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“We use a most unfortunate idiom when we say of a lustful man prowling the streets that he ‘wants a woman’. Strictly speaking, a woman is just what he does not want. He wants a pleasure for which a woman happens to be the necessary piece of apparatus. How much he cares about the woman as such may be gauged by his attitude to her five minutes after fruition--one does not keep the carton after one has smoked the cigarettes.”

(C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves , p. 135)

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## **Chapter Fourteen**

### **The Dark Side of Passion: The Mystique**

#### **\*Especially for Men**

Insight #14 Men’s strong physical side can lead into the mystique: sex divorced from love and, honor.

Kerry captivated my heart instantly; he was fun-loving, adventurous, and admired by all, especially the youth of the church. One Saturday, he offered to take one of the boys, who was having struggles in his life, ocean fishing. Kerry had a small rowboat just right for the occasion. When they arrived at the coast, a warning sign greeted them on the beach: NO SWIMMING OR BOATING ALLOWED: TREACHEROUS UNDER CURRENTS.

Kerry chose to ignore the sign, after all, the sea was calm, the breeze was light, and there were just a few slight swells on the blue green water. He must have reasoned that there was really nothing to worry about; he was an experienced outdoorsman. He had been through plenty of close calls in his life, and there was never a situation thrust upon him that he couldn’t handle.

Unfortunately his experience was, for the most part, in a totally different environment. He had been raised in the Rocky Mountains. And although he knew and understood the inherent dangers that exist on icy lakes and raging rivers, he had never experienced the undercurrents of the Pacific Ocean. This was the first of his two fatal mistakes.

As they loaded their little boat with fishing gear, sandwiches and snacks, he reminded the boy to wear a life jacket. He himself was an expert swimmer, and he definitely didn't want to be encumbered by a bulky life jacket. This was his second mistake.

They were on the water just over an hour when the wind kicked up and the waves began to crash with a frenzy of turmoil. It all happened so quickly. The little boat was no match for the sea. It finally gave way and capsized, throwing both of them into the foamy, icy waters of the Pacific.

The young man--with the help of his life jacket--was finally able to reach the beach. Almost completely exhausted, he drug himself ashore and then turned, looking for his leader. Nothing. And then he saw him. About a hundred yards out, he was perilously clinging to the top of a rock. By now the sea was boiling. The young boy jumped up and down, waving frantically to his leader. Then he stopped and stared horrified as a giant wave came crashing down unmercifully over the rock, and his leader was gone.

### **The Undercurrents or Evil Force**

Kerry was no match for the powerful undercurrents. Like a giant vacuum, they sucked him into the water, and to death. The powerful undercurrents of the ocean are like the powerful down pull of evil that pulls human sexuality away from love and into the dark side of passion: the mystique.

John Milton, in his classic epic poem "Paradise Lost" reveals the deep despair of the Evil One who will never know the joys of sweet, intimate marital love. The scene in the poem is vivid, looking upon Adam and Eve in loving embrace, ". . .with kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned for envy, yet with jealous leer malign eyed them askance and to himself thus pained:

"Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two  
Imparadised in one another's arms,  
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill

Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,  
Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,  
Among our other torments not the least. . ." (p.

112)

Milton portrays the devil's horrible torment that He will never experience sweet marital love. Enraged by fierce jealousy, he attempts to corrupt and destroy it. Interesting idea. The emotions

can lead women into dramatic, and often destructive relationships masquerading as love, while the adventurous physical side of men can lead into the mystique--seductive sex.

We need to just look around to see that there's a power intent on twisting human sexuality away from the Creator's intent. Everyone passing through puberty is endowed with this power, and must choose whether to use it for or against themselves and others. Sexual drive creates a need for others--either a need to love or the need to merely use another for sexual gratification.

What a prime target to corrupt! Think of the tragedy when the marvelous powers to bind men and women together are used as a game, a predatory sport, even a weapon of hate. Men viewing women as toys for sexual pleasure and women, fearful of exploitation, scorning all men, or looking upon men as toys for pleasure and men fearful of exploitation. Such fertile ground to seed contempt, greed, envy, lies, deceit, pretense, pride, vanity, between the sons and daughters of God!

