

MADE TO MINISTER 2025

WHEN VOWS BREAK

Biblical Counseling for Betrayal Trauma in Marriage

presented by Aaron and Angi Greene

OBJECTIVES

- to gain an understanding of how sexual betrayal in marriage impacts the relationship and spouses.
- to present principles to guide biblical counsel in helping couples move towards hope and healing after sexual betrayal.

GOD'S DESIGN

“God designed sex to always function as a means of covenantal union, a means of mutual pleasure, and an expression of marital love. If any one of these purposes is missing, sexual activity cannot honor God or accurately reflect his design.”

GOD'S DESIGN

Essential Purposes



01.

Means of
Covenantal Union

Genesis 2:24



02.

Means of
Mutual Pleasure

1 Corinthians 7:2-5



03.

Expression of
Marital Love

Song of Solomon



Sex is also designed to bring new life.

GOD'S DESIGN

Eternal Purpose

“Sex is a signpost...pointing beyond itself to explain to us our union with an eternal, loving, faithful Lord. Marriage and the sexual intimacy which is meant to be in marriage, is meant to be something that helps us understand God and his relationship to us, his people, an eternal bridegroom and his bride, God and the body of Christ.”

1 Corinthians 13:12; Ephesians 3:19; Ephesians 5:25-32

THE BEGINNING OF UNFAITHFULNESS

- 
01.
Temptation
 02.
Lust
 03.
Sinful Choice
 04.
Hiding/Blaming
 05.
Consequences

Genesis 3

THE IMPACTS OF UNFAITHFULNESS

“Sex bonds two people in a uniquely powerful way. It’s not just that our bodies are joined together—our souls are intertwined and unified. Two become one. This is what makes adultery such a devastating betrayal. It not only breaks the marital covenant but also forms a physical and spiritual union with someone outside that covenant bond. It is the ultimate human betrayal. This is why any sexual activity outside the marriage covenant is so relationally destructive. Pornography, fantasies and masturbation are all just variations, to different degrees, of this same betrayal.”

Adultery

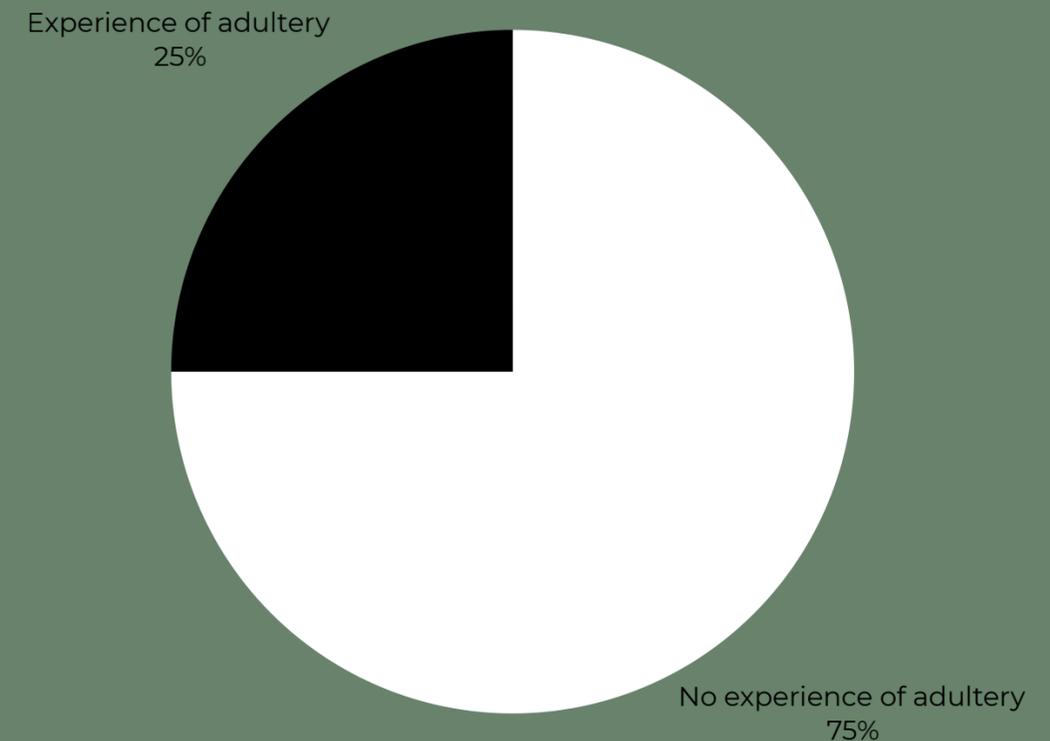
✦ The word translated adultery in the Scriptures means unlawful sexual intercourse.

