

# Charlyne Cares

July 6, 2010

Each Tuesday Charlyne's husband, Bob, shares from the prodigal's perspective more than two decades after divorce and remarriage.

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## Not At All!

Many standers are constantly looking for the key to getting their spouse back home while leaving every thought of separation and divorce behind in the far country. Even though we refrain from giving direct counsel, apart from listening to God, people often ask us for our thoughts on a specific idea.

*We have had people ask me, as a returned prodigal, "How well would have received Charlyne sending someone to talk to you?" If that question had come by email the short answer would have only taken three words: "Not at all!"*

Before our divorce we had an older couple as close friends. He was the morning man at a local Christian Radio station. These devoted Christian people were in our home weekly. I became his vacation and illness fill-in at the radio station. They had witnessed our children growing up. Sadly, they also witnessed our family disintegrating.

The man, Fred, was an active soul winner, who had no fear of talking to people, on or off the air, about Jesus. When Charlyne's Dad was dying, Fred went to the hospital and led him to the Lord. Only days later, he also spoke at my father-in-law's funeral service.

What would have happened if he had called me to confront me? No doubt there would have been a heated exchange, with my saying words I would today regret. Instead, I could call Fred's Saturday night Southern Gospel program with a song request, and hear Fred say, "We're praying for you, brother." As we prodigals do, I attempted to persuade Fred and his wife to accept the other woman.

You, see Fred recognized it was God, not Fred whose job it was to convict me (and the other woman) of our sin. Isn't that what you want the person to do whom you sic them on your prodigal? I do not now of one prodigal who came home because a Christian brother or sister confronted them. I do know of many, many friendships and relationships that have been seriously damaged by attempts to confront, even when the sin was blatant and God's will was obvious.

Fred never did call me, but when hearing that we had remarried, they rejoiced as loudly as anyone. Although not as close as we once were, due to age, (theirs, not ours!), the couple are still on the Ministry mailing list, have provided financial support and pray for us. Several years ago I officiated at the funeral of the wife's mother. Through the past twenty plus years, I would have missed out on the blessing of a friendship, if he had confronted, and I had responded.

Since this comes up often in the Ministry, Charlyne and I talk about it often. She says, "I thought that if Bob would listen to this one sermon, or read a certain book, or someone would talk to him, that he would come home. Standers, before they relinquish their mates to the Lord, are desperate people. They will do anything to get their prodigal to wake up."

Although we ask that it not be done, standers do subscribe their prodigals to '**Charlyne Cares**' daily devotionals. Some even fill out our online forms with a prodigal's name and address so that we will send mail to them. Yes, this brings results, but not what the stander anticipated. The restoration process is actually harmed by deceitfully forcing restoration material on your spouse. The prodigal gets mad (or madder) at the stander. They always know who sicced a marriage ministry on them and become more convicted than ever not to go home. They get mad at us for sending material.

I have received email purported to be from a prodigal, asking me to call them. God could not be pleased that Ministry resources have been wasted and Ministry time used to straighten out the ensuing mess and to make apologies.

If your prodigal is honestly wanting to hear from someone who has walked the path that they are now on, we have a book titled "**Finding The Way Home**," that I wrote just for them. I am always willing to take time to speak to a prodigal, but they must be serious and put forth the effort to call me. It simply does not work for me, or any Christian, to become like Bloodhounds, tracking down and cornering prodigal spouses.

As you go to church this next Sunday, you may have the thought, "He/she's the one! If they would only call my prodigal and straighten them out, my beloved will be home before sunset." If you manipulate a spouse home by sending someone after them, they could be gone again before sunrise.

What about pastors going after prodigals? The wise man of God will do so, only if the Holy Spirit, and not you, has burdened them to make that contact. Until then, the pastor should be praying for your prodigal and for you. Church leadership should be supporting your stand for handling divorce God's way, namely praying for restoration of that which God created, namely the family.

There is a comment that needs to be inserted here. When a family's disintegration becomes public, the pastor or elders have a Biblical mandate in James 5:19-21 to go to those involved to offer help. Beyond that, the elders have a mandate to be praying for the family in trouble. This was never done for us, and the cases where it happens biblically are rare.

*"My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins."*  
**James 5:19-21**

The church should, whenever possible, be seeing that a spouse's food and shelter needs are being met. The church must not be encouraging you to pursue divorce or divorce recovery classes. If your church is not meeting these biblical standards, you need to be praying that hearts will be changed where you worship.

Speaking of churches, no church and no pastor should be encouraging you to divorce your covenant spouse. They should never dissuade you from returning to your covenant spouse. Period. If your church is not behind you, you need to be asking God if you should put that church behind you.

Are you seeking someone to go after your prodigal? I pray that you are, and the only one who can be effective in reaching that soul, taken captive by the enemy, is Jesus. May you be asking Him alone to search out and talk to

your prodigal mate. That is the way marriages are healed.

*"You hear, O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more." Psalm 10:17-18*

Because He Lives,

***Bob Steinkamp***

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