

Angie's Marriage Column ~ May 18, 2011

Courage to Detach from the Alcoholic

A note from Angie: Dear subscribers, I had to restore my whole computer. Luckily I saved my email lists but unfortunately, I lost all email communications. If anyone has written into the ministry with their marriage questions or comments between April 3 and May 12, 2011, I lost your emails. Your questions are important to us. Please resend your questions and or comments if you would like for us to respond with biblical guidance.

Thanks! Angie

Ask Angie: A question? No. A thousand? Yes. I am Pastorless at the moment and at a desperate place with my husband. I've read all the books, attended Alanon, attended counseling alone, and prayed. (probably not enough) I think I am ready to take some kind of action to get my daughter, the last child still living at home and me into some kind of normalcy we can call life. I am seeing that it is alright if I want to be alright. I understand the concept of detachment, but I don't know what I can do to detach. Everything I think of seems cruel. I keep remembering "do unto others as you'd have them do unto you". The only thing I can do to even make him notice is not continue to pay all the bills. He gives me very little money from his convenient-for-him business. He keeps saying that working for himself is the only thing he can do in the economy today. I love the Lord and want to keep growing spiritually, but it seems every ounce of growth causes more discomfort in my marriage. Would it be possible for you to provide phone counseling or something? I am ready but really do need some guidance.

Marriage Guidance: At the moment we are not offering one-on-one counseling. We will however, counsel both husband and wife together through Skype video. We may, sometime in the future, offer personal counseling and if we do we will let our subscribers know.

Detaching from an alcoholic person is not cruel; it is a way for you to seek peace of mind for you and your children. If you do not take the needed steps to detach from the addiction it will take you under with it and this can make you emotionally unstable and unable to help yourself, your children, or the alcoholic. Alcoholism is insidious.

Yes, as Christians we are to treat others in the way we would like to be treated but Jesus did not say, "stand there and take the alcoholic abuse". I remember when my husband first started to detach from me. I did not like it at the time, nor understand why he was doing it, but later, after I got sober, I realized that he was detaching to help me realize I had a drinking problem, plus detaching is the only way for loved ones to bring some peace and normalcy into their lives.

Please read through some of our [free articles on detachment](#) to understand more about why, how and when to detach from the alcoholic. The eBook "[How Do I Detach From An Alcoholic Spouse](#)" goes into

great detail to help loved ones understand alcohol addiction and get their lives back into some kind of normal functioning again.

I'm not sure why you are paying ALL the bills since you said your husband is self-employed? Stop paying *all* the bills. I believe you already know what you need to do but just need some encouragement. Understand this, if you want to help you and your daughter than you have to pray and seek Christ for the guidance and comfort you need. Put your faith and trust with Christ because this is what He asks us to do.

To help your husband “see” that he has a problem may mean you might have to sacrifice something or go through temporary suffering, such as electric getting turned off because the bill wasn't paid. Of course, we don't want to do anything that would endanger our children, so use discretion and be discerning. As long as you are the one paying all of the expenses why should your husband make something of himself and for his family? How will he recognize he even has a drinking problem? Do you see what we're saying here?

One thing is for sure, and that is we agree with your husband, working for yourself is how to get [ahead in these trying times](#). Perhaps you can help your husband grow his business for the family? Team effort by married couples makes for the best home and self-employed businesses and ministries. It is good for everyone involved. It lets mom's spend more time with her children and it encourages your husband in the business. It allows you to be working for and with your own husband rather than for someone else. And it can bring husband and wife closer together in the long run. We highly recommend and encourage couples to work together if at all possible.

So, first things first, read [our articles and books on alcoholism and detachment](#) and then put the steps into practice in your life. Ask your husband how you can help him to get ahead in his business and perhaps someday, if and when you guys get ahead you can [quit working for someone else](#). You see, when we work for someone else we are helping them grow their business and stay in business, but why not do that with your own husband? Many people do not understand this concept but it is the way it should be, especially in this economy where everything has skyrocketed and the dollar devalued.

“Someone says at an Al-Anon meeting: “But I must ‘cover up’ for the alcoholic; what would my neighbors and relatives think of me if I didn't?” Another admits she must make excuses to the boss, lest the alcoholic lose his job. **Another goes to work to help pay bills that should be the responsibility of the head of the household.**

Can we really delude ourselves into believing that such stop-gaps will work? Do we imagine they will do anything but prolong the alcoholic agony, since we know the disease (condition) is progressive? We would do well to realize that the inevitable collapse may be far worse than if we had allowed him to face up to his own responsibilities and mistakes, free of our interference.

Today's Reminder

If I take no part in protecting the alcoholic from the consequences of his drinking, and allow disaster to overtake him, then the responsibility for what happens is not mine. I should not create a crisis to “bring the alcoholic to his senses”—but I must have the courage to keep hands off and let the crisis happen. —Quoted from the Al-Anon book page 98

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5)

Take care and God Bless!

In Christ,
Angie and Frank
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