

CHAPTER 18 - Her Deliverance

from The Power of a Praying Husband by Stormie Omartian

Picture yourself out sailing on a beautiful, clear, sunny day. A gentle wind is blowing in your face and rustling the sails. The water is calm as you glide along peacefully. You sense the open sea giving you life. You can feel it seeping through your pores and into your innermost being. You have a renewed sense that life is good. You can relax and enjoy the moment as you sail to your destination.

Carefree sailing like that only happens when it's done right. The sails have to be positioned perfectly to catch the wind so the boat can move forward. If they don't catch the wind properly, the boat can be tossed unpredictably. You can end up going around in circles revisiting the same old territory, and never actually getting anywhere. Or worse yet, you can lose control and capsize.

The same is true for us. **If we are not positioned right in our relationship to the Lord, we never catch that wind of His Spirit that enables us to sail against the tide of our limitations and circumstances and arrive at our destination. We keep coming back to the same old places, and we never get free.** And the ride can get rough and unpleasant. We sometimes lose control and get the feeling that we're sinking. But when we move with the Spirit of God, He never leaves us to wander around where we are. He moves us on to where we are supposed to be.

The problem is, we can't move on to where we are supposed to be if we have dropped anchor in the past. Whether it's something that happened 30 years ago or only as recently as yesterday, the past can keep us where we are if we don't pull in our anchor. God wants us to sail freely. He wants us to leave those old broken places behind so we can become whole people. This is especially important in a marriage, because that's where the mirror of our lives is held up to us daily. We see what we're made of, good or bad, moment by moment. The more whole we are individually, the better our marriages will be. But if we don't seek that fresh wind of God's Spirit to carry us, we never arrive at that place of wholeness and peace.

MOVING AWAY FROM HURTS OF THE PAST

No matter what your wife's past is, unless she has been able to step out of it, she won't be able to live successfully in the present or move into the future God has for her. Whatever hurt from the past that your wife has brought into your marriage will affect the present and the future of your life together. It could be something that someone said or did to her, or the trauma of things that happened to her, or something she did herself. Whatever it is, if it keeps her from having peace about the past, present, or future of her life, then she needs to get free of it. And she needs your prayers to help her do that.

After I wrote the book Stormie about my life of devastation and the road I took to find total restoration in the Lord, I received countless letters from men married to women who had come from abusive or emotionally damaging childhoods. In each case, the woman seemed fine when the man married her, but after they were married she fell apart. The husband felt helpless in the face of the depression and turmoil his wife was going through and was at a loss as to how to help her. Her emotional swings were too confusing for him. He didn't feel up to the task at hand, even if he could figure out what it was. He found it impossible to relate to what his wife was experiencing. This is what I advised each one of those men:

"Because of the love you have for your wife, and the fact that you have committed yourself to her in marriage, you have provided a safe haven for her," I wrote. "Your love tangibly represents God's love. She now feels loved enough and safe enough to face the frightening issues of the past and let them be exposed to the healing light of God's presence and power so she can be released from them. She feels secure enough to fall apart so that the Lord can put her back together again. What she wants from you is to know you will continue to stand by her with love and support—even if you don't fully understand what she's feeling or going through. She needs your prayer covering because it will 'break the back' of the enemy and provide a place of protection while she heals."

THE NEED FOR FORGIVENESS

We can never sail smoothly out of our past and into the future God has for us without forgiveness. That's because

our greatest hurts usually come from people. If there are negative relationships in your wife's past (especially old boyfriends, or an ex-husband), pray for her to be delivered from the effects of them so she won't bring ghosts from the past into your life together now. Those ghosts can appear at your most intimate times together without your even knowing what's happening. You don't want to be constantly trying to prove that you are not like the person with whom she had a bad experience before she knew you.

Another important area of healing to pray about is your wife's relationship to her earthly father. The way he treated her will affect how she relates both to God and to you. Was he strong and there for her? Did he abandon or abuse her? If she had a father who molested or mistreated her, or who made her feel bad about herself in some way, she may have a hard time trusting you. It's not that she doesn't want to, it's just that the man who was supposed to protect and love her didn't. If she doubted her earthly father's love, she may doubt her heavenly Father's love, which may cause her to doubt your love as well. This is where your prayers can make a major difference.

There are also traumatic events that can affect a woman so profoundly that she needs prayer to get free from the memory of them. For example, I once witnessed a man bleed to death after a terrible car accident. I didn't see the accident happen, but I drove by immediately afterward and stopped to help and report it on my cell phone. The man was alone and trapped in his car, and as I prayed I saw the life drain out of him before the ambulance even arrived. It was so traumatic for me that I had nightmares for days afterward. My husband finally had to pray for me to be delivered from the grip of that memory, and then the nightmares stopped.

FINDING FREEDOM

We all need to get free of anything that binds us. It could be anger, resentment, bitterness, or depression. The number of women who struggle with depression is staggering. But God doesn't want women struggling with any of these things. He wants them to be set free. If your wife is tormented by depression, for example, she needs you to stand with her in prayer until she receives freedom from it, no matter how long it takes.

The struggle many women have with food is a deep and troubling problem for them, one that requires deliverance.

They desperately need their husbands to pray for them until they find victory in this tormenting issue.

The great thing about praying for your wife to get free is that you don't have to have all the answers. She's not expecting that anyway. And you don't have to understand everything. She may not even understand it herself. But God understands everything and has all the answers, so put Him in charge. Your wife just wants to know that you will continue to love and support her when you see what she's been holding inside.

