



TRUE BETRAYAL

Overcoming the Betrayal of Your Spouse's Sexual Sin (Listening Guide)

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EQUIP

“TRUE BETRAYAL”

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What Can I Hope to Get From this Seminar?

Whether you are here due to personal need, the needs of others, or for a general interest in the topic, we hope this seminar will benefit you. If we do our job well, parts of this seminar will speak to you personally. There will also be parts that speak to aspects of this subject that are different from your own experience. What follows are **six unavoidable facts** that should help you profit from all of the material you hear (bold faced text taken from Paul Tripp and Tim Lane *How People Change*):

1. Someone in your life had a problem this week. That person may be you. Even if you are here for yourself, chances are you know or will know others who struggle in this area. Because we live in a fallen world and have a sin nature, we can be certain that we will battle with sin and suffering in our lives. Because we love people, we can be certain we will be called on to love and assist others in their battle with sin and suffering.

2. We have everything we need in the Gospel to help that person (2 Peter 1:3). God has given us Himself, the Gospel, the Bible, and the church and promised they are effective for all things that pertain to life and godliness. Our task as Christians is to grow in our understanding of and ability to skillfully apply these resources to our struggles. These resources are the essence and source of "good advice," and we hope to play a role in your efforts to apply and disseminate this "good advice." We do not aim to present new material, but new ways of applying the timeless, eternal truths of the Gospel found in Scripture.

3. That person will seek help from friends, family members, or pastors before seeking professionals. Counseling (broadly defined as seeking to offer hope and direction through relationship) happens all the time. We talk with friends over the phone, crying children in their rooms, spouses in the kitchen, fellow church members between services, and have endless conversations with ourselves. We listen to struggles, seek to understand, offer perspective, give advice, and follow up later. This is what the New Testament calls "one-anothering" and something we are all called to do.

4. That person either got no help, bad help, or biblical, gospel-centered help. Not all counseling is good counseling. Not all advice that we receive from a Christian (even a Christian counselor) is Christian advice. Too often we are advised to look within for the answers to our problems or told that we are good enough, strong enough, or smart enough in ourselves to overcome. Hopefully you will see today how the Bible calls us to something (rather Someone) better, bigger, and more effective than these messages.

5. If they did not get meaningful help, they will go elsewhere. When we do not receive good advice (pointing us to enduring life transformation), we keep looking. We need answers to our struggles. This means that as people find unfulfilling answers they will eventually (by God's grace) come to a Christian for advice. When they eventually come to you, we hope you will be more prepared because of our time together today.

6. Whatever help they received, they will use to help others! We become evangelists for the things that make life better (this is why the Gospel is simply called "Good News"). We quite naturally share the things that we find to be effective. Our prayer for you today is that you will find the material presented effective for your struggles and that you will be so comforted and encouraged by it that it will enable you to be a more passionate and effective ambassador of the Gospel in the midst of "normal" daily conversations.

“Where Do I Begin?”

In life and counseling, finding the starting point can be difficult. Life is fluid enough that identifying where to begin with a life-dominating struggle can feel like finding the beginning of a circle. In order to help you with this very important question, Freedom Groups have developed a progression of five levels of starting points.

A struggle in one of the higher categories may have many expressions or contributing causes in the lower categories, but unless the upper level concerns are addressed first (i.e., substance abuse should be addressed before conflict resolution skills), efforts at change have a low probability of lasting success. The degree of self-awareness usually increases as you go down the page. The level of denial usually increases as you move up the page.

1. **Safety** – When the basic requirements of safety are not present, then safety takes priority over any other concern. Safety is never an “unfair expectation” from a relationship. If safety is a concern, then you should immediately involve other people (i.e., pastor, counselor, or legal authorities).

This category includes: thoughts of suicide, violence, threats of violence (to people or pets), preventing someone from moving freely in their home, destruction of property, manipulation, coercion, and similar practices.

2. **Substance Abuse / Addiction** – After safety, the use of mind or mood altering substances is the next level of priority concern. Substance abuse makes the life situation worse and inhibits any maturation process. The consistency and stability required for lasting change are disrupted by substance abuse. **The mentoring and Freedom Group materials for the sexual sin seminar can be applied to an addiction level struggle.**

This category includes: alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drug not used according to instructions, inhalants, driving any vehicle with any impairment for any distance, and similar activities.

3. **Trauma** – Past or present events resulting in nightmares, sleeplessness, flashbacks, sense of helplessness, restricted emotional expression, difficulty concentrating, high levels of anxiety, intense feelings of shame, or a strong desire to isolate should be dealt with before trying to refine matters of character or skill. Trauma is a form of suffering that negatively shapes someone’s sense of identity and causes them to begin to constantly expect or brace against the worst.

This category includes: any physical or sexual abuse, significant verbal or emotional abuse, exposure to an act of violence, experience of a disaster, a major loss, or similar experience.

4. **Character** – This refers to persistent dispositions that express themselves in a variety of ways in a variety of settings. Because both the “trigger” and manifestation change regularly and hide when convenient, it is clear that the struggle lies within the core values, beliefs, and priorities of the individual. Skill training alone will not change character. **The mentoring and Freedom Group materials for the sexual sin seminar can be applied to a character level struggle.**

This category includes: anger, bitterness, fear, greed, jealousy, obsessions, hoarding, envy, laziness, selfishness, pornography, codependency, depression, social anxiety, insecurity, and similar dispositions.

5. **Skill** – With skill level changes there will be a high degree of self-awareness that change is needed in the moment when change is needed. However, confusion or uncertainty prevents an individual from being able to respond in a manner that it is wise and appropriate.

This category includes: conflict resolution, time management, budgeting, planning, and similar skills.

Hopefully, after reading these five points, you will have less of a “jump in anywhere and try anything” mentality towards your struggles. Change is hard but knowing where to start helps to establish confidence. Remember, you are not alone. Christ will meet you and the church will walk with you at any of these five points.

WHAT ARE FREEDOM GROUPS?

Freedom groups are struggle-specific small groups where individuals commit to investing a season of their life in overcoming a particular life-dominating struggle of sin or suffering.

Bible-Based & Gospel-Centered: Programs and information do not change people. God changes people through the power of the Gospel and the wisdom of His Word. The relational structure of Freedom Groups is the vehicle God has ordained to transport the Gospel and Scripture into the lives of His beloved, enslaved, and hurting children.

Recognize the Difference Between Sin & Suffering: Freedom Groups recognize that struggles of sin are different from struggles of suffering in terms of cause, dynamics, emotional impact, relational influence, and other ways. While every believer is simultaneously a saint, sinner, and sufferer, there are fundamental differences (practically and theologically) between a struggle an individual does (sin) and those that happen to the individual (suffering).

Built On Honesty & Transparency: The courage to be honest about our suffering or sin is often the essential expression of faith God calls for in overcoming a life-dominating struggle. Freedom Groups create an environment that fosters honesty and transparency by incarnating the love of God and protecting confidentiality within the group.

Issue Specific: We do not advocate a one-size-fits-all approach to life struggles because of the tendency of such programs to become cliché or offer generic advice. Christ bears many names, has many titles, and serves many roles. Freedom Groups uphold the breadth of Christ as greater than the complexity of life. We believe our Savior is as personal as our struggles and service to Him is the only way from bondage to freedom.

Gender Specific: During a time of intense struggle and personal sharing having members of both genders in a group is unnecessarily distracting and, in many cases, can exacerbate the struggle or stifle genuine sharing.

Time Limited: Freedom Groups have recommended durations for each group based upon the time necessary to *solidify* change on a given subject.

Avoid Struggle-Based Identity: We recognize that when an individual has struggled with one issue for an extended period of time that struggle begins to define them. Freedom Groups are structured in content, duration, and philosophy to alert the participants to this temptation and guide them away from it. Freedom Groups strive to teach and model what it means to live out of an identity as a dearly loved child of God.

Embedded Within the Church: Freedom Groups are not a "program" put on by the counseling ministry, but a part of church life. Recovery groups that become a program, tend to diminish the confidence of the participants in the ability of the church to understand and its willingness to care about their struggle.

Blend Discipleship, Accountability, & A Guided Process: Freedom Groups are more than a Bible study on a given subject. They develop a practical theology of their subject during the group study and guide members through an intentional process during the personal study while the members hold each other accountable.

Transition Into Larger Small Group Ministry: The goal is for each Freedom Group member to be in a general small group within a year. Group members may choose to be a general small group the whole time. If desired, at "graduation" the Freedom Group leader would direct the participant to a small group with a leader who has completed personal study and counseling exercises for that area of struggle. It would be the participant's choice whether to disclose that was the reason for choosing that leader's small group.

The 9 Steps of Freedom Groups

We do not believe there is a one-size-fits-all solution to the struggles of life. Neither do we believe there is any magic in these particular steps. However, we do believe that these steps capture the major movements of the Gospel in the life of an individual. We also believe that it is through the Gospel that God transforms lives and modifies behavior as He gives us a new heart.

In Freedom Groups we attempt to walk through the Gospel in slow motion with a concentrated focus upon a particular life-dominating struggle. We do this in a setting of transparent community because we believe God changes people in the midst of relationships.

We believe that the Gospel speaks to both sin (things we do wrong) and suffering (painful experiences for which we are not responsible) to bring peace, wholeness, and redemption. We also believe that every person is both a sinner and a sufferer. However, we believe the Gospel is best understood and applied when we consider how the Gospel relates to the nature of our struggle. The nine steps below are those used by Freedom Groups to address struggles of sin.

Sin-Based Groups	Suffering-Based Groups
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 1. ADMIT I have a struggle I cannot overcome without God.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 1. PREPARE yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually to face your suffering.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 2. ACKNOWLEDGE the breadth and impact of my sin.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 2. ACKNOWLEDGE the specific history and realness of my suffering.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 3. UNDERSTAND the origin, motive, and history of my sin.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 3. UNDERSTAND the impact of my suffering.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 4. REPENT TO GOD for how my sin replaced and misrepresented Him.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 4. LEARN MY SUFFERING STORY which I use to make sense of my experience.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 5. CONFESS TO THOSE AFFECTED for harm done and seek to make amends.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 5. MOURN the wrongness of what happened and receive God’s comfort.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 6. RESTRUCTURE MY LIFE to rely on God’s grace and Word to transform my life.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 6. LEARN MY GOSPEL STORY by which God gives meaning to my experience.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 7. IMPLEMENT the new structure pervasively with humility and flexibility.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 7. IDENTIFY GOALS that allow me to combat the impact of my suffering.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 8. PERSEVERE in the new life and identity to which God has called me.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 8. PERSEVERE in the new life and identity to which God has called me.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 9. STEWARD all of my life for God’s glory.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STEP 9. STEWARD all of my life for God’s glory.</p>

To learn more about Freedom Groups visit www.summitrdu.com/freedom

Chapter I

“What Am I Supposed To Do with This?”

PREPARE yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually to face your suffering.

“Living in denial about my spouse’s sin would be more costly than anything God would take me through in the restoration process.

God is good for bringing me to the point of knowing what has happened. Therefore, I will put myself in the best physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual position possible to face my suffering.”

Memorize: Jeremiah 7:9-11 (ESV), “Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’ – only to go on doing all these abominations? Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Commit adultery, swear falsely” – God understands the betrayal of sexual sin and being lied to by one you love.
- “Stand before me in this house” – God understands the way sexual sin can change your perception of your home.
- “We are delivered” – God has heard broken promises that his bride (the church) would turn from her false lovers.
- “Only to go on doing” – God has had to respond when those promises repeatedly come up empty.
- “Den of robbers” – This experience of yours was on Jesus’ mind when He cleared the temple (Matt. 21:12-13).

