

## FLIRTING WITH DISASTER: DEALING WITH MORAL FAILURE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

Pastor Francis Chan

*Pastor Francis Chan deals with the moral failure of a church leader in a wise, compassionate, godly fashion. Sin must be dealt with, but our focus in facing the issue of compromised morality in the church should be godly fear and self-examination rather than condemnation and arrogance.*

It is so hard for some people to do self-evaluation. There are certain people that are great in discussing other people's sins and other people's issues, but an inability to look at their own lives. I don't understand that, because ever since I was a kid, I was very hard on myself, and constantly looking at my own life. How do I explain humble examination to someone who has never done it? I'm trying to get people who don't normally consider their own actions to consider their own issues carefully before God.

The Pharisees could see what was wrong with everyone else, every tiny detail of other people's lives, but somehow were blinded to their own sins. We need to look carefully at our spiritual condition and trust the process that the church leadership is using to deal with the fallen leader. The greatest thing we can do right now is use this opportunity to get rid of the impurity in our church fellowship. When I described the moral failure, we know that we all are vulnerable. It could happen to any of us. We also know that it is happening in some of your lives. There is a lot of hidden sin in the body. There is a lot of hidden sin in the body. You can wait until the day that God exposes that, or you yourself can come before Him today and cleanse yourself of that.

This has been an amazing week for me, honestly. It was a great week of self-examination and get rid of junk. Sometimes we believe that there is this "safe zone" where you are not necessarily pursuing the things of the spirit, but you are also not totally in sin yet. We think that there is this fence where we can walk where there is a little bit of flirting, a little bit of talking, a little bit of stray impure thoughts, maybe a little Facebook commenting or texting. We justify our actions by saying that nothing physical has happened yet. Either you pursue the things of God or you pursue the things of the flesh. There is no fence. If there is a fence, then Satan owns it. Where is the impurity? Where am I rationalizing and playing games in my own mind saying it's okay but never doing it in the presence of Jesus Christ? I can have inappropriate conversations simply because I am not living in His presence at that moment. Let me get that out of my mind. Let me get that out of my life.

Affairs start with harmless flirting. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says "We destroy arguments, and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. I love that phrase, "take every thought captive to obey Christ." Every single thing, you take it captive like it's your prisoner, you interrogate it and go "is this of God? Is this what God wants me thinking? This is your body, this is your mouth, God, these are Your hands, Your eyes, You are the Lord of this body."

I pray that this will also be a great week for you, just to take every thought captive, to evaluate every thought. Everything you watch, saying "Is this of the Lord?" Good news. On Thursday, Lisa and I celebrated our fifteenth anniversary. I can say to you that I love this woman more than I ever have. I am crazy about her. There is no one I'd rather be with, it's been an amazing ride. Fifteen years, those of you who have been down that road. It just flies by. I can say that I desire her, maybe too much information, but I desire my wife more than I ever have. It was a good time this weekend!! We're married, it's okay, it's the way God designed it. One of the things that I told my wife this last week, that I just thanked her for as we look over these fifteen years, I have never ever seen her be even the tiniest bit flirtatious with another man. I thanked her for not being that way. Not even one sentence or e-mail sentence. Not even one Facebook comment, that's even questionable, or the tiniest bit inappropriate. I just thanked her for that. I've never questioned her loyalty, and as a husband, that type of devotion means the world to me. Even in her thoughts, she has remained pure. That's what every husband wants. Every husband wants to know that his wife is faithful to him. Even when someone is flirting with her, I know she's not going there, she's not going to play those games. I praise God for His grace.

Ephesians 5:5-27 "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

I've preached this passage so many times, and when I looked at this, I thought that it was about marriage, and any time I did a marriage ceremony, I would turn to this passage, any time I'm doing pre-marital counseling, I would turn to this passage and I would point out "Look, husbands, love your wives" that our job as husbands is to love our wives, cherish our wives, and in the same way that Christ loved the church." The way Jesus loved the church is the model for us in marriage. He gave Himself up for her, so husbands, we give ourselves up for our wives, we sacrifice ourselves the same way that Jesus did for the church. "That He might sanctify her" we should be leading our wives to further and further purity. Every guy wants a wife that is spotless, holy, without blemish. I'm so glad I can say that about my wife. However, the Bible makes clear that Paul was not talking about human marriage, so much as he was talking about Christ and the church and that great mystery. This about the church and about Jesus' passion for the church. Christ gave Himself up so that we, His bride, His church, might be holy and blameless, spotless, shameless. I love my bride's purity, and I heard Jesus say, "That's what I want in my bride." Sometimes I am called legalistic because I am so hard on sin, but I see Jesus, longing to see purity in His precious Bride. When we experience moral failure in the Body, we grieve, yet our heart should say, "Oh, God, I don't want that for your Bride."

