

Counseling after Adultery
Biblical Counseling 301 Class 4 – July 1, 2018

I. Adultery

A. Definition

1. A violation of the “two become one” nature of the marriage relationship (*Mark 10:8*)...
2. Emotional and/or physical displacement of the one to whom you are covenanted...
3. By unfaithfully attaching to another love.

B. Usually demonstrated in sexual union with someone not your spouse.

C. Biblical injunctions and warnings against and indictments for adultery:

1. Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:9 (*The two become one... let man not separate what God joined*)
2. Exodus 20:14 and Lev. 20:10 (*Don't commit adultery because the punishment is death*)
3. Jer. 3:6-10; Ezek. 16:15-63 (*Israel is committing spiritual adultery against God in idolatry*)
4. 1 Thess. 4:3-8; 2 Tim. 2:20-22; Heb. 13:4 (*flee immorality because God will judge it*)

D. Commonly referred to as “an affair” but that is a mistake (*sounds happy/carefree*).

II. What the Bible Says about Adultery (Grace Fellowship Church, Florence, Ky., by permission)

A. Common Contributing Causes

1. Absence from a spouse (Proverbs 7:19-20)
2. Advice from the opposite sex (Proverbs 5:3-6; see Titus 2:3-5 where it may be implied)
3. Alone with the opposite sex (implied in Job 24:15 “no eye will see”)
4. Attractiveness of the opposite sex (Proverbs 6:25, 9:17)
5. Attitude of immature, foolish, egotistical men or women (Proverbs 9:13-18; 18:1)
6. Advances of willing women (*for men*) (Proverbs 7:10-18)
7. Arousal of inner lusts (James 1:13-15)

B. Consequences

1. Defiles vow to the spouse and invites God's judgment (Hebrews 13:4)
2. Denies wisdom and what would have been best (Proverbs 5:7-11)
3. Destroy yourself and becomes despised worse than a thief (Proverbs 6:30-35)
4. Deprived of ability to make restitution (Proverbs 6:31-35)
5. Destroys the soul (*inner life*) of the guilty (Proverbs 6:32, 7:26-27, 6:27-29)
6. Deeds are open to God (Proverbs 5:21-23; Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10-11)
7. Disease becomes a threat (Deuteronomy 7:15; Romans 1: 22-23; 1 Cor. 5:7)

C. Cures

1. Keep God's commands close (Proverbs 7:1-5; 6:20-24)
2. Avoid tempting situations (Proverbs 5:8; Rom. 13:14; I Thess. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:22)
3. (*Modified*) Learn to walk in the Spirit so you don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-18; Col. 3:5)
4. (*Added*) Continually grow in a cleaved, weaved, one flesh relationship with your spouse (Genesis 2:23-25)

III. **A Chain of Events that Leads to Adultery (by Wayne Mack)**

We are not saying this is always the way it happens, but it is a common pattern. Part of leading people back into a reconciled relationship is **helping the offender see the steps towards sexual sin which got them** to the point of what we usually consider “actual adultery.” Each step had the built-in opportunity to move towards the Lord or away from Him. Repenting of the physical act of adultery is **only part** of the issue. (See James 4:7-8)

1. Presence of internal and/or external circumstantial factors that begin to open the door.
2. **Growing awareness** of a particular person.
3. Time spent **noticing, thinking about** the person’s desirability – physically or relationally.
4. Unplanned, **innocent meetings**, contacts.
5. Spend time **comparing** with present mate.
6. Spend time thinking about personal unhappiness.
7. Planned, **intentional contacts**.
8. After occasion of natural interaction – seek other person out for **conversation**.
9. Continued contact, conversation with this person after others depart.
10. **Increasing awareness of good feelings** when you are with the other person.
11. Compare the way you feel about this person with the way you feel about your mate.
12. Compare the way you are **treated** by this person with the way you are treated by your mate.
13. Look for ways you **can be with the other person** for **apparently legitimate** reasons.
14. **Exchange of seemingly or near-innocent forms** of physical contact.
15. Escalates to embracing, perhaps an affectionate cheek peck and then to passionate kissing.
16. Experience **struggles with your conscience**.
17. Minimization or **denial followed by rationalizing**.
18. Desire for contact (relational and physical) with each other continues.
19. Actual sexual involvement.
20. Additional covert meetings.
21. Double life.
(#22-#24 may or may not happen)
22. Others are suspicious and confront you.
23. Defensiveness, denial.
24. Truth revealed or exposed.
25. Decision time (1 of 3 choices)
 - a. *Decide to continue the adultery and remain married*
 - b. *Make plans to separate or get a divorce*
 - c. *Repent and seek to rebuild your marriage*

