

How to Heal after a Mate's Affair

INTRODUCTION

A. There is probably no deeper wound in a marriage than an affair or adultery.

1. Normally an affair is a longer term sexual relationship outside of a marriage union. Adultery is usually viewed as a "one night stand" (less frequent) sexual relationship outside marriage.

B. God designed marriage to be permanent.

1. Gen. 2:24, "...a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined (bonded) to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."
 - a. Just like we became one in Christ.
 - 1) John 17:21, (Jesus, to His Father prayed) "that they all may be one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."
2. Matt. 19:6, "...Therefore what God has joined (bonded) together, let not man separate."
 - a. Regardless of the culture or religion, not just Christians.

C. Marriage is not a Christian institution. It is a social institution designed by God for all of society.

1. People in the Old Testament were married but were not Christians. There were no Christians in the Old Testament.
 - a. Heb. 13:4, "Marriage *is* honorable among all (people, not just Christians), and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."
 - b. God held King Abimilech in the Old Testament accountable if he took to himself Abraham's wife (Gen. 20:5).
 - c. John the Baptist held Herod the tetrarch accountable for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias (Matt 14:4).

- 1) Out of guilt and bitterness his wife had John beheaded (vs. 8).
 2. 80% of all cultures punish adultery without any Judeo Christian influence. Why?
 - a. God's absolute standards for marriage are written in their hearts from birth (Rom. 1:18-20).
- D. Since our relationship with Jesus is compared to marriage, God wants marriage to be permanent like our relationship is permanent in Christ (Rom 8:31-39; Col. 3:3; Eph. 1:13).**
- E. Yet, adultery is becoming more and more frequent all over the world. // (Approximately 40% of all U.S. married men are unfaithful.)**

How many of you know someone who has been through an affair?
Who, in this group, have been affected by an affair? In what way?

- F. It is a myth that adultery does not happen to good marriages.**
1. Good people can sin (Rom. 3:23).
 2. Good people can fall into sin.
 - a. I Cor. 10:12, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."
 - 1) That's why you have to aggressively protect your marriage.
 - b. II Sam. 11 (King David's affair with Bathsheba and murder of her husband)
 3. Good marriages can go bad if they are not nurtured, cultivated and actively worked on. Each mate's heart will be where their treasure (time, energy, money) is .
 - a. Matt. 6:21, "For where your treasure (investment) is there your heart will be also."
 - b. Adultery is transferring the treasury (delight) of your heart to another.

G. Emotional affairs are as damaging as physical affairs.

1. An emotional affair is characterized when one's emotional delight is taken from his/her spouse and placed on another person.
 - a. Wives deeply desire to be delighted in (cherished) to feel secure.
2. Intimate talk by a man to a woman is as stimulating to the woman as sexually provocative clothes on a woman can be to a man.
3. Men are primarily stimulated by sight and women are primarily stimulated by words and actions.

Why do you think that an emotional affair could be as damaging as a physical affair? What are the dynamics taking place in an emotional affair?

H. Adultery is relational rebellion both against your mate and God. All sin is rebellion against God.

1. God strictly forbids adultery.
 - a. Ex. 20:14, "You shall not commit adultery."
2. Fornication (sex between singles) is also relational rebellion against God's laws.
 - a. I Thess. 4:3, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality."
 - b. Couples living together apart from marriage are in relational rebellion. Their logic is that they "feel" they are married in God's eyes. No, they are sinning in God's eyes.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:5
 - c. Repeated sex by singles does not make a couple married. Having babies does not make a couple married. It only increases the possibility of divorce by 50% should they marry (Gal. 6:7). It deepens mutual insecurity because they both know they can walk away without any obligation.
3. Photo adultery or fornication (pornography) is also forbidden by a holy God.

- a. Matt. 5:28, “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” That’s where it starts.
- b. God knows it can become addictive.

DOORS OF ADULTERY

- I. Not every case of adultery has the same cause. There are many different doors into the house of adultery. //Prov. 14:12, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” Prov. 12:15, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.”**

What kinds of “doors” or causes of adultery are you aware of?

A. Optional Doors

1. Absence of communication, especially on a feeling level, and failing to talk out problems.
 - a. Problems do not permanently damage a marriage but failing to work them through biblically will.
2. Withdrawing from your spouse in spirit, mind, will, emotions and then physically. A woman’s deepest fear is being distanced from her husband. She needs to feel connected in order to feel secure.
3. Unsatisfactory marital and sexual relations. //This is correctable.
4. Changing one’s negative mood or feeling to a temporary feeling of pleasure. If it is habitual it can become addictive. This results in a pursuit of selfish pleasure.
 - a. Mood altering is not wrong. It is only how you do it that makes it wrong. God has a precise pattern to change how you feel.
 - 1) Eph. 5:18-20, “And do not be drunk (mood alter) with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, (how?) ¹⁹speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - b. These are key verses for those in addictions because at the root of many addictions is a desire to change from a negative mood (feeling) to a pleasurable mood.

