

Angie's Marriage Column ~ August 3, 2011

Should a Wife "Beak Free" Financially from her Alcoholic Husband?
When should a Wife Pay the Bills?

Ask Angie: Does your book go into detail regarding finances. We have been married for 31 years and my husband now 2 weeks sober and I am in the discovery zone of all that is wrong. Finances/lack of paying bills is the biggest problem.

He is really doing well but I want to break free and be my own person for the first time in our marriage. I want to be responsible if I get a ticket from Toll tag authorities because they have not been paid (which he did not tell me and this is now the 4th this year). Most of all, as I become responsible for MYSELF and MY BILLS, I do not want to hinder his progress. Any information or help is very greatly appreciated!

Please read this marriage column with your husband so you both can come together in the Lord and be all you can be for each other in the marriage.

Marriage Guidance: There are two parts to this issue in marriage. One part is if the alcoholic is still drinking and the second part is when the alcoholic gets sober. If the not paying of a bill is a utility bill, let's say water and electric, and there are small children in the home, it is best to go ahead and pay the bill. Why should your children not have their needs met because of a sick parent? Take care of yourself and children.

But if the bill is directly related to the alcoholic, such as not paying DUI fines, or not making a car payment on his car, then don't do that for him. You have to be discerning and know the fine line of what to pay and what not to pay.

We can certainly understand wanting to be responsible and pay your bills as it should be. But now that your husband is finally sober, it would be a good idea to allow him to do his job and pay his bills and owe any debts that he has on the table. This is part of sobriety. Sobriety is a journey of literally "growing up and taking responsibility" and part of that process is learning to be responsible for thyself and family.

The time to make sure that any bills related to the management of the home or for yourself were paid was when he was in the throngs of addiction. Now that your husband is getting sober it is certainly not a good time to break free and be your own person. It's now time to be supportive and "give" your newly sober husband his responsibility of being a provider for his family back to him. He needs to take responsibility and be accountable to God and to his family.

It is our firm belief that the man of the house should behave as the man of the house and pay the bills. The man of the house should be the main financial provider for the family. There is nothing wrong with a wife being resourceful and also making money through her crafts, cooking, gardening, writing, or any other endeavor where she would be helping out the family. **(Proverbs 31:10-31) It is all in her attitude.** Is she striving to make money to break free and be her own person, or is she striving to be industrious for her family? A husband and wife are to be responsible together for each other, not for self. After all, in a Godly managed marriage, a wife is accountable to her husband in all things and a husband is accountable to his wife in all things. This is the “one flesh” of God’s established marriage union.

We believe that there are so many ways that a wife can be industrious for her own family that she should not have to go outside the home to work for someone else. But this is our opinion and belief. [A wife working outside the home](#) causes negative issues within the home and is not conducive to a peaceful and happy marriage or family life.

Sadly, today in marriage couples only want to be married when everything is going good, but the minute the bad times come they don’t want to be married anymore. They are so used to being and thinking as individuals as in “I” and “me” that they forget that marriage is actually “us” and “our”. They don’t want to share in each other’s burdens but rather get a divorce; after all, divorce is the easy way out. A piece of official looking paperwork clenches the divorce deal.

But you see, this individualistic thinking is a major problem with marriage today. The wife has her job, bills and responsibilities that she does and the husband has his. Your attitude should be that of helping your husband “break free” from addiction so he can become the man/husband that God wants him to be for his family and others, then you will truly be free from the cares and philosophies of the world. When a husband and wife work together as a team (one flesh) that is freedom!

When a man becomes the man of his home and the wife *meets him* to be that man there is no feeling of needing to break free and be one’s own person. **(Genesis 2:18)** The two have become one through each knowing and establishing the roles that God intended for them.

How Does the Individualistic Attitude Harm Marriage?

Let’s talk about individualism for a moment. The problem with a wife having her own job and money is she creates an attitude within her of “my money”, “my bills” and “his money”, and his bills”. But the truth is Godly marriage is “one flesh” and his money is your money and your money is his money and it should all be put together in one place and used to provide for your needs and further your growth in the Lord.

The only time a wife should create the feeling of needing to be free is [learning to detach](#) from an alcoholic husband that won’t take responsibility for family as he should. It is at this time the wife must take financial responsibility for herself and for any children in the home. But even this

is and should not be labeled as “breaking free” as you call it. There is no breaking free from our marital responsibilities unless you are an unbeliever. God’s Word gives us principles to live by and shows us what is expected of us as Christian’s and sometimes that may involve personal suffering and or sacrifice. But that is what marriage is about—sacrifice.

The bottom line is we have to decide what kind of marriage we want and then live that marriage. It all boils down to [who we are](#). Are we walking down the street holding hands with the world, or are we walking down the street holding hands with Jesus Christ? I would think that those people who write into our ministry our at least wanting to hold hands with Christ? So then let’s start holding His hand!

Married people have the responsibility to each other —there should be no individualism.

Your husband needs his wife now more than ever to help him be responsible financially. No man wants his wife paying all the bills. You and your husband need to make out a family budget and learn to put away the monies for the bills BEFORE they are even due. This way when bill time comes you just pay them.

As your husband becomes healthy in body and mind from the addiction he will want to accept his responsibilities as man of the home, do not hinder him in this area. Again, I noticed you keep saying MY BILLS. No, if you are married it is “OUR BILLS. You and your husband manage a home, family and marriage and it is “household bills” that you both work together to make sure they get paid in a timely manner.

Live joyfully with the wife (husband) whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in *this* life, and in they labour which thou takest under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

In Christ,
Frank and Angie
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