

When Adultery Happens

I hate to say this, but my wife has cheated on me, and I feel really angry.”

“She is no better than a dog. You should divorce her and find a better woman.”



“I feel so hurt! My husband has been seeing another woman.”

“What a cad he is! You should leave him.”



Brothers and sisters, so-and-so has been caught in adultery. #we have gathered here today to expose his sin and to expel him from the church.”



What should the church do?

When adultery happens, what should we church leaders do about it? First, there are two errors that church leaders must avoid, and, second, we must follow biblical instructions.

Errors to avoid

Error 1: Reacting emotionally in anger. Some leaders immediately condemn the adulterer in public. This causes public shame, often destroys marriages, and fails to bring spiritual healing and restoration of the marriage. Outsiders will hear about this and say that Christians are a bunch of hypocrites.

Error 2: Trying to avoid all publicity. If church leaders try to keep the matter quiet and hide their actions, then others in the church may also commit adultery, believing that the church will do nothing about it. Some outsiders already know about the adultery, and they will say that Christians are a bunch of adulterers.

Steps to take

What does each of these Scriptures instruct churches to do, when a Christian has committed a grave sin?

1. Matthew 18:1-20

Church leaders should guide the couple through steps to repentance and to reconciliation.

2. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

If the adulterer remains unrepentant, then the church should shun them, no longer treating them like a church member.

3. 2 Corinthians 2:5-10

When the adulterer does repent, then the church should restore them and treat them as a church member.

Other practical guidelines

- Foreigner church workers should never apply church discipline. Rather, they should review, with local church leaders, what Jesus and the New Testament have to say.
- Local church leaders should apply biblical instructions, in culturally-sensitive ways.
- If there are wise church members who are skilled at giving marriage counsel, then they may arrange for that member to give counsel to the couple.

- Foreigner church workers, or local church leaders, or wise marriage counselors can lead seminars for church members, teaching how to improve their marriage and how to avoid temptation to commit adultery.

Know these causes and cures of adultery

Cause: When men commit adultery because they want more sex, they need to learn how to be filled daily with the Holy Spirit.

Cure: The fruit of the Spirit makes men better able to love their wife, remain faithful and exercise self-control.

What is God's promise in **Galatians 5:23-24**

Cause: When men commit adultery because they got drunk or took drugs, then they must get free from their addiction.

Cure: Church leaders must pray for such men to be delivered from addiction through the powerful name of Jesus. Such men should also get counsel from wise folk who understand addiction.

What is God's promise in **1 Corinthians 6:9-15**

Cause: Some women commit adultery because they want to be loved, they need to learn how to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Cure: The Spirit pours God's love for them into their heart.

What is God's promise in **Romans 5:5**

Cause: When women commit adultery to get money.

Cure: must learn to believe in God who supplies all they need by his riches in Christ Jesus.

What is God's promise in **Philippians 4:19-20**