Think of the pain and sorrow of unfaithfulness--when the circle of love is broken by infidelity. Disloyalty inflicts a wound on the soul that penetrates deeper and wider than any other kind of human suffering. Scarred-over hearts may never heal; the nausea of betrayal hangs on and on. Think of the tragedy when the powers of procreation become powers of prodestruction, as happens when they are used for exploitation, rape and child molestation.

In his fascinating book, The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis adds to Milton's idea. It is written in the form of directives or memos from one devil to another. He writes,

“He [meaning God] has filled His world with pleasures. There are things for humans to do all day long without His minding in the least--sleeping, washing, eating, drinking, making love, playing, praying, working. Everything has to be *twisted* before it's any use to us. We fight under cruel disadvantages. Nothing is naturally on our side.” (p. 102)

Sexual intimacy is naturally good, naturally uplifting, naturally the greatest force for happiness. It can create little heavens on this earth where husbands love their wives and wives love their husbands, and together they love their children. This wonderful power for happiness must be twisted away from its original intent in

order to become bad, immoral, and harmful to the human spirit. It must be twisted away from making love to making lust, then it can create literal hells of human suffering, because nothing penetrates and pains deeper than crimes against the heart. Those who seduce almost always feign love to get sex, and feigned love hurts deep. Wounds against the body can heal in a matter of days, but wounds against the heart sometimes never heal.

### **Twisted into an Act of Lust**

How can human intimacy be “twisted” away from the original intent of the Creator? How can it be twisted away from its purpose? How can the Adversary, who will never experience intimacy, know how to twist it?

It must be twisted away from an act of love, and turned into an act of lust. Then instead of making love, it becomes an act of simply making fun, or making alienation, or making resentment, or making hate.

There are grey layers of the twist, and there are black layers--when the power to love is twisted three hundred and sixty degrees away from the Garden of Eden version and cast into outerdarkness--when tenderness is twisted to callousness, when bonding sinks to alienation, when it is used as a game, a predatory sport, acting out under the cloak of love. There’s a universe-wide difference between love and lust. Lust is best described as intense sexual cravings motivated by power rather than love. Dictionary terms: devoured by desire, mad with lust, frenzy of desire. These intense cravings have nothing to do with love, and everything to do with selfishness, pride, vanity, abuse, and power. Lust drains spiritual strength, while love increases it. Lust drains feelings of the heart while love magnifies all good and tender feelings for everyone. Lust originates from sex organs; love originates from the heart. Lust is greedy while love is giving. Lust shuts down conscience while love enhances it. Lust confuses the mind and battles with reason, while love clears the mind and creates order. Lust doesn’t care about the morning after, while love cares for eternity.

“Lust is a captivity of the reason,” said Jeremy Taylor, 16th century clergyman, “and an enraging of the passions. It hinders business and distracts counsel. It sins against the body and weakens the soul.”

Poet John Milton wrote, “When lust, by unchaste looks, loose

gestures, and foul talk, but most by lewd and lavish acts of sin, lets in defilement to the inward parts, the soul grows clotted by contagion, embodies and imbrutes till she quite lose the divine property of her first being.” In other words, lust cankers the soul and corrupts the very nature of a child of God into becoming animalistic. Those who prefer the barnyard romp, eventually belong in the barn.

There are more differences between love and lust. Love respects human life; lust disrespects all life. Love inspires honesty; lust inspires lies and deceit. Love sees hearts, minds, and feelings, while lust sees sexually, wants sexually. Love inspires one to bless the life of the beloved; lust inspires one to possess the life of another or merely to use that life for sexual gratification. Love inspires dignity in oneself; lust inspires depravity. Love inspires a deep adoration and admiration for the whole person--body, mind, spirit, personality, unique identity, while lust inspires only a deep craving for flesh-to-flesh intimacy. Love desires a soul mate while lust wants a playmate.

### **The Rape of Lucrece**

William Shakespeare’s “The Rape of Lucrece” gives a graphic picture of one who is enflamed with predatory lust. It reveals the internal conflict between conscience and fierce desire. Conscience pleads, but passions win. It begins with a group of Roman soldiers discussing the virtues of their wives. Collatinus tells his friends that his wife Lucretia is most chaste and virtuous. They all agree to find out whose wife is most chaste by surprising them in the night suddenly and secretly. All the wives are “dancing and revelling” except Lucretia, who is spinning with her maids.

