

## How To Forgive an Adulterous Husband

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**H**ave you tried to forgive your husband of adultery only to have it all come back to haunt you later? This happens because we have not forgiven in its completeness. Anyone can say they have forgiven, but what is your heart telling you?

Do you think it is the end of your marriage because your husband had an affair? On the contrary it's time to nurture, cultivate, and cherish the marriage even more. It is time to start plucking out the mischievous weeds to make room for the tender new shoots.

The purpose for forgiving those who have hurt us is to clear out unwanted emotions, and free our minds from negative clutter. This needless stuff builds up if we don't do anything about it. First and foremost we need to be mentally and spiritually healthy so we can express feelings and needs appropriately to our husband. Then and only then can we actually forgive in completeness?

One of the most difficult aspects of forgiving is the ability to stop picturing the hurt in our mind. We may actually try and envision what it was like for our husband while he was engaged in the sexual act with another women. We want to know if he enjoyed it or not. We want to know why he did it. We may even believe there is something wrong with us sexually. All of these things enter our mind even after we have forgiven, and they can literally tear us apart.

My motto has always been that we absolutely need to take care of our self first before we can take care of another. If we are all messed up inside, full of bitterness and resentment towards our unfaithful husband, we certainly cannot forgive him properly. The same applies with love. Don't we need to love ourselves first before we can love another?

So this brings me to detachment. We become healthy in mind by detaching with love. What's that? As Jesus would say, "Turn the other cheek." We need to let it go! Letting emotional qualms trouble us will not help the forgiveness process. When we let the anger and bitterness go from within our inner being, we can start applying constructive ways to build back up our wounded marriage.

Detaching only means we are not going to allow the weakness of our husband to CONTROL our mental and spiritual well-being. If we are still angry and bitter over their unfaithfulness, we invariably make their sin a part of who we are by obsessing over it every chance we get. Detaching gives us the freedom to forgive!

If we refuse to forgive our husband we are missing out on the wonderful opportunity to experience the joys in forgiving and sharing that happiness with the man we married. The marriage will miss out on the growth process that takes place within its framework, and our own spiritual outlook on life. Marriage can remain stunted by not forgiving or we can finally begin to grow out from the selfish person we have been by forgiving our husbands of their sin against the marriage, and doing it with completeness of our heart.

No doubt, it is difficult to forgive when we think of our husbands in bed with someone else. But that's just it; we are flabbergasted that he would err against the marriage in such a way. We feel duped, unloved, and deceived! We want restitution at all costs! For some of us that means divorce. This initial feeling, of course, is completely understandable. We have been hurt deeply by the unfaithfulness of our husband and justify our own bad behavior by literally making ourselves the victim of our husband's weakness. But who really is the victim here? At some point and time we absolutely need to forgive or else we persecute ourselves

with our own hurt emotions.

In reality, we make our self the victim of our husband's sin by obsessing over it and not forgiving. We do that to our self. No one does that for us. Divorce over unfaithfulness is totally unnecessary. Couples can work through this infidelity issue properly and grow from it to boot.

Do you think your husband had an affair to do wrong purposely against the marriage or you? I don't believe this to be true. Most of the time when a husband is unfaithful it has nothing to do with the wife, even though they like to finger point and blame. The reasons behind unfaithfulness stem from the need for constant self-gratification, low self esteem, and lack of spiritual wisdom and knowledge. Having a not so good marriage does not give anyone the right to commit the act of adultery. God has given us other useful tools that we can bring into the marriage when the issues of adultery come into play. Divorce is unnecessary.

Here's how it usually works. First the idea to be unfaithful is imagined in the mind. Secondly it is mediated on with vivid scenes and great clarity. Thirdly, the act of adultery somehow becomes justified because of wrong thinking taking over because of cultural influences. Finally the act of adultery is actually carried out in the physical sense. Sometimes the guilty party feels remorse about defiling the marriage bed, and won't do it again. No one finds out, case closed. But sometimes-promiscuous acts continue, and that is because the unfaithful husband has not humbled him self to God for the guidance he so very much needs to help him to turn away from tempting and enticing situations. Unfaithfulness in marriage is only a symptom of a greater problem. But so often when marriages break apart couples blame infidelity as the culprit, but it is not the real problem.

