

## AN OPEN LETTER TO AMERICA'S PASTORS

Dear Pastor,

Seventeen years ago I was the guy who you heard about in the counseling room. Living the life of a Sunday Christian, I had allowed abuse and unfaithfulness to enter our marriage. My wife, Charlyne, and I made numerous trips to see you. Finally, Charlyne could take it no more and she followed your advice and divorced me.

I wonder why you sent her that direction. I wish you had counseled her to become a Noah and to build a spiritual ark for our family. God hates divorce, He clearly tells us in His Word. We read that Moses allowed it for hardness of heart. Granted, leopards do not change their spots, but I am a child of God, not a leopard. I had a free will to do as I pleased, but the Lord works in molding and shaping that will, according to His perfect plan. Yes, the Lord had "someone better" for Charlyne. It was me after God had touched me, in His time. Yes, Charlyne had to, "get on with life," but I am thankful that life included praying this prodigal husband out of satan's grasp.

If someone you loved was diagnosed with terminal cancer today, what would you do? Would you say, "The doctor says it is hopeless," and set out to pre-plan a funeral and your life afterward without your loved one? I doubt if that would be your course. You would be pulling down heaven on behalf of that one who is so precious to you. Your congregation would be enlisted to pray healing, not death, on your loved one. We would each hang on to hope, until God's miracle of healing came. The faith of each one who prayed with you would be strengthened because we had witnessed the miracle of life when death was the prognosis.

Why, then, pronounce as dead a marriage that is sick and hurting? If you remove hope that our Lord God can touch and heal a marriage, are you not taking away a bit of the faith of all involved that God can do anything? If we have a God who cannot work miracles, can we even trust Him for eternal life?

Following our divorce, Charlyne and I both continued to hurt. Several months later, she heard from the Lord that He had not given up on me, as you and she had done. My wife began to fast and pray for me, even without your support. Over the next two years, the Lord slowly changed first Charlyne and then He changed me. It was Holy Spirit conviction that caused me to knock on her office window in 1987 and ask for her forgiveness, and ask her to remarry me.

Sending a wounded mate from your office to divorce court via divorce recovery is not the answer. We do not need to recover from divorce. We need marriage restoration. The men and women, boys and girls, whom you pastor, need to witness that our miracle-working God does not stop short of changing hearts and healing hurting families.

Today or tomorrow a wounded spouse will make an appointment to see you. Through tears, mixed with anger, they will relate what is happening at home. Please put aside your personal feelings of, "If my spouse acted that way, I would divorce them." Turn not to personal experience and opinion, but to the Bible and show that hurting spouse what God says about marriage. Send that one into a deep and close relationship with the Lord. Be sure and tell them how God works miracles for His people.

There are boys and girls whose very future will depend on what you tell their wounded Mom or Dad. I beg you not to speak death into that family, but new life through Jesus Christ. May the Lord bless your ministry for Him as you introduce your people not to an attorney, but to an altar where God answers prayers.

A returned prodigal,  
Bob Steinkamp  
[www.steinkamp.org](http://www.steinkamp.org)