

BETRAYER

30 DAY BETRAYAL RECOVERY

RESTORE YOUR TRUST
REBUILD YOUR INTIMACY
RECOVER YOUR HOPE



 **OnlyYouForever**
Build a Thriving, Passionate Marriage

CALEB SIMONYI-GINDELE

30 Day Betrayal Recovery Devotional - Betrayer Spouse
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Preface

When I set out to write this, I had no idea how large of a challenge I was taking on! Many of the listeners of our podcast, The Marriage Podcast for Smart People and other visitors to our site requested a devotional journal and workbook that would guide them through recovery from the betrayal of an affair.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my wife, Verlynda, as I reflect on the writing of this devotional.

Unknown to her, I brought a secret pornography addiction to our marriage. Perhaps it was not as severe as some, but what hurt Verlynda most was the lies I hid behind for several years. Finally, convicted by God of my need to become fully honest in our marriage, I confessed to Verlynda.

While God's forgiveness of me in salvation was a greater act, I can honestly say I've never been so impacted by the reality of the power of forgiveness as I was the moment Verlynda chose to forgive me. I am still deeply humbled by this and overwhelmed by gratitude. To her credit, she has never held my breach of our vows over my head. No, she has truly embodied the work of divine forgiveness.

I will never be able to repay Verlynda for this act of grace.

However, I hope that as you proceed through this journey you will be able to prove yourself more forgivable and repentant and less defensive than I was to begin with.

I pray that as you begin this journey, you will find the grace and strength you need to allow God's light to shine in every part of your heart.

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P.S. If at any time you feel like you need more space to write, I suggest you use some notepaper that you can tuck into the pages of this Journal.

Day 1

Transparency Leads to Intimacy

Daily Verse

"...the truth shall make you free." - John 8:32

Yes, the truth will make you free. And, it might nearly kill your spouse and/or destroy your marriage in the process. Look, I get why you hold back on disclosing: you're probably most afraid of hurting your spouse and you're likely also terrified of losing him or her. The burning fear is there: if s/he really knows who I am at my core there's no way s/he'll stick with me.

Yet the words of Jesus are true: freedom only comes through truthfulness. A complete, honest confession is what you and your spouse need in order to begin rebuilding.

I see betrayers being defensive. I see them minimizing. I see them just letting out little bits of information at a time, over a few weeks. I see them denying and then later admitting. None of those are productive approaches. Unfortunately, this is one band aid that needs to be pulled off fast. It will hurt but it will hurt worse if you try anything less.

In your spouse's devotional, I'll be asking them to stop the endless search for facts. But I also need you to step up with the truth if you haven't done so already. Tomorrow, your spouse will be asking who the extramarital partner (or partners) was, how long the affair lasted, how often you met, and where you met.

It's really your guys' prerogative but I don't recommend sharing the minute details that will create traumatic images: sex acts, positions, what s/he wore, etc. But you should be prepared to fully disclose the who, when, where and how often details.

Look: I understand the consequences of your confession are yours to bear, not mine. I cannot take responsibility for the outcome of your actions. But marriage recovery, if possible, has to begin with total honesty.

Actions to take

- Reflect on the truth of John 8:32
- Listen to Francesca Battistelli's song, "If We're Honest".
Here is a link: <http://oyf.link/honestsong>

Prepare yourself to answer these questions

- Who was your extramarital partner(s)?
- How long did the affair last?
- How often did you meet?
- Where did you meet?

How honest have you been with your spouse, so far?

What else would be important for him or her to know, so that you don't feel that you're hiding anything that would prevent you from being fully known by your spouse? Are you ready to share this?

How has hiding the truth about your extramarital affair(s) impacted your ability to be fully present in your marriage?

Day 2

Hiding Doesn't Help

Daily Verse

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"

- 1 Peter 2:21-22

This was the verse that God spoke to me through that prompted me to be fully transparent with Verlynda about my past pornography use.

I lied because I didn't want to hurt her or lose her. In a distorted sort of way, I was trying to protect the marriage. The problem is, when we aren't fully honest with our spouse, we're actually undermining the one thing we're trying to achieve: intimacy.

Intimacy can only be built on the back of total honesty.

By the way, when I say 'intimacy' I don't mean sex, although it may come to that. I really mean truly knowing and being known. Think about it: if you can't fully reveal all of who you are, how will you create that deep intimacy every human heart craves?

So: we begin with honesty.

Actions to take

- What do you need to make known to your spouse so that you can become like Christ in this regard: "nor was deceit found in His mouth"?

Following on from that, I just want to double check that you've also become honest with your affair partner(s).

Have you formally closed those doors? Totally closed them? All communication lines that may have been open to your partners need to be closed down before you can begin walking in integrity again. You may feel some sense of grief and loss. That is normal, but don't expect your spouse to understand.

As you bring yourself to be completely transparent with your spouse, s/he'll need the assurance that you've severed those other channels of communication. It's going to take them a while to trust again but it's critical at this stage that you know, even for yourself, that you can be a person who is safe to be in an intimate relationship with.

Perhaps lying has been a significant part of your past. Or, perhaps it has only been a problem on this one issue. Either way, I'd like you to journal about how lying has helped you. (I know, not what you expected, right?). Following that, I'd like you to journal about what it has cost you. Now: look at this in terms of cost/benefit. What do you need to do to make sure that honesty becomes your new normal?

Day 3

Acknowledging Their Feelings

Daily Verse

"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife..." - 1 Peter 3:7

A significant component of your journey toward healing and recovery is going to be learning to connect emotionally. One of the things I've asked your spouse to do in their devotional is to share their feelings of the affair and betrayal with you rather than just ask about facts. Facts are easier to talk about than feelings so it's important that you help them by learning how to respond to their feelings.

The key component here is acknowledging. Sometimes you may feel their emotions are too severe or you may find them overwhelming. However, I really want you to do your best to stay calm and present. All of their emotions are valid, given their perception of this situation. Their perception is their reality.