The king’s son, Sextus Tarquinius, becomes inflamed by lust as he observes the beauty and purity of his friend’s wife, Lucretia. That night, after Collatinus leaves again, “he treacherously stealeth into her chamber, violently ravished her, and early in the morning speedeth away.”

Before surrendering to his lust, his conscience pleads:

“What win I if I gain the thing I seek?

A dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy:

Who buys a minute’s mirth to wail a week?

Or sells eternity to get a toy?

For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?

. . .I have debated, even in my soul,

What wrong, what shame, what sorrow I shall breed;

But nothing can Affection's course control,  
Or stop the headlong fury of his speed.  
I know repentant tears ensue the deed,  
Reproach, disdain, and deadly enmity;  
Yet strive I to embrace mine infamy."

The author continues,  
"But she hath lost a dearer thing than life,  
And he hath won what he would lose again.  
This forced league doth force a further strife,  
This momentary joy breeds months of pain,  
This hot desire converts to cold disdain:  
Pure chastity is rifled of her store,  
And Lust, the thief, far poorer than before."  
(p. 1170,1175, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare)

### **The Dark Side of Passion--The Mystique**

The twist, or mystique, attempts to make lust appear more exciting, more sexually satisfying than love--as if fragmented sex could possibly be more satisfying than holistic intimacy of mind, heart, body and soul. The mystique would say, "Oh, of course there's sex in soul-bonding, and marriage, and all that family stuff, but the real thing, the real passion happens when you break out of all that and enter into a different dimension--a mirage only--that's beyond reality. Only in this way can you get the high that your sexuality deserves. Sure God knows about love, but I know about sex--raw, sweaty sex."

There are at least four layers to the mystique: **masturbative sex**, using a man or woman as an apparatus for sexual pleasure, **consensual and collusive sex**, pausing conscience to have a dead-end masquerade, **predatory sex**, satisfying the craving for sex and pride with the thrill of the hunt, and **criminal sex**, acting out the rage inside through sexual satisfaction that comes only with another's suffering and pain. (This last, darker form of the mystique is discussed later.)

### **Predatory Sex**

Chris was waiting to take our daughter Anna out on a date. I had often heard her comment on his respect for women, and so I said, "I hear good things about you. My daughter tells me that you won't play the games with women, as many of the guys do. She

admires the respect you have for women.”

“I don’t know how they can do it,” he said. “Most of my friends see it like it’s all a game. They’ll go for the best-looking woman around like they’re going for a trophy or something. Then if someone better looking comes along, they’ll break off with the first and go for that woman. They don’t seem to even care whether these women are getting hurt or not. I know that you might admire me for not playing the game, but sometimes I find myself wondering what’s wrong with me.”

“Wrong with you?” I asked.

“Well, everyone I know seems to be into the trophy game, and I just can’t do it, so I wonder what’s wrong with me--like I’m not a real man or something like that. I guess I’ve been around too many women to just use them. I was raised with my Mom, my Gramma and my sister. I just can’t look at women like they’re toys when I’ve been so close to them all my life. But I know that some of the guys look at me and wonder if I’m just a wimp.”

“You’re not a wimp,” I said, “You’re a gentleman. You have respect for women; you have a good heart. You obviously still care.”

Chris’s friends might be adventurous, or mischievous, or maybe showing off to impress someone, but if they continue to fake love to get sex they may find they can’t love at all. Chris noticed this when he observed, “They don’t care whether the women get hurt or not.” The disrespect for these women eventually extends to all human life--even one’s own. We have the choice, to love with honor, or to dishonor and lose the ability to love at all.

Chris’s friends have entered into the mystique--sex twisted away from creating circles of love--and turned to a predatory game. They began playing the game after they were seduced themselves by the lies: that a *real man* becomes more manly with each seduction; that a real man plays the game: sex for entertainment, sex for vanity, sex for pride, and that real men stay distant--cool and casual, even cold. They probably don’t stop to think about the suffering they are inflicting upon women. If they did, perhaps they would reconsider what it means to be a real man. By some standards, Chris isn’t a *real* man--by the world’s definition--but by my standards, he’s a true man--true to himself and true to women. I was very impressed.