Teaching Notes

“I heard Gary come in, and I heard the boys greet their father. Normal sounds. But this wasn’t a normal household. Nothing was normal anymore. I wasn’t normal. All I could do was cry and ask questions. I was obsessed. Everyone would be fine if I could just move on. They could all just live their normal little lives with all the other normal people (p. 41)... Nothing surprised me anymore. Except me—I surprised me all the time (p. 177).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“During times of great difficulty, it’s common for people to neglect their own self-care... Feelings of shame or embarrassment often prevent a partner from turning to resources that could normally be a source of comfort (p. 105)... “[Testimony] I fluctuate between wanting to forgive him and filing divorce papers. I have always been the ‘stable’ one in our relationship and, recently, I feel like I’m going crazy (p. 37)... In general, it’s advisable not to make major decisions in the early days, unless you need to leave for your safety (p. 32).” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

“Co-addicts may assume that when the sex addict gets into recovery, all their troubles will be over. They may think their problems are due solely to the sexual acting out and when that stops all other difficulties will stop. The problem is that they expect the sex addict to do all the work of recovery (p. 173).” Mark Laaser in *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*

“Most marriages in which both partners are committed to making the partnership work and go through the confession and repentance process usually survive and often become even more intimate (p. 347).” Doug Rosenau in *A Celebration of Sex*

“The spouse needs to realize he or she can contribute to the pain in many ways as well. One of the most common is whom they tell about the adultery and how they share that information... The truth is that those who are told all the details about the infidelity are rarely told all the details about the restoration process as it progresses. Yet we expect those same people to follow us on our path toward healing with only half the information. It is an unfairly placed burden on those who love us and want to protect us from harm (p. 117)... As a general rule of thumb, we suggest that as much of the pain as you have shared with others, that much of the healing process also needs to be shared with those same people (p. 252).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

How Do I Prepare?

If it is right and healthy for you to be shocked, then what does it mean to prepare? To help you on this step, we have five key areas for you to consider:

1. Don't Hurry or Give Up
2. Create Realistic Expectations
3. Find the Right Kind of Community
4. Establish Non-Negotiables
5. Care for Yourself Physically

Doing these things "right" will not make the journey easy. Part of the challenge of recovering from the betrayal of sexual sin is that right actions are frequently not accompanied by circumstantial or emotional affirmations. When you diet well you can see the numbers on the scale go down. When you budget well you can see your debt decrease or savings increase. But even when you respond well to the betrayal of sexual sin, it still hurts and you are left wondering "Am I doing this right?"

1. Don't Hurry or Give Up

- A. Avoid Threats.
- B. Be Patient Making Changes.
- C. Don't Excuse or Deny Sin.

2. Realistic Expectations

- A. Self.
- B. Spouse.
- C. Sex.

3. Right Kind of Community

- Tell those who have spiritual authority over you.
- Seek agreement with your spouse on those with whom you share your suffering.
- Only tell those you are willing to include in the restoration process.
- Do not tell those who would quickly advise you to separate.
- Make sure your motivation is to seek comfort not revenge.
- Have a prepared statement for those who ask questions but do not need to know.
- Allow parents and other family to be told as part of confession if possible.
- Talk to your children.

4. Establish Non-Negotiables

- If the sexual sin involves any direct interaction with a real person, break off all contact.
- If there was any sexual contact with another person your spouse should get tested for sexually transmitted diseases.
- If the sexual sin involved on-line activity, accountability software should be installed on the computer.

5. Care for Yourself Physically

- Rest.
- Eat.
- Exercise.
- Express.
- Don't Isolate.
- Go to Doctor, If Needed.

Chapter 2

“What I Already Know Feels Like It Could Kill Me

ACKNOWLEDGE the specific history and realness of my suffering.

“I will look at my life and acknowledge what has happened as my history.

I will not try to move forward out of a false history or with no history.

I trust that God can and will redeem what is and what has been.

Evidencing my faith in God I acknowledged my specific history to [name; counselor or group].

This brought great fear [describe] and then relief [describe].”

Memorize: James 4:4-6 (ESV), “You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, ‘He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us?’ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Adulterous people!” – God can relate to the sense of betrayal you feel. Every sin violates our covenant with Him.
- “Friendship... is enmity” – God will not accept the “just friends” or “just porn” excuse for violating covenant.
- “Jealously” – Jealousy is the emotional response God has to the betrayal of covenant.
- “To Dwell in Us” – It is the oneness-relationship that God shares with His people that causes His response.
- “Proud... humble” – The criteria for God to re-establish relationship is not intense remorse, but humility.

Teaching Notes

“A spouse may be the last one to accept this evidence. A part of them doesn’t want the pain of accepting the truth. The spouse may even become involved in elaborate explanations of why it can’t be true. You may have heard the phrase, ‘the family is the last to know.’ Families often aren’t the last to know, but they may be the last to accept the facts (p. 69).” Mark Laaser in *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*

“A hurting, motivated wife came to me for counseling and said she had practiced submission, hoping to help her husband make some needed changes. I replied that submission was not God’s tool for accomplishing change. Confrontation was that needed skill. She needed to assertively confront her husband, not angrily, but rather with ‘great patience and careful instruction (2 Tim. 4:3 NIV) (p. 338).” Doug Rosenau in *A Celebration of Sex*

“No matter how many details you know about your partner’s acting out, the ultimate choice to change his behavior lies with him or her, not with you. Having more information won’t give you more control. On the contrary, sometimes too much information can cause you additional problems. You may end up obsessing even more about your partner’s behavior... The formal disclosure may take up to two hours or more... Many couples consider this session to be a turning point in their relationship, an opportunity to establish a healthier marriage (p. 29). (p. 26).” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

“I knew the next question before I heard it. I knew that answer before he said it. There was no satisfaction here, no new information to be had. I searched for a way to elicit new information, trying to figure out what I need to know now. And then the thought crossed my mind. *I don’t care*. But it wasn’t the *I don’t care because there’s nothing in me to care with* thought. This was the plain *I don’t care to know any more* thought—because I’d heard it all. Because I was bored (p. 145-146)!” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“Whether your marriage survives or not, you will have to forgive and let go of bitterness. But you can’t forgive a wound you haven’t acknowledged—you won’t even know what you have to forgive. You are laying a foundation for forgiveness by being honest about how you’ve been wounded (p. 6)... For your marriage to become better, you have to talk about what happened and why (p. 19).” Winston Smith in *Help! My Spouse Committed Adultery*

What / How Should I Ask My Spouse?

“The first thing you need to realize is that disclosure isn’t a one-time event—it’s a process (p. 32).” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

Full Disclosure Follow Up:

- Based upon the full disclosure outline – The recommended outline for the full disclosure was organized around the different expressions that sexual sin can take. This would allow you to ask questions based upon different aspect of the sin. This structure is often most helpful when you still do not feel like you know or understand what your spouse has done.
- Based upon the history of the marriage – In this approach, the questions are arranged based upon a time line that may begin with dating (or your spouse’s previous sexual experiences) and comes to the present. This structure is most helpful when the lies associated with sexual sin removed the confidence that you know your spouse or your own personal history (the theme of “disrupted story” will be developed more in chapter four).
- Based upon subject areas – You may find that your questions better cluster around certain subjects (i.e., behavior at work, guy’s/girl’s night out, taking phone calls outside the house, etc...). This structure can be more helpful when your uncertainties gather certain events, devices, or people.
- Based upon the dominant emotions you are feeling – When the other structure prove ineffective, you can arrange questions based upon the emotions they come from or illicit (i.e., anger, fear, sadness, etc...). This structure is recommended for when you believe your spouse has been honest with you, but you do not think they “get it” about their sin’s impact on you.

The “Why?” Question:

Playing the Detective:

- If your spouse is actively engaged with the False Love materials with a counselor, mentor, or group and participating in the restoration process, it is not advised that you not seek information without your spouse’s awareness.
- Before taking any investigative step, you should be seeing a marriage counselor or, at least, a personal counselor. A relationship at this level of trust deterioration will not survive, even if you fears are disproven, without outside guidance.
- You should resolve before you check anything to tell your spouse what you have done, what you found, and why you deemed this step necessary. Gaining information you will not share will only serve to further damage the relationship and you.
- You should not do anything illegal in the pursuit of information. Your spouse’s past or continuing immoral action does not warrant you taking illegal actions no matter how hurt you feel.
- You should not make this your regular practice. Investigation, even when it finds nothing, does not build trust. If your search finds problematic materials and your spouse will not acknowledge clear facts of sin, then you may need to take the next step outlined in Appendix A. If your search proves empty, then you should inform your spouse of your search, your concern, and trust that God will expose your spouse’s sexual sin as He was faithful to do on the previous occasion(s).

What Benefits Do I Gain?

- Clarity about the situation:
- Validation that you’re not crazy by making sense of the past:
- Validate suspicions that offender denied:
- Have some sense of control:
- Evaluate the offending spouse’s commitment to the future of the relationship:
- Hope for the future of the relationship:
- Finally having the information necessary to decide about the future:

What Benefits Does My Spouse Gain?

- An end to denial:
- An end to putting on a false front:
- Hope for the future of the relationship:
- A chance to be truly known by his/her spouse:
- A new start for the offending spouse:

How and When Do We Evaluate the Pre-Betrayal Marriage?

Evaluating the pre-betrayal marriage requires a degree of objectivity during a time of fluctuating emotions. During this evaluation things will be both good and bad; but the good things will not excuse the sexual sin and the bad things will not explain the sexual sin. However, the evaluation needs to be done for two reasons.

1. The sexual sin, while the most obvious and emotionally urgent issue may not be the most destructive factor in the marriage. If there are more significant problems in the marriage than the sexual sin, then purity will not “fix” the marriage. It is likely that the sexual sin will have common roots (idolatry of power, immaturity, control, etc…) with these larger problems. During this time of concentrated change, the pursuit of purity by your spouse must also address these larger concerns.
2. In cases where these larger concerns do not exist, the couple may still begin trying to fix the marriage by getting back to what they had before. Whenever your past is brighter than your future it is a recipe for despair. During a crisis, pre-crisis can seem like heaven; or the “good old days.” If this tendency is allowed to take root, then purity will have become a distraction from the broader need to be growing individuals. A good marriage can never be reduced to success in one area of life.

The evaluation below is meant to help you assess the condition of the marriage before the sexual sin interfered. It would be unwise to allow this evaluation to shift your focus from marital restoration to marital enrichment. Marital restoration (the subject of this material) involves repairing the unique and significant damage done by your spouse’s sexual sin. Marital enrichment involves creating a pattern of life and interaction that fosters God’s design for a healthy personal and married life. Marital enrichment solidifies marital restoration; it is not a replacement for marital restoration.

Instructions: Read the following descriptive statements. Consider how well they describe your marriage before your spouse’s sexual sin. This exercise should be completed after the full disclosure and follow up in order to ensure that you know when “before” the sexual sin began.