5. A lack of mutual support and encouragement that is now being offered by an outsider.
6. To build up a weak ego or sense of inferiority.
 - a. ILL.: Woman attracted to a pastor. If he is willing to jeopardize his career and family for her, she feels she must really be something special.
7. A long record of disregard for authority or accountability.
 - a. Rebels are users and abusers.
 - b. This was President Clinton's reason for his sexual relations with a young White House intern, "I knew I could."
8. Deep feelings of loneliness or an attempt not to feel feelings of loneliness.
 - a. Sex gets confused with a false sense of belonging.
 - 1) This was Potiphar's wife's need when she attempted to seduce Joseph (Gen 39:1-10).
 - 2) This was probably the need of the abandoned wife in Prov. 7:19; "My husband is not at home, he has gone on a long journey."
9. A need to exercise power by one who feels weak or powerless.
10. One who has a habit of acquiring things in order to feel better about himself.
11. I owe it to myself for all the things I missed in life or am missing.
12. To fulfill a need to be loved, accepted, admired or respected through affection and sex.
 - a. Relational prostitutes receive artificial attention. One secretary was a secret sexual partner of a pastor for ten years.
13. Out of fear that he or she may never have the chance to share a man's or woman's love.
 - a. But affairs are never based on love but on selfishness.
14. A high percentage of past immorality before marriage can carry over into marriage. (Pornography: movies, magazines, internet)

- a. Soul bonds through past sexual intercourse continue to be a draw after marriage because they are reconnecting in the brain at points of pleasure.
 - 1) I Cor. 6:15,16, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "*the two*," He says, "*shall become one flesh*."
 - a) *Bonding* means there was an evil exchange between partners.
 - b) You see this taking place in Solomon's life. The evil in the women ultimately turned him into a pagan idolater (I Kings 11:1-4).
- 15. Out of anger and revenge towards the other spouse or unresolved family of origin conflict. Anger is self-justifying of any behavior. The affair is a reward for the misery they have endured and it may be a form of revenge.
- 16. Attempt to still find that perfect ideal relationship designed in fantasies based on unrealistic expectations; one who will ultimately make me externally happy.
 - a. But when you find them, you will discover they are just as needy.
- 17. Attempt to "fix" a childhood rejection.
 - a. "I'll prove I'm attractive, acceptable," etc. But it does not last because it is an empty emotional bucket with holes in the bottom.
- 18. An inattentive spouse because of lack of interest, overloaded schedule or just plain disinterest in the marriage.
- 19. The transfer (or investment) of one's affections from the spouse to another person.
- 20. To compensate for a recent failure. They are an easy target because sex offers a quick fix for a deep hurt.
- 21. Because devotion to God and the Christian life has just become routine.
- 22. To escape the control of a controlling mate, i.e., perfectionist.
- 23. To get relief from stress. They want a "time out."

- a. ILL.: Greg G.
- 24. (Denial) They don't know why they did it based on a habit of being defensive; they avoid looking at what makes them tick; they do not want to admit the real reason or they do not want to learn why they did it.
- 25. They were seduced resulting from a desensitized conscience by over familiarity.
- 26. The influence of drugs and alcohol.
- 27. Tired of being rejected sexually by their spouse.
 - a. Ill.: John and Rachel.

RATIONALIZATIONS BEHIND ADULTERY

II. Rationalizations for adultery. Actions are a result of a core belief system (Prov. 25:7) that's usually lie based (Jer. 17:9). The following rationalizations are an expression of the deceived core belief system of the heart.

A. Rationalizations for adultery are endless.

What kinds of rationalizations have you heard to justify marital unfaithfulness?

1. I can give love to others and not reduce my ability to love my spouse (mistress or concubine).
2. Boys will be boys.
 - a. Playboys are boys who never grew up (irresponsible).
 - b. They want the choice of adulthood but not the responsibility or consequences of adulthood. This is a classic description of a child or adolescent.
3. All is fair in love and war (which is a lie).
4. Second best is better than none at all (John 4:1-18).
5. The devil made me do it (James 1:14,15).

6. It doesn't hurt anyone but me (II Sam. 12:10-14).
7. "I will show you" out of anger (revenge; Rom. 12:19).
8. I am the only one who is suffering so intently in this marriage and I need relief.
 - a. Temporary passion numbs pain and then it returns.
9. I deserve to feel good now and then.
10. Alcohol made me do it.
11. I couldn't help myself (I Cor. 10:13).
12. I was seduced (Prov. 7:6-27).
13. God will grant me grace even in this sin (Rom. 6:1).
14. We are praying about our (immoral) relationship and seeking God's guidance (James 4:13).
15. If God did not want us together He would break us up (I Cor. 6:18).
 - a. No responsibility for our choice.
16. God put us together through undeniable circumstances.
 - a. Satan can order circumstances.
 - 1) Job 1:12-19
 - b. God leads by His Spirit and through His Word. If He orders the circumstances, they will be consistent with His Word.
17. It is just a phase I am going through.
18. My spouse is never going to change.
19. God wants me to be happy. No, He want you to be holy.
 - a. I Peter 1:15,16
20. We want to establish a Christian home together someday.
21. His wife is cold toward him.

22. I was not a Christian when I first got married so my mate is not God's best for me.
23. I just fell in love with someone else.
 - a. No, you love the way they make you feel. Genuine love is not selfish (I Cor. 13:5, "...does not seek its own [selfish] interest...") Adultery definitely does not seek the best for other spouse or children.
24. If I pass up this relationship, I might not ever find one as good again.
25. He said he will kill himself if we break up (manipulation).
26. My kids like him better than their dad.
27. No one ever cared for me like him.
28. He is the only one who has ever understood me.
29. I don't know why I am in this relationship.
30. I deserve better than what I have.
31. I need to relieve all the stress I am under.

B. What is a general plan of approach for dealing with a spouse whose mate has been unfaithful or they have been unfaithful themselves?

IDENTIFICATION

III. Identification (with feelings, not giving information at this point).

Why do you think it may be best to acknowledge and affirm their feelings?

