

Following the Lord in Our Marriages

Episode 257

Rachel Winchester [00:00:02]:

Sometimes we're led to believe that if we do all the right things, make the perfect choices, and follow the ideal path, we'll get the perfect outcome, especially in marriage. But as we know, life doesn't always follow a formula. While an ideal marriage can't be guaranteed, we can learn to live with faithfulness in the covenant we have made as a husband or wife. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carol Joyside has been helping families homeschool for several decades now through her seminars and consulting services. In this episode from the archives, Carol shares the story of her marriage and how she kept her covenant despite great hardship. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:46]:

Well, this morning, I'm sitting with my dear friend and prayer partner, Anne Storms, and we are about to share, a personal story that we wanted our listeners to be aware of. Anne is the very happily married wife of doctor Sam Storms, the theologian and author and pastor. And Anne and I have been prayer partners for about twenty some years. We started in preschool, and and we're just so happy to be together. So welcome, miss Annie. It's so good to be here with you. So Anne and I are on a little vacation together, little prayer retreat, and we're just as we've been talking and praying and spending time together, we just felt that it was time to share, my personal story, not all of it. You don't need to know all the gory details of my life, but just, just a part regarding covenant.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:50]:

And so I had written something, and I'm going to read it. And then Anne and I are gonna just kind of process and discuss, what I wrote. So, here we go. It's called the keeping of a covenant. On a late February afternoon in 2020, my husband died. My granddaughter and I planted an apple tree in his memory, and that evening, I finally took my wedding ring off. It had been a long, hard journey. Over forty years before that, I had married the love of my life, and through it all, he remained that for me.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:34]:

My brother-in-law stated in his eulogy that my husband was a Renaissance man. Brilliant, hysterically funny, dynamic, a man you would follow off of a cliff without questioning. An artist, musician, athlete, and craftsman. There was nothing he couldn't do with his hands, rebuild a house or a car engine or whip up an unbelievable gourmet meal. Did I mention that he was six foot five and drop dead handsome? I never tired of his company. He never met a stranger, as his mother said, and he could tell a story like no one else. But there was a dark side to all these gifts and talents. He had a lifelong battle with depression that he overcompensated for with manic episodes of overspending, self medicating, and overworking.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:30]:

Nothing was done by halves. As his father said, he worked when he should be playing, and he played when he should be working. Highly dysfunctional and yet irresistible. After years of separation with several miraculous periods of reuniting, he finally divorced me shortly before his death. I believed what I said on our wedding day, that I was bound to him until death. I never gave up hope for his wandering heart to return to the fold of God. My constant prayer over all those years was that he not die unshriven. That is an old medieval word.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:16]:

It referred to the custom of being baptized at your death. Because people in the middle ages believed that any sin committed after baptism would not be forgiven, they waited until they were at death's door to receive the sacrament. But if the priest did not arrive on time or they died a violent death on a battlefield, they believe that their salvation would be lost. Now, of course, we don't understand salvation that way today, and that was not what I meant by that prayer. I merely prayed that my husband would die in a state of repentance, not rebellion. Our son was present at his deathbed, and walking in forgiveness all these years toward his father, he was praying and reading scripture over him that described heaven in the book of Revelation as well as the glorious ending of the book Pilgrim's Progress. Although no one can know what takes place in another man's heart at the hour of death, I have hope that I will meet that dear man someday on that beautiful shore. His shackles will be gone, and he will be eternally free.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:34]:

So I read that to Anne this morning as we talked about doing this. And, Annie, what were some of your thoughts? I think the first

Anne Storms [00:05:43]:

thing over the years when I've met with you and we've prayed and I've seen your just unwavering faith, as you said, you never gave up hope. And my question for you is I'm hearing the story again, and I bet some of your listeners are asking the same thing. What kept you committed? What kept you strong? How did you keep on through all of the difficulty and the sorrow and the broken trust?

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:14]:

Yeah. I think the word of God. You know? I just to whom much is given, much is required. And I had been taught the word of God as a new believer, indelibly in my mind. I knew that the word said that God hated divorce. I knew that a covenant, unlike a contract, could never be broken except through death. And so I just also, I really had hope that my husband was going to return to be the man that I'd married, the dynamic on fire Christian man who is in the word. And we went to church four and five times a week in California.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:59]:

And the man who witnessed to everyone and picked up hobos on the street and brought them home to our house and gave things away sometimes to the point where I would go, oh, you gave that away? Because he had such a gift of giving. I mean, I married a man that was the godliest man I could find. I turned down other marriage proposals waiting for God's best, and I really knew through the word that God had told me to marry my husband. And so I just never gave up hope on our destiny as a family and our ministry. So we don't in any way want to bring condemnation on so many friends and and listeners have, like me, been put in a marital situation they never asked for or wanted in terms of, abandonment, abuse

Anne Storms [00:07:53]:

Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:54]:

Adultery, drug use, you know, all the different things that people are dealing with and living with. And I can't, tell anyone else what to do. This is such a personal conviction. But for me, I just felt that the Lord said that as I promised at my wedding day that for better or for worse, that I was committed to my husband until death. And that was just a core conviction that I had and I shared with my son, you know, through it all as well.

