



“Are You ‘Flirting with Disaster?’”

by Jim Burns, Ph.D.

The auto industry is one of the key indicators of the U.S. economy. The more new cars on the road, the better the overall financial health of our nation.

In times gone by, cars were “built to last.” We kept our vehicles anywhere from seven to ten years after purchasing them. We prided ourselves on keeping them clean and well maintained. And when a part did wear out, it was replaced in order to prolong the life of the automobile.

Then, in the late 1980’s, a revolution of sorts took the auto industry by storm. Leasing – once a financial tool used only by large companies – became a popular alternative to purchasing a new car.

Whereas a purchase requires a total commitment from the buyer, the lease arrangement has considerably fewer strings attached. Leases typically run from two to three years, while a purchase may take as many as six years to complete. And while the owner is responsible for all car maintenance, the lessee is usually accountable for next to none of his – the dealer provides the upkeep during the two to three year lease term.

Should a buyer grow disenchanted with his purchase, he usually faces a lower return on selling the vehicle than fixing it up and “toughing it out.” Not so with a lessee. Because the lease terms are generally rather short, changing styles and tastes are easily accommodated.

Now, you turned here looking for help on keeping flirtatious advances from ruining your marriage . . . and I’ve been rattling on about auto leases. So, what’s the connection?

Well, I’m afraid that, here in the 21st Century, the popular mindset of marriage is that it’s more like a “lease” and less like a “purchase” arrangement.

Whereas couples used to commit to each “till death do us part,” nowadays the attitude is more like, “till something better (or younger, prettier or wealthier) comes along.”

It has often been said that the best thing you can do for your kids is to love your spouse. I happen to agree. A quality marriage is perhaps the optimum factor for rearing secure children. (Ask anyone you know who grew up in a home where the parents were too “child-focused” and you’ll know what I’m talking about.)

I know this may sound a bit selfish, but if you don't put that "Mom-and-Dad" time into your marriage, your relationship will suffer . . . and so will your kids.

Now, this means that sometimes you're going to have to put your spouse's needs in front of your children's. Believe me, your kids won't mind – in the long run, of course.

If you're sensing a distance growing between you and your spouse, you need to do two things: first, start building a bridge between the gap; and second, don't look to someone else to meet needs your spouse isn't meeting for you right now.

If you're married and you find yourself flirting with a member of the opposite sex, you're headed for trouble. Sure, it might seem fun and a bit flattering at the time. But ultimately it can only lead to disaster.

Now, I'm not suggesting that you avoid all contact with co-workers, friends or other associates of the opposite sex. But what I am saying is that you may be sabotaging your marriage by doing so – without even realizing it!

Men, get with a couple of guys from church and talk openly and honestly about potential "distractions" that might be keeping you from opening up to your wives. And ladies, get with a couple of trustworthy girlfriends and talk to them about your "distractions" also. Loving your spouse is of primary importance in developing the kind of spiritual foundation your children want and really need!

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