

When His
SECRET
SIN

Breaks Your

Heart

Letters to
Hurting Wives

Foreword by
BEVERLY LAHAYE

KATHY
GALLAGHER

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WHEN HIS SECRET SIN BREAKS YOUR HEART:

Letters to Hurting Wives

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Dedication

*This book is dedicated to my beloved.
How far we have come, from ashes to beauty.
The Lord has made our crooked paths straight,
and you have become to me the love of God personified.
Thank you for loving me and being faithful to me.
Truly my beloved is mine, and I am his.*

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Foreword

We see them every day as we go through life's daily routine. Sexual images constantly bombard us—in newspapers, magazines, movies, billboards, television. And now they can be easily accessed through the Internet. Add to this that pornography, homosexuality and adulterous affairs have become not only prevalent but acceptable, and we now have a society that has become saturated with sex.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that many men have found it difficult to keep their minds pure and have succumbed to some type of sexual sin. Pornography is the most common form of sexual sin, and it is estimated that 40 percent of American men purchase erotic materials each year. Adult entertainment is a multi-billion dollar industry, and those who profit from it know that the addictive nature of pornography and related activities lead men to spend an increasing amount of money and energy in pursuit of them. But what many fail to realize is that sexual sin carries with it a greater cost than the impact on a man's wallet. It can devastate all of his relationships—especially with his wife and children.

The church is now beginning to recognize that pornography and prostitution are also problems for Christian men. In the past these problems were either ignored or thought to be limited to those men outside the church. Thankfully, many pastors and congregations are starting to deal with what has been called the church's "secret sin" and are providing Bible studies and support groups for men and women affected by sexual sin.

If you are a wife whose husband is involved in sexual sin, my heart goes out to you! This is one of the deepest betrayals that a woman faces. Often times you may feel alone, afraid,

Concerned Women

frustrated, and unsure of where to turn for help. I want you to know that you are not alone. God has been watching over you, and He will continue to do so. He wants to be your source of strength. It is not an easy road to travel, but God has promised that he will provide you with the strength you need to endure. And in the midst of these trying times, you will develop a deeper relationship with God if you rely on Him. He is both loving and faithful. At the same time, God may use these circumstances to smooth some rough edges and to develop character within you.

This book is also written for friends and family members who know women whose husbands have strayed sexually. You will develop a greater understanding of the struggles these wives face. They need encouragement, support, confidentiality, prayer and Biblical counseling. The Apostle Paul admonished believers to bear one another's burdens. This is a difficult burden for a woman to bear alone, and Satan can easily lead her into despair, anger, and bitterness. Your love and support for her can make a difference in not only her life but also the life of her husband as she strives to help him.

When a wife finds out that her husband is involved in a sexual sin, many emotions and questions run through her mind. Kathy's personal experience and her years of counseling wives have provided her with tremendous insight into the doubts and uncertainties they face.

Beverly LaHaye

Concerned Women for America

Introduction

This edition of *When His Secret Sin Breaks Your Heart* is newly revised from the 2003 edition. I have grown in my convictions about how to “survive” the devastation of an unfaithful spouse and have continued to hold to the Ancient Truths as the pathway God desires for us. As difficult as this subject is, God is still, and will always be, not just the One with the answers but is Himself the answer that we long for.

I have chosen to use a unique format for this book—answering letters from various hurting wives I have encountered. Over the span of the 25 years that I have been dealing with the wives of sexual addicts, I have yet to run into two women whose circumstances were exactly the same. With that in mind, I have attempted to handle a variety of issues that women experience, although I know I haven’t touched on them all.

While this book does not provide formulas about changing your husband, it does address practical situations you probably deal with on a regular basis. This is definitely not a one-size-fits-all kind of book so you may find yourself looking for those pieces that apply to your situation. The main thing I want to emphasize throughout the book is how IMPORTANT it is that you see Jesus in your situation. Having practical answers is secondary to this.

One of the subjects woven throughout the pages of this book is true biblical love – how to respond to pain with love rather than hate; how to replace bitterness with compassion; how to intercede rather than fret, and so on. Of course the earnest believer wants to be purged of ungodly attitudes and desires nothing more than to act in a way that both honors and pleases the Lord.

Another prevalent theme you will find in these pages is the importance of suffering in the believer’s life. As you come

to see the precious work it is producing in you, you will begin to appreciate it—even embrace it! This is the sublime truth Paul the Apostle alluded to when he wrote, “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory.” (II Corinthians 4:17) Paul experienced far more suffering than any of us and he knew what he was talking about!

Over the years I have run across books that express in great detail the sufferings of the woman married to a sexual addict. My concern over those books has been that they haven’t offered the anguished wife anything other than shallow empathy. The overriding message spun by these authors is: “You are a victim and your husband is a perpetrator! God wants to bless you! Get rid of this loser so you can get on with your life!”

