

For the Love of the Family Ministries
Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family
Why Do Christians Get Involved in Infidelity?

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As a Pastor for more than 25 years and the Director of For the Love of the Family Ministries for more than four years, I have gone through a few stages in my life and ministry. I use to be amazed at why Christians would get involved in such things as infidelity. I am no longer amazed about anything I find Christians engaging in. My heart now goes out to the people who are in our churches. Through For the Love of the Family I have heard from God's people all over the world. I think many times as pastors we believe our church people understand a whole lot more than they do. Also, it has been obvious to me that there has been a lot of instruction on church building, but not on building lives to glorify God. After all, the desire of our life should be to seek to glorify God moment by moment, I Corinthians 6:19-20, "What know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: **therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**"

If we could only get the issue of glorifying God in our life everyday and in every way, as we deal with the issues of life! **Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life."** Every issue of our life and how we handle it will be determined by what is in our heart. Most people have never learned that we must glorify God in all the issues of life. Not just big issues but all issues. If that becomes the goal of your life, it will be the most significant issue outside of your salvation. Psalm 95:6-8A, "O come let us **worship** and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of his hand. **Today** if we will hear his voice, **harden not your heart.**" Learning to glorify God is a part of our worship daily. Folks, we must learn to hear His voice in the everyday issues of life to glorify Him. On a daily basis, God desires that we integrate "spirituality" into the individual moments of our lives. Our day to day, moment by moment actions and reactions are to express the character and nature of God, not try to impress others with our strength, abilities, or intellectual fortitude. Folks, God desires that even in tough times we show forth His nature, not our own. If we have not developed this aspect of godly living by continual daily, moment by moment practice, it is very unlikely that we will be able to accomplish it in the heat of the future crisis or battle. We are to seek to have Biblical change in our life daily through God's Word. With these thoughts as a background, why would a Christian get involved in infidelity? Why does it happen in many Christians lives? All of us at one time or another have been shocked that Mr. or Mrs. so and so who attended church regularly and was active in the church, left their wife or husband and they are involved with somebody else. Finally, I want to give some help to

those Christians who have been involved and need God's help to recover. So, I hope you read carefully. Quite frankly, folks this is an overwhelming epidemic as my mail from For the Love of the Family tells me. If your marriage has been affected by infidelity or you have friends whose lives have been affected by infidelity, please pass this information on to them. Also, try to be open and take in the concepts I will share. I will discuss the root causes of most infidelity as well as the ingredients needed to not only salvage the marriage, but also to rebuild it into something better than it has ever been. If you can hear me, several positive things will happen: the infidelity will make a lot more sense (why did he or she do this to me?), your bitterness and sense of victimization will be greatly reduced, it will help you to communicate with your spouse in a more positive and effective manner, and it will provide a solid Biblical foundation upon which to begin the restoration process in your marriage. It will also help you with the understanding of glorifying God in your life on a moment by moment basis.

So, why does infidelity happen in a marriage? What are your spouse's most important emotional needs? If their main needs are not being met, then all it takes for infidelity to start is for a member of the opposite sex to come along and quite innocently begin to meet them. I'm not talking about sex here-I'm talking about emotional needs. Most of the time the straying spouses are good, well meaning people who have drifted from their spouse and their relationship with God. Folks, I have to say here that many people just do not have a daily, intimate, personal, passionate relationship with God. They are church folks, involved in the program of church building, but many have never learned how to deal with their issues of life moment by moment with God. The person who is involved in infidelity has drifted from their spouse and God without realizing just how needy, vulnerable, and exposed they are. They think about the fact that they are unhappy. Their needs in their mind are not being met. Many times they will ask themselves, why am I not happy? The communication in the marriage has deteriorated to just what needs to be done or anger and fighting, Ephesians 4:29-32. So, one of the spouses feels their emotional needs are not being met and they probably are not. They also do not know how to communicate their needs to their spouse.

What are the keys to restoration for a marriage that has been damaged by infidelity? There are six keys I would like to bring to your attention. They are: accountability, shifting out of a victim's perspective, overcoming abandonment issues, grieving, forgiveness, and recreating love.

1. **Accountability**-As I have dealt with people who are involved in infidelity, I find that getting them to end the affair is an extremely difficult thing to do. It can be very much like trying to quit using cocaine. Going cold turkey is the only successful or reasonable approach. The person must realize that no matter where they are emotionally they have to come to grips with the fact that this issue is sin. However, when people are lead by their emotions they are lead into sin every time. Years ago a lady was involved with several different men down through several years. She came to church for all the services and was involved in many aspects of the ministry. Her husband did not come or only came occasionally as his golf game would allow. When she would talk she would talk about how mean he was and all the things he did not do. He was never home, spent money on himself and not her and the children. In her mind, he was not meeting her emotional needs. He was not in many instances meeting her needs. When other men came along and flattered her, showed interest in her, or listened as she talked, she would think of the pain she felt and would become involved with them. Through all the years she hid this sin from her husband and her church family. Of course, she had developed lying pretty well. In marital counseling with her husband she lied about the affairs. Then when she was finally caught, she admitted to some, but not all. Only the ones she had been caught in. She then admitted it was wrong and she wanted to do right etc. She would leave the counseling sessions and go out and be involved again. It is addictive and it is an emotional issue. If the

person will not be held accountable, they will destroy their life, marriage, and children. This lady was not willing to be held accountable and she still lives this way today. Nothing matters to her-not her children, her former husband, church, God, or anyone. She is involved in destructive emotional, sexual behavior. Once an affair is brought to light, a great deal of accountability will be required to help the ensnared partner to stay completely away from their former lover. This means that e-mail and cell phone passwords are willingly handed over to the spouse-this is not negotiable. You will need firm boundaries with consequences if you are going to be successful in helping your addicted partner kick this incredibly powerful drug. Of course, let's not forget that Satan loves to encourage people to live by their emotions. (This is always amazing to me the churches that are set up to appeal to people's emotions rather than to help them to realize their life is to glorify God moment by moment by having a relationship through God's Word. I find more people in these types of churches are involved in infidelity).

