

# A Serious Health Concern

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In this article we want to tackle one of the most serious health concerns of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's a very personal and sensitive subject, and some people do not want to talk about it. However, because people's lives are at stake, and people's families, marriages and relationships are at stake, we have felt burdened for many years to approach this subject.

## A LOOK AT THE PAST

When I was growing up in the 1950's and 1960's, marriage was nearly always considered a life-long commitment. Divorce was hardly heard of. I grew up in Toronto, and the first divorce I can remember was when I was a teenager. In my parent's generation divorce was even rarer. For many people, the goal of the marriage relationship was a **life-long commitment** to love and serve each other, rather than just romantic attraction which quickly wears off. Children were considered a 'gift from heaven' and had to be cared for, loved and protected by both parents. Selfishness and pride were considered the enemy of relationships, and unselfish love and humility were the goal of many people in society back then. These goals were not always achieved, and so confession and forgiveness were necessary in order to help restore and heal the relationship. Unfortunately, we saw a lot of these good values and goals change in our lifetime.

## MODERN INFLUENCES

In society today there are influences that encourage people to be selfish, and to use other people to get what they want. When this thinking is applied to relationships the result is broken relationships. People are often influenced to use their body, and other people's bodies in a selfish manner. The subject of moral purity, and the benefits of moral purity are considered by some people to be old-fashioned, or impossible to practice. There are web sites, movies, television shows, magazines, music, fashions and books that are focused on arousing lustful thinking. These desires can never be satisfied,

and will bring people into increasing bondage. Lustful thinking becomes an addiction, and like all addictions a person becomes desensitized, and ends up needing more and more to try and satisfy their selfish desires. When a person becomes enslaved to this type of thinking their actions become increasingly more damaging and degrading to themselves and others. A person who is in bondage to lustful desires, cannot practice or even understand true unselfish love. As a result, the important family relationships in their life start falling apart.

When young people are growing up they can often approach relationships and dating from the standpoint of **what am I going to get** out of this relationship. People can be lied to and told, 'I love you. Our love is all that matters. I will love you forever.' What they might end up meaning by that could be, 'I want to use you to try and satisfy my desires, until I get bored with you, and get more interested in and more attracted to someone else.' When someone comes along that appeals to them more, they might say, 'I don't love you anymore.' These can be the most painful words a person ever hears. Broken commitments and false promises will always damage people and their relationships.

People today are receiving messages from the media and many different sources telling them that it is normal and healthy to be physically intimate with more than one person in their lifetime. Is this true? Just because something is common, doesn't make it **normal**. And just because something is common, doesn't make it **healthy**. When people are close physically, strong chemicals are released in the body and in the brain, which creates emotional bonding between the two people. This creates a feeling of comfort, attachment and security which we all crave. They can feel like they have become *one person*. If this relationship between the two people is broken, the emotional pain is severe. The pain can cut into the inner person of our thoughts and feelings like a knife. In

some cases, this is so severe that a person will feel like their life is over, and they can't live anymore and they become suicidal. This is not normal, and it is not healthy. Unfortunately, many young people can find themselves in situations like this today.

Breaking relationships and changing partners cheapens and degrades relationships. Each time this happens people cannot give as much of the inner person of their heart and mind, because they have lost part of themselves to another person. Relationships become more and more empty and unfulfilling. An even bigger problem is all the guilt and pain from the past broken relationships. Many years later people can have memories and images that will not go away, and that continue to torment them.

## PURITY

Now let's talk about the positive and happy subject of purity. Purity has to **start in the mind and heart** where people make a commitment to have an unselfish attitude towards themselves and others. Whether a person is married or celibate the goal is to have an unselfish attitude towards their body, otherwise they will have selfish and lustful feelings towards themselves and others. A person is not just pure because they are faithful to their spouse, or because they are celibate. To be pure we must first have pure unselfish thoughts and feelings, and then our outward actions will also be pure. The **first step in this process** is to guard our eyes and our ears. If we look at and listen to things which promote selfish lustful thinking, it won't be long before our mind and heart is polluted, and then our actions will be selfish and lustful. To feel comfortable with this bondage, people can start believing the lie that this behaviour is all 'normal and healthy'.

The **second step** in developing purity in our life is to feed the inner person of our heart and mind with positive, pure, unselfish love. For people who believe that God loves us and forgives us, and wants us to be pure, the process

is relatively simple. We offer a Study Course on 'Relationship Health' which is based on the writings of the Apostles who wrote the New Testament. Also, there are 6 articles in back issues of the Rural Route Magazine that have helped many people. They are:

Improving Mental And Emotional Health (Dec 2014/Jan 2015);

The 4 Pillars Of Building Good Relationships (Feb 2015);

Roadblocks To Building Good Relationships (Mar 2015);

Completing The Framework For Building Good Relationships (Apr 2015);

Freedom Through Partnering (April 2016); and

The Family Is A Precious Partnership (May 2016).

All of these articles are available from 'Legge Fitness Superstores'.