Often we betrayers try to play down our spouse's emotions; we say things like, "It wasn't that bad" or "I think you're overblowing it". But your task is to really sit and listen to your spouse's feelings. Take the time to understand all of the emotional impact of this betrayal. As you listen to them you will need to acknowledge their emotions.

This is the idea behind the verse, "dwell with them with understanding, giving honor". You honor your spouse when you listen and when you acknowledge these emotions without minimizing them or becoming defensive. Neither of those will help.

To acknowledge: look at them, ask them questions to clarify, say things like "I can understand why you would feel that way". Never follow with "but". Don't immediately follow with your perspective. Just acknowledge and then stop yourself. A great way to really prepare and train yourself to listen well is to listen all the way through my podcast episode #15, "Listen to Understand". You can listen to that at <http://oyf.link/15> while you do the exercises on the next page.

Actions to take

Ask God to help you learn this critical skill of listening to understand. Ask Him to give you the wisdom to know how to acknowledge and affirm the feelings your spouse is experiencing. Ask for His power to help you stay present and not become overwhelmed as they talk about their distress. Use the following exercises as you listen:

Write out two examples of a clarifying response you might make to your spouse:

When does paraphrasing help during a conversation?

Write out an example of reflecting based on something your spouse has said to you recently (use an example involving emotions):

What is the difference between an open and a closed question?

What non-verbal cues will you use to communicate you're following your spouse as s/he shares with you?

Day 4

A Communications Exercise

Daily Verse

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” - Psalm 34:18

It is a wonderful truth to know that God comes very near when our heart is broken. Even though it's you who has betrayed your spouse, you likely feel very brokenhearted over the whole affair, too. It's quite likely that you have begun to realize that sharing the deepest thoughts and feelings of your heart with your spouse is not something you have been doing. Perhaps the initial draw of your affair was that you felt an emotional connection you wished for in your marriage.

Today, I'd like you to start a new daily ritual with your spouse. This communication exercise is simple but is designed to start bringing you more into each other's world and hopefully closer as the wounds of betrayal begin to heal.

To do this, you're going to lead in your marriage by understanding this exercise and explaining it to your spouse. It's fairly straightforward. I want you, at the end of every day, to share one positive feeling about the day's events and one negative feeling about the day's events with each other.

They should be feelings about what you've experienced; not feelings about each other. This isn't the place to create conflict. Rather, it's a place to acknowledge and give voice to the emotional impact of the events of everyday life. Often, guys struggle more with sharing emotions—that's normal. Men can learn new vocabulary! It's like a muscle: the more you work it, the stronger it gets.

So your exercise might go something like this:

Husband: “At work today, my boss came in and complemented me on the proposal that I had created for him yesterday. I felt really satisfied about doing a good job on it!”

Wife: "Thanks for sharing that. I can see why you would feel satisfied! When I was driving home this afternoon I saw a homeless person and I gave him a chocolate bar I had in the car. He was really thankful and I felt thankful for all the good things I receive daily, too."

Husband: "Yeah, I sometimes forget to be thankful so I appreciate that reminder. I guess my negative moment was also driving home. This guy forced his way in front of me as we were merging and then got on his cell phone. I felt myself getting very angry at him."

Wife: "I think I'd be angry too! My negative moment today was when I found an old picture of my parents at the beach. I felt sad because it took me back to my grief over their divorce the next year."

Husband: "Yeah, it does feel like a loss, doesn't it?"

Just notice the back-and-forth there. You can lead off but it's one moment each. And after each person shares, the other acknowledges before continuing.

Here's a little tip: if you need help with those feeling words, just Google "feeling words worksheet" and you'll find some helpful resources. Consider printing one off and putting it on your fridge so you have it handy to refer to as you start making this exercise a daily point of connection between you.

Also: I want you to know that I've asked your spouse in their devotional for Day 4 to really work on sharing their feelings about the affair with you and to also turn to you for what s/he needs to hear from you. Be aware that when s/he asks you for something, even reassurance that you love them and you're committed to the marriage, it is crucial that you answer very intentionally. Look them in the eye, stop what you're doing, turn towards them and speak from your heart. Respond to them very intentionally.

Day 5

Filling in the Blanks

Daily Verse

“Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.” - Job 6:24

Today, I'd like you to pray that God would help you to understand further the root causes of your affair as part of your healing process. It is usually the case that there were qualities in your affair partner that were perceived as missing in your spouse. This isn't true for every situation, but it is for most. Often, these are also qualities that you loved or admired in one of your parents.

They may even be qualities that you feel like you are missing yourself.

What were those qualities that you saw in your affair partner(s) that you perceived as missing in your spouse or yourself?

If you really stop and think about it, are these qualities missing from yourself or your spouse? You may find some present or some not:

How do any missing qualities in yourself call out your own need to grow and develop as a person?

Day 6

Grieving

Daily Verse

“And [Joseph] turned himself away from them and wept.”
- Genesis 42:24

A great tide of grief flows from the devastation of an affair. I'm sure you're well aware of this by now. Often we want to just try to fix things or explain them or 'move on' but the reality is that the only way to deal with the loss and pain of betrayal is to grieve.

Your spouse will grieve and you will grieve also. Grief is best acknowledged, accepted and endured. Your willingness to accommodate your spouse's grieving process is essential to the recovery of your marriage. It may take longer than you want and feel far rawer than you're accustomed to but it is absolutely necessary to express the losses incurred by grieving.

I wonder if you have been able to acknowledge your own loss... Perhaps it's the loss of the idealized projection of yourself. Maybe you were that person who seemed to have it all together. And now you're facing the blunt reality of your own failure.

There's loss in this too, and even though you may feel you don't deserve to be felt sorry for, all loss is worthy of grief.

So this is not a pathetic whimpering that I'm asking you to take to your spouse for a pity moment. No, s/he may not even have enough energy to comprehend your loss, never mind their own.

I'm just asking you to start taking the time—you can do this with another trusted person (of the same sex) in your life or you can do this alone with God—to begin to acknowledge your own loss.

