

Angie's Marriage Column – Wednesday August 15, 2007

Forgiveness vs. Reconciliation

Marriage Question: What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? My husband committed adultery for a long duration with a close friend. He is truly repentant, I know. I have told him I forgive him, but I don't see how I have with the anger that keeps coming back as I turn my back on God's call. And are physical interactions, when I'm so unstable, potentially a good & healing thing, or will it put my dependency more back with my husband than the Lord? I'm afraid it will disrupt my new love with God that I'm learning & take my focus off him.

Response: Forgiving someone completely can only be done by understanding Christ's forgiveness for us. How can Jesus forgive us for what we have done? We are all sinners and we all go wrong from time to time. Why does your husband not get to have mercy and forgiveness from you if he is repentant? That is not fair to him, is it? Why continue browbeating him with your angry feelings? If your husband is truly repentant then that means Christ has already forgiven him. By you not forgiving, you are sinning against God. You are hurting not only your husband, but also your spiritual self and relationship with God.

I always tell people who have a difficult time forgiving to try and put themselves in the other person's shoes. Yes, it was terribly wrong what your husband did, but it is over and now he needs your forgiveness from you - his wife. The difference between forgiveness and reconciliation is in true forgiveness we do not still feel anger over the wrong - it is not continually browbeating the person who erred either.

In other words, *to reconcile* issues with your spouse means you have come to an agreement through negotiation and, or, compromise, which has nothing to do with forgiveness. *To forgive* means to give mercy to someone for an unjust they committed. As Christ Ones our example to follow is what Christ did for us. Jesus Christ has given us mercy by suffering and dying for our sins.

I believe you are still turning your back on your husband, which in a real sense *is* turning your back on God. I would not stop having sexual relations with your husband. Getting intimate is what your marriage so very much needs right now. Denying a husband his wife is not a good idea, ever. I don't see how getting

close with your husband would be turning your back on God or keep you from having a relationship with the Lord. It is perfectly normal for married couples to be dependent on each other for their sexual needs, and so I would not even begin to think otherwise.

You are married, and God wants you to focus on your marriage with everything you have within you – it is your purpose as a wife, and when you do that you are doing the will of God as well. God is the Master Designer of marriage and by basing your marriage upon His Design you are being the godly woman that God created you to be. The more loving and giving marriage partner you are, the more blessings your marriage will receive.

Being a loving and respectful wife *is* being a loving child of God. Caring for yourself and taking care of your responsibilities as a wife is what makes you closer to God. You would be showing God your love for Him by forgiving your husband. Why don't you both grow together in the Lord by doing home bible study and biblical research together?

I have a very old dictionary. Noah Webster's American Dictionary 1828 of the English Language which was written during the years when home, church, and school were established upon biblical principles and godly standards. Here is what it says about forgiveness.

Forgive - Forgiveness

1. To pardon; to remit, as an offense or debt, to overlook an offense, and treat the offender as not guilty.
2. Forgive us our debts – The Lord's Prayer

The act of forgiving: The pardon of an offender, by which he is considered and treated as not guilty. The forgiveness of our enemies is our Christian duty.

Scripture reference: Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in Heaven may forgive you your sins. Scripture quote ???

Until next Wednesday, May God bless each and every one of you for His glory in His kingdom! -- Frank and Angie

Book Resource: Journey on the Roads Less Traveled

http://www.amazon.com/Journey-Roads-Traveled-Angie-Lewis/dp/1413788904/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1/102-9025118-8810566?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1187131516&sr=8-1

Articles: How Can I Forgive When It Hurts So Bad?

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

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