IV. **Healing the Wounds**

- A. Steps to take (from Peggy Vaughn’s *An Overview of Affairs* in CTI’s Urgent Care Adultery)
 1. Answer all questions and persevere through the inevitable emotional turmoil.
 2. Sever contact with the third party and build trust through actions, not promises.
 3. Make a commitment to honesty and to ongoing honest communication.
- B. Preventing Reoccurrence
 1. Develop oneness (Gen. 2:22-25; Eph. 5:21-35)
 2. Live with integrity (Proverbs 18:1, Psalm 51:6, 10)
 3. Live for eternity (Romans 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:9-11)

V. How Does a Couple Reconcile a Marriage Damaged by Infidelity?

A. The first thing necessary is repentance on the part of the offender.

John the Baptist spoke of repentance when he said, *“Bring forth fruit in keeping with your repentance”* (Matthew 3:8). Zaccheus, after Jesus said He was coming to his house, portrayed repentance when he said he’d give back four times as much as he had taken from everyone (Luke 19). Jesus, in Luke 17, says we should forgive people *“as many times as they repent.”*

The word “repentance” means literally “a change of mind” and signifies a change of direction. Whether it occurs in the life of an unbeliever or the life of a believer, it means we “agree with God that my way was wrong and His way is right.” In repentance, the change in mind is movement away from the sin and towards God because of conviction of sin. It is in no way dependent upon the response of the offended spouse.

In adultery, when there is repentance, most offenders repent only after they have been caught. Because of that, an offended partner has reason to question the sincerity of the apparent repentance. Accordingly, an offender needs to base the **fullness of their repentance not on the basis of the presence or absence of trust or forgiveness on the part of the one offended.** Our repentance must be based solely on what we know to be true and right in God’s sight. The desire in repentance is a clear conscience and restored fellowship with God. Period. (See Psalm 51)

B. The second thing necessary is confession to the Lord (1 John 1:9).

Confession and repentance are like two sides of the same coin. Repentance is the change of direction from sin towards God, the “A” side of moving back to God. Confession is an offender naming her or his sin to the Lord, the “B” side. Confession is not a kind of quick, general, “I’m sure sorry about what I did.” Confession is more specific, like, *“God, I willfully turned aside from your commandment to be faithful to my husband, I lied and I stole. I lied to my husband when I lay with him when I was already taking someone else into an intimate relationship. I stole when I took someone else’s husband from her and someone’s dad from them. In doing this, I have broken the trust, security and beauty of our marriage and opened the door for the enemy to attack us. I do not deserve it, but I ask that because of Jesus dying for me, that you would forgive all my sins and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I believe you will because you said you will.”*

In recognition of sin (by conviction and repentance), this confession is an expression of sorrow/regret to God with a request for pardon.

At this point, it is important to address the issue of “double-mindedness.” James speaks of it in James 1:8, *“a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”* Part of the reality of adultery, and especially so where the adulterer is a believer, is that the guilty party knows it was wrong and generally feels a little bad about it even while it is happening. Some mistake that “feeling sorry while sinning” as repentance; it is **not even close** to repentance. It may be *conviction*, but when the person continues in sin, they are quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) and ignoring the gift of conviction.

