

Emotional Infidelity

Headline: This week's Fathers Team meeting will focus on our relationship with our spouse. Men, are we allowing relationships outside of the marriage to become more important than our relationship with our spouse? Husbands need to keep the relationship that we have with our wives as paramount.

Objective: This session is intended to help men explore how they are living in their relationship with their spouse. For this exercise we define emotional infidelity as when you gain fulfillment emotionally from someone who is not your spouse. It's OK to have best friends or confidants, those people who you have fun with or vent frustrations to in certain moments. However, those relationships should be subordinate to the relationship that we have with our spouse. This session is intended to help men to discern if they replace the emotional connections meant for a spouse with another person.

Song Suggestion: The Servant Song

Bible and Catechism Readings:

Ephesians 5:21-28

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

The husband should fulfill his duty toward his wife, and likewise the wife toward her husband. A wife does not have authority over her own body, but rather her husband, and similarly a husband does not have authority over his own body, but rather his wife. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by mutual consent for a time, to be free for prayer, but then return to one another, so that Satan may not tempt you through your lack of self-control.

Catechism 1638

"From a valid marriage arises a bond between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive; furthermore, in a Christian marriage the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state by a special sacrament."

Catechism 1644

The love of the spouses requires, of its very nature, the unity and indissolubility of the spouses' community of persons, which embraces their entire life: "so they are no longer two, but one flesh." They "are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving." This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the sacrament of Matrimony. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together.

Saint: Saint Joseph: [A model of fidelity](#)

My Lord and my God, I firmly believe that you are here, that you see me, that you hear me. I adore you with profound reverence. I ask your pardon for my sins and the grace to make this time of prayer fruitful. My Immaculate Mother, St. Joseph, my father and lord, my guardian angel, intercede for me.

We have just invoked St. Joseph as our father and lord. These words have to mean a lot to us in a very special way because St. Joseph, who is a hero for us, gives us such a marvelous example of strength, of resilience, of faith, ultimately, of fidelity. Each one of us is called to be a source of solidity for our family, for our neighborhood, our church, our society. And so, during this time of prayer we can turn to St. Joseph and ask him to give us a double portion of his fidelity. In one sense, it could strike us as a little bit odd, that St. Joseph occupies such a lofty space simply because we know so little. He appears so little in the New Testament and yet we know that he was a source of solidity for the Holy Family.

In our prayer we can fill in the gaps with our imagination. We can think, for example, of the difficulties that St. Joseph had to face and we have to make a special effort to use our imagination because the problem is that we know how those situations turned out. We can only begin to imagine what St. Joseph experienced when he was told that his fiancé was expecting a child in those days of uncertainty, of agony, really, until the angel told him that the child whom Mary was expecting was of God. The unimaginable dread after the birth of Jesus, when Joseph was told to arise immediately and flee into Egypt with Mary and Jesus. We can't imagine the dread of the- the horror of thinking that the ruler of the land was hunting down that infant nor can we imagine what it must have been like to arrive there - that poor, young family - to arrive in a distant foreign land, having to begin again. We know how everything worked out, but it helps us to- to stop and think, what did Joseph experience during those- those tough times when he was confronted with enormous difficulties? He confronted those difficulties with faith and with confidence which is why we can consider him the master of fidelity.

Vignette: David, an engineer at a high-tech company, was married to Claire, whose career was in a different field; she didn't understand much of what David did for a living. When Emma, a new salesperson, joined David's team at work, David was captivated by their shared passion for technology and their conversations about customers, big deal opportunities, and co-workers. David and Emma's bond eventually deepened from professional chats to an emotional connection, leaving David increasingly distant from Claire, who felt left out and confused. David enjoyed syncing with Emma on the way to work about their prior evening, and the day's adventures ahead. He found he could talk to Emma about anything, and she seemed to understand. One evening, Claire confronted David about the growing gap in their relationship, expressing her hurt and bewilderment. Realizing his mistake, David ended his connection with Emma and sought therapy to understand and address his actions. He and Claire worked on their relationship, focusing on rebuilding trust and improving their communication. The journey was challenging, but David learned the importance of emotional fidelity and balance in his marriage. In the end, David and Claire emerged stronger, having deepened their commitment and understanding of each other.

Questions for Large and Small Group Discussion:

If you have a close friendship that you think may have crossed the line into an emotional affair, consider asking yourself the following questions:

Are you experiencing repetitive hostility and conflict in your marriage?

Do you feel an emotional distance from your spouse?

Do you find it difficult to talk with your spouse?

Are you sharing more with your friend than you are with your spouse?

Do you think your friend understands you better than your spouse?

Is the phrase, "We're just friends," your rationalization for your close friendship?
Does your spouse know about the friendship or the depth of your friendship?
Do you look forward to being with your friend more than being with your spouse?
When you talk to your spouse about your day, do you avoid talking about your interactions with this friend?

Do you prefer being with fellow workers or friends to being with your wife and perhaps the rest of your family?
Are you sacrificing your time with family to be with those friends?

Resources:

<https://stjosemaria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/St.-Joseph-Model-of-Fidelity.Transcript.pdf>
<https://www.verywellmind.com/emotional-affairs-and-infidelity-2303091>

Action Plan:

Does this topic make you think of weaknesses or strains in your relationship with your wife that could be considered emotional Infidelity? Take time, examine your conscience, do you see any hints of replacing what should be shared with your wife, being shared with another woman or other person? Resolve to change and talk to your wife about it.

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