

Angie's Marriage Column ~ February 3, 2010

I Thought I Married a Godly Man!

Ask Angie: My Husband led me to believe he had a relationship with God when we were dating, but I have since learned from him that he does not believe in God and has only been pretending to pray. He is addicted to pornography and I feel unsafe around him. We are separated and I am fasting and asking God for guidance

Marriage Guidance: I'm sorry you are going through such turmoil and grief in your marriage right now. You must have faith to know that God is using your faith to help your unbelieving husband to accept the LORD for his life. It is God's will that even though you are married to an unbeliever that we remain married to them.

To the married I give this command (not I, but the LORD): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does she must remain unmarried or reconcile to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)

A few months ago the marriage column was about how Christians should not marry unbelievers. God does not want us to be unevenly yoked because he knows the suffering we will go through because of it. I realize that you say you did not know that your husband was not a Christian but God also tells us to be careful, watchful, discerning, and patient regarding decisions for our life, and marriage is no exception.

The trappings of the dating process are very deceiving and many people are left broken-hearted and or married to a person they thought they knew and loved, but really did not know them or love them. Dating is not scriptural, and in fact, the dating process is the very opposite of how God wants *His people* to find a lifetime spouse—for the very reason you mention above.

Dating is not something that the sincere Christians should be participating in at all, and for many reasons, which would take another marriage column. But instead let me veer off for a moment and tell you what our ministry has been working on the last couple of months. We are very excited about this new project, which will be a sister site to our marriage healing ministry.

We have created another website geared for young and older single people, *who have never been married*, to help them prepare for a lifetime marriage built on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. So... if any of you parents on this list have teenagers and young adult single Christian children who don't want to get themselves involved in the deceptions of dating, this website is for them. It is a biblically based preparation for a Godly marriage. I will be sending out the link to this new website on marriage preparation to the list very soon. This website will be filled with encouragement, wisdom and insight for the single person. There is so much deception these days among Christian people that they don't realize how much dating does not prepare people for marriage but does exactly the opposite!!

How Can We Turn our Suffering into Joy?

Is it even possible to turn our suffering into joy? I believe it is because I have done it many times. The joy we feel while in the midst of suffering is our connection to God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit within us!

In **Romans 5:3** it says that we should be rejoicing in our sufferings. What does that mean? It means that Christians will face difficulties in this life, throughout their lives, and through those difficulties, if they remain faithful to God, they spiritually grow and build Godly Christian character in the Lord.

Through our sufferings when we stay faithful in the LORD we become wiser and much more discerning when it is in regards to our personal lives and way of living. **It teaches us to say no to ungodliness. Titus 2:11-12**

Scripture tells us that suffering develops perseverance, which is a great character trait to have. Then it goes on to say that perseverance builds our

character in the LORD. As Christians our character traits should come from Godly wisdom and not worldly wisdom.

“...We know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character and character hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our heart by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Romans 5:3-5)

It is important that when we are hurting and going through trials in our life we go to God with our sufferings and let Him fill us up with His love. Because only he can truly give us what we need when we are going through suffering!

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present you requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ. (Philippians 4:6)

We can't change people to be what we want them to be, but we can stop allowing their actions to control our being, meaning we need to take care of our own relationship with Christ and hopefully others will follow our lead. The more we remain close to God, building our relationship with Him, the better we can influence others in the LORD. We must have a good relationship with God to help others.

It is God's hope that His children continue to grow and learn, becoming wise and spiritually mature in Him. We do that by pushing forward and never relenting in our love, faith and trust in Him.

There is a lot of deception going on in this world, even among those who profess to be Christian. People will *say what your ears want to hear* and they will *say things that make them look good to others*, but deep down that is not their true character. We become deceived because we aren't on our guard like God asks us to be.

Many Christians don't *wait on the Lord* to help them find a suitable lifetime spouse and they become deceived and marry someone who is not suitable for them.

Proverbs 18: 24 teaches that **a discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eye wonders to the ends of the earth.** God tells us to be on our guard at all times—to be on the lookout for wolves in sheep's clothing. On the outside they may appear to be gentle as a lamb but on the inside something different is revealed after the marriage.

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.” (Matthew 7:15)

We must learn to look for the fruits in people that we want to have as friends, or as a potential marriage spouse. How do they live their lives? What is important to them? Do they cherish family and marriage values? What kind of people do they have as friends? And above all, how is their relationship with God?

Remember the Pharisees liked to pray in public **(Matthew 6:5-8)** to be seen by men, but their hearts were not in it. Just because someone goes to church and they pray with you does not by any means make them a Christian. Look for the fruits.

“Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” (Matthew 7:17)

Christians need to be careful, not just in choosing a marriage spouse but also in choosing friends and in choosing those they will do business with. Christians must be careful about a lot of things in this world. Many will put on religious behavior to gain approval, acceptance, and admiration from others, such as what your husband has done. Its not right by any means, but it is how the world works and bad stuff happens to good people.

So what can you do about it?

Well you're married now, and that means a lifetime commitment to that marriage, through the good as well as the bad. But just because you are in a bad marriage does not mean that your personal attitude and well-being should also be bad. Some people, who have a difficult time perceiving any good to come out of a bad marriage, rely on divorce as their only option. But Christians are not to do things via worldly patterns and philosophies. If we put our trust in God He will make things right in due time.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

You can journey on the path that leads to God by taking care of you and your relationship with the LORD. You can continue to develop your Christian faith and service in the LORD. You need to find peace for your self in the midst of your suffering and that can only be found through God.

For this very reason make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control; perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

If you feel unsafe being with your husband at this time then it is ok to remain separated temporarily. You shouldn't allow your husbands unbelief to weaken your faith in God!! You need to take care of your own spiritual well-being. Don't allow the sins of another to absorb your whole being—this is not what God wants for His children. Come to Christ and get the healing you need so that your husband may see Christ working in you.

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1 Timothy 4:8)

Too many times husbands and wives, who are not getting along, become discouragers for each other, which hinders their relationship and spiritual growth in Christ. This constant battle to be better than the other, or battle to be right and to shift the blame onto each other, spoils the beauty and sanctification of the marriage. This is not the way to win anyone to Christ, in fact quite the opposite.

You both must find your healing in the Lord and then come together in love to restore the marriage, **if** both of you are willing to get the inner healing you need. God is our healer! Your husband has to be willing to get the healing he needs—you can't do that for him, and so the best thing for you both at this time is for you to take care of YOU and for your husband to take care of himself.

Hopefully your healing and faith in God will help your husband to accept Christ Jesus in His life. I fully believe in total restoration of marriages but before that can take place inner healing of both husband and wife needs to happen **in the LORD!**

What's important now is your faith and relationship with God. So take care of YOU and let your husband come to terms with his life and decide what it is that he needs to do for himself to help "save" his marriage. Pray for your husband. Be patient and wait on God for the guidance and answers you need on your journey with Him. He knows what you need—trust Him and He will not let you down!

Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

Find your peace in Christ—seek encouragement and wisdom in the written word and experience the power of Christ's Spirit working in you. **Galatians 5:23**

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him,

because it neither see him nor know him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:16-17

In Christ

Angie and Frank

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