

Ep_47_Your_Healing_is_Not_Dependent_on_His_Recovery_part_1

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SPEAKERS

Pam B., Bonny, Lyschel

P Pam B. 00:03

Hi, I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace.

L Lyschel 00:05

And I'm Michelle Burkett with hope redefine. And

B Bonny 00:08

I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives. We're so glad you're joining us.

B Bonny 00:17

Welcome to another episode of hope for wives. In today's episode, we're discussing your healing and how it is not dependent on your husband's recovery. This conversation has wives in mind that may have been on this road of recovery for several years now. And there's still a good bit of relational conflict in the marriage. In our next episode, we'll talk about practical tools you can consider to care for yourself while he's still moving forward toward solid emotional health. But for today, we're talking about what it means for you that your healing is not dependent on his recovery. So ladies, what kind of situations and feelings come up for a wife when his recovery is slow going.

L Lyschel 01:04

So I'm going to intrude Michelle fashion be able to just just give all my confessions on this podcast, I don't know. This is, uh, when Bonnie, when you sent this topic to us, I was just like, Oh, this one's so familiar for our story, but I'm thankful for it, because it does help me be reflective around the where we've been and where we are now. So my story, if you may remember it, when in some of our earlier episodes, I very much struggled with this concept that I needed him to heal, so I could heal. And so and I think some of that was like an unsaid direction from people that we were around. Mostly because all of the resources were designed for him, there was nothing for me. So in my brain, I went, Oh, well, then if he's the one with the book, he's the one who needs to be fixed. And then he's the one who will fix this. And I just remember having that sense of anticipation that he's going to come home from group one night, or read a chapter in a book and have an epiphany. And it's going to make things come back and be better. There was one particular season I do remember he was he was supposed to be supposed to be reading a book in a men's group. And I noticed that it just kept sitting on the coffee table. And there was one particular day where I'm all so out of sorts, I'm tired. Problem, I was probably hungry, because I say things bad when I'm hungry. And you know, and then I just and I just lost it on him about this book. And I was like that books been sitting there for three weeks, you haven't tried to do a little bit, you know, and I'm all upset about it. And I'm angry. And I'm mad that he's not doing the steps. And soon after that, it started to become clear to me that that's what I was doing is I was waiting on him to fix this. And I do think that all of our husbands have a responsibility and repair. I think that is necessary. But to say that I can't get better until he gets better isn't truthful. And so when I see situations or feelings coming up with this, I oftentimes will hear women say I feel so stuck, or I feel trapped. I don't know how to make him go do his recovery. And that was another thing that I assumed discovered was all of my behaviors around control. Where I was trying to control everything i i went to the point of when my husband told me that one of his triggers was stress, that I made this like internal personal vow that he would never have to navigate stress again, right? And then guess what he went to work, and all those dumb people at work, stressed him out. And then I'm out of control. And I'm frustrated with the environment that's not being kept safe the way I want it to be. Because the

reality was, I didn't want to experience the acting out again. So I just was really, you know, lost in my mind thinking I had this sense of power that I could control everything and that he would never experience stress. And of course, here I am, right. I've like I think of it as like having a duffel bag. I've like taken all his dirty laundry and shoved it in my duffel bag, so he doesn't have to carry the weight of it. And it is so heavy. And then I look over and he's napping and not reading his book. And I lose my ever loving mind about it. Because I'm going where are you putting in the effort because I've taken on all of these things in an effort to try and create space and opportunity for you to do the hard things. And that is just it's difficult but it's a reality that so many of us as wives We tend to do, and I had to start coming to a place of maturing and my boundaries. I had to be the one that said, I can't not, you can't not be an adult in our relationship. Right, you can't not have responsibility with our kids or you can't not have, you know, the finances and all these other things that come with being an adult, I can't carry all those on my own. So I'm going to have to create boundaries around that. And then also understand that you're responsible for your recovery. I can't be responsible for that. So it definitely came to a place of me having to mature in my boundaries, but also assess what I was doing and why I was doing it.

