

Angie's Marriage Column ~ August 5, 2009

When Only One Spouse Wants to Work on the Marriage

Ask Angie: I am saved and married to an unsaved husband. He believes in the Lord but does not live by Him. We have been separated for over a year and my husband has lived a life of a "single" man. He has learned to "love" his new life and has expressed that he [no longer feels that he loves me](#). I have faith that God's will be done in my marriage but I do pray for restoration. What can I do to work on a marriage where only I am willing to work on it? I know that God does not like divorce and that all things are possible through Him. However, my husband seems set in his ways right now. He loves the freedom he has and does not seem to "want" a married life. I too often read about how to stay married, working on marriage together, but what do you do when you're separated and it's only you wanting to work on the marriage? He used to be very caring, loving, unselfish, protective, and now he is everything else but what he used to be.

Marriage Guidance: Please print this marriage column out and mail it to your husband. Believing in the Lord but NOT doing what the Lord says is like this...

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:23)

More often than not the spouse who *thinks* he does not want to work on the marriage can [begin to work on the marriage if](#) only they would begin doing what they know to be right. Everyone has a conscience and knows what is right. But because they have their heart out in the world they can't see beyond the pains and resentments of the past to make the needed changes for the benefit of the marriage. They are consumed with only the negative aspects of what the marriage was, rather than what the future could bring.

People who have left their marriage and *think* they love this new-found freedom in the world are very much confused. They believe in God but don't put God's principles to work in their life...their own understanding of themselves and marriage is based upon "how they are feeling" rather than God's perfect laws for marriage. They believe they are free when in actuality they are caged up and dying from not allowing their soul to be free in the Lord.

This certainly does not mean they will always remain separate from their Savior, but what it does mean is they will definitely have to have a spiritual intervention to come into their life and wake them up out of their worldly slumber. The unsaved soul is [enslaved to the world and its lustfulness](#). The spirit is connected to the world rather than with God.

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. (James 4: 4)

Working on saving a marriage is actually working on ourselves and doing what it takes to do the Lord's will for the marriage and making it work according to the principles God established for marriage. A wife has her duties and responsibilities that need attended to and a husband has his. Together, in an ideal marriage, [husband and wife work together](#), encouraging, supporting, and caring for one another through the good times as well as the rough times.

When one or both parties stop being givers (doing their part) the marriage feels the pangs of anxiety, and the bond that intimately and emotionally connects husband and wife together in marriage becomes severed. Perhaps it is because of an addiction, past baggage, adultery, selfishness, and the lack of Christ-like principles applied in the marriage. It really doesn't matter what caused the bond to break, what matters is repairing and restoring the bonds again.

Our Fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:10-11)

How to Restore Marriage When Only One Spouse Is Willing

Stop everything you are doing now and write down these principled ways for reconnecting and restoring the broken bonds with your spouse. Apply each of these principles every day until you have completed them all. Don't worry about what your spouse will say or do, just do these steps for yourself!

Principle 1) Forgive Your Spouse

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the Lord and he will deliver you. Proverbs 20:22

[Forgiveness is the greatest principle ever created](#). Instead of being vengeful, spiteful, resentful, and unforgiving, Christ teaches us to forgive.

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (Matthew 6:14)

Forgiveness is much needed before you can restore the marriage because without forgiving your spouse they may feel exasperated, move on and find someone who will forgive and them. Forgiving your spouse lifts the burden from you and frees you to move on in the marriage to love again. Forgiveness is freedom of heart, mind, and soul.

Principle 2) Bible Study Together

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

Make time for the Lord! It is so important to make time for understanding and learning about God's will for your marriage. Couples should not forget about the importance of growing and connecting with the Lord—it is what brings couples back together again. It is God who brought you together in the beginning and it is God who will reunite you again.