Here is how James addresses it later in 4:7-8. He tells the convicted believer to *“wash your hands, you sinner, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”* Washing the hands is acknowledgement and confession of the sin and turning from the behavior. For an adulterer, however, the greater problem is very often not a lack of confession or ‘initial’ turning. The greater problem so often is that she or he feels remorse and says they are sorry, and eventually return to their sin. Why? Because they never addressed the underlying sin (thus, double mindedness) that gave rise to adultery. *I didn’t just get emotionally and physically intimate with someone not my husband/wife. I made an idol of excitement and the life of a bon vivant and resented the discipline imposed by living honorably before the Lord.*

C. The third thing necessary is an apology to the offended spouse.

In this, the offender names the sin (both the action and the sinful attitudes underlying the action) and acknowledges and owns the pain caused to the offended. The apology is like the confession in that it is specific, not general. We don't sin "generally" in adultery (e.g., *Sorry if I hurt you by what happened*). We sin very "specifically." Adultery is a specific sin against specific promises in the context of a specific relationship.

This apology is never done with demand of a certain response by the offended. It is **never**, "*I said I'm sorry. What do you want? You've done stuff wrong, too, you know.*" Apology is admitting to the other persons what you have done against them, expressing regret for the pain caused them and asking for forgiveness. It is also humbly giving them time to work through it. (Recommend that you read the chapter on *Confession/Forgiveness* in the book Peacemaker by Ken Sande.)

While I have no specific verses on it (other than John the Baptist's "fruits in keeping with repentance" comment), I believe that the fourth thing necessary is for the offender to take whatever steps the offended needs them to take (within reason) in order to show a commitment to restoring the relationship. This includes the offender telling the other person that the illicit relationship is over.

It includes no further contact with the person the offender committed adultery with. It could require moving or switching jobs. It includes not meeting on the sly to let the other person down gently or trying to help them with the "hardship" incurred by the change. It may involve counseling to try to address areas of weakness in the spiritual or marital lives of the couple so that they could be strengthened to help prevent reoccurrence. It might involve at some future point a "marriage renewal" ceremony to formally put the past behind and to renew pledges publicly for the future of the marriage.

D. The fourth thing necessary is for the offended to forgive the offender as much as he himself or she herself has been forgiven.

Luke 17 shows Jesus saying "*If your brother sins, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him.*" While I personally doubt the full applicability of this to adultery (e.g., the offending husband or wife goes out each day multiple times to have sexual relations with anyone they can find and then returns and says, "I repent"), the main point is clear. Nothing is beyond forgiveness.

In Matthew 18, Jesus explains this by means of the parable of the king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. One man owed the king 1000 talents (millions of dollars) but was forgiven the debt. But he then went out and imprisoned another man who owed him 100 denarii (100 days' wages; for us maybe \$15,000). Jesus said we are like the one who owed 1000 talents (to God), and anyone who sins against us is like the one owing 100 denarii. It doesn't mean it is a small debt. It doesn't mean that what the other person did is inconsequential. It means that when we see ourselves in light of where we stand before God, we have no right to hold someone's sin against them. If they have repented, confessed and apologized, we are told to forgive them.

For some people, forgiveness occurs fairly easily. They know their own sin, they know their partner's regret and they extend mercy. For others, forgiveness is very hard to give (such as the original question implies). Several common obstacles may stand in the way of forgiveness.

One obstacle to forgiveness is the question of whether the person is really repentant. Is there an internal change with God? Or are they just saying what they think we want to hear so that we'll get past this "little ripple in the relationship"? Some of what has been written above helps address that topic. If more is needed, counseling with a pastor or biblically minded counselor experienced with cases of adultery may be needed.

A second obstacle is related to the first. It is the offender's temptation to try to "make all this go away quickly." Sometimes the offender is more interested in a quick apology and a quick forgiveness than in restoring the one who was injured by this egregious breach of trust. The offender needs to humbly give room to the offended to work through their hurt, anger, sense of betrayal.

The third obstacle is the offended person's spiritual immaturity (they don't know God well nor the ways of God) or their unwillingness to trust God and obey Him by extending forgiveness. That is a matter of personal discipleship, and something that a same sex mature friend from church or biblically minded counselor might be able to help with. Sometimes it involves teaching; sometimes it involves listening and praying. Sometimes it involves gentle rebuke. Sometimes it requires all those.

The last obstacle we'll look at is the issue of trust, the original question posed here, usually expressed as "*How do I know they won't do it again?*" What they often mean is "Perhaps I will forgive if I know I won't get burned again."