It also carries the idea of idolatrous worship.

Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27-28;

Romans 13:9; James 2:11

✦ Adultery is prohibited in both the Old and New Testaments.



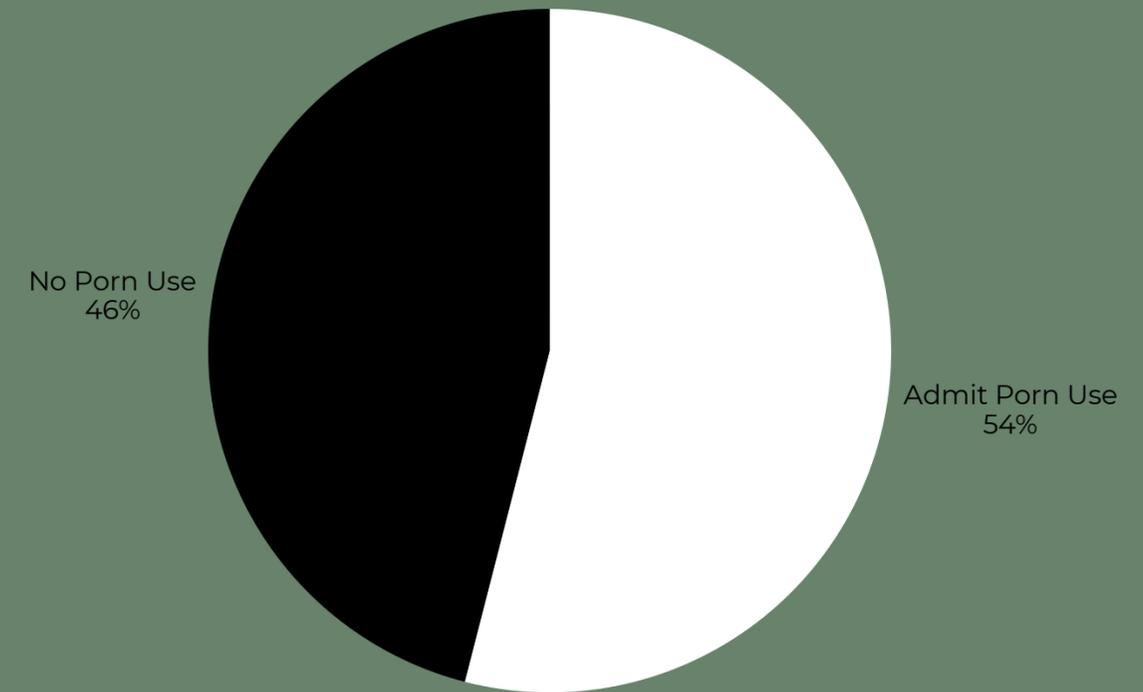
Approximately 25% of marriages will experience adultery in the lifetime of their relationship.

Pornography

- ✦ The word translated immorality in the Scriptures refers to any sexual activity outside of God's design. It also carries the ideas of idolatrous worship.

I Cor. 6:13-18; Gal. 5:17-21

- ✦ Sexual immorality is prohibited in both the Old and New Testaments.



Just over half of practicing Christians admit to porn use with some frequency.

THE IMPACTS OF UNFAITHFULNESS

“Trauma is defined by its impact: the extent to which an event or experience disrupts a person’s sense of self, safety and connection to others. Something is considered traumatic when it overwhelms the individual who has experienced it.”

THE IMPACTS OF UNFAITHFULNESS

Spiritual

Shame

Questions (about faith,
suffering, God, etc)

Doubts

Relational

Physical

THE IMPACTS OF UNFAITHFULNESS

Spiritual

Shame
Questions (about faith,
suffering, God, etc)
Doubts

Relational

Shame
Unhealthy Dynamics
Fear/Anxiety
Grief
Hypervigilance
Indifference/Apathy
Insecurity
Inconsistency
Cynicism/Gullibility

Physical

THE IMPACTS OF UNFAITHFULNESS

Spiritual

Shame
Questions (about faith,
suffering, God, etc)
Doubts

Relational

Shame
Unhealthy Dynamics
Fear/Anxiety
Grief
Hypervigilance
Indifference/Apathy
Insecurity
Inconsistency
Cynicism/Gullibility

Physical

Mental Confusion
Headaches
Fatigue
Sleep Disruptions
Loss of appetite

Understanding the impacts is beneficial to...