Losing your affair partner is a loss. Not one your spouse should have to try to understand. But it may be a loss to you. You may have lost reputation in your family and community. You may have lost respect from others: parents, children, your spouse, or close friends.

Day 7

Honesty with Yourself

Daily Verse

“As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.” - Psalm 18:30

I don't know your exact circumstances.

But: I am probably right (in most cases) to point out that there was some deception going on around your affair. Maybe a lot. And lies; again, maybe a lot of them. You've lived two lives. Nobody got to see the real you. All of you. One of the challenges your spouse faces is learning to trust you again. This is a vital process in their journey to healing and it's just that: a process. It's not a step. Trust isn't a switch s/he can flip, so don't hold that expectation over them.

I always get excited when a betrayer comes to me in counselling and says, “Even if my spouse decides to leave me, I want to do this for myself. I want to become a person of integrity. I want to know that I am trustworthy.”

This excites me because it tells me your motivation to be a trustworthy person is intrinsic. You're not just doing it to get your spouse back or to get life back on an even keel again.

That's what I want to challenge you on today: why do you want to become a trustworthy person?

Integrity is a fundamental part of God's character. As His child, He wants to develop this same aspect of character in you. You have all of God's power behind you as a child of God to be a man or woman of integrity.

But: it's up to you. He doesn't force that on you and I can't either. Nor can your spouse. You have to choose this for yourself.

Today: I want you to just attend to this one issue of integrity.

Day 8

Honesty with Your Spouse

Daily Verse

“The truthful lip shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment.” - Proverbs 12:19

It would be a wonderful thing if the remainder of your journey on earth would be marked by a legacy of truthfulness.

The lies you have told don't define who you are. They have certainly had a significant impact on your life's journey. But it is God who tells you that you are “justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

As you make honesty an overarching priority in your life, you may find yourself challenged by situations that leave you uncertain of what the right choice is.

I want to speak to a few of those situations.

First, any contact, intentional or unintentional, with your affair partner after breaking it off must be made known to your spouse. I mean: any communication at all must be reported.

I cannot stress deeply enough the importance of transparency. Bad news is always better than secrecy.

And absolute honesty is critical. Even an accidental meeting or even if the affair partner reaches out despite your insistence that things are over; this could cause great alarm if it is discovered but not reported.

Rebuilding trust and helping to resurrect loyalty will only come as a result of honesty. This must happen even if bad news is unpleasant. And I believe that while it may be upsetting initially, your spouse will recognize that this new regard that you have for integrity speaks more to what is happening than the bad news itself.

Day 9

Demonstrating Accountability

Daily Verse

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” - 2 Timothy 1:7

Living in the fear of being caught is a terrible burden to have to carry. However, as you’ve come out into the light and shared the truth of what has been happening in the hidden parts of your life, the shock of this may have caused your spouse to start to question everything.

Often betrayers will ask me about this as I’m working with them. Your spouse has likely become hypervigilant about your actions and even though you’re desperate to never find yourself in an affair situation again, s/he continues to question you. This is the point where I tilt my head to the side and kindly say, “Sorry, sometimes you gotta chew what you bit off.” This is par for the course. But don’t worry, it won’t always be like this!

In fact, you can help your spouse by giving them more than they’re asking for. Go ahead and take the initiative to demonstrate accountability.

Explain your comings and goings voluntarily. Think about ways you can beat them to the draw – not competitively, but compassionately – by letting them know where you will be, who you’ll be with, and so on. The goal here is to act out of a place of compassion. Recognize the breach of trust that you’ve created. And start being proactive about your movements until s/he lets you know that trust is greatly restored and s/he no longer needs as much visibility into your happenings.

Of course, I’m making the assumption that you’re doing this authentically. The goal isn’t to get your spouse off your back. That is totally the wrong attitude. Rather, the point is to begin to restore their concept of you as a trustworthy person. That is going to take the three t’s of time, transparency and talking about what you’re doing.

Day 10

Shame

Daily Verse

“There is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” - Romans 8:1

One of the most powerful and destructive feelings experienced by the betraying spouse is shame. We need to have a heart-to-heart about this today. First, you need to know the difference between shame and guilt. Shame is about who you are: it's about identity. Guilt is about what you've done. It's about behavior. There's a huge difference.

Guilt should lead you to repentance and restoration. Shame leaves you stuck, miserable and believing things about yourself that are not compatible with a Christian worldview. I believe the Devil uses shame to keep us stuck and wallowing in our own misery. On the other hand, God wants us to experience guilt for the things that we have done so that we turn back to him for mercy and forgiveness. And, per our Scripture above, this is always available!

Perhaps you're beating yourself up a lot. Part of you wants to make sure you never betray your spouse again and so you're trying to impress upon yourself the gravity of this sin. Or, it could be that you're trying to do the Protestant version of penance. But God doesn't accept penance: He only accepts the blood of Christ as payment for sin.

Your role is to repent, confess and claim that forgiveness that comes from God before moving on to making amends towards your spouse and others who have been impacted by your choices.

Today: I want you to work really hard on how you think about yourself. Watch especially for shame and when it strikes remind yourself, “I am a valuable, fallible child of God.” This is what is true. Shame is most easily recognized by a burning sensation in your face or heat rising in your neck. Keep this in mind as you work on today's exercise.

Actions to take

- Take time to memorize Romans 8:1.

Journal

This could be challenging but I think you're ready for it. I'd like you to journal about the feeling of shame that you've been experiencing recently.

- What triggers this? When does it hit the hardest?
- How has shame been a lifelong experience for you?

Perhaps you'd like to write Romans 8:1 on a sticky note and leave it on your desk or dashboard. What does God say about your identity? How does He see you? How does He want you to see yourself? Take more space to answer these questions on another sheet of paper if you need to.

