

A biblically-based book that researched Jesus' life as one who experienced violence and abuse both personally and otherwise. It shows Christians and others how to address domestic violence and abuse like Jesus did by listing dozens of abuses which Jesus experienced, by identifying specific things Jesus did in abusive or violent situations, and by featuring 77 cases in which Jesus demonstrated specific behaviors in response to abuse and violence related to both victims and abusers.

What Would Jesus Do about Domestic Violence and Abuse Towards Christian Women

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What

Would

Jesus

Do

about

**Domestic
Violence and Abuse**

Toward Christian Women

Dr. Chloe Cummings, D.B.S.

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“Thank You God for turning the manure in my life into fertilizer. Thank You that this fertilizer which has been a source of growth to me and to so many others. It’s reaped a bumper crop, and this book is one result of the bountiful harvest which You have brought about in my life.”

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whose prayers I am still benefiting from - even though she has been gone for many years.

This book is dedicated to _____ (Your Name Here), the precious woman of God, who is a true Saint by virtue of the blood, shed by Jesus Christ; a bride who has been despised by man but honored, cherished, cared for, and loved by God. A woman whom JESUS has *chosen* as *HIS* Bride for His very own self!

“For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you. *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*”

(Jesus) John 13:15, 17 NKJV

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Author's Note to Reader

I have long been frustrated with the Church's proclivity to be "tolerant" of sin among its members; mainly because I was a victim of abuse which was served to me in the name of religion and it was knowingly ignored by particular Christians in my personal life like former pastors, my relatives, and some close Christian friends. I was married to a modern day Pharisee for over 20 years and the wrath of the law channeled through anger and control was dealt out almost daily.

Having always been a prolific reader, I've read many Christian and secular self-help books over the years; many of which have been sources of enlightenment and growth that have helped me to make healthy and bondage-breaking choices. I began educating myself on the nature of domestic violence and abuse; howbeit, *my desire was to filter this information through God's Word, the Bible*. I believe that God put this desire in my heart because, as a Christian woman, my desire was always to be in God's will and obey His Word regardless of my circumstances. Also, my counsel to others has always been based on the Bible with a focus on pleasing Jesus versus pleasing self. Additionally, through a series of divine directives, I "discovered" a radical Doctorate program at *Master's International School of Divinity*, a school which, much to my surprise, offers biblical counseling courses related to women and victimization issues-all *from a Biblical perspective*. God was equipping me by sending me to a school where He was Master; and through much biblically-sound education I was able to better filter old and newly acquired knowledge through the Word of God.

Also, throughout my personal life and in my practice as a Biblical Counselor, God has used me to be a source of support and help to both men and women who have been ensnared into

domestic violence and abuse. This book is one result of my studies and my years of experience as a counselor, and also as one who has been a victim of domestic abuse in a “Christian” home.

Though, this is in part a studious work, I wrote it with the lay reader in mind, someone who, like me, desires to become equipped with knowledge that can enable them to move towards maturity and freedom in Christ. I site several studies and a magnitude of Scripture; mainly because it would be lunacy, arrogance and blasphemous for anyone to presume to imagine that Jesus would do something if it were not supported by the Holy Bible.

Many Church leaders and counselors not only want to know how they should approach domestic violence and abuse situations, but they want the assurance that they are acting in accordance with the Word of God. I did the “homework” by diligently studying the Scripture and particularly looking at Jesus’ life experiences with violence and abuse, so that pastors, church leaders, counselors, victims, and others can have a reliable resource to help them filter this trauma through the Word of God and respond as Jesus would - in a manner pleasing to God.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Before reading this book, I'd like to clarify some important terms. Many are commonly used terms, each subject to its own interpretation depending on the background of an individual. I would speculate that many who would make a choice to read this book are from a Christian background, and there is a vast scope of religious affiliates who define themselves as Christians. Such groups or sects of the Faith include: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Jehovah's Witness, Christian Science, Baptists, Evangelicals, and more. There are also other groups who have no religious affiliations, yet they identify themselves as "Christian" for moral, social, or other reasons such as their family background. In addition, each group may consider their general assembly (locally, globally, and generationally), the Church. It is because of this inconsistency why I'd like to begin by clarifying how the term "Christian", "Church", and other related terms are defined in this book.

Jesus Christ: Jesus is a name. Christ is a title. Chirstos (Gk) or Mashiyach (Hb) means "anointed". Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed One. Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Savior of mankind as prophesied and as promised by God. Jesus is God Incarnate, and as such, in this book, outside of direct quotes, all pronouns in reference to Jesus are capitalized.

True Christian/Believer: To define a true Christian, I will utilize *Jesus'* very narrow definition. Let's begin by looking at Matt. 7:21-23 where Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonder in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" NKJVTM

Many will think that they know Jesus but Jesus understands what it means to know Him. The word here for know is *ginōskō* (Hb) and implies an intimacy between persons. It involves getting to understand and becoming knowledgeable about someone from personal experience, from being in such close proximity to them that your senses are in tune with them, their feelings, values, and all that makes up their person. The nature of this word, *ginōskō* (Hb), is so intimate that it's actually a Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. It's used in Matt. 1:25 to tell that Joseph did not know or have sexual relations with Mary till after she had given birth to Jesus. [Joseph] "did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS." NKJV

From what Jesus said, it is clear that "many" people will be wrong. "Many" people have an intellectual awareness of Jesus but they do not have an intimate relationship with Him. "Many" obviously believe Him. "Many" did Christian things like reading Christian materials, singing Christian songs, attending Christian services, talking Christian-like, believing Christian doctrine, and doing Christian deeds, including prophesying and casting out demons in the name of Jesus. Yet, "many" Christians are not known by Christ Jesus. Who does Christ deem worthy to bear His name and be identified as a Christian?

Several verses in Scripture answers that question. A couple include: Acts 16:31 ("...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved...") and Romans 10:9 ("...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved"). These verses echo Jesus' own words found in John 6:40, "And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." NKJVTm

One key word that is common in these verses is the verb 'believe'. This word *believe* (Gk: *pisteuō*) means to place full confidence in [Him] and to trust [Him]. People, who actually believe in Jesus, as Jesus means it, are those for whom there exists no other means of hope or life (in this world and in the next) apart from Jesus. Their lives, and all that encompasses their self-identity and will, is replaced with Jesus' and their lifestyle reflects unwavering commitment to God by *obeying* His commandments.¹ Their time and their resources are devoted to Jesus. When one believes in Jesus to this degree, an intimacy and a knowing is developed. It is a *personal* relationship. They have a resemblance of Jesus because of this intimacy and they have a nature that resembles Christ. As such, those who believe in Jesus (as Jesus identifies His own) are called Believers or True Christians.

There are occasions when I want to emphasize that this is the category of Christians to whom I am making reference, therefore, I will use other commonly used terms interchangeably to identify this group. These terms include: 'true Believer', 'God's Chosen', 'true Christian', 'believer in Jesus', 'believer in Christ', 'the Church of Jesus Christ' or 'the Body of Christ'. At times, depending on the context, I include this group into the generic use of the word "Christian" because only Jesus truly knows the ones who are real and who He claims as His own.

Nominal or so-called Christian: Those who identify themselves as Christians, who may or may not live a religious lifestyle, but who do not believe in Jesus as Jesus defines belief, nor have a godly character reflective of walking in obedience to God's commandments because they have an intimate knowing relationship with Jesus. See Psalm 50:16-22.

Christian: I use this term to mean all who identify themselves as Christian regardless of their denominational affiliation or church

attendance record. Both groups (Believers/True Christians and Nominal/so-called Christians) are included unless otherwise noted or specified.

The Church: Many times the word *church* is used in various contexts to mean different things. For example: people go to church (a place where a group gathers for a corporate religious ceremony), people ‘play’ church (behave religiously), builders erect a church (a building), people refer to their corporate religious experience as *having church*, and people from some non Christian religions refer to their place of worship as church. The true meaning of the word church (ekklēsia-Gk) however is defined as “an assembly” or “called-out ones” i.e. *God’s chosen people*. Stephen, as recorded by Luke in the Book of Acts, referred to the assembly of the Children of Israel at Mt. Sinai, as the Church². Paul refers to the Assembly of God’s chosen people, [all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13)], as the Church. In this book, my use of the word *church* refers to the assembly of Christians who by their religious practices, regardless of denominational beliefs, refer to themselves as the church-included in the mix are God’s chosen people - the Body of Christ.

WWJD: WWJD is a trendy term which became popular in the 1990s and it’s an acronym which means, “What Would Jesus Do?” It is a phrase used by many (Christians and others) to indicate the belief that Jesus’ actions is what they ought to emulate in life’s daily circumstances. I use this term because most professing Christians are genuinely desirous to know what Jesus would really do in many circumstances which occur in their daily lives and more specifically, in the case of domestic violence and abuse.

Intimate Partner: This term has become vogue because it can include both heterosexual and same-sex couples. I will use this term if I am quoting directly from another source. If I am not

using someone else's quotes, I am referring to heterosexual couples who are in a committed relationship, or couples who are engaged or married.

The world: A term, which loosely translated, is used to refer to those who are not a part of the true Church of Jesus Christ, whose worldview is secular, non-biblical, humanistic, and independent of God (2 Cor. 4:4; James 2:5; I John 4:3).

Abuse: To define abuse, I've looked at several Scripture verses like I Sam. 31:4; Matt. 5:11, 15:32; Romans 15:3; 1Pt. 3:16; James 4:11; and Isaiah 53:5 where words like abuse (*`alal*-Hb), revile (*oneidizō*-Gk), persecute (*diōkō*-Gk), speaking evil against someone (*katalaleō* -Gk), crushed, bruised (*daka'* -Hb), wound (*chalal*-HB) and others such words that depict victimization are used. The biblical definition of abuse is any sinful behavior (thoughts not excluded according to Jesus because behaviors manifest from the heart), such as unsavory speech or action that is against another person with the intent to shatter, wound, pierce, crush, profane, defile, treat as common, cause shame and embarrassment, or other such harm in order to control, manipulate, or overpower a wife (or others like children who like the weaker vessel, are lesser in stature, power, rank, age, and size), that she is not able to walk in liberty as the autonomous person that God created her to be and function in the calling of God's divine purpose for her life.

At times this term *abuse* is used interchangeably with domestic violence, and can include abuse that is verbal, religious, psychological, emotional, financial, and/or physical.

Abuser: The abuser is the victimizer who perpetrates abuse and, in this book, is identified as male, primarily because 95% of victims are women, who are victimized by men.

Sinful behavior or Sin: An act, thought, or way of behaving that goes against God's righteousness, violates His law, is

offensive to God, is punishable by death and eternal damnation, but redeemable by Jesus' death on the cross.

Sin in relation to abuse: Abuse as defined above and includes such acts, thoughts, or behaviors as: pride, denial, anger, rage, deception, violence, unsavory speech, mistreatment (spitting, hitting, starving, etc), motivated by the intent to do harm, whether emotionally or physical, and the like.

Church Leader: I use the term "church leader" when referring to clergy, like a priest or rabbi or anyone in a ministerial or leadership role within the church. Christian and biblical counselors (they're not the same thing) are also included in that designation.

Comment on John 7:53-8:11: In this book, there are many references to the story of the woman caught in adultery as recorded in John 8:1-11. This portion of Scripture is in question by biblical scholars as to whether it is to be considered part of the inspirational Scripture mainly because evidence from some very early manuscripts does not have this portion in the Book of John. It's been found in other places within the Gospels. In modern translations it is noted in some fashion that this portion "was not found in the oldest and best manuscripts" or a similar statement. However, this statement is extremely misleading on its own, since the passage was known to exist in some manuscripts of John long before Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were made (St. Jerome, circa 382 A.D. tells us that he found the passage "in many copies, both Greek and Latin", which shows it was popular long before his time.)³

John Calvin commented on this section of Scripture in his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Calvin introduces this portion by saying, "It is plain enough that this passage was unknown anciently to the Greek Churches; and some conjecture that it has been brought from some other place and inserted

here. But as it has always been received by the Latin Churches, and is found in many old Greek manuscripts, and contains nothing unworthy of an Apostolic Spirit, *there is no reason why we should refuse to apply it to our advantage.*"⁴ (Emphasis mine) I share John Calvin's sentiments in part. I think that there is no reason not to apply this story to our advantage, one which most scholars note as historical and factual and which early Christian writers mention as early as 100 A.D, and is believed by many to have actually happened.

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Vindicate the weak and fatherless;
Do justice to the afflicted and destitute.
Rescue the weak and needy;
Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.
Psalm 82:3-4

PREFACE

There is no other “family sin” within the body of Christ more secretive than that of domestic violence and abuse, but it is one about which the Church in general, has largely been evasive. Even though there are many factors surrounding this issue, it is not a new or uncommon problem. I Corinthians 10:13 says that “no temptation has overtaken us but such that is *common* to man (kind)...” That truth is a given; there is nothing new under the sun. The Church of Jesus Christ preaches that all answers to any, and every situation that mankind can possibly encounter, is found in God’s Holy Word, the Bible, and in the person of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, some things like domestic violence and abuse are either left unaddressed or relegated to be handled extra biblically by other social agencies or personnel like professional counselors, psychiatrists, and the state’s welfare department.

However the Church should *not* dismiss such modern-day issues like domestic violence and abuse as issues which are out the Bible’s and out of Jesus’ expertise. Mainly because the true Church of Jesus Christ knows that because Jesus is God personified-revealed in human flesh⁵; and as God, He has the answer to every problem, regardless of what it is.

I believe that The Bible, as the Creator's manual for our lives, contains the answers for all our problems including those of domestic violence and abuse. Furthermore, I believe these answers are found in Jesus' life; specifically in those experiences where Jesus Himself was a victim of abuse and in those experiences where Jesus shared in the abuse experience of others within His community.

From reading the many encounters that Jesus had with the religious leaders of His day, I believe that Jesus was a victim of abuse (in the public arena). In addition, His ministry involved ministering to others who were victims.⁶ When we compare those types of abusive behaviors that Jesus encountered with the types of abusive behaviors that the Christian woman encounters within the home, it can be determined that they are both the same. Keeping in mind however that though Jesus Himself was not a victim of *domestic* violence and abuse, He did have experience with the same *types* of sin that constitute domestic violence and abuse. Violence is violence and abuse is abuse, regardless of the context. Jesus' experience was in the public domain and the Christian woman's experience is within a private domain, her home. Jesus addressed these issues and we can learn from Him how to address these same issues which are manifested in the arena of the Christian home today.

Below is a list of some of the malignant behaviors and sins which are embedded in the type of abuses that *Jesus* experienced both in His personal life and in the lives of other victims He encountered. When compared with those which occur in the life of the domestic violence and abuse victim, it can be determined that they are the same.

Some of these malignant actions which Jesus encountered includes: control and power issues (John 12:19) and jealousy (John 7:32). There was mistreatment (John 10:31) and verbal abuse where He was scorned, insulted, despised and

berated (John 9:28; John 8:48, Luke 11:53). He was falsely accused (Mark 14:56-59; Luke 11:54, 23:2, 14; John 18:29-30), dishonored by slander (John 8:49), and mocked (Mark 15:20). He was rejected and despised, He was “a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief” (John 10:19; Isaiah 53:3). Jesus experienced religious abuse (John 9:34, Matthew 23:5-7) in the form of religious criticism (John 10:19), scripture-twisting (John 7:21-24, 8:5), scripture misapplication (John 7:21-24), using scripture for one’s own gain (John 7:50-52), and various expressions of religiosity (John 9:34; 12:42; Luke 11:53). Violence was perpetrated against Him; He was slapped *and* punched in the face repeatedly (Mark 14:65, John 18:22; Luke 22:63) spat on (Mark 13:65, 15:19), and suffered the shame of nakedness (Mark 15:20). He experienced anger (John 8: 12-59), rage (John 7:30, 10:31), hate (John 15:18, John 5:42), and stalking (John 7:32, John 6:11; Mark 3:2). People plotted to do Him harm (John 12:10-11; Mark 4:6) and multiple attempts were made to murder him (Luke 4:28-29; John 10:31, 39). Ultimately, He was killed.

He was so violently assaulted that “many were amazed when they saw him - beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person” (Isaiah 52:14 NLT). In fact, it is biblically accurate to say that no other human being was as violently assailed because the Bible states: “As many were astonished at thee; his visage (appearance) was so marred *more than any man*, and his form (figure) *more than the sons of men:...*” Isaiah 52:14 KJV (Emphasis mine) This description in Isaiah 52:14 suggests to us that the worst depiction of Jesus’ crucifixion as portrayed in Mel Gibson’s The Passion of the Christ⁷, was underrated, because the audience could clearly discern that Jim Caviezel (the actor who portrayed Jesus) was still recognizable as a human being.

As a victim of abuse and violence, Jesus is an unparalleled model from which the Church and the Christian

community can learn. His victimization experiences of suffering and shame makes Him the perfect authority on abuse and violence. Yet, despite all He suffered, Jesus - God incarnate, responded in a godly manner in and throughout all His experiences. He responded to his own numerous abusive circumstances in a variety of ways: He ministered to those who were abused, He addressed those who were abusers, and He left behind valuable insight into the nature of abusers. Jesus' life, as one filled with encounters of abuse and violence, is not just history, it's a model which all Christians need to emulate in order to respond righteously to violence and abuse, especially on the home front.

The Bible contains the historical record of Jesus' life; and as God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16), the Bible should be the foremost authority and the main resource that Christians should look to for answers regarding domestic violence and abuse.

In the world, there are many useful materials and resources from experts on domestic violence and abuse; and I am so very thankful for them. I read many other materials on domestic violence and abuse, and I utilize many resources as well. I educate myself, and I encourage others to do the same. However, I believe Christians should always use God's Word as the standard by which they measure everything else against. Christians should consider such questions as: What advice do the experts on domestic violence and abuse give? How does such advice measure up with what Jesus did? Is such advice or action effective? How are the concerns of Christian women who are victimized being addressed by the Church? Is the Church implementing worldly ways or biblical Christ-like ways?

When one seriously takes thought and reflect upon answers to such questions, we find that the Church's response to such issues as domestic violence and abuse is less biblical

than it should be. That is why, as a Christian who stands on the premise that God's Word has all life's answers, I have looked mostly at Jesus' life experience with victimization (personal and otherwise) to find, what I believe should be the Church's approach to domestic violence and abuse towards Christian women. The Bible provides answers on what to do in regards to the specific sin-issues, which are entrenched in domestic violence and abuse (and I've included many in this book). However, for the purpose of seeking to explain what Jesus would have done about domestic violence and abuse towards Christian women, I've limited my report, mainly to the biblical records of Jesus' life experiences.

Calling domestic violence and abuse a sin, and demanding that the Church responds righteously and biblically towards this sin is a relatively new cry. It is difficult to hear this message, because domestic violence and abuse towards Christian women is a silent giant which has been embedded within the landscape of the Church for so long a time. Yet few dare to arouse this beast, and its existence within the Church has even been denied among some Christians. In the mean time, the jaws of this monster continue to crush and grind the souls and the bodies of our Christian women, who are our mothers, sisters, and daughters. This monster has left a trail of bones behind it, and it wipes its mouth and says, like the adulterous woman of Proverbs 30:20, "I have done no wickedness." KJV

By writing this book, I hope to encourage the Body of Christ to have faith in the authority, and sufficiency of the Bible and in the answers which the Bible provides to overcome those sins that comprise domestic violence and abuse. This book is also meant to provoke and challenge Church leaders, Church members, Counselors, and others, to break away from the safe, traditionalist, religious, and worldly/secular approaches to domestic violence and abuse among Christians. In place of

these, I encourage the Church to approach the matter by doing the radical things that Jesus did when He dealt with the abuse and violence, which He encountered both directly and indirectly. I also desire that Christian women who are encountering abuse (whether emotional, spiritual, verbal, psychological, financial, physical, or otherwise) will be able to filter their experience through the sieve of God's Word. I pray that the eyes of their understanding will be enlightened and that they will experience true freedom in Christ through the information presented in this book.

I believe that the Church is to trust God's Word and Jesus' examples; believing fully that if they apply the Word of God to any situation that they may encounter, God's Word *will* work perfectly in the Christian's life.

