

Angie's Marriage Column ~ June 16, 2010

How to Cope After Husband Had 14 Affairs in OUR 20-Year Marriage

Ask Angie: What do I do if I feel I have tried everything I can to save my marriage? We have been married almost 20 years. My husband has had 4 affairs. The last one ended in Feb. We started counseling then. He now decided that it is not working and he is not going back to counseling. I no longer know what to do. Our children were affected by our mess of a marriage. During the last affair that lasted almost 9 months he lived in our basement. A lot took place (anger, hurtful words, blame). Our 18-year-old daughter blames us for spoiling her senior year. She feels we have to earn her respect-He for what he did (the affair with a 23 yr. old-he is 45) and me for staying with him. I am so confused. I am a Christian woman-my husband is not. I don't think I can continue like this.

NOTE to our Readers: Is there someone in your life who needs encouraged? Pass along this message of hope and encouragement today!

Marriage Guidance: Please do not continue in the way that you are. Let go of the NEED to manage and organize what your husband does or doesn't do. I know this may be difficult. But you can pray for your husband and give the rest of the problem to God. When it concerns your husband *that* is all you need to do. There is nothing you can do about your husband and his sinful lifestyle; continue praying for him and if it is possible for you, "love the sinner" but hate the sin.

However, there is a lot you can do for yourself and that of your children. Sit down and talk with your children about their dad's sickness and separateness from God. We live in sin and are spiritually unwell when we are not living in God's Truth and Light. If we who say we are Christian do not believe this, or cannot praise, worship and adore our Savior to others, then we must take a look at our own faith and ask God to help us in our weakness.

You must let go of your husband's weakness before it undermines your own faith and trust in God. There is more to good health than just being physically healthy, we must also be emotionally and spiritually healthy. This is something that is lacking in those people who are a slave to sin.

We talk about “saving marriage” as if it is something that we do, and initially it is—**we do have to be willing to let go of our pride and humble ourselves to God**. God gives us the ability to love our spouse in the right ways when we [allow Him to heal us](#) of our emotional and spiritual sickness.

Mainstream counseling is not going to heal someone in the spiritual sense because they can't—it's impossible. This is something [between the individual and God](#). This is why worldly counsel does not really work. A counselor may encourage someone to seek Christ' forgiveness for their sinful life, but most of them will not do that because that would take the focus off of them.

Most mainstream counselors want to be God in your life and they act like they are God—they steal people's money and don't really care about you like God does—they are just doing their job. They can have fifty certificates on the wall but not one of them can save your soul.

ONLY God Can Save Marriages!

If God saves marriages, what must we do? God only asks that we follow [His awesome, loving, beautiful instruction for our personal life](#), which flows into our relationships. Following Christ's teachings for our marriage is how God disciplines us. It is how we learn self-control and develop strong Christ-like qualities in our relationships. Our relationship with God and putting to work the principles of Christ in our life is what will heal us emotionally and spiritually. But your husband has to be willing to give up his pride and humble his life to the Lord. It's a personal matter—it doesn't have to happen in a church building; no one else needs to hear our cries for help to our Father in Heaven—only He wants to know the sincerity of our heart and the sorrow we feel for our past deeds.

Some people make a big hoopla over their coming to Christ, but that is not what God wants from us. God wants our earnestness in prayer and steadfastness in our faith and daily walk with Him.

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you that truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then

your Father, who see what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6: 5-6)

If a person truly wants to give up their sinful life, they must be willing to give up the wayward lifestyle for a new lifestyle with Jesus. We have to get the healing we need through a [transformation of the heart, mind and soul](#). This is in the form of a new attitude, a new perspective and a new way to believe and live. Becoming saved is a gradual process because of our obedience to God through Christ. It works like this: **As we grow and learn in God’s Word we begin to actually see and believe in a different way for our life and we change how we perceive the world and our lifestyle.**

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22,23 NIV)

What we once believed as true for our life is no longer truth, but a lie. As we gradually transform our lives we begin to be more Christ-like in our character and become more like Him—this is our purpose for living. “We are being transformed into His likeness”. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*”.

We can go to twenty different counselors, but if we do not recognize the need for Christ in our life, nothing is going to change—we will remain a slave to our selfish desires. God speaks about the degradation of a man when he allows lust to control him and take over his mind and soul. Whenever we allow something (substance of choice) to control the way we believe and how we live we are under its control. This is precisely why it is called addiction.