Day 11

Affair Profiles

Daily Verse

“And David said, “What have I done now? Is there not a cause?”
- 1 Samuel 17:29

Understanding the root causes of our sin can be tricky business. It's important to remember here that the goal is not to place blame on circumstances outside ourselves. No, we heal best when we own our sin and face its ugly reality. However, understanding the profile of an affair can give some clues as to your motivation for breaking your marriage vows. One common typology was developed by Emily Brown (1991) and she describes five types of affairs:

1. Conflict-avoidant affairs: think of this as an energy drain on the marriage and a diversion from problems between you and your spouse.
2. Intimacy-avoidant affairs: sometimes closeness to your spouse can feel very uncomfortable. Ironically, an affair can be used to escape this discomfort.
3. Sexual addiction: this has little to do with the quality of your marriage and is primarily about addiction or an intimacy disorder.
4. Empty nest affairs: similar to intimacy-avoidance but as long as children are in the house, they can be the distraction. When they leave, something else needs to preserve the space between the couple.
5. Out the door affair. I call these exit affairs. The affair is just used as leverage to exit the marriage while making sure there's something to go to.

The Scripture quotation above is from a situation where David finds himself struggling to understand his context. In my experience, it can be especially helpful to take some time to understand how you got to where you are today.

Day 12

Ownership Leads to Forgiveness

Daily Verse

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.” - James 5:16 (KJV)

When we've screwed up, we tend to really bolster our defenses, right? We've lost enough—we need to protect what remains.

Today I'd like to ask you to lean on God for His help with understanding more of how your brokenness has contributed to this betrayal in your marriage.

You might just wish your spouse would forgive you and get on with it. Perhaps you're struggling with staying patient with them. Or perhaps you've been trying to convince them it wasn't that bad – just to help them think more rationally about it.

That's not working very well for you, is it?

No, the only way to truly help someone come to terms with the reality of what you've done is to demonstrate total ownership of how you've hurt them.

For you, this means really owning your part in your marriage. Now: it may be that your spouse was withholding sex or that other distress or dysfunction in your marriage feels like the cause of you looking outside the marriage for intimacy.

However, at the end of the day you chose to betray your spouse. Nobody made you do that; it was your choice. I'm sorry to be so blunt with you but it's so important for your healing that you own this reality.

I've never heard a betrayed spouse say, “He hasn't really owned his part but I've decided to commit myself fully to him again anyways!” Not going to happen!

Day 13

An Affair is More Than Just an Affair

Daily Verse

“Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.” - Psalm 51:6

By now you're probably catching on to where I'm going with this part of the devotional. You see, an affair is a huge problem. But more than that—and I want you to grasp this especially—an affair is actually a symptom of a problem.

That's why an apology like, “I'm sorry I screwed up—I won't do it again!” doesn't quite suffice. No, we need to understand what the affair was a symptom of.

You see, while the affair is your choice and so becomes your wrongdoing, it must also be the case (unless sexual addiction is involved) that there was some dissatisfaction or dysfunction in your marriage.

This is why putting all of your focus on affair-stopping behaviors is not going to guarantee that you never go down this road again. That's just white-knuckling and is not really addressing the deeper roots of the matter.

This is where you need the Spirit of God to come in and to search your inner thoughts and to give you the wisdom to understand not only what you did but why you did it.

The why is the critical part. And too often I've seen folks rush through this and not truly get to bottom of it, only to find themselves in the same situation months or years later.

This healing has to happen from the inside out. Today, I'd like you to keep inviting God to take you deeper into your inner thoughts and to give you wisdom to understand all that is hidden in there.

Day 14

Looking into Your Marriage

Daily Verse

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” - Psalm 139:23-24

I would like you to build on the work you've been doing over the last couple journal entries by asking God to search your heart and make visible those parts of yourself that you may be blind to. We all have blind spots, right?

Nobody will reveal these more carefully and kindly than the Holy Spirit. Consider using and expanding on the Psalmist's words above as you ask God to do this work.

I understand that this is a very private, personal exercise. And as it relates to the affair there's the bitter reality of how this has played out for you and all the hurt that has resulted. However, as you think about rebuilding your relationship with your spouse, that deeper, more intimate, more connected marriage that is resilient to affairs can only be built on the back of this deeper work.

This renewal and revival doesn't happen overnight but just hold onto the vision of what you are trying to create.

I know we've touched on some of this before but we're coming back to it because it is so easy to brush by this part. I would really like you to pause and seriously reflect here. Go deep. Search carefully.

Day 15

Collusion

Daily Verse

“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” - Amos 3:3

This verse applies to the good, the bad and the ugly of marriage. You've done a great job confessing your contribution to the marriage and how that brought you to where you are today.

In this devotional, I want you to sit in God's presence for a little while and again ask Him to reveal how your past, broken ways of relating to your spouse have colluded with his or her brokenness to create the marriage you had.

You see, somehow you made it to this point. It wasn't easy. It wasn't pleasant. It certainly didn't deserve to be turned upside down by an affair. But somehow you both had this dance that kept you in the marriage groove all this time.

This is different from yesterday's work in that we are now looking at, reflecting on, and praying for understanding about the interface between your spouse's brokenness and your own.

Action to take

Let's start with the positive: what is the glue that has kept you together?

Day 16

Why the Affair Happened

Daily Verse

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

- Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV, alternate reading)

It's helpful to know that this verse is a promise from God to a nation that was in desperate need of restoration, healing and recovery. Their situation looked hopeless: there was no foreseeable future or hope for them. These words shone brightly into their darkness. I trust that they will shine on your circumstances as well. I want you to start thinking about why the affair happened. Is there some way you can begin to make meaning of the affair?

Is it possible that God could use the betrayal or affair as a launching point to a marriage that is even stronger than it ever was?

Could the heat and pressure of this trial be the birthplace of a gemstone?

Actions to take

Today I want you to open your heart to this possibility. You don't have to figure it all out today; we'll pick this up again in the days to come.

But, against the backdrop of your own brokenness, your spouse's, and the work you've been doing to articulate the dissatisfaction and/or dysfunction that has been present in your marriage, I'd like to ask you to:

- Reflect on these passages
- Then begin to pray
- Journal

Don't rush this part of the process. Take small steps and just process things in careful, thin slices.

