

**HELP!**

**MY SPOUSE HAS  
BEEN UNFAITHFUL**



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## CONTENTS

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Introduction	5
1 What Does God Want Me to Do?	8
2 First Steps	13
3 What's Next?	29
4 What if My Spouse Continues the Infidelity?	43
Conclusion	49
Personal Application Projects	53
Where Can I Get Further Help?	59

## INTRODUCTION

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**Y**our world has been turned upside down. A future that seemed bright is now clouded by uncertainty and confusion. Your emotions are all over the map. Your thoughts often play imaginary tapes of *them* together. You feel vulnerable and exposed. One moment you feel guilty for hating your spouse because of what happened; the next, you feel guilty for still loving your spouse in light of what happened. You wonder if your years together were just a lie, and you are angry that you didn't see this coming. Tears come uncontrollably and unexpectedly. You feel depressed and alone—even alienated from God. You never dreamed this would happen, but here you are. You are reeling from the news that your spouse has been unfaithful, and you don't know what to do.

The word “affair” does not adequately describe the destruction adultery brings to a marriage. Something belonging only to you has been carelessly given away. Trust has been shattered and pain has been inflicted. This is something that happens to others, not you—not your marriage! The tsunami of emotions which

are experienced when a spouse has been unfaithful can be intense. Betrayal and rejection create within the human heart a sickening unsettledness, and the despair it can create turns life into a lonely journey.

Your friends and family members don't want to see you hurt. Because their primary concern is how you *feel* they take up your offense. Perhaps they tell you things like:

- “You deserve so much better.”
- “You don't need someone like that in your life.”
- “Life is short. The sooner you can forget about this and move on, the better.”
- “If you stay in this marriage, you know this is only going to happen again.”

While they mean well, comments like these only add fuel to your already enflamed emotions and they influence you toward unhelpful responses. You try to filter the advice you receive, but you are not sure where else to turn. Is there any help?

The good news for you is that God provides specific direction for those who have been betrayed, rejected, and wounded by others. The purpose of this booklet is

to assist you as you seek to navigate your way through this painful season of your life. The perspective and hope you will find here come from God's Word. What God has to say to you in your crisis is powerful and practical.

You stand at a crossroads, and the decisions you make now will impact the rest of your life. The price of complicating your future, by doing something you may regret later, is high. It is true that your spouse has done something against you that is reprehensible. But consider that your spouse has sinned not only against *you*—but also against God. Therefore, God is involved in this to an even greater extent than you are! Because he knows the hurt you are experiencing and how you got here, he offers you the opportunity to experience his grace in new and fresh ways. In the following pages we will examine what God wants you to do to move forward. He desires to take your hand and walk you into territory you never thought possible. Will you join him?

# 1

## What Does God Want Me to Do?

To everyone around them, the Johnsons<sup>1</sup> had it made. They seemed to have a storybook marriage and lived what many would consider an enviable life. Ron was a doctor with a thriving practice, and Carol was growing her real-estate business. They had two beautiful children and a large house on a picturesque lake. However, things aren't always as they appear.

When Ron called, his voice lacked its usual confidence and I could immediately tell something terrible had occurred. "Ron, what is it?" I asked. What he said was the last thing I expected to hear. "Mike, I don't know what to do. I just found out that Carol is having an affair." For the next several months Ron and I

<sup>1</sup> All names have been changed to protect the identity of those involved.

spoke together on the phone nearly every day. His heart was broken and the pain he experienced was intense.

Carol acknowledged to her husband that she was in a relationship with another man and had no intention of cutting it off. Ron was devastated. He begged Carol to stop the relationship so they could work on their marriage. He assured her they could get through this—that their marriage was worth saving. However, with the affair exposed, Carol only became more open and blatant in her new relationship and more callous and hurtful toward Ron. During the day she would stay home with the children, and when Ron came home from work, she would go to her lover's house and return home in the morning. Ron's devastation soon turned to disgust.

His family and friends all counseled him that the marriage was over, since Carol had no desire to return. Ron was advised to protect the kids and file for divorce. He asked, "Mike, what do you think I should do?" I responded, "It doesn't matter what *I* think you should do or what *anyone else* thinks you should do. The real question is, what does *God* want you to do?"

This is the question you must come to terms with. God's ways are perfect and his counsel is sure. If you are unsure of where you stand right now with



God, consider that God has gone to great lengths to demonstrate his love to you. He wants you to turn away from everything else and experience the grace he has made available through his Son.

Even greater than the restoration of a broken marriage is the need for the restoration of a broken life. It may be that God is using your pain to point out your need to be reconciled to him.

## The Problem

Adam and Eve had it all: a perfect environment in which to live and a perfect relationship with their Creator. However, through the serpent, doubt was cast on God's goodness. He indicated that God was withholding something precious and they were missing out on all that could be theirs. The couple rejected God in the garden of Eden in order to pursue fulfillment on their own. And through this rebellion against God, sin entered their perfect world. The consequence of this sin would be mankind's separation from God, and death. "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned ..." (Romans 5:12).

Man's greatest problem is that he is a sinner

separated from God with a heart and mind that are blinded by sin. Because we are sinners, there is nothing we can do to overcome our sinful condition. Furthermore, because God is righteous and just, it is impossible for him to overlook and excuse our sin. To do so would violate who he is as God. God's justice must be satisfied and our sin must be punished. Nothing short of this satisfies God's righteousness. But God is not only righteous and just, he is also merciful and loving.

## The Solution

God extended grace to man by promising to send a Redeemer who would reconcile his rebellious enemies to himself. For centuries people waited for God's Redeemer to come. Finally, God's Son was sent as the only solution for man's problem. However, when he came, he was rejected. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11).

Jesus's life had shone brightly as the light of the world, but those in darkness hated the light and would not come to the light. The very one God sent was willfully rejected, spitefully betrayed, shamefully abused, and violently put to death. However, as Jesus was dying on the cross, the very purpose of God

was unfolding. Sin demands the full fury of God's wrath to be leveled against it. And in obedience to the Father's plan, Jesus took our sin, requiring God the Father to pour out his wrath upon his own Son! On the cross, Jesus became a substitute for sinners, providing atonement for the sins of everyone who would ever believe. Jesus's sacrificial death completely satisfied God's righteous demands, enabling him to forgive and declare righteous all who come to him by faith. "For He [God the Father] made Him who knew no sin [God the Son] to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The good news for sinners like you and me is that by embracing God's Son by faith and entrusting him with our lives, we can have peace with God! Through this "new birth," God offers us new life. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

If you have never received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, turn to him today. Ask God to open your eyes to the weight of sin you are carrying, throw yourself upon the mercy of God, and cry out to him to save you.