

Healing Your Heart After Soul-Aching Betrayal

It was about this time six years ago when my husband left.

Although in many ways I'm stronger and better, the repercussions still vibrate through my life. In the midst of something wonderful, I can feel the stirrings of fear seeping into my thoughts, the beat of insecurity pulsing through me, and the blending of sorrow and hurt spilling over my heart. Sometimes it comes at the oddest times; sometimes it almost makes perfect sense.

The hurt and sorrow have dulled, but the insecurities and fear have not. If anything, at times, I think they have increased. And it drives me crazy! I don't want to live with the repercussions of someone else's actions—I have all the repercussions of my own actions to deal with, thank you very much.

If my ex-husband could have comprehended how much his actions would hurt me, would he still have left? If he could have looked ahead and had any idea of the sorrow and fear that would plague me, would he still have had an affair? If he could have felt the pain that washes over me so often, would he have abandoned our children?

I don't know, but I can't imagine causing anyone the pain he has caused us. I can't imagine being okay with any of this.

But then again, there are a lot of things I can't imagine.

I can't imagine this fear ever leaving, though I pray it does.

I can't imagine ever being free of this pain, although I pray fervently I am.

There are moments ... sweet, precious moments of freedom.

Moments when I forget. Moments when I see clearly a bright and hopeful future.

The fight for those moments is daily. It is a constant battle to take my thoughts captive. I know that settling in that fear and insecurity is a miserable place ... a not-God-honoring place ... a hopeless place.

I know that God wants more than that for me. He wants me to be more than a bruised and shattered woman. He wants me to live a life of confidence and hope.

Each morning is an opportunity to set my mind on things above, not on things of this Earth.

"If you then were raised with Christ, desire those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3).

Every morning is the opportunity for something new: a new start, a new perspective, a new vision for my future.

Every morning provides me a fresh way to grab hold of hope.

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed; His compassions do not fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in Him'" (Lam. 3:22-24).

What do I hope for?

I hope for peace. I long for peace. I have found that this world offers little peace. It is a decidedly not peaceful place. *But* Jesus is the author of my peace.

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

I often pray for peace that passes all understanding to guard the hearts and minds of those who share with me. I should absolutely be praying that for myself as well.

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with gratitude make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

I hope for the ability to truly trust again.

Trust others to know my heart ... to take care of my heart ... to treat me as precious and valuable.

Trust others to be faithful and honoring.

Trust others to love me.

But trust has to start with me trusting God. Trusting that God has a good plan for my life, for this day. Trusting God with my heart.

"My soul, wait silently for God, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my refuge; I will not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my shelter, is in God. Trust in Him at all times; you people, pour out your heart before Him; God is a shelter for us" (Ps. 62:5-8).

I hope for freedom from fear.

Freedom to love without fear.

Freedom to let go of the fear of pain.

I do not believe there is any freedom apart from Christ. I will not find the peace, hope and freedom I so long for from anyone but the Lord.

"You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called

from its remotest parts, and said to you, 'You are My servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you.' Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:9-10

I picture this woman with her hands outstretched, with a huge smile, welcoming all that God has into her life.

I picture a woman, healed and whole, who loves others with abandon and without fear.

I picture a woman on her knees praying for strength to face tomorrow with hope.

Sue Birdseye *is the author of When Happily Ever After Shatters: Seeing God in the Midst of Divorce and Single Parenting published by Tyndale/Focus on the Family. Sue is a single mom of 5 children from 8 to 21-years-old.*