P Pam B. 05:49

You reminded me of a conversation, many cycles ago and old pami Jeff, and I was sort of bickering with Jeff about going to therapy. And he was like, I'm done. I'm fixed. It's okay. And I'm like, oh, no, no, no, things aren't right here. You must still need therapy. And he said, Well, aren't you gonna go to therapy, and I said, I don't have a problem, you have a problem, when you fix your problem, I'll be fine. And I was so wrong. I had trauma, I had attachment wounding, I had deep, deep wounds from all of it. But I didn't know that. And I just thought that once the environment became safe again, that I'd be fine. And I was wrong. I wasn't aware of and therefore it neglecting my betrayal, trauma wounds that nobody else could heal. But me and God, another human being. I mean, I could have therapists, I could have coaches, I could have friends, I could have pastors, people praying over me. But other people, including my husband, couldn't just fix me or heal me. And so I kept looking to Him and the relationship. And back then, and I know, this still happens to this day, with some untrained therapists, or my expectation was, well, that therapist is helping my husband and his group is helping him. They're also going to help him figure out how to fix this relationship. And I was wrong. See sets, if see sets are trained to work with sexual addiction. They're not necessarily trained unless they go and get additional training, like from App sets, for the partner piece to support us, and to help us heal on their end to support the relationship because there's three recoveries, there's the recovery for, for the part for the husband, for sexual addiction, there's recovery for me. Now, I know from betrayal, trauma, and the third recovery is the relationship itself. And I think I was I was looking for my husband's therapist, I was looking for my husband to fix the relationship completely. And, and that's where I was so stuck, because I'm crying in the corner alone, feeling the loneliness, because my husband didn't yet know how to deal with his emotions and how to deal with intimacy, emotional intimacy, and everybody else was helping him. Nobody was helping me nobody was helping the relationship. And so I was lost and alone. And I kind of also thought, you know, self sufficient, Pam, well, I should be able to fix this, like you did, Lucia, like you took on more than was yours to take on. I was taking it all on to. And I just didn't have the power. I didn't have the power or the skill or the knowledge. But yet I took it all on my shoulders. Mm hmm.

L Lyschel 09:08

When you said that, immediately, I started thinking about I've I've sat with so many women who have talked about going to see the CSET in hopes of getting information and the disappointment or the the letdown that happens for them, because they're going in to say, can you tell me how long this is gonna go on for? Can you tell me when we're going to be better? And oftentimes, they feel that disappointment because he the CSAT tends to educate, I should say, hey, there are female suicides, too, but they tend to educate around the addict and the addiction. And so they're telling her about that individual and she's going, you know, there's a part of her going, yeah, yeah, I know that stuff. What about us, or what about me? And so I've had I've had clients who have sat in that environment and paid for that type of care. And then they find somebody who is betrayal, trauma informed upsets, or have you and they're like, this is a game changer. This, I have gotten more out of two appointments with somebody with this particular training than I ever did with my CSAT. And it's not the SI SATs fault, right? Like, we're not blame shifting here. But it is an understanding of the fact like you said, Pam, like I needed help. I needed help with my own healing. And I do know that that was a place I didn't know for a really long time. I've

P Pam B. 10:36

heard that too. And again, this is not anything against the people out there. The professionals who are untrained, they're just what you they don't know what they don't know that sitting with an app that's trying to betrayal trauma informed provider, whether it's a coach, a therapist, a group leader, is an absolute game changer, because the first thing we do is validate all your emotions are normal and valid and actually healthy. In response to what you've experienced, that alone can release so much pressure, that okay, I'm not crazy. I'm not over overreacting, that I have a right to feel, the way I feel and, and then I have hope, once I feel seen, then I have hope that I can do something about it. But when everybody else is running around saying either leave him or get over it, or everybody does it, or, you know, with all these fixes, I have no hope that I'm ever going to get this problem solved. So being seen, for what I'm experiencing is huge. Which I think leads us into findings like Oh, go ahead.