(CD) Completely Disagree, (SD) Somewhat Disagree, (NS) Not Sure, (SA) Somewhat Agree, or (CA) Completely Agree

1. I knew the important life events that shaped my spouse’s character and beliefs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
2. My spouse knew the important life events that shaped my character and beliefs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
3. I enjoyed hearing about the day-to-day events of my spouse’s life.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
4. My spouse enjoyed hearing about the day-to-day events of my life.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
5. I regularly thought about how to bless my spouse based on what I know of them.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA

6. My spouse regularly thought about how to bless me based upon what they know of me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
7. I resisted making a list of things that I want to change about my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
8. My spouse resisted making a list of thing he/she wants to change about me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
9. Our marriage was free from any use of illegal drugs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
10. Our marriage was free from any abuse or excessive use of alcohol.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
11. Our marriage was free from any gambling.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
12. Our marriage was free from lying to cover up painful or embarrassing events.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
13. I recognized that marriage is a living relationship and will require work and attention.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
14. My spouse recognized marriage is a living relationship and requires work and attention.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
15. We showed the ability to love and support one another in good times and bad.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
16. I resisted the urge to think that marriage or my spouse should solve life's struggles.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
17. My spouse resisted the urge to think that marriage or I should solve all life's struggles.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
18. I allowed my spouse to see my weaknesses without defensiveness.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
19. My spouse allowed me to see their weaknesses without defensiveness.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
20. I was comfortable knowing how to encourage my spouse when he/she was down.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
21. My spouse was comfortable knowing how to encourage me when I was down.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
22. I did not have expectations of my spouse the regularly lead to me feeling jealous.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
23. My spouse did not have expectations of me that regularly lead to them feeling jealous.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
24. I enjoyed and agreed with how we divided the responsibilities of managing our home.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
25. I consistently fulfilled my household responsibilities as we agreed.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
26. My spouse consistently fulfilled their household responsibilities as we agreed.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
27. We were able to talk about new responsibilities when they emerged.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
28. I had a regular time of reading from the Bible	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
29. My spouse had a regular time of reading from the Bible.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
30. I regularly shared with my spouse what I learn in my time of Bible study.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
31. My spouse regularly shared with me what he/she is learning in Bible study.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
32. We felt comfortable asking each other to pray for specific concerns.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
33. We agreed on the importance and frequency of church attendance for our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
34. We agreed on the importance and frequency of small group attendance.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
35. I believed my spouse's friends are a positive influence and a blessing to our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
36. I believed my friends are a positive influence and a blessing to our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
37. We had couple friends who model and actively pursued a healthy marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
38. I voluntarily abstained from habits or practices that make my spouse fearful or upset.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
39. My spouse voluntarily abstained from habits or practices that cause me fear or upset.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
40. I made the changes that marriage necessitates without resentment or bitterness.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
41. My spouse made the changes marriage necessitates without resentment or bitterness.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
42. My sense of humor did not put my spouse down or highlight his/her weaknesses.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
43. My spouse's humor did not put me down or highlight my weaknesses.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
44. I valued the things my spouse tells me enough to remember them.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
45. My spouse valued the things I share with him/her enough to remember them.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
46. I felt safe to express my thoughts and opinions with my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
47. My spouse felt safe to express his/her thoughts and opinions with me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
48. I was able to deal with change without it disrupting the marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
49. My spouse was able to deal with change without it disrupting the marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
50. We did a good job of selecting wise times to have difficult or in-depth conversations.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
51. I was willing to be interrupted to hear what my spouse has to say.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
52. My spouse was willing to be interrupted to hear what I have to say.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
53. We agreed on the type or level of offenses that need to be discussed.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
54. I maintained honor towards my spouse even when we disagree or argue.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
55. My spouse maintained honor towards me even when we disagree or argue.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
56. I resisted the temptation to "clam up" or "shut down" when saying something difficult.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
57. My spouse resisted the temptation to "clam up" or "shut down."	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
58. I did not use "being honest" as an excuse to be harsh or dogmatic.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
59. My spouse did not use "being honest" as an excuse for being harsh or dogmatic.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
60. I did not allow my personal or marital goals to take precedent over the marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA

61. My spouse did not allow personal or marital goals to take precedent over the marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
62. I was able to effectively forgive and not keep a record of wrongs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
63. My spouse was able to effectively forgive and not keep a record of wrongs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
64. My spouse felt safe when I express my anger or hurt.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
65. I felt safe when my spouse expresses his/her anger or hurt.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
66. I recognized that my spouse cannot be expected to meet all my emotional needs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
67. My spouse recognized that I cannot meet all of his/her emotional needs.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
68. I resisted grading my spouse or marriage based on how fulfilled I felt.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
69. My spouse resisted grading me or our marriage based on how fulfilled he/she felt.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
70. We were able to talk about our family finances without defensiveness or arguing.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
71. I felt safe because of how we manage our finances.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
72. My spouse felt safe because of how we manage our finances.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
73. I felt free to make spending decisions within our family budget.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
74. My spouse felt free to make spending decisions within our family budget.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
75. My spending habits contributed to a sense of peace and stability in our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
76. My spouses' spending habits contributed to a sense of peace and stability in our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
77. I did not hide expenses or debt from my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
78. My spouse did not hide expenses or debt from me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
79. We were willing to live simply enough to give time to the things that really matter.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
80. We agreed on the distractions that interfered with our time priorities.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
81. I was joyfully sacrificial in my love for my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
82. My spouse was joyfully sacrificial in his/her love for me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
83. My spouse got the best of who I am.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
84. I believe I got the best of who my spouse is.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
85. I resisted the temptation to keep score of who had done more for the other.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
86. My spouse resisted the temptation to keep score of who had done more for the other.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
87. I was a growing person and felt like I had new things to share with my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
88. My spouse was a growing person and had new things to share with me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
89. I regularly put intentional time and effort into romancing my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
90. My spouse regularly put intentional time and effort into romancing me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
91. I was growing in my ability to enjoy and appreciate things that are important to my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
92. My spouse had a growing ability to enjoy and appreciate things that are important to me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
93. I knew the things that most effectively communicate love to my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
94. My spouse knew the things that most effectively communicate love to me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
95. I looked for new ways to express the things that my spouse found most affirming.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
96. My spouse looked for new ways to express the things that I found most affirming.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
97. I was able to hear and receive the love and affirmation my spouse gave me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
98. My spouse was able to hear and receive the love and affirmation I gave him/her.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
99. I was able to put myself into words and shared myself with my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
100. My spouse was able to put him/her self into words and shared him/her self with me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
101. We were balanced in who requested and initiated sex.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
102. I was satisfied with the frequency and quality of sex in our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
103. My spouse was satisfied with the frequency and quality of sex in our marriage.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
104. I felt like I could meet my spouse's sexual expectations and desires.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
105. The language my spouse uses to describe sex was wholesome and non-offensive to me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
106. I was unselfish during sex and sought to find greater pleasure in my spouse's enjoyment.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
107. My spouse was unselfish during sex and sought to find greater pleasure in my enjoyment.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
108. I did not use sex as a tool to get things I want or punish my spouse.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
109. My spouse did not use sex as a tool to get things he/she wants or to punish me.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
110. My spouse and I agreed on the difference between sex and intimacy / closeness.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
111. My spouse and I agreed on the balance we want between sex and intimacy / closeness.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
112. My spouse and I could talk about what we enjoy and want from our sexual relationship.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA
113. My spouse and I could talk about our fears or insecurities are related to sex.	CD	SD	NS	SA	CA

Remember this evaluation is not your new “to do list” replacing the marital restoration efforts under way. Any couple taking this assessment would find aspects of marital enrichment to work on. Your goal in this assessment is to identify any long-standing marital problems that would have contributed to the sexual sin or undermine the sustained progress achieved during the restoration process.

If there are particular areas of marriage enrichment that need attention **after** the marital restoration is complete, then know that that this evaluation is an abbreviated version of five marriage enrichment seminars presented by The Summit counseling ministry covering the subjects: marriage foundations, communication, finances, decision making, and sex/intimacy.

What Do I Do With This Information?

In most cases, the healthiest first thing you could do is rest. Chances are you have learned a great deal of information that is troubling. Some of your fears just became reality. Other fears are in the process of being calmed (although likely resisting it). Disclosure is a hard time, that while beneficial and necessary, is traumatic as it happens.

“An intimate marriage thrives on commitment, honesty, trust, comfortable companionship, and sex that is safe and connecting. Satan could not have devised a better scheme for striking at the heart of a marriage than adultery (p. 344).” Doug Rosenau in *A Celebration of Sex*

Remember, in most cases, the majority of the information learned is only “new to you” not “new.” Because it is new to you, your mind and emotions are prone to respond as if what you learned as just happened. In your world these things are “breaking news” and carry the impact that comes with an imminent threat. Taking some time, even if it’s a few hours, to get away from your spouse and let these things settle in as “past events” is important.

The majority of what you will do with this information is covered in the coming chapters: three (understanding the impact of these events upon you, your spouse, and your marriage), four (understanding the destructive messages and meanings that come with the betrayal of sexual sin), five (mourning the reality of what has occurred and the damage done), six (learning how the message and meaning of the gospel is able to redeem the impact and false messages of your betrayal), and seven (figuring out what to do in light of what you’ve learned about your spouse, yourself, your marriage and your God).

The main thing at this point is not to become overwhelmed by or misuse the information gained. The quotes below demonstrate common ways that this amount of new information can be overwhelming or misused. While you are coming to grips with what you have learned, this is an important time to utilize the support network you developed in “The Right Kind of Community” in chapter one.

“She insisted that I spend every waking moment convincing her I was here for the duration, that I wasn’t going to quit. And I had better answer every question exactly as I had answered that same question the last time—and the time before and the time before. Any slight variance in my answers was cause for suspicion: Why had my answer changed? What wasn’t I telling her? What lie had I just been caught in? It was an endless assault (p. 46-47).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“The spouse is now in possession of some very effective weapons that could easily be turned against the infidel. Your commitment to each other means that you choose to use the knowledge for the good of your marriage, not for its destruction (p. 154).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“I had become so paranoid and fearful during the years... My obsession with what he was doing, thinking, saying, plotting, and so on reinforced my fears... My hyperactive imagination kept me in a prison of despair during this whole period (p. 33).” Kathy Gallagher in *When His Secret Sin Breaks Your Heart*

Chapter 3.

“What’s Going On with My Thoughts and Emotions?”

UNDERSTAND the impact of my suffering.

“I used to fear my facing the reality of my spouse’s sin and would not acknowledge it, so I expected myself to live as if their sin never happened [describe].

I can see how their sin has affected me [describe].

It was wrong to interpret the impact of their sin as my failing or my emotions as weakness.

God is more gracious than that and I must agree with Him and not my fears.

The impact is starting to make sense and help me see life differently [describe].”

Memorize: Psalm 55:12-14 (ESV), “For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together, within God’s house we walked in the throng.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Psalm” – God knew we would need words to express the pain of betrayal’s impact and graciously gave them.
- “Not an enemy” – This multiplies the pain. Hence David repeats it twice. Love leaves us unbraced for betrayal.
- “Then I could hide” – When betrayal occurs at home it feels impossible to “get away.” Rest is hard to find.
- “My familiar friend” – Not only are you hurting but your normal/rightful source of human comfort is taken away.
- “Used to... together” – It hurts each time you see something you used to enjoy together. It hurts because its hard to enjoy now and it hurts because you may wonder if it was all a lie.