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:17)

If you are separated from your spouse now, don't let that stop you from learning, loving, and growing with Christ. Remember, you have your responsibilities and your spouse has their responsibilities. One of the responsibilities of a Christ One is to be Christ-like as much as we possibly can. How can we do that if we don't study and learn about God's will for our life? [Pray every day for God to bring you back together.](#)

Therefore do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, *yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.* For our life and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. (2 Corinthians 4:16-17)

Principle 3) Trust Your Spouse

Just like forgiveness, trusting your spouse involves fruit from your spirit. Christ gives us fruit when we remain faithful to Him and do His will in our marriage.

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22)

Trusting your spouse takes all of the above attributes. If you do not trust your spouse then it is not much of a marriage. [Trust is an important aspect of having a close intimate and emotional bond with your spouse.](#) If trust is gone, the marriage will be heading for big trouble. In reality real trust for our spouse comes from trusting in ourselves. How do we trust in ourselves? Through having a close intimate connection with our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness works very closely with trust. If a spouse has hurt you in some way and you stop trusting them then the intimate and emotional bonds between you will break. Talk with your spouse about ways in which [they can begin to be more accountable to you.](#) Let them know that because of past behavior you need this kind of accountability from them right now.

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. (1 Corinthians 7:3)

Perhaps accountability for you is being able to call your spouse at work whenever you want. Or it could mean having passwords to any chat or forum accounts, or reviewing cell phone records. Or maybe it is driving them to work and picking them up everyday. Whatever it is that will reassure you of your spouse's actions is what accountability is. If they aren't doing anything wrong then they shouldn't have any issues with it. And if they want to work on the marriage this is a considerate and mature action for them to take.

If you and your spouse are separated then of course you will be unable to apply accountability into the marriage, but you can let your spouse know that you forgive them and trust them for anything they may have done in the past and that you are now moving forward in the Lord and taking care of your self and any responsibilities that join you to the marriage. They need to know that you are not going to resent them or play head trips with them because of a past sin they may have committed.

Communicate Intimately Every Day!

Don't let a day go by that you do not have an intimate conversation with your spouse. Is there something on your mind today, talk about it *today*. Get things off your mind productively. Don't beat around the bush, but be straightforward and honest about your feelings.

Believe it or not couples can lose touch with one another emotionally and intimately when they do not take the time to be there for each other [through communication of feelings and self-expression](#). Who are you married to? Do you know? What does your wife need most from you? What do you need most from your wife? How can husband and wife meet these needs of each other? By being givers!

The lack of knowing one another and needs not getting met is the biggest reason [why couples seek outside emotional encouragement and intimate relationships](#). They are looking for praise, companionship and ego building mostly. People who do not have a close connection with the Lord have a need to have their egos built up and if their spouse is not making them feel good about themselves they will find someone who will.

This is why scripture states to build each other up. It is through your intimate and emotional conversations with your spouse and doing things together that builds couples up. We all need encouragement now and again; even those people who have close relationships with Christ. In ideal marriages it is essential that couples be there for each other!

Therefore encourage one another, and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
(1 Thessalonians 5:10)

Make God the Most Important Part of Your Marriage

God should be top priority in your personal life and marriage. For a healthy, abundant, and blessed filled marriage, God is always in the forefront of the marriage. How do couples make God the top priority in their marriage? By studying the below chart. This is really what marriage is all about. [You can save your marriage and have happiness and abundance!](#)

Husband's Priority List	Wife's Priority List
<p style="text-align: center;">God – Jesus Christ (Accountability, Purpose, Service)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">God – Jesus Christ (Accountability, Purpose, Service)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Wife (Accountability, Responsibility, Service)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Husband (Accountability, Responsibility, Service)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Children (Responsibility)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Children (Responsibility)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ministry (service)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ministry (service)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Self (career, job, hobbies)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Self (career, job, hobbies)</p>

Take care and God Bless!
 Angie and Frank
 Heaven Ministries ~ Marriage Healing Ministry
<http://www.heavenministries.com>

If you have not yet read this e-book, please do...it will offer you the encouragement and support you need to get your marriage and life back on track. Study it, pray about it, apply it...live it!

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