Anne Storms [00:08:27]:

Right. And I'm thinking of something that I've heard you say so many times, and I quoted you probably even more, is when you have spoken about being in a very difficult hurting place in your marriage. The best marriage you will ever have is the one

you are in right now, that getting out of one bad marriage very often well, you know, you take all the baggage anyway, but you can end up in even more complications, sorrow and disappointment that affects even more people than just you. And so I've just remembered that very, very often if you stand with the lord in this, that there is beauty that comes out of ashes. It may not look at all, as I'm sure you never expected for John to pass away without having repented as you said, but you stood firm, and it's God who will bring those that beauty out of ashes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:22]:

Yeah. And I know our son has thanked me for holding my covenant

Anne Storms [00:09:28]:

Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:29]:

And not, running off and divorcing my husband even though, of course, everyone told me that I should and that I had grounds. But as I would say to people, just because you have grounds for divorce doesn't mean that you have to get divorced. It you have an option, but what would be god's best? God's best is the healing of a marriage, and how would God most be glorified? And that is, as you said, with the the husband or as the Bible says, the wife of your youth.

Anne Storms [00:10:01]:

Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:02]:

That's God's best. He's the father of your children. There'll never be anyone else that is the father of those children.

Anne Storms [00:10:11]:

Yeah. And then I know I think a question for so many is, well, I can't stay in this. This is destroying all of us. Is there another option? And what I saw you walk out was a biblical separation with Christ still at the center between you and John. You were not in the same home. For years, you were not in the same town, but you stood strong to the covenant, but you took the safety net that protected you and JJ from further abuse

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:42]:

Yeah.

Anne Storms [00:10:42]:

And torment. But that doesn't mean you have

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:45]:

to go all the way to the divorce line. That's right. So we were legally married all those years, and people said I was crazy, that I was linked to him legally in every which way. But I just believe for me personally, that I was committed to him, and I would never dissolve my marriage. If he wanted to dissolve it, I couldn't stop him. The laws are so bizarre in our world today where you cannot prevent someone divorcing you. But I certainly was not going to begin that process with my husband.

Anne Storms [00:11:22]:

Right. Okay. So what about those who are listening today who have been divorced, who because of extenuating circumstances, they felt that God had given them an I hate to say an opportunity But biblical grounds. Biblical grounds. Yes. To go ahead and divorce, and they have done that, and they have either remarried or not.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:48]:

Mhmm. How do they walk this out without feeling condemned? Yeah. Great question, Anne. And we have so many people in our lives that are in that position. I can only say we each have to walk in the light we've been given, but there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. And so, even if you've disobeyed the Lord, sin is sin. All sin is under god's blood. And it isn't that we willfully disobey and just flagrantly say, oh, he'll he'll forgive me.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:21]:

He'll forgive me. We don't ever want to put god to the foolish test. But there is a place of saying, Lord, it's scrambled eggs. I can't get them back in the shell. How can I go forward and live my life to your glory? And and you may have to be honest with your family, with your children, and say, you know, mommy disobeyed God and in this particular situation, or daddy did, but you know what? God still loves us. We are still under his forgiveness. There is no unpardonable sin except rejecting the death and atoning blood of Christ. And so, no one has has done something that will separate them from God as long as they're willing to repent and own it and say, that was sin.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:09]:

But I sin every day, Anne, and and sin isn't graded. God doesn't grade on a curve. Sin is sin, and it all when I gossip about my next door neighbor, that's that's sin. It's all sin. And so we just need a the forgiveness of Christ, and we start from that day, and we pick up in our mat and go home. We walk, walking in the light we've been given, but we don't continue to go back, you know, to the pig farm. Right? Right. Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:42]:

And I'm kind of thinking too for those who are listening today and going, oh, I had no idea. This really encourages me. You mean there's somebody who's walked through this and stood strong? And I do remember a phrase that you talked to about standers. Yes. Can you share

Anne Storms [00:14:00]:

on that? That really gave me a picture

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:01]:

of what you were doing. Yeah. That's so good. So when my dear husband first left us and abandoned us, I started attending a church, and I knew what the Lord was saying to me about standing for my husband. And, but I started working with this pastor and his wife, and they told me about a ministry called standers. And it was for people who were standing for their covenant, where one member of the marriage was standing for the marriage even if the other member had violated or abandoned it or broken the covenant. And so I started going to a prayer group that met. I think it was Monday nights, and there was an older lady there.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:49]:

