

Bringing Healing to Marriages Broken by Sexual Sin

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I. Introduction.

II. Help the healing to begin.

- A. You need to understand what has happened – what was the nature of the sexual sin and how was it exposed? Heb. 13:4 Num. 32:23
- B. Are both parties open to reconciliation?
- C. Help both parties deal with their initial (strong) emotions. Ps. 55:4-5,12-13,20-21
 - 1. Don't make hasty decisions. Wait to see what God may do.
 - 2. Each spouse should understand that the other is suffering too. Phil. 2:3-4
 - 3. Both parties may need godly counsel. Prov. 11:14 12:15 Js. 1:5
- D. Nothing is more important than building hope in God – Who He is and what He can do. Jer. 17:5-8 Heb. 13:5-6 6:18-19 1 Co. 10:13 Ro. 8:28-39 Ps. 34:17-18 46:1ff Js. 1:2ff
 - 1. God understands what it is like to be the victim of adultery. Jer. 2:13 Js. 4:4
 - 2. Adultery is not the unforgivable sin. Isa. 55:6-7 Ps. 32 51 103:11-12
 - 3. Broken marriages can be redeemed..
 - 4. God has a purpose and is working – perhaps in many lives. Rom. 8:28 Gen. 50:20
 - 5. Your focus has to be on pleasing God, regardless of what the other person does. 2 Co. 5:9 Gal. 6:1

III. Help the person enslaved to sexual sin.

- A. First, repent before God. Ps. 51:1ff 32:1ff Gen. 39:9b Pr. 2:17 3:5f Isa. 55:1-2 Mt. 19:6
 - 1. No progress can be made until the relationship with God is restored. Gal. 6:1
 - 2. Your sin exposes the condition of your heart. Mark 7:20ff Gal. 5:16ff Isa. 55:1-2 Mt. 12:33-35 James 1:14-15
 - 3. You must fully accept blame – no excuses. 1 Co. 10:13 Pr. 28:13 Ps. 51:3
 - 4. The adulterer has been lying to himself and needs to address the lies he/she has believed about God, his/her spouse, marriage, etc. Ps. 51:6
 - 5. The adulterer who is seeking repentance may find that his heart has grown cold and hard towards God and that it may take a long time for it to be warm and soft again.
- B. Take drastic action to make a clean break from sin. Pr. 28:13 2 Co. 7:10-11
 - 1. The guilty party needs to see both his/her sin and the other person as God sees them. Prov. 2:16-19 7:6ff

2. The break from the past cannot be protracted. Mt. 5:29-30 2 Tim. 2:22 Pr. 5:8
 3. Practice radical amputation. Mt. 5:29-30
- C. Confess and seek forgiveness from your spouse. Mt. 5:23-24 Luke 15:21
1. Must one confess if the spouse doesn't know?
 2. The greatest sin against one's spouse is the breach of trust. Eph. 4:25 Pr. 12:22
 3. There are many other related sins which also need to be confessed.
 4. Go through the seven As of confession (from *The Peacemaker*, by Ken Sande).
 5. How specific should a confession be? Eph. 5:4 4:29
- D. Make a specific action plan for godly change by God's grace.

IV. Help the victim of adultery.

- A. The non-adulterer must also come to grips with his/her sin. Mt. 5:21ff Lev. 19:14
Gen. 2:24 1 Co. 7:3ff Rom. 12:17-19 Eph. 4:31-32
- B. The innocent spouse must see the sin of the guilty party as God sees it.
1. Her/his spouses' sin is primarily against God. Ps. 51:4
 2. Your role is to restore (not judge). Gal. 6:1-2
- C. How can you know if your spouse's repentance is genuine? 2 Co. 7:10-11
1. Characteristics of worldly sorrow. (Worksheet)
 - a. Self-focused. Gen. 4:13
 - b. Hates the consequences of sin.
 - c. Blame-shifting.
 - d. Resents accountability.
 - e. Impatient – demanding to be trusted and restored immediately.
 2. Characteristics of godly sorrow.
 - a. Focused upon the other person.
 - b. Hates the sin itself.
 - c. Fully accepts responsibility.
 - d. Seeks accountability. 1 Co. 10:12
 - e. Patient.
 3. What if you are not sure whether the other person is repentant?
- D. Should forgiveness be granted if the guilty party is not repentant?
1. What if the guilty spouse continues in adultery. Mt. 18:15ff 19:9 Luke 6:27-28
 2. One can have a forgiving attitude regardless of the attitude of the guilty party.
Mark 11:25-26 Luke 23:34 1 Pe. 2:22-23 4:19 Ro. 12:19 Eph. 4:31-32
 3. But full transactional forgiveness can only be granted when forgiveness is sought.
Luke 17:3-4 1 Jo. 1:8-9
 4. Forgiveness is only possible because of the gospel. Mt. 18:21-35 Col. 3:12-14
Eph. 4:31-32
 5. Must the innocent party fully forgive and take back the guilty party? Num. 14:20
- E. What does Biblical forgiveness look like? Jer. 31:34
1. The four promises of forgiveness (from *The Peacemaker*). Jer. 31:34 1 Co. 13:5
 2. Forgiveness is declared, sacrificial and complete.
 3. Forgiveness is both an event and a process.
 4. Sins have been fully forgiven cannot be used as ground for divorce.

V. Help to rebuild a marriage after sexual sin.

- A. Seeking and granting forgiveness only clears away the weeds and rubble so that something new and beautiful can be built.
- B. It may be appropriate to formally re-commit to the marriage covenant.
- C. The object is not merely to go back to the way things were before the adultery, but to bring the marriage into the greatest possible conformity to the biblical ideal. Phil. 2:3-4

VI. Conclusion: God rescues adulterers and restores relationships.

VII. Other resources.

- A. The path for the offender (from Robert Jones).
 1. Break the adulterous relationship immediately.
 2. Admit the facts; disclose honestly.
 3. Confess to God, spouse, and appropriate others both the adultery and the deception/lies and seek their forgiveness.
 4. Develop and implement a specific action plan for godly change.
 5. Believe the gospel and move forward, continuing the action plan.
- B. The path for the innocent party. (from Robert Jones).
 1. Your security and identity are in Jesus Christ, not your spouse and your marriage. Ps. 27:10 73:25-26 God, not spouse center of life
 2. View this trial biblically, seeing God's sovereign, wise, loving purposes. Ro. 8:28
 - a. Draws you nearer to the Lord.
 - b. Share in Christ's suffering
 - c. Exposes your remaining sin.
 - d. God's comfort experienced. 2 Co. 1:3-4
 3. Forgive your spouse attitudinally and unconditionally in light of the gospel.
 4. Forgive your spouse relationally and transactionally if he repents.
 5. Realize the process nature of these matters; deal with bad memories when they arise.
- C. A wise perspective on why people fall into sexual sin in Proverbs 5. (W. Mack).
 1. Failure to pay attention to God's wisdom. 5:1-2
 2. Association with sinful people. 5:3-8
 3. Failure to consider the consequences. 5:4-11
 4. Inattentive to one's own marriage. 5:15-19
 5. Desire for something new and different (greener grass). 5:20
 6. Lack of God consciousness/fear of the LORD. 5:21
 7. Failure to understand the enslaving nature of sin. 5:22-23