



The Family Room

By: Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

Blaming Each Other Weeks Marriage

When Jesse and Delores came for marriage counseling, their marriage was in deep trouble. (All characters are fictitious.) Jesse had a serious drinking problem, and Delores had recently had an affair. Both were very angry.

Jesse began the proceedings, "She had an affair with my best friend! I don't think I can ever forgive her for that. I've known for five years that she had these attractions to other men, and I told her to be careful. Did she listen to me? No, she never does."

Delores quickly voiced her side of the story. "He thinks all he has to do to be a good husband is bring home a paycheck. Well, I don't want to be married to someone who spends his whole life in front of the TV, drunk. I've told him to quit, but he won't listen to me. If I had a decent husband, maybe I wouldn't have gotten interested in another man."

Jesse chimed back in with his defense. "You knew I drank when you married me! Why is it suddenly such a big problem? And maybe I

If you would get your life straightened out, then I could act like a wife."

Jesse was ready to continue the argument when I stopped them. "How many times have you had this argument?" I asked. "It sounds as if you've gone over this ground often." Both nodded. "But it's not getting you anywhere, is it?" I said. "Let's see if we can find a new way to approach these problems."

One of the biggest obstacles to successful marriage counseling is that couples blame each other for the problems without each of them looking at his or her own actions. Delores and Jesse had both done damage to their marriage, however, calling this to the attention of the spouse was not

helping. Every time Jesse criticized her for what she had done, Delores became defensive and blamed him for all their problems. Their arguments became a vicious cycle that never ended. Someone had to break the cycle of blame or the counseling would go nowhere.

When I explained all this to them, Delores and Jesse looked skeptical.

Jesse again brought up Delores' affair and Delores was ready to begin another fight, when I stopped them. "Jesse, you have every right to be upset," I told him, "but continuing to criticize Delores will get you nowhere. Delores, you also have a right to be upset, but your criticism

of Jesse isn't helping him or you."

"But, I'm right!" Jesse almost shouted. "You may be right," I responded, "but do you want to be right or be married? You have a choice. I know people who have insisted they were right even as the divorce papers were being signed. It didn't help save their marriages."

"To save this marriage, the two of you need to look at yourselves and solve the personal problems that each of you has," I told them. "Jesse, to have a good marriage, you have to quit drinking. You and I will meet for individual sessions to work on that. Delores, you need to explore

the reasons you had the affair, also in individual sessions. Both of you need to deal with the anger you have toward each other. Harming the other one for the problems just isn't working. It's time we tried something new. I will help you take responsibility for your own actions."

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Hi, my name is Courtney Marie Puckett. I was four weeks old July 21st. The guy holding me is my proud daddy, Jason Puckett. I am the first granddaughter of Brenda Adams and Tim Puckett and the first great granddaughter of Edgar and Gladys Adams. They are all very proud of me.



Hi! My name is Joseph Gregory Cowan and I just celebrated my second birthday on July 7th. I want to thank everyone for all of my wonderful presents and for coming to my party. I also want to thank my big sister, Katie, for being a great host. My parents are Greg and Paula Cowan. My grandparents are Earl and Judy Phillips and Jerry and Liz Cowan. Thanks a lot.



Byron Evert Abney
April 9, 2001, 6 lbs. 9.75 Oz.
Hi, my name is Byron Evert Abney. I was born April 9th at the Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital. I weighed 6 lbs. 9.75 ozs. and was 19 inches long. My parents are Byron and Joanna Abney with my sister, Katlyn Abney of Berea. My grandparents are Ralph and Lisa Ambrose of Mt. Vernon and also Walter and Deborah Abney of Berea. My great grandparents are Roxie Ambrose and Lillie Lakes, Reba Baker Abney and the late Walter Lee Abney, Joyce E. Johnson and the late Clement Johnson.

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