Waiting on a Spouse to Change

By Joy McClain – Waiting for His Heart

1. Ask the Lord for wisdom. For a wife/husband in a difficult circumstance, it's vital that he/she continually ask the Lord for wisdom. The fog of hurt clouds judgment; seek wise counsel and prayerfully make decisions that align with God's Word. James 1:5

2. Remember that God is working even when you don't see it. It is impossible with your limited knowledge to see all God is doing to draw your husband/wife to Him. You might not see evidence of conviction for years. That doesn't mean God isn't pursuing him/her. Remember that God has an eternal perspective. His timetable is not your own. Philippians 1:6

3. If your husband/wife isn't saved, don't expect him/her to act like it. You can't believe the kind of movies your spouse watches or the language that spews out of his/her mouth. He/she doesn't like to go to church and becomes agitated when you bring up anything to do with God. Darkness doesn't like light that exposes sin. If he/she doesn't have a relationship with Christ, he/she doesn't have the Holy Spirit to help him/her discern. His/her eyes are not open and his/her ears do not hear. Pray that the blinders would be removed from his/her eyes.

4. Be a peacemaker. That doesn't mean you don't stand up to sin. But, be respectful of your husband/wife as a person—and of his/her family. You can hate the sin without disrespecting the sinner. Be cautious with information you share with others. Guard your mouth carefully around everyone, especially your children. Romans 12:18 and Romans 14:19

5. Don't allow despair to be your identity. Often when you've dealt with a particular hardship over a long period of time, you can grow comfortable in the sorrow. You know what it is to live in that place of hurt, and you know the reaction you get from others as they feel for you. It is important to receive sympathy, but don't remain in a pit of despair. Psalm 42:5

6. Have a right theology. Thinking it isn't fair to have hardship or loss is bad theology and will tilt your perspective of your sovereign God. God hasn't disappointed you; man has! God is the one constant in your life. In all of time, if anything wasn't fair it was piercing the hands and feet of the totally innocent God-man for your vile sins. Repent of your bitterness toward God. Ask Him to give you a right perspective of His love for you.

7. Grieve your loss. While you don't want to remain in your grief, it is necessary to realize you have been affected deeply by things you could not control. Unpacking those hurts one by one, and then forgiving each one, helps you move forward. It doesn't mean you forgive and forget, but rather you forgive and chose to move on.

8. Extend mercy. Remember that God first extended mercy to you by offering His Son on the cross. You were shown mercy and given grace while you were still a sinner. Luke 6:36

9. Don't let bitterness take root. The enemy will gladly entice you into believing you deserve returned love. But if you allow those thoughts to consume you, bitterness will destroy you. God is a righteous God, and He will deal with the sin. Even in the times you are called to take a stand, God will ultimately be the One to deal with that person in their disobedience. Hebrews 12:15

10. Be willing to examine your own heart. This is perhaps the most important lesson of all. God wants to do a work in you. He doesn't want to leave you where you are—He loves you too much. He wants to increase your faith, your reliance upon Him, and your love for Him. Be willing to allow God to transform *you*. Psalm 139:23-24