A. Listen to their story with compassionate understanding (James 1:19; Romans 12:15). //What does this look like?

1. James 1:19, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

2. Romans 12:15, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

B. Let them tell their story with as little interruption as possible on your part. Listen intently.

1. You must hear and get the facts first. (This is usually where counseling begins to fail.)
 - a. Prov. 29:20, “Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”
 - b. Prov. 18:13, “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly (foolish) and (is a source of) shame to him.”
 - c. King Solomon asked God for an understanding heart (I Kings 3:9). The Hebrew word for “understanding” is “hearing.” The idea is to hear with understanding.
2. Not every person is going to have every need that is common in affairs.
3. Don’t project on them what you feel they need. Listen carefully to detect what they need now.
 - a. Or, you may need to ask directly, “What do you need now (first) or did you have some specific question you wanted to ask?”
4. Conflicts reveal needs in relationships. You will only determine their need after you have listened and clarified with them what their need is at the moment.
 - a. God reveals tools (scripture) to deal with these needs in relationships.
5. The offended one should select only a few trusted confidants to spill her heart out to. It is wrong to use the kids as your confidant or those who are not part of the problem or solution.

C. Affirm to them the reality of their feelings and that they are normal. //This will open the door of their mind and heart.

1. It is God’s idea to affirm their feelings.
 - a. Rom. 12:15, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”
2. Use “yes,” nods, visually show grief, pain, sadness, look in their eyes and acknowledge you hear their pain.

3. Remember, no one is fully prepared for the emotions that follow the revelation of an affair. They are in shock!
 - a. One wife said she felt like she had been shot in the head.
 - b. The shock is the first step of the phases of grieving. (More later.)
4. Validate that their emotions are normal. Believers often fail to allow another hurting believer to feel normal emotions. They hear well meaning statements like, "You shouldn't feel this way" as if the hurting one has a switch on their chest that they can throw and just stop the feeling. Instead, they now may stuff it because they have just been shamed for having a normal feeling like anger.
 - a. The thoughts of revenge are normal, though it is in God's circle of responsibility (Romans 12:19).
5. Give them permission to feel their pain, anger, grief, fear and not be rejected for having these normal emotions.
 - a. Believers experience the same full range of emotions that non-believers experience when their mate is unfaithful.
6. Don't be surprised by their wide range of emotions over the course of time during their healing process.
 - a. There will likely be a quick switch back and forth between emotions. One minute they'll have a great day and next, plunge head long into the pit of despair.
 - b. It's important to warn the adulterer of this reality and to stay calm when his mate goes into a spin like that.
7. Encourage the offended spouse to list the ways the guilty spouse has offended (hurt) them and the children, extended family, friends, church, etc. Draw it out of them and their family. Later, this will be the basis (list) that you will use to lead them in a prayer of forgiveness.

D. Before emotions can be healed they first need to be openly identified along with their source.

1. Identify the emotions and then ask God to reveal what's behind each one. This will help them discover the myths, lies, and misconceptions of the affair. It could also help them see the reality of something they may not want to acknowledge to themselves.

2. Emotions are not subject to truth so they need to be tested with truth or reality.
 - a. Test emotions with truth just like we test false teachers with truth. It all may sound right but when tested with truth or reality it may not be true.
- 1) I John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
- 2) Project: Take a piece of paper and draw a line down the center. Label the top left side “Feelings” and label the top right side, “Facts/Reality.” Have the client list their feelings on the left side and write out on the right side what is fact, truth or reality regarding those feelings.

Feelings	Fact/Reality
1.	1.
2.	2.

3. Your task is to realistically help them acknowledge their feelings and help them to successfully manage them.
 - a. What you do not acknowledge (feel) you cannot heal or correct.
 - b. This was the issue God had with the Laodicean church. Rev. 3:17-18, “Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ – and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.” ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”

E. Reassure them they are not abandoned by you or God (Gal.6:2).

1. They may feel since they are abandoned by their mate they are also abandoned by God even if they are angry at Him.
 - a. You may need to reassure them God has not abandoned them even though they feel He is far off.
 - 1) Heb. 13:5, “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

- 2) Romans 8:35-39, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- b. They may tend to be angry at God for allowing it to happen or ask, “Where was God when it happened?” or “Why didn’t He stop it?”
 - 1) As a result they may pull away from God, church, prayer, Bible reading, or friends.
 - 2) This is a dangerous time when they could do something foolish and would regret it later.
 - c. Even Jesus felt abandoned in His pain by His Father while on the cross.
 - 1) Mark 15:34b, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
2. They can expect Him to comfort them in their pain (II Cor. 1:3-4; Ps. 119:50).
 - a. Comfort has at least two components: hope when they feel hopeless and strength when they feel so weak.

What struggles do you have with being able to feel with a wounded mate or at least acknowledge their emotions?

INFORMATION

IV. Information

- A. **Without acknowledging the emotions and allowing them to be expressed appropriately, the offended one may not be open for any information. Once they are free to be honest and feel cared for, and not condemned, then they are open to new information or reinforcement of known information. Acknowledgement opens the door of the mind. You might begin by asking if they have any specific questions.**

B. Realize they feel their life is suddenly on hold and are now facing many life changes. //Such as...

1. How will I handle the affair with our children?
 - a. The level of information should be based on age and maturity of the child. Don't give a "trunk" of information when an overnight size suitcase would do.
 - b. Sometimes, failure to share age appropriate information causes them to sense there is a problem in the home and, because they are myopic (self-centered), they may feel they have done something wrong. Life will not make sense to them why mommy or daddy are not at home or out of the house.
 - 1) Avoid the temptation to get revenge through the children.
 - c. Secrets are one of the three characteristics of a dysfunctional family (don't feel, don't trust, don't share).
2. Will I need to move, get a job?
 - a. Avoid making major changes unless circumstances dictate it (i.e. legal reasons).
3. Will I be able to stay in our church (if the offender is in the same church)?
 - a. This rarely works.
4. How can I go out in public and hold myself together because of the shame?
 - a. Take baby steps.
 - b. Prepare answers, i.e. "Thank you for your concern and prayers" (I Pet 3:15).