In the real world, men are never less like men and more like beasts than when they are trampling upon tender hearts to play the jungle game--seducing various and assorted women in various and

assorted ways. On the other hand, nothing is more of a disgrace to womanhood than when women cunningly capture a heart that they do not even want in order to satisfy their craving for attention, vanity, or pride.

Behind the mask of the masquerades are bad ideas and bad motives, and behind the mask of the masturbation and predatory mystique there's a different set of bad ideas and bad motives that appeal to masculine pride and twist the longing to love and bond into a desire to use and abuse. Some of these bad ideas are:

Men who score with many women are more manly.

Some women or men exist, like toys, for sexual gratification and that it's okay to use them because they expect to be used.

Sex is simply a biological need.

Real men don't cry, feel or fall in love.

Sex is more exciting when it's immoral, or worse, when pleasure comes with another's pain.

It's okay to say, 'I love you,' even when it's a bold-faced lie to get sex.

Spending money gives you a right to her body.

Women secretly like being seduced into sex--even forced.

Sexual passions cannot be controlled.

Extra-marital affairs can actually help a marriage.

The lies go on and on; these are just the beginning, but they all lead to the same ending: creating circles of indifference and dishonor. In this section we will explore both the *power* and the *plan* behind the mask of the mystique.

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— *“Sexual attraction creates, for the moment, the illusion of union, yet without love, this ‘union’ leaves strangers as far apart as they were before--sometimes it makes them ashamed of each other, or even makes them hate each other, because when the illusion has gone they feel their estrangement even more markedly than before.”* *The Art of Loving, Erich Fromm, p. 54*

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## **The Web of the Mystique**

The mystique is sex robbed of dignity. It is stripped down to the bare-bones of the physical act itself. It's seeing it all as a joke, a sport, a game, a hunt, and a selfish pursuit. Recently, I read an article in which a group of young men in high school set themselves

a challenge to see how many of their women school mates they could seduce by graduation--this is the predatory mystique. A middle-age man pursues a beautiful married woman for the challenge of it all--this is the predatory mystique. A woman plots to win her employer's heart and separate him from his wife--this is the predatory mystique.

In a very real sense, we could call the mystique a web; it ensnares, entraps and drains spirituality. It includes the five L's:

**One: Lowering the value and dignity of human life**

For clarity let's pretend that the mystique has a voice, and if it did it would say things like, "We are all just animals, so we have to get all the gusto while we can. . . Forget all that mushy stuff like love and marriage, and get right down to sex. . . She does it all the time, what difference will this one time make? . . He's a love-machine; good till the right one comes along. . . What a woman; look at her body. . . Hey, you make me look good now, but if someone better looking comes along, I just may. . ."

Just as the case for moral virtue is founded upon a clear window perspective of the dignity of human life, the mystique is founded upon a distorted view--disrespect for human life and sexuality. It reduces human beings to sexual beings only. It's the attitude that there are some human beings--women and men--whose destiny is to sexually satisfy. They are not sons or brothers or daughters or sisters; they are warm mannequins without hearts and feelings, thoughts, or aspirations. What man ever thought the prostitute a sister, a daughter or a mother?

Recently, our family visited a video-rental store. As I walked up and down the aisles, I noticed video after video exposing women's bodies, buttocks and breasts, but faces were hidden from view.

A World War II Japanese soldier was being interviewed. Now an old man, he related his experiences during the war. He told of young women, who were captured and kept as hostages for sexual exploitation by the soldiers. At the time, he said, he didn't realize how horrible this treatment was for the women. Then, with tears in his eyes, he said, "I only began to feel for these women after the war, when my wife gave birth to our own little daughter. I still wake with the nightmares of it all; that someone could do this to our daughter. I wonder if one day I will come face to face with the

fathers and mothers of those women--women we somehow believed were just there for us to use. I still can't figure it all out; how could we be so callous?"

What a paradigm shift! Becoming a father, he realized he had been duped into believing a lie--that some women, and men, exist only as sexual beings for exploitation.

### **Two: Implanting the lie: secret and shameful**

The mystique might say, "This is the secret of great sex: it has to be bad to be really good. You have got to go outside what's moral and all that rot in order to experience the thrill of the forbidden. Let me show you how much more exciting it is when it's in secret and shameful."

