Bob: Chris Beall had a secret and it came to a point where he realized as long as he kept his secret a secret—it was affecting his marriage and his spiritual life.

Chris: All the things that God wanted to do in my life wouldn’t happen until I had the courage to bring what was in the dark into the light. There’s something about bringing it into the light—confessing it to another person and praying for each other—that brings an exposure and a healing. The moment that I took that step was the beginning of radical healing in my own heart.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Monday, August 28th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I'm Bob Lepine. We'll learn about Chris Beall’s secret today—and how it almost destroyed his marriage. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us.

We have a couple with us today who—some of our listeners will recognize them because their story. They’ve shared it on FamilyLife Today before. It’s been shared as a part of The Stepping Up® Video Series. It’s a great story of beauty coming from ashes.

Dennis: It is indeed. We have the author of the book Rebuilding a Marriage Better Than New - Cindy Beall. Cindy, welcome back to the broadcast.

Cindy: It’s great to be here. Thanks for having me.

Dennis: And her husband, Chris—welcome back to you as well.

Chris: We are excited. We love you guys.

Dennis: The Beall’s have been married since 1993. They have three teenage sons and their story is one of the classics on FamilyLife Today in terms of God showing up and truly not only redeeming but reconciling their marriage.

Bob: If our listeners would like to hear the complete story of what brought your marriage to the brink, they can go to our website—FamilyLifeToday.com—and listen to the
interviews we’ve done with you. But Chris, it’s rooted in you growing up with the exposure to pornography that lead you to some dark places.

**Chris:** Right. Eight years old I saw the first pornographic image—and for the next twenty years I was a prisoner—in one form or another—to the struggle. In 2002 we were invited to be a part of Life Church in Oklahoma City and we came. At that moment I really feel like there was kind of a do-over because I had an enormous amount of baggage and an enormous amount of lifestyle moral failures. Honestly, multiple affairs prior to us moving to Oklahoma City.

**Dennis:** That weren’t really known to anyone.

**Chris:** Correct. It was total double life. Cindy knew something wasn’t right in our marriage, didn’t know exactly what that meant or what it looked like. I would say that I was a master deceiver—of myself and other people—to keep those worlds separate—but it was when we came to Life Church that it really seemed like, “Okay, God. We thought we were coming to be the next worship leader at this church”—and the reality was God brought us there to heal us. That starts with the exposure of what the sin was.

**Bob:** Cindy, for you that exposure came out of the blue one morning when your husband came home from work unexpectedly and said, “We need to talk.” You had no idea was coming.

**Cindy:** I had no idea. As he began to unfold the things he just shared with you—the pornography addiction, the infidelity—as he began to say all those things, things just started happening in my mind. Of course, instant desperation, despair, everything terrible you can imagine that you could think, I thought it—but at the same time was—“Oh, it’s making sense now.”

Because it wasn’t our entire nine years of marriage leading up to this point—it was about a two and one half year period of really intense difficulty—so it was a total shock. I would never have imagined that he would have gone this far—this deep—into such a wretched place.

**Dennis:** You knew at that point that something was missing in your marriage. You just couldn’t say, “This is it”—but all of a sudden it was disclosed.

**Cindy:** Absolutely.

**Chris:** Correct.

**Cindy:** For me, I remembered during that two and a half year period I felt very alone where we were in our church. My husband was the worship pastor, the youth pastor and so I really—people looked to me—so who am I going to talk to? I just—it was really a
lonely place for me so I became very well acquainted with my heavenly Father. He became everything to me. I remember just praying, “God, something’s wrong. Something’s wrong.” I just remember Him saying, “Trust me. Trust me.”

So, I believed that had we not come to Oklahoma, been a part of Life Church—under Craig and Emily Groshells—that we might not have survived this.

**Chris:** I remember seeing a book that was always next to Cindy’s chair during her quiet times in the mornings during those two and a half years that I was living this double life. It was the *Power of a Praying Wife*.

**Dennis:** Yes.

**Bob:** Yes.

**Chris:** I will tell you, looking back, my wife was praying God’s word over my life in the period that I was the most prodigal that I had ever been. I know we’re going to get to this, but I truly believe where we are today—there are so many things how the church responded—partly how I responded—but I believe it all started with the fact that I had a wife that was praying—in the darkest place of my rebellion—my wife was praying and believing God’s word and speaking promises over my life that ultimately I became those prayers.

**Dennis:** *FamilyLife* has known as an organization for bringing practical, Biblical, help and hope to couples. I just have to say what you two modeled—as you faced this deep, dark valley of despair—how you modeled repentance, Chris, and how you modeled grace and forgiveness and steadfast commitment to move forward in your marriage and how the church offered healing and how they helped restore—first of all, Chris, you to a right standing before God—but then secondly, restore your marriage and your family.

