

## Angie's Marriage Column ~ August 11, 2010

I Left My Alcoholic Husband – When Should I Go Back ?

**Ask Angie:** I have just left my alcoholic husband. I love him dearly. We have three children together. It has been eight years of covering up and lying to friends and family. I have been threatening to leave forever, and it made no difference, now I have left. He swears he won't touch alcohol again, and will become an active part of our family again. Is there a chance he will stop for good? Can addicts cure themselves? Does he need intensive therapy? Do I? Should I go back to him???????

[We touch down on this issue in this encouraging video. Should you go back?](#)

**Ask Angie:** Hello Angie and Frank, I came across your article on “loving an alcoholic”. I would love to have additional encouragement and guidance for how to detach with love from the alcoholic. I could use it in a big way at this time in my life. Blessings, and thank you.

**Marriage Guidance:** As you may have already watched in the [video above](#), if you have separated yourself physically from the alcoholic we suggest that you do not go back with the alcoholic too soon, and there are many good reasons for this, which we will talk about in this marriage column.

Since you have left and are now not rescuing and enabling your husband any longer, it is now time to rescue and enable you to help you get [the emotional and spiritual healing you need after enduring years of alcoholic abuse](#).

Loving an alcoholic is never easy but once you get the understanding that you need, it does become more bearable, and once you become more knowledgeable about addiction it will also help the alcoholic. Through our materials on the website [Heaven Ministries](#), you will learn [how to detach from the alcoholic with love](#). Loving detachment is what all loved ones of alcoholics need to do, even if they are temporarily separated from the alcoholic. This helps you and helps the alcoholic.

Emotionally, the alcoholic has been draining you of life and without learning how to detach you will literally become sicker and sicker with the alcoholic. Spiritually, the [behaviors of the alcoholic make loved ones feel resentful](#) and without hope...but there is hope. Our materials will show you how to rescue YOU from addiction first so you can then [help the alcoholic you love to get sober](#). Let's put it this way. The alcoholic has a far better chance at sobriety, if the person or people closest to him or her back off for awhile through understanding how detaching works. The loved ones emotional and spiritual wellness is what everyone needs. Alcoholism and its affects are contagious, literally.

Alcoholism is a family affair, meaning everyone who has contact with the alcoholic is affected by alcoholism. This is why children of alcoholics either end up being alcoholics or drug addicts themselves or become the enabler and rescuer of an alcoholic spouse. This is researched and factual information. More and more people are becoming addicted or love an addicted person and it is because no one is getting the [TRUE HEALING THEY NEED. God is our HEALER!](#)

Here's what we have learned. You can't tell an alcoholic that he or she needs God. They will turn the tables on you and say that you need God. No alcoholic wants to hear that they need God because it makes the person who said it seem self-righteous. The truth is WE ALL NEED God...it is God who give us life!!

### **We Help Others through Example**

*But you can influence the alcoholic through your own emotional and spiritual healing.* Your changed actions and behaviors help the alcoholic to see that they are truly sick. This is what happened with Frank and I. About 20 years ago he got spiritually and emotionally well and stopped enabling and rescuing me. He detached with love from my alcoholic abuse and even separated from me for a short time. You can read Angie's full testimony of how she overcame alcoholism through Jesus Christ in our book, [Journey on the Roads Less Traveled.](#)

To help others we first have to help ourselves. How can an emotionally distraught person help an addict? They certainly cannot. Once I saw positive changes in Frank through his detachment of my addiction, I also wanted to get well (sober) and experience the peace that he got through Christ working in him. God does heal our souls and makes us better people for each other.

The question remains, "would I have gotten sober had Frank not first gotten spiritually and emotionally well? I cannot see into the future, but I do know that because he got knowledgeable about alcoholism, accepted Jesus Christ for his life and learned to detach from me with love, it helped me, in a big way, to realize I had a problem with alcohol and a BIG one.

God uses people, especially spouses [to help the unbeliever](#) "give up" what is holding them back from seeking him, whether it is alcoholism, drug addiction, [anger](#), unbelief, pride, negative emotions, religion, etc... Scripture even says so.

*"...If any obey not the word, they also may with the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."* (1 Peter 3:1,2)  
How can a wife have chaste conversation with her abusive alcoholic husband? She can't on her own; she must seek Christ to help her with detaching and loving the alcoholic.  
[Detach with Love!](#)

If you are a husband of an alcoholic wife it works the same way. Be a good example of Christ working in you through your actions and behaviors. Detach from the addiction and

take care of your own well-being. We know this first hand because Frank and I have already walked that road. I was a very [verbally abusive](#) alcoholic. But praise be to God, that person is dead—I am no longer *that* terrible person. I buried her 20 years ago along with all of the attitude and garbage that goes along with addiction. We overcame and so can you!

### **Don't Cover up and Lie for the Alcoholic**

When spouses of alcoholics cover up and lie for the alcoholic all it does it keep the addict addicted. **When you cover up and lie, it isn't their problem anymore, it's yours!!** This is why loved ones of alcoholics, without first learning to detach and take care of their own well-being, are actually a detriment to the alcoholic ever getting sober!!

When we sweep things under the rug we literally feed the addiction. When we threaten to leave but never do it, we become like the little boy who called wolf. One day he really saw a wolf and no one would listen to him and he got gobbled up. We should never threaten to leave, just do it...if the abuse has gotten unbearable for you and the children... then it is always best to leave. God doesn't want both of you to drown in the depths of addiction. One of you has to swim to shore so as to help the other.