If you have a wife who needs a lot of freedom and healing, you may be thinking, "I don't have it in me to deal with all of my wife's problems. I just want to sail along peacefully, and she's stirring up the waters." But that's why **opposites attract—so they can complete each other.** Do you have any idea how boring it would be to live with someone who was exactly like you? Where would the spark be? The challenge? You would be able to predict your wife's every word, her every move, because it would be the same as what you would say or do.

I'll never forget the time I was involved in a seminar where the host and hostess divided us into personality groups. The outgoing people who needed to be the center of attention were all together. The sensitive, deeply thoughtful people were all put together, and so on. It was completely miserable. The outgoing people were constantly trying to outdo one another. The sensitive, deeply thoughtful people were depressing each other. I couldn't wait to get back into a mixed group. Being exactly alike is boring.

You may be thinking that you would gladly trade all the excitement you've been having for a little more boredom. And I understand that. But **when we are challenged by our mate's problems, it makes us stretch.** So even though your wife may be going through a difficult time that seems like more than you have the patience to bear, just remember how privileged you are to be an instrument of God's healing, and thank Him for allowing you to grow along with her.

THE DELIVERANCE PROCESS

The most startling thing I discovered about being pregnant was that from the moment I conceived, a process was set in motion. And there was no way I could stop it, outside of doing something that would terminate it. It was entirely out of my control. The process was going to go on, with or without my cooperation. That sense of being completely out of control of your body is a strange feeling. Sometimes that's exactly the way the deliverance process feels. It's going on whether you want it to or not. But that's because you have submitted your life to the Lord, and He wants you to be free. When God decides you are ready to go through it, He plants the seed, and it becomes a force that grows until you give birth to freedom. **And just as with delivering a baby, there's a certain amount of pain that is a part of the deliverance process. But when it's over, you're glad you went through it.**

Emotional hurts and bondage usually come off in layers, just the way they got there in the first place. That's why, even though your wife may have achieved a breakthrough in a certain area, the whole thing may come back with even greater force. It will appear to be the same old thing all over again, only worse this time. If that happens, don't be intimidated or disappointed by it. Don't think that things are getting worse instead of better. It just means that there are new layers of hurt or bondage that are coming to the surface for healing, and that God is leading your wife into a deeper level of deliverance. Often the deepest layers are the most painful. Just cling to God in the midst of the storm, and He will bring you through it safely.

Just as with giving birth to a baby, the worst pain comes right before the greatest deliverance of our lives. Things are the most difficult right before the biggest blessing is about to come forth. But God's timing is perfect. If women were able to deliver babies whenever we wanted to, we would deliver them sometime in the second month when the morning sickness kicked in. But the baby would not survive because it would be premature. The same is true with deliverance. We have to provide the best conditions we can, give it time, and try not to do anything to terminate it once the process has been set in motion.

Only God has the kind of love that can calm the storms of our lives. Only He can set our sails and move us in the right direction. Pray that your wife can pull up the anchor from her past and allow the fresh, calm wind of the Holy Spirit to get her sailing smoothly where she needs to go.

SHE SAYS...

Please pray for your wife that:

- 1. She will find deliverance and freedom in the Lord.**
- 2. Nothing will separate her from all God has for her.**
3. She will have emotional and mental wholeness.
- 4. She will be able to release the past completely.**
- 5. She will forgive anyone she needs to forgive.**
6. You will always love and support her in prayer.
7. Her life will become a testimony of God's healing power.

HE SAYS...

By Neil T. Anderson

Neil is the president of Freedom in Christ Ministries and author of Victory Over the Darkness and The Bondage Breaker. He and his wife, Joanne, have been married for 33 years, and they have two children and two grandchildren.

In the spring of 1986 my wife had eye surgery to replace a defective lens. It should have been a fairly routine surgery, but Joanne did not respond well to the anesthetic. She suffered a phobic condition, which led to a major depression lasting 15 months. Nothing her doctors did reduced her symptoms. In the midst of it, I got caught in a major role conflict. Was I her pastor, discipler, or counselor (which I had been for many people)? Or was I her husband? I realized I could only be the latter. I was in a situation I could not fix or control.

During this trial we lost everything we had. We were stripped down to nothing, and I realized for the first time that if God is all I have, then God is all I need. My ministry was to hold onto Joanne every day and say, "This too will pass." And it did pass, through prayer and humble dependence on God. The Lord brought me to the end of my resources so I could discover His. It's only God who can bind up the brokenhearted and set the captive free. Out of this period of brokenness, Freedom in Christ Ministries was born. And our marriage has been greatly strengthened.

Prayer Power

I pray that You would set (wife's name) free from anything that holds her other than You. Deliver her from any memory of the past that has the power to control her or keep her trapped in its grip. Help her to forgive any person who has hurt her so that unforgiveness will not be able to hold her captive.

Set (wife's name) free from everything that keeps her from being all You created her to be. Keep her protected from the plans of the enemy so that he cannot thwart the deliverance and healing You want to bring about in her life. Restore all that has been stolen from her until she is lacking no good thing. I know that in Your presence is healing and wholeness. Help her to live in Your presence so that she can be made totally whole.

Lord, I know that "though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:3,4). In the name of Jesus I pull down any strongholds the enemy has erected around (wife's name). Specifically I pray that my wife will be set free from (name a specific area of struggle from which your wife needs to find freedom). Set her free from this in the name of Jesus. I pray that for her sake You "will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns" (Isaiah 62:1). Make darkness light before her "and crooked places straight" (Isaiah 42:16). You have said in Your Word that "whoever walks wisely will be delivered" (Proverbs 28:26). I pray she will walk with wisdom and find full deliverance. Show me how to love and support her well in the process.

Power Tools

Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. - Isaiah 43:18,19

The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. - 2 Timothy 4:18

...you have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. - Ephesians 4:21-24

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 3:13,14