I would just encourage listeners—because we’re not going to continue to unpack all the details of what they did in the previous broadcast, go listen to that broadcast that they did.

What I want to unpack is how God met you in that deep wound and brought deep healing.

**Bob:** Cindy—that started that morning when your husband comes home. He is transparent about everything that has gone on. You find out about multiple affairs. You find out that he has fathered a son—who is living in another state. This is all new to you.

You had two big questions right in front of you that day. The first one is,” How do we handle this in the short term?”—because the news is going to come out that the worship pastor at the big church in town that he’s not the worship pastor anymore and we have to figure out what we have to do with that—but then,”Do I even stay married to this
man?” There’s a Biblical case to be made for you to say, “We’re done here. I’m moving on.”

Cindy: Yes, and that honestly, as much as I loved him, I literally thought, “I don’t think my heart can take this. I think it would be best to just cut my losses—move back to Texas. I just have one child; I can manage being a single mom.” I started immediately—I’m a planner—I’m proud of being a planner, but sometimes it gets me going on the wrong track and I start planning and not including God in the scenario—but I—I’m telling you—I began thinking, “What am I going to do?”

Thinking—just because I didn’t leave our marriage—at the time we were still living in the same house—mainly because we couldn’t afford to do anything different. I just felt like the Father was like, “Hello? I’m still here. Are you going to ask Me about this?” Sure enough, I was like, “Okay God. What do you think I should do?” I just kept asking that question. I just remember Him saying, “Remember when you said would do anything to bring Me glory?” I was like, “Well, yes—but I was meaning easier things, like something simpler.”

God just began to stir in me—and through a long series of events that I wrote about in my first book—I talk about how God met me and He spoke the word to me about staying the course and trusting in Him and trusting Him for the vision that He would unfold.

So three weeks later I said, “Okay God, I trust you.”—because I certainly didn’t trust him—I had to trust my heavenly Father. He is the only one 100% trustworthy—so that was the beginning of that.

Bob: So it was a three week period, basically—from the time you heard this until said, “Okay, I’m going to stick with this.”

Cindy: Correct.

Bob: Was, “I’m going to stick with it,”—was that, “I’m in this until the end,” or was this, “I’ll stick with this for six more months and see what happens?”

Cindy: It was for the end—it was until the end. Habakkuk 2:3 says, “For the vision is yet for the appointed time. Though it linger, wait for it. It will certainly come. It will not delay.” That was the Scripture that I had been basically begging God for. I just didn’t know it was going to be through a minor prophet of a name that most people can’t pronounce—and certainly we don’t read about him. I mean, it’s Habakkuk!—but God spoke to me through that. That’s what I have stood on for 15 years.

Dennis: I just want you to unpack—what gave you the courage during that three week process to take that step of faith to move toward healing?
You’ve mentioned you had a relationship with God and you had a heart that was open—
teachable—willing to do what God asked you to do. What else did He bring your way to
make that a reasonable step of faith?

Cindy: Well, He brought people. There was a couple that really walked with us—they
had already experienced infidelity in their marriage like twenty years prior, so they were
with us—they were walking through it with us—encouraging us. One of the pastors on
the team—as I was that three week period I kept—as I said I am a planner, I wanted to
kind of know what the rest of my life would look like—which is a ludicrous thing—but I
was thinking, “I need to know. I need to know,” and he just looked at me and he said,
“Cindy, you don’t have to decide the rest of your life today.”

So that thought kind of carried me each day until I knew that I had heard from God to
stay in my marriage because there were people with opinions everywhere. Anybody can
give you an opinion. Well, you need to leave. Once a cheater, always a cheater. He’s
going to do this again—and there’s so many things.

Dennis: You heard that from Christians?

Cindy: Oh, yes. I mean—of course—and had I not gone through something like this, I
can’t say I wouldn’t have thought the same thing. We shoot our wounded as Christians,
sadly, but trying not to decide the rest of my life for that season really did help me and
take those steps.

Dennis: I want to point out three things here real quickly. First of all, you had counsel to
hang in there—people who had been wounded themselves. And secondly they shared
their own wounds with you which had been adultery—a lack of faithfulness. I am
thinking of a couple, Bob, that you and I both know who have been very open about an
error the husband made in their relationship, and their marriage has now been used to
literally touch hundreds of other couples, both here in America, and internationally as
they’re willing to open their hearts and admit something that is really kind of ugly. We
kind of are repulsed by it.