B

Bonny 12:01

Yeah, we'll get to that next question. Yeah, yeah. Um, so for me situations and feelings that came up between the first and second D days between that period of time it was about 10 years. Absence wasn't even a thing. I don't think it came into being until the what 2015. When did it anyways, so so for me in that, that season, I was doing exactly what Pam and Michelle had been describing. I was doing all the things I exactly what you said, Michelle about. I was trying to make his life as easy as possible. Because I was trying to protect myself. But also that was what I was hearing in the religious community. We took a marriage class, which did help us tremendously, but one piece of it was try to have the home be peaceful and quiet and organized when he arrives home from work. So imagine trying to do that with three boys within three years of age. I was exhausting myself and I, I reached a point of really of hopelessness until something shifted. And it was that I was separate and apart from him. I had personal responsibilities, and he had personal responsibilities. And somehow it was God totally God. Because I didn't have resources at that time. I was able to see where I stopped and Dave started. It wasn't up to me to help calm his frustration from work that was up to him. He needs to figure that out. So the situations and feelings that came up for me was a lot of guilt and blame accepting for a season. And then it shifted into hopelessness. And then when hopelessness just became too much, I really leaned into God and God started showing me things. So Pam, let's move into that next question. Let's talk about the concept that a wife's healing is not dependent on his recovery.

P

Pam B. 14:26

You bring up this concept brings up a word for me that is really kind of, for a lot of people scary and murky and not clearly defined. And it's detachment. And I find even myself, it was thrown at me so much through the 90s and the early 2000s. About well you need to detach just detach. And to me that sounded like okay, well I need to throw up this big brick wall and completely distance and pretend like I'm not even married, and just completely detach, and so I'm not supposed to care anymore. And that's not really what detachment in the, in the healthiest sense of the word means. What I learned in my own story was that detachment meant, I'm reattaching, to myself, like you said, Bonnie, you just You took the words right out of my mouth, that there was no boundary for me, between what my husband was responsible for emotionally, and what I was responsible for emotionally or even the health, I thought, you know, as a wife, I'm responsible for the health of my family, including physical health, emotional health, psychological health, men don't go to doctors, it's up to me to get them to go to the doctor, those those kinds of things, culturally, and I felt so responsible for making sure he got the help that he needed. That, like I spoke about before, I wasn't getting the help I needed. I was so affected by his mood, his demeanor, the words, he said, whether or not he was safe, for me in the relationship, but of course, back then I didn't have that language. You know, I felt something's off in this relationship, I have to make it right. I have to do something to make it right. And I didn't have the language or the skill or the knowledge that I have now to know that something's off in the relationship. I feel uncomfortable. How do I get comfortable? How do I make myself feel comfortable? And do I have an external focus? Every time I'm unhappy? Or sad or scared? Is that focus external to other people? Do I always look to other people to fix that for me? Or do I ever go to myself first and say, What can I do to comfort myself to feel connected to, to feel that I'm doing everything I can do for myself and for the relationship. And if my husband's not able to participate? That's on him. It's not my fault. And it's not up to me to drag him back into the relationship. And so there was this very blurry line between who's responsible for whose moods I have a story I tell about when he was, we work from home, and I heard him in the other room, he was getting heated over something with his job. And I know the situation he had every right to be angry. But my mind first went to, well, I could make him cookies. I wanted to have chocolate chips, and I had to go no, no, wait a minute. I'm not responsible for that. I'm only responsible for my feelings and my emotions, I need to let him learn how to deal with his anger and deal with his anger. I can't fix his anger. I can't fix his mood. I may kid myself that I can. But even if I were to bake them cookies, and he would, they would change his mood, it would be him changing his mood, not me. What I needed to do was keep bringing the focus back to me, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute, what can I do? What do I feel? What do I need? How can I get that need met? Can I meet it myself? Can I ask my husband and meet that need? Can I ask a recovery friend to meet that need, of course, always take it to God first. Sometimes God just meets that need from you that need for connection to be heard, to be seen and heard for what's happening with me.