E. There are several things to say about trust.

First, the offended person who walks through this with the Lord will go through various stages of trust. For some, many occur all at once. For others, each new stage is felt perceptibly as a new level of risk. They have to have an element of trust to even listen to and talk with the offender at all after learning of the adultery. They need some element of trust to remain in the home with the offender. They need some element of trust to re-establish the relationship to a place of oneness.

They will have to go through a level of trust to confide in one faithful friend to pray and support them through this. They will go through a level of trust to have an intimate relationship. But the offender also has to do the kinds of things that tend to create trust. If the offender was "caught" – that is, they didn't come clean on their own but confessed only after being found out, trust is harder to win. The offended person can understandably think "you'd still be doing it if you'd not been caught." Here are some things an offender can do:

Offer to the offended person the right to ask any questions they wish for a period of time (usually no more than 30 days) and give entirely honest answers. At the same time, offended people should remember that sometimes questions they have are for information they a) don't really need and b) that can be a stumbling block to them later. For example, you ask about the places they would meet and they tell you "Martin's parking lot" and you might never be able to go into Martin's without thinking about that. **What difference does it make that you know that? Did it really help?**

Remember: Offender must not expect or demand anything from your spouse. You are the guilty one in this. How can the one who is guilty tell the judge what the judge can do with them? Remove yourself from contact with the person (physical, personal, verbal, emailing, etc.) with whom you had the adulterous relationship to the extent possible (usually can be pretty complete). It may require moving or changing jobs or churches, but marriage and family are worth more than those things. In conversation with the offended spouse, differentiate between anything they may have done wrong to contribute to your wandering (e.g., lack of attention, lack of affection, etc.) and your decision to wander.

It is entirely appropriate when rebuilding a relationship to look at the areas of dissatisfaction that were there prior to the adultery, but they must not be combined with the adultery as if her excess weight or his involvement with work "drove you to adultery." Adultery is never by chauffeur. We make decision after decision to get us in the place where adultery can occur.

VI. Homework

- A. Read the following three articles.
- B. Come back next week prepared to discuss 2-3 things you would do and 1-2 things you would not do if you were to counsel a couple where adultery had taken place.
- C. Be prepared for a counseling video next week.

Appendix One
Five Steps to Repairing the Damage Caused by Infidelity. Colossians 3:13

by Louis and Melissa McBurney

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—Louis and Melissa McBurney were co-founders of Marble Retreat, a Christian counseling center in Colorado.

In the ideal scenario, confessing to adultery results in repentance, forgiveness, and a resolve not to repeat the sin. But forgiveness can be slow to appear, and fears of reoccurrence can be very strong. Here are five keys to heal the wounds caused by infidelity.

Genuine Remorse

As we hear from adulterers in counseling, we find that many try to minimize the significance of betraying their vows. Our secular culture reinforces the notion that just a “one-night stand” isn’t such a big deal. But that thinking is a dangerous deception. All adultery creates hurt and a huge barrier to ever trusting again. Not only was your marriage jeopardized, but any kind of casual attitude about the sinful choice also jeopardizes relationships with your family and God. While there can be repentance, grace, and forgiveness, they have a price.

Genuine Confession

Make no attempt to justify or minimize the sin. That helps rebuild the relationship and makes you aware of your vulnerability. You have a will and the power to make your choices. As a Christian, you also have the Holy Spirit to help you avoid giving in to the temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

Develop Self-understanding

You said you don’t know why you committed adultery. But if you honestly seek the truth and explore the underlying causes of your adulterous relationship, you’ll find answers. Often they lie in self-doubts about being attractive or desired. At other times it may be a need for excitement and risk taking. There may be an impulsivity left over from adolescence. While there are many reasons that can contribute to adulterous behavior, they’re explanations, not excuses.

Spiritual Forgiveness before God

We can understand Psalm 51 in which King David expressed his broken heart to God about his adultery with Bathsheba. He realized his sin was ultimately an affront to God: “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight” (verse 4). Realizing the destructive spiritual consequences of adultery is essential to total restoration. David went on to plead, “Create in me a pure heart, O God” (verse 10). And he does! Every time.

