

JASON AND JENNIFER

"Why is he so insistent", wondered Jennifer? " He acts like a moon-sick cow sometimes. I really do like him and he is so sweet but I just wish he would know when to leave me alone! I think he cares for me more than I really like." This last thought was not really true, but Jennifer was definitely out of sorts. Once again Jason had seriously embarrassed her in front of her friends. He was just SO WEIRD. When they were alone he was always gentle, sweet, kind, and very understanding though he did seem to be awfully 'straight laced'. Yet he was a lot of fun -- when they were alone. It was really when they were with the 'kids' that she felt, well, kind of sorry for him. He was just so 'out of it' that it was clear that the others considered him just a total outsider. Actually the main problem was that he behaved the same when they were with others as he did when they were alone. Decidedly not normal!!

Jason was a major problem for Jennifer and had been for several months now. She was major league attracted to him and was drawing closer and closer to him but he always seemed to be marching to a totally different drummer. He seemed absolutely out of step. Like today, for instance. All the kids were having a blast and having, like a really fab time. They began winding up tighter and tighter and, well face it, began being stupid. Some of the guys saw this little puppy and began to tease it. They weren't doing any harm and were not 'hurting' it at all. They were just running around it, hollering, shouting, and having a bit of fun. When the pup would run one way some of the guys would run in front and chase him back with a shout. Then others would jump in front of the puppy and chase him back the other way. It was all in fun, no one was being hurt and then Jason just messed it all up. Why did he have to shout at the other boys and absolutely command them to stop. They did too! Then he held the puppy until it quit shaking, talking gently, calming him down. Then he set him down and sent him on his way. The guys were mad as hops - you could just tell. They didn't say anything but they turned away like they didn't want to even look at Jason, or her either. Jennifer had just wanted to drop out of sight. She could feel comfortable with Jason, she could feel comfortable with her good friends, but it did not seem like she could be comfortable with both.

"Why is she so different when we are with the others?", Jason wondered. "Most of the time I love her so much I hurt. But some times it is like she is a totally different person". Jason was clearly smitten with Jennifer and therefore all other girls were 'different' to him. Sure he liked some of them and many were wonderful

to be around - but Jennifer, WOW she was just 'different'. Even though there were some things about her he didn't understand, some things he didn't like much, he knew that she was the only one he wanted -- for life.

The relationship between Jason and Jennifer continued to grow even though Jennifer still could not understand him sometimes. Like the night they were out walking under the stars with a full moon shining. It was so romantic and he was saying some really nice things about her and to her. He was even telling her that he loved her. Jennifer found it so easy to respond to his loving words and his gentle ways and found herself being a bit 'carried away' in her emotions and fantasies. She began to desire and initiate some physical intimacies and expressions of how she was feeling when all of a sudden Jason pulled away from her and would hardly even look at her. Jennifer was mortified and felt rejected with a great big capital REJECT. Later, when things got smoothed out a bit she asked him why he had been so rude to her and hurt her so deeply. After all, for the very first time she had been ready to really give herself to him and he didn't even want her. Jason tried to explain in halting words, with long pauses for thought, "Jennifer, please try to understand! I love you more than life itself. It is not at all that I do not want you. I want you more than you can ever know. You are the most valuable thing in my whole world and I would never want to do ANYTHING to cheapen you or to make your value less than it truly is. I want you for my bride and I have visions of our being together for eternity. In my mind I picture wonderful things that we might do together, dreams that **can come true**, joys that await us -- all in the proper time. Dear Jennifer, it is not yet time for that kind of physical relationship. Somehow I know that if we 'made love' now it would change our whole relationship and might even ruin it. Now is the time to talk, to discuss our hopes and our dreams. Now is the time to plan, to get to know one another. There is a right time for all things and it is my hope that we will use this time for its proper purpose." Jason went on and on with this kind of talk, which sounded good to Jennifer but it did also sound kind of goody goody. Still, that night convinced Jennifer that she did indeed want Jason in much the same way he wanted her and they began making plans to spend their lives together. The more they spent time together however, the more it became clear that while Jason was steady and constant in his love for Jennifer, she lived life on a roller coaster. She surely loved Jason -- but not with ALL her heart. She still loved her friends and, at times longed for the fun and excitement of doing wild and crazy things with her 'other' friends.