Why do you think the grief of an affair would parallel the grief of losing a loved one to death? In what ways do you think they would be different?

C. Introduce the steps of grief (long term process).

1. When an affair is discovered, the injured spouse is likely to experience incredible grief that could last several months or years.
 - a. Grief has many faces. It is the emotion of loss and includes:
 - 1) Grief may include struggles with feelings of sadness, hurt, anger, confusion, guilt, depression and loneliness.
 - 2) You may try to make sense of this great disappointment and betrayal, yet their emotions vary widely in their expression.
 - a) They may shutdown, lash out at everyone, cry uncontrollably, become clinging, avoid, act compulsively, etc.
 - 3) (Remember) The affair will only make sense when all the lies are exposed and the truth is known. Some of the lies that will come to light are:
 - a) I must not have been good enough, pretty enough, sexy enough, smart enough or handsome or manly.
 - b) I am a failure as a wife or husband.
 - c) No one loves me. I am unlovable.
 - d) If he doesn't want me, no one will want me.
 - e) There must be something wrong with me.
 - f) What have I done to deserve this?
 - g) God is punishing me.
2. Help them to identify and work through the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance. (Acceptance of the consequences of the adultery, not that the behavior is acceptable.)
 - a. Denial: "I can't believe this is happening to me."
 - b. Anger: "I'm enraged!!" "I could kill him!"
 - c. Bargaining: Mystical thinking; "If only I would have..." "God, I'll do anything to end this pain."
 - d. Sadness: "I just feel grieved, hurt, depressed, dead inside."

- e. Acceptance: "I now accept upon myself the consequences of the losses I will experience now and in the future." (You will never feel the same as if it never happened.) In time you will forgive, but never forget.
3. Reassure them of the fact that emotional healing is possible independent of the offending spouse.
- a. Their goal is to be mentally, spiritually and emotionally healthy with or without the spouse, with or without the marriage.
 - 1) Isa. 26:3, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."
 - b. Whatever decision you make about the marriage, God will not abandon you, good decision or bad decision.
 - 1) Because your relationship with God is secure.
 - a) Rom. 8:35-39
 - c. There will always be a sense of loss. In time the pain will not last as long and go as deep.
- D. Identify with them what they feel (think) needs to be done if the marriage is to be restored.**

What do you visualize would be the needs an offended spouse in order to restore the marriage?
 How do you think these steps would restore the relationship?
 What rights would the offender need to give up and in what areas?

Get the Facts

1. It is appropriate to ask for details of the affair: who, when, where, frequency and historical time line, but it is not appropriate to ask details "how" (i.e. how they had sex, positions, etc.) (Eph. 5:12 "For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret").
 - a. The "how" questions only create a greater pain for the injured spouse.
 - b. Often the "how" details are asked in order to compare oneself with the other party to see who is better.

- 1) God says comparison is unwise.
 - a) II Cor. 10:12, "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."
2. It is not the adulterer's place to tell the offended spouse how they are to heal. Only God and the offended one are responsible for that.
 - a. Offenders tend to want little consequences for their actions therefore they tend to minimize the effects of their actions and what it would take to genuinely restore the marriage.
 - b. The "quicker" is not "better." Why? It often causes the hurt to resurface later unprocessed.
3. Allow reasonable "why" questions although these usually lead to a dead end and the answers are usually rejected or invalidated. The "why" question rarely brings the closure that is desired.
 - a. Passion is not subject to facts or reality. King David never thought through what would happen if Bathsheba got pregnant or if her husband would come to know about David's abuse of power by taking another man's wife.
4. The offender needs to answer the hard questions without being defensive and argumentative.
 - a. The willingness of the offender to answer the hard questions is a strong source of reassurance for the offended spouse.
 - b. This willingness also reflects a sincere heart that desires a biblical reconciliation.
 - c. Again, the offended one is not to ask the "how" questions and the offender is not to answer the "how" questions if asked.
5. It may be important to establish a time line or sequence of events to deal with the issue to be resolved and to serve as a basis for correction and for future accountability.

Establish Accountability

6. Establish accountability to the injured spouse's satisfaction, not to the adulterer's satisfaction. This would include time, money, all phone records,

credit card records, computer usage and any further relationships or contacts directly or through social media (email, Facebook, twitter, etc.).

- a. Be accountable for his time. Too much unaccounted for time can spell trouble because there has been so much lying about the offender's time in the past.
 - b. Nothing is to be hidden or secret which would include phone bills, computer time or time away from home.
 - c. It is key to remind the offender that one of the consequences of the sin is that they must now give up a large part of their independence for a period of time. The offended one must feel free to know where the offender is and what they are doing where this is practical. This is an important step in rebuilding trust that was destroyed by the affair and subsequent period of lying. There must be absolute freedom to confirm all facts where humanly possible and practical.
7. Establish boundaries or limitations for present and future safeguards. These are usually given by the offended one in the form of prohibitions, boundaries, limitations.
- a. These boundaries need to be set as soon as possible, not gradually.
 - 1) Rom. 13:14, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."
 - 2) I Cor. 6:18, "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."
 - b. These must meet both spouses' needs.
 - c. There must be a willingness to stay away from activities that may create even the appearance of mistrust. This includes no time alone with the opposite sex.
 - d. One of the hardest boundaries is the reestablishment of sexual relations with the offended spouse.
 - 1) The offended mate is free to participate in sexual relations when they are ready.
 - a) Sex should not be used by the offended one to try to fix all the hurts and ignore all the other issues.