Though I've earned a Doctorate in Biblical Studies, and I am in practice as a Biblical Counselor with years of experience in helping women and men of faith through personal crisis, what I present in this book are not the assertions of an expert. I claim neither to be a Bible expert nor a counseling expert. Anyone with a desire, motivation, money, and time to study, can get a piece of paper declaring them "edumacated"⁸ in any field. Rather, I am a sister in the Lord Jesus, and a woman of God who desires to bring freedom to the Body of Christ by promoting liberty⁹ and the truth of God's Word for "the truth shall *make* you free."¹⁰ Mike Murdock says that what you hate reveals what you are created to change; in other words, what you hate is a clue to something you are assigned to correct;¹¹ and this book is one Christian woman's contribution to affect change regarding how the Church of Jesus Christ responds to domestic violence and abuse towards Christian women.

I believe that if we did the things which Jesus did in His own abuse experiences, personal and otherwise, domestic abuse would not be as pervasive as it is in the Christian home

today. In addition, I believe that following Jesus' examples would also lessen the incidences of domestic violence and abuse within our nation, which traditionally, is primarily identified as "Christian".¹²

PART I

Identifying Domestic Violence and Abuse among Christians

CHAPTER I

Exposing the Secret

“Defendant Matt Baker was a pastor who allegedly took advantage of his position as a leader in his church. He counseled Vanessa Bulls after her divorce, and then slept with her. Now he's accused of killing his wife Kari, so he could be with Vanessa.”¹³

“Preacher’s Wife Killed Husband Because of Abuse, Family Says: It was a crime that stunned the nation. In March, 32-year-old Mary Winkler, a soft-spoken preacher's wife, was charged with the murder of her husband Matt, a Church of Christ minister in the small town of Selmer, Tenn..... When Winkler was questioned the day after the shooting, authorities said she confessed to the crime, saying she had snapped after years of abuse.”¹⁴

“Husband Kills Wife, 3 Kids in Apparent Murder-Suicide: On the Sunday following the murders, the mood inside Holy Family Catholic Church was a somber one as parishioners tried to cope with the death of the family.....Mrs. Wood was scheduled to help out inside the church nursery and teach a second grade Sunday school class. Instead, her bubbly personality was missing from the pews.”¹⁵

“Wife slain in Wilmette murder-suicide never worried about husband’s violent past: Minister who married them 'shared concerns'.....Kathryn Motes met Wiley at the First Presbyterian Church late that spring. By Sept. 16, 2000, they were married.....By all accounts, Wiley-Motes, 50, never worried about her husband's conviction for the 1985 murder of a previous wife, Ruth, who was stabbed 23 times...."There is this

piece, you do have to wonder, did she think she could help him?" Zolk said. *"When you have that kind of pastoral spirit, let's face it, we're caregivers, we're helpers."* ..."I asked [Kathryn] repeatedly if she felt safe," said First Presbyterian's pastor, Sarah Sarchet Butter, *who added that the old murder was known to many members in the congregation.* "The reply was always, 'Yes.' "...*Many was eager to help him start life anew, the pastor said.*"¹⁶ (Emphasis mine)

"Accused Killer Reportedly Tried Suicide:¹⁷ The Sunday school teacher accused of raping and murdering an 8-year-old California girl attempted suicide days before her arrest in the case, CBS News has learned....[Melissa] Huckaby was a volunteer Sunday school teacher at the Clover Road Baptist Church in Tracy, Calif., where her grandfather is pastor. Police returned Tuesday to search the church, as well as Huckaby's home..."

Stories like these are shocking, but somehow like everything else on the news, these stories seemed so far removed from my own personal life. As a believer in Christ, I've attended church on Sundays, and often times, in the middle of the week as well. As part of a family of Believers in Jesus Christ, and partner in fellowship with the family of God, I have rarely if ever come across an instant which domestic abuse and violence were openly discussed as an issue of concern in any of the churches I ever attended. There was no teaching about domestic violence and abuse by pastors from the pulpit, no lessons regarding it in Sunday school, and no wife shared her personal story with me (though once I'd heard from a another sister, that a friend of ours had been beaten by her husband, and that was the reason for their breakup). However, several years ago, as I listened to a local Christian radio station, I heard a program that Family Life Today was airing (10/15-10/21/05), and

the topic was on domestic abuse and violence among Christians.¹⁸ I was shocked! It's not that I wasn't aware that domestic violence and abuse existed among Christians, *but* I was surprised that the Body of Christ was 'outing' this matter. After all, domestic violence and abuse is not compatible with the reputation of the Church or with the image of Christians. Nothing could have removed me from that radio program. It was a two-part series, scheduled to continue the next day, and I could not wait. I *knew* I was not the only Christian woman who was encountering abuse in her marriage and in her home. The church has traditionally kept this subject so under wraps, that it was even a secret in my own home because nobody, me included, would label some of the things that were a daily part of my life like anger, rage, undermining, putdowns, walking on "eggshells", etc. as abuse. I thought one had to be beaten to be considered abused. My knowledge on the subject has significantly improved since then.

I hated the fact that no one in my church would correct the sins associated with bitterness and anger, which were so blatantly evident in my ex-husband's life. The leaders of the church I'd attended for 15 years were certainly very aware of my husband's temperament. They had experienced his predisposition to anger and offense, his propensity for control and manipulation, his proclivity to dominate, and his delusional sense of religiosity. In addition, we'd gone in for "counseling" over some small matter which had "caused" him to blow up like a volcanic eruption. We had a reputation. I knew the church leadership was aware of the anger, control, and the delusional character traits of my husband, because of what was communicated to me during the unfortunate circumstance when our eldest son had unexpectedly died from leukemia. One pastor told me directly that the reason they had not reached out to our family in our time of need, was because they believed (mistakenly) that my ex-husband was responsible for my son's death, and they did not know how to respond to *that*. They in part believed he was responsible

because of some hyper-religious statements which he had declared about his beliefs on divine healing, plus his temper and the emotional imbalance which they'd encountered in their interactions with him over the years. On another occasion, one pastor had warned another member not to provoke my husband because of a belief that he was capable of *killing* someone.

Yet, neither the pastors nor any other leader in that very large congregation once demonstrated the love of Christ by confronting my ex-husband about his sinful behavior patterns [Though one woman with whom I had a counseling appointment, wisely noted when she saw him walked by her office (he had no reason to be in the building), that I was being stalked...God bless her]. They were too concerned about not offending, showing the pleasing sort of behavior many Christians define as love, and acting like "Christians" rather than acting like Christ. This type of response by that church is rather typical of many Christian churches today. They believe that just praying for a brother or sister, who is living a life of sin, and expressing love towards them with niceties, is what Jesus called them to do. The Christian church has in part redefined Christ to fit its religious mold rather than transforming itself to fit into the image of Christ.

What would Jesus do? Would Jesus demonstrate that kind of safe, distant, non-committal, kind of love? Is it truly *love* when a church leader or fellow Christian puts his or her concerns above that of the salvation of others, because an act of correction would cause offense to oversensitive and immature Christians? I believe that many of the incidents that I experienced in my home are not isolated or rare occurrences in the Christian home. Domestic abuse is spread out over a wide spectrum, therefore I have depicted below three scenarios in which violence and/or abuse is evident in the relationship of three fictional Christian couples.



The phone rings, and Kristen hears Sam on the line; “Oh, I’m sorry” he says; his voice sounding remorseful. He paused as if collecting himself, “She can’t come to the phone right now because she’s passed out on the bed...again.” He says the “again” with that exasperating tremor with which Sue knows is meant to draw sympathy to him like flies to dead meat. She wipes a few wisps of hairs, which have fallen on her sweaty forehead as she bends over to scrub the bathtub. Sam puts the phone down and Kristen could hear his soft footsteps approaching the bathroom. Her nervous tremors didn’t have a chance to register in her brain, because before she knew it, Sam was already behind her and had connected his boots to meet with the middle of her back. A couple swift kicks followed by a few rapid-fire explicative mixed in with the message of “Tell your friends not to call *my* house!” He continued, “... and you better have this bathroom clean when Father Murray comes over tomorrow.” He turned and walked out of the bathroom as if he had only just used the toilet.



Chlarisa is in wonderment as she listens to her husband’s eloquent and touching speech at church. The congregation gives the customary “Amens” and “Hallelujahs” in response to Daniel’s moving testimony. “Is that a *tear* in his eye?” she thought, as she tried not to roll her eyes in disgust at his hypocrisy. Her other reason for stifling her true feelings was for fear that someone might see her and think she really was the ‘bad’ Christian wife that Daniel had painted her out to be.

Ever since she and Daniel had married after their whirlwind romance, he’s made it clear that *she* was the spiritually inferior one, and made it a mission in his life to encourage their children and other church members, to believe the same thing. It

seemed that he knew more of the Scripture from reading the Bible through once than she did reading it every day; and he was well skilled in using it for his own gain. He always has a scriptural answer why he would not entertain anything she, or anyone else, had to say. At times she'd fought more forcibly to say what she knew to be scripturally correct about a particular matter, but he'd shut her up by his "trump card" response - "My sheep hear my voice and another he will not follow" (John 10:27). By that, he was implying that *she* was not God's sheep, so he will never listen to anything she had to say. In time she had conquered some of her fears over his intimidating ways, and she'd speak up and confront him, but when she did, he would then demand that she shows him, in the Bible, specific evidential verification of his 'sin'. This is something she was unable to do because quoting bible verses off the top of her head on demand was not her strong-suit. In the end, he'd turn things to where he'd accuse her of victimizing *him* and *his* children with her unchristian ways.

In Daniel's eyes, her Christian rock was "worldly music", the neighbors to whom she ministered, were her "sinner-friends", that glass of wine she drank on those rare occasions, made her a "drinker", and if she didn't 'mother' exactly as he directed, she was a "bad mother". It was his strong Christian convictions that had attracted her to Daniel when they were dating, now she often wonders, where is Christ in this angry and embittered Christian man?



Diane, a woman who's been married to Justin for 7 years, lives a life of "If-onyms". If only she could hear footsteps in their house without getting a nervous stomach. If only she could feel free to breathe in her own space without being criticized. If she could, just for once, speak her mind without risk of getting sarcasm in return. If only she could have an evening of quiet;

one without shouts, insults, angry words, and of course, one without the floors shaking beneath her feet at the slam of the door, or the trampling of angry feet up and down the stairs. If only she could, for one week, go without being drilled about who she talked to, or where she went, or what she did. If only she could make one decision to buy something on her own accord without giving an account for each penny. Lately, since she doesn't believe in divorce, her 'If-onlys' have turned to "If only he was dead, I'd be free!"

In all three scenarios the Christian women are victims of domestic violence and/or abuse and the Christian men have no semblance of Christ in their role of husbands. All three scenarios fit the biblical description of abuse, as previously defined in the "Definition of Terms" section. They also fit Webster's definition of abuse as well. As defined in Webster's 1828 Dictionary, abuse is an improper treatment towards another when one abuses his natural powers, privileges, or advantages. An abuser is a person who "mistreats another in speech, or behavior; one that deceives; uses rudeness of language, ill treatment, or violence towards another person."¹⁹ As well as fitting the above scenarios, these definitions also fit the malicious experiences which Jesus experienced (personal and otherwise) with the religious leaders of his day.

Violence and abuse was not only prevalent in Jesus' life; it is prevalent in the lives of many women today. Here are some statistics that reflect this epidemic.

- Approximately 95% of the victims of domestic violence are women.²⁰
- About 1 out of 4 women are likely to be abused by a partner in her lifetime.²¹
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States; *more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined.*²²

- Of females killed with a firearm, almost two-thirds were killed by their intimate partners.²³
- The number of females shot and killed by their husbands or intimate partners was more than three times higher than the total number murdered by *male strangers* using *all weapons combined* in single victim/single offender incidents in 2002.²⁴
- 33% of women murdered in America are killed by their husbands or boyfriends.²⁵
- 75% of domestic violence homicides occur during or after the victim has left the abuser.²⁶
- The *number one* killer of African-American women ages 15 to 34 is homicide at the hands of a current or former intimate partner.²⁷
- One woman is beaten by her husband or partner every 15 seconds in the United States.²⁸
- Battering on women is the most under reported crime in America.²⁹
- 92% of women who were physically abused by their partners did not discuss these incidents with their physicians; 57% did not discuss the incidents with anyone.³⁰

After reading these statistics, one may be tempted to think that this is a social problem which *sinner*s alone have and that it is *outside* of the Church. However, there is a very strong biblical and historical relationship between domestic violence and abuse and God's people. Let's take a look at some of that history.

I will fast-forward past the first domestic violence incident between brothers Cain and Abel, to look at three examples where the Bible records instances of terrible victimization of domestic violence against women among God's people. From these examples we see that domestic violence and abuse is one

manifestation of the evil that plagues the sinful hearts of mankind. It is a crime that is not just against one's self, but it is against the soul and body of another human being, and it has a detrimental impact on other members of the family as well. Additionally, its effect also impacts future generations.

In addition to looking at these biblical accounts of domestic violence and abuse, we will also take a glimpse of some historical documentation of domestic violence and abuse within the Christian Church.

PART II

The Church

and

Domestic Violence and

Abuse

CHAPTER 2

A History of Domestic Violence and Abuse among God's People

One of the most startling accounts of domestic violence and abuse recorded in the Bible is found in 2nd Samuel 13:1-18. This story reveals the shameful, violent, cold, calculated, and premeditated rape of Tamar by Amnon, one of King David's sons and Tamar's half brother. Tamar's life was characterized with shame because of this crime.³¹ She also had other emotional scarring.³² She became a social outcast, and remained isolated in her brother Absalom's house³³ rather than fulfilling the cultural expectations which her position as a Jewish young woman and as a princess would dictate. Indeed, she had to deal with additional tragedies, mainly, her brother murdering her rapist, who was one of his own family members (his brother). The result was that bitterness, conspiracy and betrayal divided and destroyed her family. This division spread into the entire citizenry within the kingdom of David, and negatively impacted future generations.

Another historical account of abuse and violence against women among God's people is found in Judges 19, where a horror of the worst kind is recorded. A concubine was given up, by her man, to satisfy the (homo) sexual lust of a gang of men from the tribe of Benjamin, who really were seeking to have intercourse with *him*.³⁴ The man, from the tribe of Levi, had a male servant³⁵ yet he gave his up wife³⁶/concubine, to be gang raped instead. The host, who had invited them in, had previously offered to give up *his* virgin daughter to the mob. These masochistic sodomites abused the man's concubine/wife to

death. The word for *abuse* as used in verse 25 of Judges 19 is *'alal* (Hb) and it is defined as abuse by dealing wantonly, severely and ruthlessly, to abuse by thrusting through.³⁷ This was the extreme of sadism and brutality. Though they used her violently throughout the entire night, no one in the tribe or community intervened to save her.

By the end of this drama, civil war had broken out among the 12 tribes of Israel, as 11 united to punish the one offending tribe, the tribe of Benjamin. As a result, the tribe of Benjamin almost became extinct. The other tribes vowed not to have the tribe of Benjamin engage in relations with any of their women,³⁸ 12,000 warriors destroyed the population of the entire city of Jabesh-Gilead (save 400 virgins),³⁹ and many more virgins were kidnapped to save the Tribe of Benjamin from going extinct.⁴⁰

Scriptural documentations such as these clearly show that violence and abuse against women have been a part of the culture of God's people. This bias against the weaker sex is reflected not only in scriptural accounts, but in Christian commentaries on Scripture. Such passages as Judges 19 where the Levi's concubine/wife was savagely raped to death was commented on by Matthew Henry, a 17th century and early 18th century minister. Matthew Henry's comment seemed to imply that the rape was her fault, because she "asked for it". He quotes the historian Josephus, "Josephus, in his narrative of this story, makes her to be the person they had a design upon when they beset the house, and says nothing of their villainous design upon the Levite himself. They saw her (he says) in the street, when they came into the town, and were smitten with her beauty; and perhaps, though she was reconciled to her husband, her looks did not bespeak her to be one of the most modest. *Many bring mischief of this kind upon themselves by their loose carriage and behavior; a little spark may kindle a great fire.*"⁴¹ This commentary did not weightily consider the fact that her

assailants' lust were of a homosexual nature; no "loose carriage" on her part incited their interest which was directed towards her husband and not her (Judges 19:22).

Also, this commentator clearly communicates that this horrendous act which killed her was God's punishment for her adultery. He says, *"In the miserable end of this woman, we may see the righteous hand of God punishing her for her former uncleanness, when she played the whore against her husband, v. 2. Though her father had countenanced her, her husband had forgiven her, and the fault was forgotten now that the quarrel was made up, yet God remembered it against her when he suffered these wicked men thus wretchedly to abuse her; how unrighteous soever they were in their treatment of her, in permitting it the Lord was righteous. Her punishment answered her sin...Lust was her sin, and lust was her punishment. By the Law of Moses she was to have been put to death for her adultery. She escaped that punishment from men, yet vengeance pursued her..."*⁴²

Furthermore, in his opinion, despite the fact that she was being brutally thrust through and butchered throughout the entire night, her overriding concern was not to escape the torture for her safety, but to ask her husband to forgive her for her adultery. "The poor abused woman made towards her husband's lodgings as soon as ever the approach of the day-light obliged these sons of Belial to let her go (for these works of darkness hate and dread the light), v. 25. Down she fell at the door, *with her hands on the threshold, begging pardon (as it were) for her former transgression, and in that posture of a penitent*, with her mouth in the dust, she expired. There he found her (v. 26, 27), supposed her asleep, or overcome with shame and confusion for what had happened, but soon perceived she was dead (v. 28), took up her dead body, which, we may suppose, had all over it marks of the hands, the blows, and other abuses, she had received."⁴³
[Emphasis mine]

Woman-hating comments, such as these made by this bible commentator, are known to run throughout the history of Christendom. This woman was brutally and masochistically forced and thrust through [alal –Hb] with violent abuses by a mob of perverted sadists, for the entire night! It is incredulous to me, that anyone could imagine that after surviving that ordeal, and mustering enough strength to make her way back home, and being seconds from her death, the only concern that this victim had was “begging pardon ... for her former transgression”.⁴⁴

Both these examples of the victimization of Tamar and the concubine were within the family, and therefore considered a crime of a domestic nature; the latter being that a husband gave up his wife to be raped, cultural context notwithstanding.

Both incidents led to the death of others, who were not even a part of the abuse. These accounts show that what is supposedly a *private* matter is a crime against others in society as well. It also shows that the impact of domestic abuse goes beyond those present; it spreads like a cancer affecting others, even to the next generation and beyond.

Furthermore, both accounts also prove that people are slaves to their sinful natures, doing what is right in their own eyes;⁴⁵ given over to minds and hearts that are abased, reprobate, and cruel.⁴⁶ It reveals that, as sinners, people are rebellious and disobedient to the law of God and can do atrocious things to each other.

Mankind's inclination is to take advantage of those weaker than themselves. The abuse of one's position of authority or strength continues today. The role of men and women may change and the customs of marriage may vary, but in spite of the changes in the times and culture of the people of God, the way a man treats his woman, whether she was attained by war or by

betrothal, should align with God's law. The command of God to the man remains the same; and that is "*you shall not treat her brutally*" (Duet. 21:14). Abuse of one's wife or intimate partner is *never* endorsed by God.

