

## **An Affair: Anguish of Betrayal**

Dear Rosa,

I have just been through the first stage of accepting the fact that my husband has been unfaithful to me. By the first stage I mean I have stopped sometimes wishing him as much emotional harm as he has caused me. That probably sounds awful, but it is true. If only we could erase the last two years. Realistically, I can sometimes get past the anger and pain, but just in spurts. When I am in my right mind, I can see the benefits of working on our marriage,

But ...it's like I'm living in a place where everything is changed and it is all because he is selfish, cruel, and punishing. I know I have examined myself morning, noon and night to see where I have fallen short, but I keep coming back to his lying, selfish cheating behavior. Help!

*Anguished*

Dear Anguished;

There is no pain like this pain. It hurts so deep and so wide. I would say you are not quite through the "first stage" of grief, and yet show bargaining, hurt, anger, as well as shock and denial. These stages aren't science and are certainly not accomplished one by one. The stages are not even linear. One can bounce from being in some form of later stage right back to shock and denial for a time. This does not mean you have not made progress. You have. You have made great progress in facing the truth of the betrayal.

That is what an affair is: a betrayal of trust. The one who has had the affair does not usually comprehend the pain he/she has caused his/her spouse. There are many things that both the betrayer and the betrayed need help with. The betrayer is loved by God as much as the betrayed and this is difficult to integrate at a feeling level when you are the person betrayed. There are a few things I will list here to be mindful of, but to be straight with you, find someone specially trained in marriage and family therapy to obtain good help. Yes, you can get through this without help, but how fast and how thorough will it be? What is your marriage worth? It is worth an immeasurable amount.

Here are some things to guide you:

- Start talking to God as soon as possible

- Delay big decisions right now.
- Disclose the full picture as soon as possible not in bits and pieces dragging it out.
- Look at emotional issues.
- Don't assume divorce.
- Get support from friends but don't spread it all around seeking votes for your side. Choose good friends with good boundaries to share with.
- Both parties will feel exhausted. Pay attention to resting spiritually, emotionally and physically.
- You will have a spiritual and rational part of yourself. Go there often.
- An affair is used to avoid pain usually and it is ironic that it causes more pain (funny thing about sin...), use this time to get a handle on the inner problem and work on it honestly allowing God to lead the work.
- Focus on your relationship, not the third party.

These are a just a few guidelines; however, there is so much more and so many stages. Get good help. It is a good sign that you are reaching out with your question. May God make the crooked straighter than it has ever been before for you both. That is what God does if you follow Him closely through this. It is not going to be easy, but God is faithful if you do this His way.

- Rosa

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