

# Marriage Restored

## Forgiveness Brings Healing to Divorced Couple

By Judy Ransom

Only God could heal my broken heart and restore my life, my marriage, and my family.

Steve and I were married 28 years when we decided to separate and eventually divorce.

We both made mistakes, and I grew more and more disheartened. My 50th birthday hit me like a ton of bricks, sending me spiraling deeply into depression. Studies have shown that women who were abused in their youth are at higher risk for depression leading up to and during menopause, and I had been physically abused throughout my childhood and teenage years.

Back then, all I could do was numb the pain. God delivered me from a world of drugs and dark despair at the age of 20 when I turned my life over to Him. I learned to forgive my parents, but I believe I still had lingering bitterness which I brought into my marriage.

Bitterness is a poison-tipped arrow piercing your own heart. It eats you alive from the inside out, even causing sickness and disease in the body. I believe I was projecting past hurt and bitterness onto my husband, and my health – mentally, physically and emotionally – declined.

According to Hebrews 12:15, a root of bitterness springing up will cause trouble and defile many. When you're bitter, everyone around you is impacted negatively, and in my case, it tore apart our marriage and family.

While separated and divorced, I discovered the grass was not greener on

the other side, but brown and brittle. I was still depressed and filled with anxiety. I couldn't sleep for weeks and months, feeling like I was losing my mind. I had lost self-confidence, and was filled with

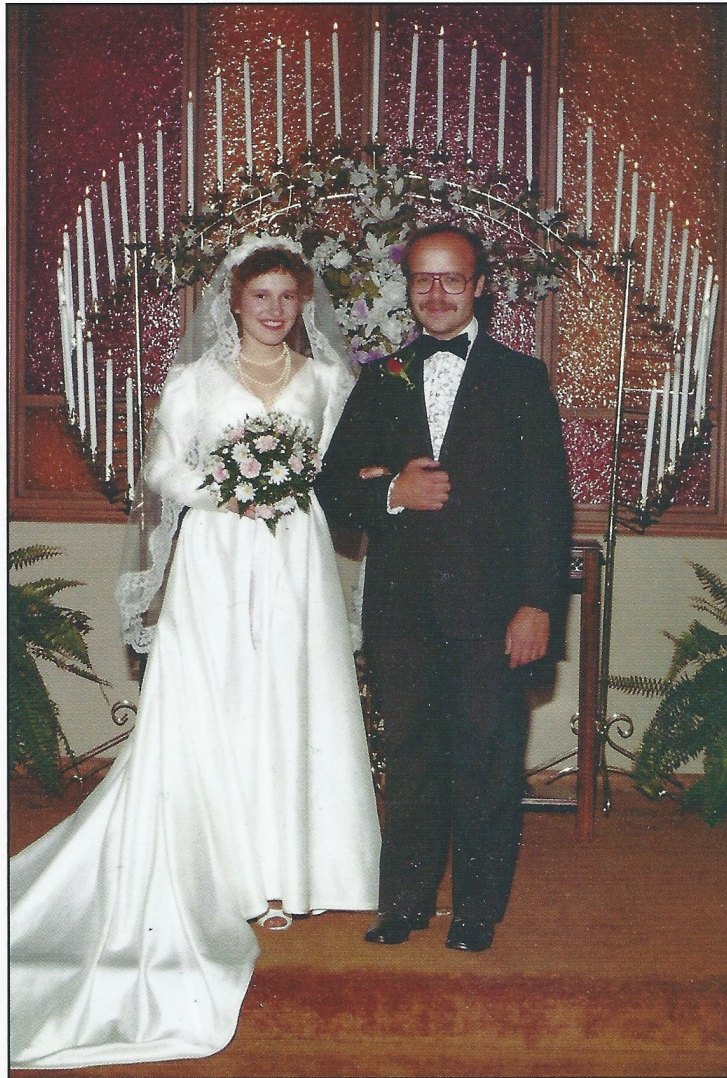
long would it take? I had seen countless miracles of healing and deliverance in my life, and I knew He would deliver me yet again.

In the summer of 2014, a friend texted me a link to a teaching and healing ministry. I clicked on it and listened with voracious hunger. The old proverb, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears," came to life as I began to devour teachings every possible waking moment, flooding my mind with the light of God's Word. I was coming to life again, as God restored my soul.

The miracle came unexpectedly. I started listening to a family series which turned out to be about marriage – something I wanted nothing to do with. In the middle of a teaching, God gave me revelation. In a moment of time, He showed me how destructive my divorce was – to my life, to Steve's, to our marriage, our family, our extended families, our church, and even our local community. He showed me the things for which I had so much difficulty forgiving Steve were just mistakes he made ... and they were forgivable.

In that moment, I genuinely forgave Steve, and God healed my broken heart. When God showed me the plank in my own

eye (Matthew 7:3), I couldn't even see the speck in Steve's. I was filled with remorse and repentance for what I had done. When God gives repentance (2 Timothy 2:25), He also gives you an action to take, like "first be reconciled to your brother" in Matthew 5:24. I was suddenly filled



Steve and Judy Ransom on their wedding day in 1983.

fear, which does indeed have torment (1 John 4:18). I still read my Bible and prayed, but felt like I was hanging on by a thread. I clung to God's promise in Psalms 147:3, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." I knew He would heal my broken heart ... but how



with a sense of urgency to call Steve, tell him I repented, and ask his forgiveness. We hadn't spoken for months, but I called and asked to have lunch with him.

We met the next day, and I explained what God showed me. I told him I repented and asked if he would forgive me. He said, "Yes." When we got up to leave, something blurted out of my mouth which I hadn't planned at all, "If you ever want to consider reconciliation, let me know." We both stood there in silent shock at what I had said. He answered, "I'll need to think about it."

A few weeks later, Steve called and said he'd be willing to start dating again. We proceeded cautiously, with the help of a Christian counselor, learning to communicate openly with each other. The following spring we were married in the mountains of northeast Alabama, the setting of our first honeymoon over 31 years earlier.

We are now communicating on a deeper level than we ever thought



The second wedding for Steve and Judy Ransom happened in the spring of 2015. Pictured with the couple are their children, Matthew, Stephanie and David.

*“Bitterness is a poison-tipped arrow piercing your own heart. It eats you alive from the inside out, even causing sickness and disease in the body.”*

possible, and have come to realize we are soul mates and best friends. It's as if God helped us hit the "reset" button, with all things new in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Is our marriage perfect? Well, if you bring two flawed people together, a perfect marriage it does not make. However, we can both attest our marriage is better than it ever was. Picture a triangle, with two imperfect people at each bottom corner, moving upward each side toward a perfect God. As each of them draws closer to God, they become more Christ-like, and draw closer to one another.

I now keep a gratitude journal and write in it every day. I have found this is a great key to happiness, eliminating any sense of victimhood or entitlement. I was once bitter and unthankful, blaming others for my discontent, but now understand I am the only one who can determine my own happiness – by remaining thankful. "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ ..." (2 Corinthians 2:14).

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