

Charlyne Cares

February 2, 2010

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

Grasping At Straws

*"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." **Philippians 3:12-14***

The bomb of serious marriage problems, followed by separation and divorce, will destroy tens of thousands of additional families around the world today. Someone has said that having a spouse walk out feels like having the air sucked out of the room. Each of us has had days on our roads to divorce that we will always remember with emotion.

When a spouse first walks out, or when a report of unfaithfulness becomes public, often their mate will immediately start grasping at straws. They do this in three ways:

* **They try anything** – In this era, this often includes going to a search engine and seeking help by entering a couple of words related to their situation. Sadly, not every web site has the best interest of your family in mind. Some are looking to take advantage of your vulnerable state for their personal gain. There is good, free help available to you online, but we caution you to think twice before pulling out the credit card or enrolling in some program promising to save your marriage. We encourage men and women facing divorce to buy books and tapes, but initially to get their feet on the ground through free resources. Ask God to give you discernment in matters related to what you should do. If someone is overzealous in their attempts to steer you toward a particular place online, you need to question their motive.

Pray and ask God to direct you to the source of help that He has for you. Ask Him, and not other people, for your directions. He created you and your spouse, He alone knows what is best for you. Seeking advice from people and not from God is like taking a Mercedes to a lawnmower shop when there is car trouble.

* **They tell everyone** – It is human nature that we feel better when we share our problems, telling too many, too fast. Too much detail will harm your fractured marriage more than helping.

Did you ever play the kid's game, where people sit in a circle and the first person whispers something to the one next to them, until that saying has passed all the way around the circle? When the saying gets all the way back to the first person, it is always totally different than what was said originally. When what you are saying today gets back to your spouse, and it often does, it also will be totally different than what you spoke.

When you share about your marriage problems with any other person they need to be a dead end street, not an

entrance to an expressway of words. For example, what you share with a pastor, counselor, reputable marriage ministry or trusted prayer partner must stop with them.

The testimony excerpts we publish (with permission) in 'Charlyne Cares' each Saturday are only a few sentences long. Many of these are taken from email and letters that are 10 times longer. People do not need to know all of your circumstances.

My wife has a saying that she uses often in her teaching, "Zip the Lips." I can tell you she also practiced that policy when we were divorced. If you had known her then, you would have been hard-pressed to hear details of my misadventures, which were many.

I have said before that if there had been an Internet when we were divorced, and if Charlyne had been sharing details about me like some people share today, I would most likely still be a prodigal, kicking against God's working in my life, simply because I would not want to live with a woman who was gossiping about me. How are you doing at keeping family secrets a secret?

* **They think everything** – People who are grasping at straws always play the "what if" game. They are intent on borrowing tomorrow's problems. No wonder they become overwhelmed. Many of the recovery programs focus on "one day at a time" and that should be your goal also. Do not allow yourself to dwell on a negative future. That is a trademark of a person who is grasping at straws.

My wife and I pray that you can grow from grasping at straws to going to the Savior for your direction, comfort, advice and hope.

What are the traits of a person, once grasping at straws, who is now going to the Savior?

* **They trust God** – The worries and frets about what a spouse or court might do to them are gone. They trust God to meet their financial needs and matters of health. They trust God for their future. These people have a desire to learn more about God. They want a personal day-to-day relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. They allow the Holy Spirit to be their guide through life, instead of people.

* **They turn to the Bible** – Nothing is more exciting to us than to see an abandoned man or woman discover that the Bible has their answers. Once they realize God can speak to them through scripture, they are able to see their circumstances from God's perspective.

These same people realize that the Bible's 66,000 promises are from their Creator to them. Their focus goes from an unfaithful mate to a faithful God, who always has their best at heart and who will never abandon them.

* **They travail in prayer** – Many men and women who are standing with God and praying for the restoration of their marriages have never had much of a prayer life. Once they go to the Savior, they realize that God can change them and then their spouse and then their situation.

Sitting next to me is a phone. If my computer were to catch on fire and I picked up the handset from that phone and started shouting for help, without dialing a number, nothing would happen, except that in a short while it would be sitting in ruins. If I picked up the same handset, dialed 911 and shouted, help would be on the way.

Where are you today? Grasping at straws or going to the Savior? Are you sitting there, crying out for help, amid a burning home and no one is responding? I remind you to call on God today.

God is your only real help and hope, and He is waiting for you to turn to Him and to depend on Him.

*"For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body." **Philippians 3:18-21***

Because He lives,

Bob Steinkamp

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