

The Price of Infidelity

By Kathy Harrison

If I were to lay my heart out on a table for you to see, it would be covered with deep scars. This would be the result of the land mines that exploded as I've walked through the territory called adultery. Some of my wounds still have scabs and under the right conditions can be torn off, and again I will bleed. It is not a very pretty sight. You would be tempted to turn away.

My self worth took a terrible blow. From the first morning that my husband, Richard told me of the affair, the losses have had a domino effect. Adultery is the ultimate disrespect for your wife and children. When that line was crossed, it told me that I had no value and neither did our four children. The trust I had given my husband for twenty-six years was shattered. After the first blow, my thoughts went to our children... how could their dad do this to them? He had seen each of them being born. I wanted to protect them, but the adultery would shake their worlds in ways that broke my heart. Next I thought of our church family and realized that it would never be the same. So many losses! So much pain!

I love being a minister's wife. I love working with women, planning social activities, the Bible studies I taught, the mentoring I did and most of the friendships. I was losing my position in ministry in our church without me having done anything wrong. I mourned the loss of so many friends... all the families that would leave. I was sad beyond belief.

Knowing that the *other* woman was someone that came to my home every Wednesday night sickened me. I remembered all of the times she had hugged me and all of the times I had prayed for her and truly cared about her. I now knew two Judas' had kissed me, her and my husband. I screamed and cried until exhaustion would over-take me.

The most difficult child to tell of the affair to was our oldest daughter. She had been married less than one month at the time of the disclosure. How my heart broke for her to find out that the father that had performed her wedding ceremony and said the words,, "forsaking all others," just three weeks before, was in the midst of an affair. I would have rather died than have her know this. All of the pictures we took as a family, the 500 guests, the prayer and blessing for her marriage. How could her dad do this to her? I have viewed the video from her wedding only once. To this day I will not look at it because it is too painful. A wonderful occasion blessed by God between two great Christian children now represented a tragedy. On their one-year anniversary I felt so sad because it was also the one-year anniversary of Richard's affair. The heartache of infidelity has a stranglehold on all involved for a long, long time.

When our youngest daughter was told, she cried in my lap for three hours. I rocked her like a baby and as each tear touched my cheek a piece of my heart broke off. She would be a senior at AG High School in the fall and experienced many embarrassing times during her last year of school. The scandal was gossip on the campus. She became withdrawn and told me she would never marry a Christian man. The wounds ran deep. Our sons basically told their dad that they would never respect him and couldn't stand seeing me being nice to him.

So many hurt people, I was overwhelmed, confused and felt helpless as the adultery ran its course. Lawsuits were threatened. Nasty letters came and some wanted my husband's head on a platter. I hid in our home most of the time and hoped on some level it was all just a horrible nightmare. And, just maybe I would wake up and find out it had never really happened.

I have shared only a small portion with you on the price one pays for adultery. I know that there are men also who have experienced this price from unfaithful wives. It hurts like hell because it was created in hell. Satan hates marriages and is at work to destroy them, especially Christian marriages. It is time that we keep our promises to God and our spouses. Some say, "You don't know my wife," and you are right. But, if you know my Jesus it won't matter what your wife is like. Breaking the heart of Jesus becomes more important than our selfish needs. God gives us the grace and power to stay faithful to the end.

Men, right now some of you are playing with fire. It could be a secretary at work, a client, your neighbor, your wife's best friend or a waitress at your favorite eatery that you have been fantasizing about. I believe that one of the greatest tools of Satan is to help men and women get to the place of total discontentment in their marriages. We cry out, "there must be more!" and then he shows us the forbidden fruit by offering us someone else. Flee, run and never look back. God will always provide a way out, but we must choose to go His way.

I believe King David was a great man, but morally, he was a failure. We need a lot more Josephs than we do Davids. Yes, David repented and was forgiven... but what a price he had to pay... the death of his own son. Count the cost! Count the cost!

If my story were to end in the misery of adultery, then it would be a very sad and wasted experience. I told you what my heart looks like since the adultery, but the wonderful part is that God picked up the pieces of my broken heart and provided the glue of love and mercy to put it back together. He heard every cry of my heart and wept with me. He wanted my marriage whole and healthy more than Richard and I did. I walked miles during those first few months, sometimes with the Lord holding my hand and other times with Him holding me. I learned to walk in the truth that "God will never leave us or forsake us." I experienced the depth of His love and healing power like never before. Not even the sin of adultery could snatch me out of the Father's hand.

I want to give you hope that God can do an awesome miracle in your life and the life of your marriage. It has been a very difficult journey on the road to healing our marriage. But God's calling card says, "Miracle Maker," and He lives up to that. Richard and I are more in love with each other today than we have ever been. Our marriage is healthier than it has ever been. Does this mean that we are pain free? NO! I still hurt when I am reminded of the pain of Richard's infidelity. But the new memories of love and commitment Richard and I have give testimony to the power... the RESURRECTION POWER of a loving and forgiving God.

Richard and Kathy Harrison now lead TouchingHearts Ministries. They counsel, lead conferences and speak at a variety of functions. See their website at: www.growinggreatmarriages.com/.