B

Bonny 19:04

And I think it's important to remember that what you mentioned before, there's three things that need to heal. And we do get confused that that marriage relationship is equal to our personal healing. And something that I struggled with. He wasn't even in recovery. I thought he was working towards recovery. He wasn't but one thing I personally dealt with was the constant feeling of am I wrong? Am I wrong? Because he told me I was wrong, but am I really wrong? So I started asking myself two questions. What does the Bible say? Because I started to think I need to have personal responsibility to God, not my husband. So if my personal responsibility is to God, is what I'm doing here. Totally. asked his word, or is this kind of a gray area? Or is there somewhere in the Bible that says I'm right? So that's what I, my, that was my very first question when I would start to have these. I call them pings. These feelings come up that are confusing, and they don't feel right. And wait, what? So that was my first question. And then my second question was, can you okay with him being mad? That I'm not agreeing with him? Yeah, I can be. And that's where the detachment comes in the loving, detachment, loving in that you're not, you're not, you're still a fruit of the Spirit. You're still patient, kind, loving, you can be assertive. But you're still those things, but you detach and that

your opinion and your mood really aren't my problem. And I don't have to agree with you. So that was the beginning of my healing very much separate and apart from him, because he didn't have he didn't even really get into recovery till 10 years later.

L Lyschel 21:07

So bonding did you guys live? And that tension of you not really. Like what I was hearing you say, was kind of like, I just had to be okay with him not being okay. Was that happening that whole 10 years before he started recovery?

B Bonny 21:30

So yes, I will say he travelled for business a lot. So he wasn't in the house for most of the weeks, you know, three to four days a week, he was not in the house. So I didn't have to see him and deal with him. When we had it was on the weekends, that were hard, because we were living in that tension, but not 100% of the time. He had finally got to the point where he realized I had a voice. And he, you know, I was he it got to a point where I think he saw that the pattern was I wasn't being as manipulated. And maybe that wouldn't have even been a conscious thought of his really, because he's, I mean, I'm still with him, because he's basically he's a kind guy, really, outside of this addiction and all this stuff. But he, he saw that his anger and his blustery moods, and those kinds of things weren't manipulating me as much because I was getting stronger. And I think by the time our last discovery happened, yeah, there wasn't much tension in that way anymore. Does that answer your question?

