

This 1 Kings 5 Truth Will Guide You When You're Tempted to Hide Your Sin

Within this last week, two Christian friends both confessed to cheating in a relationship. This couldn't have been an easy confession for them, knowing how broken I was over my first husband's infidelity. But just like I forgave my spouse at the time, I had compassion for them. In fact, as I left the one friend today, I said, "I'm proud of you."

If you're as surprised by my response as she was, let me explain. See, I don't think adultery is the most destructive thing that can happen in a marriage. Yes, it's heartbreaking, and experts say the only thing more emotionally painful is losing a child, but unfaithfulness doesn't have to be the end to a relationship. Whether a couple gets divorced or not, what truly destroys a marriage is when sin is concealed and/or continued.

I shared the following Scripture with my friend this afternoon. We all know King David committed adultery and tried to hide it, so I thought it interesting the way 1 Kings brings this up again. "For David had lived an exemplary life before God all his days, not going off on his own in willful defiance of God's clear direction (except for that time with Uriah the Hittite)" (1 Kings 15:5 MSG).

"Except for that time ..."?

I'd been pondering the parentheses all morning, and in speaking with my friend, I realized why the punctuation is so important. Because we each need parentheses in our lives.

In confessing their affairs, my friend were doing the same thing the writer of 1 Kings knew David did:

1. **They quit trying to hide their transgression.** This took humility in a willingness to accept consequences.
2. **They put an end to a destructive behavior and refused to let it define them.** They chose to “go and sin no more.”

Now take another look at what it says in the parentheses of 1 Kings. “Except for that time with Uriah the Hittite.” It’s not the adultery the writer points out. He’s pointing out the coverup. Whether we’ve ever had an affair or not, we’ve all done things we are tempted to cover up.

What would have happened to King David if he continued to hide his sin in shame? Honestly, if he wanted, he could have had the prophet Nathan killed for calling him out. That’s what King Saul had done to the priests he didn’t like. But if David hadn’t come clean, would 1 Kings still claim David “lived an exemplary life”? Or would he have been listed with the many other kings who “openly did evil before God”?

Since I’d never committed adultery, my friends probably worried about me judging them, but the truth is that there are things I could put in my own set of parentheses. For example, I got pregnant before I was married. If I’d wanted to cover up the pregnancy, I could have, and I know other girls at my Christian college who did. But instead, I went home, told my parents the news, and had the freedom of hearing my mom respond, “Babies are a blessing,” and the joy of raising my son. It was hard, but I don’t live in shame anymore.

If I hadn’t put my sin in parentheses, if I’d tried to conceal and/or continue such behavior to this day, it wouldn’t have been possible to live an “exemplary life” like King David. The beauty of confession is that as long as you’re alive, it’s never too late to break free from shame.

Every day we get a new chance to put our past in parentheses. This week, my friends chose to be like King David. And I couldn’t be prouder. {eo}

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