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**THE UNSTABLE HEART**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"Oh, Judy, you poor, dear girl! I just know you must be devastated. How could Kirk do it? How? I thought I'd die when Donna told me about him." Amanda wept while she spoke.

Judy sat like someone mute; totally silent. The pain and hurt of Kirk's Christian defection left her feeling cold and numb and chilled through and

through. Kirk, the one-time seemingly totally committed and dedicated Christian now a vagrant profligate. Kirk, the one and only one whom she had one time truly and really cared for.

Sudden sobs came from her small frame. Her shoulders shook convulsively. Her heart felt like hammers were crushing it, smashing it to bits and pieces.

"We're all praying for you," Amanda said kindly as she slid an arm around her friend's shoulders.

Judy lifted her swollen tear-filled eyes to look into the face of her friend. "Thanks, Amanda," she whispered. "Please thank all the church young people for praying for me. It seems . . . unreal. I keep hoping I'll wake up and find it's nothing except a bad dream or a horrifying nightmare. Then reality creeps back in with its facts and its ugliness."

"Maybe if you didn't have the news clipping it wouldn't haunt and plague you as much," Amanda said, trying to console Judy.

"It wouldn't be any different, Judy. Sin is sin no matter if its results are publicized or if its kept silent. One can't just pretend it didn't happen when it has."

Amanda sighed heavily. "But Kirk! I would never have thought it of him. How do you suppose it happened, Judy? I mean, well, we all know that Kirk was brought up in a good family. Maybe his dad isn't a Christian -- yet. But he is a good moral man. He's respected by all who know him and, frankly, he's a good father to his family. Kirk's mother loves the Lord and has taught him rightly. She sees to it that all the children attend church and Sunday school regularly and consistently. All the time. All, that is, until Kirk refused to come anymore six or seven months ago."

"But each of us is a free moral agent, Amanda. We decide which way we take, regardless of our upbringing. Kirk's mother has fulfilled her God-given motherly and moral obligation where her family is concerned but the final decision and choice is up to each of her children. Many things are beginning to come back to my mind since this has befallen Kirk."

Amanda furrowed her brow as though thinking seriously. "Like the time when he backslid; is this what you mean, Judy? That was four, five years ago, I believe," she stated. "But he never went out into out-broken sin, as I recall. Now this time, though. . . . Oh, I can scarcely believe it!"

Judy replenished her supply of tissues from the Kleenex box and after using a goodly number of them she said sadly, "Looking back, I see the pattern clearly. Kirk's grandparents, two years ago, while they were visiting Kirk's family, told me something which I didn't pay much attention to at the time."

"Like what? Or would you rather not divulge it?" Amanda asked.

"Oh, I don't mind telling it; not at all. They -- the grandparents, both of them -- got me aside and told me not to get too greatly enamored with Kirk. They said, 'Judy, he's like Reuben was as stated in Genesis 49:4 -unstable as water.'

"I laughed, and told them I wasn't 'greatly enamored,' which, at the time, I wasn't. I liked him a lot and he liked me; but at that time I wasn't into caring so deeply and greatly. But then I began to see that they were right: Kirk's been unstable for years."

"Do you really mean that, Judy? I know, like I said, that he backslid four years ago. But he seemed so real and so genuine since he got back to God. He seemed to be doing well since he went to the altar two and a half years ago."

Judy sighed. "I'm wondering if Kirk was ever truly and really sanctified wholly. He said he consecrated his all to the Lord. But when I'd ask him if he could say truthfully that the old carnal nature was crucified and that he had died out to sin and self and to all his friends, he never did say that he had."

"He was always real close to that one Skellette boy who lived on the same block with him," Judy said. "His name is Leon. Several of the young men from our church were ordered off the porch, as you will remember, and the Skellette property entirely, by Leon. Poor Gary and Justin. They said they felt they should try to get him out to church, at least, so he'd have an opportunity to hear about his need of a Savior, since he never would listen when Gary and he tried to tell him that he needed to become converted so he

could go to Heaven. Justin said he got belligerent and downright nasty, remember?"

"I certainly do, Amanda. I told Kirk about Leon's attitude and his belligerence. He laughed it off and said we are all different. I asked him if he had ever talked to Leon about his soul, and he said, 'Judy, you don't talk about such things to Leon. He'll shut you up immediately if you do. He said he isn't interested in religion or anything about religion. He wants to make money -- big money -- so he can retire while he's still young.' That's what Kirk's reply was to my question. And I feel like shuddering now, when I realize how he was making this so called 'big' money."

"It's bad enough," Amanda asserted, "that Leon chose to take this way of making money. But to get someone like Kirk into it makes it even worse."

"This is where Kirk's instability comes to the fore, Amanda. II Peter 2:14-21 puts it like this, 'Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; . . .

"These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. . . .

"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.'

"Kirk's been an easy prey for anything and everything, as I now see it, Amanda. The writer to the Hebrews said, 'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; . . .' (Heb. 13:9). Souls who are 'unstable as water' have no 'cohesion.' They lack the power of God to resist evil and to say no to evil. My word for it would be that they lack 'stick-tuity' -- meaning they lack that inner grace that gives them courage and strength to stick to what they know God's Word tells them to do or not to do. They have no back bone, spiritually speaking."

"My heart aches for all five of those young men who will not enjoy that big money by sitting it out in a penitentiary; Kirk especially," Amanda said. Then she said, "If Kirk really and truly ever repents of his sins and gets completely changed by coming back to God, and if he wants to start dating you again, what will you do, Judy? Do you think you could ever take him back?"

"No, Amanda. No! Never! For me, Kirk is a closed chapter of my life. If the day of true repentance and of turning from sin ever came for Kirk -- and oh, how I pray that it does! -- I would be most happy, and I would forgive him for the pain and the hurt which he caused me, but I could never go back to him. For one thing, I would be plagued constantly by his unstableness. I know God is able to keep; but Kirk has already established this pattern of instability -- of wavering where right and wrong are concerned -- and I would always be fearful that he would defect again. Also, his involvement with pornography, well, no! No way, Amanda."

Amanda hugged Judy. "I'm glad to hear you say that," she admitted. "I know that I, for one, would have been disappointed had you said otherwise. It makes me realize all over again that you have found Christ to be all in all to you and that you have settled it to go through with the Lord no matter what it may cost you."

"I have, Amanda: I have," Judy declared.