L Lyschel 22:45

Yeah, no, I think it was great. I just as I was listening to both of you talk and I, Pam, I think you did such a beautiful job of describing detachment. What healthy detachment is. And I recognize that a part of the hurdle for me in this area was coming from a family with a lot of abandonment wounds. Detachment for me was debilitating, because my caregivers detached from me often. And so when people would start to talk to me about detachment, that sounded like, my personal hell, if I'm going to be just totally direct about it, right? Because all I knew was actually unhealthy detachment. I was familiar with the hanging up on you, not speaking to you for months, because you've made me mad, disappearing for months at a time, right? Like, these were all things that were familiar to me. So when people would talk when I would hear that word detachment, I would just be like, That is not who I am. I am not going to duplicate things that I've come from and treat people that way. But it was because I had a really false definition of what healthy detachment was. Right? I am what I began to learn was the language that was given to me as I learned, where I end and where you begin. And granted that's also a part of boundaries work right? That is a lot of boundaries, involves learning how to detach well from another person and reattach to self like Pam, like you said, so. So, in the beginning, this was difficult in I love, I love hindsight, right? Because the Lord teaches us so much with it. Because in the early stages of our story, I didn't necessarily know that I was looking for heal healing from betrayal, trauma, where God took me was on a journey about my identity. And I was suddenly And these places just being saturated and the truth of what God said about me. And what that meant for me, you know, at all costs. And what I began to understand what I know now that I didn't understand then was when I know who I am and who's I am. And who I'm actually attached to. Having that healthy detachment with other human beings, is more doable. But because I lacked that foundation of identity in Christ, the idea of detaching from my husband in a healthy way was just terrifying. I had no idea it, like when someone would say that to me, I'd have you know, I do word pictures all the time, it literally felt like I'd be free falling through a canyon, and have no idea where I was going to land when someone said that. And, and I know how unhealthy that sounds. But I also know where it comes from, in my past trauma, so I had a lot of work to do. That's where a lot of my personal journey started was with my identity in Christ. And once that started to have a sense of a new foundation. That dependency on him, to fix me, started to started to shrink. But I'm going to share this story I don't I'm sure I've shared it here before about the hem of the garment. Because that is one of the most pivotal stories for me in this particular space is that I remember reading the story of the woman with the blood disease. And I'd probably read it four or 510 times I don't know before this part moment, but this particular time, the Lord, I felt like the Holy Spirit really revealed a whole new framing of the story. And so I'm reading the story of the woman with a blood disease, and I see that she's reaching for Jesus and the hem of His garment to heal her. And I know that feeling, I know what it feels like to be so desperate for something to make the bleeding stop, right, the heart bleeding, stop. And feeling like you've been in so many different places with no answers and no direction. And in that moment, I felt the Holy Spirit really convict me and say, you know, you've been reaching for the wrong garment for a really long time. And that garment was my husband's garment. I was longing for him to heal me. And I again, I felt the Holy Spirit go on to say, I named him Garen did not name him healer. I'm the only one who carries that name. And that was a moment, a very transactional moment with God that I went. What does that even mean? Like I agreed that I had been longing for my husband to heal me. But I didn't know what it looked like to have God heal me. And so that started this journey of me pursuing what does that even mean? How is God gonna heal me, I don't even see him like, and I do see him and other things. But like he wasn't another physical human. So I think that that, for me, that feels like that story sums up what we're trying to share with women is saying your healing is not dependent on your husband, your healing is dependent on your identity. It's dependent on the boundaries that you need to have in order to have a solid identity that you don't begin to lose parts of yourself because of others. And then it comes back to really knowing where's the healing going to come from?

B Bonny 28:51

Then you've just segwayed beautifully into leaving hope for our listeners.

P Pam B. 28:59

And it just I just also Yes, yes, yes. And yes, the shelter everything you just said. And it's not to say that our husbands don't have a place in our healing because they do. They can have a huge impact. But it's upside down that we can't go to them first. We can't expect them to do the bulk of it for us personally. It has to start with us in our relationship with Christ. And and like you said, knowing who we are and then everybody else after that. We have been upside down i It's so common. I know I did it. I'm hearing you guys say did it. I hear it all the time. It's not to say that we don't need our partners to be become safe people and provide a safe environment for us to heal in and that's where our boundaries can come in. So beautifully Sadler Shah. Thank you

B Bonny 30:01

Yeah. Yeah, the hope, the hope I'd like to leave in my personal story, I needed permission to be able to refute things My husband was saying. And so the story of Abigail meant so much to me. She went against her husband, in his wishes because they weren't sound, he had something that he had a substance that was in influencing him, I believe Nepal was an alcoholic, so another addiction. And she had to honor safety for her family. And that story gave me permission to find the strength of God, to go against the man I, I didn't want to go against and I'm not saying that what I went against him in a aggressive way, it was small things that I'm, I'm a woman who has the mind of Christ, and I can make my own decisions. So I just want to leave you with that kind of permission as well.

P Pam B. 31:18

And the hope that I would leave each woman is that this is something you can master is something you have to practice at. But once you do master it, it is so powerful, it is so uplifting. It is so freeing to be free of carrying something that really belongs to someone else, and to carry your own load.

B Bonny 31:49

Well, listeners Please join us next week as we talk about practical tools to care for yourself while in the waiting season between sobriety and solid recovery. If you'd like to leave us a comment or question, please use the contact button on our website hoped for wives.com and that's hope fo r wives.com. Also, if this podcast has helped you please leave a five star rating or review on iTunes to help other people find us because when we reach 500 ratings, Apple podcast promotes us in a different way. We are deeply grateful for each of you that joined us today and we'll see you next week. Hi, bye