“Do not lust in your heart after her beauty, or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a load of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life” (Proverbs 6:25)

Wow that sounds pretty hard-hitting, “preys upon your very life”! In what ways does sexual sin prey upon our lives? It controls our thoughts and our being, if we allow it too. It hurts our spouse and children and marriage and

all the people we love the most, or should be loving. It degrades a person and harms the soul. It keeps us separate from God. It shows a terrible example to our younger generation. We may or may not get a venereal disease from sexual sins but it puts disease into our whole being. That is the sad truth.

For the sober alcoholic, just “thinking” about wanting a drink can be dangerous. For the obese over-eater just “thinking” about food can be dangerous. For those who are living for their own selfish desires, just “thinking” about the opposite sex can be dangerous for marriage, family and society as a whole. So why do it? Addiction is a powerful force—we simply do not have the will power to stop our cravings...we have to HUMBLE OUR WRETCHED LIVES TO GOD!

If we are [preoccupied with lust desires](#) we NEED to immediately pray about it and ask Christ to help us change our desire before we are drawn into it and controlled by it. We must ask Christ to change our thoughts to pure and loving thoughts. And we should immediately get our minds busy with doing activities that keep us from being so easily tempted. If we are faithful in our attempt to rid ourselves of impure thoughts and behaviors God will give us the self-control to say “No”. He will give us the [self-control to walk away from tempting situations](#).

“But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

God gives us the choice to choose things of God or desire things of the world. Most people do not go to the proper source when having personal problems. They believe a mere man is going to help them with their personal moral issues, but here again, this is something between the individual and God. **Marriages are unhealthy because the couples in it need healing.** They need to grow and mature in God’s Word by being obedient to what it says for them. This is what “being saved” is all about—it’s a lifestyle, not a one-time thing.

A person can steer us to a road in our life journey but the “saving from death” part, is all between you and your Savior. This is what are ministry does; we send out encouraging messages to people to guide them in their direction they should go, but we cannot save anyone’s marriage or personal selves.

REMEMBER: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. (Psalm 111: 10)

The above biblical quote does not mean to be afraid of God but afraid of DEATH. If we are afraid of death we might wizen up in the LORD!

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We cannot blame a bad marriage on marriage itself. Marriage is a beautiful relationship that God designed for the purpose of love-making, procreating, service and companionship. We have to humble our lives to God and get the healing we need so we can then restore our marriage to God. ...Because that's where it belongs.

And finally, scripture reveals God's anger toward sinful people in **Romans 1:18-32**. It is important to note as you read and study these scripture verses in Romans how much they resemble what is happening in the world today. **Many people, (mainstream Christianity) have stifled God's truths in order to believe anything that supports their own selfish lifestyles. Don't let yourselves get caught up in the deception.**

God always wishes to restore the sinner, but the sinner has to be willing to restore himself—no one can do it for him. Remember it is an individual matter between God and that person. God is able to restore anyone, no matter what they have done, as long as the sinner does not stubbornly reject and distort the truth.

Nonetheless, God's wrath remains in those people who persist in being controlled and led by their sin. (**Romans 1:18-32**) We can choose to accept what God has freely given us or we can reject Him and remain blinded from understanding God's plan and purpose for our lives.

“But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through ALL GENERATIONS.” (Psalm 33:11)

The bottom line is you don't have to continue in the way you have when you give up control of the sin and the sinner. This will free you to take care of YOU. It's almost like the spouse of an alcoholic, the more they fight with the addict and the behaviors of the addiction, the more it consumes their

daily living and wrecks havoc on their spiritual and emotional well-being. The more we fuss and fight with the person who is living in sin the more harm we do to ourselves. Give it to God! Pray for the sinner! Be a good example of Jesus working in your life. **Ask God to help you to love the person through forgiveness, while still hating the sin.**

And remember, your husband's addiction to sin is not yours to interfere with; it is out of your control. GIVE IT TO GOD. He needs to come to God and seek forgiveness for HIMSELF; you cannot do that for him.

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:10-11)

Finally, allow your husband to see Jesus Christ working in you, through your attitude and independence away from his sinful behaviors. You must detach from his sin and the behaviors the sin causes, so YOU CAN GO ON LIVING IN CHRIST.

In Christ,
Angie and Frank
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