The real issue is most likely boredom, lack of respect and commitment for one another. But those are the main features God had designed especially for marriage! And since the culture of society has made it justifiable to sleep around from bed to bed, house to house, couples have decided to make themselves a part of that promiscuous world instead of God's world. So in essence the real problem stems from lack of spiritual wisdom guiding couples in their faithless marriage!

Unfortunately, so many marriages of today deal with the issue of adultery. Culturally speaking, isn't it a thing of normalcy for a spouse to be unfaithful in their marriage? No one gives a darn! But this kind of thinking is destroying lives. It is not normal to have sexual relations outside of marriage! It is very wrong and goes against all that God has created and planned for marriage! Adultery breaks the bonds of trust and respect for the person we married, and carries with it a heavy sword of sinful rebellion against what God has created.

You see, if we have not yet acknowledged the realm of God's world and are lacking in the knowledge of God's goodness, we, through our own understanding, allow our wayward thinking patterns to take charge. But what do we know? We know our negative feelings! That's what we know.

Our feelings tell us to be bitter because our husband had sex with someone else. So what do we do? We become bitter! Our feelings tell us to stay resentful, and so we resent him! Our feelings tell us the grass is greener over there on the other side of the fence. So we go to the other side. How can we forgive properly when our negative feelings are controlling us! These unhealthy emotions make our attitude, and ultimately tell us how to view the world around us and how to live in the world.

A healthy spiritually minded woman allows her self to be directed by God's insight where it looks beyond selfishness and into the loving person she was meant to be. We absolutely need to have the knowledge and wisdom of God within the framework of who we are, so we

can understand how to respect and love our husband properly. Love the man you married? Get off the sand and build your house on the rock.

In Matthew it tells us, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on a rock. The rain came down, the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell with a great crash.” Matthew 7:24-27

One repentant man wrote in to me addressing a certain article I wrote on the topic of forgiving a spouse of adultery. Here is what he had to say about how he felt after committing the act of adultery. His wife would not forgive him and she was literally tormenting him with all her unforgiveness and rotten emotions.

*Your Article on forgiveness was very comforting. After cheating on my wife, I felt so helpless and worthless. I would do anything to go back and change what happened and there's nothing I can do. My wife will not forgive me, and she torments me continuously about my mistake, it wears at my innermost being. The sorrow and grief and shame are unbearable. I could not think of a better gift and proof of true love and character than forgiving someone that has hurt you, especially someone who has hurt you deeply. I hope to experience this gift one day and be able to have a full heart once again.*

Bottom line. The ability to forgive does not stand with us alone. We just do not have the complete understanding to actually forgive without ever bringing up the offense again to our husband, and even to our self! What happens is we only forgive superficially, which keeps us feeling the burden of the hurt. But we don't want this because here is what happens. If we only forgive superficially the offense will continually evade our heart and mind like the poor woman above, and consequently bitter feelings will take over and control what we do and how we behave.

Do you want to lash out in anger at your husband? Then forgive superficially. Do you want to say hateful and mean things to the man you married? Then forgive superficially. Do you want to respect and trust your husband again? Then forgive completely. Here is how we forgive. First, understand this: The Holy Spirit is our greatest blessing and gift from God that we, as His children receive when we share ourselves with Him. When we give up the selfish ego to God, He will in return gives us the gift of how to love properly, how to hope, how to have faith with conviction, and how to forgive completely. When we act on His instructions we are allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to take over in our marriage and life and we are submitting to His will for us.

God is in control. Remember, we do not have the ability under our own understanding to forgive properly, to love completely, or to understand and utilize the blessed gifts of the Holy Spirit. We know that all these awesome gifts come from God. But that is all we know. Not until we put all of this into practice will it actually be real to us. We will not understand what it is that God wants for us, until we submit our sinful and selfish lives to Him. We want it all. But to have it, we must experience God's forgiveness for us first. ♥

