

The Journey Toward Healing (Page 2)

Your pain has a time limit built into it. God is faithful and will never stop loving you or let you down.

by Joann Condie, RN, MS, LPC

[Read part one of this article first.](#)

I = Insist Your Spouse Decide

You must be clear with your unfaithful spouse. He or she must decide to have you alone as a marital partner. He cannot have you plus his other mistresses, be they prostitutes, pornography, girlfriends, strip clubs or whatever else takes him away. She cannot expect you to continue as if nothing is wrong, while she has another man online or waiting in the wings. Do you remember your vows taken before God to “forsake all others?” That applies today, tomorrow and always. Insist on it!

Many marriages end in divorce or exist simply as a piece of paper at City Hall because the spouse of the sex addict was unsure of himself or herself. This is not the time for you to get weak-kneed or cater to any of your codependent weaknesses. If you have any hesitation about whether or not this is a healthy biblical position, please read the best book I know for explaining these principles, *Love Must Be Tough* by Dr. James Dobson.

If you allow your spouse to continue with the affair or pornography use, the disrespect will continue. This leads to contempt, which offers the least likelihood of saving the marriage. Also, you are at greater risk of slipping into depression or suicidal thinking.

T = Talk To A Trained Christian Counselor

I have already mentioned the importance of a strong system of friends and family. Remember, however, that right now you are making some of the most important decisions of your entire life. These folks may be helpful and supportive in some manner, but when it comes to decisions with life-long consequences, their suggestions may actually be harmful. Don't make these common mistakes:

Choosing a buddy instead of a trained counselor

We wouldn't consider calling on our best friend to provide treatment for terminal cancer, no matter how nice he might be. In the same manner, when our marriage has symptoms of being terminal, we need to call on a professional Christian counselor with years of experience and expertise.

Choosing a counselor simply because he or she treats a little of everything

Some professional counselors may have worked with a multitude of common disorders, but have little or no expertise working in this area. Generic marriage counselors do well

with generic problems; however, sex addiction, pornography addiction, and adultery require specialized work.

Choosing a counselor who simply focuses on fixing your spouse's problematic behavior

God's design for intimacy in marriage involves husband and wife deeply connecting in mind, spirit and body. The infidelity or sexually addictive behavior reveals intimacy disorder in the spouse and in the marriage. The inappropriate behavior must stop, of course, but the damage was also done to the wounded spouse. Therefore, the couple needs restoration and healing. For more information, see the article "Intimacy and Basic Trust."

Choosing a counselor who automatically assumes many years of treatment will be needed

Beware of therapists who move you toward dependence on them or on something other than dependence on God. Also, some sex addiction counselors believe, "Once an addict, always an addict." Concerning intimacy disorders, such as sex addiction, I personally do not believe this matches with what God says in the Bible. I believe (a) therapy must comprehensively address the intimacy disorder of the body, mind and spirit, or relapse is more likely to occur; and (b) recovery is certainly a process and not a magical event. But, God reminds us that we can be a new creation in Him ³ and He can restore the years the locust took away.⁴

Choosing a counselor based on lowest fees

Do not consider bargain shopping for the cheapest brain surgeon, parachute packer, or licensed counselor! You and your marriage (and children) deserve the best care possible.

Choosing a secular counselor

Frequently, secular counselors are on insurance panels or have a convenient office location. Does it matter if they are not Christian? If you have a broken leg, a skilled secular physician can read the x-ray and place a leg cast, but if you are broken in your marriage, in your spirit, or in your heart, would you ever want to trust the treatment to someone who had no understanding of God's design for you and the spiritual basis for marriage? No! If you need assistance in finding a licensed professional Christian counselor in your region, Focus on the Family can help. They have a listing of counselors throughout the US and Canada who have been thoroughly screened. Call (719) 531-3400 ext. 7700 weekdays 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (MST). When you call that number, you may also ask for a one-time complimentary consultation with a Focus on the Family licensed Christian counselor. If a counselor is not immediately available, you may leave your contact information and a counselor will call you back as soon as possible.

H = Heed Biblical Principles

This last letter of the acronym, FAITH, represents the most important aspect of your journey. Regardless of what you have taken from this article up to this point, all advice

must stand up to the test of heeding biblical principles or else you “jump from the frying pan into the fire.”

God is in the business of healing; therefore, His plan and guidelines will be the most accurate and effective. Following biblical principles is not a matter of “keeping the letter of the law,” for that approach was attempted (and failed) long before Jesus arrived. You can only maintain a functioning balanced life when you have asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior, forgiver of your sins, and Lord of your life (letting Him guide and direct your decisions). If you have already taken that life-changing step, stay close to Him who will never leave you or forsake you. If you have not yet made that response to His love, there could never be a better time than right now. Please call a local pastor or Focus on the Family’s counseling department to provide you with additional guidance, support and resources.

Continuing Your Journey in FAITH

Faith in God will carry you through these most difficult times of recovering from infidelity. Don’t try to figure it all out today. Even though you may have just recently discovered the painful reality that your marriage is in trouble, the truth is, it has taken many months and years to get to this point. As a result, it will take time to bring about restoration for yourself and your marriage. Regardless of what your spouse chooses to do next, you can choose to live fully and receive peace and joy along the way.

God is faithful and will never stop loving you or let you down. Your pain has a time limit built into it. How do I know? Because God has proven His promise to me and many others just like you.

"Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning." —Psalm 30:5

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Endnotes

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:17

² Joel 2:25