“An iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another”. (Proverbs 27:17) In the marriage relationship it is God's ideal that husband and wives sharpen one another. “Bear with one another” (Colossians 3:13) “Be completely humble and gentle”. (Ephesians 4:2) “Be patient, bearing with one another in (Christ's) love.” (Ephesians 4:3) “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work” (Ecclesiastes 4:9)

### **Don't Leave Because You Think It Will Get Them Sober**

**And don't leave thinking it is going to get the alcoholic sober.** It may get him sober and it may not. When you leave the alcoholic it is for spiritual and emotional growth for yourself...so later you may help the alcoholic. Also, when we talk about leaving it is only **temporary**; we don't mean to [divorce your spouse](#). We believe marriage is a lifetime commitment.

We don't like to tell people to leave or separate from their spouse but if you do not know how to detach and are not spiritually well then it is best if you have family to stay with while you get emotionally and spiritually well. **Then** you can go back to the alcoholic in “loving detachment” and possible help them to seek help for themselves, if they haven't already.

We do not believe that anyone should have to take abusive, angry rants from an abusive person or alcoholic. This is “why” we wrote four healing ebooks on addiction. Just because our spouse is an alcoholic doesn't mean [we can divorce them](#). This is not God's will for marriage. Marriage is for the good times and the bad times. It is God's will that couples work together to heal themselves and restore the marriage (back) to him. This may take months or years to accomplish but it is what God wants us to do. God does have

a purpose and a plan for you. Pray about this and ask Him what His will is for being married to an alcoholic spouse.

Addiction is a family affair and our ebooks are written for the whole family in mind; to help families understand addiction and to encourage them to seek Christ for inner healing and peace. These ebooks get right to the point and give step by step biblical instruction on what to do when married to an alcoholic spouse. We separated one book on addiction into four ebooks, so families could read the appropriate ebooks according to their situation and standing with the alcoholic.

Through [these ebooks](#) on alcoholism, you can learn some valuable detachment techniques that will help you to get closer to God and be happy in the Lord once again, no matter what your situation is like. Many spouses of alcoholics don't realize that when they do not detach emotionally from the abuse and behaviors of the addict they get sucked right into the addiction with the alcoholic, which leads to resentment, frustration and desperation and sadly divorce.

So if you have temporarily separated (you don't have to tell them that it is temporary) from the alcoholic it is now time to rescue YOU from drowning with the alcoholic in your life. Understand this, no matter how mean and gnarly the alcoholic can get they still do love you, they just don't know how to properly love you. No one knows how to love others properly until they have accepted Christ and received love and forgiveness from Jesus Christ and have been empowered by the Holy Spirit of Love!

For the enabler being married to an alcoholic is like the cartoon character "Humpty Dumpty". Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall and his or her spouse kept putting Humpty Dumpty back together again. The next day Humpty Dumpty doesn't know how it happened but the puke was cleaned up, the broken china was swept up, the black eye was covered over with makeup, the wife had a tow truck come pick up the wrecked car, the father-in-law bought groceries, and the mother-in-law just thinks he drink too much one time. No one knows there is a problem. What happens? Humpty gets back up on the wall and starts all over because everything was taken care of by everyone else who is involved with the alcoholic.

What loved ones need to do is when humpty falls, leave him or her there, unless they are hurting themselves or someone else. Let them take responsibility for putting everything back together again. Stop fixing everything. Leave Humpty in the situation that he or she made for themselves (tough Love) and let them put themselves back together on their own. Let them realize they have a problem, without you telling them they do...

### **Can the Alcoholic Cure Themselves?**

Absolutely not! People through their own will power cannot cure themselves of addiction. They must get the inner emotional healing that they so desperately need through Jesus and subsequently then are able to lead a pleasing life for God through Jesus Christ.

“Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin”  
Romans 6:6

“If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him: If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear: Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.” (Job 11:13-16)

Alcoholism and other addictions are an insidious condition. If addicts could simply cure themselves then it wouldn't be addiction, and there would be far less people hurting others, and the world would be a better place. There are a lot of addicts in the world and those who accept Christ and turn from their addiction, with the help of God have a far better chance at sobriety than those who don't.

Many alcoholics get sober only to begin drinking again or to become angry individuals, or to become addicted to something else. They aren't sober because they quit drinking, they are still sick with addiction. Even those people who go to AA for years have not gotten completely sober, if they STILL need A.A. We need a personal relationship with Our Savior! **He is our intensive therapy**, because it is the only therapy that works!

The alcoholic must reach out for God in a personal way, not through others or religiously. No one can have a sincere personal relationship with God through someone else, we must communicate with Him through our prayers and wait and listen to God when He talks to us. We need to read the Word of God daily and truly seek out God's will for our lives because we know in our heart that it is His will for us that will bring us peace and contentment. Church is not the only place where God can be found because we bring God into our hearts and minds through reading of the word, fellowshiping and prayer.

Christ frees us from our demons (baggage, hurts and pains) when we put our [total trust and faith in Him](#) and begin to live our life for Him. Jesus fills us up with His Spirit and then we don't "crave" alcohol (or other controlling factor) in our life any more. His Spirit help us to say "NO" to alcohol (and sins). I'm a living, breathing testimony of this very beautiful, marvelous liberation in Jesus Christ.

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him and He in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:15-16)

God Bless!  
In Christ,  
Angie and Frank

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