Day 17

Was it Really Just a Symptom?

Daily Verse

"I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; ...and I will bring you to the place from which I caused you to be carried away captive." - Jeremiah 29:14

I touched on this in previous days but I know the thought must be difficult. Was the affair or betrayal really just a symptom of the problem? Was there a deeper problem in our marriage?

Look, I know this must be a hard question to hear. In some ways it would just feel good to patch up from the affair and keep moving. I get that this makes the problem bigger, deeper and more sensitive and pushes you into some uncomfortable territory.

Perhaps you were trying to just do your best to stay in the marriage and it seemed like the opportunity for the affair just popped up. After a while perhaps it felt like you were trapped in the double life: the lies, the duplicity, the fear of being discovered.

God wants to deliver you—fully and completely—from this captivity and to bring you back to a place of hope and relational health and wholeness.

Like I said, I get that it would be easier just to put this behind you and move on. But to truly move forward in a marriage that is intimate, connected, and alive we need to be willing to be brought back to where we derailed. Brought back to face ourselves, our history, our choices, our own hearts.

Since you've done so much work to uncover the deeper reasons this affair happened, I'd like you to think about how this great error has turned into an opportunity for restoration and rebuilding. How has God's grace been working through all the grief, regret and distress of this betrayal?

Actions to take

I'd like you to take a big step today. I want you to complete this sentence in as many ways as possible:

This affair has helped me to see

This affair has helped me to understand

This affair has helped me to learn

This affair has helped me to realize

Day 18

Taking Responsibility

Daily Verse

“Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.”

- Psalm 26:2

At some points during this journey, it's quite possible that you've noticed your spouse trying to take responsibility for the affair. This can be a tricky part to navigate. In their journal, I've been helping them understand how they played a role in creating a marriage where an affair was possible. But I want you to be clear too: the affair is your responsibility. It was your choice to betray them.

I know you've probably already owned this but I just want us all to be really clear about it. Alongside the truth that the affair was your choice is this other reality that you co-created with your spouse a marriage that contained dysfunction and/or dissatisfaction.

However, this is no place to give your spouse the eyebrow and say, “I told you so.” You know that's not going to be helpful, right?

Rather, it's in this context of understanding that the responsibility is shared for creating the marriage you had leading up to the affair and its discovery that you need to work particularly hard to be clear with your spouse that you're owning your part.

That means owning not only the affair itself in full, but actively communicating that you're taking at least half the responsibility for what your marriage became.

Is your spouse aware that you're taking ownership of your part? As in, very clearly aware?

Day 19

Breaking Up Old Pathways

Daily Verse

"Behold, you are fair, my love!" - Song of Solomon 4:1

Read chapter four of the Song of Solomon carefully: note that in all of the description his bride, he never compares her to another woman. One of the most sensitive parts in your spouse's journey of healing is comparing himself or herself to the affair partner(s) you were involved with.

However, you've likely even noticed yourself struggling with this to some extent. You just wish you could take that whole chunk of memories and hit "Delete" and have it gone. Well, the good news is that your brain is very malleable and it can be trained.

I'd like to challenge you to make it your goal to see your spouse as the most desirable partner in the world. I get that this might be hard to do today as you're still in the throes of recovering from the betrayal. However, you can still make this your goal, right?

At some point you started running down this trail in your brain that led you to believe that your desire could be better satisfied outside your marriage. The problem is that this is outside of your values and also outside of God's design for your marriage. Think about it: He created marriage, right? Surely He also created the potential for every redeemed mind and heart to find its ultimate romantic fulfillment in one's spouse.

See: this business of greener grass on the other side of the fence isn't a design flaw. It's one of the ways that sin reigns in our flesh. But: in terms of the gospel, your salvation is secure and God is fully invested in making you holier every day of your life.

So if you bring this part of yourself to Him for redemption, is He going to step up to the plate? You bet: He's always looking to own more and more of our hearts.

Journal

How have you allowed yourself (in the past) to open your mind to possibilities outside of your marriage?

In what ways were those ideas incompatible with the truth of the Gospel and the truth of who God has made you to be in Christ?

Going forward: how do you want to think about yourself, your marriage and your spouse, biblically? And in terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ? (see Ephesians 5:22-33)

Day 20

There Are No Quick Fixes

Daily Verse

"[Be] patient in tribulation" - Romans 12:12

You've likely figured this out by now but there are no quick fixes for an affair. Recovery is a difficult journey and will take longer than you want it to. I just want to encourage you to be patient in tribulation.

You've done a lot of internal work already and there's still more to come. But it's helping you create some new ways of relating that are more powerful and more adaptive to what your marriage needs!

Yet, the reality is that there are no quick fixes and no easy outs. You may have met others by now who have just "bounced back" from affairs or decided to "just put that all behind us and move on". Are they truly healed? Has their marriage become more intimate and more alive than it has ever been?

No, it takes hard work to truly heal and recover. But, as the wisest man once wrote, "He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread, but he who follows frivolity is devoid of understanding" (Proverbs 12:11). You're doing the harder work of tilling your land rather than settling for the frivolous, easy route of just brushing this affair off. I believe that God already has honored and will continue to honor your ambition to till the field of your marriage.

Just bear in mind that you do this not only for your own healing and recovery, but for His glory. He is the Bread of Life and each day as you read and absorb the word of God, He is sowing into the tilled field of your life. The seed is perfect: it is His word. As you open your heart to Him for healing in the most sensitive places, He will be that diligent farmer who works to bring forth a great harvest.

Hang in there!

Day 21

Hurdles to Reconciliation

Daily Verse

“But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband.” - 1 Corinthians 7:11

The focus of this last third of the journal is on working towards reconciliation. I want to coach you through your part in this so that you're responding optimally to your spouse's journey each step of the way.

One fundamental piece that needs to be in place is your spouse's need for safety.