Teaching Notes

“The news that Carol was in a relationship with another man shook the very foundations on which Ron was building his life. In his time of crisis the things he had considered so important had no value (p. 14).” Mike Summers in *Help! My Spouse Has Been Unfaithful*

“Husbands and wives are often shattered after revelation because they believed they knew their spouses so well that the person could never have pulled off having an affair... Infidels are often astounded by their own ability to lead a dual life, to separate one life from the other (p. 137).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“Many partners find themselves making compromises in the relationship that lead to the loss of their sense of self. Examples include acting against your own morals, values or beliefs, as well as giving up on life goals, hobbies, and interests. Other examples include changing your dress or appearance to accommodate the addict, or accepting the addict’s sexual norms as your own... You may have struggles with feelings of unworthiness or perfectionism. As a result you have settled for feeling needed in the relationship and compromised yourself to keep the peace or feel valued (p. 14).” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

“The affection that I wanted for so long was now mine in abundance. He was constantly wanting to hold my hand and hug me and kiss me – and I was sick (p. 23).” Kathy Gallagher in *When His Secret Sin Breaks Your Heart*

“Gary was not the man I had thought he was, but I was no longer sure who I was either. For that matter, who were we as a couple? Were we a couple (p. 24)?... That night my life took on a new timetable: before the affair, during the affair, and after the affair. Everything during was now marred and distorted: our family trip to Disneyland, Gary and I going to Hawaii. I recalled snippets of conversation with both Gary and my friend and suddenly heard and saw completely different things (p. 26)... You each will process at your own pace. Remember, the infidel began this process before the affair even began. The spouse typically begins at revelation (p. 54).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“An affair erodes their carefully constructed security system. It erects an interior *wall of secrecy* between the marriage partners, at the same time it opens a *window of intimacy* between the affair partners. The couple is no longer a unit. The affair partner is on the inside, and the marital partner is on the outside (p. 25).” Shirley Glass in *Not “Just Friends”*

Factors that Increase the Impact

1. Type of Sin:
2. Length of Sin:
3. Degree of Lying:
4. Number of Times Caught and Repeated:
5. Number of Incomplete Disclosures:
6. Social and Economic Impact:
7. Risk-Factor of Sin:
8. Closeness of Person(s) and Places Involved:
9. Accusations of Spouse to Defend Sin:
10. Interpretation You Place on Sin:

The Impact on You

1. Tolerating an Unhealthy Lifestyle:
2. Changing Role or Identity:
3. Acquiring Controlling Tendencies:
4. Becoming Inconsistent:
5. Growing Gullible or Cynical:
6. Growing Passive Toward Life:
7. Growing Insecurity:
8. Living a One Variable Life:
9. Relating as a Codependent:
10. Post-Traumatic Stress:

- _____ Intrusive recollections of the events surrounding your spouse's sexual sin or your discovery.
- _____ Recurrent dreams associated with your spouse's sexual sin.
- _____ Flashbacks where you feel like you are re-experiencing your spouse's sin or the discovery of it.
- _____ Intense distress when you experience things that remind you of your spouse's sexual sin.
- _____ Feelings of detachment from others.
- _____ Difficulty concentrating at your normal levels.
- _____ Hypervigilance – always looking for what is about to go wrong.

The Impact on the Marriage

Two Time Tables

- Shock
- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance
- Forgiveness

Principle of Least Interest Trap

Chapter 4.

“Is What I’m Thinking True, Right, Real, Helpful, Crazy?”

LEARN MY SUFFERING STORY which I use to make sense of my experience.

“I formed beliefs [define] about myself, life, marriage, and God based on my spouse’s betrayal. I lived out of those beliefs [describe] because they were all I knew and they ‘fit.’ Those beliefs became the guiding themes of my life story. Putting those beliefs into words scares me [describe why]. I reject that false life story and am committed to learning how my life fits into God’s great story of redemption.”

Memorize: Solomon 8:6-8 (ESV), “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Set me as a seal” – Expecting your spouse avoid sexual sin is to honor the marriage covenant reasonable.
- “Love is strong” – The betrayal of sexual sin hurts so bad because love is so good and so powerful.
- “Fierce as the grave” – Sexual betrayal is a very tangible experiences of “the wages of sin is death (Rom 3:23).”
- “Flashes of fire” – The intensity of the emotional pain can have psychosomatic affects of pain, nausea, or illness.
- “If a man offered” – This is why it hurts and is offensive if your spouse tries to do or offer some form of penance.

Teaching Notes

“How many people knew about the affair? I didn’t know and would never know... I felt as if I were wearing a sign that read, “NOT GOOD ENOUGH!” (p. 61)... God, I need a miracle here. You’re the great Healer. Heal us! Let me wake up from this nightmare. We’re sitting here breathing, and yet as surely as there is air moving in and out of my lungs, I know we’re dying. But I want to know why I have to die when the sin is not mine! I didn’t do this (p. 75)... In my weary brain there were only three alternatives: lying to myself, being lied to, or pain. If there was no pain, then someone must be lying (p. 98).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“Quite often I hear in counseling, ‘If he loved me he wouldn’t have had the affair.’ I sadly respond, ‘He loves you and he had an affair (p. 347).’” Doug Rosenau in *A Celebration of Sex*

“Couple shame makes them feel that they have a bad marriage and that people won’t want to associate with them (p. 183).” Mark Laaser in *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*

“[Case study] Tiffany could not believe what she just heard. After all of the sexual improprieties her husband Jason had engaged in, he was blaming her for his acting out. According to Jason, Tiffany was critical, blaming, non-supportive, and wasn’t meeting his sexual needs (p. 7)... Examples of impaired thoughts for co-addicts include *I deserve to be treated this way. I can’t do any better. If I was performing better sexually this wouldn’t have happened* (p. 21)... Many co-addicts, even before marrying a sex addict, have come to believe that sex is the most important sign of love. This makes them the perfect partner for a sex addict, who usually believes that sex is his or her most important need (p. 35).” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

“And I was angry! Gary and his partner had ‘repented and been forgiven.’ They could move on with their lives. Well, I couldn’t! I resented the fact that I had not committed this sin, yet I still had to carry the pain. Why didn’t they just run away together? By now I could have been moving on with my life instead of being stuck. And at least I wouldn’t have had to suffer in silence; everyone would know if they’d run off. Even as I thought these things, I knew the absurdity of them. We all suffered. We all were suffering. But it was so unfair. No one had ever wanted to have an affair with me! There had been no desire so strong that I had risked everything to satisfy it. Gary had risked everything and everyone for her. What had he ever risked to have me? Maybe I wasn’t worth having. Maybe I should just disappear (p. 110).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

Sexual Sin: A Disrupted Story

How Do I Respond?

- Go slow.
- Don't confuse resonance to truth.
- Allow yourself to feel.
- Don't expect a single answer.
- Try to attach emotions to themes.

Ten Potential Themes of Your Suffering Story

1. Something Is Wrong with Me:
2. This Was My Fault:
3. If You Loved Me, Then...:
4. Trust Is Dangerous or Naïve:
5. Sex Is Ultimate:
6. Sex Is the “Ring of Power”:
7. I Am the Unwanted One:
8. Life Would Be Easier If...:
9. Intensified Male/Female Stereotypes:
10. Everything Is Second Class Now:

These are not the only ten destructive themes of suffering that can be used to make sense of your marriage. Hopefully, they are representative of the kinds of thinking that take the pain of betrayal and turn your life into a story with suffering as its core theme. More than this, it is hoped that this section gives you a pattern (1) to **articulate** the destructive messages of your suffering, (2) to honestly **acknowledge** the pain, and (3) to **counter** them with Scripture even before you see (4) how they are **replaced** with the gospel (chapter six).

From Facts to Themes to Story

- How you have already begun to make sense of the past, present, and future with the ten themes above or ones you added to the list?
- Which of the themes do you naturally gravitate towards?
- Is this gravitation new (only beginning with the revelation of your spouse's sin) or a long standing tendency?
- How have these themes distorted your interpretation of new life events not directly related to your spouse's sin?
- What phrases or thoughts capture your preferred theme(s)? How often do you say them to yourself or others?
- What kind of things do you find yourself naturally arguing with in the words and actions of others?
- Who or what has become more and less trusted?

As you reflect on these questions, it should help you see how you are moving from facts to story. If you do not like what you discover, do not be alarmed. The fact that you can see the destructive themes as “not good,” means that the destructive themes do not have the place of dominance in your heart and mind.

Chapter 5.

“It Feels Like I Loss Something”

MOURN the wrongness of what happened and receive God’s comfort.

“I am willing to agree with God emotionally about my suffering.

I can see that God does not just want me to ‘get over this’

but to ‘love me through my loss and pain.’ [describe difference]

I will accept that ‘blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted (Matt 5:4)’

as expressed by God’s loving me personally through this group.

Mourning my suffering with God and this group has changed me [describe].”

Memorize: Zephaniah 3:18-19 (ESV), “I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. Behold at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame, and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “I will” – God is voluntarily involved. You do not have to beg. God is more eager to help than you are desperate.
- “You who mourn” – God has a special compassion for those who are mourning (Psalm 56:8).
- “Suffer reproach” – God understands that there is more to your grief than the loss of something precious.
- “Deal with all your oppressors” – You can trust God with your spouse and everyone else involved in his/her sin.
- “Lame... outcast... shame” – God knows your experience: feeling powerless, rejected, and embarrassed.

Teaching Notes

“We found that not recognizing the loss, not mourning, only made it worse (p. 131)... It took us a while to identify the things we had lost, and even when we did, accepting that they were really gone was more difficult than we expected it would be. However, once we were able to name them, it seemed we had taken another step on the path of healing. We didn’t feel so stuck (p. 132).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“Forgiving the addict prematurely is a common problem for many partners... It is essential for you to grieve your losses before being able to forgive (p. 50).” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

“It is definitely a healing moment, however, when *both* infidel and spouse can acknowledge the depth of pain the adultery has caused: when the spouse can say they believe the infidel ‘gets it’ (p. 117).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“We had to mourn the time of Gary’s unfaithfulness, but that did not mean his faithfulness to Mona or to God could not be resumed (p. 135).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

What Is Being Mourned?

1. Loss of Relationship as It Once Was:
2. Loss of the Dream of Your Relationship:
3. Loss of the Purity of the Marriage Bed:
4. Loss of Faithfulness:
5. Loss of Trust or Emotional Safety:
6. Loss of Sexual Safety:
7. Loss of Financial Stability:
8. Loss of Identity (Personally and as a Couple):
9. Loss of Church:
10. Loss of the Sense of God's Presence:

Mourning's Evil Twin: Bitterness

What do bitterness and mourning share in common?

- Both are triggered by an event that is personal and negative.
 - Both exist on the unpleasant end of the emotional spectrum.
 - Both feel very justified and make sense in light of the event.
 - Both feel very natural and like we are not "doing" them but that they are "happening" to us.
 - Both involve a high degree of mental repetition.
 - Both are seeking to make sense of life in light of the negative event.
 - Both begin to shape the way you interpret the events and people around you.
 - Both shape the way you anticipate and prepare for the future.
 - Both change the way that you think of past events.
 - Both have lingering effects after the intense experience is over if not processed in a healthy manner.
- Bitterness Disrupts Peace vs. Mourning Makes Peace Possible Again
 - Bitterness Destroys Joy vs. Mourning Is Foundational for Joy
 - Bitterness Depletes Strength vs. Mourning Replenishes Strength
 - Bitterness Distorts Focus vs. Mourning Restores Focus
 - Bitterness Defiles Relationships vs. Mourning Honors Relationships
 - Bitterness Displeases God vs. Mourning Pleases God

How to Mourn?

- Realize mourning is not an event you can calendar.
- You will not "finish" mourning before you move to the next step.
- You are allowing steps 1-3 to settle in without the contamination of step 4.
- You are solidifying a sense of God's comfort for you suffering before considering changes to your thinking and actions.
- You are reminding yourself you do not have to be "rushed" in the process.
- You are being sad about an event(s) that created turmoil and a season of change while recognizing that the sadness of this season is not the final or defining chapter of your life.

Chapter 6.

“Replacing What Is Real with What Is True”

LEARN MY GOSPEL STORY by which God gives meaning to my experience.