- b) One wife wanted sex with her husband (the adulterer) every night for weeks. She was motivated out of fear of not being loved and a fear of abandonment. In reality, it was a control tactic because of her insecurity.
- c) Good mutually satisfying sex greatly helps faithfulness but is not a guarantee of faithfulness.

End the Affair

8. Establish clearly if the affair is continuing or is it broken off completely.
 - a. Ending the adultery should be done by the adulterer. It is his responsibility.
 - 1) Rom 12:18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."
 - 2) I Cor. 6:18, "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."
 - b. (Suggestion) It should be done by phone with either the offended spouse present or in the presence of a third party chosen by the offended spouse. Why? This way the offended spouse hears either firsthand or from one they trust what was actually said.
 - c. The wording must be approved by the offended spouse. Where there is disagreement, a third party should be consulted.
 - d. The break off should be short and firm, "I've come to realize I was wrong for committing adultery with you. It is my desire to rebuild my marriage with my mate. I will not be contacting you and I ask you not to contact me ever again. Thank you for honoring this request, good bye."
 - e. Any future necessary contacts with the other party should be done by a respected third party, not the adulterer or spouse.
 - 1) Return all gifts or personal items or destroy them. They can be triggers to past experiences if they are kept. The value of them is of no consideration. They must be removed. Israel was to destroy all the pagan worship paraphernalia so that it would not become a temptation to them (Judges 2:2, 11-13).
 - 2) Rom. 13:14, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts."

- 3) One woman had over a million dollars worth of jewelry given to her by a married man with whom she was having an affair.
- f. The other partner in the affair is not the victim. The offended partner comes closer to it. Either way, staying in the victim mode only postpones the needed healing and restoring power and control to one's life.
- 1) The other person in the affair was just as evil, especially if they knew they were party to destroying the other person's family, career and reputation.

Give and Receive Forgiveness

9. Forgiveness is to be granted by the injured spouse but trust is to be earned by the offender – //Forgiveness and trust are two separate issues.
 - a. Prov. 18:19, "A brother offended *is harder to win* (back) than (to conquer) a strong city. //And contentions *are* like the bars of a castle."

Why do you think forgiveness and trust would be two separate issues? How are they separate? How does the time factor enter in?

10. Confession for the purpose of forgiveness needs to be made to those in the circle of offense and to those who are responsible to help in the healing process. Confession may need to be made to the ruling body of the church and/or the whole congregation. This practice needs to be in writing in the constitution and/or by-laws of the church to avoid lawsuits.
 - a. I Tim. 5:20, "Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear."
 - b. In-laws need to be told only that adultery has happened and that you are seeking to rebuild the marriage and that you are getting appropriate help. They can be told more information if they are involved in a positive way in the healing process. We strongly recommend that parents not be the primary counselors, only support people. Often they are too close to the situation to be helpful.
 - c. Usually offenders do not want to think about the past either because of their own guilt and shame or they see it hurts the offended mate. Often they just want to avoid the consequences of their sin which only prolongs the healing processes.

- 1) Gal. 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."
 - 2) Trust must be earned over time! (i.e. years)
 - a) Proverbs 18:19, "A brother offended *is harder to win* than a strong city, and contentions *are* like the bars of a castle."
11. Asking God's forgiveness handles the judicial part of sin of the adultery. Asking the offended one's forgiveness is the relational part of forgiveness for the adultery.
- a. I John 1:6-9, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. Confession must include the words, "I was wrong for..." Then list the sins, ie, betrayal, breach of trust, lying, selfishness, lack of love, embarrassment. The offender can say he is sorry or deeply regrets his sin but that must follow the statement, "I was wrong." The Greek word in I John 1:9 for confess means, "To say the same thing God would say," namely, "I was wrong for....."
 - c. Even when Israel had to confess their sins for the year on the Day of Atonement, they had to name them all.
 - 1) Lev. 16:21 "Aaron shall lay both hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins."
12. The adulterer, after confession and repentance, is to stop acting out of guilt over already confessed sin and start living a life of appreciation to both God and to their mate for the forgiveness. Sadness, remorse and humility are appropriate emotions.
- a. False guilt and true guilt feel the same therefore, that emotion must be tested by truth, i.e., "I am forgiven."
 - 1) Guilt means, "I'm worthy of blame." Before confession and forgiveness one is worthy of blame. But once confession is made and forgiveness received they are no longer worthy of blame. They are still responsible for the consequences and for all the efforts to restore the marriage.

- b. The adulterer is to ask forgiveness once. If they are not forgiven then the offender is to tell the spouse that they look forward to the time when they can forgive them.
 - 1) The offender is forgiven by God whether their mate forgives them or not. Now the offender needs to shift into the understanding mode not the defense mode of the past behavior. Defenders are losers!!
 - 2) The adulterer has absolutely no place lecturing their mate on their need to forgive. They are to ask for it then leave it. It is God's responsibility to convict the offended mate of the need to forgive.
 - a) John 16:8, "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."
- c. If the offended spouse happens to go off on the offender, the offender should remain calm and verbally state, "Don't stop! I need to learn from you how deeply I have hurt you."
 - 1) Reinforce to the offended mate the necessity to find a support person to vent to when the urge and pressure builds.
 - a) God has delegated responsibility to fellow believers to help another believer through this pain (Gal 6:2).