Counselors—Continuing to learn helps us grow in compassion and empathy for those we serve.

Hurting Couples—It is a kindness to give them language to help them express their thoughts, feelings and responses during deep suffering.

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.”

Romans 12:15

THINGS TO CONSIDER AS COUNSEL BEGINS

- ✿ Both spouses need the same degree of care, time, attention and support.
 - ✿ Often individual counseling is helpful before ongoing marriage counseling.
 - ✿ Be just as serious about addressing their suffering as addressing their sin.
 - ✿ Be patient. The path to healing will take time.
-

“Counseling couples through adultery requires endurance, patience, and wisdom from above. It’s not easy; it can be discouraging at times—even lonely. Let me encourage you to stick with this; stick with *them*.”

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS

Markers on the path toward hope and healing



01.

Discovery

1 John 1:5-7

The sexual betrayal is uncovered—caught or confessed.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS

Markers on the path toward hope and healing



01.

Discovery

1 John 1:5-7

The sexual betrayal is uncovered—caught or confessed.

Unfaithful Spouse

End the affair.
Remove access to pornography.
Be open to accountability.

Spouse

A wide range of intense emotions is normal.
Draw people in who can help.
Wait to make big decisions.

Counselor

Listen well.
Offer support and encouragement.
Draw them back to the Lord for hope.
Be patient as they begin to process.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



02.

Disclosure and Confession

Psalm 32:3-5; James 4:8-10

The unfaithful spouse communicates necessary details about the path and progression of their sin.

The spouse begins to understand the scope of sin.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



02.

Disclosure and Confession

Psalm 32:3-5, James 4:8-10

The unfaithful spouse communicates necessary details about the path and progression of their sin.

The spouse begins to understand the scope of sin.

Unfaithful Spouse

Be humble and transparent.

Explain timeline of compromise and sin. Often requires individual counseling.

Spouse

No immediate answer is required.

Questions are ok.

May feel like initial discovery.

Counselor

Preparing the disclosure and hearing it will require help and support. Be patient with both spouses and their responses.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



03.

Repentance and Forgiveness

Matthew 18; 2 Cor. 7:10-11;

James 5:16

Repentance and forgiveness open the door to relational healing.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



03.

Repentance and Forgiveness

Matthew 18; 2 Cor. 7:10-11;

James 5:16

Repentance and forgiveness open the door to relational healing.

Unfaithful Spouse

Repentance and seeking forgiveness are stepping stones to new ways of thinking and acting. Be honest and patient with your spouse's questions.

Spouse

Trust the Spirit of God to give discernment in looking for repentance. Forgiveness is a catalyst for trust building.

Counselor

Repentance and forgiveness are choices empowered by God. Be patient as the couple processes how to live this out.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



04.

Trust Building and Reconciliation

1 Corinthians 4:2; Ephesians 4:22-24

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



04.

Trust Building and Reconciliation

1 Corinthians 4:2; Ephesians 4:22-24

Unfaithful Spouse

Believable behavior over time builds trust. Be honest and transparent about struggles and victories. No hiding.

Spouse

Living out forgiveness and grace give potential for growth and health in the relationship. Be honest about questions and concerns. No hiding.

Counselor

Encourage a close walk with the Lord. Emphasize the importance of community.

A JOURNEY TO FAITHFULNESS



01.

Discovery

1 John 1:5-7



02.

Disclosure and
Confession

Psalm 32:3-5

James 4:5-8



03.

Repentance and
Forgiveness

Matthew 18

James 5:16

2 Corinthians 7:10-11



04.

Trust Building
and
Reconciliation

1 Corinthians 4:2

Ephesians 4:22-24

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD



Redemption



Reconciliation



Restoration

Genesis 3

RESOURCES

Counsel for Couples *by Jonathan Holmes*

Redeeming Sex in Marriage *by Scott Mehl*

Jesus and Your Unwanted Journey *by Ellen Dykas*

Living Beyond the Heart of Betrayal *by Julie Ganschow*

Torn Asunder *by Dave Carder*

Unfaithful *by Gary and Mona Shriver*

Reclaim Your Marriage *by Jenny Solomon*

Redeem Your Marriage *by Curtis Solomon*

When It's Trauma *by Darby Strickland*

After an Affair: Pursuing Restoration *by Michael Scott Gembola*

My Spouse was Unfaithful: Finding Strength in God's Presence *by Robert D. Jones*

False Love: 9 Steps Towards Sexual Integrity *by Brad Hambrick*

True Betrayal: 9 Steps for Processing Your Spouse's Infidelity *by Brad Hambrick*