

## ***Warning Signals***

We've seen it in the news. The mayor of San Francisco had an affair (P.C. for adultery) with his campaign manager's wife. And in the most bizarre case, astronaut Lisa Marie Nowak assaulted a "romantic rival." Warning signals were missed in their lives, warning signals that could have saved them a lot of pain, guilt, and embarrassment.

The moral bedrock is that adultery is wrong. God placed it in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:14). It is there to protect marriage, family, and society itself. Disintegrating families lead to a disintegrating and decadent culture. We need strong moral and religious convictions on this issue.

Yet moral and religious convictions may not always be enough because emotions are powerful. We must also actively protect our marriage and heed the warning signals when our thoughts and emotions are going in the wrong direction. Charles Mylander noted some "yellow lights" to warn us of marital danger:

1. *Emotional Stage.* Beware of emotional delight outside of marriage that is not taking place within it.
2. *Touching Stage.* Double-check your feelings if you find yourself looking forward to the next hug.
3. *Possession Stage.* Watch out for male-female friendships that become too close; they come to believe that they belong to one another.\*

Heeding these "yellow lights" is like getting out of the Niagara River before you pass the point of no return and go crashing over the falls. We can control our thoughts and emotions when we see them taking us in the wrong direction, but we must do so before the sweep us along to actions we would regret.

Jesus teaches this in the Sermon on the Mount.

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. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.  
Matthew 5:27-29, *ESV*

Jesus makes clear that wrong thoughts can lead to wrong behavior. We must battle the wrong thoughts to prevent the immoral actions. The thoughts warn us that moral and spiritual dangers are ahead. Unfortunately, our society provides many glaring examples of missing the warning signals.

—Russ Holden

\*Mylander, "Running the Yellow Light" *Marriage Partnership* (Nov-Dec, '87), pp. 37-38.