Remove Shame

13. Identify any continuing shame issues.

What is the difference between guilt and shame?
How would you deal with them together or separately?

- a. True shame and false shame feel the same. The shame like the sin must be transferred over to the Lord Jesus.
 - 1) Guilt focuses on what we have done.
 - 2) Shame focuses on who we are as a person.

- b. Jesus died not only for our sin but our shame.
 - 1) Heb. 12:2, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Reevaluate Environments

- 14. Identify what environment changes have to be made.
 - a. Do what you can externally do to help with the circumstances.
 - 1) There may be a need to change churches, job locations, recreational activities, maybe even where you live.
 - b. Realize that changing external matters is only helpful up to a certain point.
 - 1) The unprocessed luggage of hurt goes with you.
 - 2) Fresh starts begin with a changed and healed heart, not a new house.
 - c. Do not make an abrupt house move to fix everything. The past will be in the moving van with you. Relocation may be necessary after some stability has been restored.
 - d. Remove any pornography from the house and put blocks on the computer or restrict access to it.
 - 1) E-mails, chat rooms, instant messaging, porn sights, Facebook.

Reestablish Communication

- 15. Establish fair communication rules. Usually communication has already broken down. Now you have to establish a structure or framework to be able to communicate in a healthy manner.
 - a. Choose to not interrupt or talk over each other but focus on listening instead (James 1:19).
 - 1) Talking is not listening.

- a) Interrupting or talking over a person is usually a refusal to understand, a desire to win an argument, defend oneself, or to control.
- 2) Tolerating is not listening.
- 3) Preparing your defense is not listening.
 - a) Prov. 18:13, "He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him."
 - b) Defenders usually lose over the long haul.
- b. Avoid all name calling (Eph. 4:29).
 - 1) It is designed to avoid issues that are being discussed.
 - 2) It could be a vain attempt to control by shaming.
 - 3) It is a form of verbal cannibalism.
 - a) Gal. 5:15, "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another."
 - 4) Focus on the use of words that help build the other person up. No one feels warm and cuddly who has just been verbally abused.
 - a) Eph. 4:29, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."
- c. Focus on one issue at a time and not jump from one issue to another.
 - 1) Issue hopping is a tactic designed to avoid staying focused on the issue at hand, usually out of feeling guilty or the feeling of losing the argument.
 - 2) Instead, verbally acknowledge the other person's position.
 - a) "I acknowledge your position and I will seriously consider it."
 - b) Remember, acknowledgment of the other person's position does not necessarily mean agreement but it communicates you have at least heard their perspective.

- 3) Failure to deal with issues will allow them to grow into a monster of accumulated unbearable luggage.
- d. Avoid outbursts of anger but focus instead on controlling your temper.
 - 1) Do not use anger to change, to control or to manipulate.
 - 2) Our anger never accomplishes the righteousness of God.
 - a) James 1:20, "For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
- e. Avoid the use of hot button words (to hurt someone in a vulnerable area).
 - 1) Hot buttons words: "you," "always," "never," "if only."
 - 2) Avoid referring to past failures or weaknesses.
- f. Avoid all physical signs of disgust. //This includes: sighing, rolling of eyes, hands on hips, finger pointing, in your face/cornering.
- g. No pouting or silent treatment. This can be a form of punishment and revenge.
- h. Do not walk away from an argument without affirming you will return and continue the process at a specific time later when cooler minds are in control.
 - 1) Do not follow the other person around from room to room. When a person is done talking, they are done.
 - a) This is one major source of domestic violence.
 - 2) It's important to honor the other person's timeout and space.
 - 3) Definitely avoid lectures, monologues, forced late night marathons. That is a form of control and abuse.
- i. Absolutely no physical attacking: shoving, biting, poking or throwing things.
- j. Mutually agree on the rules you need in order to communicate in a mutually agreeable fashion.

What other communication rules would you add to this list?

Rebuild Trust

16. Establish a new pattern of truthfulness to rebuild trust.
 - a. This broken relationship came about because of a great deal of lies that the adulterer told to himself and then told to his mate.
 - 1) This is evidence that Satan participated in the events and that the adulterer gave himself over to the evil one (Eph. 4:27).
 - b. A healthy relationship must be established on truth and trust.
 - c. God only gives grace (strength) for the truth (John 1:14).
 - d. Often a wife will know intuitively whether the husband is telling the truth. Men do not seem to have this ability.

Take Responsibility

17. Assume full responsibility for each one's own actions.
 - a. Identify, assume and fulfill whatever is in your own circle of responsibility.
 - b. There is such a thing as an innocent party. Ask King David's wives. How could all of them be such a failure that David "needed" to rape Bathsheba and kill her husband. The Prophet Nathan put the total blame on David, not Bathsheba. (II Sam. 12:1-10)
 - c. True, we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) but not all sin contributes to adultery.
 - d. But a person is drawn away by his own strong desires and they lead to evil actions.
 - 1) James 1:13-15, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

Weigh Separation

18. Is there a need for a temporary separation?
 - a. I Cor. 7:8-11 gives us at least three options.
 - 1) To stay in the home with or without any change and “cope.”
 - 2) To leave and remain single, “But if she leaves, let her remain unmarried.”
 - 3) To leave and “be reconciled with her husband.”
 - b. Separation may not need to lead to divorce.
 - 1) Separation should lead to reconciliation if at all possible.
 - 2) The Heavenly Father divorced Israel because of her unfaithfulness but will restore His relationship with her.
 - a) Jeremiah 3:8, “Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.”
 - c. There may need to be an in-house separation (i.e. separate bedrooms).