I know there is sin in the Body. We all know there is secret sin in the Body. We know that there are affairs-full-blown affairs in our midst right now. I think "man, I'm sorry God. That's your Bride." We are the Bride of Christ. That's why it concerns me. What about emotional affairs? That is also a blemish on the Bride of Christ. Things going on in the heart that are hidden. We justify and say we haven't gone to a physically impure

relationship so we are okay. We've got to get rid of all of that. There are inappropriate things being looked at by the eyes in this room. Movies, internet, we are the Bride of Christ. The eyes of Jesus. We are His temple. I don't want to use His temple for filthy things. Even cell phone issues, they need to be pure. Any stain, any wrinkle, any blemish. I want to be pure for Christ.

2 Timothy 2:22: "So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." It does not say stand there and use self-control, it says you need to run from that, so if you are standing there, you are in sin. Why are you there? If there is even a question, you need to take action. We flee by setting up parameters. We flee by taking thoughts captive. Since I travel all the time, I haven't even had a woman in my car that wasn't one of my children. Never alone with another woman. I have to run away. I am not going to sit there and play with fire. I don't even counsel women in my office. There are plenty of women that can counsel other women. I'm not even a good counselor! I'm really bad at it. Some of you know this and say "Amen." I don't even really listen!!!

This theme of fleeing and pursue righteousness, and peace. The Bible says to do both. You run away from something and you run toward something else. There are churches that spend so much time telling you what to run "from" that your whole life you are running away from something. Don't do this....don't do this. Absolutely! Scripture teaches that, but that can't be our only focus. The Bible teaches you to pursue something as well. It's like dieting. You don't just run from unhealthy foods, you eat the good stuff. Because you are going to be hungry. Pursue the right type of eating. Run away, but pursue things. 1 Thessalonians 4 says "abstain from sexual immorality, and pursue sanctification." Colossians 3 says, "Put off all of these deeds of the flesh, and put on all these deeds of the spirit." Galatians 5 says "Don't walk in the things of the flesh, stay away from those, but walk in the Spirit and pursue the fruit of the Spirit." In the Old Testament they would say "Do this, and God's wrath will be upon you," or "do this and the blessings of God will be upon you." Pray the Lord's Prayer, "Lord, lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil." Are you running, or are you sitting there, playing with fire? Galatians 5 commands us to "walk in the Spirit and YOU WILL NOT GRATIFY the things of the flesh." If you just pursue moment by moment what the Spirit wants you to do, if you just keep in step with the Spirit, you don't really need to worry about the other stuff. "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit. And the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. They are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do." As long as I am focused on the Holy Spirit and surrendered to Him, I will be kept from sin. I'll never sin. Never. When I lose focus, I get snared into temptation. When your mind is in neutral, it can be pushed. When you put your car on "D" for drive, I'm heading this direction. You can't push me backwards. Some of you guys are in neutral, some are in reverse. I just made that up. Pretty cool!

In John 17 when Jesus was leaving the earth, He prays for His disciples. Do you remember that prayer? Father, He says, My time is done. The time has come. Glorify your Son that you Son may glorify you. He talks about how He completed the work that God gave Him. Jesus was going to leave the earth, but He starts praying for the people

that are staying behind. He wants to pray for His disciples. He wants to pray for these guys. He goes “I’m not praying that you take them out of the earth. I want to pray that you protect them from the Evil One.” Jesus was well-aware that there are so many traps in this world. There are so many things in this world to ensnare us, especially in the area of sexual sin. He then prayed that God would sanctify them, purify Your body with the truth. Your Word is the truth. That’s why last week we read through the whole book of Ecclesiastes. There is something purifying about listening to the Word. I want to read to you Proverbs 6. It’s amazing when you read the book of Proverbs, you find out how much it talks about this area of sexual immorality. Solomon writes about this knowing that we would be trapped by this.

Proverbs 6:23-33 says,  
“For these commands are a lamp,  
this teaching is a light,  
and the corrections of discipline  
are the way to life,  
24 keeping you from the immoral woman,  
from the smooth tongue of the wayward wife.  
25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty  
or let her captivate you with her eyes,  
26 for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread,  
and the adulteress preys upon your very life.  
27 Can a man scoop fire into his lap  
without his clothes being burned?  
28 Can a man walk on hot coals  
without his feet being scorched?  
29 So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;  
no one who touches her will go unpunished.  
30 Men do not despise a thief if he steals  
to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.  
31 Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold,  
though it costs him all the wealth of his house.  
32 But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment;  
whoever does so destroys himself.  
33 Blows and disgrace are his lot,  
and his shame will never be wiped away...”

I’ve asked two of our men to read Proverbs 5 and Proverbs 7.  
(Reading)

Some of you guys hear those words and it kills you. Because you've given in. But that's why we are here, and we can celebrate what Christ did for us. He can forgive you of anything that you've done. I don't want to make this religious where you do good and run from bad. This is about a relationship, a love relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you know why we run from that sin? It's because Jesus Christ is better. The reason we sold all we had was because this relationship is better! You have to say to God, "I want you more than I want this relationship. Jesus is better than pornography. This attention I get from guys, I enjoy it, but you are better. I'm going to run to You, run to You, run to You."