The mystique promotes the idea that the best sexual high can only happen outside God's wholesome boundaries of a loving, loyal and legal relationship. There's electricity to the lie, powerfully deadening, which can lead from one perversion to another, because once a "boundary" has been broken the thrill is gone. Just as a drug addict craves riskier and more dangerous drugs to get the same high, those caught into the web of this dark version of the mystique crave new flesh, variety, the bizarre, the vulgar, the perverted to get the same kick--to just feel again. This spiral-down cycle leads to the living dead--humans that walk and talk but exist without hearts, consciences, and feelings of compassion. Take Gary Bishop--child molester and killer--for example. Before they executed him he said, "I continued to digress further and further into my perverted behavior (because) more stimulation was necessary to maintain the same level of excitement."

### **Three: Inflaming the lust**

The mystique would say, "Let me take control of your sexual desire; let me show you how it can be powerfully satisfying without love. Let me inflame the craving to have, to hold, to use and then discard."

The mystique strips the desire for human love and tenderness down to lust--a game that always leaves the victim feeling less loved and more used. Its "*the felt evil. . .it is that 'tang' in the flavor which [the lustful] are after.*" ( C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters , p. 93)

### **Four: Spicing up the language**

The mystique would say, "Let's talk sexy--you know those terms that make you melt with desire. Forget the real words--the words in the anatomy textbooks--they're so academic. I have created other words, words that entice and seduce your thoughts into the web."

Terms for body parts and passions must be twisted from the platonic to those with the "tang" in them--electrically charged.

The inflection--how it is said--can be as seductive as what is said. I recall the junior high days when it seemed that everything said could be slanted towards the sexual--even the most innocent of conversations. For instance, a young girl says to a classmate, "How are you today, Bob?"

Her greeting is simply an expression of human warmth, but he answers, "And how are you, Babe? Is there anything I can do to make you feel better?"

"I just meant. . ."

"Hey, I know what you meant; you don't have to explain things to me. I know you are one fine chick. And I would love to get to know you better."

The inflection is as important as the language itself.

## **Five: Creating the look**

The spider says, "Let me show you by the way I look, the way I walk, the way I dress, the way I smile, the way I sit, that I want you sexually. That's why my eyes are half-closed, my smile is seductive, and my body is twisted to look eager for you. It's what I call--the look."

Women and men models for pornography are taught to look a certain way--never like the girl-next-door with eyes open and mouth in a friendly smile. They have that look that says, "Hey, Babe, do you want me or what?" You can see this same look, though not so exaggerated, in some clothing catalogues. The models have their eyes half closed, heads thrown back, mouths open and hips thrust forward. Hardly ever do they have a warm, friendly smile. Bodies are contorted into sexually arousing positions. Blouses are half-buttoned--jeans, too. It all looks so silly! When we have our heads on straight, we feel like saying, "Ah, come on. Get real."

You might get that same feeling when you're walking through the mall and a teenager walks by dressed with baggy pants sliding off his buttocks, high-top tennis shoes with laces dragging behind,

hair dyed four variations of purple and shaved down the center. Next year the whole thing may flip flop, but right now it is called being *cool*. Who of us wasn't inclined--the first time we saw the new look in fashion--to say, "What are you trying to put over?" You just have to play dumb to enter the game. The "knock, knock" jokes show how one must play dumb to enter into the fun. If someone says, "Knock, knock." The response is, "Who's there?" If you say, "What do you mean knock, knock? You're not at a door." The joke is gone.

You just have to give in to the game, and forget all seriousness. It works exactly the same way when you enter into the mirage of the mystique. You must surrender logical thinking and sympathetic emotions. The rule of joke listening is to never think deeply. Same with the mystique-- never think too deeply or the mirage disappears. Never feel too deeply, either, or your heart won't let you proceed! But if you continue to shut down your mind and heart, eventually they do just that: shut down.

### **Self-Evaluation**

You know you're entangled in the dark side of passion when you think that men who score with many women are more manly; when you think that some women or men exist simply for sexual pleasures; when you are convinced that sex is just basic instinct; when you believe that real men don't cry or feel, or fall in love; when you have bought into the lie that sex is more exciting when it's outside the boundaries of honesty and honor. You know you're in the darkest depth of the mystique when you think that sex is better when it's illegal and immoral, when it's all right to fake love to get sex, when spending money on someone gives you a right to their body, when you actually believe that women really secretly like being seduced into sex, even raped, and when sexual gain comes only after someone else's pain--emotional pain, spiritual pain or physical pain.