2. **Shifting Out of A Victim's Perspective**-There are NO victims in marriage. A victim's stance will destroy whatever is left of your marriage. If you let it. You will need to be frequently firmly reminded by an assertive and insightful pastor, or counselor, of the following truths....1. You contributed to creating an environment where an infidelity could develop by unknowingly not meeting the most important emotional needs of your spouse. 2. Due to your unresolved childhood wounds, you needed to select a spouse who was capable of abandoning you. Through For the Love of the Family, I deal with unresolved childhood wounds all the time. We have dedicated much of the resources of For the Love of the Family to parents and how they deal with their children. Most children's parents are dealing with their children like they have been dealt with by their parents. Sadly, the principles of God's Word are not used in their marriage and of course not with their children, Proverbs 23:26, Proverbs 22:6. When the child grows up to not serve God the parents are staggered. The number of children who grow up in an Independent Baptist church and do not live for God is huge. When we deal with these areas in For the Love of the Family meetings, you have parents and unfortunately even some pastors who are in total denial. Therefore, of course, they do not know how to deal with the pain they feel or what went wrong. As pastors, we have to understand our position is to teach God's people how to glorify God in their life. It also means we have to understand that as well. Folks, I deal with a number of pastors and their wives who have been involved in infidelity. I share the same principles with them as I am sharing here now with you. 3. You allowed the Emotional Cutoff to develop without taking the appropriate steps to fix it. You were asleep at the marital wheel.
3. **Overcoming Abandonment Reactions**-This is the most difficult issue to overcome. When an abandonment reaction comes up it is sort of like you become instantly drunk. You become 3 years old and of course, you act like it. You are full of hurt, (See How to deal With Hurt on our Web site www.fortheloveofthefamily.com), and rage. Severe abandonment reactions will blow up your already damaged relationship. Being blaming, raging, judgmental, out of control and attacking will do nothing to help anyone, Ephesians 4:22-24, 29-32. With help you can learn to recognize your abandonment reactions step back from them and be objective. Folks, the basis of all relationships is Ephesians 5:18-21. You must understand being filled with the Holy Spirit and then learning to submit yourself to others. The reason both people got into this issue to begin with is not understanding this issue. The word submission in Ephesians 5:21, if I could define it like this, "the other person's life is more important than yours."
4. **Grieving**-You will cry more tears than you thought were in you. You will go through many boxes of tissues-yes even you men. I have had many men cry when they have shared their hurt with me. You will need to talk about it and talk about it some more. This process takes time. Grieving is scary and hard. Armed with a great deal of support and given time, you will get through this. The sun will shine again. Things are not as dark as they seem to be right now.

Keep your focus on your issues-spend the time in God's Word looking at the issues of your own heart and life. Remember, God loves you and He wishes for you to have joy in your life and He wants to heal the hurt you are experiencing. I repeat keep your focus on your issues-not your spouses. I always tell people; the more you cry the better you will feel. It is okay to cry. Tell the Lord how you feel. Years ago, I wrote in my Bible "when you hurt tell God everything that is on your heart tell Him everything." Get with a godly Pastor and let him help you deal with these issues. Don't give up.

5. **Forgiveness**-You have done the hard work. Your spouse has de-toxed from his or her sinful addictive relationship. They are truly sorry for all the pain they have caused you and they tell you this frequently. You are seeing your spouse as the wounded, needy little child that they are on the inside. You are ready to forgive. Ephesians 4:32, "...forgiving one another, even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you." That means the re-establishing of trust. It means being able to say I love you again. It means letting go of it finally. While your marriage is now out of surgery and off life support it will still not make it without the next step.
6. **Re-creating love**-Love can be re-created in a dead marriage simply by devoting time to meeting each other's most important emotional needs. Spending a great deal of time together deliberately focusing on meeting the most important emotional needs of your spouse will become the sweet icing on the cake of restoring the beauty and the sacredness that had been lost in your marriage. To find out what their most important emotional needs are you must ask the How, What, When, Where, and Why questions. You have to get into their heart by asking what is on their heart. How do you feel about that? What is it that makes you happy? What is it that makes you sad? What do you think I need to understand about you? What emotional needs of your life do you think I need to know about and meet? Of course, turn your marriage and your life totally over to God. Quit holding back in your relationship with your spouse and with God. Take a look at what God says in His Word about infidelity, immorality, and sexual sin. Get a good understanding of it from Scripture. Finally, pray together over these emotional needs you are discussing with each other. Ask God to give you wisdom in dealing with your lives, James 1:5-6.

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