

3 Real-Life Reasons God Doesn't Want You to Keep Secrets

Years ago, I attended a seminar where we played games to find out more about ourselves, which required opening up about our secrets. This was harder for some people than others. For one couple, it was so hard they'd traveled out of state to attend this seminar so their secrets didn't get home.

See, the husband was a pastor of a large church, and he'd been having affairs for years. He'd claimed to have repented, and his wife stayed with him, but to keep their position, he felt they had to hide his infidelity. She submitted, but this secret was so painful, she'd become suicidal.

As a woman who'd been cheated on before, I wasn't OK with this.

One of the "games" we played had us share any negative feelings we harbored. We were supposed to go stand in front of the offender and tell them what bothered us and why. I normally prefer to avoid conflict, but as others aired their grievances, I gathered my courage.

I stood in front of the pastor and said, "You're crippling your church." I thought he would never talk to me again.

Next it was time to play a game where we were each given four pieces of "medicine" that would save lives, and we had to go around and tell each participant whether we were going to save their life or not. This unfaithful pastor, whom I'd called out, saved me.

After we'd given away all our medicine, the four people who'd received the most medicine were asked to stand up at the

front. Everyone else had to line up to tell them what message to give to their loved ones after they died. I was one of the four. And this pastor was the last in my line.

By the time he got to me, everyone else was done talking and turned to watch us. The pastor broke down, sobbing in my arms. I cried with him. We both found healing from our fears in that moment. Later, I was able to discuss his secret with him.

He said he didn't want his sin to turn people away from the church. He'd justified this decision with the fact that God didn't remove King David from his position after his affair with Bathsheba. Since we'd developed a relationship where we both cared for each other, I was able to explain why I disagreed.

1. **Keeping secrets to protect others puts God in a box.** God can handle our messes. God can even use them for good. This pastor's wife wanted to retire from their church and start a retreat center for fallen pastors. What a powerful ministry that could be.
2. **Keeping secrets still hurts people, starting with our family.** As a pastor's daughter, I've seen church leaders sacrifice their families in favor of their flock. This could be an even bigger turnoff to Christianity than anything else, and it's the opposite of what God calls a husband and father to do.
3. **King David was allowed to keep his position after his secret was revealed.** His story is no secret anymore. In fact, it's now told around the world as an example of God's mercy. The unfaithful pastor felt God's mercy when sobbing in my arms. At that time, he'd been completely open about his darkest places and realized he was still loved in spite of himself.

I don't know what this pastor decided to do after going home, but I've seen others find healing after opening up about their secrets. It's hard, there are consequences, and not everyone

in the church will forgive. But it isn't about our mistakes; it's about God's mercy.

Sometimes I've seen cover-ups allowed to "avoid gossip." As this is an honorable goal, start by sharing with those you trust and ask for feedback and support. If you don't have the freedom to share your story with the people closest to you, what kind of freedom do you have?

Sinning doesn't make you like David. Sinning *and confessing* makes you like David. Sinning and keeping it a secret makes you like King Saul when he said, "I have sinned, yet please honor me before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God" (1 Sam. 15:13).

On the other hand, if you're in a position like I was, you can ask God for courage to confront the wrongdoer. If you are speaking the truth in love, it will hurt you too, but like Nathan confronting David, it's the loving thing to do.

There is no gray area here. God tells us in James 5:16 to "confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." God is never in favor of the cover-up because He is in favor of our healing. {eoa}

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