**“I have already told you how my spouse’s sin shaped my life [review step 4].
Letting go of that story, identity, and set of beliefs left me with only God.**

It was good to begin rebuilding my life from that solid foundation.

**Now I am beginning to understand my life with God and the Gospel at the center
[examples from previous list reinterpreted].”**

Memorize: Hosea 2:23-3:1 (ESV), “And I will have mercy on No Mercy, and I will say to Not My People, “You are my People”; And he shall say, “You are my God.” And the Lord said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulterous, even as the Lord loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.’” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “I will have mercy” – The search for fairness in the betrayal of any sin will leave you increasingly pained and alone.
- “On No Mercy” – Background: Hosea named his children “No Mercy” and “Not My People” to represent Israel.
- “He shall say” – The response of the unfaithful spouse is necessary if forgiveness can ever become restoration.
- “Go again” – If restoration is going to occur it will involve more than your spouse pursuing you.
- “As the Lord” – Each step of embracing the gospel story for your suffering calls you to remember Christ.

Teaching Notes

“She suddenly realized she had lost not only her marriage and her husband but also part of herself. There was absolutely nothing left to hang on to. She found herself completely insufficient for the first time in her life, and terror gripped her... She came to understand that she had put Gary above God. It was not that she thought Gary was God—especially now—but she looked to Gary to be her source of strength, comfort, and love (p. 66)... Our faith grew because we found we were not enough and God was (p. 67).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“The foundation we rebuild on will be the foundation intended for marriage—God Himself. That foundation is sound because God is trustworthy. We rebuild the trust as if we were rebuilding a house brick by brick. The house fell, but God’s foundation is still safe (p. 185).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“One’s past is never over except in God’s eyes. Our failures are woven into the fabric of our lives. The sinner can rejoice in God’s goodness and forgiveness while at the same time being reminded of his or her own vulnerability and helped to stand against ongoing temptation (p. 137).” Earl & Sandy Wilson, et al in *Restoring the Fallen*

“When we examine the Bible’s teaching on forgiveness, it’s helpful to distinguish two levels. We cultivate attitudinal or heart forgiveness before God concerning all offenders; we extend transacted or granted forgiveness to those offenders who repent (p. 15).” Robert Jones in *After Adultery*

“Believers need to dispel from their minds the myth that if you have forgiven someone and you love that person, you will never bring up the past. In reality, the past is inextricably woven into the present and impacts the future (p. 102).” Earl & Sandy Wilson, et al in *Restoring the Fallen*

Who Am I Now?

Changed and Unchanged

Free to Choose

Loved by God

Who Is God?

Faithful

Our Pioneer

Powerful

Who Is My Spouse Now?

A Sinner, Not “Sin”

A Fruit Bearer

Capable of Change

What Is Sin?

Spiritual Adultery

Sin is Illogical

A Conquered Enemy

Is Love Worth Pain?

Chapter 7

“What Is ‘Forward’ and How Do I Move There?”

IDENTIFY GOALS that allow me to combat the impact of my suffering.

“I can now see that innocence and powerlessness are not the same thing. I used to think ‘it was not my fault;’ was the same as ‘there is nothing I can do.’

My old suffering story came with a way of life that I lived.

The new story, identity, and beliefs that come with the Gospel allow me to actively live differently without giving into the old false shame or regret.

I can change [describe how] without a sense of condemnation [describe why].”

Memorize: I Peter 4:1-2 (ESV), “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Arm yourselves” – Whenever we suffer we must actively engage and change our natural way of thinking.
- “Suffered... cease from sin” – A key part of overcoming sin in a fallen, broken world is learning to suffer well.
- “The rest of the time” – Identifying goals is a steps that pivots from processing the past to preparing for the future.
- “No longer for human passions” – Suffering enflames our passions. This is not wrong but is a source of temptation.
- “For the will of God” – In the midst of suffering it can be very tempting to seek relief more than the will of God.

Teaching Notes

“Prolonged pain indicates the degree of the hurt or injury, not the presence or absence of forgiveness. When pain comes to the surface, it reveals how severe the results of sin are; it does not mean that forgiveness has not occurred. Pain and forgiveness are different yet interrelated. Pain can continue after forgiveness (p. 60).” Earl & Sandy Wilson, et al in *Restoring the Fallen*

“Equally deceptive and harmful is a commitment to making sure your spouse now becomes the person you always wanted him or her to be (p. 49)... Trusting him again was not just about him being trustworthy; it was also about me recognizing there’d be times my trust would be required (p. 178).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“Whatever your [self-protective] style of relating, it probably seems to work for you. But beneath the pretenses, you’ve made a commitment that you will never be hurt again if you can help it. This commitment conflicts with the commitment to love (p. 107).” Harry Schaumburg in *False Intimacy*

“The next step—if and when both are ready—is to recommit yourselves to the marriage covenant and to explore the marital problems that existed prior to the infidelity. The affair did not arise in a vacuum; good marriages seldom beget adultery (p. 18).” Robert Jones in *After Adultery*

“The one involved in the affair is relieved to be beyond the secrecy and guilt and is rediscovering some of the reasons for the original attraction to the partner. The one cheated on, after dealing with anger and betrayal, is excited not to have lost a mate... The problem with the honeymoon is that it can sweep issues under the rug, which can later come back to haunt the marriage (p. 352).” Doug Rosenau in *A Celebration of Sex*

“If you’ve just let loose on your spouse, this is a good time for you to call a break. And when you’ve cooled down, go to your spouse and apologize. Apologize for whatever you said or did that did not help the healing process. We don’t believe you need to apologize for the feelings—those are real and true—but you do need to say you’re sorry for the way you handled them at the particular moment (p. 155)... The other aspect of transparent honesty Mona had to accept was the fact that in the end, she would have to entrust Gary to God and place herself in a position of vulnerability (p. 187).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

Forgiveness: What It Is and Is Not

Forgiveness vs. Restoration: These terms are distinct but have significant overlap. All restoration is rooted in forgiveness, but not all forgiveness will result in restoration. In the discussion below the tone of forgiveness implies a movement towards restoration. However, if your spouse is unrepentant of his/her sin, then your personal recovery may involve applying these principles without the particular applications made towards restoration.

- **Forgiveness is not containing or restraining hurt and anger.**
- **Forgiveness is not letting someone off the hook.**
- **Forgiveness is not an excuse.**
- **Forgiveness is not forgetting or some kind of sentimental amnesia.**
- **Forgiveness is not trust or reconciliation.**

Read Ephesians 4:31-32. This passage describes where you should be at this stage in the process. There should be a commitment to put away "all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander (v. 31)." Forgiveness is when you make this commitment, not the declaration of its completion. After reading this section on forgiveness in light of the journey you have been on, how do you understand the phrase "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you (v. 32)" differently? What is different in how you view your forgiveness from God? What is different about what you believe God is asking of you towards others?

Trust: A Wise Journey

A Progression of Trust

1. **Require Third Party Mediation:**
2. **Listen and Require Validation:**
3. **Listen and Require Less Validation:**
4. **Rely on Spouse Functionally:**
5. **Share Facts:**
6. **Share Beliefs:**
7. **Share Feelings:**
8. **Rely on Spouse Emotionally:**
9. **Allow Spouse to Care for You:**
10. **Relax and Feel Safer With Spouse than Apart:**

Trust and Ultimatums or Time Tables:

Trust and Sex

Communicating About the Whole Marriage

Old Problems

New Context

After a Prolonged Strain

The Divorce Decision

There are two groups of people who likely had a very hard time reading this chapter: (1) those whose spouse is still committed to his/her sin and (2) those who are themselves resistant to the notion of forgiving, growing in trust, or examining the marriage for restoration. If you do not find yourself in one of these two groups, you can skip this section. There is little benefit to deliberating on a question that would only serve to disrupt the good things God is doing in your life and marriage.

However, others of you cannot avoid this question. You are faced with a choice to either (A) remain in an unhappy marriage trusting that God can change your heart, your spouse's heart, or both; or (B) pursue a divorce. In the first chapter, we cited secular resources (meaning they did not contain the Christian "bias" of believing marriage is sacred covenant) that advised not considering divorce until you had gone through a time of personal recovery and marriage assessment. If you have worked through these materials, that type of work has been done. Assuming there are not other emotionally traumatic events currently occurring in your life, you are likely in a place to make this decision.

There are two scenarios on which the choice to accept divorce is clear. First, your spouse has chosen his/her adultery partner and has initiated a divorce. Second, your spouse is unwilling to live in a marriage where sexual sin is absent and abandons the marriage for his/her "freedom." In either case, you are morally free before God to accept the choice of your spouse without any sense of condemnation (1 Cor. 7:12-16).

There two more difficult scenarios in which choices are less clear. First, what if my spouse has not committed physical adultery, but refuses to quit or continually gives into the sexual sin of pornography or emotional affairs?

Read Matthew 5:21-30. The question surrounding pornography, emotional affairs, and divorce is, "Does Jesus' words in Matthew 5:27-30 allow habitual lust to qualify as ground for divorce under the adultery clause of Matthew 19:1-12?" Looking at the Sermon on the Mount as a whole, we would have to conclude that if Jesus was intending to permit the legal consequence of divorce for lust, then Jesus was also intending to allow the legal consequence of capital punishment for degrading outbursts of anger (v. 22). It is not contextually feasible that Jesus wanted to address the legal consequences of heart sins. Jesus was telling us how seriously to take sin and at what level to battle sin.

The spouse whose partner is perpetually or defiantly engaging pornography or sexual sin would have two options.

- Chose to live with his/her spouse without participating in their sin and seek to win them back to God through his/her example of godly character and selfless love (1 Pet. 3:1-7).
- Be separated from his/her spouse for the purpose of reinforcing the seriousness of their sexual sin, but not seek divorce. If this option is chosen at this stage in the process, you should (a) be prepared for an indefinite separation and (b) have a clear expectation for what would end the separation. This option is not recommended without consultation of your church elders or pastoral staff.

Second, what if my spouse is repentant and I have tried to work through my hurts, but find it more painful than I am willing to bear to remain married? In this case we might ask, "Is there a 'statute of limitations' on the divorce clause of Matthew 19? Does my biblical freedom to choose divorce ever expire?" We are now asking a question to which Scripture does not speak directly. This would imply there is no reason to assume that the divorce clause expires. With that said, the partner who believes his/her pain is too great to remain married would have two options.

- Choose to remain married and continue to pray that God would bring a level of healing and restoration to his/her pain that the marriage could be an enjoyable relationship.
- Choose to pursue divorce with the liberty that Scripture provides. If this option is chosen, then it is recommended based upon Mark 10:1-12 that neither spouse should think, "I am getting out of this marriage so I can get a fresh start in a new marriage."

Chapter 8

“Living a Life Not Defined by what I’m Overcoming”

PERSEVERE in the new life and identity to which God has called me.

“Some of the pain related to my spouse’s sin remains [describe] but it defines me less and less.

But I am also experiencing more of what God has for me.

I never knew life could include [list of experiences] again.

I see now that God was not withholding these things from me, nor were they forfeited.

I am learning to enjoy them without guilt, fear, or guardedness.

I have come to realize that ‘healthy’ means more than the absence of pain or sorrow.

I am learning to trust and enjoy God in the rise and fall of my circumstances.”

Memorize: Romans 5:3-5 (ESV), “More than that, we rejoice in our suffering, knowing that that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through this Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Rejoice” – If you read the passage carefully, you’ll see we actually rejoice in the fruit of suffering; not the pain.
- “Endurance... character... hope” – Hopefully this captures well the journey you have been on in this study.
- “Shame” – God is faithful to not only redeem the suffering but remove the shame associated with suffering.
- “God’s love” – The perfect love of a perfect God enables us to live with imperfect love of an imperfect spouse.
- “Holy Spirit” – This seal (2 Cor. 1:22) of God’s permanent covenant provides the security for all earthy covenants.