Identify Triggers

19. Prepare for triggers that throw you into a tailspin.
 - a. Calendar dates or anniversaries of the affair.
 - b. Places where affair occurred.
 - 1) sights
 - c. Seasons of the year when the affair occurred.
 - d. You may have to plan a special event or activity on these dates.
 - e. Smells, music

- f. Often the body or senses will alert you to the past affair before your mind remembers the event.

Plan Processing

- 20. Select precise times to process events. //Rather than have open seasons to talk about the affair any time, place, or location.
 - a. This may take time to get to this place. Why?
 - b. It is important to have a break from the healing process or discussions. This will allow each of you to have a time-out to restore your own energies. It will allow you to relax and avoid being uptight all the time.

Heal Historic Hurts

- 21. Discover and process any long term unresolved issues or conflicts in the marriage that existed prior to the infidelity.
 - a. The past that is not processed is always present.
 - b. If you don't identify it, you can't heal it.

Reestablish Biblical Disciplines

- 22. Get back to a daily time in the Word or establish one if there has not been a pattern of it.
- 23. Return to your Bible believing and preaching church or find one where this is the case.
 - a. God designed the body of Christ to be a major support without judgment in the healing process.
 - b. The immoral man in Corinth was restored by the church (II Cor. 2:5-11).
- 24. Because of venereal diseases and aids, it is imperative that both mates be tested and given a clean bill of health before resuming sexual intimacy. Do not take the offenders word that it is not necessary. Remember, this has been a lie based relationship and they could be full of guilt and shame.

MOTIVATION

V. Motivation

A. This plays a big part in the restoration and it played a big part in the affair.

B. Each person has a scale in the back of their mind that determines their behavior whether they will do something or refuse to do something.

1. There is an inborn desire for gain (benefit, pleasure).
 - a. "What am I going to gain if I do this?"
 - b. "What gain am I going to lose if I don't do this?"
 - c. People usually do not change unless they can see personal benefit to do so and unless they think they can do it.
 - 1) God gives power to make any change He requires (Phil. 4:13).
2. There is also a fear of loss (physically, emotionally, psychologically).
 - a. What am I going to lose if I do this?

How did this gain-loss scale work in the events leading up to and during the affair?

- b. What am I going to lose if I don't do this?
 3. Two other levels are also present.
 - a. Desire for others' gain or fear of their loss.
 - b. Desire for God's gain or fear of His loss (i.e., glory).
- C. The desire for gain and fear of loss scale played an important part in the first sin.**

1. Eve and Adam understood God's instructions.
 - a. Gen. 3:1-2, "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" ²and

the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden."

2. The instructions included a warning of death (loss) if they disobeyed.
 - a. Gen. 3:3, "But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"
3. In order to get them to sin, Satan had to remove the loss side of the scale.
 - a. Gen. 3:4, "Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die.'"
4. With the loss side removed, Satan then emphasized the gain side.
 - a. Gen. 3:5, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."
5. Now being free to look at the gain side with the loss side removed, Eve began to focus on what she would gain by eating the fruit.
 - a. Gen. 3:6, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate."
6. The result of the sin was twofold: shame and fear of rejection.
 - a. They covered themselves (shame).
 - 1) Gen. 3:7, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."
 - b. They hid from God out of fear of rejection and possible death.
 - 1) Gen. 3:8-10, "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?' ¹⁰so he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'"
 - 2) Note: it was only the presence of sin in their life that brought the shame and fear. These were not learned emotions. They never saw them displayed in anyone else's life. There were no other people.

How do affairs follow the same pattern
of Adam and Eve's first sin?

D. Affairs follow the same basic pattern as the original sin.

1. All adulterers know, at some level, sexual sin outside of marriage is wrong.
 - a. In his book Extramarital Relations, (N.Y. : Hawthorn Books, 1967, pp 385-391), Robert Harper states, "all known cultures have some limitations set upon extramarital sex relations and some means of enforcing such designated taboos."
 - b. Anthropologist, J. S. Brown, found that among eighty-eight societies in various parts of the world 89% of these groups punished their people when they were discovered to be party to an extramarital affair. (Peterson, p. 13)
2. Satan reduces the loss side.
 - a. Who is going to know?
 - b. It won't hurt anyone.
 - c. It's not that bad.
 - d. Other rationalizations.
3. Satan now highlights the gain (pleasure, benefits, etc.) side.
 - a. Affairs are basically energized by how they make you feel, not what is best for the other person.
 - 1) This is one of the reasons affairs are never done out of love. It is done to get a felt need met. Love doesn't use someone else for their own benefit.
 - a) I Cor. 13:5 "love does not seek its own."
 - b. Feelings or emotions are not subject to truth or reality of scripture.
 - 1) A person can swear they're in love when in reality they "love" the way the other person makes them feel.