### **"This was a game, like bridge. . ."**

You know you're caught into the predatory mystique when you can see yourself in this scene from the book by Ernest Hemingway's, Farewell to Arms: "We were off the driveway, walking under the trees. I took her hands, then stopped and kissed her.

'Isn't there somewhere we can go?' I asked.

She looked at me, 'And you do love me?'

‘Yes.’

‘You did say you loved me, didn’t you?’

‘Yes,’ I lied. ‘I love you.’ (I had not said it before.)

After she declares her love for him, she asks, “You won’t go away?”

He answers, “No. I’ll always come back.” He then rationalizes his lie away, “I turned her so I could see her face when I kissed her and I saw that her eyes were shut. I kissed both her shut eyes. I thought she was probably a little crazy. It was all right if she was. I did not care what I was getting into. This was better than going every evening to the house for officers where the girls climbed all over you and put your cap on backward as a sign of affection between their trips upstairs with brother officers. I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards. Like bridge you had to pretend you were playing for money or playing for some stakes. Nobody had mentioned what the stakes were. It was all right with me.”

A few minutes later, however, Catherine calls the game for what it is. She says, “This is a rotten game we play, isn’t it?”

“What game?”

“Don’t be dull.”

“I’m not, on purpose.”

“You’re a nice boy,” she said, “And you play it as well as you know how. But it’s a rotten game.”

“Do you always know what people think?” He asks.

“Not always. But I do with you. You don’t have to pretend you love me. That’s over for the evening. Is there anything you’d like to talk about?”

In this story we see clearly the motives of the Predator. He wanted more than a warm body (masturbation sex); he mentions that there were women who “climbed all over you” at the officer’s club. He wanted a challenging warm body. Catherine stops him short and calls it for what it is: a “rotten game” but leaves the opportunity for friendly conversation open.

### **The Longing to Share a Gift--the Gift of Love and Intimacy**

Here’s a little analogy that may help men see the dangers of exploitive sex, and the wholesome destination of human bonding. You’re driving down the road, hoping to make your destination before night fall. You have a beautifully wrapped gift to give to

someone, but you don't know who and you don't know where that person is. Something inside is leading you, but you're not even quite sure what that is--a strange longing.

You see a sporting event alongside the road, a soccer game. You've always loved soccer but you decide to continue on in the hopes that you'll get where you're going before nightfall. Besides, something within urges you on and tells not to get sidetracked.

A few hours later, you notice an amusement park. You stop your car, and wonder if you should spend the day on the rides--just for the thrill of it. You could open the gift and take it to a hock shop to get money to go on the rides, but the longing within urges you to continue on so you keep driving.

Evening has come. In the darkness it's getting harder and harder to see, especially since you don't know where you're going. Just as you're beginning to fall asleep you notice bright fluorescent lights against the black sky. The closer you get, the brighter and more bizarre the town seems. At first it looks offensive and gaudy. There's a dank and dark feeling, but as you drive through the town an eerie kind of excitement takes over, and you long to be a part of whatever's happening. You park the car, and a young woman approaches you. She's dressed in a low-cut top, and a short short skirt. Her makeup is plastered on, and you wonder why, since without it she would be fairly attractive. She moves close to you, and says, "Hi, Babe. I've been waiting all my life for you. Only fifty-dollars."

You realize it's all a joke--played on you, but for a moment your mind becomes confused; it all seems so fascinating, so intriguing, so flattering. You feel so manly, so powerful, so cool and casual. After all, you think, maybe this is different. Maybe she really does think I am more handsome, more manly, more wonderful than any other man that's she's ever been with before. In the darkness, she looks so enchanting, so appealing. You begin to think her not as a woman, but some goddess with mystic powers.

While all of this is racing through your mind, she urges, "Come on, let me make your dreams come true."

"I don't have any money, but. . .I do have whatever's in this package."

"Hey, I'm game," she says with a seductive smile. "Besides that, I'm bored."

As you get out of the car and begin to follow her, an inside alarm starts going off. It shouts, "Can't you see through this hoax?"