In another example, this one from the New Testament (John8: 1-13), tells of the *woman* who was caught in the act of adultery. She was dragged out of her adulterous bed to be stoned to death. There is no mention of her husband, and one may wonder whether he played a part in this sting operation. One may also wonder why the man, who was also caught in the act of adultery with her, and deserving of being stoned as well, did not have to account for his part in this sin. One may also wonder if when they "caught her *in the act*", and their eyes looked upon her nakedness in the midst of the sexual act, whether lust ignited in their minds through the feasting of their eyes as they apprehended her while she engaged in sex. Yet, they didn't consider that they themselves may have, according to Jesus' definition, committed adultery by looking upon her with lustful eyes.⁴⁷

Outside of biblical accounts of violence and abuse of women among God's people, we have additional records within the Church, where domestic abuse and violence are encouraged. In more recent history, that of the 1500's, the pulpit was the platform from which Christian men were exhorted to beat their wives, for their wicked nagging. One Church leader, Friar Cherubino of Siena wrote a document entitled "Rules of Marriage" which in part said "when you see your wife commit an offense, don't rush at her with insults and violent blows. Scold her sharply, bully and terrify her. And if this still doesn't work...take up a stick and beat her soundly, for it is better to punish the body and correct the soul than damage the soul and spare the body...Then readily beat her, not in rage but out of a charity and concern for her soul, so that the beating will rebound to you merit, and her good."⁴⁸

In addition to church ministers, laws were enacted by key lawmakers born out of historically religious educational institutions like Oxford, Yale, and Harvard. Prior to the first law against wife beating which was enacted until 1850, it was legally, a man's privilege to "beat her with a stick, to pull her hair, to choke her, spit in her face or kick her about the floor, or to inflict upon her like indignities."⁴⁹

Historically, such biased and unbiblical teaching like this which endorse abuse and violence against wives specifically women in general, have been promoted within the Church and have disseminated into Christian culture as well. Many so-called Christians, who are abusers, use Church teachings (real or imagined) to justify their abuse.⁵⁰ When false teachings about gender roles and expectations are tied to "God's authority", the bonds of doctrine are strengthened. These, then become woven into one's belief system about intimate partner relationships. Today, these non-biblical beliefs in our "Christian" society are reflected in studies and national surveys, which show that 27.6% of husbands think that slapping a spouse could be considered normal or good.⁵¹

Many religious, gender-biased, and misapplied teachings of Scripture are also reflected in specific studies done of conservative Christians. Some studies show that there appears to be no difference in the degree of domestic abuse between conservative Christian men and other (non-Christian) men.⁵² Also, there is evidence that if one partner (the man) is not in agreement with the other partner's religious beliefs or church congregation, the risk of violence is increased.⁵³ Abuse is more pronounced if the men hold a more conservative belief about their wives' role and the authority of the Bible.⁵⁴ However, findings indicate that this same population of men who hold more conservative beliefs than their wives and who are more abusive, also do *not* attend church (Bradford, et al, 2004).⁵⁵ Other studies found that most perpetrators rationalized their violence as

biblically acceptable and thought that it helped the family run more smoothly.⁵⁶

In putting these findings together to make a clearer picture, it seems that men who are most abusive are those who *claim* to have a Christian affiliation but do not engage in any true Christian ritual (like church attendance). They hold more conservative beliefs about their wives' role, not because they are actively engaged in living a Christian lifestyle (as indicated by rare Church attendance) but because false teachings on gender roles have disseminated within and beyond the 'Christian' culture, and are a part of their [faulty] belief system. Interpersonal violence victims also have reported that their perpetrators used patriarchal religious beliefs to justify their acts of abuse.⁵⁷

To bring balance to this picture, some studies show that as a general rule, men who are regular church goers have a bond with other men who also hold strong family values. They are more involved with their families, and they have healthier marriages and family lives (Bradford et al, 2004).⁵⁸ It was also found that professing Christian men, mainly evangelicals who attend church regularly, have the lowest rate of domestic abuse (Bradford et al, 2004).⁵⁹

From these studies, we can indeed see the strong influence that Church teachings and religious beliefs have on people who claim to be Christians, both nominal and real, and we can also see how Church teachings can have both a positive and a negative impact upon Christian families.

There are other studies that have been done among church leaders that show that they also concur that the church's teachings have had a measurable influence on domestic violence and abuse among Christians. Many have expressed concern that, although clergy and church leaders may not use

the same archaic words as Friar Cherubino, his sentiments are still alive and well today. In one study where 22 religious leaders from various religious affiliations were interviewed, 91% were concerned that teachings of submission could be interpreted to support abusive behavior.⁶⁰ Another study shows that some church leaders believed this distortion occurred only when teachings were misconstrued.⁶¹ Also, there are other leaders who believe that submissive teachings by definition create unbalanced power dynamics that increased the chances of domestic violence.⁶²

As presented in this chapter, we have seen how such things as: the disobedient, debased, debauched and self-serving nature of man (which compels him to mistreat those weaker than him or those under his authority), coupled with the history of Church doctrine, and mixed with the gender-biased and unscriptural teachings of scripture within the Christian church, has had a harmful influence on the domestic front. This combination of factors creates a poisonous cocktail that negatively impacts not only the Christian home, but it has a lethal effect on others in our society as well.

What can be done to remedy this? What was Jesus' take or opinion on women in a society where social and religious bias prevailed? How did He, as a male figure, in a traditional patriarchal religious society, relate to women? And how would He (and how does He) relate to women today? There are many scriptural references and examples to plainly guide us into knowing what Jesus would do.

WWJD: Jesus would love, respect, esteem, and minister to women.⁶³

“But when Jesus was aware of [it], He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.” Matt. 26:10 NKJV

“Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” Matt. 26:13 NKJV

Case A. Jesus had a love and respect for women, though He lived in a society where the local (Jewish) government was even more religiously-based and patriarchal than our society is today. It is evident from Jesus’ relationship with women, that He had no biases or unfounded negative beliefs about them. Indeed the archetype of His Church is modeled after the woman, even calling it His Bride (Rev. 21:9).⁶⁴ This feminine symbolism, The Bride, is also a figurative representation of Christ (Rev. 22:17)⁶⁵ and also of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2).⁶⁶

Case B. In John 2:1-4, Jesus initiated the work of His ministry signaled by the statement of a need expressed by a woman - his mother. It is even more astonishing that He responded to her even though it was not yet the ordained time for His ministerial duties to begin; He told her “My time is not yet”. Despite that, He chose to change His divine pre-ordained timetable at her caring consideration. To me, this is an incomprehensibly wonder - God incarnate differed to a *woman* and changed His timetable to honor her concern about a need.

Case C. In John 4:28-29 and 39 we see how Jesus spoke with the Bible’s first recorded missionary, the Samaritan women. In those days just talking to a Samaritan woman was considered inappropriate. This is reflected in the scripture which says that “the disciples marveled that He talked with a woman.” (John 4:27) This woman was someone we could describe as “loose”

and “shacking up with one man after another”. Yet, Jesus confronted her with the truth about herself in such a way that it ignited her to make inquiry about religious things. Meeting Him, brought her to a new life of change, and she in turn was instrumental in changing the lives of others she knew (John 4:28-29). She indeed did what Jesus told her at the well, she gave *Him* to drink (John 4:10 KJV)⁶⁷ by going and telling others the good news.

Case D. Luke 7: 36-50 Jesus got prepared for His burial by a woman who was described as a sinner. She anointed His feet with oil, washed His feet with her tears, and dried His feet with her hair. Though she was severely criticized for it, Jesus publicly corrected her critics, and used her as a model to reprove and also to enlighten them. In her honor, *He immortalized her memory forever.*

Case E. Luke 8:1-3 tells us that Jesus had an entourage of “certain women” who, along with His disciples, “went through every city and village” with Him as He preached and brought the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. These women included former hurting victims whom He ministered to, chief of which was Mary Magdalene. Included also were “Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others” (NIV) who provided for Him from their substance.

The servant-like behavior of these “certain women” also shows a shadowing of how a Christian woman will follow a man around and willing and happily minister to his needs, if he is a real Christian-man like Jesus who loves and respects her.⁶⁸

Case F. In John 8: 1-11⁶⁹ Jesus saved the life of the woman caught in adultery from a mob of murderous men. Robert Jamison, A.R Fausset, and David Brown commented on this in a way which reflects Jesus’ love and tenderness towards women: “What inimitable tenderness and grace! Conscious of her own

guilt, and till now in the hands of men who had talked of stoning her, wondering at the *skill* with which her accusers had been dispersed, and the *grace* of the few words addressed to herself. She would be disposed to listen, with a reverence and teachableness before unknown, to our Lord's admonition. 'And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.'" ⁷⁰

Case G. Jesus loves His Bride, the Church, so completely that He gave His life for Her; the same way a husband is admonished to love his bride.⁷¹

Case H Matthew 15:22-28 records the story of a Canaanite woman in desperate need, and one whom Jesus' disciples urged Jesus to send away. Nevertheless, after seemingly ignoring her, Jesus took the time to test and discern her heart. He judged her as a woman of great faith and answered her request.

How many of Jesus' disciples today still have the mindset to send desperate women away? How many are responsible for making Jesus' women desperate victims because of unbiblical and biased teachings?

These women to whom Jesus related, were not "sharply scolded, bullied and terrified" by Jesus. They were not "beat soundly with a stick to punish and damage their body" so that "it will rebound to His merit, and her good", as Friar Cherubino of Siena wrote in his Rules of Marriage document,⁷² and as some men believe today.

As these cases above depict, Jesus demonstrated His love towards women by keeping them safe, saving them from their abusers, and at times, from themselves. He showed them respect and He honored them. Jesus symbolically feminized His Church by calling it His Bride, and He gave His life for *Her -His Church*. (See *Ephesians 5:25*) There are many of Jesus

disciples (Believers) today who subscribe to Jesus' philosophy of respecting and honoring woman and who follow His example (according to research, mainly regular church attending conservative evangelical husbands)⁷³. Jesus respected, loved, and esteemed women; the Church ought to develop the same mindset.

The Church's prayer should be, "Create in us a new heart Oh God and renew a right Jesus-like spirit within us. Renew our thinking and transform our minds to the mind of Jesus so we can see our wives, our sisters, and our daughters through the eyes of Jesus." (Inspired by Psalm 51:10; I Corinthians 2:16; Romans 12:2)

CHAPTER 3

Keeping Domestic Violence and Abuse in the Dark

Traditionally, the church has not given domestic violence and abuse among its own members the attention it deserves, mainly because this type of nasty is not conducive to the Christian image and no one wants to shed light on a taboo. This avoidance has taken on several forms which include: denial that domestic violence or abuse occurs in a local church, dismissal or minimization of any complaints or cries for help made by the Christian woman, telling the victim to go back and be submissive to the abusive husband, trivializing the abuse, blaming the victim, siding with the abuser or just saying “We’ll *pray* for you.” It is not sufficient to placate the victim with cordialities, the Church must do the works required to bring salvation to the one in need because the Scripture says that faith without works is dead just like the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26).

The following is a report from a study that, in part, presented various responses to domestic violence and abuse by clergy members. Here is a testimony from one well-meaning pastor that I call “classic”, because it so typifies many well-meaning churches. Also, it reflects a secular and a religious response by the church, rather than the Biblical response. I will present the testimony in the same manner as it was presented by the researcher Dorothy Ann Valin (2006).⁷⁴

In the study, one particular pastor tells of his experience with abuse in his church; this particular example has to do with the sexual abuse of two daughters. In the report, “Doug” (not his real name) tells the story: “I never worked with anyone experiencing domestic abuse or abuse of any kind at this church . . . well, I did get a letter from a person who said, ‘I can’t tell you who I am but there are people in this congregation who are being abused.’ . . . that was pretty frustrating and we couldn’t find out who it was . . .”⁷⁵

When the researcher Dorothy Ann Valin, (2006) asked him what he did about this, such as making a public prayer for the person or preach a sermon on it; his response was, “I didn’t do anything . . . no one ever came to me and said they were abusing anyone either . . . oh well, once a person did say he had sexually abused his two daughters . . . and he wanted to confess it to the men’s group. We talked it over *and he did confess it and he got a warm reception.*”⁷⁶ (*Emphasis mine*)

The researcher said that she thought an abuser who told his men’s group about his abuse was a really positive development, until she found out from the other pastor that the confessor never really *said* he had sexually abused his two daughters. The associate pastor said about this man: “He asked if it was OK (to tell the details of the sexual abuse of his daughters to the men’s group) or should he sanitize it? . . . so we told him to sanitize it and he said something like, “I hurt my girls,” rather than naming it as sexual abuse. The men were very supportive, but I don’t know what would have happened if he had named it sexual abuse... I believe he is forgiven by God, and that in the atonement some kind of *cosmic exchange* took place, and the definitive thing is that God and good will win, and evil will lose. . . . that’s the good news”⁷⁷.

In this “classic” scenario, this church essentially muted the topic of abuse even when the abuse situation was “handed to

them” and the abuser himself “surrendered” to them. The pastors of the church had created a climate where the name of this type of abuse was not even named publicly. This cultivates an environment for the abuse of Christian women (and children) to flourish. I’m sure if this “Christian” man had “opened up” to the local child welfare department the reception he’d receive would be far different.

The men’s group could not really support this abuser nor keep him accountable, because what he did had not been named. The irony is that the abuser was ready to name the sexual abuse, and the pastors of this congregation stopped him.

Alarmingly, in a separate incident within the *same church*, it was discovered that a youth-ministry leader was accused by teenage boys of inappropriate behavior. After speaking with the ministry leader, the church decided he used ‘bad judgment’ while staying clear of naming any immoral, or sinful act (as they had done previously). A year later, the youth ministry leader who had since moved to another state, was convicted and imprisoned for the sexual assault and rape of two other teenage boys. The pastors had shown partiality and favoritism; they did not believe that one of their highly regarded members in leadership could do such a thing. Once again, an abuse incident within the church was not given the attention it deserved.

It is unfortunate that because of this unbiblical “hush-policy” (and no background check), those boys who first reported inappropriate behavior were not able to “flee the wolf”; and those boys who were victimized in the other church, were “eaten by the wolf”. The church leaders were not good shepherds. They did not cry wolf! In fact, the researcher reports that both pastors persist in saying abuse doesn’t happen in their church, despite past abuse experiences, receiving letters and reports saying that abuse occurred, hearing an abuser confess to them, and “counseling” survivors on a regular basis.⁷⁸

This is a striking example of repeated denial and avoidance. In addition, the pastor's behavior demonstrated that he was more concerned about the abuser's forgiveness (there is no given indication that he even *asked* for it), than about the damage he incurred upon his daughters and wife. He said nothing about keeping the abuser accountable. He says nothing about restorative justice, or what real forgiveness might be. The whole approach is justified by the term "cosmic exchange"⁷⁹ which implies some universality of forgiveness by powers unspecified. In one clean sweep, with the broom of the group's "warm reception", the abuser had been absolved of his abusive behavior, and he did not have to account for his abuse. Under such benevolent treatment, all criminals would be absolved without accountability; thank God that the world has a penal system. This abuser, of which no one knows the extent of his abuse, (was it rape or fondling?) received grace, but what do the victims receive? Did anyone even ask that question? This church's, as well as others, contextual theology is mostly concerned with helping men get quick forgiveness for abuse of their power. That way the abuse stays in the dark and no one has to deal with it. Is that what Jesus is about?

What would Jesus do in the case of that man who confessed that he "hurt his daughters"? Would Jesus stop the man from naming what he did? Would Jesus gloss over his sins and not require real repentance? Would Jesus have trivialized sexual abuse? Would Jesus have ignored the wounded children and the devastated mother? Would Jesus only isolate the sin of this abuse as if it came out of nowhere? Would Jesus not require repentance for the many sins which led up this abuse (moral compromise, pornography, sexual lust, fornication, etc.) and brought this man to the debased place of sexually molesting/abusing the children? In order to answer these and other questions, let's look at some examples from the Scripture which illustrate what Jesus would do.

WWJD: Jesus would take sin seriously.

“And whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged around his neck and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea.” Matt 18:6 KJV

“Yet you say, “For what reason?” (Did the Lord not accept our offering) because the LORD has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant. And did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.” (Note in parenthesis mine) Malachi 2: 14-15 **NKJV™**

“You cry out, “Why has the LORD abandoned us?” I’ll tell you why! Because the LORD witnessed the vows you and you wife made to each other on your wedding day when you were young. But you have been disloyal to her, though she remained your faithful companion, the wife of your marriage vows. Didn’t the LORD make you one with your wife in body and spirit? And why one? In body and spirit you are his. And what does he want? Godly children from your union. So guard yourself; remain loyal to the wife of your youth”. Malachi 2:14-15 **NLT**

Case A. Matthew 23 gives the account of a Jesus who does not fit the “gentle and mild” profile that many Christians tend to assign to Him. Jesus was very serious when He chastised the religious abusers who were preying on those who were weaker than them, and who took advantage of those who were under their authority. Jesus held them accountable.⁸⁰ If Jesus held the Pharisees accountable, will Jesus not hold such a one, as the child molester in the above testimony, accountable for his heinous actions?

Case B. Jesus also takes seriously any sinful action that is perpetrated against His “little ones”. In Matt. 18:1-7, Jesus called a little child to Himself and said that except one be converted and become as little children, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven (Vs.3). He continues by saying “And whoso shall

receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*" Vs.6 KJV (Emphasis mine) "Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Vs. 17 KJV

Jesus is so serious about this that He said "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offends thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." (Vs.8). Jesus, *still* speaking within the context of "these little ones", continued, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven..." (Vs.10). He goes on to describe how one would go after a prized sheep that was lost until he finds it, and he comparatively said, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (Vs.14). We can tell from such statements that Jesus does not appease, compromise, or cajole, when it comes to abuse against children. If Jesus' statement is taken literally, that father is in serious danger. It may not be an understatement to tell that father that it would be better for him to cut his penis off than to use it against one of Jesus' little ones. The Church leaders did not demonstrate true love by warning him that Jesus has a no-tolerance stance on abuse of His "little ones".

Also, having a better understanding of the word "little" as used in this context, helps to add a greater perspective to Jesus' meaning. According to Strong's Concordance, little or Mikros (Gk) is a word designated to cover *all* things related to little. This

includes: size (stature, length), space, age (younger in age), time (short or brief), quantity (number or amount) and being less in rank or influence.⁸¹ It's a word used in many other places in scripture⁸² and it also includes "weaker vessel", which is a term the Bible uses to describe women.⁸³ Therefore, Jesus' protective stance of all His "little ones" includes women and others less empowered. In the example above, as well as others, pastors and church leaders should, at the very least, do the loving thing and warn abusers of that what Jesus said will happen to them?

WWJD: Jesus would speak out publicly and identify the abusers in a public forum.⁸⁴

"Then in the audience of all the people He said unto his disciples, Beware of the Scribes...." Luke 20:45 KJV

"In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people...He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be made known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetopsand I say unto my friends...I will forewarn you..." Luke 12: 1-5KJV

In many abuse cases, as in the case above, pastors and congregation members are likely to choose not to become involved by keeping the abuse "under wraps". There are studies which have direct testimonials from pastors and congregation members that indicate this type of avoidance strategy.⁸⁵ They may implement a "don't tell" policy, or they may advise the victim

in a way which further burdens and pressures her to keep her abuse “in the closet”, while leaving the abuser to continue in his sin. However, it is never biblical or Christ-like to ignore or hide sin in the Church, or give the one who persists in his (or her) sins, preferential treatment. To do this, is to let sin have its corrosive and cancerous effects within the Body of Christ.

Jesus showed no partiality. Jesus exposed sin and He called out the ones who persisted in their sins. He specifically exposed the religious abusers of His day - the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and others. Throughout the Gospels, we see many occasions where Jesus spoke out publicly against them. Speaking out publicly allowed the hearers to be warned. Speaking out publicly also identified and separated false religious doctrine from truth. Speaking out publicly exposed the sins of abuse among the religious leaders, and helped to unburden the people from religious expectations, which were not God ordained but man imposed (Matt.21:13; Matt.23). Jesus named names; He called out sin and identified those who practiced sin.

Case A. Jesus, speaking out publicly, separated the religious hypocrites from the true Believers. He identified and named God’s true believers like Moses, the Prophets,⁸⁶ and John the Baptist.⁸⁷ Then, He contrasted them with the sons of Satan (the Pharisees, other religious leaders),⁸⁸ and those cities who rejected Him.⁸⁹ He called out the offenders and brought to light hidden sins - which were sins directly against the sheep within the fold.