Teaching Notes

“Even with all these complex factors, God’s healing grace abounds. If both partners are committed to restoring the marriage, they almost always succeed. The trauma often creates a deeper and more realistic intimacy with better boundaries in place. Greater maturity grows out of the crisis they have weathered (p. 351).” Doug Rosenau in *A Celebration of Sex*

“That night happened in 1993 [book published in 2005]. We can now say with absolute sincerity that we have fully healed from the adultery. Our marriage is strong and mutually satisfying. We have love and trust (p. 27).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

“One of the tests for an intimate relationship is answering the question, Can I be most myself in your presence? Can I be creative, funny, vulnerable, productive, strong, weak, flamboyant, shy or even smart? Can I couple any of those words with sex and romance? Can I be tough, forgiving, generous, spiritual, intuitive, graceful, clumsy, lazy, self-indulgent and disciplined? Do I feel equal, successful, attractive, encouraged, trusted and believed? Can I be fully as competent as I can be and not have my partner disappear? Do I feel challenged? Can I be accountable and hold my partner accountable? Is it OK to make a mistake? Does our time together really seem to matter (p. 66)?” Stephanie Carnes in *Mending a Shattered Heart*

“Forgiveness is a direction you are taking. Keep walking towards it (p. 173).” Gary & Mona Shriver in *Unfaithful*

Indicators of a New Normal

1. Energy Level Returns to Normal:
2. Decision Making Becomes Easier:
3. Appetite and Sleep Cycle Return to Normal:
4. Sense of Humor Returns:
5. Play Together as a Couple:
6. Begin Making Plans for the Future:
7. Memory Triggers Are Less Intense:
8. View Members of the Same Sex Normally:
9. Willing to Consider Using Your Experience to Help Others:
10. Pervading Sense of God’s Goodness and Faithfulness:

Piecing Together Your New Story

Who am I now?

Who is my spouse now?

Who is God?

What is sin?

Is love worth pain?

Preparing for Transition

Make sure you are in a small group.

Learn accountability and encouragement on a broader scale.

1. **Voluntary** – Accountability is not something you have; it is something you do – you make yourself accountable. You must disclose in order to benefit from the relationship. Hopefully, the positive experience you have had going through this material will encourage you to remain transparent and vulnerable.
2. **Trusted** – The other person(s) is someone you trust, admire their character, and believe has good judgment. You are encouraged to join a small group now so that you can build this trust before graduating from your Freedom Group or mentor relationship.
3. **Mutual** – Relationships that are one-sided tend to be short-lived. In the small group you will hear the weaknesses and struggles of others as you share your own. You will help carry their burdens as they help carry your burdens (Gal. 6:1-2).
4. **Scheduled** – Accountability that is not scheduled tends to fade. This is why small groups that meet on a weekly basis are an ideal place for accountability to occur. Everyone knows when to meet and has a shared expectation for how the accountability conversations will begin.
5. **Relational** – We want spiritual growth to become a lifestyle not an event. This means that we invite accountability to be a part of our regular conversations not just something that we do at a weekly meeting. It should mean that there are times when we are doing accountability and don’t realize it.
6. **Comprehensive** – Accountability that exclusively fixates on one subject tends to become repetitive and fade. It also tends to reduce “success” to trusting God in a single area of life.
7. **Encouraging** – Too often the word “accountability” carries the connotation of “sin hunt.” When that is the case accountability is only perceived to be “working” when it is negative. However, accountability that lasts should celebrate growth in character as fervently as it works on slips in character. This means asking each other questions about discouragement in addition to questions about temptations.

Have a plan for future study.

Make a formal transition plan.

Chapter 9

“Dreaming and Pursuing Dreams Again”

STEWARD all of my life for God’s glory.

**“God has shown me great grace; grace greater than my pain.
I am learning what it means to live out of my new identity in Christ.
That has pushed me to ask the question,
‘How can I be a conduit of God’s grace to others?’
As I have sought God, examined my life, and consulted with fellow believers,
I believe this [describe] is what it looks like for me to steward God’s grace now.”**

Memorize: I Peter 4:19 (ESV), “Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” As you memorize this passage reflect upon these key points:

- “Those who suffer” – This passage will apply to every person many times in the course of their life.
- “God’s will” – Hopefully, at this stage in your journey you can read this without hearing it as God’s punishment.
- “Entrust their souls” – Life is a choice between entrusting our souls to God or seeking to protect ourselves.
- “To a faithful Creator” – If you made it to this point in the study, you have many evidences of God’s faithfulness.
- “While doing good” – Without a returning sense of mission, suffering would drain our vitality for engaging life.

Teaching Notes

To “steward” something means to use it for God’s intended purpose. It is important to remember that what is being stewarded is the life of the group member in general, not the sin specifically.

Being a living testimony to the transforming power of God’s grace can feel exposing. We must be willing, when appropriate, to share what God has done on our behalf. For many who experience suffering, this will be difficult; not because they are unappreciative, but because sharing God’s grace also means sharing their suffering.

Vulnerability is the willingness to take the risk of allowing any event, belief, preference, interest, or emotion of your life to be “on the table” when it is useful to glorify God by encouraging a fellow believer, allowing a fellow believer to encourage you, or evangelizing an unbeliever. It is this disposition that breathes the life of authenticity into relationships and allows them to be mutually enjoyable, enriching, and character shaping.

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket—safe, dark, motionless—it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. The alternative to tragedy, or at least to the risk of tragedy, is damnation. The only place outside of Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and perturbations of love is Hell (p. 169).” C.S. Lewis in *The Four Loves*

Embedded Study

As you read through and answer the next nine questions, remember God’s patience and timing. There will be some aspects of God’s design that you can engage in immediately. But there may also be ways you want to serve God that will require you to be more mature or be equipped before you are prepared to fulfill them. The main thing is to begin to have a vision for life that involves being God’s servant and actively engaging that vision where you are currently equipped.

1. Am I willing to commit my life to whatever God asks of me? This is a “do not pass go” question. If your answer is “no,” it will bias the answers you give to each subsequent question. Do not get lost in guilt or pretend that it is “yes.” Rather, identify the obstacle. What aspect of your suffering story (chapter 4) makes this sacrifice seem too risky? Are there specific things you believe God is asking of you? Be sure to record your thoughts on this question before reflecting on the subsequent questions.

2. What roles has God placed me in? The first part of being a good steward of one’s life is to fulfill one’s primary roles with excellence. When Paul says in Ephesians 5:17 that we are to “understand what the will of the Lord is,” he goes on to describe God’s design for each of our major life roles (spouse, parent, child, and worker in 5:22-6:9).

3. What are my spiritual gifts? Stewarding your life for the glory of God involves utilizing the spiritual gifts God has given you. God gives spiritual gifts that coincide with the calling He places on each individual’s life. Read Romans 12:1-8 and I Corinthians 12:1-30. If you need further assistance discerning this, talk to a pastor about taking a spiritual gifts inventory.

4. For what group of people (age, struggle, career, ethnic, etc...) am I burdened? From God’s earliest covenant with people His intention was to bless us that we might be a blessing to others (Gen 12:2). By investing your life in those you have a burden for, it allows you to be other-minded and find joy in it.

5. What am I passionate about? At this point in the stewardship evaluation, you can begin to see Psalm 37:4 fulfilled in your life. There is a level of vulnerability involved in being passionate again, but allow yourself to express faith in God through this vulnerability and pursue the life He has for you.

6. With what talents or abilities has God blessed me? These need not be spiritual gifts. Read the amazing description of abilities God gave Bezalel and how he used those abilities to serve God (Exodus 31:1-11). Think through the skills and expertise you have accumulated in your life.

7. What are my unique life experiences? Both pleasant and unpleasant experiences should be listed. We are sometimes tempted to think that God can only use the good or spiritual experiences of our lives. God is glad to use our successes (Matt. 5:16), but God also delights in displaying His grace by transforming our suffering from flaming darts of Satan meant for our destruction to bridges of ministry carrying many people to life in Christ (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

8. Where do my talents and passions match up with the needs in my church and community? We should seek to steward our lives in cooperation with our local church. God’s way of blessing and maturing those we serve is through the Body of Christ, the church. By identifying where your gifts, burdens, passions, and abilities fit within or expanding your church’s ministries, you are maximizing the impact your service can have on those you are seeking to bless and protecting yourself from discouragement through isolation.

9. How would God have me bring these things together to glorify Him? This is not a new question, but a summary question. Look back over what you have written. Talk about it with your Christian friends, family, mentor, or pastors. Dedicate a time to prayerfully ask God to give you a sense of direction. Then begin serving as a way to steward your life for God’s glory.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” Matthew 5:7

Appendix A

How to Conduct an Intervention for Sexual Sin

An intervention is a group confrontation that is often used as a last resort when an individual is consumed by a life-dominating struggle but will not admit the sin is present or controlling his/her life. For the purposes of this study, the life-dominating struggle would be either adultery or pornography.

Before an intervention is conducted you should have already confronted the sexual sin in your spouse's life in multiple one-on-one conversations (Matt. 18:15). In most cases, it is advisable that friends, small group leader, or pastor would have already initiated conversations with the offending spouse about the sexual sin. An intervention should be used as a “last resort” method. An intervention is followed by significant life changes (whether its successful or unsuccessful) and should only be initiated when the situation warrants such changes and the offended spouse is willing to follow through.

If your spouse is unrepentant or will not acknowledge concrete facts, then an intervention is modern language for on way the second step of church discipline (Matt. 18:16) can be expressed. Even if your spouse is not a Christian or not a member of a church this step can be taken, but it would not be a part of any formal church involvement.

“The group intervention then follows the same process as the one-to-one intervention... Each participant expresses care and concern, provides evidence, articulates the impact of the sexual behaviors have had on them personally, defines boundaries, establishes consequences, and offers help. If the sex addict resists all these steps, those involved must not associate with that person. A spouse should take steps to separate from the addict, friends should refuse to socialize with the addict, and the church should bar the addict from participating in the Lord's Supper. Shunning a person is intensely painful for everyone, but it is the most caring thing to do, and the most honest (p. 145).” Mark Laaser in *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*

What follows is a process to walk you through the before, during, and after of staging an intervention.

Step One: Gather Your Facts

You only want to confront your spouse with your most solid evidence. If you mix weak and strong evidence, your spouse will pick apart the weak evidence and feel like he/she has discredited the entire case. You should assume that your spouse will be defensive. If there was reason to believe he/she would be cooperative, then the intervention would not be needed.

Step Two: Meet with a Counselor

Present your evidence and seek confirmation that this is a situation that warrants an intervention. The counselor should also be able to provide you with a list of best-fit church-based, local, and national resources that will become an important part of the action plan you propose to your spouse at the intervention.

Step Three: Recruit the Intervention Team

These people should be people that your spouse trusts and respects. They should also be people who would necessarily be involved in the restoration process when the sin is openly acknowledged. This team can consist of two to five people other than you. Children still living in the home should not be on this team. A member of your small group and pastoral staff should be on this team if possible.

The recruitment process would involve either a phone call or face-to-face meeting in which you say to each prospective team member, “I appreciate your friendship with my spouse and me. I am sorry to have to say that my spouse is trapped in sexual sin. I have spoken with a counselor and we assessed that an intervention is a wise next step. I am asking if you would be a part of that process. It would involve a planning meeting, an intervention meeting, a commitment to be a part of my spouse's follow up accountability team, and praying diligently for the entire process.”