Set Firm Behavioral Boundaries

Don’t allow yourself to go into relationships and situations where you might be in danger. I (Louis) know when a woman is coming on to me in a seductive way—most men do! And I know I’m titillated by the flirtatious attention. I also know that’s a temptation I don’t need. I can flirt with that woman and expose myself to the excitement of her sensuality (and the risk of indulging in inappropriate touch or talk), or I can make sure I steer clear of her. Choose to set boundaries that will keep you from falling.

Appendix Two
My Emotional 'Affair'

by *Anonymous* ©Family Life Today, 2010

About 15 years into marriage, my heart started turning cold toward my husband. He had an odd schedule at work, and then he spent most of his leisure hours volunteering at our church. When I tried to talk to him about spending less time at church and more with me and our children, he angrily shot back, "You're just trying to hold me back from doing God's work." He then began punishing me by turning his back to me in the bedroom.

Feeling lonely and rejected, I confided my misery to a friend who had called about an upcoming ministry project. My friend was kind and understanding. Unfortunately, no one had ever told me to guard my conversations with the opposite sex. The friend was a man and a very good-looking one at that.

We began talking more frequently. I thought the conversations were innocent, even though they now included discussions about the struggles in his marriage. Gradually, our phone relationship escalated to flirting, and his calls were the highlight of my week. Neither of us told our spouses.

At church, I noticed that he watched me a lot. I admit that I enjoyed the attention, the affirmative words, and the "high" I got with my schoolgirl crush. If someone had asked me if I was having an affair, I would have denied it. After all, there were no private lunches, there was no secret rendezvous, and there was no physical touch except for a public hug now and then or a slight touch of the hand. Everybody in our church hugged anyway so no one was the wiser ... or so I thought.

Our emotional affair rocked on for over a year until the day he said to me, "I think I'm in love with you." Honestly, I felt the same about him, but hearing the words jolted me into reality. I was so upset afterwards that I looked at myself in the mirror in shock and cried, "What have I done?"

I didn't like what I saw as the Holy Spirit replayed the ugly truth of my actions back to me. Had I been physically unfaithful to my husband? *No*. Had I committed adultery in my heart? *Yes*.

I plowed through days of agony before finally falling to my knees before God in surrender. One definition of relinquishment is "giving up title, releasing possession or control and yielding power." How could I do otherwise? I had been a Christian for 16 years. My body was not my own. I had been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20), so it was no longer my will that counted but His (Luke 22:42).

I confessed to God that I felt nothing for my husband, but that vows are not made to be broken. I would rather be unhappy the rest of my life than bring reproach to God's name, embarrass my children, or break up my family or anyone else's. As the Holy Spirit strengthened me, I heard the words in my heart that Jesus spoke to Peter over and over (John 21:15-17): "Do you love Me?"

"Yes Lord, I love You, and I repent."

"Then trust Me," said the still, small voice.

With my hands shaking and my heart racing, I made the call to tell my friend it was over. "I can't do this anymore because the Lord has convicted me," I told him. "Please don't call me again." Being an honorable man, he had never pressed me into anything, and he didn't now. He graciously made it easy for me to say goodbye.

I didn't think I would have to tell my husband. We changed churches for other reasons and, frankly, I was afraid to confess. Meanwhile our new church had a positive effect on both of us and our relationship was slowly improving. We spent more time together and our intimacy returned.

Finally, when I felt comfortable and with the prompting of the Holy Spirit, we sat down together one evening and I confessed. I didn't want any secrets between us.

My husband had some questions and then he shocked me by saying, "I knew it all along. Do you think I was blind to the looks and banter between you two?" He couldn't really explain why he had not confronted me, but I was so touched by his grace and forgiveness. For the first time he, too, confessed that he shared the blame for neglecting me and our family. It was a holy moment I'll never forget. Neither will I forget the surprise birthday present he presented to me a couple of weeks later—a 14k gold ring with my birthstone in it.

I learned five important things from this experience:

First, *there's nothing more important than my relationship with God.* I had to acknowledge that I had drifted from Him. When I got into a crisis, I became distracted and compromised, which led to sin.

