

GETTING PAST THE ANGER

Background

Many marriages have been saved even after serious wrongs have been done but then are followed up by doing the right things. This is still a hard and messy process and involves much more than just a simple act of forgiveness. Often, the couple may need help in improving their communications skills and trust issues. They also need to deal with their anger.

Have five group members to read the parts of Narrator (announces the scenes and scene title), Counselor, George, Jennifer, and Pastor Smith. Have an additional person to serve as moderator at the end to lead class discussion.

Scene 1

George finds out that Jennifer has cheated on him

George (angry): How could you ever do a thing like this? I have always been there for you.

Jennifer (remorseful): I am so sorry, but I was desperate. There was no communication between us. There was no connection between us, that's why I did it.

Scene 2

George and Jennifer go to counseling

Counselor: George, you are holding Jennifer's past over her head. You have to make up your mind as to whether you want your marriage to succeed or not. Either you deal with your anger and forgive her and do your part in helping her with regaining trust or you let your anger destroy you and your marriage. Jennifer, you need to stop lashing back at George every time he digs up your past. This just gets you into an endless argument that doesn't go anywhere but down.

If things are that bad, you should just walk away.

Scene 3

They have a good week

George: Jennifer, I love you and want to always be there for you.

Jennifer: George, I love you, too. I am very sorry for what I did, but I hope you can forgive me and let me prove my love and faithfulness to you.

George: Let's go get some ice cream.

Scene 4

The problem resurfaces

George and Jennifer confront each other.

George (angry): You betrayed me that time when you were unfaithful. I can't get over it. I can't believe you would ever do that to me.

Jennifer (also angry): I only did it because I was so totally alone and was desperate about our relationship.

Scene 5

George deals with his anger

George goes to Pastor Smith for Counseling

George: Pastor, Jennifer and I are ready to split up because she had an affair a year ago and we can't get past it.

Pastor Smith: I am sorry about that, but regardless, you still need to deal with your own anger and unforgiveness. The fact that you have been coming to me for the last several months shows that you do care about your marriage and still love Jennifer, but even if your marriage doesn't work out, if you keep feeding your anger, it will destroy you.

You need to seriously consider the message of Philippians 4:8.

In the Living Bible translation, the Apostle Paul, who was unjustly in prison had this to say: 8 And now, brothers, as I close this letter, let me say this one more thing: Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about.

The Message translation says it this way: 8-9 Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious-the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

George, mulling the same thing over and over reinforces it in your mind, whether good or bad. You have the power to control your own anger by forcing yourself to think about the positive things and stay away from the things that make you angry. The path of thinking good things about Jennifer and avoiding the negative will not only help you to interact with her in a more positive way but will also help you deal with your own anger issues.

Let's have prayer for God's help.

George: Thank you, pastor. You have given me some important things to think about. It is hard for me to admit, even to myself, that my anger has been such a problem and so hard to deal with. If the Apostle Paul could write those words of encouragement when suffering so wrongly, I guess I could break my own cycle of negative thinking about Jennifer and start forcing myself to concentrate on her fine qualities. I am going home right now and tell Jennifer about our session, how I love her, forgive her, and want a better life.