Case B. Luke 20:45-47 records an occasion where Jesus addressed the religious leaders because they were victimizing widows. According to the scriptural records, Jesus made a *public cry* against this type of abuse. In the “hearing of all the people, He said to his disciples (The Church) ‘Beware of the scribes...who are righteous appearing, but “*who devour*

homes...” (Vs.47 KJV). From this example, we note that Jesus addressed the abuse of widows *in an open forum* for “all the people” to hear. Even though He was addressing his disciples, He did not call a “private staff meeting”; He could have (which He did at times), but He didn’t. Also note Jesus’ concern for the home above the religious expectation of the Church. His concern is that those religious expectations not cause unnecessary burdens in the home. In fact, He says that such burdens *devour* homes! (Luke 20:47 KJV)

The Church ought to make a public cry by saying something from the pulpit. They ought to speak out and tell the congregation that a child abuser/molester or a wife-beater/wife abuser/rapist is in their midst. They ought to tell the sheep to “BEWARE!” because there is a wolf among the sheep.⁹⁰ It is the job of the Church leaders to be good shepherds. They are to lay their lives down for the sheep, just as Jesus said and just as Jesus modeled (Jh.10:1-18), despite personal or congregational constraints.

Case C. When it came to imparting the knowledge of the Kingdom of God, Jesus may have spoken in parables at times (Matt.13:10-13), but in regard to crying out against the consistent and habitual sins of the religious offenders, He was very clear. He told the Pharisees directly that they are the ones who were responsible for making His House (the Temple) a den of thieves (Matt.21:13; 21:45). Publicly, He “spoke to the multitude and to His disciples” and told them, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.” (Matt: 23:1-3 NKJV).

Jesus was concerned about souls and about the Kingdom of God, not about hurting feelings, losing membership, or respecting privacy. Respecting one’s privacy in regard to the sins which constitute abuse is akin to respecting the skeletons in

the closet or respecting the ghosts in the attic. In the Church, no skeletons that affect the entire body or community, or cost someone their identity, their autonomy, or their life, should be kept in the dark.

In Luke 12:3, Jesus, in the context of speaking out against the religious abusers of His day, said “For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.” NKJV

Taking the public platform, which, for today’s clergy, includes the pulpit, the streets, or the media, was Jesus’ general practice. I can imagine Jesus’ voice resounding across the audience as He warned synagogue members, and other community members among them, to beware of offending abusers (See Matt 23: 1-3).

Case D The Church should seriously consider whether Jesus had ever patronized sin with privacy, tolerance, concern over causing offense, or self preservation. This is the mindset that Jesus never endorsed or embraced. The scripture even tells us that the Pharisees “took offense at him” (Mk. 6:3) and they also told Him that He was insulting (Luke 11:45). But, despite this blow to His “ego” or “ministry”, He did not succumb to any pressure to stop doing the will of God by openly speaking out, and identifying habitual sinners.

In today’s world, criminals sometimes have more rights than the victims. Sometimes the assailant gets to have his face covered while the media have a field day exposing the victim of the crime and the victim’s family on national TV. The Church is not the world; sin doesn’t have any rights, and persons who

habitually engage in sinful behaviors like abuse and crimes of domestic violence against God's people, should be "outed".

Following the behavior that Jesus demonstrated, the Church should name the abuser and shine the light on his sins, so he will not be encouraged to use the church as a hiding place anymore.⁹¹ I dare say if the Church were following Jesus' example, the Church would not one of the choice places for abusers to hide, and clergy would not be one of the top three professions which abusers choose-the law enforcement system and the military being the other two.⁹² Following Jesus' example would discourage them and keep sin under restraint. It is unscriptural for the Church of Jesus Christ to heed to "political correctness", "personal rights", "privacy ethics", and "confidentiality policies", in regard to wickedness and sin (Colossians 2:8). By doing so, the Church is partnering with evil (Eph.5:7, 11; Phil.3:17-19) and going against God.

WWJD: Jesus would sanction distance between Himself and an abuser who persists in sin.⁹³

"Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them* which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and *avoid them*. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple. Romans 16:17-18 KJV (Emphasis mine)

"Then Jesus said unto them...walk while ye have the light, lest the darkness come upon you. For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light that ye may be children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hid himself from them. John 12:35-36 KJV

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicator....if man that is called a brother be a fornicator...with such a one no not to eat.” I Cor.5:9-11 KJV

Case A. Jesus did what the Church is encouraged to do by the apostle Paul, “Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them* which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and *avoid them*. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple.” Romans 16:17-18 NKJV (Emphasis mine) Jesus “marked them” and He was not fooled by the Pharisees’ “good words and fair speeches”, or the “vain words” spoken to deceive (Eph.5:6).

Outside of Nicodemus, who initiated a relationship with Jesus by coming to see him *at night*, there is no biblical record where Jesus fellowshiped with any of the Pharisees. In general, Jesus avoided their personal companionship; “What fellowship has darkness with light?” (2 Corinthians 6:14) These people were not a part of His fellowship. Jesus exemplified the words of the apostle Paul in that He “had no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather [He] reproveth them.” (Eph.4:11)

Case B. John MacArthur, in reference to these religious deceivers mentioned in Ephesians 5:6,⁹⁴ makes this comment, “No Christian, will be sinless in this present life, but *it is dangerously deceptive for Christians to offer assurance of salvation to a professing believer whose life is characterized by persistent sin and who shows no shame for that sin or hunger for the holy and pure things of God*. They are headed for wrath (Eph.2:2) and *believers must not partner in any of their wickedness.*”⁹⁵ Eph.5:7 (Emphasis mine)

Also, Phil.3:17-19 echoes these same sentiments which Jesus exemplified and which the Church should also heed. “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping,[that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end [is] destruction, whose god [is their]belly, and [whose] glory [is] their shame...who set their minds on earthly things.” Phil. 3:17-19 NKJV™

Case C. If Jesus were a pastor today and His followers were the local church, members who were abusers (and other evildoers who want to affiliate themselves with the Church) would not be made to feel comfortable in maintaining fellowship with Him. In John 6:66, we see that many followers left His company /ministry, when He offended them by preaching the sermon about eating His flesh and drinking His blood; this teaching was too hard for them to take.⁹⁶ Today, many church members, who persistently practice sin, would leave ministries/churches if the radical teachings and practices of Jesus were realized today.

Case D. Sexual abuse of a wife, which is the crime of rape, and incest (like that previously mentioned sexual abuse case), can be compared to another case of incest (consensual) that the Apostle Paul encountered in the Corinthian Church. Let’s look at how the Apostle Paul responded in that case. *We are assured that this is the same response Jesus would have directed at the Church because, it is He (via the Holy Spirit), who directed Paul to give this counsel (2 Tim.3:16).* Paul’s response to this sexual immorality case is recorded in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. He says, “*I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you, something so evil that even pagans don’t do it. I am told that you have a man in your church who is living in sin with his father’s wife (stepmother). And you are so proud of yourselves! Why aren’t you mourning in sorrow and shame? And*

why haven't you removed this man from your fellowship? ” Vs: 1-2 NLT (Emphasis mine)

Look at the attitude of which the Apostle Paul (and Jesus) says the Church ought to have had over this sin; one should be mourning in shame and sorrow. He continues, “Even though I am not with you in person; I am with you in the Spirit. And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man in the name of the Lord Jesus. *You must call a meeting of the church.* I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved when the Lord returns” Vs: 3-5 NLT (Emphasis mine) The King James Version more accurately reads “for the destruction of the flesh” rather than “so that his sinful nature will be destroyed.” Only Jesus can destroy our sinful nature.

Talk about explicit instructions from the church’s “How To” manual! The Church should: call a meeting of the church members (notice Paul didn’t say the meeting is a private meeting for church leaders or board members only) *and* throw this man out with the loving action of “deliver[ing] such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh⁹⁷ that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” KJV.

Galatians 6:1 brings a balance to these instructions: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently, but watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” Too often the church jumps ahead of God’s instructions and seek to restore without distinction of whether the abuser is one who has simply fallen in sin or one who lives a life entrenched in a sinful habit. Keep in mind that the context in which Galatians 6:1 was written is a follow up to a warning that those who live according to the acts of their sinful nature will not inherit the kingdom of God.⁹⁸

The Apostle Paul continues to address this consensual incest case in the Corinthian Church: “Your boasting about this is terrible. Don’t you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? *Get rid of the old “yeast” by removing this wicked person from among you...I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin.. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who **claims** to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, **or is abusive** or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don’t even eat with such people.* It isn’t my responsibility to judge outsiders, but *it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning.* God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, “*You must remove the evil person from among you.*” 1 Cor.5:1-13 NLT (Emphasis mine)

If this judgment is so harsh for two consenting adults, how much more severe will it be for an adult who violates a child, or for a man to rape or perpetrated other acts of violence or abuse against a woman, especially a woman who is his wife with whom he is one flesh.⁹⁹ No wonder Jesus said in Matthew 18:6 that it is better for such a one that a millstone is hanged around the neck and that he is tossed in the sea rather than offending one of His *little ones.*

Please note that the Apostle Paul gives this instruction of I Corinthians 5:1-13 “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” and “with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ” (vs. 4). Is this not Jesus’ example and instructions to His church? Of course it is. Let the church do what Jesus would do, and not lie down with those who call themselves brethren but live like sons of Satan. Jesus would sanction distance between Himself and the abuser who persists in sin; the Church should do the same.

Case E. What about the husband who “indulges in sexual sin” (I Cor. 5:11) by fattening his lust on internet porn then forcing his

wife into sexual acts against her will (Rape)? What is the responsibility of the Church if and when the wife reports this sexual abuse and the Church becomes aware of this fornication/uncleanness? What biblical premise would dictate the Church's response?

First of all, it is helpful to understand that in various places where the word fornication is used it is translated from the Greek word *Porneia*¹⁰⁰ from which porn or pornography is derived; it means all manner of illicit sexual intercourse and sexual uncleanness. The portions of Scripture which warn against this type of sin being a part of the Christian's lifestyle include: Matt 5:32, 15:19, 19:9; John 8:41; Acts, 15:20, 21:25; Romans 1:29; I Cor. 5:1, 6:13, 7:2; and 2 Cor.12:21. I Corinthians 7:2 say that having a wife is a *solution* to avoiding this type of sin. It is best to work on that which God has sanctioned than commit adultery and *porneia* via the internet. A husband who forces sex upon his wife compounds his sin with violence by using the sword of his lust to cut apart her body and her soul.

In our society, the idea that a husband cannot be guilty of rape, since he is "one" with his wife, has in part originated from Church doctrine.¹⁰¹ To add insult to injury, this idea was also sanctioned by the law. Up until recent years (the 1980s) spousal rape was not considered a crime and juries in rape cases had to legally be read a statement made by 17th Century British Jurist Matthew Hale whose opinion was that "the husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract, the wife hath given herself in kind unto the husband which she cannot retract."¹⁰² Lord Hale had two wives and ten children...umm.

Rape of this type, for the most part, is seldom reported by a wife, partly because of shame and partly because she is a victim of this lie that even forced sex, is a husband's right. The

Scripture, however, is clear that a person who professes to be a Christian and do such things should be branded an outcast by the Church and Believers are not even to eat with him.

Also, the concept “Christian abuser” is an oxymoron because both terms are contradicting, and one who fits this description is an *imposter*. The judgment that is outlined above in I Corinthians 5:1-13, is for those who claim to be Christians, but they do not walk the walk of Christ. These are hypocrites.¹⁰³ The Church has a responsibility to do as Jesus would do and as the Apostle Paul states: “It isn’t my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, ‘You must remove the evil person from among you.’” I Cor.5:3-5, 9-13 NLT

In a society where the Church community is too civil to do the radical yet biblical thing, we *must* see that it is *love* that compels this action outlined in I Corinthians 5 - the removal of the evil person from among the body of Christ for “the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.” (I Cor. 5:5) Jesus exemplified ‘tough love’ before the term was ever popular. This is *true* love. Let us follow Jesus’ example.

Case F. Another thing I’d like to take note of in this section of scripture (1Cor.5:1-13), is that the Apostle Paul started out by addressing sexual immorality, but he also addressed the verbal-abuser and puts him in the same category as the sexually immoral person. Both have the same consequence. Verse 11 states, “I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer *yet* indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is *abusive* or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don’t even eat with such people.” NLT (Emphasis mine)

To better understand the word 'abusive' as used in 1 Cor. 5:11, let's look at the word's origin. The words *abusive* (NLT) or "slanderer" (NIV)] or "railer" (KJV) is translated from the Greek word '*loidoros*' (Strong's 3060).¹⁰⁴ It means slanderer, *verbal - abuser*, railer, and reviler. It is closely related to "*loidoria*" (Strong's 3059)¹⁰⁵ which means to speak reproachfully, insult, verbal abuse, and railing. Another derivative, '*loidoreo*' (Strong's 3058),¹⁰⁶ refers to the action of insulting and cursing. In light of these definitions, there is no mistaking that verbal abuse is not to be a part of the Christian's life or tolerated by the Church, just as much as other immoralities.

From these various cases within the Scripture and from Jesus own life, and instructions in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ via the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul, we see that the Church must draw a clear line of demarcation between brethren whose lives exemplify Christ and those whose mouth professes Christ but whose behavior and habits are marred with uncleanness in fornication (*porneia*), verbal abuse (*loidoros*), and other immoralities, which identify them as abusers. Jesus sanctions distance between Himself and the abusive immoral person, and so should the Church.

CHAPTER 4

The High Price of Non-involvement: The Cost of Saving a Soul

Some of the reasons why the Church shies away from involvement in domestic violence and abuse issues towards Christian women have already been shared. However, there is another reason, which is the skeleton over which most other reasons lies; it is that being involved carries a price tag that can be very costly to the Church (leaders, counselors, and laity). Some of the costs to a church for becoming involved in a domestic violence or abuse issue include: its sterling reputation being tarnished by “trouble in the house”, division in the church should friends of either party take sides, tithes and offerings lessening should members leave, gossip, time, energy, and emotional stress.

It does take time and energy to speak with the victim, to help her overcome the emotional and spiritual marring, to give support, and to set up an escape plan if needed. It takes time to walk her through making wise, safe, and godly decisions about her life, gathering helpful resources if not already in place, praying and helping in other practical ways. It also takes time to walk with the abuser through a process of active repentance and one in which he makes restitution to the victim(s) *if* he were to choose that path. Benevolent actions such as these can be costly, but they are not as costly as the price the Church will pay if it does *not* answer the cry of the needy victim in its midst.

It's a cost that is dearer than any natural cost, and if unpaid, it's a debt which has spiritual repercussions. It is the price of having a victim's blood on the Church's hands. The Church can be "blood" guilty if it acts outside of Jesus' example and directive. I'd like to present an imaginary scenario which may lend itself to a better understanding of what I mean about the price of having the victim's blood on the Church's hands.

Let's pretend that you and I are hospital administrators, and we became aware that one of our hospital's surgeons is a drunk. We also discovered that he has been injuring the patients he's worked with for many years. Let's also pretend that he is a family member [incentive not to fire him right away (as I Cor.5:2 encourages)], and that we don't want to risk this getting out to the press and initiating a plague of lawsuits. Now with this dilemma, we have some very important questions to consider in making the right decision.

If this doctor's sin of drunkenness is detrimentally impeding his skills as a surgeon, would we help him by encouraging him to work on improving his skills *rather than addressing his lust for alcohol*? Of course not! If we were to do that, the lives of the patients he works on would be more at risk, because as long as his drinking problem exists, he is dangerous. From this example, it's easy to see that the surgeon's problem is not his *skills*. *It's drunkenness!* It's a *sin* problem.¹⁰⁷ Yet, many *churches* do not show the same regard for the life of abused Christian women, or concern for the abuser as our fictitious hospital administrators have towards the surgeon and their patients. Many church leaders, rather than addressing the husband's sin (like anger, pride, drug abuse, etc.) that leads to his abuse, treat that domestic violence and abuse situation like it's a *marriage* issue (which it is not). They regard the abuse situation as if it is the marriage skills which need to be

sharpened, rather than what the problem really is – sin in the abuser’s life.

Let’s take our imaginary hospital administrative scenario a little further. Let’s say we were to meet with that same doctor on three or four occasions for counseling regarding his drinking problem. At each of our meetings, he appears clean and sober. He impresses us with his knowledge about rehabilitation and accountability measures. He tells us that he is extremely sorry and ashamed of his past behavior. After such sterling exchanges, would we then reinstate him into his practice as a surgeon? No, we would not! We would not because we know, barring the supernatural, those years of alcohol- dependent habits and the emotional issues that drove him to drink, are not overcome in weeks (or in one meeting). We’d require more accountability, along with specific rehabilitative measures, to indicate that he is taking care to put off his sinful choices and to put on sober mindedness and self control. In addition, we would require a length of time sufficient for us to be confident that, if he were to take up that surgeon’s knife again, the patient on the table would be 100% safe.

Yet, often times Church leaders may call in the husband to hear his side (Something they should never do), and counsel him for a couple sessions in which he uses his years of master manipulative skills to impress and to ‘buddy-up’ to the church leaders. Being ignorant of the abuser’s extreme mastery of the skills of deception, the church leader becomes convinced of his transformation, tells the wife how much he has changed, and requires *her* to reconcile (after she had “outed” him and is making plans to leave or has already left).¹⁰⁸ However, just like a patient under the knife of the drunkard surgeon, she may be dead or maimed for life if she returns or if she stays with him. In fact, thirty percent (30%) of women murdered in America are killed by their husbands or boyfriend,¹⁰⁹ and of those, 75% of

domestic violence homicides occur *during or after the victim has left the abuser*.¹¹⁰ Hospital administrators would not put the patient back under the drunk's knife after a couple of impressive meetings. It is likewise immoral to put the Christian sister back under the knife (proverbial or real) of her abusive husband.

Let's take our imaginary journey a little farther. If that surgeon does not actively repent by doing what it takes to become rehabilitated, even with all the assistance we give him, would we encourage him to *continue* his practice in *our* hospital? Of course not! We would fire him. We would not even give him a referral to another hospital. Rather, we would call ahead and warn other administrators *not* to hire him. We care about him, and we also value the lives of those prospective patients he would work on. What about those patients whom he has already hurt? Whose mother or sister was damaged because he was drunk when he did their surgery? Would it be right that restitution be denied them?

If we as hospital administrators were to subject future patients to the knife of this surgeon (whom we know is still subject to drunkenness), and that patient dies, then that patient's blood would be on our hands. Would you not agree? Likewise, if Church leaders subject a wife under the knife (proverbial or literally) of her abuser, there would be blood on the Church's hands.¹¹¹ The Church would have blood guiltiness.¹¹² And if per chance, the abused wife (who understands the real danger that she's in), refuses to obey the church leaders' advice to return or stay with her abuser, then she may be ostracized. The Church may view her action as rebellious, while Mr. Abuser, who has portrayed himself so convincingly at meetings with the Church leaders, is embraced as the "victim".

By acting responsibly we as hospital administrators, demonstrate that we are wise professionals. We show that we

are humane, moral, and we have demonstrated unselfish love - to both the surgeon and to the patients. We shudder to think what would happen if, as hospital administrators, because of fear to offend, or fear of the hospital losing money, we did not act responsibly. The church must also shudder at the possible cost of leaving the victim in the lion's den all because she is *married* to the lion. The Church has to consider the practical, the spiritual and the eternal cost of not acting wisely and righteously in regard to the Christian woman who is a victim of domestic violence and abuse! It is helpful to see, from Jesus' example, how He responded to abuse situations in which He had to pay a price for behaving righteously before God and man.

WWJD: Jesus would be bold and stand up for righteousness despite the risk.¹¹³

“Now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned but what sayest thou? This they said tempting Him that they might accuse him... But Jesus stooped down and with [his] finger wrote on the ground, [as though he heard them not]... He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her...”
John 8:5-7 KJV

“...Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.” John 8:59 KJV

Case A. In John 8 we see that Jesus was not afraid of what righteousness would cost Him when He was faced with an angry religious mob that was armed with stones. He did not shy away from facing trials because He was accountable to God the Father. In Jesus' case, He was usually “taking his life in His hands” when He corrected the abusers of His day. He exemplified this in the case of the woman caught in adultery. There were a lot of life threatening factors present in that incident

but Jesus did the right thing. He was out manned, and out muscled. The men were already armed with weapons in hand (stones), plus He was the real victim of the ruse anyway (John 8:6). Yet, despite these factors, Jesus acted in wisdom and in righteousness. He counted the cost and acted with an *eternal* perspective in mind. By doing so, He *saved* this woman's life.