Second, *the feelings of love for my husband are a direct result of my love for and obedience to God.* He rewards obedience. He would not have blessed sin and disobedience. When I put Him back on the throne of my life, I started receiving everything I needed for life, love, and happiness.

Third, *married women should not pour out their troubles to another man, or vice-versa.* It's a trap of the enemy. Satan wants to derail lives and marriages. Don't let him!

Fourth, *infatuation is not love.* It is selfish and doesn't meet the criteria of righteous love in 1 Corinthians 13:5-6.

Finally, *I chose to lead my heart instead of continuing to let it lead me.* Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick." I learned not to trust my heart for guidance or truth.

Now, many years later, my relationship with my husband continues to flourish. I never dreamed I could love him as much as I do. The Creator of marriage knows how to redeem it – for those who are willing to relinquish and lay down their own lives for the glory that is to come.

Appendix Three
Don't Let It Happen Again

These safeguarding measures can help prevent adultery from again taking place. James 1:14–15

by Jill Savage

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My husband, Mark, and I spend countless hours mentoring hurting marriages. We counsel others based on our own “back from the brink” experience many years ago when our marriage seemed hopeless. Many of these couples are dealing with damage caused by infidelity. The story is always the same: the unfaithful spouse develops a relationship that started as an innocent friendship. It was someone to talk to who listened and cared.

We know that story all too well. Even though no lines of unfaithfulness were crossed in our marriage, at the most difficult time of our relationship, I experienced attraction for a man I worked with. Luckily I realized the dangerous place I was in and got honest with Mark. We recognized the need for establishing boundaries in our personal lives that exist specifically to keep temptation at bay.

The Bible tells us that “each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:14–15). Temptation, enticement, desire, sin, death those are the steps infidelity takes. Because of that, we have to put boundaries in place that keep us from stepping into situations where temptation can take place.

As we talk to hurting couples about advance decisions needed to protect our marriages, we use as an example the line of trees along the west side of our house. The previous owners had wisely planted the trees to provide a hedge of protection against the winds that rage across the cornfields. When the hedge of trees was planted on our property, each tree was planted individually. As the trees grew in size and strength they worked together to protect our home from the unpredictable weather and wind.

In the same way, we need to plant a hedge of protection around our marriage, that is, we need to make advance decisions that will keep temptation at bay and the marriage a priority. Each hedge that we plant around our marriage will do the same. Each time we make one advance decision to protect our marriage we are on our way to building a marriage that is marked by faithfulness and on its way to lasting a lifetime.

Hedge 1: Choose wisely. Avoid unnecessarily spending time with someone of the opposite sex. For instance, if you're looking for a personal trainer at the local gym, choose someone of the same sex.

Hedge 2: Share carefully. If you find yourself sharing things about yourself or your marriage that you haven't or wouldn't share with your spouse, that's a red flag. Not all affairs are physical—an emotional affair is just as damaging.

Hedge 3: Stay in large, public settings. Determine not to meet one-on-one with anyone of the opposite sex. If your coworker asks if he or she can join you for lunch, ask a third person to join you as well. If necessary, don't hesitate to share the boundary you and your spouse have agreed upon in your marriage. You just might lead by example.

Hedge 4: Don't be naïve. Most people who end up in affairs don't set out to have one. Infidelity usually begins with an innocent relationship that, in time, moves to an emotional depth that crosses a line of fidelity.

Hedge 5: Increase your investment at home. Solid marriages are built by spending time together, laughing together, and playing together. If you aren't dating your mate, set up dates for the coming months and make spending time together a priority.

Hedge 6: Pay attention to your thought life. When all you think about is your spouse's faults, any other man or woman will look better. Make a list of the strengths that initially attracted you to your spouse. Increase encouragement and decrease criticism.

Hedge 7: Don't play the comparison game. We all make mistakes, have bad habits and annoying behaviors. When we compare a "new friend" to our spouse, it's an unfair comparison because we aren't seeing that person in a "living under the same roof, taking care of kids at 3 A.M., struggling to make ends meet" reality.

Hedge 8: Seek help. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. A Christian counselor can provide valuable perspective and help set new strategies for a marriage that can go the distance.

—Jill Savage is the founder of Hearts at Home, www.jillsavage.org