After graduation from high school they both went to college. Jennifer had a strong 'call' toward medicine and helping people and finally chose nursing as a career. Soon she was virtually buried in A&P (anatomy and physiology), nerves, muscles, and insertion points. Later came the development of nursing plans,

interaction with high-tech electronics, and even computers ("this is nursing ?", thought Jennifer) Later still she became totally involved in her rotations and the various practical training work which fit into her notions of what REAL NURSING was all about. Jason, however, went in an entirely different direction. His father was out-of-sight wealthy and so Jason did not need to prepare to 'make a living'. His main concern was people and how they could best be 'helped'. He didn't follow any particular course of study but just took whatever he thought would help most. Academics seemed to come pretty easy to him and he never seemed to care much whether the courses were 'easy' or 'hard', he just took them and did tolerably well. He took a lot of math because he wanted to understand economics and statistics. He took a lot of psychology and sociology because he wanted to understand the behavior of people, as individuals and in groups. He took a lot of chemistry and agriculture because he felt that knowledge would help him in understanding how poor people could improve their condition with a minimum of outside help.

Even though they stayed very much in love and were together quite a bit, both Jason and Jennifer were very busy during the next four and a half years. They both exercised a lot of discipline in managing the fierce physical pull that flamed inside both of them. They became active in sports and exercise both for good health and as an aid in sublimating their passions. They stayed pure and were blessed by real growth and maturation of their relationship. At last they graduated and plunged into the life together that they had been waiting for and planning for so long.

Jason and Jennifer were joined together. They became one. In the beginning there was a wonderful honeymoon period when Jennifer thought that she would never be sad, never be lonely, never want anything but to be with Jason in everything he and she would ever do. They shared everything with one another and a wonderful intimacy began to develop. Each was very interested in the other's ideas and thoughts. In the sharing there also came a developing honoring and esteeming which is not an inherent part of the love relationship but beyond it. Truly they were becoming 'ONE' in fact as well as name. He was ALWAYS thoughtful and kind. It seemed like he could never get enough of her presence and was helpful in every way. For quite a while Jennifer echoed Jason's consistency and responded in kind. The joy they grew to know was impossible to express. "This thing called marriage is even better than I thought", Jennifer said to herself.

There came a time, however, when Jennifer began to indulge herself in 'daydreams'. She was so sure of Jason's perfect love that she began to take it for granted and began to think, not of what she had, but what she might be missing. She began to think about her old friends. Slowly but progressively she developed a fantasy life which invaded her real life. She often found herself dreaming about

her past life and her previous friends. They were all gone now because they could not stand Jason. It was not like he was critical or anything but the things he said and did always wound up making them feel uncomfortable and sometimes even ashamed. Jason never seemed to do these things on purpose, seemed to really like those other people, but he always said just the wrong thing at the worst possible time. By and by, Jennifer began to visit some of her old friends -- "just for old times sake", she told herself. While visiting them she found herself more and more being drawn back into her "old" life and spending less and less time with Jason. She still loved Jason, just as much as ever she told herself but she was entitled to some fun in life and he just didn't seem to be much fun anymore. Anyway, he would understand. He always did! She began to be embarrassed again by his 'dorky' attitudes about things and began to think that he was pretty strict about an awful lot of things. Her friends grew to be more and more important to her, one in particular. He seemed to offer the fun and wildness that Jason lacked. Besides he really 'needed' her. Jason seemed so self sufficient. "Oh, he says he loves me", Jennifer thought, "but what does he 'need' me for. He gets along just fine listening to his own drummer which others never hear and I only hear faintly and then only rarely. Lucas really needs me! He has had such a hard life, no one has ever really loved him. If he only had someone like me to take care of him he could really get his act together and perhaps end up being better than Jason and without a doubt, more fun besides." So Jennifer began spending more and more time with Luke trying to rehab him, mother him, and 're-create' him so that he wouldn't be so troubled and sad. No one 'understood' him and he had had so many bad breaks. To the surprise of no one -- the day finally came when Jennifer left Jason and moved in with Luke.

