

Angie's Marriage Column ~ April 23, 2008

Finding Joy and Love after Husband's Affair

Question: Hi Angie - my question is about joy. My husband and I are 9 months into our "recovery" from his affair. We use scripture daily in everything to heal from this. I couldn't ask for a better situation of after it was revealed (he's repented, committed & working every minute on us). I've chosen to forgive yet struggle with unforgiveness still too often and struggle with feelings of love for my husband. Other feelings are progressing slowly but I worry over whether I will "feel" love for my husband ever again where the strings are no longer attached to the past and am trying to understand what joy means to a Christian in the midst of suffering. How does joy & happiness differ, if at all? I know choosing to love is what Christ wants me to do, not rely or wait on the feelings - but I wonder if God loves marriage, would feelings of love be absent if we're obedient in walking with Him? Thank you for your ministry.

Guidance: First of all I would like to say what a wonderful Christ-like example you are showing of forgiveness for other couples who are struggling with the issue of forgiveness in their own marriage. Your willingness to heal yourselves and restore the marriage shows commitment and principled acts of love – both, which are biblical.

The forgiveness you are having a hard time dealing with comes from self. You have chosen to forgive because you know it is the “right thing” to do, but you can't. That's typical for imperfect folks as us. We all struggle with forgiveness from time to time. The good news is...”your willingness” to forgive and that is what's important. Many people are not “willing” to forgive and they remain bitter, lonely, and sad in unforgiveness.

Here's why you are still struggling with forgiveness. You are still holding onto hurt feelings from the affair your husband had and you're not ready to give up those feelings yet. The minute we forgive it means we cannot use those hurt feelings anymore to justify ourselves or to verbally abuse others with. But for true forgiveness to happen it takes complete faith and trust in God.

Here is how it works. You give the hurt to God and He will help you forgive. Why do we hold onto the pain and hurt? Because we can use our negative feelings to wield as a weapon against the person who hurt us anytime we want. It is our defense mechanism. So you see, it is a vicious cycle! We must hand it over to God once and for all and let Him deal with it. He said He would. He wants our burdens and then He'll take care of us.

[“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. \(Matthew 11:29\)](#)

As Christ followers we must allow the Spirit of Christ to go to work in our life. It is a big part of our Christian walk. We absolutely need to have faith to give our sufferings to the Lord. And then He will bless us with abundance. **Part of that abundance is “joy”!**

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith...(Galatians 5:22)

Scripture tells us that we are to trust in God for our **daily bread**. (Matthew 6:11) Our daily bread comes from the fruit of the Spirit. It is where we receive **joy**, happiness, hope, love, faith, and forgiveness. He is our Source for comfort and security in a demanding world. This is where many Christians go wrong – they find comfort and security through other sources and then they are not blessed with joy, happiness, hope, love, faith and forgiveness. What’s missing? They are not complete.

God blesses us with everything we need when we follow Him.

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your **joy** may be full. (John 16:24)

If we dwell on what we *think* we have “given up” or if we dwell on how much we “give” and do not receive anything in return for our efforts, we will only find more unhappiness and pain. The reason is we are not doing these things out of love but out of negative feelings controlling us. Where is the fruit of the Spirit? The fruits are not apparent because we are living our life to satisfy our own desires – essentially we are still in the “want mode” of thinking. And we have not allowed ourselves to have faith enough to “give up” whatever it is that is holding us back from allowing the Spirit of Christ to go to work in our life.

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:24-26)

True joy to a Christian while in the midst of suffering can only be attained through the power of the Holy Spirit within them. Even though they may be suffering, they feel joy in the hope of eternal life with God. And in the comfort of knowing they are doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord.

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls”. (1 Peter 1:8,9)

God loves marriage. He is the Master Designer of marriage. God does not want husbands and wives to hurt one another. Marriage is a living symbol of Jesus Christ and the Church. (Ephesians 5:23-32) Therefore, in regards to your question, “Would feelings of love be absent if you were obedient to God?” The answer is an emphatic NO! On the contrary.

When couples are obedient to the word of God in their marriage, the marriage thrives with abundance! The reason why feelings of love are absent or disappear is because couples are looking out into the world for their answers. They want that “feeling” of love to come back so much that they commit adultery, and or other lustful acts. They let their feelings tell them they are not “in love” with their spouse anymore.

But marriage designed by God is based upon “principled practice of love”. That means, once couples begin to apply “principled acts of love” the fruits of the Spirit begin to become apparent – **joy**, faith, love, longsuffering, forgiveness, hope, compassion, etc. God blesses couples in marriage with fruits as those above when they base their marriage upon His wisdom and understanding, and not our own.

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” (Ephesians 5:21) (This scripture, if practiced, would be a principled practice of love).

Article Resources

Have You Really Fallen Out Of Love With Your Spouse?

<http://www.heavenministries.com/articles/haveyoureallyfallenoutoflove.htm>

Principled Acts of Love

<http://www.heavenministries.com/articles/principledactsoflove.htm>

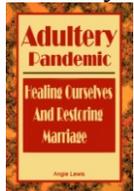
What Marriage Is Not

<http://www.heavenministries.com/articles/whatmarriageisnot.htm>

Book Resources

I recommend my book Adultery Pandemic for any marriage that is going through the devastating impact of infidelity. It offers the biblical guidance couples need to heal and restore their marriage.

Adultery Pandemic



<http://www.lulu.com/AngieLewis>

Your Marriage Can Be Restored! A treasure book filled with effective guidance for your marriage from forgiveness and trust to recommitting your lives to each other again.

You Can Heal The Wounds! Your marriage deserves the best possible care. God is that care. Make your marriage important to you. A treasury of great information you can't live without if you want to remain happily married.

Scripture References on Joy and being Joyful in the Lord

Luke 6:22-23

James 1:2-3

Romans 14:17

Romans 15:13

Psalm 126:3

In Christ,
Frank and Angie
Heaven Ministries ~ Marriage Healing Ministry
<http://www.heavenministries.com>

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