But the Bible teaches something that unbelievers and worldly-minded Christians cannot comprehend: Life is deeper and more meaningful than temporal happiness. Even suffering plays an important role in God’s economy.

My experience has been that those who gravitate toward the easier solutions and prefer pat answers offered by popular psychology over biblical solutions usually suffer most in the end. Dealing with life’s problems God’s way may often seem difficult, but those who choose to do so always reap the benefits in the end. A new person emerges, not because of any self-esteem revival, but as a result of having found the presence of the Lord to be sufficient through every trial and every struggle.

Ultimately, we are all on a journey and while this trial might seem like a huge detour to you, I want to assure you that it is the Lord’s desire to use all of this to bring forth an inner joy that transcends outward circumstances. I want to encourage you to let the Master Architect of the freeway system you find yourself on guide you safely through to the end.

Kathy Gallagher

THE ENCOURAGING WIFE

Dear Ann,

I appreciate so much your sincere desire to be a blessing to your husband. Life's a lot easier when you have a husband who is really trying to do what's right. The key to his living victoriously is faithfulness and endurance, staying humble before the Lord and staying in a heart of repentance. If he remains diligent and chooses to do those things God has shown him, he will make it!

Your role is to be his cheerleader, not just when he scores a touchdown, but even after he fumbles the ball! Don't ever hold his mistakes against him. As best as you can, create an atmosphere of grace for him.* Let him know that you are totally committed to him. No matter what kind of day he's had, show him that you are in his corner. His sincere desire to walk in victory will enable you to be completely supportive.

I'm glad to hear you are also being responsive to him during intimate times. Many wives punish their husbands in the bedroom by rejecting their advances.† However, what these women don't realize is that this often exacerbates the problem. Generally speaking, the more satisfied a husband is at home, the less inclined he is to search elsewhere! In First Corinthians 7:5 Paul warns married couples: "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

Please continue to encourage your husband to have his daily time with the Lord. As you know, it is essential that you express support without nagging him. Perhaps you could even

* There is a fine line between allowing a husband to remain in sin and "creating an atmosphere of grace." This husband's attitude allows for this (cf. letters to Judy and Robin, pgs. 67 and 120).

† Again, there is another side to this. There are times when abstinence is the best policy, i.e. when there is a legitimate possibility of the husband transmitting an STD.

Practical Love

suggest that the two of you spend some time together in the Bible every evening.

As your husband matures in his walk with the Lord, one day he will cross a defining line—sexual sin will be completely behind him. I suspect that when that day comes he will gladly have this to say about his wife:

“Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, he praises her, saying: ‘Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.’ Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”
(Proverbs 31:28-30)

I FEEL LIKE I'M LOSING MY MIND!

Dear Anna,

You have beautifully articulated the agony of countless women: “Is my husband a liar or am I just imagining all of this? I don’t know what to believe anymore. I feel like I’m losing my mind!”

From what you expressed in your letter, it is obvious that your husband is manipulating you. You mentioned that every time you attempt to discuss his problems with him, he somehow twists the whole conversation around and makes you the focal point of the discussion, rather than him. You also said that when you confront him with undeniable evidence about his unfaithfulness, he manages to get everything so confused that you “don’t know up from down.”

Let me tell you: I’ve been there and done that! I experienced the same thing with Steve. Whenever I tried to talk to him about his sexual sin or the way he was treating me, he would cleverly commandeer the conversation and somehow get the focus on me. To this day, I don’t know exactly how he did it. Each time at the end of our discussion, I felt like I had made a big deal about nothing or that I was only imagining things. So masterful was he at manipulating me that I would actually end up being the one to repent!

One of the reasons he got away with this was because I desperately *wanted* to believe the best about my husband. He used his strong, domineering personality to emotionally bully me into submission.

As it turned out, my suspicions were right on target. Eventually I came to the realization that trying to convince Steve to do the right thing was a hopeless cause. It was then I decided to leave him. I simply couldn’t continue to accept his lies, his manipulation and his sleeping around. I knew that he would never change as long as he was allowed to stay in

Dear Anna

control of the situation. I hoped my leaving would cause him to see things right but there were no guarantees.

Anna, you must be strong and take a firm stand in your dealings with Tony in the future. It's obvious from what you shared in your letter that he is being unfaithful to you. Since he isn't sincerely responding to your discussions, you may consider a separation. It could be the very jolt he needs! Just be careful not to get into your own form of manipulation. Ask the Lord to give you the wisdom to do what is right and the strength to follow through with whatever He lays on your heart.

Thirty Day Journal

Thirty Day Journal

30 DAY *Journal*

*...and I will
what success when you
love a husband who is
really trying. I will try
to enjoy a fulfillment
and endurance. If he
can remain consistent
and faithful in the
things God has shown
love, he will make it!*



