



Ashley Madison as a wake-up call for would be and real-life cheaters

By

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By now just about everyone who keeps up with the news has read something about the hacking theft and now publication of the Ashley Madison "Life is short. Have an Affair®" database. If you somehow missed it here is a summary article that appeared today, Thursday, August 20, 2015: [Hacker's Ashley Madison data dump threatens marriages, reputations](#)

In an article that also appeared today titled [The Ashley Madison hack will have a mixed result for those involved](#), the writer shared this:

"I had joined out of curiosity and for research purposes when I was Townsville's premier dating columnist. And it's safe to say that I am not alone in being a relatively 'innocent' Ashley Madison user.

"I somehow suspect that more than a few individuals who joined Ashley Madison did so just to see who'd respond to the (no doubt inflated or totally fake) profile they posted."

In the same article, a computer security expert by the name of Graham Cluley shared this:

"For one thing, being a member of a dating site, even a somewhat seedy one like Ashley Madison, is no evidence that you have cheated on your partner," [he wrote](#).

"...if your email address is in the Ashley Madison database it means nothing. The owner of that email address may never have even visited the Ashley Madison site."

It is also noted by Cluley that "It turns out Ashley Madison didn't require users to verify their email address in order to use the website."

"Put simply, people could enter any email and have access to the free features of the website."

With all this said, a computer programmer created a simple search feature anyone can use to see if an email address appears in the Ashley Madison database. It is at <https://ashley.cynic.al/>

There are, of course, some high profile people who set up one or more Ashley Madison accounts and left a trail that leaves little doubt about who is responsible. One that is in the news is **Josh "19 Kids" Duggar** whose alleged connection to AM is discussed in this article [EXPOSED: Josh Duggar revealed as having 'paid almost \\$1,000 for multiple Ashley Madison accounts' as 37 million would-be love-cheats are named by hackers who stole Ashley Madison accounts](#)

As you might expect, articles now abound which offer advice as to what folks listed in the AM database should do next. Predictably this advice runs the gamut albeit most advise "fessin' up" and dealing with the fallout head on. Naturally, lawyers, marriage therapists, psychologists and others are likely to see an upswing in couples visits in which one party cheated through Ashley Madison and was exposed after the AM database came to light.

Of course, there really isn't anything all that shocking in all this. After all, a day hardly passes in which some prominent politician, religious figure, television personality, high ranking military officer or such gets caught up in scandal after an affair comes to light or some other dark sexual pursuit comes to light.

I get human weakness. And the fact that people (perhaps men especially) are predisposed by their nature (evolutionary biology) and upbringing to have wondering eyes. Throw in lots of free time and the ease of reaching others anonymously through the Internet and you wind up with the current situation: Married people flocking to date sites, sex chat sites, cheating sites, porn sites and all the rest.

Of course, people who have considerable influence, power or wealth seem even more vulnerable, if only because they attract those seeking solace or sex or money or what-have-you. Some feel "entitled to cheat" due to their special station in life or the challenges they must deal with.

If you are reading this and happen to be cheating on your significant other be it an emotional, sexual, or cyber affair, and feel shameful, guilty or troubled, then there is hope for you. How so? Ask yourself this: When people do immoral or unethical things and feel no guilt or shame about this, what happens when their dark pursuits are exposed? Typically, rationalizations and arguments surface that place the blame on the victim.

So if you are cheating in some way and feel bad about this, you have a conscience and know you are doing wrong. I now have another question to ask you: **Why are you cheating?**

Bored? Looking for missing passion? Lonely? Lust-filled and unfulfilled? Emotionally isolated or adrift? Feeling misunderstood by your significant other or ignored by him or her? Getting older and feel you need the attention of another to validate your good looks or worth? Overwhelmed in some way and feel you can't look to your mate or family for help? Think there are things about yourself that if revealed are so dark or loathsome that only a stranger or new love interest could brush it aside and love or desire you anyway?

Maybe it's one of these things or many of them or all of them or none of them. Let's set aside the "why" for now and look at the **fruits of cheating**: Betrayal, disloyalty, a violation of sacred

commitments, and, yes, cruelty. Does bad fruit bear a good crop? You don't have to be a farmer or horticulturist to answer this question.

In our age of "I'm spiritual and not religious" there is a tendency to replace the [7th Commandment](#) with platitudes that allow and excuse latitude; to forget, ignore, dismiss or downplay the fact that infidelity is sin; to gloss over the fact it offends the Almighty and has both spiritual and real world consequences.

The good news is that if you recognize you are sinning, forgiveness is a simple matter of changing your mind about what you are doing and asking forgiveness (A process called repentance or [teshuvah](#)), and then marrying right actions to your beliefs and commitment to do the right thing.