During this conversation it is good to provide a copy of this appendix to help familiarize the prospective intervention team member with what has been and will be done. A PDF version of this appendix can be found at: www.bradhambrick.com/truebetrayal.

Step Four: Plan the Intervention

This requires getting the intervention team together, although most of the material can be outlined before the meeting. The purpose of the planning meeting is to inform the team of what an intervention is, providing the evidence you have substantiating the need for the intervention, explaining their role, and rehearsing the meeting.

The intervention should have a written agenda which states when each person will speak and the purpose of their speaking. Each person should have a copy of the written agenda during the intervention meeting. The plan for the intervention meeting should include:

- **Place and Time for the Intervention:** At the end of the team meeting everyone should know when and where the intervention will occur. Arrangements needs to be made for seating that accommodates everyone who will be present so that details do not become a points of distraction or discredit the purpose of the meeting.
- **Plan to Get Spouse to the Intervention:** The main criteria for determining the place for the intervention are: (1) where can you get the sinning spouse come without suspicion, and (2) where can there be enough privacy that social awkwardness does not drown out the message of the meeting. The spouse's home is usually a natural place for this to occur. Arrangements would need to be made for the children to be away and for the driveway not to be filled with cars.
- **Clearly Defined Plan to Begin Recovery:** After consulting with the counselor, you want to have a plan in place that the sinning spouse can enact immediately. This may help determine when the intervention is planned. If part of the plan involves attending a recovery group and the group meets on Thursday nights at 7:00, then the intervention should be on Thursday night at 6:00 with one of the intervention team members prepared to attend the first meeting with the offending spouse.

If part of the plan involves meeting with a counselor, then an appointment should already be scheduled within 24 hours of the intervention and the intake forms ready to be signed. If the part of the plan is for the spouse to attend an intensive counseling regimen, then their bags should be packed, reservations made, and travel accommodations prepared.

An intervention should not end with a statement like, "I'll think about it." An intervention is a decisive call to action. Anything less than a full commitment to the proposed recovery plan should result in the enactment of predetermined consequences.

- **Clearly Defined Consequences if Uncooperative:** The intervention team is not just there to be a positive peer pressure influence on the offending spouse. They are also there to make sure, if needed, the consequences for non-compliance are communicated clearly and followed through upon.

Similar to the recovery plan, the ability to enact the consequences of non-compliance need to be ready to be enacted immediately. If the consequences are separation, then the offending spouse's bags need to be packed and a visitation schedule with the children prepared. If the consequences involve informing an employer, advancing church discipline, or other communication-based consequences, then the letter needs to already be written.

The presence of the team is there to communicate that these consequences are not the emotional reaction of a spurned spouse, but the reasoned response of a collection of people who care about the spouse and want him/her to be free from his/her sin.

- **Schedule for Who Will Speak and When:** The meeting needs to run smoothly and should not last more than 30 minutes. The offending spouse should not feel invited to speak until the end of the meeting. Pauses between pieces of the intervention will invite the spouse to begin to rebuttal each thing that is said.

When the offending spouse comes into the room a designated person (preferably the offended spouse, if he/she is composed enough to do so effectively) should greet him/her and say:

"I am sorry that it is necessary to surprise you like this. I have tried to talk to you in person about your [blank; pornography or adultery] but you would not hear me. It is a problem that cannot be ignored. We want to address it with you. Please sit. When we are finished we will give you an opportunity to respond."

After explaining the purpose for the meeting there are three things that would need to occur:

- a. **Give Evidence that There Is a Problem:** Walk through the financial records, phone records, internet history, e-mail exchanges, testimony from people at work, or other pieces of evidence that reveals there is a problem. If there are verifiable consequences that the offending spouse or family have experienced as a result of the sexual sin, those should be given as well.

This is not a time to talk about how hurtful or offensive the sexual sin has been. It is not a time to talk about what the influence on the children will be if the sin continues. Those are subjective things (true, but subjective) that can be dismissed by a hard-hearted person as "you being sensitive" or "you blowing things out of proportion." Those things can only be effectively discussed once repentance has occurred.

- b. **Each Person Share:** Each person present takes turn expressing their care for the sinning spouse and that the facts point to an immediate need for change. Each of these sharing times should be brief; two to five minutes. It can be reiterated that those in the intervention are not taking sides with the offended spouse as the "innocent spouse." Marital enrichment may need to be done, but it after covenant-breaking sin is forsaken and marital restoration has been done.

The core message of these talks are, "We love you too much to be silent. The situation is too serious to be passive. We are here to call you to acknowledge the truth, repent, and take steps to be restored to God and your marriage."

- c. **Call for a Decision:** The meeting ends with a presentation of the team's proposed recovery plan and consequences if that plan is rejected. Both the recovery plan and consequences should be articulated with clear visual evidence that both are prepared to be enacted. It is at this point that the sinning spouse is invited to speak in response to the question, "Which one will you choose?"

Step Five: Rehearse Intervention, Assess Motives, and Pray

At the end of the intervention planning meeting, it is wise to walk through the meeting so that the team members will be familiar with the rhythm of the meeting. For most people this will be their first intervention and creating comfort with the process is important to effectively conduct the intervention.

Once everyone knows what is involved there are two things each member should do in preparation for the intervention. First, each member should commit to pray for the offending spouse and the intervention meeting. Strategies and meetings don't change hearts. That is God's work, so an intervention should be prayed for fervently. Second, each member should assess his/her motives. Mark Laaser give four areas of personal assessment in preparation for a personal confrontation, but also apply well to a group intervention.

"If you are thinking of confronting a sex addict alone, you first need to take stock of yourself. Consider these four questions: (1) Are you able to confront the addict with a spirit of love and gentleness?... (2) Are you in a

codependent relationship with the addict?... (3) Is your own conscience clear in this area?... (4) Will you be able to follow through on the intervention? (p. 141)” Mark Laaser in *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*

Step Six: Conduct the Intervention

By this point you simply need the courage to follow through. An intervention is highly uncomfortable for everyone involved. No one feels qualified. It is common to second guess whether every appeal that could have been made was made or if the recovery plan and consequences for non-compliance are too strict / lenient. But you got to this point through the collective counsel of both professionals and friends with prayer. As long as the evidence of sin is strong, then it is wise to move forward in spite of the second guessing that naturally arise from any social interaction this awkward.

Step Seven: Follow Through Based upon Spouse’s Response

Plans live and die more on their execution than their preparation. If the offending spouse does repent, then it is essential that the intervention team serve as accountability and encouragement during the time when the recovery plan is being enacted. With a repentant response, the couple should be encouraged to work through these False Love and True Betrayal materials with a trained mentor or counselor.

If the offending spouse does not repent, then it is equally essential that the intervention team support the offended spouse in implementing the consequences. In this situation the offended spouse will be facing intense emotions of rejection, anger, guilt, and fear. The intervention team should care for the offended spouse as he/she experiences these waves of emotions. At the same time, the team should regularly contact the offending spouse to remind him/her of their prayers and to encourage him/her to embrace the proposed recovery plan.

Appendix B

How to Talk to Children When Sexual Sin Affects the Family

Written by Caroline Von Helm, M.A. and Brad Hambrick, Th.M.

When sexual sin invades the life of a family, every member of that family is greatly affected. Not only is the impact large, but the impact is also unique upon each individual family member. The most innocent of the victims, and the ones who frequently received the least quality or quantity of care, are the children.

Children young and old need both *honesty* and *hope* during and after the crisis. The facts, which should be age-appropriately honest, need to be delivered in a way that is clear and as hopeful as the situation allows. As parents (both offended and offending parent), our instinct is most often to shield our children from this hurtful reality and to try to make things "less painful" for them.

"Less painful" is an appropriate goal as long as it does not come at the cost of being truthful or leaves a void for legitimate questions a child may have about his/her family, home, and future. If "less painful" compromises the child's age-appropriate ability to know the truth or being able to anticipate the future (at least to the degree that is possible), then "less painful" creates more harm than it alleviates pain.

Case Study:

The following case study is a fictitious example of a family of six walking through the process of a mother slowly finding out that her husband is committing adultery with a co-worker. It is meant to help you apply the recommendations that follow, by having an example that is less personal than your current situation.

Caitlyn is three years old. She stays at home with her mom most days, enjoys being outside, and loves reading stories with her dad. She has older siblings who go to school. Caleb is six and in the first grade, Kayla is eleven and just entering middle school, and Jacob is fourteen and starting high school. From the outside, all looks good for this family.

They are active at church, have a small group that they love. The children are involved in sports, drama, and other extra curricular activities. Dad works hard to support his family financially. They look like your typical American family; the kind that you would want to have over for dinner.

Behind closed doors things are quite different. Dad is critical, and emotionally absent most of the time. He will do what is asked, but rarely seems excited and does not initiate family time or individual activities with the children. He asks the standard questions about grades, school, and friends; but seems uninterested beyond those topics.

Mom does her best to compensate for Dad's lack of involvement by over-involvement. She tries to make sure they have everything they need... and want. This creates tension between she and dad, because they can never get ahead financially. For this and other reasons, Mom and Dad neither value time with each other.

The most recent tension has been created because mom found some emails from Dad to a co-worker that to her seem flirtatious and inappropriate. Dad quickly minimized them and then proceeded to berate mom for looking at his personal things and not trusting him.

Over the course of the next few months, mom continues to see emails, and eventually text messages that confirmed her suspicion that Dad was having an affair. After multiple attempts at confrontation and many arguments, dad admitted to his actions. Mom was devastated, Dad was angry, *and the children were confused.*

What Does the Family Do Now?

The scenario above is meant as a framework to use when discussing how to discuss sexual sin by a parent with children. There are many things to keep in mind as you prepare for this type of conversation. The points below are meant to orient you to how these situations affect a child, appropriate expectations of a child when he/she first learns of the sexual sin, expectations afterward learning of the sexual sin, and the type of assistance a child needs to process this information.

1. An event of this magnitude and the subsequent parental conflict / absence / distraction can be traumatic for the children involved, even adult children.
2. If your child has not reached puberty and/or has no knowledge of or exposure to sex, your conversations about what has happened should not describe what happened in sexual language.
3. As children age and develops sexually, they may ask questions about things that have happened during this time. Answering these questions in age-appropriate ways is an important part of helping them process the grief and trauma associated with these events.
4. Your child’s feelings may be more or less intense than the feelings of the offended spouse. Both parents need to accept whatever feelings surface, help the child to name those feelings, and understand how those feelings relate to the changes in their life, home, and family.
5. If a traumatic experience happens to children who are pre-school age or above, they will remember it and may need to process those memories at each developmental stage as they are able to comprehend more of their personal-family history.
6. Most children will not process (healthily assimilate into their life story) their emotions about a traumatic event until they feel safe enough to do it. Once you and your spouse have reached a “better” place and feel as if you are “moving on,” that may be when the children decide to process their own feelings. This will feel like it drags out the healing process for the parents, but you can not rush your children through their process anymore than the offending spouse could be rushed to repentance and the offended spouse rushed to forgiveness.
7. The biggest “damage” that has been done is undermining the child’s sense of security and definition of love. This is true regardless the age of the child. The care and aftercare for a child should focus upon providing a healthy sense of security and balanced expression of love.
8. When it comes to having the “what’s going on” talk, the ideal situation would be for both parents and a neutral third person to talk to the children together.
9. The content of the “what’s going on” talk should be decided before the talking to the child. If an agreement cannot be reached, then wait until an agreement can be reached. The time period that passes should be as short as possible, waiting more than four to six weeks becomes very confusing for the children.
10. There may have to be more than one conversation depending on the age differences in your children. If your children are in the same age / developmental range, then one conversation can be had with all family members present.