True love is the opposite of lust. Selfish desire or lust, is aggressive, hurtful, selfish, proud and demanding. True love and purity, is gentle, kind, unselfish, humble, and submissive. If we want our spouse and children to be pure, we should set that example ourselves. Practicing purity, and having a life-long commitment to love our spouse and children is the best way to improve and safeguard physical, mental and emotional health. *The change I want to see in my family has to start with me!*

## A MODERN DAY PLAGUE

In society today there are organizations that give advice on how to be physically intimate with people outside of marriage in a 'safe' or 'safer' manner. However, these methods do not always prevent disease. The number of people, and the percentage of the population diagnosed with STD's (sexually transmitted diseases) has increased dramatically over the last 50 years. There are now about 25 known STD's. Many of these diseases can cause serious damage to the body if left untreated. Some are fatal if not treated. Some STD's can stay hidden in the body for many years without showing any symptoms. During this time the person falsely assumes they are healthy, but damage is being done. Some STD's cause certain types of cancer. For some STD's there is no effective treatment, and some are even fatal with treatment. According to the CDC (Centre for Disease Control) in the United States, there are about **20 million people diagnosed with STD's**

**each year** in the United States! Half of those people, or about 10 million, are young people between the ages of 15 and 24. This is only the number of people being reported. The accurate number is higher because if a person has no symptoms they might not get tested, so the disease is not reported to the CDC. When we look at the statistics on STD's, perhaps the words should never have been 'safe' or 'safer', but rather 'less dangerous'. This modern day plague is the result of **broken commitments and false promises**. A similar situation exists in Canada as in the United States, except the number of people infected in Canada is less because our population is less.

These physical diseases are an epidemic, but there are also serious mental and emotional concerns. Not everyone who is physically intimate with people outside of marriage gets a physical disease. However, everyone experiences the mental and emotional pain of a damaged mind and heart from a broken relationship. Alcohol and drug abuse is an epidemic with young people because it helps them cope with the inner pain. Unfortunately, this creates other serious problems. Western civilization and countries all over the world are being threatened with the spread of STD's, and with alcohol and drug abuse, and also with increasing mental and emotional illness in their populations. This situation is unique in human history. Never before has there been this type of worldwide threat to civilization.

Another concern with broken relationships is unwanted pregnancies and abortions. Instead of people receiving children as a 'gift from heaven' the children are unwanted, and are not being loved and cared for by their parents. The family is a unique and precious partnership because when the husband and wife are blessed with children, those children are unique to them. Their children are literally from their own bodies, and share physical, mental and emotional characteristics of both the husband and the wife. The focus in the family should be on unselfish love, where the goal is for each person to be cared for, protected, and nurtured. The love relationship in the family does not happen automatically. It has to be worked on and practiced for it to be successful. To build the love relationship in the family, we have to

practice patience, kindness, unselfishness and forgiveness. These four character traits were discussed in an article in the February 2015 issue of the Rural Route Magazine. This article is available from 'Legge Fitness Superstores'.

## WORKING WITH NATURE AND COMMON SENSE

All down through history STD's have been a problem, but nature has always provided us with two safe and healthy practices to prevent people from becoming infected. One practice is to be faithful to our spouse for a lifetime. The other practice is to be celibate. If we don't follow the laws of nature we will be damaged physically, mentally and emotionally. The list of physical diseases includes dangerous infections, and sometimes fatal conditions. To say, 'I don't mind getting these diseases because there are drugs to treat these diseases', is not a healthy or logical choice. For some STD's there is no effective treatment. Drugs are not always effective, and some bacteria are becoming drug-resistant. Drugs also have negative side effects, and can weaken our immune function and we can become more susceptible to other diseases. It makes sense to work with nature, because every time people go against the laws of nature there are serious consequences. *When we look at human history, we can see that countries and civilizations have always been weakened by the breakdown of the family unit and STD's, and some have even collapsed.*

The mental and emotional damage from broken relationships can be just as serious as the physical diseases! We might not see what is happening in a person's spirit when they are in emotional pain, but it can break a person down and rob them of life just as quickly as a deadly physical disease.

## THE FAMILY

More and more people are realizing the importance and the benefits of making a physical relationship part of a life-long commitment. This concept is not new, and it has formed the **foundation of western civilization for several centuries!** The Christian New Testament Scriptures speak about the need for a permanent, secure love relationship between one man and one woman and their children for life. The Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures also forbid fornication and adultery for



the same reasons.

Life is a very serious thing, and it is easy to be deceived, and then led in the wrong direction and damaged. When family relationships are broken, the family falls apart. The people in the family are damaged, and it makes it more difficult for the children to develop healthy family relationships when they grow up. Children raised without loving parents who are committed to their children and each other, can feel hurt and unloved. This emotional pain can stay with the children for a lifetime. This is bad for people, and bad for society as a whole. It is important to get good, caring, loving advice and support from people who truly care about you. In a loving family this advice and love should come from the parents. Husband and wife working together, and showing and practicing love, faithfulness and respect for each other. This will set a life-long example for their children to remember forever. When this happens, each generation can **pass on this loving example** to their children for them to practice. This is good for people, and good for society as a whole!

True love is not romantic attraction. True love, or unselfish love is a life-long commitment to care for, support and provide for another person. We can't 'fall in love' or 'fall out of love' if it is true love. True love is rooted in God's love, so it is forever.

'Unselfish love, or true love can wait to give – selfish 'love' cannot wait to get.'

Next month we will be talking about quite a different subject. We will be looking at the health benefits of bouncing ... and also horse and buggies. What's the connection? Find out next month in the Rural Route Magazine. Don't miss it!



The above article was written by Philip Legge, who is the founder of Legge Fitness Superstores. Legge Fitness Superstores is located in **Listowel and Fergus Ontario**. For more information, please call 1-800-695-7338 or email [info@leggefitness.com](mailto:info@leggefitness.com). Visit their website [www.leggefitness.com](http://www.leggefitness.com) to view their full line of health and fitness products and services.



Our photo of the month was taken by Tracy Simpson from Mount Forest. Readers are welcome to submit photos for this feature. Send photos, along with photographer's name and address to [editor@theruralroute.ca](mailto:editor@theruralroute.ca)



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