If you think about it, it doesn't make sense to reconcile when it's not safe to do so, right? Depending on how you were involved in the affair, I'd like you to consider offering to your spouse that you'll do whatever it takes to make sure s/he feels safe as s/he anticipates the possibility of reconciling with you.

S/he may ask for, or you may choose to offer:

- Polygraph testing. While its accuracy is questioned, it may help to establish truthfulness.
- STD testing. You may have unknowingly contracted a sexually transmitted disease. This is not a ticket back to having sex with your spouse, but for your own health and his/hers it is worth investigating. Consult your family physician for more information.
- Ask: are there other safeguards you need in place?

Your spouse's need for safety might be more demanding than you'd like. Just keep in mind that discovering betrayal is often so severe it results in genuine emotional trauma. Showing respect for the severity of this impact will only serve to make you a safe person again.

Denying or minimizing it will have the opposite impact.

Actions to take

- Discuss safety with your spouse.

What did s/he ask you to do in order to help you make yourself a safe person to reconcile with?

What was it like for you to hear them ask you for these safety items?

What are your next steps so that they can see you moving forward on this?

Is there anything you want to do for yourself so that you know that you're a safe person to reconcile with?

Daily Verse

“A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle...”

- 2 Timothy 2:24

Today you're both working on gentleness, but from different angles. One of the hardest things to take out of our communication as spouses—especially around sensitive issues—is defensiveness.

We defend to protect ourselves. Often, our spouse is trying to make us aware of some flaw and as a part of that they may even choose to exaggerate or make it bigger. This seems unfair and we immediately fall into defensiveness.

However, if you're able to see them as speaking to your faults in order to help them to heal, recover, feel safe and eventually reconcile with you this should help you to look past any possible overstatements. The problem with defensiveness is that it always thwarts reconciliation.

It's just so important that during this phase you learn to hear and accept their concerns. Look past the anger and resentment for those deeper fears: fear of connecting, fear of being made to feel foolish, fear of being betrayed again.

Learn to look for those deeper concerns and to speak to them. If this part becomes an ongoing struggle for you, again it might be wise to seek out a qualified marriage therapist. Consider reaching out to myself for online counselling or to someone local. Regardless, be gentle. Be soft. Be willing to take more than you feel you deserve. Acknowledge their perspective. Acknowledge all of the truth in what s/he is saying.

When you're this real with your spouse, and are willing to own up to your wrong-doings, you are sending them the message that you are serious about being a safe person for them.

Day 23

Don't Return Blame for Blame

Daily Verse

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing." - 1 Peter 3:8-9

It seems like it's just natural to want to return blame for blame! I have to help couples—particularly husbands—through this part all the time.

Truth be told: you need to eat some crow. You're the one who chose to have an affair; receiving blame is part of the consequence. I know it may seem one-sided or unfair at times. But, if you both have things to make right and to correct in your marriage just keep in mind that s/he also has the work of getting over the betrayal on top of all that.

So it's only natural that s/he'll have more to be concerned about than you, right?

This is where today's devotion is particularly helpful; there's a lot of need in these moments for compassion, love, tenderheartedness, courtesy and a constant dedication to refrain from returning reviling for reviling.

(In case you were wondering, 'reviling' means to criticize in an abusive or angrily insulting manner. I had to look it up too!)

So when you're feeling blamed, take a deep breath. Again: you want to acknowledge all of the truth in what your spouse is saying and leave the rest. You were called to blessing and this is how you can bless them as they prepare to forgive you.

Journal

To help you with this part, I would like you to do a couple things. First of all, take a moment to reflect on the forgiveness you have experienced from God for all of your sin. How does sitting in the good of this forgiveness feel? Write a short prayer of gratitude to God:

Next, are there things that you need to forgive your spouse of? List them out here and ask God to give you a gentle forgiving spirit, especially if their pain and hurt have led them to be harsh with you at times:

Day 24

Recall the Hurt

Daily Verse

“And he [Joseph] went into his chamber and wept there.”

- Genesis 43:30

Joseph also experienced a huge betrayal in his family. Three times we read of him weeping during his process of forgiving and reconciling with his brothers. This may be the most difficult part to do without escalating into anger. Remember that anger expressed when dealing with hurt is only coming up because it is easier to feel angry than it is to feel hurt. This would be the same for you or your spouse.

However, the difficult path is the one you need to follow. I've asked your spouse today to recall the hurt that has come from the affair or betrayal. Whatever form or shape that hurt has taken, it is important that s/he is given space to express this without you responding angrily.

Don't try to suppress or divert their anger. S/he needs to express the full range of emotion that has resulted from the betrayal. This is why I've been working hard to prepare you for responding non-defensively! It may be a good idea to refer back to Day 3 today. Those listening skills will be super-helpful here as you listen to their pain and grief. Probably the most important thing you can do is to acknowledge their hurt. You likely don't need to keep apologizing and apologizing—that can get annoying. But to acknowledge their hurt with simple words like, “I can see how that tore you apart” or “Now I see how this has hurt you so deeply” is very valuable.

A sincere, unqualified apology when s/he is finished would not be out of place. This may take a few rounds to get through but don't try to rush it or skip it. It's often the case that when we're willing to stay in the darkest, most difficult places we find God doing His greatest work of healing and restoration. This is what we want for your marriage.

Day 25

Seeing Yourself Through Their Eyes

Daily Verse

“Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it.”

- Proverbs 16:22

Today's devotion and action item are very purposeful steps in the journey of healing your marriage.

Please follow me carefully here. You've listened to your spouse and taken a lot of time to understand how s/he has been impacted by your betrayal.

Today, I've asked your spouse to express empathy as to how you might have come to a place in your life where you were ready to choose to have an affair. This is going to be a very challenging exercise for them.

I want you to be able to respond appropriately to this. Again, you need to acknowledge their effort and willingness to try to understand. You need to hold on tight to your commitment to remain non-defensive.