And she was standing for her marriage for many years, and there were healed marriages during that time. Unbelievable stories. And we would just pray for each other's spouse, and the rule was you never said anything negative about your spouse, and you didn't talk about this outside. You didn't go around making yourself a victim, but you protected your spouse's reputation and, with the hope that someday they were coming home, and you didn't want them to have to live down all the things that you invented to make yourself feel better and to make yourself look better, but that you were to keep it close to your chest and talk to God about it, not other people. So yeah. That's huge. The hours and hours that I have heard you, seen you, been with you, praying, talking to the Lord about it instead of everyone else. I have seen you literally on your knees in my living room asking god to bring John to repentance to his heart and for restoration, and you weren't blabbing dirty stories for years.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:53]:

I didn't know very many

Anne Storms [00:15:54]:

of the details. I still don't, actually. And That's good. Yes. It is.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:00]:

It is. Because what's the point? You know, the Bible says it's good to not even talk about the things that are done in darkness.

Anne Storms [00:16:06]:

Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:06]:

You know, we're all so snooty in the world in which we live. And how does that glorify god?

Anne Storms [00:16:12]:

You know? Well and I'm thinking today, as somebody's listening, as soon as we sat down and you started the introduction, I immediately thought of one of my favorite verses in Psalm 90. It's number 12, teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom. And I feel like that's what I've seen you walk out, that you have been numbering, counting, surrendering every single day to the lord that you would gain his heart of wisdom in how to bring honor to his name, glory to to him through all the years of your marriage even though it certainly did not look as most people would want a marriage to look.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:59]:

Yeah. You know, that's such a good point. There are such worse things than being single, Way worse things. And as a pastor's wife, you hear them every day. Don't you, Anne?

Anne Storms [00:17:12]:

Right. So

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:14]:

yeah. So I guess the thing is, like, in first Corinthians seven, Paul talks about if you really wanna serve the Lord, it's easier if you're unmarried. And interestingly, that's what I read when I met the Lord in reading that Bible in a meditation center as an unbeliever. Mhmm. Those were the verses principle that pastor Chuck taught us out in California was, seek first the kingdom of God and all these other things will be added. Don't seek marriage. Don't seek mister wonderful coming by on a white horse. Seek first Jesus and his kingdom, and put the rest on the altar and say, Lord, if it's your will that I be single, I'm willing to be single.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:05]:

If it's your will that I be married, I'm gonna be married. How can I best serve you? When you read all the missionary books that I read all the time, all these missionaries were single. Most of them, Rosalind Go forth was married. But most of the women that I love and esteem were single because a single person, as Paul said, doesn't have to worry about how to make their husband happy. They can only worry about what makes God happy, and it really sets you free. And so this idea that you have to go from one marriage immediately to the next, and that's gonna solve your problems and remove your burdens, sometimes it's just easier to be married to the lord. Men did that. So, I I've told my son because he has longed for me to have that wonderful relationship that he and his wife have and and that, you know, his dad and I had in the early years of our marriage, and he's longed for that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:01]:

And I so when my dear husband died, I said to him, okay. I'm ready to be remarried. And he's like, really? Because he would love that for me, and I am I am open to that. Absolutely. But I'm also every day, I say to the lord, but I'm so my life is so full in you, lord. You're enough. Makes me cry. I know.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:25]:

I can see your tears now. Yeah. So anything else we wanna say? Okay. You wanna pray for these sweet folks that are listening to us?

Anne Storms [00:19:35]:

Absolutely. Okay. Lord Jesus, I lift up every single person listening, whether they are married, whether they are single, whether they are hopeful for restored marriages. I pray through the power of the holy spirit that you will enable them to walk out what is in their heart that you have placed that they would remain committed to you first and foremost. I ask holy spirit that you will bring bring wisdom and counsel and guidance to those who are struggling and trying to figure out the next step. And, Jesus, I thank you. You say not only do you bring us peace, but, Jesus, he is our peace. So I pray father, son, and holy spirit that you would invade the hearts of every single person wherever they are on the spectrum of this conversation is they have heard Carol share some painful details of her private life that most people do not know.

Anne Storms [00:20:42]:

But now on the other side of it, it is bringing glory to you as she stood hopeful in her marriage, fervent in prayer, and committed to what you told her to do, Lord, surrendering her heart to you first and you alone. And I thank you that you are even now beginning to drop bracelets into the the spirits of those who are listening. And you are saying, come to me, and I will give you the rest that you are seeking. You will

not find it out in the world. Come to me, and I will show you the way. I will teach you to number your days aright, and you will gain a heart of biblical wisdom for the journey ahead. In Jesus' precious name, I pray. He will not fail.

Anne Storms [00:21:30]:

Amen.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:31]:

Amen. I love you, Annie. Thank you. Congratulations. Thank you for joining us.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:39]:

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. If you like what you heard in this episode, please leave a rating and review on Apple podcast or Spotify, or share this episode with a friend. It means so much when you help us spread the message of Homeschool Made Simple with others. Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What he calls you to do, he will enable you to do. Blessings.