

GOD'S RENEWAL FOR HOUSEHOLDS

"Part XV: Renewing Household Marriages: Addressing Roadblocks - Overcoming Spousal Infidelity Trials"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) In a late 80s documentary on male mid-life crisis of 1964 male graduates from Yale, Michael Redman, a former prosecutor from Olympia, Washington and 1964 Yale grad, told of his first marriage's failure. Gordon Fairclough of the Associated Press reports of Redman's case in the Register Citizen: "One day, out of the blue . . . his wife told him she wanted a divorce. The reason she gave . . . is that she wanted children and she could not have them with Redman, who had a vasectomy five years earlier when the couple decided they were not going to have a family. As it turns out, he says, his wife had 'been working a deal with the old boyfriend from 20 years ago...I hadn't been out of the house 45 days and she changes her mind...so now she's coming back on me with 'Gee didn't we have a wonderful thing together,' Redman says. 'I'm crawling, but I'm not moving.'"

(2) A man who attended the Church youth group I grew up in California one day told his wife that he was bringing a girlfriend home to live with the family. He was going to put her in the spare bedroom!

Not having anywhere to go, Jan, his wife, with the children, went through untold emotional trauma before the divorce, and Jan has since turned to mind-altering drugs to drown out her sorrow. I saw her at my parent's 50th wedding anniversary, and her younger sister had to introduce her to me because she was so spaced out she couldn't talk! "Jannie", as I used to know her, was a hollow shell of her former self!

(3) A man I know once found out that his wife was having an affair with another man, and that in his own home bed! He became so upset that he rushed home and held her for house at knife-point. Needless to say, the marriage ended up in divorce court, and the case railed on for years after the break-up. At one point, the judge turned to both of them and said, "I have never seen two people do more damage to one another than you two!" **The sad thing is that BOTH claimed to be born again CHRISTIANS!**

Spousal infidelity -- how is this crushing problem addressed effectively, both from the viewpoint of the one offended and of the one creating the offense? How can we HELP friends caught in triangles of infidelity?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "With the ravaging effects of infidelity, what can one do when his spouse has cheated on him? What if HE was the one who cheated?! What if the issue is just at the mental stage of adultery?!"

- I. **To understand how to HANDLE spousal infidelity, we must understand that SPIRITUAL aberrations CAUSE it as follows:**
 - A. Even fallen man can have his nuptial needs met via a spouse for **life without** having to resort to immorality, Prov. 5:18-20 . . .
 - B. Thus, **both actual and** mental immorality are viewed as infidelity, an inexcusable sin worthy of God's judgment, Mtt. 5:27-28; Pr. 5:20-23.
 - C. Thus, one cause of actual or mental infidelity is **Satanic temptation:**
 1. **Satan** can tempt one having sexual needs with adultery, 1 Cor. 7:5.
 2. He can do so **when** any one of these additional states are present:
 - a. When one fails to use Scripture, he can fall for Satan's ideas and practice adultery as though it were right, 1 Jn. 2:14b; 1 Cor. 7:5.
 - b. When one fails to depend on God's Spirit, he can be pulled by Satan toward lust, 1 Jn. 2:14b; 2 Tim. 2:1; 1:8, 13-14; 1 Co. 7:5.
 - c. If one has not trusted in Christ, he is in Satan's realm & cannot guard himself from the lure of infidelity, Eph. 2:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:5.
 - D. Thus, another cause of actual or mental infidelity is the **sinful nature:**
 1. The sinful nature is capable of all sorts of immorality, Gal. 5:19.
 2. Failure here arises from one's not living his life by the power of the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:16 with 1 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 5:19.
 3. Since one does not have God's Spirit if he is not a believer (Rom. 8:9; Jn. 3:16), his sin nature makes him vulnerable for infidelity.
 - E. Thus, a third cause of actual or mental infidelity is **worldly** values:
 1. The world's system promotes the viewpoint that what feels and looks pleasant or boosts the ego is to be experienced without regard to moral or ethical restrictions, 1 Jn. 2:15-16.
 2. When one adopts that view, he is vulnerable to rationalizing away his inhibitions to practice infidelity, Gen. 3:1-6; 2:16-17; 1 C. 3:3.
 3. If one does not know Christ as his Savior, he belongs to and adopts that errant value system and is led into infidelity, Jn. 17:14-16.
- II. **Hence, we must address infidelity in the SPIRITUAL realm:**
 - A. One **avoids** turning becoming unfaithful to his spouse as follows:

1. He escapes (a) Satan's kingdom, (b) gains the indwelling behavioral controlling entity of God's Spirit and (c) escapes the brainwashing bondage of the world's values by trusting in Christ for salvation, Jn. 3:16 with (a) Col. 1:13f, (b) Rom. 8:9b & (c) 1 Jn. 5:4 respectively.
 2. Once thus positioned, he stays faithful by (a) confessing sins done in everyday life (1 Jn. 1:9) to recover the Spirit's behavior control and (b) leans on God for the right desires to do the (c) values and directives regarding marriage that he reads in the Bible, 1 Jn. 2:3-6!
- B. One **handles** infidelity as the **innocent** spouse in the affair as follows:
1. One thus wronged **must** get right with God as noted in "II,A"; otherwise, the devil, his sinful nature's wrath and the world's value system full of pride will pressure him to "get even" with a divorce!
 2. Also, the **believing** spouse thus wronged must know that God wants him/her to **stay wed** to the spouse, Rom. 7:2; 1 Co. 7:10-11!
- C. One **overcomes** infidelity **failure** if he is the **guilty** spouse as follows:
1. To start to rebuild, one guilty of infidelity absolutely must begin by applying the Biblical truths mentioned in "II,A" above, or there is no guarantee that he or she can or will ever rebound, Prov. 26:11.
 2. If one is a **believer** and **STAYS** overcome with infidelity though knowing the spiritual resources for victory, he is deceived by the world's value system and must be taught the following Bible facts:
 - a. "Know that indulging body appetites, aesthetic appeal and ego gratification above obeying God's will is sin, 1 Jn. 2:15-16."
 - b. "Also, know that such a choice is foolish: (a) though indulging in these appetites may first promise gratification, both the lures and what they actually offer disappoint, leaving one a hollow shell of a person with nothing to show for it, 1 Jn. 2:17a with Prov. 7:1-27. (b) Though it may not at first gratify like these lusts try to do, doing God's will produces lasting value of great joy and worth that follow one into eternity, 1 Jn. 2:17b with 1 Jn. 1:4."
 - c. Thus informed, apply "II, A, 2" by faith, calling on the Lord in prayer for the motivation and power for deliverance.
 3. Once victorious, seek God's moving in the **innocent partner** for reconciliation, but be prepared for a **LONG** time for trust to be renewed, see 1 Tim. 5:22-25! (If the wronged spouse will not get right with God, the marriage may not be salvaged!)
 4. If the wronged spouse **then** divorces us, (a) claim Mtt. 11:28-30 to let Christ bear our burden via prayer, (b) apply "II,A,2" above, (c) recall 1 Jn. 1:9b to handle false guilt & (d) claim 2 Cor. 4:8-18!

Lesson Application: *To prevent spousal infidelity, to overcome it and obtain renewal, (1) believe on Christ for salvation from sin and the forces of sin in the world that produce it, Jn. 3:16; Col. 1:13f; Rom. 8:9b & 1 Jn. 5:4. (2) Then, take God's empowering, healing hand and let Him lead in relating to the spouse as best as is possible.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

One night years ago, I received a telephone call from a man who was an upstanding member of a church I then pastored! He was distraught!

Away on a business trip and staying in a hotel, he had just been through a brief, unhappy sexual encounter with a prostitute, and was calling me up, feeling wicked and generally terribly low! He wanted to know what to do!

Sensing that he might be a candidate for suicide, and knowing he knew his Bible pretty well, I asked if he could find the Bible the Gideons usually placed in such rooms. He found it in the drawer under the phone desk, and I had him open it to Psalm 51 where David confessed to God his sin with Bathsheba! He was to follow David's lead and confess his sin to God. As soon as he returned to town, I contacted him and urged him to take an AIDS test before uniting with his wife!

Wife, she was **furious** and didn't want him near her anymore! I remember going to their home and trying to urge her to accept his confession! As I sat in that living room, it seemed as though we were facing the beginnings of a nasty, dreadful divorce between two people I cared about! It was awful!!

Well, through much intercessory prayer and counsel, most of the latter being given to them from an outside source, they reconciled, and the marriage was saved! He had been led into the affair through a lifelong habit of reading pornographic material, a habit that his **father** had **taught** him as a young boy!

There is victory available in Christ when the disaster of infidelity strikes! Not all cases are as victorious as this one, but if **BOTH** spouses seek the Lord, they can overcome! **It's been done!**