- 2) King David knew adultery was wrong. But his lust (emotions) controlled his actions, not his thinking.
4. There is a precise pattern of an affair although the details can vary.
 - a. James describes this pattern.
 - 1) James 1:14-15, “But each one (emotion) is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”
 - b. The pattern has these ingredients.
 - 1) The source of the temptations is from within “his own evil desire” lust or inner craving.
 - 2) The inner craving “carries him away” or “draws him away” (i.e. like a fish is drawn out of his hiding place, Greek word, *ekelkomenos*).
 - 3) Then he is enticed (trapped) by his own cravings (Greek, *deleazomentos* from the verb *deleazo* “to bait, to catch a fish with bait, or hunt with a snare”).
 - a) He builds and baits his own trap.
 - 4) Now, the pleasure of lust conceives and from this conception of lust sin is born, “gives birth to sin.”
 - a) The unmentioned father of course is Satan just as he was in Adam and Eve’s case.
 - 5) Now we have the generational cause and effect, the results or offspring, death “brings forth death.”
 - a) Unchecked lust gives birth to sin that gives birth to death – just like Adam and Eve.
 - 6) Summary: The whole pattern is based on feelings (lust) that are not subject to truth or reality of God’s Word.

E. Deciding to change or refusal to change is based on the same gain/loss pattern.

1. In the absence of obedience to God's Word and a new desire for repentance and righteousness, the adulterer will decide what to do or not do based solely on his/her own gain/loss scale.
 - a. If he continues in the affair, he could lose his wife, kids, reputation, job, position, esteem, etc.
2. Most offended spouses are afraid to do the responsible thing out of fear of loss.
 - a. This fear usually factors God out. Fear, like worry, is facing a present or future situation with God factored out.
- 1) Phil. 4:6,11-13, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, (factor God in) let your requests be made known to God...¹¹Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹²I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
- b. (Project) Write your fears or worries out in one column then write out the truth or reality in another column with God factored in.

AFFIRMATION

VI. Affirmation

- A. Often a person is doing the right thing or making the right responses and they need to hear from you an affirmation of what they are doing is right even if they are only taking baby steps.**
 1. A lot of self doubt clouds the mind because of shock, anger, sadness, despair and depression. Your affirmation can help clear some of that away.
 - a. Key verse, Heb. 3:13, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 2. Second guessing one's self is normal so there is a need to have a cheerleader to help each one to keep doing the "next right thing."

B. Affirmations are another way to help carry one another's burdens of hurt or guilt.

1. Burden bearing is a priority in the mind of God. He has chosen to limit Himself to work through others for their healing.
 - a. Gal. 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
2. In time they will need to carry this alone when they are healed and the pain is manageable.
 - a. Gal. 6:5, "For each one shall bear his own load."
3. Remind them that healing from infidelity is not a quick fix, it is a process over time and years. //God has called you to go the full length of the process with them. This fulfills God's requirement for love (Gal. 6:2).

C. Truth (reality) is confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses. You become the second witness as to what is true and what should be done.

1. Matt. 18:16b, "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

D. Since emotions are not subject to the truth, a second person may be able to see the truth or reality clearer and confirm or clarify, or affirm the steps are right, the feelings are appropriate, the reactions are normal and the pattern is appropriate.

E. Reaffirm they may need a 24/7 support couple available, especially during the early days of the discovery of the affair and the immediate aftermath of the possible fall out.

OPPOSITE SEX FRIENDS

VII. Be alert to danger signals with opposite-sex friendships.

A. When any of the following happens in an opposite-sex friendship, it is time to reevaluate the friendship, and change or end it:

1. You intentionally "forget" to share with your spouse about talking with your opposite-sex friend.
2. You begin making excuses to see him/her or spend time together.

3. You begin to become the most important friend he/she has, and you feel the same about him/her.
 4. You begin to think about him/her when you pray or have your devotional times.
 5. You begin to confide in each other things you should be telling your spouse.
 6. You experience sexual feelings toward your friend you do not share with your spouse.
 7. You spend more time thinking about things you know you should not do instead of thinking about the positive aspects of the relationship with your spouse.
 8. You begin constructing mental fantasies that you know would be wrong to act out.
 9. You begin to engage in more intimate and intense physical contact. (You want to touch each other all the time.)
- B. All of the above are caution signs. They mean you seriously need to rethink your friendship, discuss it with your mate, and, if necessary, get counseling to help you honor God and your marriage. If you fail to change your friendship or get help as these signs occur, you are choosing to honor your opposite-sex friendship over your marriage. You are also well on the way to committing adultery (Husbands and Wives: The Best of Friends: LifeWay Press, 1994).**

VIII. Keys for Healing

- A. Remember adultery can happen in “good” marriages.
- B. Acknowledge adultery as the sin of relational rebellion against God.
- C. Test the rationalization with truth.
- D. Identify and affirm the honest feelings.
- E. Focus on listening first.
- F. Speak to the need they identify.
- G. Review the steps of grief.
- H. Answer the *who, when, where, how long* questions but not the *how* questions.
- I. Establish accountability and boundaries.
- J. Grant forgiveness but allow trust to be earned.
- K. Establish fair communication rules.
- L. Identify, assign, assume and fulfill personal responsibilities.
- M. Restore the habit of a daily devotional time and weekly church attendance.
- N. Encourage as often as possible.
- O. Be alert to danger signals of opposite sex friendships.

How to Heal after a Mate's Affair

Small Group Questions

1. How have you been affected by an affair either in family or friends? How did it affect you?
2. How would you compare an emotional affair with a physical affair? In what ways would they be equally damaging?
3. What reasons (rationalizations) have you heard for an affair? What was your response to them?
4. What are some of the issues both parties have to work through and what biblical support do you offer while they work them through?
5. Why do you think that death is easier to handle than an affair or divorce?
6. How do you believe affairs and their fallout affect children?
7. What steps do you think are necessary to rebuild trust after the forgiveness issue is settled?
8. Do you think opposite sex friendships are dangerous? Why?
9. What are some safeguards that can be set up in marriage to help avoid this kind of moral failure?