Jason was devastated ! His one true love had left him because she preferred another! His passion and longing for Jennifer made her infidelity almost more than he could bear. Even though his love for her was, somehow, undiminished, his pain was terrible. His facile mind was continuously filled with thoughts of how he might be able to rescue her, for Jason knew in his heart that Jennifer was trading jewels for garbage. He knew that a time would come when her misery made her long for the joy and peace they had known. What Jason did not know was whether she would be too proud, too ashamed to return to him when she realized her mistake.

Some of his pain was because of his own loss and loneliness but much more was for Jennifer herself who was throwing away all she really wanted in return for - what ? Jason in his wisdom understood the dust and ashes that would come from her false lover. It took very little time for Jennifer to realize that she had MADE A BIG MISTAKE. Lucas was not the pathetic little underdog that she had imagined

him to be. He was a tyrant!. He was stubborn, strong willed, unfaithful, and had no regard for her at all. Jason had seen her as having great value. Lucas saw her as trash. Nothing Jennifer did was ever quite right. Soon his criticism became abusive, especially when he was 'high' on his favorite drug of the moment. It was not long before Jennifer also saw herself as trash. Her self-esteem plummeted, with some justification. Her conduct certainly was not very noble and all the money she earned as an R.N. was used to provide drugs, booze, and yes -- even other women for Lucas. And yet she hung on to him -- where else could she go. She became miserable and wanted to escape but had no idea which way to turn.

Gradually Jennifer sunk down, down, down - below bottom, low enough to carry a flag under a snake, feeling that her life was totally and terminally ruined. One day as she was dragging herself home from a long, tiring shift at the hospital she caught sight of Jason in her neighborhood. She was much to ashamed to go to him and actually slipped down a side street to avoid him but when she looked up she discovered that he had come running to her. Unbelievably she began hearing the words that she so desperately wanted to hear but could not deserve. Jason was telling her how much he loved her, how important she was to him, what tremendous value she had to him. "No, no, Jason. Please stop! You do not know what I have become." All of her hurt and anguish began pouring forth. All the things which had been building up inside her for months suddenly became a flood over which she had no control. With no thought nor regard for what her words were surely doing to Jason she talked and talked and talked out of her deep need to the only one who had ever loved her, honored her, and been truly intimate with her. Jason listened. Then he just stood there for the longest time.

Jason's heart was in total turmoil. Here was his love, the one with whom he was bonded forever. Others would see an adulterous, despoiled, untrustworthy person. Jason saw his love who needed him more than she had ever needed anyone or anything. Jason's entire being and every emotion was directed toward helping his love who was in such great trouble. If he ever needed wisdom, he needed it right now. The only possible hope for Jennifer was for him to convince her that she is still lovable. That she is still worthy simply because his love makes her worthy. He simply had to find some way to get past her own view of herself so she could adopt his view of her.

Jennifer, who had begun with total despair, could not imagine why he didn't just walk away but neither did she walk away. Finally, after minutes that seemed like hours, Jason said "Come, Jennifer, let's find somewhere to sit and talk". They soon found a lonely park bench and sat. Again, it seemed that a very long time went by before either of them spoke. It was Jason who broke the silence.