And then I want you to speak to them about how you have come to understand how you contributed to the dissatisfaction and dysfunction in your marriage.

This is more than confession, although it includes that. I want you to also make sure to express the ways in which you've come to see yourself through your eyes, and thereby entered into some understanding of the hurt and betrayal that they have experienced. It's important that you don't blame or criticize him/her during these moments. What you're aiming for is to communicate to them that you understand their point of view and that you have come to see yourself as they do, and from this that you understand something of how all of this has made them feel (see 'understanding' in the verse above).

Day 26

Leaning on Divine Forgiveness

Daily Verse

"I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah." - Psalm 32:5

"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." - Romans 4:7

You're likely feeling a little (or a lot!) raw at this stage of the process. Perhaps with revisiting the impact of your betrayal and really taking all the time to understand it you're starting to really feel the weight of all that you've done wrong.

It's easy to go from this place into shame: to tell yourself that you're a worthless person or that you don't deserve to live or something along those lines.

However, I'd like to call you to go in a different direction. I want to call you to lean hard on the full grace of divine forgiveness.

You know: it is possible that your spouse (and even others in your circle of family and friends) will never forgive you. I hope that's not the case. But you do need to know and to consistently remind yourself that God forgives you (see also 1 John 1:9 in addition to the verses above).

As part of this, you'll need to trust the process your spouse is going through. It has been my experience that most Christian couples end in a place of forgiveness and reconciliation. But you have to remember you cannot demand forgiveness. You can only ask for it and leave the process to God.

S/he'll have to choose to forgive you and then commit to an emotional journey through forgiveness as hard, angry feelings of resentment and bitterness are exchanged for the softer, gentler emotions of sadness and grief.

Day 27

Forgiveness is a Journey

Daily Verse

"Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." - James 5:7-8

I'd like to encourage you to be patient in this part of your journey. Forgiveness takes time. It is a process. Don't impose your expectation on your spouse. When James wrote the verses above, he wrote to a church that was going through some very difficult times. I'm sure he would have been just as happy for everything to clear up and to move on to the next thing.

But he understood that patience is a virtue that needs developed in all of us and that problems don't just solve themselves and disappear. In a very particular way through these days of your life you'll want to give your spouse the space and time that s/he needs to process through this journey of forgiveness.

Don't withdraw from them or begrudge the time it takes. Stay open. You're still working on the daily communication exercise from Day 4, right? Maybe have a quick check back there and make sure you're still working on connecting at an emotional level every day. If you like, you can offer to revisit anything that s/he feels is unfinished business or that is still gnawing at them. Taking the time to really understand their point of view and then speaking that understanding back to them will help them move closer to healing. See, often we just want to rush away from these painful parts of our experience because they are uncomfortable. However, being willing to stay in the discomfort as long as it takes to find healing is well worth the effort. This is the stickability that the farmer exhibits in James 5 as he waits through the various stages of the growing season for the final, "precious fruit" that will come. He knows he cannot rush the process. He must wait and trust. "You also be patient." That is your challenge for today.

Day 28

Extending the Olive Branch

Daily Verse

“Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.”

- Psalm 34:14

As you recover and rebuild your marriage I want you to begin thinking about how you can seek peace and pursue it with your spouse.

Peace comes from a few different things. First, I want you to think about how peace comes from righteousness. Are there areas in your life where you have windows or doors open to unrighteousness? Are there ways you use the Internet or things you watch on TV or other channels by which you expose yourself to unrighteousness? List any of these channels here, and commit to eliminating them:

Peace also comes from righteousness. Are there any areas of your life, perhaps not overtly sinful, but where righteousness does not yet reign? Ask God to reveal these to you; list them out and commit to eliminating them:

Finally, peace comes when fear is removed. 1 John 4:18 says that “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear”. Are there ways in which your spouse is still fearful? Are there ways in which you are fearful with regards to your marriage? Write about those here:

How can love, made perfect by God, speak to those fears? How is God calling you to show love in a way that reduces or eliminates fear that has been persisting in your marriage?

What are some ways in which you can begin showing a genuine, selfless, fear-eliminating love to your spouse? Ask God to give you the wisdom to show you how you can love and live with your spouse in an understanding way (see 1 Peter 3:7).

Daily Verse

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” - 1 Corinthians 6:11

You are not your sin. Note how the Apostle Paul is directing the Christians in the church at Corinth to think about themselves. He doesn't deny their past. But, when he brings it up he uses the past tense: “such were some of you.” When he wants them to think about who they are today, he also goes to the past. But not their past; rather, to the work of Christ which was done at Calvary nearly 2 millennia ago. This is who you are: a person washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

This theology isn't here just to make you feel good—although that is a perfectly acceptable outcome! Rather, this is here because you need to know that you can live—today, and the rest of your life—in the good of who God has made you to be.

This is why I wanted you to do the deeper work of understanding what the meaning of your affair was. By attending to these deeper, darker parts of yourself and allowing God to shine his light in there, you have set yourself up to live a life that is marked by God's definition of who you are.

This is so important because you need to know that you don't have to live as an adulterer. The next time you face loneliness or conflict or disappointment in your marriage you can choose differently. You don't have to obey your flesh or to follow the invitation of someone who would lead you outside of the boundaries of your marriage. No, you can choose righteousness. You can choose to live Christ's righteousness out in your life. You can choose to live as a person who is washed, sanctified and justified. This means you're a person over whom sin no longer has power or precedence.

Day 30

Renewed Love

Daily Verse

"Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, awesome as an army with banners?" - Song of Solomon 6:10

By this stage, I hope that you're astounded by the power and strength of your spouse to work through this betrayal.

Have you told them how much you're impressed by this? A spouse who forgives like God does is priceless. S/he is worthy of all of your love. S/he is also worthy of seeing you give everything to continue growing and developing as a faithful spouse. Your task is to learn to love them authentically and with complete integrity.

Often, when a betrayal is first revealed people in your circumstance find a sense of relief: the pressure of a hidden life is relieved. As you know, this quickly turns to distress as you experience your spouse's reaction.

