

What Happens When God Doesn't Heal Your Marriage

I thought God saved my marriage. After my ex's first affair, we went to counseling, I read a prayer book on marriage, and we were supposed to take over the new marriage mentorship program at church. I so wanted to save marriages that I would hand out the prayer book like Band-Aids whenever I knew of a struggling couple.

Then one day a woman told me, "I have a thing against that book. I read it, and my husband left me anyway." I admit, I was a little skeptical. She must not have prayed hard enough.

Sadly, this seems to be the mantra of the Christian church, as well. We rave about stories where marriages are saved. Even Christian romance novels must have a happily-ever-after, or editors will require a sequel where the main character falls in love.

But if praying hard enough is all it takes to save a marriage, what does that say about me if my husband cheats again and says, "With the kind of wife you've been, you're lucky I didn't have more affairs"? Not only am I not a good wife, I'm a second-class Christian. I'm abandoned by the person who was supposed to love me most in the world, then I'm judged by the body of Christ.

My heart had so many puncture wounds that love ran through it like a sieve. I did everything I could do to fill it up again and again. I even went to the store and bought another copy of the book that I thought had saved my marriage the first time.

While at the bookstore, I ran into a woman who also loved that book. I told her what I was going through, and she took me over to another book—the Bible. She opened to Isaiah 54:5-6. "For your Maker is your husband ... For the LORD has called you

as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth when you were refused, says your God.”

Yes. God knew my pain. And He loved me.

This woman invited me to her church. A strange thing happened while I was there. To go along with the pastor’s sermon, the worship band sang a Phil Collins song called *Against All Odds*. A good song, but it was strange because, not only do churches usually refrain from singing ’80s love songs on stage, but because I’d just dedicated this song to my husband. I sobbed.

At the time, this was God meeting me where I was at. This was God saying, “I know your pain, and I love you.” But now, as I look back, it was so much more than that. While I’d dedicated the song to the man I so desperately wanted to love me, God was dedicating it to me.

God took a chance on me when he came to earth and died on the cross. I was already more loved than I could even imagine. All I had to do to see that was take my eyes off my husband and look to God. Marriage couldn’t heal me, but He could.

Now, I’m not against marriage at all. I want marriages to be saved. I want them to be healthy. I want them to be an example of Christ’s love for the church. But that’s it. They should be an example of Christ’s love, not a replacement for it. Not an idol. Not a measure of success as a believer.

I’ve had to apologize to old friends who had once come to me in a crisis, and I told them just to pray more and everything would be fine. Prayer is not a formula. It’s a relationship. The most important relationship.

A woman does not need a man to love her for her life to be restored. No matter what your spouse chooses, God wants to restore you. He wants to heal your marriage, but above all, He wants to heal your heart.

He sees your pain. He loves you. And so do I. {eoa}

Angela Ruth Strong is a Christian romance writer who writes not only about a man and woman falling in love but more importantly about women finding out how loved they already are. She's won the Cascade Award for her novels and also had a couple optioned for film. To help other aspiring authors, she started IDAhope Writers in her home state of Idaho. When not writing, she's adventuring with her husband and teenagers, teaching group fitness classes and working her day job at an airline. She believes in the power of story and would love to hear yours. Feel free to visit or write her at and join her Facebook fan page for fantastic fun at