If your children are at different age / developmental stages do not try to talk to everyone at the same time. But do make sure that what you say to everyone is as consistent in content and language as age-appropriateness will allow. Older children should be told if there are things their younger siblings do not know, and do not need to know at the current time.

11. Make sure there is someone in your children’s lives who will be their support. This is especially important for the older children and even children who are out of the house who often get overlooked in this process.
12. If the sexual sin is not resulting in lifestyle changes (i.e., parental separation, legal action, job loss, pregnancy, etc...) seek counsel about what to disclose to your children. All the information your children may need is that you and your spouse have encountered problems because of hurtful choices by a parent, and that Mom and Dad trying to make things better.
13. Encourage children to ask questions as they have them. It is unreasonable and unhealthy to expect children to formulate their questions at the “information meeting.” When you give them the freedom to ask questions, it is wise to also tell them you don’t have all the answers and that there may be some things that will stay between mom and dad.

14. Remember that children will process at a slower pace and may ask questions years after the occurrence. Being prepared for this prevents the emotional processing of your children from setting you back or giving you reason to be unforgiving. A negative emotional response by the parents to a child's questions, is a factor that reinforces the common false belief that the child has some responsibility for what happened in the marriage.
15. Guard yourself from feeling the need to "make up" for what is happening in your family. Neither gifts nor penance-love will make up for the offense or alleviate the impact of the offense. If anything they will teach a distorted view of the gospel, repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and family. Patiently submitting to the reconciliation process is the most helpful thing for your children (when possible). Only God can heal the hurt in your children not things or imbalanced love.

If the sexual sin is resulting in a lifestyle change, then consider the following:

Birth through Five Years

While you may think that at these ages children are not be able to tell something is going on, children are very perceptive at reading emotional changes in their environment. If mom is always crying, dad is always angry, or there is bickering and fighting, children in this age group can tell. They may become more "needy," experience developmental delays, or regression in already learned skills as expressions of how changes in the home environment are affecting them.

The goal for parents is to be both real (fake calm when you think the child is looking is not enough) and reassuring. Although your spouse may have had an affair, you still have to be a parent. You cannot spend days crying, angry, or searching for more/new information. If restraining these behaviors is hard for you, ask for help. Take time to see a counselor or ask a friend to work through these True Betrayal materials with you.

No conversations should be had with your preschooler unless a decision is made for the offending spouse to leave for an extended or indefinite period of time. If spouses are staying together and no one is moving out, then preschool children do not need to know what has happened. Later in their life (as adults or older teens) there may be an appropriate time to share what God has done or what happened, but preschool children have no way of comprehending what you would tell them. The main goal at this age is to provide consistency, love, and safety. This is their greatest need. Leaning on friends and trusted caregivers will be important during this time.

If the offending parent leaves the house and the child is between two and five years old, you should give some explanation as to where the parent is going. The most optimal plan would be for this conversation to be factual and done together with a third party present. The person leaving should be the primary one speaking and communicate the following information:

"I am going to stay with (**location** – the child will need to know because it can cause more anxiety to say he or she is just "going away") for (**duration** – it is important to tell the child the duration so they know an ending point. If a time period can not be determined, then be honest and tell them you don't know how long). I know it will be hard for you to be away from me, so I will come see you (give **visitation plan**)."

Notice in this conversation, you did not give the preschooler the answer to the "why" question. Most will ask, but some may not. Do not try to answer the "why" question for pre-schoolers unless they ask since it is hard for them to spontaneously transition to abstract thinking based upon a conversation prompt, especially in an emotionally powerful setting.

When they do ask "Why?" the offending parent should tell them:

"I made some choices that I should not have made, and when we make bad choices that really hurt people we need to give the person we hurt time and space. So, I am going to (location) to give Mommy/Daddy some space." Reiterate your love for them and that you will miss them.

There will be tears, shock, and an inability to comprehend what you are saying. Their brains are not developed for this type of transition. They do not have the life experience to grasp what it means or know what to do when a parent is absent for punitive reasons ("punishment" is the category they do have to comprehend a marriage "time out"). Be patient. Prepare for tantrums and disruptions to their sleeping and eating patterns.

The experience of children (at any of the ages discussed) will look a lot like grief, because they are grieving the loss of what they have known as "normal." For this reason the parenting tips and family devotion appendix will be an adaptation to the "Taking the Journey of Grief with Hope" seminar. That seminar is based upon the same nine steps of suffering as this study, so you should be walk with your child through his/her experience based upon what you are learning in this study.

If the parents stay together, then keeping preschooler's routine as normal as possible is vitally important. Enrolling in programs like Mother's Day Out or preschool for a couple of days a week may allow the offended parents time to work through what has happened.

The offended spouse will often say to the offending spouse, "Your relationship with your child is your relationship. I'm not getting in the middle of it." This is a deadly message to send your child. Children have not yet learned the intricacies of relationships; they have not learned to talk about their feelings.

As a parent, the offended spouse must model the journey of forgiveness. This includes encouraging the child to express their feelings and telling the offending parent what they are thinking. You are not responsible for the other parent's behavior, but you can teach your child in the midst of this difficult time how to handle conflict and express emotions healthily.

It is important to think about what you are teaching your child through modeling at this time. Children will learn more about emotions, reconciliations, and relationships from what they see you do with/towards your spouse than what you "teach" them during this time.

Elementary Age Children

At each stage in the developmental discussion, all of the previous material should be considered still relevant unless the next maturation level material says something contradictory.

Elementary age children are more verbal and have more cognitive ability than pre-schoolers, but they should not have sexual knowledge or understanding yet. Unless you want to explain sex to them, you still do not reveal the nature of the conflict.

When talking with your elementary aged child about what has happened, it is wise to say things like:

- "Mom/Dad made choices that hurt me."
- "Mom and Dad are working on making our marriage better."
- "Mom/Dad is working on forgiving...."
- "Mom/Dad is working on building trust with...."

Children at this age will ask lots of questions, like "What did you do? Are you getting divorced? Do you still love Mom/Dad?" Be honest where you can, but when the answer to their question is not age-appropriate or is undecided it is appropriate to say, "Some of what happens between Mom and Dad is not beneficial for you to know," or, "Those are things you can know when you are older."

Reassurance of your love for them is important during and after each of these conversations. Pointing them towards God and prayer is essential. Pray with your child after these conversations. But when you do pray speak in ways that express where they are, not trying to "teach" them what or how to think instead of talking to God on their behalf.

These conversations are a great opportunity to talk about how even parents may let them down, but God that is faithful and will not let them down.

If the decision is made that the offending spouse is going to leave the home for a time period, then a conversation much like you had with your two to five year old will be necessary.

Middle / High School Children

By this age, children are becoming sexually aware and likely know what sex is. You as their parents may have already had "the talk" with them. If this is the case, then being factually honest about the sexual sin is appropriate. You would rather your child hear your confession from you than from someone else.

If the sin is adultery or an emotional affair, you should not give details about the sexual relationship. They may want to know how long the affair went on, and it is important to tell them. They may ask questions about the other woman or man: what they look like, if they have children, how old their children are, and similar questions. These are the details that are important for pre-teens and teens. It is appropriate to answer these questions.

The biggest thing that children in these age categories will be thinking about is “How does this affect my life?” They are at an egocentric time period in life so their fear is that somehow their standard or norm of living will be altered.

The other tendency for children at this age will be for them to take on the role of protector for the offended spouse. It is vitally important to not let the child do this. It will be tempting to want a “team” against the offender, but in the long run will only do more damage that has to be worked through.

If the situation extends and children are not kept informed as to the general things that are happening in the restoration process, some children may begin to defend or excuse behaviors of the offending parent. Most times this happens is a child’s attempt to just want things “back to normal”, or because they feel sorry for the parent that has had to leave. Affirming your child’s care for that parent, validating the “hardness” of the situation, and reassuring them that you both love them is what is needed. Do not try to get them on a side, give them time and space to continue processing their own feelings, ask if they have questions, and provide the freedom to appropriately share what they are experiencing.

Adult Children

Sometimes children who have moved out of the house are thought to be okay or unaffected. This is simply not true. Children, regardless of their age, will feel like their basis of security is shaken when their parents marriage is traumatized or dissolved.

Adult children may feel like all that they knew growing up was false. They will question if the offending parent was really who they thought they were, and may even question the validity of marriage. The disclosure of sexual sin can be used as an excuse to turn from God and how they were raised.

It is vitally important for children in this age group to have an adult who knows them and is aware of the situation to reach out to them and check on them regularly. Unless someone reaches out to them, they are forced to process things alone and without the benefit of seeing what their parents are going through. An objective opinion, not just what their mom and dad are saying, will be an important part of them processing these changes in their home of origin.

When the Children Find Out First

What do you do if your child comes to you because they saw a parent looking at things on the internet, or flirting with someone in public, or with questionable magazines?

In this situation, it is important for the offended spouse to assure the child of the following things:

1. They did the right thing by coming to you.
2. You will do your best to find out what happened.
3. Once you do have an answer, plan a time for both parents to talk with the children.
4. Continue to validate that they did the right thing in speaking up, they are not in trouble, and they did not get any one else in trouble (witnesses don’t cause problems; they only observe them).

If a child is in the position of witnessing the sexual sin and then reports it, it is very likely they will feel responsible for the disruption in the family which ensues. They will need consistent reassurance that they did not cause the disruption. Ideally, this reassurance should come from both parents as well as the adult individual identified as supporter of the children.

Appendix G

What Do I Do Now?

A plumb line of the Summit counseling ministry is, “We don’t do events; we create resources.” That means you should be asking yourself, “What can or should I do with this information now?”

We have created a series of brief videos that answer that what-now question from several different perspectives. Each of these can be found at:

www.bradhambrick.com/whatnow

Personal Study or Small Group

Question: I’ve been to several of the Summit counseling seminars and notice there appears to be a couple of different kinds. You frequently recommend studying them as a small group or with a friend. That seems like a great idea, but since I haven’t done that before I’m not quite sure how to start something like that. Do you mind giving me guidance?

Pursue Personal Counseling

Question: After attending this seminar I realized I would like to pursue counseling to help me grow in this area. It sounded like there are several different options available. Would you mind explaining to me what those are and how I could connect with the one that best serves me need?

Leveraging My Workplace

Question: I’ve heard rumors that I’m supposed to be able to use the Summit counseling seminars to leverage my workplace for gospel influence. My first impression is that it sounds awkward and intrusive; like I’m telling people they’ve “got issues” or “need help.” But I’m also worried about putting up Christian material that might be offensive to some people who visit my workplace. But I would at least like to hear what you’ve got to say. How would this work?

As a Professional Counselor

Question: I’m a licensed counselor (LPC) and came across the Summit counseling seminars. I’m excited to see the church addressing these kinds of subjects, and I’m curious how you might see someone in my position (or a LCSW or LMFT) using the materials. I can see recommending them to my clients who are open to an overtly Christian aspect to their counseling, but it seems like there could be more uses than just counseling homework. Could you share your thoughts on how those in private practice might use these resources?

Our goal in Summit counseling is to (1) equip the church to care for one another and our community with excellence; (2) provide quality counseling services that allow our people to get involved in the lives of others with confidence – knowing additional, experienced care is available to come alongside them if needed; and (3) create ways for our members and other Christians in our community to leverage their workplace and careers for greater gospel impact in their spheres of influence.

We hope this seminar and these videos give you a vision for how this can happen and stirs a passion in you to be a part of God’s work of redeeming and restoring hurting individuals and families.