Case B. There are multiple instances where Jesus chose to do the will of God and do His work even when it cost Him, even though it appeared to others that He was either breaking God's law or the tradition of the religious establishment. We see such instances in Matthew 12, Mark 3, Matthew 21, and Mark 11, where Jesus taught radical doctrines, healed on the Sabbath, seemingly breaking Sabbath rules by having a man carry his bed, and eating without washing His hands. On one occasion, He brazenly "went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, overthrew the table of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves and would not suffer that any man should carry [any] vessel through the temple."¹⁴ In each of these instances, Jesus went against the norm of the religious establishment; He boldly stood up for righteousness - paying a price despite the risk!

He was plotted against, His siblings didn't understand Him, many followers left Him, and so on, but Jesus was not out to win a popularity contest; He was accountable to God for His actions, just like the Church is today. Jesus chose to do the right thing, and so should His Church. Regardless of the cost in the natural; the spiritual consequence or price which the Church will have to pay for not doing God's will, may be too high.

CHAPTER 5

Becoming More Knowledgeable about the Issues

To some extent there is a wide-ranging consensus that the Church should only stick to matters of the soul (the term soul conventionally used to refer to spiritual matters). Other societal concerns such as domestic violence and abuse, addictions, emotional problems, mental dis-eases,¹¹⁵ politics, legal and/or judicial concerns, economic conditions, and so forth, should be left into the capable hands of “specialists” and “experts” because there are other institutions in society that specialize in meeting such non-spiritual needs. (Some of these institutions include social welfare departments, shelters, charitable organizations, and mental health care facilities and private psychiatric practices). Subsequently, the Church has given up taking care of those members who have needs that are not directly spiritual. The Church is likely to refer church members to “experts” and “specialists” already established by the world, for the world and of the world. Nowadays, most church leaders do not even believe that *they* are qualified to care for Christians who are encountering negative life issues like domestic violence and abuse. It is this type of modern-day thinking that is partly the reason why churches today do not see themselves as qualified to deal with many of the types of social issues which they encounter among Christians.

My conjecture is that this could be one reason why a study in a rural community identified the lack of trained clergy on issues related to domestic violence, as a barrier to some churches being a supportive environment (Wolff et al. 2001).¹¹⁶

In my opinion, lack of knowledge (or training) about relevantly modern social issues is a poor excuse, when virtually any piece of information is available on the internet nowadays. Search engines can spit out valuable information regarding domestic violence and abuse (or other topics) in any population. After all, we live “in the time of the end... [when] knowledge shall increase.”¹¹⁷ There is simply no excuse for ignorance and lack of knowledge when information such as the mind-boggling statistic presented earlier (See Chapter 1) can be ascertained simply by going on line.

One of the things that being aware of such statistics can do is quicken the conscience and provoke an individual (such as a church leader or lay church member) to restrain hastiness in dismissing a victim who comes to them for help. Knowledge can make one more empathetic and more caring. Also, it's hard to justify turning a victim of domestic violence and abuse away when one has knowledge of the possible detrimental impact of such an action.¹¹⁸

The Church does not have to be ignorant about the problem of domestic violence and abuse or other problems which Christians encounter. There are also other resources available on the topic of domestic violence and abuse in the Church, in addition to the internet. One resource which is readily available to the Church is the Bible. The Bible gives definite instructions on specific ways to address sin among Christians, whether these sins manifest in the workplace, or in the home, in private or in public, in addictive behavior patterns or in violent and other ungodly behaviors. Studying how Jesus handled abuse is one key way of casting off the chains of ignorance. The Church can then become armed with knowledge, and boldly addresses any “non-spiritual” societal issues among its own in an effective and successful way.

If Jesus were physically in the Church today He would not be ignorant of the issues concerning His sheep nor would He leave such matters to “specialists” in the world. He would have specific knowledge about His Father’s will on how to respond to the problems He would encounter nowadays. Let’s look at some biblical evidence of which can help support this point.

WWJD: Jesus would embrace learning and becoming educated, via the Scripture, on how God wants Him to respond to social issues.

“And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” Luke 2:40 NKJV

Case A. Some Christians mistakenly think that just because Jesus is God incarnate, as a human, He was automatically knowledgeable of all things at birth. According to the Scripture, that was not so. Jesus, being fully human was subject to doing the work of acquiring knowledge by *working* for it, both naturally (by receiving a Bible-based education),¹¹⁹ and spiritually (by habitually choosing to commune with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit via prayer). Luke 2:40 tells us that Jesus “grew” [*auxanō* (Gk)] and “became” [*ikrataioō* (Gk)] strong in spirit. The terms *growing* and *becoming* denotes increasing in stages or increments over time. It was a process; it wasn’t automatic.

Luke 2:40 says Jesus grew in *spirit*. What does it mean to grow in spirit? According to Strong’s G4151, the word *spirit* [*pneuma* (Gk)] has five different meanings. As it is use in this verse (Luke 2:40), one likely meaning of ‘spirit’ is the “vital principle by which the body is animated [mainly] the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides

[properties of *the mind*]"¹²⁰ (Brackets mine). We can ascertain from Luke 2:40 that Jesus' formative years were applied in a manner which equipped him to become or *to grow into a learned and mentally sound person*.

Case B. Jesus grew up in a family which was strongly knowledgeable about God and they were faithful in the religious practices of the Jewish culture as Luke 2: 21-39 indicates. It is assumed by some that Jesus was not formally educated; rather, He was a just working class carpenter.¹²¹ However, the degree of Jesus' knowledge was astonishing to many according to Mark 6:2-3 and Luke 2:47. This is a strong indication that Jesus did not spend his formative years enslaved in the workshop but rather in the Scripture.¹²²

Case C. In the account of Jesus in the temple at age 12, we find Jesus' passion for knowledge, and *evidence of his early years of education* being displayed in his intercourse with the rabbinical teachers where he was "both *listening to them* and *asking* them questions" (Luke 2:46 NKJV). This manner of "both listening to them and asking them questions" is a Jewish style of learning. It's a way of both *obtaining* knowledge and also of *imparting* knowledge.

Case D. Jesus' acquired-knowledge made Him a masterful teacher. He was referred to as "Rabbi" (master or teacher).¹²³ The most learned religious teachers could not succeed in their efforts to intellectually trap or ensnare Him;¹²⁴ they were astounded by His knowledge on one hand¹²⁵ and jealous of Him on the other.¹²⁶ Jesus didn't get that way by choosing to close His mind to knowledge, especially knowledge of the Scripture by which He met the spiritual, as well as, emotional, mental, and physical needs of people.

WWJD. Jesus would embrace learning and education about issues relevant to His followers, if He did not have the knowledge (Luke 2:40).

“But He, *knowing* their hypocrisy, said to them ...”*Mark 12:15*

“...But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground.”
John 8:6

Case A. Jesus was very knowledgeable of his abusers and the sins that constitute abuse and he did not gain that knowledge by osmosis. This knowledge kept Him from becoming ensnared by the manipulative and deceptive tactics of the religious abusers, despite how religiously the trap was dressed up.¹²⁷ For example, in His encounter with the woman caught in adultery, the Bible tells us that there was an ulterior motive in the heart of the abusers. Jesus *knew* that when they asked Him about stoning her, that “they said this tempting Him that they might accuse him.” (John 8:6) Jesus therefore, outsmarted them and didn’t buy into their scheme.

From this example, a church (laity, pastor, counselors, etc.) also must become knowledgeable about the nature and the heart of the abuser.

A church leader (or others) can do this by educating himself on the characteristic and behavior pattern of the abuser, in order to be as knowledgeable about abusers as Jesus was. This is important because, if Jesus was not educated or knowledgeable of the abuser and those sins involved in abuse, He would have been caught in the abuser’s (the Pharisees) snare. A church leader who is not knowledgeable about domestic violence issues will become a victim himself by falling for the masterful manipulative tactics and the elaborative scenarios that the abuser will weave to make his story more

believable. Without knowledge, the church (leaders, counselors, laity) can give counsel which would further endanger the life (emotionally and physically) of the victim.

Case B. In another experience documented in Mark 12:15, the Pharisees and the Herodians collaboratively connived to “catch Him (Jesus) in His words.” They used flattery and mixed factual things with their question about the legality of paying taxes to Caesar so that they might deflect attention away from their true motives. But when they tried to trick Jesus, “to catch Him in His words”, Jesus was not caught off guard, “But He *knowing* their hypocrisy” rightly corrected them to the point that they marveled at Him.

From the outside, a modern day church-going abuser looks just as respectful, normal, and God-fearing as the Pharisees or the Herodians. He has his own unique personality; he may be the pastor, the deacon, the new Christian on the block, or your long-time family friend. Jesus did not look at what was portrayed to Him. Jesus *knew* the heart of the abuser. The Church (leaders, laity, counselors) should follow Jesus’ example and educate itself; and, like Jesus who “perceived what the Pharisees were reasoning in their hearts” (Mark 2:8), the Church, armed with knowledge and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, can also perceive what is in the heart of the abuser.

Case C. We know that Jesus customarily taught in the temple;¹²⁸ and at times, He’d read from the Scripture as He taught.¹²⁹ However, there is no record in Scripture of Jesus writing in a teaching setting; the only record of Jesus writing is found in a very intensely dramatic situation as recorded in John 8:1-11. When accosted by a murderous mob on the verge of stoning a woman, He chose to do a most unusual thing; He wrote! John 8:6 tells us, “But Jesus bent down and started to *write* on the ground” (Emphasis mine). Pretty cool! Pretty calm, and pretty collected as well. He did not throw His pearls before swine and

debate or argue with them. He did *do* something else however; He actually changed His body position-He went from standing to stooping. By so doing, He in essence, ignored her accusers and put His attention unto something else - writing. He occupied Himself with writing while they harangued Him. Many theologians have conjectured what Jesus might have written. There is no biblical record, however, of the *content* of His writing. What *is* recorded is that He wrote! This may appear like a seemingly inconsequential act; however, it does show the obvious - that Jesus was educated; but besides the obvious, we can be confident that Jesus did nothing without a purpose and even that (His writing) had its pertinent effect to do that which He intended.

If any lesson is learned through Jesus' writing is that regardless of how inconsequential an act may seem, exercised in wisdom and knowledge, and done in obedience to the Holy Spirit, it will bring forth life and God will be glorified. Also, it is simply sheer wisdom for Church leaders, counselors, and victims to write down the various interactions they have had with any abuse situation: taking note of dates and times, incidents, accounts, applicable scriptures, follow-ups, and the like. One never knows when records might be needed to validate or verify certain information especially in such a potentially volatile arena as domestic violence and abuse.

A little act of writing is not too trivial to learn from, neither is it trivial to note that Jesus was a learned man; He developed His intellectual prowess, sharpening His mind on the Scripture and knowledge about those around Him to whom He was called to help.

CHAPTER 6

Teaching the “New Man in Christ” the New Rules¹³⁰

Jesus explicitly taught His disciples what is involved in being a leader; He outlined that job description for them. The primary role of leadership according to Jesus is that of being a servant. His criterion is not compatible with the cultural, traditional, secular, or religious definition of what a leader is thought to be. It went against the grain of the religious establishment of Jesus’ day, and it goes against the status quo of the religious establishments of today. It is a teaching that gets stuck, like a bone caught in the throat of the Church, both then and now.

Jesus taught His disciples about true leadership in the most practical ways; He led by example. On the last Passover Seder that Jesus had with His disciples, He “rose from the supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple’s feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.”¹³¹ After He had washed their feet, taken up His garments and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”¹³² Jesus demonstrated one of the most important lessons of true leadership. In fact, Jesus promised that this type of servant-leadership behavior is a key to happiness. In

this context He promises: “If ye know these things, *happy* are ye if ye do them.” (John 13:17 KJV) This one scripture could be a key verse for a sermon entitled: “The *Key* to a Happy Marriage”.

Though the Church teaches this principle, it usually designates this role of servant-leader to Christ alone. When it is taught it is understood to be more of an unattainable ideal, rather than a principle that must be practice. The Church does not demonstrate that it has the expectations that this teaching is to be taken personally by men in leadership roles, particularly the leaders on the home front of married couples - Christian husbands.

One of the reasons why this cataclysmic lapse between teaching and practice exists is because it goes against every grain of what has been historically, culturally, and socially instilled in men regarding what a man’s role as a leader in his family entails. Also, the practice of servant-hood conflicts with our sinful nature as human beings; pride and self preservation rebels against putting others first.

Servant leadership involves self-abasement, self sacrifice, humility, preference of others, and an attitude of servitude. These traits of servant leadership are the exact opposite of how a man is defined in the natural *and* how a leader is socially. These traits do not fit any concept of masculinity within any historical, cultural, or social norm- in any part of the world that I am aware of. It makes sense that it doesn’t- because as is typical of Jesus, it is really a principle and a doctrine that is alien to human beings and is “not of this world”. Jesus admitted to that.¹³³

According to Jesus, one of the roles of the Christian man as the leader in the home and as the head of his wife¹³⁴ is that of being a servant leader. Just as Jesus did, a husband should implement this trait of real love, showing preference of those

under his authority, while demonstrating humility, servitude and self sacrifice (See Mark 10:35-45).

This definition of love¹³⁵ is pretty hard to swallow, and it's one that is not obeyed as a general rule. To the world, and unfortunately to the Church, this requirement of Jesus seems akin to proverbially emasculating or castrating a man. In the Church, Christians are taught to "be not conformed to this world; but be transformed by the renewing of [their] mind, that [they] may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."¹³⁶ The Scripture commands that Christians are to *reprogram* their thinking to acquire a new Christ-like mindset.

The Church encourages Christians to change their behavior and habits to align with God's command in all areas - but this one. As a whole, the Church (men and women) picks up on many other teachings of Jesus, which include His teachings on giving financially, helping the community, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and other humanitarian deeds. However, when it comes to taking on a personal role of meekness as men and as leaders in the home, many men do not understand how that teaching is compatible with their identity as men. On the contrary, they feel that expressing love via this role of subservience belongs to the Christian woman and these traits of servant hood are more acceptable traits for a woman - the wife.

This lack of understanding of this one particular role of the man as a leader in his marriage is one venue that feeds largely into the culture of domestic violence and abuse in the Christian home. Unfortunately, the many, many promises of the characteristics of a happy marriage such as peace, pleasure, protection, increase, joy, rest, and abundance¹³⁷ that comes with walking in God's design for the man, who He's placed as the head of his wife, will never be realized by Christian men as long as they want to be "*da*" man, rather than *God's* man.

One study was done to find out how religious leaders view the relationship between marital equality and domestic violence. The results were, that of the 22 religious leaders (from various religious affiliations) interviewed, 10 believed the prescription of submission was based on a misinterpretation of Scripture that ignored the historical context of biblical times,¹³⁸ and I may add, that *it also ignores the context of which Jesus teaches it.*

In this same study, one of the religious leaders, a Full Gospel Baptist pastor insightfully noted, “Well, it is something you grow up learning, even when you are not in church, you hear people say that women are to be submissive. They [Christian men] remember that Scripture. [In] some kind of way men will pick that one up above everything else.”¹³⁹ This pastor is right; most Christian men don’t pick up on the scriptural command in Ephesians 5:21 that *they* are to be submissive as well, or that for them, the attitude of servitude and humility goes beyond mere submission, according to Ephesians 5:25, it calls for self sacrifice.

If the Church practiced and taught more clearly the life that Jesus commanded of leaders, specifically of Christian husbands, then Christian men would have a better understanding of biblical masculinity and take pride in being the servant leader in their homes. It is freeing and self-satisfying to have a solid understanding of what one’s role ought to be.¹⁴⁰

The Christian man ought to transform, reprogram, and renew his mind, according to Jesus’ mind (Romans 12:2; I Cor. 2:16). Having the mind of Christ, leads to a change in his behavior. He will go from being like the self he thinks he is, to being the self Jesus created him to be. His energy should be spent working on accomplishing the command Jesus requires of him rather than brow-beating or fist-beating his wife into a role which *he* is assigned by Jesus to take on. It is the Church’s job to *disciple* so Christian men can be disciplined. Jesus taught His

disciples, some of whom were husbands, and no doubt - godly husbands,¹⁴¹ how to be servant leaders. The Church should do the same.

WWJD: Jesus would teach His followers today the same lessons of servant leadership as He taught His disciples.

Jesus “called the people [unto him] with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me”. Mark 8:34 KJV

“The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors’. But not so *among* you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves...I am among you as the One who serves.” Luke 22:25-26; 27b NKJV (Emphasis mine)

Case A. Jesus taught about the importance of being a faithful servant over a household when He told His disciples about the signs of the end of this age. In Matt.24:45, He asks, “*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom the lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*” He compares that faithful ruler over his household, to an unfaithful ruler, one who “*shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.*” Jesus said that the Lord of that unfaithful leader-servant will “*cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; [where] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*”¹⁴² This lesson is a perfect lesson for a man who is the appointed head of a household. Leaders in

earthly families have a Heavenly Lord to whom they will have to give account.

This example also showed that, this servant whom Jesus told about was abusive to his fellow servants in much the same way that an abusive husband is to his fellow servant, his wife. We see similar behavior; he "... *smite [s] his fellow servant, and... eats and drinks with the drunken.*" Additionally Jesus told about the repercussions to the abusive servant. Similarly, a husband who is abusive to God's fellow servant (his wife) should take heed.

Jesus taught the principle of servant leadership, and it should be taught in the Church in general and also specifically to Believers (particularly men) who are walking a process of sanctification through discipleship.

Case B. Jesus taught about the *attitude* that a leader should have. Leaders should have the attitude of saying "we are unprofitable servants", *even after* doing those things which, as servants, we are commanded to do (Luke 17:7-10). This teaching can change a husband's expectations about what his role is in marriage and in life. Such an understanding can help men to deal with what may seem to them as additional pressures of married life. For example, after working all day he can still wash the dishes that his wife was not able to get to. Even after fighting traffic for an hour, he can still happily stop at the grocery store and pick up the milk. Even after he has been brow-beaten on the job by his boss, he can still take a correction from his wife who loves him. Even after he has done everything that God has commanded him to do, he can still say, "I am an unprofitable servant!"

It's that *attitude* that Jesus had and which Paul wrote about in Philippians 2:5-8 where he said "Your *attitude* should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself *nothing*, taking on the very nature of a *servant*, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.” NIV

Mark 8:34 records how Jesus “called the people [unto him] with his disciples also, he said unto them, whosoever will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me.” KJV

Jesus taught servant leadership principles to the disciples then, and He is doing so to His modern day followers as well. The Church should embrace Jesus’ teaching and demonstrate Jesus’ instruction to all Christian men, so that as husbands, they can be fulfilled and reap the blessings of a happy marriage which comes from obeying Jesus.

WWJD: Jesus would (and did) set the example of servant leadership by being a servant leader.

“After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe [them] with the towel which He was girded”. John 13:5 KJV

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” Phil. 2:5 KJV

Case A. Jesus sets the example of servitude in practical ways. He washed his disciples’ feet as He taught them the type of attitude and work that was now expected of them (John 13:3-17). Jesus said “...no servant is greater than his master, nor is a

messenger greater than the one who sent him” (John 13:15, 15:20).

Case B. Jesus set the example by “being in the kitchen” so to speak and cooking a fish breakfast for His disciples to eat after they came in from their all-night fishing job. Not only did He take on the role of cook, He also acted as a waiter or maid-He *served* them the food He cooked (John 21: 9, 12, 13). This He did *after* He gave His life so the entire world could be saved. *Even after giving His life, Jesus continued to serve.*

Case C. The occasions on which Jesus demonstrated servant leadership are too many to detail for this purpose. It is sufficient to encourage the Church to be conscious of the many things Jesus did, because He had a *lifestyle* of serving others. Of course Jesus’ supreme demonstration of his great humility by which he served mankind, is summarized in Philippians 2:5-8.¹⁴³ This degree of humility can never be matched but it is that *attitude* of humility that the Church is to have, and it is especially relevant to those who are leaders-whether in the Church or in the home. Jesus taught His first disciples “*the greatest among you should be like the youngest and the one who rules like the one who serves.*” (Lk.22:24-27), and this is the same lesson which He teaches to His disciples today.

