

Real, Fake, or Synthetic

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." (Philippians 4: 8)

I woke up two mornings straight and the first thought that pierced my mind was that of a scene I had read in a book. Okay, I'll be honest...a romance novel. I was so disturbed. For as long as I can remember, the first thing that happens when I face each new day – God gives me a song. I wake up every single morning singing praises to God. It is more than just a routine; it's a part of who I am. I expect it. I enjoy it. Imagine what I felt like when my mind was plagued with junk – Trace taking Lillian in his arms and telling her how much he loves her and wants her to have his baby. Here I am – this Christian woman – daydreaming about a carnal love affair.

I lay in bed asking God, "What in the world is wrong with me?" This is awful...crazy." I heard the Lord say to me, "*Erica, what do you expect? What you put in is what's going to come out. STOP READING THOSE ROMANCE NOVELS!*" Well, I listened, but that wasn't the end of it. I'm a very analytical person. I figure if I'm doing something out of the ordinary then there must be a root cause. Bottom line – I wanted to know why I started reading romance novels in the first place? Soap operas, romance novels...none of those things have ever interested me before. After several days, God illuminated my mind. I saw the truth...I was lonely. To escape that loneliness I didn't turn to God, the lover of my soul. Instead, I turned to romance novels and other counterfeits.

We've all either said it or heard it said, "I just want someone to love me." Unfortunately, somewhere in the midst of this strong desire to be loved, we may confuse lust or loneliness with our true needs. The reality is, sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. Much too often the search for love and companionship leads to the wrong places.

We live in a techno world, one which brings sex and perverseness right into our homes through computers, television, radio and telephones. Counterfeits are everywhere. Only through a passion to live right before God are we able to maintain a pure and holy lifestyle. The Bible gives us no other choice but to remain pure in our singleness. At times we may feel weak. It is then we must rely solely on the word of the Lord.

- *"Flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness" (2 Timothy 2: 22).*
- *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word. With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against you. Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes. With my lips I have told of all the ordinances of Your mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways" (Psalm 119: 9-15).*

We cannot expect to be spiritually healthy if we live our lives by worldly standards. The word of God is our only standard for holy living. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do." Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) Guard your heart, guard your eyes, guard how you dress, guard your walk, guard how you talk, guard what you read, be careful of who you keep company with. I'm not preaching paranoia or isolationism, but I do hope to make you aware of our cunning enemy. If we don't watch what we do and why we do it, we may find ourselves in situations that will grieve the heart of God. No matter your past, no matter your present situation, you can live a pure, holy, and righteous life that is pleasing to God. **Shine.**

Grab It!

1. People use various methods to escape unpleasant situations. What escape mechanisms do you use to avoid reality?
2. Do you know the difference between lust and love? Define in your own words?
3. Is your lifestyle based on secular or worldly expectations?

The Diamond Monologue Series I 2005 is written by Erica Rutland.
The Diamond Monologue is a part of Online Bible Studies, provided by IPHC Women's Ministries.
For more information call 405-787-7110, ext. 3227 or email WMSinfo@iphc.org