

Are Your Friends, Friends of Your Marriage?

Situation

Karen doesn't care for her husband's relationship with Dahlia. Dahlia has been disrespectful to Karen by calling her names and by pursuing a "friendship" with Jarious, her husband; even though Karen has expressed to the both of them that she is uncomfortable with the relationship. To make matters worse, Dahlia has a history of being in unhealthy companionship with men, married and unmarried, and has participated in over the line flirtation with Jarious. Jarious has admitted to crossing the line and has asked his wife to forgive him but refuses to end the relationship because they work together and because Dahlia is a Christian woman. Jarious also feels like his wife should trust him more.

Karen feels like Jarious has chosen Dahlia over her and that Dahlia has won. Karen has been tempted to re-enter relationships with friends that she has let go for the sake of her marriage just to get back at Jarious for choosing another woman over her. She is tired of being disrespected by her husband and his "friend". However, Karen's friend Tina told her that she should not do anything wrong just because her feelings are hurt.

Scripture: Proverbs 27:6 KJV

Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful.

Solution

All too often I hear married women and men complaining about their spouses' relationships with others. Whether it's a parent, a friend, a sibling, or co-worker all external relationships should strengthen your marital bond.

In the Life Application Study Bible's concordance, a friend is defined as an intimate companion or associate; one attached to one another by affection or esteem. When determining the validity of friendships that strain your relationship with your spouse, you need to figure out why you are maintaining the relationship by asking yourself the following questions:

Do I have an intimate relationship with this person? If so, would I feel comfortable with my spouse maintaining the same kind of relationship with another person?

Intimacy goes beyond the bedroom and sex. Intimate conversations can include the discussion of finances, marital problems, and even work issues. When an intimate relationship happens between members of the opposite sex, the natural attributions of the male and female psyche begins to operate. Men have the inclination to rescue; women, to nurture making it easier to cross the line. Would

you want your wife to be rescued by another man? Would you want your husband to be nurtured by another woman?

Am I attached to this person by affection or esteem? Why am I attached in this way?

For the sake of argument, let's look at several of Miriam-Webster's definitions of affection and esteem.

1. affection: a moderate feeling or emotion / tender attachment / the feeling aspect (as in pleasure) of consciousness
2. esteem: the regard in which one is held; especially : high regard

The biggest part of this step is *why* you are attached to the friend in question. If your spouse's discomfort with the relationship is valid, holding on to that friend is selfish and may cause detriment to your marriage. Marriage is about love. Love is not selfish (1 Corinthians 13:5).

What are the motives of the friend in question?

This part of the self-evaluation ties into the chosen scripture reference. Your friends are honest with you about your wrongdoings and will encourage you to do what is best for you and your family. An enemy - someone who does not love you - will tell you what you want to hear and send you off to fail.

A person cannot be fond of you if they are not fond of your spouse; you are one. Your spouse is a direct reflection of you. If you have a friend that does not respect or like your spouse, that friend is truly a foe.

Am I being obedient to God in maintaining this relationship?

Ephesians 5:21 – 23 is clear on how the marriage relationship should be handled. Verse 21 states, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

If an external relationship causes your spouse pain, you should walk away from it. If the relationship is a work relationship, it should be modified meaning that only situations and conversations related directly to the business at hand should be entered. Anything outside of this may put your relationship with your spouse under duress.

If you would like to get a biblical remedy for a situation, please email me at makasha@dorseypublications.com