

“Submit to My Philandering Husband and Quit My Management Job?”

As a result of her commitment, dedication and hard work, a faithful Christian woman rose to the position of assistant manager in one of the banks in Nigeria. In the course of time, her husband concluded that her late hours at work must be connected to a relationship. The woman explained to her husband that there was no affair of any kind, that in any organization, especially in the banking industry, the closer you get to the top level of leadership, the more you must be willing to work long hours. The husband was not satisfied and without any proof or attempt at open and honest discussion, he divorced her.

Later, it was discovered that the husband himself was actually having an affair with a woman at his work and he had divorced his wife so he could marry this lady. In the course of time, his second marriage didn't work out and he wanted the first woman back --- but he still insisted that she must not work any extra hours. She would be forced to resign her position if she refused to work the occasional overtime. What do you advise? Should she resign and re-join her former husband or stay fixed to her job?

-PJ

Dear PJ:

Let's think about this from two angles: first, marriage and extra-marital affairs; second, marriage and major decisions about work. The husband has radically and decisively broken the marriage covenant he had with his first wife by committing adultery, initiating divorce, and marrying the second woman. He has no right to expect his first wife to come back to him. You don't mention any repentance on his part, no asking her forgiveness. His behavior makes him a terrible prospect for any marriage. Still, there may be other factors such as children that should be considered. Both the man and the woman need long-term counseling, prayer, recovery, and reflection assisted by mature, wise Christian lay counselors or pastors before they should think of any romantic relationships with anyone, certainly including each other.

Second, it is very important that married couples make major decisions together about things like work. In fact “together-with-a-small-group” is even better. Should I take this job? How will we pay our bills? How do you feel about my working overtime? We need togetherness on these issues. I have turned down job possibilities when my wife cautioned against them --- and taken others with confidence when she encouraged me to. Looking back, I am so glad we did it this way. It is also important to have your spouse meet anyone you are working closely with on a daily basis. It helps your co-workers and yourself to have your spouse in the picture. It doesn't sound like this troubled husband really knew much about what his wife's work situation was like, so suspicion became speculation then accusation then betrayal and excuses and the death of a marriage.

But this advice is an “ideal” stated from a long distance. Adultery is wrong. Rebellion against your spouse is wrong. But only wise and spiritual counselors, friends, and pastors close to those concerned are in a position to prayerfully advise what steps to take in a specific case like this.