She's selling you something, like the barkers at the carnivals. Her flattery is all a scam; if you give away the gift you'll throw in a piece of your soul. She's confused, sure. Maybe someone molested her as a little girl so that she believes that this is all she's good for. If you go with her, you'll confirm that image that she has of herself. You'll be just another guy to cause her to think less of herself. Run, now!"

You attempt to shut the alarm down. "I know what I'm doing here. I'm an adult; I can do what I want with whom I want. Leave me alone. Besides, she'll think I'm a baby if I back out now. She'll think I'm a wimp. I'll think I'm a wimp myself. . . Wait, giving in is the wimp; I'm not giving in to this."

Suddenly, you turn away and run. Like a bad nightmare you search for your keys, but you cannot find them. You search for your car, but you can't find it. Finally, you see your car, and find your keys in your pocket. You jump into the car, breathing heavily. You're terrified--not of what someone could do to you, but what *you could do to yourself*.

As you proceed down the road, you cannot get the whole thing out of your mind. The smokescreen clears and now you can see it all for what it was. You sigh a breath of relief--grateful that you had the courage to get away. You remember that idea that when you have sex with someone, you also have sex with everyone they've already had sex with, and feeling of ominous fear comes over you. You realize what tripped you up: pride, vanity, and fear of humiliation. You wonder how you could have been taken in at all by such an obvious scam, and you realize the baggage you would have walked away with had you surrendered to the moment. The baggage of bad feelings, the baggage of possible diseases, the baggage of bad memories, the baggage of being a part of those who have made her feel so desperate for love that she accepts anything--even if it's opposite the real thing.

After several hours, the morning rays of sunshine cast soft light on the landscape. Everything looks fresh and beautiful and clean. The giant oak trees are radiant with their new spring leaves. The lake on the right is blue and clear, with misty vapors rising. You see a campsite near the lake. There's a sign that says, "Welcome".

As you approach the parking lot, you notice a family nearby on a picnic table. They're laughing and talking together. You notice that there's a young woman throwing a ball to a group of children--an older daughter maybe. She's beautiful, radiant, athletic looking. As soon as you are out of the car, the father of the family comes

over to you, and invites you to their picnic. Reluctant, but hungry, you join them. You feel awkward at first, but within a few minutes it seems like you've always known them. You join in the conversation; they actually listen. They even invite you to be a part of the cleanup after dinner.

Later, as everyone gathers around the campfire, you sit next to the young woman, who you've learned is the eldest daughter in the family. You're stunned by her beauty. Her light-brown hair seems to dance about her face; her warm smile is inviting. Within a few minutes you realize that somewhere, somehow you've always known her. You find yourself telling her things you've never told anyone. You discover yourself in her presence. After awhile, you start thinking: I never knew I could be this way; I love the way she makes me feel. I'm falling in love with her--and myself at the same time. I love the me I am with her.

The warmth of the fire blends with the warmth of the conversation, and for a moment you realize that this is one of the happiest moments of your life. Then, with horror you remember the night before. You realize that if you had succumbed then, you wouldn't feel comfortable with her now.

You begin thinking, what a contrast in these women: one made me feel excitement, the other makes me feel alive: one made me feel bold and powerful, this one makes me feel warm and wonderful. I would have been ashamed if anyone saw me with that woman, but I would be proud for anyone to see me with this woman. The one made me feel like a macho man, this one makes me feel protective--like a big brother over a little sister. The one made me think of nothing but sex, and this one makes me think of nothing but love--not just love for her--love for everything and everyone, including myself. The other woman would look dark even in daylight; this woman looks light and sunny even at night.

As the family members start going to their tents for the night, you realize it's time to part. After saying, "Good-night" you return to your car, place the key in the ignition, and begin to drive off. Then a flash of awareness: this *is* the destination..

The gift he was carrying was the gift of loving, the gift of honoring, the gift of cherishing, and the gift of intimacy. The point: there's a longing within--to give the gift of love--that leads us, in time and maturity, to create a circle of wholesome and honorable love,

but there is also a force that attempts to detour away from that destination and to squander the gift frivolously. The soccer game, and the amusement park represent the detour courses of using the gift for sport, entertainment or the thrill of the hunt.