CHAPTER 7

The Church's Teaching on Wifely Submission

The church has historically misappropriated Scripture relating to submission and the role of a Christian wife; so much so that it has created a belief system (of both Christian men and women) that peace in the home is the responsibility of the wife who ought to quietly subject and submit herself to the authority of her husband *regardless* of what he does. Some Christian woman even believe that to be a good Christian she is to submit to her husband unquestioningly even to the point of laying down her life (as Jesus did) because the husband has absolute authority over the wife.

Unfortunately many churches are letting this issue lie dormant and unaddressed. One possible reason may be because this type of thinking is beneficial to men. Some studies concur that religious institutions may overemphasize the submissive role of women, misappropriate Scripture, and encourage women to stay in life-endangering situations mainly for that reason.¹⁴⁴

Though domestic violence within the Church is not limited to race, class, or denomination, one study investigated battered black women's use of religious services and spirituality for assistance in leaving abusive relationships. This study which was done by Hillary Potter (2007)¹⁴⁵ will be referred to again in Chapter 7. She found that of the eight battered women who were from Christian backgrounds, seven got disappointing results from

church leaders and members. One woman *said*, “He [the pastor] was on my ex-husband’s side and we [women] were just making the stuff up and we were just too strong, dominant women. . . . We probably needed to be beat up, put in our places. That’s exactly what he said.”¹⁴⁶

This testimony support studies, which found that religious leaders have often been found to provide advice that supports the male batterer, whether the batterer’s behavior is publicly substantiated or rests solely on the accounts provided by the battered woman.¹⁴⁷

As mentioned previously and as studies confirm, submission, self-sacrifice and servant hood are roles that historically and traditionally have been expected of women and, as a general rule, the church has no problem teaching that it is the Christian woman who ought to be submissive, be servant-like, and sacrifice herself.

Scripture verses like I Peter 3:1 (“Wives be in subjection to your own husbands that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives”), are used to instill the idea that a Christian wife is not only to submit to her husband but also that she is responsible for his action; meaning that if he is acting like a heathen, her submission to him, will win him over to the Lord. Subsequently, without a balance or contextual framework, such teachings lead women to believe that it is the will of God that they, as obedient submissive wives, subject themselves to their husbands in everything, including abuse. It is also this misappropriation of Scripture that causes some church leaders to put the burden on the woman to be the servant, to be self-sacrificing, to be unquestioningly submissive, and to stay and be abused, even to the point of death.

According to Jesus, such a belief or attitude of self-sacrifice really ought to be expected of the *husband*; as the head of the wife, *he* is to lead by the example of loving her sacrificially like Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for Her.¹⁴⁸ Wives must submit to their husbands *as unto the Lord*; this is not a bad deal when the Lord loves her so much that He gave Himself up for her.

In wanting to be like Christ, many Christian women think that they are sharing in the suffering of Christ, and that they are being Christ-like if they submit to abusive husbands who are rebellious, disobedient, and living a life like their father Satan.¹⁴⁹ Rather than being givers of life like Christ - they take life.¹⁵⁰

The Church is instrumental in the misappropriation of Scripture regarding wives and biblical submission. Many Christian women feel that in order to know Christ more, like Paul, they are “sharing in the fellowship of his [Christ] sufferings”¹⁵¹ when they subject themselves to abuse. They also believe that will reap an eternal reward for doing so. Women are not taught that getting beat up does not mean that they are “presenting [their] bodies as a living sacrifice...which is [their] reasonable service”.¹⁵²

Other parts of Scripture and sayings of Jesus like “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it”¹⁵³ are also taken out of context and misapplied by the victim in her thinking because it is inadvertently taught by the Church to encourage the Christian woman to stay longer in an abusive or violent marriage. A Scripture verse such as that can encourage the Christian woman to stay *in a home where she can be killed because she desires to be like Jesus, and she* falsely believes that she is expected to die ‘for Jesus’ sake so she can ‘live’. But unlike Jesus, she cannot take her life back up again. In addition, it is also

sacrilegious to compare the shed blood of the murdered woman (or man) to that of Christ.

Other Scripture verses like Luke 14:26 where Jesus said “If anyone come to Me and does not hate....even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple”, when taken out of context, can be like bullets in a loaded gun pointed at the head of the Christian woman.

Though the Bible says “you shall not murder”¹⁵⁴ the Church sometimes encourages the Christian woman to be killed by her murderer-husband, while chickening out of addressing the sin of the murderer - her abuser. Scripturally, an abusive or violent husband can be called a murderer because according to Jesus, one who has anger in his heart is already a murderer.¹⁵⁵ The abusive husband is way past that point, and yet he is not encouraged to *stop murdering his wife*, and to be like Jesus. Instead of addressing the husband’s sin of anger, rage, control, and violence, the Church uses Scripture to place a further burden on the victim, the Christian wife.

Jesus had never misappropriated Scripture; He never put the burden on victims by using the Scripture to enslave them. What would Jesus do in regard to the Scripture being used to burden women?

Another misappropriated teaching of Scripture which the church has been influential in disseminating, is that of the husband having absolute authority over his wife. It somehow needs to be said that biblically, no man but Jesus (for He alone is God)¹⁵⁶ has absolute authority. The Scripture says that God has given the Son authority over all things.¹⁵⁷ Any human who has any measure of authority, only has it because God has assigned him or her that authority.¹⁵⁸ Those who are made subject to authority, Christian wives included,¹⁵⁹ are to be

obedient up to the point that they do not honor man's authority above God's.¹⁶⁰ It is a sin to do so.

Furthermore, Jesus holds those whom He has put in authority, accountable for their actions. These are expected to be obedient and to answer to the ultimate authority, God Himself.¹⁶¹ Also, to whom much is given, much is required, and as Jesus said regarding the scribes who abuse their authority and victimize widows, "These will receive greater condemnation."¹⁶²

Many misunderstand the concept of biblical submission and this misunderstanding is largely used to justify a husband's domineering behavior towards his wife, and the wife incorrectly believes that she ought to submit to her husband's sins. This misunderstanding is confirmed in the voices of the religious leaders who took part in a study about beliefs on submission.¹⁶³ In this study, there was *no* consensus among the leaders as to what submission really means. Most of the religious leaders (of various religions) who contributed to this cluster, believed that *their* doctrine about wifely submission was not problematic when practiced in accordance with *their* religious beliefs. Real Christianity has only one standard to measure any doctrine against and that standard is Jesus Christ Himself. When Jesus is not the standard, men can adjust their dogma to meet their own selfish needs.

It is shown that many professing, so-called Christian men, mainly nominal evangelicals (according to research), are themselves lacking in submission to the Church, and to the beliefs which they peddle to their wives. In fact, according to researcher and scholar Bradford Wilcox,¹⁶⁴ "the worst fathers and husbands are those men who have, say a Southern Baptist affiliation, but who rarely darken the door of a church. They have, for instance, the highest rates of domestic violence of any group in the United States. They also have [the] highest divorce rates."¹⁶⁵ Such facts make it all the more evident that if one is not

in submission to Jesus Christ and His Holy Word-the Bible, any doctrine will be perverted in the hand of a rebel, and it is very dangerous.

WWJD: Jesus would be proactive in dispelling false teaching of authority and submission, and gender roles.

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” (Colossians 2:8) KJV

“He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition...” Mark 7:9 NKJV

“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.” Matt. 23:8 NKJV

Case A. John 9:1-41 records a story of a man who rightly chose not to submit to the religious authority. He was the man born blind whom Jesus had healed. Jesus showed that He supported this man by seeking him out after he was expelled from the synagogue because he would not submit to the Pharisees who made unrighteous demands on him. The Pharisees had thrown him out of the synagogue (church) just for speaking his mind (vs. 34). But, *Jesus sought him out* to give him support (vs. 35) because the Pharisees had used their authority according to the manner of this world. In addition, Jesus also chided the religious leaders for abusing their authority (39-41).

Along with Jesus’ example, we have the example of the apostles who did not obey the religious authorities who had unrighteously commanded that they stop preaching the Gospel (Acts 4:19, 5:21).

Case B. Jesus lived a life of perfect submission and perfect peace. He submitted to His Father's will in all things, even to the ultimate - giving up His own life. He was a person of meekness and humility, yet His passion for holiness made Him very defiant against those in authority, those who were 'set over Him' -the religious leaders of His day. His behavior of speaking out against unrighteousness and standing up for truth caused Him to be cursed, mocked, assaulted, beaten, and killed. Jesus was persecuted because He showed perfect submission to God, rather than to men.

In following Jesus' example, the Church ought to teach the difference between what authority is of God and what is of man. In doing so, the Church should teach Christian women especially, (who are commanded to submit to their husbands as *unto the Lord*) what it is that they are expected to submit to. With a meek and humble spirit, they can fear God rather than man, and exercise submission as Jesus did.

For the Christian man, it is that spirit of humility and meekness coupled with a passion to be like Jesus, from which he too can submit himself to his wife, as a sister in the Lord, and as a member of Christ's Church; for we are commanded to "submit one to another" (Eph.5:21) for we have one master, Christ, and we are all brothers and sisters (Matt. 23:8).

Case C. Jesus dispelled false scriptural teaching and misinterpretation of the Scripture by religious teachers, the Pharisees. He did so in front of others as well. He showed kindness and love by helping others to know the truth because He says; it is the truth that makes them free.¹⁶⁶

We see an example of this in Mark 12:18-27 where He *corrected* the Sadducees about their beliefs concerning marriage after the resurrection.¹⁶⁷ He tells then plainly in Mark. 12:24 that they are mistaken, because they do not know the Scripture or

the power of God. The Church also must correct wrong scriptural teaching, and boldly say to the Body of Believers, “you are mistaken”¹⁶⁸ in areas of authority, submission, and gender roles where scriptures have been misappropriated.

Case D. In Mark 7:1-23 Jesus was accosted about not keeping in line with the religious observation of washing hands before eating. In regard to this, Jesus distinguished between what was a religious tradition of man and what was God’s Word. The line between the two was so blurred that they had been teaching a tradition as if it were God’s commandment.¹⁶⁹ It wasn’t just the Pharisees and the scribes that had this misunderstanding; it was “all the Jews”¹⁷⁰ who stood on the principle of hand-washing as if it were “thus says the Lord”. This is very much the same as the Church has done today in its teachings about gender roles and marriage.

Jesus drew a line of demarcation when He confronted and corrected them. He reflected their hypocrisy back at them, citing another area which they had also fallen short, that of paying Corban (a gift of gold put on the altar as an offering to God). Jesus did not just address the religious leaders when He corrected these traditional, non-scriptural, and imbalanced teachings; He actually “called all the people unto Him” (Mk.7:14). He then made an appeal for their keen attention; He told them “There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him; those are the things that defile a man.” (Mk. 7:15 NKJV)

Jesus desired for them not only to hear but to understand. He does this because it was a great burden to the people to have to carry the law on their shoulders. These religious teachings were so instilled in them for generations, that even the disciples didn’t fully comprehend what He taught publicly; He had to explain it again to them privately.

From this example above, we can learn that there are some teachings (like topics on gender and marital roles) that the Church has to teach in the open, and many times they should make a practice of re-teaching, in order to counteract the years of scriptural misleading and misrepresentation. Traditional teachings which have been made out to be scriptural truth have to be dispelled. The Church should “call all the people” to attention and dispel false beliefs like Jesus did until Christians are made to understand the truth. Each church should teach truth both abroad and in-house, in order to break the chains of oppression Christians wear regarding their beliefs about gender roles and submission.

We have overwhelming evidence of Jesus taking on the religious establishment of His day in correcting false teachings and misappropriated Scripture that was been used to oppress God’s people. It is imperative that Church leaders and Believers, who know the truth, do the same. This is something the Apostle Paul did as well; he taught the Church truth, and he gave the Church in Colosse¹⁷¹ this stern warning: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” Colossians 2:8 KJV). The Church ought to do the same today.

PART III

THE CHURCH and THE VICTIM

CHAPTER 8

The Church Being Jesus to the Victim

One of the most detrimental and un-Christ-like things a pastor or the Church can do is to “shut the door” on the victim, who in dire desperation, has pushed past her fears and pain, comes to the Church and utter a plea for help. Unfortunately, there are many stories from women who’ve received this type of response.

In one study¹⁷² several women were specifically asked about the following:

- (a) Their level of religious participation (e.g. church attendance) and any fluctuation in participation before, during, or after abusive episodes.
- (b) Their tendency to seek out support from clergy members and the ensuing cleric’s response to the victimization.
- (c) Their degree of spirituality before, during, and after their violent relationships.

Of the forty women in the study, twenty three participated in the interview, eight of whom sought out the clergy for guidance. Seven out of eight who were from Christian backgrounds, got disappointing results from church leaders and members.

Typically, the Christian clergy members showed more support for the abusers by minimizing the abuse, by arguing for the abuser, by citing the good things about him (such as: he’s a good provider, and he’s good to his children), and by making the

victim feel ungrateful by complaining that she is being beaten up by a “good” man.

One woman in the study said, “The priest advised me to stay, which turned me against the church forever.... I think [the pastor] looked on it as the lot of women in the world. You know, *“This happens and this is what you do: and pray long enough and hard enough, the abuser will change.”*¹⁷³ [Emphasis mine]

Nowhere in Jesus’ life, as recorded in the Scripture, has He ever blame the victim for any abuse, neither did He require that *the victims* account for the behavior of the evil person or take responsibility for the victimizer’s change of heart. Jesus *never* told the people to submit to the legalistic and unrighteous behavior of the Pharisees. On the contrary, He *chastised the victimizers*. (Luke 12:47; Mk.12:9)

These types of testimonies are typical, each woman has her own experience but the one thing they had in common, was a cleric who was unsupportive. Of the eight in this study who went to their church for help, one is Muslim. Her experience was the only one where the religious leaders “stepped up to the plate”, confronted the batterer and saved her. Her mosque leaders were brave, and they confronted the wolf, took the sheep out of its jaws, and removed him from the sheep pen. Despite such verses in the Koran like 4.34,¹⁷⁴ they responded more like Christ than the Christian leaders in this study did. This woman’s testimony about her mosques’ stance on domestic violence is this “They frown on it, I know that much. The Muslim men, they figure they take care of their own.”¹⁷⁵

How should Church leaders respond to the abused woman, when she goes to them for help? How did Jesus respond to the victim? Below are some specific examples of Jesus interacting with victims and we can learn from His example how He expects His Church to respond.

WWJD: Jesus would give the woman His respect and His undivided attention.

“...and Jesus was left alone, and the woman was standing in the midst. *When Jesus had lifted up himself* and saw none but the woman, he said unto her “woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee: go, and sin no more” John 8:9b-11JKV ¹⁷⁶ (Emphasis mine)

Case A. Jesus respected women; even those who we might think don't deserve respect. Such was the case of the woman caught in adultery. He *stood* up (literally and figuratively) for the woman. John 8:1-11 tells of Jesus' encounter with the woman caught in adultery. In this encounter, we see that He turned Himself *towards* her and He *addressed* her (vs.10). Prior to that action, He had seemingly ignored those who were accusing her by “bending down and started to write on the ground” (vs.6b).

He didn't show any respect for them or demonstrate any social niceties. When He did address them, He did so only to speak one sentence: “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” (Vs: 7b NKJV) However, when Jesus spoke with the victim, He went from a bending position to standing upright for her, He gave her His full attention, and He addressed her directly, waiting till He was alone with her. By doing these things, He demonstrated how important she was. He saved her from her enemies. Finally, He gave her the greatest gift - He forgave her of her sins.

Jesus sets a very clear example for the Church regarding how to treat the women who come to them bruised. A church leader is to regard the victim with the same honor and respect Jesus gave to this woman. Jesus reserved this honor of showing

respect to *her*, not to her abusers or her accusers, because “A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not put out.” Isaiah 42:3 KJV

Case B. Whenever an abused woman comes to Church leaders and other Christians for help, it should be, as if she were coming to Jesus Himself for help. Don't turn her off from the Church, but attract her to the Church where there is Living Water-Jesus. John 4:7-26 tells the story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. Being a Samaritan (one with whom the Jews had no dealings), and a woman (of ill-repute), did not stop Jesus for demonstrating love and respect for her. This Samaritan woman had many faults; she was shacking up with one man after another, for whatever reasons not given in Scripture, but Jesus overwhelmed her seeking soul with Himself. Regardless of the many sins or faults that may be evident in the life of a victim at the time, the objective is to overwhelm her with the love of Jesus when she comes to seek help (she is really seeking Jesus whether she realizes it or not).

Abused women come to seek help because they need saving, and *Jesus* is the ultimate savior (not enabler). While Jesus was not condoning the sins of the Samaritan woman, He did not condemn her either. Rather He saw her passion for wanting more out of her life; she was thirsty for living water, and that is what He gave her-Himself.¹⁷⁷ Her empty places became so full to overflowing with Jesus, that she brought the rest of her community to Him. How many people would have lost out on the experience of meeting Jesus, if Jesus had been too religious to reach out to her? Instead, based on her actions, she could be described as the first recorded missionary in the Church - all because *Jesus* took the first step towards *her*.

WWJD: Jesus would take the first step towards those He knew are hurting. He would not avoid the victims of abuse; He would seek out the hurting souls.

“Jesus heard that they cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God” John 9:35 KJV.

Case A. Many times church leaders may hear of an abuse situation by such means as an anonymous letter, a second-hand message, or they may plainly see the signs of abuse on the face or demeanor of hurting women. Sometimes a leader has so many conflicting feelings that he chooses to take the path of least resistance and not directly involve himself. However, Jesus shows us by His actions that His followers are to take the first step toward those in need. After all, He *came* to heal the broken hearted and set at liberty those that are oppressed (Luke 4:18 KJV).

Here is an example of Jesus taking the first step and going out of His way to minister to one wounded in heart. In the incident of the “man born blind” that was thrown out of the synagogue, Jesus only had to *hear* about the hurtful incident to initiate contact and become personally involved. Jesus didn’t *pretend* that He was not told, or that He did not hear. He found out that injustice had occurred to “one of his own”, and He *sought* out the rejected man. We know He sought out the man because the Scripture says He “found” the man. The word “found” is translated from the Greek word *heuriskō*¹⁷⁸ which means that you meet something or someone after your *search* for them; you make inquiry and you do an examination to get knowledge and come to a discovery. This is the same word that’s used in Matt. 2:8 when Herod told the wise men to “search

diligently” for baby Jesus and when they have *found* the baby, they should report back to him. It’s also the same word Jesus used in Matt 7:8 when He says “For everyone who asks receives, and he who *seeks finds*, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” NKJV

In addition to seeking this man out, Jesus used that occasion to address the abusers themselves by telling them that *they* are the ones that are blind (John 9:40-41). There was no mistaking whose side Jesus was on! Would Jesus ‘turn a blind eye’ to the victim in the Church after hearing about the abuse, after getting letters, or after listening to a victims’ personal cry for help? From Jesus example, His actions and His teachings, we see that He would not.

Case B. The story of the Samaritan woman in John 4: 3-43 was used in a previous example of how Jesus demonstrated love and respect when He ministered to the victim, but it also shows how Jesus *initiated* this relationship with the victim of abuse as well. In this encounter, Jesus took the first step in reaching out to the Samaritan woman because it was *she* who needed Him. He came to her with an offering to refresh her thirsty soul; He offered Himself. “Give *me* to drink”¹⁷⁹ He says. This term “to drink” (Pino: Gk) is not only a literally term. Biblically, it is a figurative term which means “to receive into the soul what serves to refresh, strengthen, and nourish it unto life eternal.”¹⁸⁰ Jesus did not say “give me a drink ¹⁸¹[of water]”, though she responded as if He did. However, it was the woman whose soul was thirsty. It is interesting to note that she said in verse 9 that He “asked” (aiteo [GK])¹⁸² ; however, *He* stated in verse 10 that He “said” (lego [GK]).¹⁸³ We know He was not hungry for natural food at the time because His disciples begged Him to eat afterwards and He refused the food. He evidently did not respond to any thirst for natural water either, because He didn’t drink any water, though the Scripture said He (being human) was wearied from

His journey.¹⁸⁴ There is no record that He ever received that water she mentioned, but *she* certainly got her fill.¹⁸⁵ From this example we see that Jesus' concern was for the woman and meeting the needs of *her* thirsty soul. He initiated conversation relevant to her concerns and met her needs.

