

Tracy

A young lady approached me in a department store in Oklahoma City. She knew me by name although I didn't recognize her—that is, until she told me her name. You see, I had known Tracy when she was fifteen. She was full of energy, always happy and always laughing. She had a beautiful smile. Now she stood before me almost unrecognizable—dark rings under her eyes, tired, depressed, and hurting so bad. Those eyes that once contained such life seemed so dead and empty. What had happened?

The year after I met her, when Tracy was sixteen, she began dating a young man who attended her church. He claimed to follow Christ but continually pressured her to have premarital sex. After saying “no” on numerous occasions, he finally told her that if she didn't “love” him enough to have sex with him that their relationship was over. So on prom night a week later, she gave in. Tracy soon realized she was pregnant and a few months later she married the father. He abused her continually, emotionally, sexually, and verbally, and she finally left him and filed for a divorce. A second mistake didn't make a first one right.

I remember Tracy saying, “I have ruined my life.” I remember the pain in her eyes and the tears on her cheeks. She was now eighteen, with a baby, and in the process of divorce. Of course, there's no mess so big that God can't fix it and there's no pain so great that God can't heal it, but, as you know, actions bring consequences—sometimes very painful consequences and ones that could have been avoided. But what can you do? You can make the choice to do what God wants you to do even before you face the temptation. That's the best way to avoid temptation, to decide, to even role-play, to practice long before you face the real decision.