For most of you reading this, admitting your sin and seeking forgiveness is actually the easy part. The real knockdown, drag out part is breaking free of the pull of sinful pleasure and surmounting the temptation to backslide or (to use modern parlance) relapse. Triggers and lures abound and many find themselves so weak and overwhelmed by the almost drug-like pull of pleasurable sin that they can't hold a straight course.

I get this too. To put it in familiar, *Star Trekkian* terms, your shuttle craft is caught in a powerful tractor beam and you have burned out your engines trying to break free or in the process of burning them out. Or so it seems.

The good news is that you actually can break free and achieve and maintain a moral course. Now for the nuts and bolts of how to "make this so".

First, of course, there is the simple act of calling sin, sin and turning your back on it. I assume if you've read this far you either have made up your mind to do this or will seriously consider doing so soon.

Now the part that trips up so many people: Bringing conduct into conformity with their wishes, convictions and beliefs. The hard part which actually isn't **IF** you do something most folks fear doing: **Run to God rather than from him and ask that he do whatever is needed to redeem and change your sexual nature and its expression.**

Whoa...say what?!?

Ask yourself this: What is the natural thing for people to do with bad habits and sin? Of course, hide them from man and God. Think about when you were a child and did something wrong and you feared your Mum or Dad would find out. Did you run to them and confess your wrong doing and seek help? No, you most likely hid the cookie crumbs or broken vase or what-have-you and lied. Then you grew up and stopped doing this with respect to a lot (maybe most) of your mistakes, sins and such, at least with respect to trusted others and intimates in your orbit. But when it comes to especially grievous sins did you run to or from God? And if you ran to God, did you do so without any real deep desire that he actually do whatever it takes to, well, straighten you out. Too scary eh, like opening yourself up to a spanking as a child?!?

Now let me show you what really turning something like lust and sexual weakness completely over to God's keeping consists of (Again, this is the key to moving towards the obedience and holiness God demands if we are to live decent, happy, genuinely fulfilling lives):

In dealing with men who are cheating on their wives or did so and are tempted to do so again, I invariably walk them through admission of their sin and repentance, and then ask them if they are ready to marry actions to their intentions and beliefs. Once they say "yes" to this, I ask them if their sex drive or fantasies or memories or such seem to be ruling them and undermining their resolution to do what's right. For those that signal this or something like it is making mincemeat of their commitment to change, I hand them this challenge (This is a condensed version of what I tell them):

"I want you to trust God completely with all you are including your sexuality. Your prayer to him is for resolution and empowerment, not a band aid that fits what you want or think will work. You need help and power to be obedient and do what the Rabbi from Nazareth said to sinners he encountered which is 'Go and sin no more'. You've told me that your sexual needs are not being met and your sex drive is overwhelming. What you are really saying is 'God, help me but don't mess with my sexual needs and drive'. I am telling you now that this is exactly what you must surrender to his keeping. And now comes the test of your desire to be holy as he is holy: are you willing to ask the Lord to diminish or even remove your sexual desires if it takes this for a time to free you to get into him and his Word and become conformed to what he would have you be sexually?"

I call this "**radical surrender**" and for good reason! It isn't for the faint-of-heart or insincere but I think it within the reach of every person who sees sin in him- or her- self and wants to do a 180 about and live in obedience to (and dependence on) God and his revealed Word (The kind of active faith that produces holiness). And, by the way, it works.

Can this be done without fingering underlying issues and dealing with them? I've seen some people do a turnaround that unleashed God's power in their lives which effected change in them that resolved previously unresolved issues and weaknesses and the like. Others needed to identify their problems and issues, typically in therapy with their significant other, in order to get resolution and set specific goals and objectives for themselves and their relationship.

For those that need some guidance and tools to identify unfulfilled needs and "relationship busting" habits and behaviors and weaknesses, I heartily suggest heading on over to "Marriage Builders®" at <http://www.marriagebuilders.com/>. This website is filled with tests, articles, guidelines and such.

Also, please read: [**Is an attachment style problem complicating or undermining your life? by Dr. Anthony G. Payne**](#)

And now for some "meat not milk" spiritual help (Evangelical in orientation but nonetheless brimming over with insights gleaned from Biblical truths and principles):

- [**Go and Sin No More: A Call to Holiness**](#) by Dr. Michael L. Brown

- [Good or God?](#) by John Bevere
- [Breakthrough Faith: Living a Life Where Anything is Possible](#) by Larry Sparks

If you are one of the people listed on the Ashley Madison database and were or are cheating, or cheated or are cheating without the use of any club or service or forum, consider the AM hacking scandal your wake-up call; your invitation to repent, turn your back on infidelity, and do what's needed to "go and sin no more".

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