In addition, there was also risk involved in Jesus initiating and engaging in such deep conversation with a Samaritan woman especially because, due to cultural, religious, and civil differences, Samaritans were ostracized by Jews. The Scripture says that even His disciples *marveled* that He spoke with a woman. The word 'marvel' [thaumazo (Gk)]¹⁸⁶ indicates wonderment and admiration. "Wow, Jesus is so radical!" I permit myself to imagine being one of their thoughts.

One lesson that can be learned from the disciples' response is that even though there might be surprise or dismay when the church leaders and church members take the initiative to reach out to a victim in an abusive or any other precarious situation, it is also worthy of admiration – to both God and man.

WWJD: Jesus would be an advocate for the Christian woman, a sister, a mother, a daughter. "Then Jesus said, let her alone." John 12:7a KJV

Case A. There were cases where Jesus acted as an advocate for a woman. At times, He took a stand against His own sex, against His own colleagues, and against the crowd. One such case was when Jesus stood up for Mary, who anointed His feet with expensive perfume (John 12:1-11). One that occasion, Mary was sharply criticized by Judas, a male, and one of Jesus' own disciples. They also were at a special function with many people in attendance. But, the social context didn't prevent Jesus from standing up for her, because Jesus always stands up for

righteousness. "Let her alone. She has kept this for the day of my burial." He said (vs.7).

Jesus advocated for Mary. Mark's account of this same story (Mark 14:5-6) gives additional details and shows us the extent to which Mary was attacked. It says "Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? ... And *they* rebuked her harshly." NIV In Mark's record, we see that it wasn't just one man - greedy Judas, there were other men who were criticizing her as well. We also see that this was not any small complaint; they were indignant, they argued against her, and they "criticized her *sharply*" the Scripture says.

Jesus called them out for what they were doing; they were "troubling" her He said (Vs.6). The word for troubling as used in this context is *kapos* (Gk). It means to take a beating or a beating of the breast with grief.¹⁸⁷ In other words, they were causing her a lot of pain and grief by beating her up with their critical words. He wouldn't allow them to beat up on her; He told them to *stop!*

Let the Church be an advocate for the victim; let the Church stand up for the Christian woman despite whether the abuser is a co-pastor, another church leader, or a family friend. Let the Church defend her, and defend righteousness - just as Jesus did!

WWJD: Jesus would seek to erase the marks of racist and sexist stereotypes and expectations that culture and society have left on the minds of Christians, especially regarding any false beliefs about those involved in domestic violence and abuse.

“Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.” Mark 16:9 NKJV

Case A. Many times we are influenced by prejudicial beliefs that unwittingly attach themselves to us. We live in a world where our senses are receptors to messages all around us; voices and scripts of prejudice play out through the airwave, through generational hand-me-downs and through social experiences. Such messages imprint on our minds, and impact our beliefs and our expectations about race, culture and sex. No one is immune; therefore, it is each Christian’s responsibility to renew his or her thoughts by washing the mind with the Word of God so we can think as Jesus does.¹⁸⁸

Jesus’ love extended across class, race, culture, and sex. On different occasions, He reached across social barriers to minister to those whom society was prejudice against. One such person, whom He reached out to, was Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was a victim of many things including emotional and physical afflictions (and also social stigmatism, as her state of emotional and physical instability imply).¹⁸⁹ Yet, she was the first person Jesus showed Himself to after He was resurrected from the dead.

Imagine that! If we were to guess beforehand who the first person would be that our resurrected Lord would reveal His glorious self to, whom among us would even put Mary Magdalene on our list of prospects? Of all the people in “the Body”, who would imagine that she would be Jesus’ choice - this victim with a past?

Apparently, she was not the disciples’ first choice either. Even though she bore the remarkable news of Jesus’

resurrection, when “she went and told them who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept...they, when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.” (Mark 16:10-11 KJV) Later, Jesus scolded the disciples for their unbelief. He appeared to the eleven as they were eating; He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had been raised from the dead – Mary Magdalene among the news bearers. Mark 16:11

One of the things that we can learn from this example is that we have to *position* ourselves to *receive* information which may go against what we expect or believe. We are not immune to being influenced by prejudice. In regard to domestic abuse and violence in the church, we Christians have to recognize that *no* Church is immune from domestic violence and abuse (There are vessels of honor and dishonor in every house).¹⁹⁰ Domestic violence is *not* limited to race, social class, sex, position in the Church, or even spiritual “maturity” manifested in religiosity. Let the Church allow Jesus to send whoever He sends to us, regardless of who they are, what they look like, or where they come from. Let us not reject the Mary Magdalenes who come to us.

Case B. John 4:5-43 tells the story of the woman at the well. She was not socially acceptable with Jesus’ race of people. Ethnically, she was considered a “low life”, and evidently she was a woman who may have compromised her morals for the sake of social needs.¹⁹¹ Furthermore, she was a Samaritan who described her ancestral father as Jacob, but whom the Jews disowned all social and religious connection with.¹⁹² Jesus did not adhere to the racist, sexist stereotypes and prejudices of His people. He reached out beyond His own social class and religious schema. As He ministered to this victim, the kingdom of God was expanded and God was glorified.

The Church today is a place where the Kingdom of God should be manifest, where Jesus should be exemplified and where God should be glorified. The Church should be a haven of hope and life to victims who come there for refuge and safety. Regardless of the victim's circumstances or ethnic background, social class or other distinctions, when she comes to the Church for help it should be as if she were coming to Jesus Himself- whose open arms welcomes her with love.

CHAPTER 9

Responding to the Victim without Condemnation

Romans 8:1 says “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (KJV) These words have carried immeasurable comfort to millions of hurting souls over the centuries. At one time or another in our lifetime, each of us find ourselves bound to some tragic situation for which we cannot, within our own power, find a remedy. And there are times, that even when we do find a remedy, we are powerless to enact it. It’s times like those especially, when kindness, understanding, empathy, and love, are most needed. Times like those when the only purpose that condemnation would serve, is as a lit match to gasoline-soaked asbestos - it just disintegrates a soul.

A victim of domestic violence and abuse is already weighted under the tyranny of condemnation: disapproval, criticism, denunciation, censorship, blames, and guilt is a burden to her. When she comes to a church leader for help and she receives condemnation in any form, she is getting blatant damnation. In fact, condemnation, as translated from the Greek word *katakrima*, means damnatory sentence.¹⁹³ In the context of the verse above (Romans 8:1), condemnation means to be declared guilty at God’s judgment and being damn to eternity in hell. The victim desperately needs to hear the good news of Jesus Christ and to see Jesus’ love in action towards her so she

can experience salvation, both in the context of this Scripture, and in her current circumstances.

As a way of summarizing some key points, here are some practical non-condemning ways in which a leader can respond to a woman in crisis in order to avoid shattering her soul and also to minister the love of Jesus Christ to her.

- Always, always, believe the woman. Remember that 95% of domestic violence is perpetrated by the husband or boyfriend¹⁹⁴ and 30% of female murder is done by husbands or boyfriends.¹⁹⁵
- Don't make her feel responsible for her abuse by asking "well meaning" questions such as, "How did you end up with a man like that?"¹⁹⁶ Rather, ask the abuser about how *he* ended up being someone who hates women like he does.
- Don't blame the abuser's anger on marriage problems, or other incidental circumstances. According to Pryde and Needham, there is no point in dealing with the whatever marriage problems there are until the abuser is willing and (by God's grace) able to deal biblically with his own sins first (Matt.7: 1-5)...if one looks at an anger problem as a marriage problem before looking at the personal problem the abuser has with anger he or she is actually contributing to the abuser's self-deception. The abuser needs to see that sin is in his own heart first and foremost.¹⁹⁷
- Never hint or imply that she is to be blamed in any way for the man's sin of evil towards her. She may have her own sin to deal with but the woman's sin can be addressed at the right time when she is out of danger and when she is able to face some of her own issues, like how Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery in John 8.

- DON'T recommend couples counseling or approach her husband and ask for "his side of the story." *These actions will endanger her.* Remember, 75% of domestic violence homicides occur during or after the victim has left the abuser.¹⁹⁸
- Don't endorse a man condemning and transferring blame to his partner by calling *her* abusive.
- Never put more burdens on the woman by taking a Scripture verse such as, I Peter 3:1¹⁹⁹ out of context, to encourage her to suffer some more "for Christ sake". This communicates the error of submission that God requires that she subject herself to abuse and be enslaved to man rather than to God (which is really idolatry), that fear rather than faith and love is reflective of God's fruit of righteousness, and that being a martyr is God's design for her life.
- Don't put yourself in the position for Jesus to reproach or revile you for being irresponsible or abusive in *your* role as a church leader (I Timothy 5:24, Matt. 23:14-16, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33, and 35).

Jesus had an understanding of the pressure and the burden which a victim is subject to. That is why He says that His burden is easy and His yoke is light. He came to break the chains of them that are bound and to set the captives free.

WWJD: Jesus would not condemn the victim and shatter her soul. Her salvation, safety, and sanity would be His priority.

"Neither do I condemn you" (Jesus) John 8:11a

Case A. In John 8:11b Jesus told the woman caught in adultery to go and sin no more. He didn't tell her that, or even addressed her needs, until *after* He had ensured that she was safe.

Condemning her would mean that she would have been stoned, but her safety and her salvation was His priority.

Case B. The woman at the well in John 4 was another prime candidate for condemnation because she lived with five men, none of whom she was legally married to (vs.18). However, Jesus did not condemn her but she knew she was in error and needed to right her ways. When she left Jesus she was emotionally and spiritually healed. The Kingdom of God was expanded as a result of how He met her need.

Case C. Luke 5 shows us a picture of Jesus' priority of meeting the need of people's soul first, and foremost, above making their lives look pretty on the outside. Jesus was eating with tax collectors and sinners when the Pharisee complained about it. Jesus said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Luke 5:31-32). The Church needs to likewise be the "hospital" for the sick, and the place of salvation for victims, especially to those who are steep in sin. Taking the approaches listed above, are some ways in which the Church can be a source of healing and life to the victim of domestic violence and abuse.

Each of us has been a victim at one time or another. Life sometimes presents insurmountable trials which we are unable to overcome in and of ourselves. Jesus is able to save us, and many times He uses His followers and His shepherds to do so. Condemnation has no place in ministering to victims, particularly victims who are in "Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."²⁰⁰

CHAPTER 10

Safety of the Victim: The Issue of Leaving Her Abusive Husband

“**T**he shooting happened Tuesday morning around 11:30 at the Church's Chicken²⁰¹ on Oak Street. Shortly after, police arrested Stephen McCoy and charged him with killing his wife. Just minutes before she was killed, police say Betty McCoy had filed for a restraining order against her husband and family members say Monday night she told Stephen McCoy she wanted a divorce. Neighbors in their quaint Conway neighborhood say the McCoy's appeared to be the picture perfect family. Kathleen Oliver says, “[Stephen] was always interacting with his kids and we'd wave and stuff like that.”²⁰²

Unfortunately such stories are not a rarity. Thirty percent (30%) of women murdered in America are killed by their husbands or boyfriend²⁰³ and *of those, 75% of DV homicides occur during or after the victim has left the abuser.*²⁰⁴ Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States; *more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined.*²⁰⁵

Stories like the one above and statistics like these should shock the Church into a state of alertness. This is especially important because studies show that women, who are more embedded in their religion, stay in their marriages and abusive relationships *longer* than women of lower religious inclination.²⁰⁶ In addition, it's been found that vulnerability may occur when

adherence to traditional roles of womanhood such as childbearing, childrearing, and obeying the husband, are grounded in religious beliefs and are essential conditions of intimate unions (all Christian values). Subscribing to these religious and traditional beliefs while being battered, may make it difficult for women to withdraw from an abusive relationship.²⁰⁷

Does this pattern show that religious women take marriage more seriously than those who are not religious? Or does it show that the Church as a religious establishment is entrenched in religious and traditional teachings rather than in Jesus' teachings? One thing that it *does* show for certain is that Christian women are not clear on whether they are to stay in an abusive marriage, and give up their lives emotionally and physically, or whether they are to leave their abusive husbands and be in a safe and peaceful place.

Here is a story about one woman whose experience with domestic violence left her asking similar questions. In Dorothy Ann Valin's study (Valin, 2006),²⁰⁸ one Christian woman shares the conflict about her own desperate departure from her husband (not a church-goer), who after one particularly violent episode, was arrested and then released to come back home. She told how her husband beat her, raped her (she just had surgery), and left her so maligned that she needed a hysterectomy. He almost killed her but she waited till he was asleep to escape. When asked by the researcher, what her understanding of justice is, she responded: "There is no justice ...No one in the church cared. It was OK with them if I was there and OK with them if I was not there. . . .I got out, I was saved. . . I had guilt. . . . *Was I in the Lord's will or not? Am I still in God's will, if I am divorced?* "²⁰⁹(Emphasis mine)

Many Christian women have similar questions. They are not clear whether they should stay or leave and abusive marriage, because the Church has not given a clear answer.

Being encouraged by religious teachings perpetuated by the Church, some Christian women who are victims of domestic violence, mistakenly think that they are to be martyrs, and dying at the hands of their abusers is being a good wife, and so doing, they will gain Heaven's reward. As one woman says "Divorce is not a big option, you know, and even I think being abused is very minimized in a family because fathers are under stress; they're heads of the households, and if you were doing what you were supposed to be doing, you obviously wouldn't be getting beaten... Religion is a big thing. And I think it's instilled in [us] that if [we] pray ... to be more patient and ...to live through this, then [we'll] ... be a better Catholic and [we're] going to ... you know, go straight to Heaven and ... have a seat at the right hand of the Father. I mean, that's what's told to us; you put up with it, and you'll become a saint." ²¹⁰

Some questions church members may ask include: Should a Christian woman stay in an abusive or violent marriage? Is it biblical to leave one's abusive husband in order to save one's life or sanity (or that of their children)? What does the Bible say about the Christian woman leaving an abusive relationship? How much abuse and how much violence are too much according to God?

I think that answers to questions such as these regarding whether or not a Christian woman can biblically leave her abusive but professing Christian husband have not been made clear because spousal abuse has not been looked at as the *sin* that it is. Sin has been coddled, sin has been tolerated, sin has been turned into a social norm, and sin has been respected and given privacy in the Christian home. It's time that the Church pulls back the privacy-curtain and name the actions of the abusive and of the violent husband for what it is - *sin*. It's time the Church rips the label off the lapel of sin and stops compartmentalizing domestic abuse and domestic violence as a marriage problem, but rather call it what it is - a *sin problem!*

When that is done, the question rightly ought to be asked in this manner: ***“Is it biblical for any Christian woman to leave a non-fruit producing professing Christian man or a “brother in the Lord”, her husband, who by his behavior, is angry, hateful and murderous in heart, and has manifested murderous intent towards her by destroying her life emotionally or physically by his words or actions?”*** How would the answer to *that* question be different? How would Jesus answer *that* question? How does the Bible answer *that* question?

Did Jesus “put up” with his enemies and with His abusers who were trying to destroy him? For a possible answer, let’s look at Jesus’ life to see whether He did. We will also look at others related to Jesus who also had to make decisions of the same nature.

WWJD: Jesus would not stay with violent and abusive people who were trying to destroy him.

Matthew 12:14-15 “Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He *withdrew*²¹¹ from there.” NKJV (Emphasis mine)

Case A. Jesus’ earthly father had to flee into Egypt to protect Jesus. One of the things to consider is that, even while Jesus was in the womb, He was a target of violence. Here are the examples below where Jesus’ life was in danger as a baby and God gave direction to others to remove Jesus and themselves from danger.

- Matt 2:13. Before He was even born his life was in danger, God’s directive to Joseph was to *flee* to Egypt.

- Matt 2:12. The wise men being divinely warned in a dream that Herod intended to kill them, was told by God *to* travel by another safer route.
- Matt 2:22...Even after Herod's death, when his son then reigned in his stead. Joseph "was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee." It was *that* action (going to Nazareth) which fulfilled the prophesy - "He shall be called a Nazarene"²¹².

Case B. In Jesus' adult years of ministry, there are many other instances where Jesus withdrew ²¹³Himself, and left those who meant to do Him harm (John 10:39, John 8: 59 and John 11:53-54).

Most particularly, He physically separated Himself from His abusers (the Pharisees), who made attempts on His life. Below are scriptural recordings of some instances. I endeavor not to add any personal comments which may imply that Jesus was fearful (God forbid) and had to hide. I simply point to the many clear instances where Jesus, who was led by the Father in all things, saw fit to remove Himself from those who sought His life.

- John 7:1 Jesus would not *walk* ²¹⁴ [live] in Judea *because* the Jews *sought* to *kill* him. He *walked* in Galilee instead, a safe place.
- John 7:1-10 His brothers *knowing* also that the Jewish authorities wanted to kill Him, told Him, *to leave* Galilee and *go into* Judea for the Feast of Tabernacle celebration. "Depart from here and go into Judea that your disciples also may behold your works which You are doing..." But Jesus did not..."he abode *still* in Galilee." (John 7:9 KJV) What might

his brothers' reasons have been for wanting Jesus to go to a place where they know He was in mortal danger? Were they jealous or were they fearful of going against the religious establishment? We are not told, but Jesus' experience is common to that of domestic violence victims. Many family members (and Church leaders) will be the first to tell the domestic violence victim to go back into a place where her life is threatened-her home. Jesus, however, contrary to the voices around him (even of those in his own family, those whom one would think knew him and knew all that He had suffered- his brothers), "would *not* walk in Judea *because the Jews sought to kill him* (John7:1 KJV)...and he abode still in Galilee." (John 7:9 KJV)

- John 7:10 Jesus said "...Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." "But when His brother had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as it were, *in secret*." [Emphasis mine] Jesus demonstrated much wisdom by keeping His actions secret; wisdom which the domestic violence victim can emulate (such as keeping things secret, and not telling even one's relatives her plans for safety).
- John 11:53-54 tells us of a day when two decisions were made. The first decision was made by the religious leaders: "from that day on they planned together to kill him [Jesus]." The second decision was made by Jesus, who subsequently would not make Himself available to be killed; "Jesus *therefore no longer* continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but *went away from there* to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples." (Emphasis mine) What other incidents could lead Jesus up to *that* decision? Here are some possibilities: Multiple threats on his life, and attempts to actually *kill* him (John 8:59, John.10:31, John 11:8), verbal

assaults (John 10:20, John 8:48,), entrapment (John 8:5-6), argumentativeness, divisiveness and hatred (John 8:12-59). These are some of the experiences of the abused Christian woman. I believe Jesus was lead of the Holy Spirit in all that He did. Likewise, the abused victim is to be lead of the Holy Spirit as well (rather than by fear). She is to look to God's for His directions, His timing, and His provision.

John 8: 59 says, "*At this, they picked up stones to stone him but Jesus hid²¹⁵ himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*" According to this verse, Jesus "*kryptō*" [Gk] or *concealed Himself so He was not known; He was cryptic.* How exactly did He go about making Himself so that He would not be noticed, is not told to us, but this word implies secretiveness, skill, wisdom, understanding, and faith to execute. Like how Jesus had to "*kryptō*", the church ought to be an environment where the abused victim can be safely concealed from even those on "the temple grounds" who seek her life. It also shows a victim that there are times when she has to be cryptic about her plans for safety.

- John 10:39-42 says, "Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand. And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. ...And many believed in him there." Here we see an example of how Jesus escaped *again* from those who sought to do Him harm. We also see that because He went to another location, blessings followed His arrival – "many believed in him there". Thank God He left; many souls entered the Kingdom of God, as a result. His assignment was not prematurely cut off! He continued His God-assigned task of glorifying the Father, rather than allowing men to shorten His days and deny those who believed, the gift of eternal life.