"Jennifer", he said, "I still love you. I always have. I have been so lonely without you ---""Stop", Jennifer nearly screamed. Her heart was broken in ways she never imagined it could be broken. "Haven't you heard? I have been unfaithful. I have disgraced both you and myself. I am totally unworthy to be either loved or forgiven !!" "Nevertheless", Jason replied calmly, "I do love you and however you feel about yourself is your business. As for me, I love you as much as before. Even more, love of my life, my heart is breaking like yours because I am feeling the shame and hurt that you are bearing and want to bear that burden with you. Sure, I am also hurt for myself and it would be so easy for me to fly into a rage, saying things I would later regret. Know this one thing, my dear Jennifer, it is you I love. You alone. You are still the same woman I married, the same one that has shared my heart and my life. In fact, I am hoping with all my heart that these recent tragedies have not made you worse but have made you better". "Oh, Jason. How I wish I could believe that, but that seems so wrong. I have betrayed you and have taken another lover. I can hope that you will forgive me, even that you might take me back on some kind of trial basis, but I can not hope that this will have made me BETTER." Jason now displayed a wisdom which reached far beyond his years, beyond his emotions, even beyond his understanding. It was a wisdom which had been planted there years ago by his own wise and loving Father. "Jennifer", Jason said," The longing for the others has been inside you all along. It was there when we were courting. It was there when we were wed. It was even there when we were having our most intimate times together. Somewhere, deep down inside, you have had a wistful look toward far places which I have never been able to erase. I wanted to, many times, but secretly you have always thought that you wanted more than I could give. You wrongly thought that you would always have me, even when you went to them. Now, through this experience, we may discover at least two things. First, those others do indeed have much to offer but it is sickness, heartache, and pain -- not peace and joy. Secondly, I will always love you but even our love is not enough to make us intimate, close, walking as ONE. Jennifer, my love, I offer you my love and I know that you love me. Even more, I offer you myself, my life. If you will now give yourself totally to me, if you will set your will that you will have no others but me, I am sure, we will find, once more, that intimacy, that great joy which we once knew. I fact, I believe that because that dangerous root has been pulled out of your life it is possible for us to find an even greater intimacy than ever before."

Jennifer was overjoyed at this wonderful opportunity which had been placed before her. Her choice was obvious. When offered such tremendous love and forgiveness, what else would her heart say except yes, yes YES. And so she did. Having been set free from that pull toward the 'old ways' she and Jason found

happiness as never before and encouraged each other through all their days to new heights of unity and intimacy.

This love story is taken from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He too, has caused us to fall in love with Him though some of us have wistfully looked toward the world hoping to find something which we wanted but He was not providing. Some of us too have committed spiritual adultery and, in our shame, concluded that life with Him could never be the same. We were not to be trusted. We did not trust ourselves and surely He also did not trust us. Besides, even if He loved us it could never be the same. That concept comes from the father of lies and is not the Gospel Jesus brought and it is not the truth. He is the one who makes the decision to love us, and love us He does. In that love He also offers us a place of great intimacy with Himself but it is **OUR CHOICE** whether we will accept this intimacy on His terms or whether we will shut ourselves out because **WE THINK WE ARE NOT WORTHY**. Of course we are not worthy but that has nothing to do with the problem. He knew about **ALL** our unworthiness when He gave us New Life, life in the Spirit. He knew about all of that when he brought us into being an important part of His body, His bride. Yet, He not only offers intimacy but truly longs for **YOU** to make that decision that you want this intimacy with Him also. Some will doubt that this is truly possibly, but scripture says it is, Jesus says it is. Some will think that you are not equipped for such glory as this but scripture says that you have been given everything necessary for both life and godliness. Some of you think that this is scary. If you get too close to Him you may discover some things from which you have diligently been hiding . Perhaps it is better to send Moses up on the mountain and let him come back and tell us what the Lord has had to say. It is true, the flesh may not survive this trip up the mountain. It is true that you may be changed into someone a bit different. It is true that this may be very difficult. How do you become intimate with any Spirit, much less the Creator!! The same way you become intimate with any other person (indeed He is a person, you know). You set your will to believe the truth that He wants this just as much as you do, perhaps more. You believe that He has made this possible because He has. You give yourself to Him with no reservation, desiring Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Then -- **YOU SPEND TIME WITH HIM UNTIL YOU HEAR HIM COMING AND HEAR HIS STILL, SMALL VOICE SPEAKING FROM WITHIN YOURSELF.**

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