

Ladies First Newsletter

January Volume #3



This month's focus is on Physical, Verbal and Sexual Abuse to Women

Hello Ladies, I am taking this opportunity to raise awareness regarding the subject of *Domestic Violence*. Statistics say one in every four American females will be the victim of domestic violence in her lifetime. This is a sad statement, but true. It's the same old story: He drinks too much; he's under too much pressure at work/church or he does drugs, and then acts out violently against his wife or girlfriend. She is the recipient of his unleashed rage and suffers emotional, verbal, sexual and/or physical harm. This kind of trauma scars her for a lifetime and affects the ways she reacts to others.

Please take the time to read this month's newsletter in its entirety. After reading the newsletter, please take a few minutes to inventory your situation in life. If you are the recipient of physical, verbal or sexual abuse, please call the hotline for help @ 800.621.HOPE (4673). If the information in this newsletter touches your heart and angers you to a point that you want to help, please take the time to go through the training (PWC Social Service Department) that will help you assist these women in having a better life.

Domestic Violence: Defined

Domestic violence — also called domestic abuse, battering or intimate partner violence occurs between people in an intimate relationship. Domestic violence can take many forms, including emotional, sexual and physical abuse and threats of abuse. Men are sometimes abused by partners, but domestic violence is most often directed toward women. Domestic violence can happen in heterosexual or same sex relationships. Let us be clear on the universal definition of Domestic Violence: *Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another. It is an epidemic affecting individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background. Violence against women is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior, and thus is part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control. Domestic violence results in physical injury, psychological trauma, and sometimes death. The consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and truly last a lifetime.*

Minority women are among those who are more vulnerable to abuse. Research indicates that women who are financially dependent on the perpetrators of abuse are less likely to call police when domestic violence occurs, unless children are present. From an economic standpoint, researchers highlight that domestic violence within the United States costs society approximately 5.8 billion dollars annually. In order to calculate the total cost of domestic violence for the nation, researchers generally factor in such items as victims medical and mental health care needs along with the overall loss of work productivity to employers due to domestic violence.

Domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone, yet the problem is often overlooked, excused, or denied. This is especially true when the abuse is psychological, rather than physical. Noticing and acknowledging the signs of an abusive relationship are the first step to ending it. No one should live in fear of the person they love. If you recognize yourself or someone you know in the following warning signs and descriptions of abuse, reach out. There is help available.

Biblical Perspective of the Problem

The issue of domestic violence is often problematic for many Christian women. In a study conducted by Rettig (2010) it was learned that the key reasons why many women seek divorce is due to years of continuous disrespect and abusive treatment from their husbands who seek to control or manipulate their spouse. These women also report that their husbands failed to honor their marriage vows and have often denied them freedom and access to other basic needs.

Despite the devastating psychological affects and threat of physical harm imposed on women by their spouses, many Christian leaders use Scripture to keep women locked into abusive marriages. Often when women seek counsel from their pastors or church leaders they are quoted Ephesians 5:22-23, (²² *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body*) which encourage them to submit to their husbands as the head of the wife. Because many Christian women strive to perfectly align themselves with Scripture, they fully comply with these erroneous Scripture interpretations to their own emotional and physical harm. Though Scripture may require that women submit to their husband, what many pastors and church leaders fail to do is also require that the abusive husbands also submit themselves and to love their wives as they do their own bodies (Ephesians 5:21, 25, & 28).

Another Scripture often misused by Christians to justify the husband's sexual abuse or rape of his wife is I Corinthians 7:4, *The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.* Specifically, the meaning of this verse has been interpreted by some to indicate that a married woman has no authority over her own body. Accordingly, whenever a husband decides to take her sexually, the wife has little or no recourse but to comply or yield to his sexual demands.

Lastly, even when a woman leaves an abusive spouse for fear of her life or the safety of her children, many Christian leaders will quote Luke 17:3-4 (³ *Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.* ⁴ *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him*) as a way of encouraging the woman to forgive reconcile and return back to the abusive household.

The reason provided to Christian women is that Scripture supports that it is God's desire that the marriage bond remain in tack until parted by death (Luke 16:18). Another reason provided by church leaders for not granting permission for women to divorce an abusive spouse, is found in Deuteronomy. 24:1-4.

Specifically, this Scripture indicates that the only allowable reason for church leaders to grant a petition of divorce is in the case of either adultery or the uncleanness of the offending spouse. Absent these two causes, therefore, many women stay and continue to be abused by their husbands.

Despite the above reasoning, researchers suggest that although much available research is focused on how women deal psychologically with domestic violence, many women continue to rely on hope, spirituality and other support systems to overcome the devastating effects of domestic violence. Based on what is known about domestic violence and the detrimental physical, emotional and psychological effects that long term abuse can have on women, it is truly unfortunate that Christian women are often forced to stay in loveless and abusive marriages because they are misguided by people who have been entrusted to look out for their spiritual welfare.

In Conclusion

Regardless of whether domestic violence or abusive behaviors against women are perpetrated by a spouse, intimate partner, friends or family members, it is apparent that the magnitude of the problem can only be defined by how broad or narrowly researchers limit the populations included or excluded by a particular research term (i.e., domestic violence, spousal abuse, etc.). Since use of any particular term will either increase or decrease the amount of victims included in an affected population; therefore, the complete magnitude of the domestic violence problem may never be fully known.



