that you "just did it for fun." The fact remains that you defiled your body and your relationship with your spouse. No matter why it was done, their heart will still be broken. That's just how God must feel.

Your mate might say in tears, "I'm a failure. I can't fulfill all of your needs. Am I not good enough for you?" God might say, "What's wrong, my child? Why do you allow a pagan god to be a part of your life? Am I not a big enough God to fulfill all your needs?"

It's easy enough to picture how your mate might feel. Try to picture how God must feel when you cheat on Him. He sent His only Son to die for us on Calvary, then He sent His Holy Spirit. He gives power to tread on the devil. He gives us authority to use Jesus' name. And to top it all, He freely gives us love that we can't even begin to comprehend. And what do we do but start off every day by bowing to a pagan god, "just for fun."

We aren't the first generation to defile God with spiritual adultery. The Jews did it when they were only six weeks out of bondage. God delivered them from the hand of their Egyptian captors. He opened the Red Sea in their exodus. What a feeling that must have been to stand on the floor of the sea with the power of the Living God literally holding back a wall of water. Then going into the desert and having their food fall from heaven like rain. Yet with these things still fresh in their minds, what did they do? They built a pagan god, a golden calf, and bowed their knees and worshipped it. How did God feel about their spiritual adultery? He came very close to destroying them all. This is how God felt. How does God feel about spiritual adultery - when He is not first in your life? Read about the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Read about Sodom and Gomorrah or the sins of mankind before the flood or even the Tower of Babel. Read 1 Samuel 28:5-19. Saul was told, while using witchcraft, that he would die because he did not obey the voice of the Lord. Whenever man walked away from God and turned to something else, he incurred the anger of God. God wants our fellowship. Yes, God is a Jealous God. Therefore, it behooves us to learn from the mistakes of others. As children of God, we have no other choice; no other options are open to us. We are to serve Him and Him alone. We need not and should not dabble with horoscopes, psychics, fortunetellers, palm readers, hypnotism, drugs, charms, or any other type of divination.

Adultery, whether marital or spiritual, is a betrayal of a committed love. Those things that would tempt us to commit spiritual adultery will lose their appeal if we put God first and allow Him to permeate every aspect of our lives and fulfill every need as they arise. *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of His bones"* (Ephesians 5:30).

— Roger A. Wagner

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