I just want to say to those listeners who have this as a part of your past—I’m not
encouraging you to boast about it—but I am encouraging you to boast about God’s
redemption, His reconciliation, and how He brings hope where there is despair—
because there are listeners who are listening to us right now who are despairing and
who need hope.

That’s the third thing that you mentioned, Cindy—that I just want to underline. You were
willing to admit you didn’t know what your future held, but you were willing to step out in
faith. I think it was Martin Luther King, I believe, who made this statement. “Faith is
taking the first step on the staircase without being able to see all the other steps.” I like
that because you took that first step on a staircase—you didn’t know where it was going
to lead you.
Cindy: Absolutely. I kind of picture God’s hands under my feet—and one foot is on one hand and it’s there when I step. Then the next one—it’s not ready until I lift—the ever progressing thing that I am on with God.

Bob: The river doesn’t part until you step into the water.

Cindy: That’s right.

Bob: And those who are standing on the shore waiting for the Jordan River to part—no, you have to step in the water before God does that work.

What’s going on with you in this three week period while she’s trying to decide “Do I stay or do I go?”

Chris: So I obviously want the marriage to survive—I mean desperately—but here’s the thing.

Dennis: Now wait a second—that’s not necessarily obvious.

Bob: There are some guys who are ready for it to be over.

Chris: Okay. Well, the context of my struggle was not fueled by a lack of intimacy at home. I had a deep emptiness in my heart. Here’s the thing—I have struggled since I was a kid feeling like I was a failure—do I measure up?

I love my wife. I know my actions don’t show that, but she was my best friend. I would choose to spend time with her. The thing is, I allowed this sense of inadequacy to need to be medicated. What happened was in a weird way these images on a screen momentarily made me feel a little bit more like a man—and then I felt less of a man. So it creates this spiral and this cycle of darkness.

The relationship with other women was the fact that I don’t like who I am—but this other person is drawn to me or likes me. That’s ultimately—I’m trying to medicate my own internal emptiness. It was just a deep dark place that I was trying to heal it though everyone other that the source of that healing—which is God.

Bob: Right.

Chris: So as Cindy is going through this process of, “Do I want to stay? Is this marriage going to work?” I deeply wanted that to work.

But what I wanted even more—I wanted to be free—because I’ve been a prisoner most of my life. I’ve been a prisoner of sin, I’ve been a prisoner of habitual behaviors that for whichever reason, I just can’t seem to be able to break out of. As much as I want my
marriage to work, I had nothing to offer Cindy and I have nothing to offer for my boys unless I am walking in freedom. I was desperate. This is my shot and I want to be free. There’s really two things that were significant in those early days for me.

One is that I allowed myself to let my heart break for what I had done to the heart of God and what I had done to the heart of the people I loved the most. Paul talked about the difference between worldly sorrow and Godly sorrow. He writes this letter to the Corinthians. He says, “I’m not sorry that what I said brought you sorrow, for Godly sorrow leaves no regret and brings about repentance”.

Repentance is a military term that really—it’s literally an about face—I’m going to turn 180 degrees from the direction that I am going—and I am going to turn completely to God.

But worldly sorrow is really more of a, “I’m inconvenienced by the consequence of my sin,” and that leads—Paul says—to death. So I just let my heart break. I was a puddle of emotion for quite some time—I think that process was extremely necessary for me to go through. It wasn’t that I was putting condemnation and shame on myself, but I was allowing my heart to break for what broke the heart of God.

**Bob:** You were at a crossroads—and I’ve met guys at this crossroads. You had been successfully managing your sin for two and a half years.

**Chris:** Correct.

**Bob:** You’d been playing this so they’re the only one who knows and you’re maneuvering your way through it. Now you’re at a point where, “Do I keep trying to manage this? Or do I mortify it?”—which means to put it to death. I heard one guy describe it this way. It’s like a rabid dog that you keep in a cage over in the corner of the house and you go, “As long as he’s in the cage, he can’t hurt me. I’ll get it out every once in a while and play with it and then put it back in the cage.” Well, that dog gets bigger and sicker and one of these days is going to kill you.

**Chris:** Right.

**Bob:** So the thing you have to do with the dog is you have to kill the dog.

**Chris:** Right.

**Bob:** You were at the crossroads where, “I cannot manage this anymore. I have to put this to death.” I’m imagining, Chris, even in that moment, you don’t really know your heart—“Do I really want to put this to death?” Or, “I’m where I am and I feel bad, this will last for a while then I’ll be right back to it.”
Chris Monday morning I’m sitting in a staff meeting with Chris Groshell—who is my boss—and I can’t say enough about how God used this man in our marriage. He made a comment in that staff meeting and—he said to our team that, “It is our private integrity that gives us the ability to minister publically, so we have to keep it clean. We have to. The stakes are so high.” He said, “If you are walking in sin—it’s going to find you out. Confess it, and you’ll find grace.” That was on a Monday. I had been at that church for six weeks with this looming cloud of, “I’m going to get found out.” That was on a Monday.