A WOMAN IS BEATEN EVERY 15 SECONDS IN THE US

Quick Fact: 4 MILLION WOMEN SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION EACH YEAR FROM ABUSE IN THE US

I Got Flowers Today

I got flowers today.
It wasn't my birthday or any other special day.
We had our first argument last night,
And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt me.
I know he is sorry and didn't mean the things he said.
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.
It wasn't our anniversary any other special day.
Last night, he threw me into a wall and started to choke me.
It seemed like a nightmare.
I couldn't believe it was real.
I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over.
I know he must be sorry.
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today,
and it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day.
Last night, he beat me up again.
And it was much worse than all the other times.
If I leave him, what will I do?
How will I take care of my kids?
What about money?
I'm afraid of him and scared to leave.
But I know he must be sorry.
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today.
Today was a very special day.
It was the day of my funeral.
Last night, he finally killed me.
He beat me to death.
If only I had gathered enough courage and strength to leave him,
I would not have gotten flowers...today.

By Paulette Kelly



Quick Fact: 4000 ABUSED WOMAN DIE EACH YEAR IN THE US

SIGNS THAT YOU'RE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Your Inner Thoughts and Feelings

Do you:

- Feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
- Avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?
- Feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?
- Believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- Wonder if you're the one who is crazy?
- Feel emotionally numb or helpless?

Your Partner's Belittling Behavior

Does your partner:

- Humiliate or yell at you?
- Criticize you and put you down?
- Treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends or family to see?
- Ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?
- Blame you for their own abusive behavior?
- See you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?

Your Partner's Violent Behavior or Threats

Does your partner:

- Have a bad and unpredictable temper?
- Hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?
- Threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- Threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- Force you to have sex?
- Destroy your belongings?

Your Partner's Controlling Behavior

Does your partner:

- Act excessively jealous and possessive?
- Control where you go or what you do?
- Keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- Limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- Limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- Constantly check up on you?

Understanding Emotional Abuse

The aim of emotional abuse is to chip away at your feelings of self-worth and independence. If you're the victim of emotional abuse, you may feel that there is no way out of the relationship or that without your abusive partner you have nothing.

Emotional abuse includes *verbal abuse* such as yelling, name-calling, blaming, and shaming. Isolation, intimidation, and controlling behavior also fall under emotional abuse. Additionally, abusers who use emotional or psychological abuse often throw in threats of physical violence or other repercussions if you don't do what they want.

You may think that physical abuse is far worse than emotional abuse, since physical violence can send you to the hospital and leave you with scars. But, the scars of emotional abuse are very real, and they run deep. In fact, emotional abuse can be just as damaging as physical abuse—sometimes even more so.

Economic or financial abuse: A subtle form of emotional abuse

Remember, an abuser's goal is to control you, and he or she will frequently use money to do so. Economic or financial abuse includes:

- Rigidly controlling your finances.
- Withholding money or credit cards.
- Making you account for every penny you spend.
- Withholding basic necessities (food, clothes, medications, shelter).



- Restricting you to an allowance.
- Preventing you from working or choosing your own career.
- Sabotaging your job (making you miss work, calling constantly).
- Stealing from you or taking your money.

It Is Still Abuse If:

- **The incidents of physical abuse seem minor** when compared to those you have read about, seen on television or heard other women talk about. There isn't a "better" or "worse" form of physical abuse; you can be severely injured as a result of being pushed, for example.
- **The incidents of physical abuse have only occurred one or two times in the relationship.** Studies indicate that if your spouse/partner has injured you once, it is likely he will continue to physically assault you.
- **The physical assaults stopped when you became passive** and gave up your right to express yourself as you desire, to move about freely and see others, and to make decisions. It is not a victory if you have to give up your rights as a person and a partner in exchange for not being assaulted!
- **There has not been any physical violence.** Many women are emotionally and verbally assaulted. This can be as equally frightening and is often more confusing to try to understand.

Reference Materials:

- *Breaking the Silence: a Handbook for Victims of Violence in Nebraska*
 - Sometimes Christian women get so **bogged down in guilt** and the need to save our marriage that **we forget to save ourselves**. This book is a must read for anyone in an abusive marriage seeking spiritual guidance. Solid, Christ like interpretation of scripture will offer much needed inspiration and encouragement.
- [Keeping the Faith: Guidance for Christian Women Facing Abuse](#)
 - The Christian woman whose spirit is being crushed by domestic violence is faced with a unique burden. She needs straight answers - not unrealistic expectations or stereotypical platitudes. "Woman Submit!" by Jocelyn Andersen provides straight answers and clear scriptural direction.
- [Woman Submit! Christians & Domestic Violence](#) (also available for Kindle)
 - When is divorce biblically permissible and when is it forbidden? And is remarriage ever permissible for a divorced Christian? The problem is particularly intense for Christian victims of marital abuse, who often believe they must choose between two unpleasant alternatives: endure abuse, or face condemnation by God and his church for disobeying the bible.
- [Not Under Bondage: Biblical Divorce for Abuse, Adultery and Desertion](#)
 - Focus on the Family website