With time, this also abates and you find yourself relaxing. My caution here is this: learn to relax **into** your marriage, not out of it. Lean towards your spouse, not away.

I can almost guarantee your spouse lives with the fear that you'll stop trying. So while the 30 days are coming to an end, your journey of rebuilding your marriage is not. Hopefully just the "re"building is ending and you can think of building your marriage up as your homework.

Building your marriage never ends -- but neither do the rewards of building a thriving, passionate marriage. I think this is what older couples mean when they say that marriage takes work.

Too often, we just take marriage for granted. But, to create something beautiful--a masterpiece--takes work. But, it is worthwhile work!

Acknowledgements

The idea for this set of two complementary journals came from our 'tribe': the faithful listeners of our podcast, The Marriage Podcast for Smart People and those who follow our website at onlyyouforever.com. Without your valuable and courageous feedback, we would not have known just how many couples are going through the betrayal of an affair. Thank you for sharing with us and making us aware of this need. Verlynda and I pray that you will find these devotionals instrumental in the rebuilding and recovery of your marriage.

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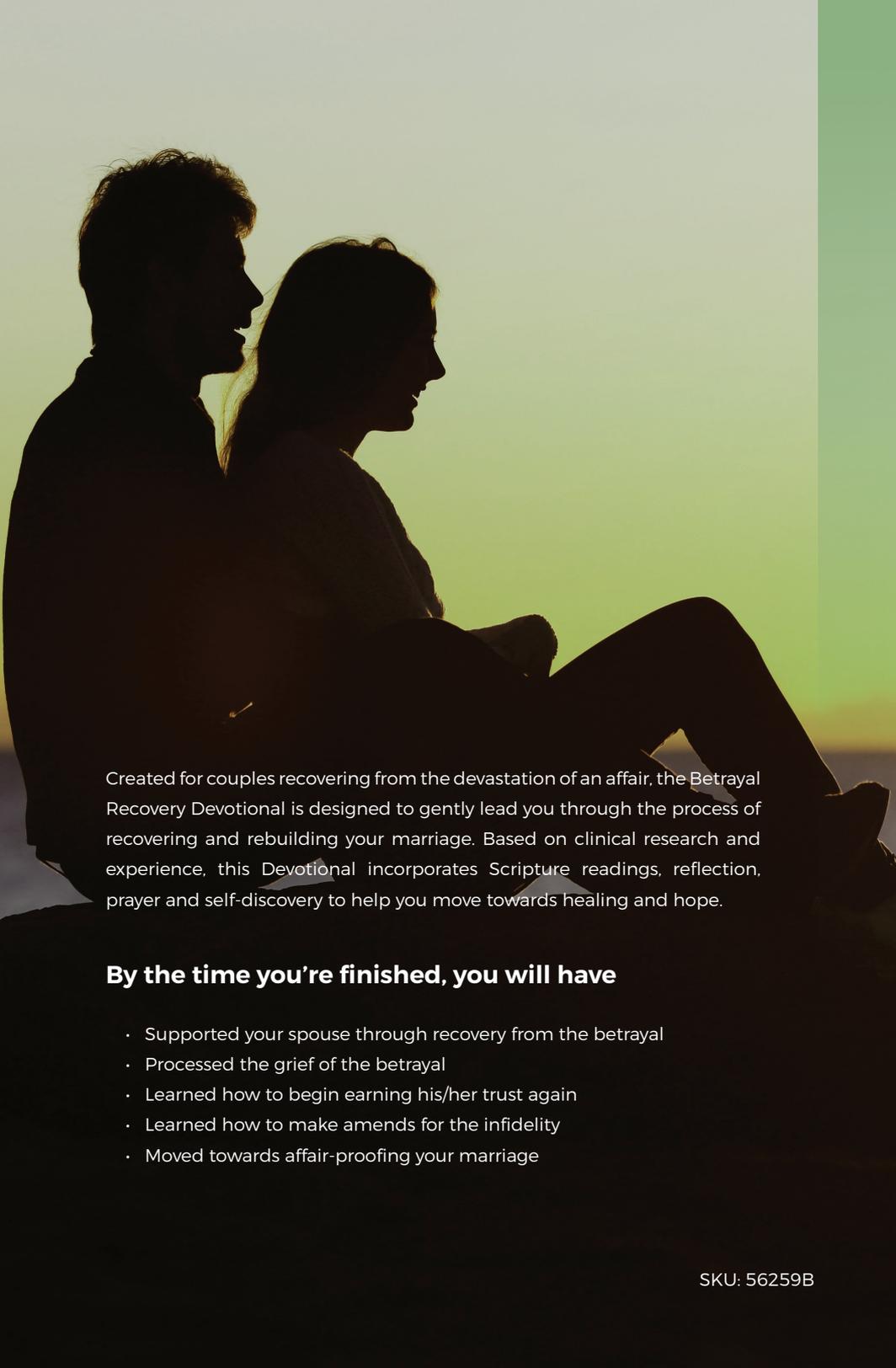
--Caleb Simonyi-Gindele, MAMFT, RCC, CSAT
August, 2016

For More Help

Please consult our website, **onlyyouforever.com**.

You'll find a full list of topics related to challenges married couples' face. Also there is a link there to schedule sessions with one of our marriage counselors.

You can also search for "OnlyYouForever" in your podcast app to catch our weekly research-based episodes where Verlynda and I share the latest wisdom on marriage from a Christian perspective.



Created for couples recovering from the devastation of an affair, the Betrayal Recovery Devotional is designed to gently lead you through the process of recovering and rebuilding your marriage. Based on clinical research and experience, this Devotional incorporates Scripture readings, reflection, prayer and self-discovery to help you move towards healing and hope.

By the time you're finished, you will have

- Supported your spouse through recovery from the betrayal
- Processed the grief of the betrayal
- Learned how to begin earning his/her trust again
- Learned how to make amends for the infidelity
- Moved towards affair-proofing your marriage