It was on a Tuesday that I’m like, “I can’t do this anymore.” I just really believed that all the things that God wanted to do in my life wouldn’t happen until I had the courage to bring what was in the dark into the light. James, “Confess your sins one to another and pray for one another that you may be healed.”

This whole time that I was in sin, I would drive home from having sinned and I’m confessing to God. “God, heal me. Please don’t let me ever do this again.” There’s not a Scripture in the Bible that says confess to the Lord for healing. We confess to God for forgiveness but there’s something about bringing it into the light and confessing it to another person and praying for each other that brings an exposure and a healing. The moment that I took that step was the beginning of radical healing in my own heart.

Cindy: I kind of equate it to—he got to the point that Tuesday morning—that he wanted freedom so desperately that he was willing to risk everything to get it—including our marriage. I know that you’ve got listeners right now listening to this broadcast and they are in a world of hurt and sick in bondage. They don’t hate their sin enough. When we come to the place where we hate it enough, we’ll do anything to find freedom. Hopefully somebody listening can take that step today.

Dennis: Chris mentioned freedom. I immediately thought of Galatians chapter 5 verse 1. It says, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” There are undoubtedly listeners right now who are listening and they have never really met Jesus Christ and understood His love, His forgiveness, His mercy, His grace, His redemption—that He offers to people to step out of the prison that they are in and be set free.

I would just challenge you if you are in this situation now, it may be time for you to settle things with God. Chris was talking about settling things with the person you have offended. It may be important for you to first of all settle the issues with the God you’ve offended.

Then secondly, after that relationship has been established—because that is what the Christian life is—it’s beginning a journey of following Christ—not perfectly—but you’re following the perfect Savior who now lives in you. Then go to your spouse—and there’s where as a couple you have to embrace the same Jesus Christ who set you free—you
have to express forgiveness to one another. Ephesians chapter 4 talks about forgiving one another just as God in Christ has forgiven you. That’s your command.

Forgiveness means you give up the right to punish the other person. I wish you could see Cindy’s nodding head right now—she’s smiling and nodding. She had to repeatedly give up the right to punish Chris.

**Bob:** The verse I’m thinking of that the two of you have modeled in this entire story is Ephesians 5:11 that says, “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.” That’s what you guys choose to do. This week we’ll get a chance to follow you on that journey and hear how God was at work in both of your lives as you moved forward.

In fact, Chris and Cindy have shared the story in a book that Cindy has written that’s called *Rebuilding a Marriage Better Than New*. We’ve got copies of the book in our *FamilyLifeToday* Resource Center. Go online at FamilyLifeToday.com if you’d like to get a copy or call 1-800-FL-TODAY to receive a copy. Again the website is FamilyLifeToday.com, you can order online. Or you can call to order at 1-800-358-6329. 1-800-F as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word TODAY.

Again I’ll mention—on our website we’ve got a short video clip where you guys share your story—listeners may want to view that. They may know somebody they’d like to pass that clip on to. Again you’ll find it at FamilyLifeToday.com.

Well, this is the home stretch week for us here at *FamilyLife*—it’s the last week of August. We just have a few days left to hear from listeners if we’re going to be able to take full advantage of the matching gift opportunity that was extended to us back at the beginning of the month. We had a friend of the ministry who came along and agreed he would match every donation we received this month on a dollar for dollar basis up to a total of $800,000. Now those matching funds will enable us to be able to reach more people more often with this radio program, through our website, through our events and our resources.

You can help extend the reach of this ministry by making a donation and having your donation be effectively doubled because of the matching gift opportunity—but you need to do it before the end of the month—and the end of the month is this week. So today is a good day to go to FamilyLifeToday.com and make an online donation or call to donate at 1-800-FL-TODAY. Or you can mail your donation to us at *FamilyLife Today* at P.O. Box 7111, Little Rock, AR. Our zip code is 72223.

Please do pray that we would get the necessary funds this week and be able to take full advantage of that match. We appreciate you.
We hope you can join us back tomorrow. We are going to continue to follow Chris and Cindy Beall as they take us through the process they've been through in rebuilding a broken marriage. Hope you can join us back tomorrow for that.

**Bob:** I want to thank our engineer today, Keith Lynch, and our entire broadcast production team. On behalf of our host, Dennis Rainey, I'm Bob Lepine. We will see you next time for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

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