

Get Back On Track  
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UNFAITHFULNESS in marriage. Seems like every week we hear of another high profile story of UNFAITHFULNESS.

In today's lesson, God through the prophet Jeremiah, delivered a message to the people of Judah about their sin against Him. God used an example portraying His people as an UNFAITHFUL spouse.

What about my relationship with God?

Is my relationship with God like an exciting romance, or more like a marriage on the rocks?

I asked the care groups to do a two part exercise:

1. As a group, come up with a list of things that can lead to unfaithfulness in a marriage. Think about both things in the relationship and things from outside the relationship.

Factors That Can Lead to Unfaithfulness  
(From Focus on The Family)

- Looking for ego boosts outside your marriage
- Neglecting to talk openly with each other
- Resisting conflict resolution
- Discounting fun and relaxation together
- Increasing the time you spend apart
- Allowing daily stresses and fatigue to sabotage your intimacy
- Letting your love life fizzle instead of sizzle
- Giving in to predictability
- Living in denial
- Forgetting your commitment to each other
- Failing to resist come-ons and temptations

Source Signs of an Affair: [http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/relationship\\_challenges/affairs\\_marital\\_infidelity/danger\\_signs\\_of\\_an\\_affair.aspx](http://www.focusonthefamily.com/lifechallenges/relationship_challenges/affairs_marital_infidelity/danger_signs_of_an_affair.aspx)

2. Now, using your first list, come up with comparisons to things that can lead to unfaithfulness to God.

- Looking for ego boosts outside your marriage = Seeking for your significance outside of God
- Neglecting to talk openly with each other = Prayerlessness and lack of studying God's Word
- Resisting conflict resolution = Lack of confession, repentance, and receiving forgiveness from God
- Discounting fun and relaxation together = No longer enjoying time with the Lord
- Increasing the time you spend apart = Again, lack of time with God and His people
- Allowing daily stresses and fatigue to sabotage your intimacy = Matthew 13:22
- Letting your love life fizzle instead of sizzle & Giving in to predictability = Letting your relationship with God grow cold
- Living in denial = I don't have a problem in my relationship with God!
- Failing to resist come-ons and temptations = Other Gods...IDOLS

It all comes down to: Forgetting your commitment to each other = Forgetting the commitment you made to God when you were saved.

Let's look at the scripture in one of Jeremiah's early messages to the people of Judah

Jeremiah 3:12b-13

12b“Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the LORD,  
 ‘I will frown on you no longer,  
 for I am faithful,’ declares the LORD,  
 ‘I will not be angry forever.  
 13 Only acknowledge your guilt—  
 you have rebelled against the LORD your God,  
 you have scattered your favors to foreign gods  
 under every spreading tree,  
 and have not obeyed me,’”  
 declares the LORD.

- Verse 12: That word "return" literally means to "turn". What do we call that?  
Repentance
- Also, verse 12: How does God say He will respond?
- Verse 13 gives us some information on what these people had done.
- you have rebelled against the LORD your God,
- (How did they rebel?)
- you have scattered your favors to foreign gods
- under every spreading tree,
- (Pagan idol worship...the term "your favors" means specifically, sex orgies in worship to fertility gods in pagan worship sites on high places outdoors...under every spreading tree)
- He states their real sin bluntly: "(You) 'have not obeyed me,' declares the LORD."

- So what were they to do to make this right? What does the first sentence of verse 13 say? Only acknowledge your guilt

If we've not been faithful to God step one is to ADMIT GUILT.

What will God do in response? Let's look at verses 14-17

Jeremiah 3:14-17

- 14 "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD,
- In some translations that reads "faithless children". He refers to himself as father.
- Next he uses another term: "for I am your husband."
- The word here is literally the word Baal...the Hebrew word for "master" and the same word they had used for the Cannanite god they were worshipping.
- Basically He's saying I am the REAL Baal...the TRUE Master. The husband of my bride...the church.
- In verse 15 he says:
- 15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.
- Shepherds means leaders or rulers who would think and act according to God's ways.

16 In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "people will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made.

17 At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.

- In those days refers to when His people repent and are brought back to the Promised Land.
- The Ark would be lost but it wouldn't matter...because Jerusalem would be the focus of God's people....it would become God's throne.
- Today why don't we miss or need the Ark of the Covenant as God's dwelling place?
- Jesus made our hearts the dwelling place of God when He gave His life for us.
- Bottom line:
- If we will ADMIT GUILT and RETURN to God we will be able to ACCEPT HIS BLESSINGS

Lets stop just a moment and take an inventory: What are some of the blessings of the Christian life?

If we will ADMIT GUILT and RETURN to God we will be able to ACCEPT HIS BLESSINGS but we will also be able to AVOID HIS JUDGMENT

Jeremiah 4:1-4

1 “If you, Israel, will return,  
then return to me,”  
declares the LORD.

“If you put your detestable idols out of my sight  
and no longer go astray,  
2 and if in a truthful, just and righteous way  
you swear, ‘As surely as the LORD lives,’  
then the nations will invoke blessings by him  
and in him they will boast.”

3 This is what the LORD says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem:

“Break up your unplowed ground  
and do not sow among thorns.  
4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,  
circumcise your hearts,  
you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire  
because of the evil you have done—  
burn with no one to quench it.

God through Jeremiah used two illustrations these people would understand:

1. Unplowed ground - Virgin soil with no thorns and thistles
2. Circumcision - Heart surgery so to speak

What's The Takeaway?

There's an old country song that says: "There's nothing cold as ashes after the fire is gone."

What about my relationship with God?

Is my relationship with God like an exciting romance, or more like a marriage on the rocks?

Have I allowed distance, denial, and apathy to lead me in the direction of other idols instead of my true God and Master?

If so, He has promised:

‘I will frown on you no longer,  
for I am faithful,’ declares the LORD,

‘I will not be angry forever.

13 Only acknowledge your guilt—