

Angie's Marriage Column ~ April 16, 2008

What to do when Husband Wants Out of Marriage

Marriage question: I am seeking of what to do after you have been told by your spouse that he wants to be by himself and that he does not want to be married anymore and after you caught him in adultery for a second time and he is not a Christian of course, but I am. I am seeking God for restoration and salvation for my husband, but my flesh is getting weak and I don't know if this is God's will for my life, but I feel that God hates divorce and that marriages were created for life. I want that so bad for my marriage to work but I have no help from him.

Guidance: Scripture tells us that when the unbelieving spouse wants out of the marriage the believing spouse is not “bound” (NIV) or not “under bondage” (KJV) anymore. Not “bound” means you are not obligated to try and keep the unbeliever in the marriage. “Under bondage” means to not be subjected to the oppression of living with a rebellious unbeliever.

We must carefully examine the scriptures so we can better understand and discern what they mean. First of all, we have the unbeliever who does “not” want to remain married to the believing spouse and then we have the unbeliever who is “pleased” to live with the believing spouse. Let's examine scripture.

“If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman, which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him”. (1 Corinthians 7:12,13)

In the above passage Paul is definitely affirming the marriage commitment. (Until death do us part) (For better or *for worse*) If the unbelieving spouse is “pleased” to stay in the marriage, then the believing spouse should stay and try and work on the marriage. A spouse who is “pleased” to stay is a spouse who can also be led to the Lord through the believing spouses loving actions and words.

God says we will be rewarded for our suffering because through our suffering, if we stay true to God we will show a good example of Jesus Christ working in us.

I know it can be difficult to live with someone who does not share in the same love and forgiveness you have in the Lord, but the believer is the “light of Christ” for the unbeliever. This is precisely why God wants us to work on the marriage. Be happy in the Lord to keep shining your light for your spouse. Besides, if you truly are a believer in Jesus Christ then God *will* be with you in Spirit through your suffering. Jesus has not left us; He is with us in Spirit! Ask of Him anything you want and He will guide you in the direction He knows is best for you.

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy”. (1 Corinthians 7:14

Did you know that God has set apart marriage for His use? That means, **even** if only one spouse is a believer God considers the marriage sanctified. The unbeliever does not receive salvation automatically, but is helped by the relationship of being married to a believer. The reason? I believe it is because in the hopes that the believing spouse can turn the unbeliever around and into the Light. The believer is to be a witness for Jesus Christ. If the Christian is truly a believer, then they have the power of the Holy Spirit within them and they will be given the guidance and power to help the unbeliever to accept Jesus Christ for their life. God blesses such a marriage, and if there are children they are also regarded as holy until they are old enough to decide for themselves.

Why would God allow such a marriage union? Is it because the unbeliever is **“pleased”** to live with the believer? If the unbeliever is **“pleased”** to live with the believer, then they probably are not rebellious to the Word of God, but only **“lost”** souls who need to be found. (Jesus’ whole ministry rested on finding the lost in the world and saving them.) The believing spouse is an instrument to be used by Christ to possibly turn the unbeliever around. So then knowing this, why would God want such a marriage to separate?

But now, in answer to your question, if the unbeliever wants to leave the marriage and is rebellious to his or her spouse and to the Word of God then the believing spouse is not **“bound”** or **“under bondage”** to that person. God does not want the believing spouse to undermine his or her own faith for the unbeliever. Living with a heathen who continues in their sinful lifestyle and is rebellious to the Word will in fact, demoralize the spiritual growth and faith of the believing spouse. So let the unbeliever go!

“But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace”. (1 Corinthians 7:15)

Does the above passage say, **“and you are now free to remarry?”** No – it does not.

The above passage is not saying that either spouse can remarry. Why? Well, the answer is simply, really. If they got a state divorce, they would still be married in God’s eyes and would be committing adultery. God created marriage between a man and a woman to be **“one flesh”** and man cannot break **“the one flesh of marriage”**. Marriage is the only contract that cannot be broken by man. It does not matter what the states thinks on this matter, what truly matters is what God thinks, right? Well, of course.

If man instituted the marriage contract, then obviously man could also break that contract, but the state did not design, create, and institute the marriage contract, therefore a mere man cannot break that contract either. **IT BELONGS TO GOD**. The **“one flesh”** marriage is owned and controlled by God!

“Wherefore they are no more twain, but **“one flesh”. What therefore God hath joined together, *let not man put asunder*”. (Matthew 19:6)**

I have had people ask me if they can still receive salvation because they remarried and are now living in adultery. I am not the judge of people – God is. Who am I? I have no right to tell someone anything of the sort and I never would. No one knows someone else's heart. God wants us to live in peace with one another, even the believer with the unbeliever.

So you tell me, are Christians living in peace when they are dissecting each other's hearts! What do you think? That is not peace, but contention, division, and strife.

But if the unbelieving spouse wants to leave the marriage and get a divorce that is recognized by the state, what can you do? What you can do is let the unbeliever go their way, while you ask Christ to give you the peace, comfort, and security to remain married to them as long as they live. You can do this by getting close to Jesus and developing a personal relationship with your Savior. Become a better person in Jesus Christ, live each day for the Lord, doing the Lord's work, asking Him in silent prayers, what His will is for your life.

You are now FREE to live completely for God, rather than be persecuted and scorned by the rebellious unbeliever. But you must remain unmarried. A spouse is only free to remarry if their spouse dies.

Scripture References:

“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord”. (1 Corinthians 7:39)

“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband is dead she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man”. (Romans 7:2,3)

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another commiteth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband comitteth adultery” (Luke 16:18)

In Christ,
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