The prostitute woman in the story represents the darker side of passion, the one that's shrouded with the "tang" of evil. Those who become detoured into dark sex, can miss out on ever discovering the real thing, and can become sucked into the powerful undercurrents that deaden the soul. Sex cannot be divorced from sincere love without severe consequences.

Studies have shown that most men and women--even the promiscuous--want eventually to have a one-and-only Beloved, but promiscuous sex can endanger the possibility of ever finding and recognizing the real thing.

Sex for masturbation, or sport, or thrills may seem like an innocent form of entertainment on the surface, but it's an act of self-betrayal and other-betrayal. It betrays the longing that guides to the real thing, it betrays oneself, it betrays conscience, it betrays sincere feelings of love, and betrays those who are used and abused in the process.

Hocking the gift, or giving it away piece by piece, naturally reduces the joy of gift opening together with one's Beloved. There's something disappointing when someone offers a gift that has already been opened and used. (I realize that this statement may make some readers uncomfortable, but it also may give those who want reasons to stay virgin until marriage incentive to do so. However, the commitment to virtue--and the inner joy of being virtuous--can take place at any time in our lives. Like the expression, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." Never, never, never think that because you have made mistakes in the past that you need to make the same mistakes in the future. After interviewing young men and women, I realized that most became involved in unhealthy "love" relationships, because they did not know or did not understand how to recognize unhealthy love or the value of waiting until a loving, loyal and legal relationship. One young woman said, "If I had read one page of this book when I was a teenager, I would have remained a virgin.")

## **Summary**

There is a Higher Power that lifts us, and strengthens us to

become all that we were created to become as children of God, and there is a Lower Power that's like a dangerous undercurrent, pulling us away from our divine selves. Again, one energizes our natural capacity to love, to be sensitive, to be compassionate, to appreciate and value all human life, and the other pulls us down into complacency or worse--contempt for ourselves and others.

We're not created to do bad and feel good. Betrayal leads to a loss of emotional feelings and spiritual strength, and this loss creates a frenzy of desire to feel again. If we choose not to feel compassion and sympathy for our fellow human beings, we will end up not feeling at all. Some people are looking for partners in love; others are looking for playmates in sex --who pretend to be in love. Playmates miss out on sexual fulfillment in its highest and most satisfying level. The human soul longs to have it all--sexual fulfillment, emotional fulfillment, intellectual fulfillment and spiritual fulfillment. Getting sidetracked has a high price.

I have no doubt that there's a power working to destroy the sweetness and glory of sexual intimacy. Isn't it interesting that sexual intimacy--most holy and sacred act of all--is the butt of a million vulgar and disgusting jokes? Isn't it interesting when what is most light is made to appear dark? When what is a pure fountain for inspiration, progress, ambition, sweet friendship, angelic babies, and happy homes is robbed of its dignity and honor. What a mighty target for the powers of darkness.

Healthy sexuality is founded upon loving, honoring and cherishing; the mystique is founded upon dishonoring and despising. It begins with the selfish, self-centered desire to use a warm body for masturbation, but can descend to the challenging warm body--the exploitive hunt--and then on down to the desire to use and abuse. Next we will explore the connection between pornography and the desire to use and abuse.

Notes on chapter fourteen:

1. The mystique--loveless sex--has had devastating effects upon young men's chances for fatherhood. By the turn of the century 50% of American children will not be living with their dads. Sex without real love may bring babies into the world, but it seldom produces a father. "Men are not biologically attuned to being committed fathers. Left culturally unregulated, men's sexual behavior can be promiscuous, their paternity casual, their commitment to families weak." This article points out that men who

are married are much more likely to take an active role in the raising of their children. Also, children raised without fathers are more likely to have emotional and social problems. They are more likely to engage in crime, less able to succeed in school, more vulnerable to sexual abuse, child neglect, etc. They are more likely to drop out of school. This list goes on, and on. (David Popenoe, "Life Without Father", Reader's Digest, Feb. 1997)

2. "Female juvenile prostitutes, most of whom are runaways, have extensive histories of child sexual abuse. Such studies report that between 30 and 90 percent . . . experienced some form of sexual abuse as children or adolescents." U.S. Department of Justice, The Sexual Exploitation of Missing Children: A Research Review, October 1988.)