- In Matt 12:13 -15 we see that because of controversy about working and healing on the Sabbath, Jesus had to exit the area because “[Then] the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him. But when Jesus knew it, He *withdrew*²¹⁶ from there.” (Emphasis mine)
- John 11:7-8 records this conversation, “Then He said to His disciples, let’s go back to Judea. But Rabbi, they said a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, yet you are going back there?” Thomas, later in the same conversation said, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him”, which made it clear that going back was dangerous. Jesus went back there because He had a destiny to redeem mankind through His death- and resurrection. The victim will do well by asking the same common-sense question the disciples asked Jesus regarding returning to a dangerous place, “Are you going back there?”
- John.12:36b shows us that after recognizing the hostile situation He was in, Jesus hid Himself. It says, “...These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.” KJV
- John 11:53-54 was mentioned previously to show that Jesus left an unsafe area to go to a separate region. It also shows that God has *timing* for everything. It tells us that a particular day came when Jesus made the decision never to walk openly among the Jews again. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit in all that He did and He left that unsafe region, that particular day when the Holy Spirit said He is to leave. (“Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples”. John 11:53, 54. NKJV). Ephraim is “a short day’s journey N.E of Jerusalem.”²¹⁷ Jesus showed that regarding the issue of

safety, a day will come when it is OK to leave a dangerous situation in order to walk in obedience to the will of God, and also to save one's life so that God's purposes for that life can be fulfilled. *Another* day did come when Jesus decided to go back to *His* appointed destiny. Thank God that *His* destiny makes our destiny possible; He died and now He *lives forevermore*, so that we can have *life* through Him!

The biblical references given above show instances where Jesus had to leave or hide for His safety so that He can continue to walk in the will and purpose of His Father. Many Christian women need to know that God actually gives directions to go, like He did with Joseph, with the Magi, with Jesus, and others. The Church needs to have a conviction that obedience to God trumps obedience to man, and saving a life is of a higher spiritual and natural order than saving a marriage; especially one in which the husband has broken and has smashed the covenant to smithereens with his violence and abuse.

Case C. In addition to Jesus' personal experience, there are other biblical guidelines that can help the Church/Christians to determine if a Christian woman should leave her abuser. We see in I Corinthians 5:11 that God commands that we separate from *a brother* who is a "fornicator (unclean person), or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer (verbal-abuser), or a drunkard, or an extortioner." The Scripture also says that it's OK for the wife of an unbeliever to go if her husband, the unbeliever, wants to be free of her (I Cor.7:12-16). Many Christian men are really Christians by religious affiliation; they have no personal salvation experience, and they are not really true believers and followers of Christ. They do not meet the definition of who Jesus defines as a Christian.

Studies done by Dr. Bradford Wilcox, which seek to find the relationship between happy marriage and religion, found that some of the worse husbands (and fathers) are men who are

nominal evangelicals who say that they have some Church affiliation, but who rarely darken the door of a church (or live a godly life which is implied). These men have the highest rate of domestic violence of any group in the United States, and they also have the highest divorce rate.²¹⁸ Christians like these are really enemies of righteousness and enemies of Christ. All biblical evidence and Jesus' description of such a man who behaves like a "son of hell", (Matt 23:15) will, as the Pharisees, die in his sin (John 8:21), and will not escape the condemnation of hell (Matt.23:33). This type of man is an unbeliever regardless of his personal profession of faith.

Here is another example of a man who professed Christianity but who really was not a Christian. His name was Elymas and he had the distinction of being labeled "thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness" by the Apostle Paul (Act 13:10). He was a sorcerer (Acts 13: 8). How appropriate since rebellion, which is a key character trait in the abuser, is equal to the sin of witchcraft (I Samuel 15:23). This is the description of an unbeliever, whom even if he professes to be a Christian-without evidence of repentance and conversion, a Christian woman, (who has done everything within her power to walk in obedience to God) can biblically leave as God directs her; since by every indication (as evident by his abusive or violent attacks), *he* wants her out of his life.²¹⁹ She can leave while she is still able to walk out rather than being *carried* out in a body bag or to a mental institution.

The Church should encourage the Christian woman who is faced with equally life or soul-endangering circumstances, to gain insight from Jesus and duplicate the same objective of staying in the Father's will, walking in obedience to Him, and following His directive, should He move her, as He did Jesus, Joseph, and others, in withdrawing from dangerous people.

CHAPTER 11

The Church as the Primary Source of Help

“Go and sin no more.”(Jesus) ²²⁰ Assuming, the woman caught in adultery heeded these five powerful words which Jesus spoke to her, (and we have no indication why she would not have) her obedience ensured two things (though there would be more benefits of her obedience, for the purpose of this argument, only two will be mentioned).

First, she would have experienced the freedom that forgiveness brings; a life free from the weight of shame and other emotional burdens like guilt which comes with sin. Secondly, she would be free from fear of being “caught in the act” a second time and being killed by the religious leaders. She would be *safe* from having to ever face her abusers again.

One of the primary needs that a victim of domestic violence and abuse has is that of safety. Many times it is the safety of knowing that they are understood, and that they have someone on their side that supports them. Sometimes victims need physical safety. Jesus provided both kinds of safety for the woman caught in adultery.

As stated previously, Jesus didn’t tell her to go until *after* He had ensured that she was safe. Likewise, the Church must first ensure, as Jesus did, the physical safety of the woman (John 8:1-10). Every woman ought to be asked if it is safe for her to go back into the home of the abuser; and if not, then the

Church should have a safe place that they can say “Go”, preferably out of the region (See John 11:54). The Church needs to realize the eminent danger for the abused sister and help provide adequate help and shelter. Remember, statistically, in 75% of the cases where women are murdered by their abusers, the murder occurs during or after the women has left their abusers.²²¹

In addition to her need for safety, a victim will likely be in need of other things as well. The Church may be a good resource for such things as food, employment, job referrals, childcare/babysitting, added protection by men in the church, and also free legal representation by a Christian attorney (suggestively as an offering unto the Lord), if one is in the local church.

If these resources are not “in house”, someone can accompany her and help guide her to where these resources are available through other agencies or groups within the community. The Church is not an isolated entity; it is part of a community and a part of the society. However, the Church must step up and take responsibility for its own and not dump their responsibility on “experts”. The police (which God has put in place) are also a valuable resource which the Church needs to take more advantage of. The abusive spouse should be confronted (*after* his wife is safely away from him) and the opportunity for a changed lifestyle and accountability offered to him, even if the law needs to be a part of the accountability process, or a part of the process of ensuring that the victim is safe.

When the immediate needs of the victim are met, continued support, in the process of time, should include the victim being accountable for her own choices or sins, which may have enabled her abuse. Such sin(s) may include fear, lack of trust in God, anger, no self appreciation or worth, substance

abuse, fornication, etc. There needs to be true repentance followed by putting off sinful choices and putting on biblical truths. These biblical choices will prevent her from falling into a repeated cycle of abuse.

One of the most insightful portion of Scripture that describes the abusive husband (or intimate partner), and also tells why women get trapped in relationship with such men, is found in 2 Tim.3:1-7. It says, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! *For of this sort [of men] are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (NKJV). This type of man, as described above, "creeps" (I find it interesting that this word is culturally relevant today) into a household. He charms. He cajoles. He makes promises. He rescues, and does other things to meet that woman's need which she seeks to fulfill outside of Jesus.

One reason she falls for this type of man is that she is "led away by various lusts" (vs.6) which may be manifest in such things as looking to men to meet her emotional, financial, provisional, and other security needs, rather than looking to God. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery to sin no more, and it is one of the responsibilities of the Church, as it ministers to the abused Christian woman, to help her come to an understanding of her own weaknesses, which made her vulnerable to the abuse in the first place. It is also the Church's responsibility to lead women who are "always learning" to the Truth so that the cycle of abuse/sin can stop. Some places where women look for truth

outside of Jesus include: self help books, education, professional advancement, Oprah, Dr. Phil, psychology, romance novels, cable channels which cater to women by showing man-hating movies, sex, and drugs. However the Church of Jesus Christ knows that Jesus Himself is *The Truth*, and that His Word *is* truth. Therefore, the Church is not only the primary source of leading “gullible” women to truth, the Church of Jesus Christ is the *only* means. How can they know unless they are told! (Romans 10:14, 17)²²²

From these multifaceted approaches which can be implemented in helping the victim, one can see that the Church’s role is not limited only to meeting “spiritual” needs. Jesus recognized the needs which people had; whether it was a physical need or a spiritual need. He used the resources He had to meet the needs of others.

WWJD: *Jesus would use available “in-house” resources since His Body is the Church. Mat. 8:4, Matt.14:16, Mk.6:37*

“Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid [them] at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” Acts 4:34, 35 NKJV

Case A. From Jesus’ life, we see Him meeting people’s physical needs. He was either feeding them or healing them. We see occasions that He used His own disciples to help Him do these things. For example, it was the disciples who helped Him distribute food to the five thousand. “*You give them something to eat*” (Matt. 14:16, Mark 6:37) He said to His disciples. When He

fed the four thousand “He broke them (the seven loaves) and gave them to His disciples to set before the people, and they did so” (Mk.8:6). It was the disciples whom He sent out, two by two, to the lost sheep of Israel. They also found a donkey for Him to ride (transportation), and a place for Him to house the Last Supper (a room).

Case B. In cases where another agency like the religious establishment was necessary, He engaged them. A prime example was when He healed the man with leprosy and sent him to show himself to the priest (Matt. 8:4). He did this because according to Leviticus 14:3, 4 and 10, there was a process and an order that had to be followed according to the laws of God. Likewise, there is a process and there are procedures in other agencies in our society that need to be followed. For example, a father who confesses to molesting his children or a husband who rapes or beats his wife should be legally reported to the appropriate social agency that God has put in place to deal with lawbreakers.

Case C. The greatest resource that the Church has is *God’s Word* enriched by the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave life through His words and the words spoken in the Scripture (not the humanitarian and religious philosophy of His day) to bring liberty and healing to the heart, the mind, and even the body. *“It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The WORDS I have spoken to you are spirit and **they are life.**”* (Jesus) John 6:63 NIV [Emphasis mine]

Looking more in depth at Jesus’ exchange with the woman caught in adultery, we see the impact that his words had upon her. Upon examination, it can be inferred that how such words brought life to her and also to other women. The first thing Jesus told her was “go”. The second thing He told her is to “sin no more”. The first part of the command, which is “go”, requires something of her; she may have been dragged to the temple

against her will, but now she has autonomy, she has a choice to make. She can stay where she was at and cry “Poor me, I’m a victim.”, or she can break, away from the place where she was being destroyed. She can move away from the sinful behaviors that put her in that situation in the first place.

The second part of Jesus’ statement “sin no more” is one key to the woman caught in adultery (or other victims), living a successful and fulfilled life. It’s her guarantee to life (Romans 8:6-13). This woman was a daughter of Abraham, one of God’s people - a Christian if you will; yet sin had to be conquered so she would not repeat that pattern of behavior. Her behavior pattern allowed her to continue in the same cycles of sin. She was a victim of sin before she was a victim of anything or anyone (Gen 2:17; Gen 3). Genesis records that “Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world; now sin has touched everyone and everything (Rm. 6:12). Sin kept her in a bondage that controlled her behavior. Sin controlled her long before any man entered her life (Rom 7:12-14).

“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Romans 6:16 NIV) The Apostle Paul talks more about sin being his master: “The law is good, then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master.” (Romans 7:14 NLT) An abused woman who is living a sinful lifestyle (similar to the woman caught in adultery, or the woman at the well perhaps) who comes to the Church for help will need to be introduced to Jesus. She needs to be free from sin more passionately than she needs to be free from the abusive man. The only person who can introduce Jesus to her is someone who knows Him personally. The only resource that has the message of Life is the Bible. Her immediate needs are paramount

however, and when her fears are abated, her faith will then have a place to blossom.

Case D. The Bible is the resource that has the message of salvation. Many women who are abused are looking for a savior, and I imagine when they are told of the abuse that Jesus took for them so that they can be saved, they would be more likely to respond to Jesus as savior-especially after they gain an understanding that what they experienced with the abuse of a man is nothing in comparison to the abuse and torture of hell and the Lake of Fire that awaits them if they do not receive Jesus' gift of salvation (Mark 9:44,46,48; Rev. 14:10,11; Rev.19:20; Rev. 21:8). Jesus took the abuse that was meant for them, because of His *love* for them. *God's love must be seen and understood above all else.*

I imagine that the experience of a woman who is abused allows her to understand suffering more than most. She knows what it is like to be cursed at, slapped, spat on, punched, have her hair pulled out, be beaten to a pulp, to experience other inhuman treatment upon her psyche, and the other such atrocities. With the Holy Spirit working upon her heart, the knowledge that Jesus went beyond that -to give up His very life, so that she can be *free* from this ultimate enemy- sin, is enough to make any woman fall weeping at Jesus' feet, like Mary did.²²³

The Bible tells us that "The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Heb.4:12) It is *the* resource to help the Christian woman live a victorious life. With guidance on what behaviors, attitudes and mindsets she is to put off *and* what biblical behaviors, attitudes and mindsets she is to put on; the Christian women can soar. Unfortunately, the Church has believed so much psychology and has developed such a secular world view, that it has lost faith that practical application of God's

Word is sufficient. The Church has a tendency to think that 'experts' are needed, and, guess what, 'experts' have a tendency to think that the Church needs them as well. There is a lacking of faith in the sovereignty of God and in the sovereignty of God's Word. What would Jesus say to the Church about *that*? The Bible is a key resource that is "in house" and one which the Church needs to depend on.

Case E. Also, take notice that the *person* of Jesus is a resource. Jesus did not look to others to do what *He* alone can do; He only used other resources as extensions of His (God's) action. (Matt. 8:4) There is no record, however, to show where He participated in any humanitarian services or social programs established by the Romans or the Jews. Likewise, while the Church should utilize available resources to gain knowledge, to get legal service, police protection, employment, etc. It should not pawn-off its own needy to the world. It should point them to the greatest available resource, JESUS!

PART IV

The CHURCH

AND THE

ABUSER

CHAPTER 12

A Picture of the Abuser: A Matter of the Heart

“But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” I Samuel 16:7 NKJV

The Law of Moses, as recorded in Deuteronomy 22: 13-19, shows a picture of a man who would hate his wife. A man who can be described as abusive towards his new wife, because he would seek to accuse her of something which he knew would get her killed. By accusing her falsely, he hoped to rid himself of her. He would accuse her of being a whore, which according to the Law of Moses is punishable by death (stoning).²²⁴ Fortunately, the law also made provision for this type of accusation to be disputed. If the accusation was founded to be untrue, there would be a *public accounting* where the innocent woman would receive vindication in the manner whereby “the elders of the city shall take that man and chastise him.”²²⁵ In addition, he could never rid himself of his husbandly responsibility towards her (Deut. 22:18-19).

One can learn several things from this husband-character described in Deuteronomy 22. The main thing that can be noted is the condition of the husband’s heart. In his heart, there is *hate* (Duet 22:13). The Scripture says that hate is akin to *murder* (I John 3:15). In this case, he can’t take his wife’s life without he

himself dying by law (Ex. 21:12, 14), so he would seek to kill her the only way he “legally” can, and that is with his tongue (Prov. 18:21). He would do so by devising a lie (that she’s a whore) to get her killed (Duet. 22:21). The source of this evil scheme is in his heart. The Scripture tells us that it is in the *heart* where the hate resides (Matt. 15:19, Lk.6:45). Jesus said “out of the *heart* come evil thoughts, murders...false witness”, etc. (Matt.15:19). The abusive and violent man does things out of what is in his heart, because he is a *murderer at heart*.

This picture of the husband of Deuteronomy 22 is totally different than the picture of another husband in a similar situation; however, this other husband truly had legal and legitimate questions about his wife’s fidelity, because she *was actually pregnant, and it wasn’t by him!* However, because he was a *just* man, and because of the *love* in his heart for his wife—his betrothed, he, “not wanting to make her a public example, was *minded* to put her away secretly.”²²⁶ This *just* man, Joseph, the father of Jesus, had *love* in his heart which, despite the appearance (and natural evidence) of foul play (Matt.1:19), he *thought* (Matt.1:20) upon *saving* Mary’s life because he knew that according to the expectations of his religion, justice would be exacted and Mary would be stoned (Matt.1:19, Duet. 23:24). In Joseph, we see a picture of a godly husband, one whose *thoughts, intent* and actions reflected the heart (Proverbs 23:7, 27:19). It is his heart that testified that “he was a just man” (Matt.1:19, Luke 6:45).

Today, husbands who profess that they are Christians, ought to have the heart of Joseph towards their wives. However many men have hearts towards their wives similar to that of the husband in Deuteronomy 22, and there are studies which identify the relationship between professed Christian men and domestic violence, which support that this true. Some of the studies that looked at the correlation between men from various Christian

denominations and domestic violence and abuse are given below.

As alluded to previously, one study sought to determine whether Christian men from particular denominations were more prone to be abusers. They found that there is no difference in the degree of domestic violence between conservative Protestants (e.g., Jehovah's Witness, Pentecostal/Holiness, Mormon, and other fundamentalist churches) and liberal and moderate Protestants and Catholics. However, the result did show that if the men held more conservative religious perceptions than their intimate partners, they are more likely to be batterers.²²⁷ Other studies done on the relationship between religion (mainly Christian) and marital wellness showed that men who claim a religious affiliation (mainly nominal evangelical), but who had *no* dealing with church life, had the highest rate of domestic violence of any group in the United States.²²⁸ In other words, "rebels" who claim to be Christians and subscribe to their more traditional beliefs than their mates, are more likely to be abusive. The contrary is seen with evangelical and mainline Protestant men who attend church regularly, and who are considerably more involved with their families. Their wives are significantly happier when their husbands are in regular church attendance with them.²²⁹ One possibility is that these men are not "mavericks" or "rebels" but are a consistent part of a group which conforms to common core beliefs, and community support and accountability are more accessible.

It must be said in all fairness that more empirical research has been conducted about the relationship between domestic violence and Christianity (Protestant and Catholic) than in any other religious groups (like Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism).²³⁰ Even so, the general consensus from what research has been done in comparing other religious groups and their relationship to domestic violence, shows findings similar to those of studies done on Christianity.²³¹ Religion is religion. Each

has some doctrine and ritual built upon a foundational belief system regarding life's purpose.

Religious people can mimic religious behaviors like praying, preaching, and going to church, but they cannot mimic love. It is because religious behavior is so easy to mimic that it should therefore, not be surprising that religion is the mask under which abuse hides its face (See 2 Cor. 11:13-15). It was the religious leaders of Jesus' day who were His most formidable enemies. Recently, I saw a startling bumper sticker that said "Get a taste of religion; kiss a witch". That is profoundly true. Satan will tell on himself, but many don't listen. Satan is the god of religion, but Yahweh is the God of relationship. Satan, however, wants to be God (Matt. 4:9, Isaiah 14:13-14, 2 Thess. 2:4), and he has millions of people worshiping him on the Sabbath, Sundays, and other Holy days, believing that they are worshiping God (Rev. 3:9, 2 Thess.2:3-12). He even tried to get Jesus, of all people, to worship him (Matt. 4:9). The point is that religious behaviors do not reflect the heart. Assessing by feelings, religious affiliations, and good intentions is not the way to determine whether a person is a real follower of Christ or whether he or she is just a religious person.

God doesn't credit us for our religion, He doesn't credit us for our denomination, He doesn't credit us for our conservative beliefs, and He doesn't credit us for our biblical knowledge. He credits us for our choice to accept His very costly gift of salvation that gives us a heart which is made new in Christ Jesus; and it is out of that new heart that we can do the works of righteousness (2 Thess. 2:13-17). Without that new heart, sin will reign supreme.

The heart of the abuser where only God sees is where the real problem lies, and only through the Holy Spirit can *the heart* and mind be transformed. Then godliness can be reflected on

the outside of a person with the demonstration of love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and self-control.²³²

WWJD: Jesus would not judge a book by its cover.

“Man looks at the outside appearance, but God looks on the heart.” I Samuel 16:7 NKJV

Case A. In Matthew 23 Jesus chastises the religious leaders by addressing their hypocrisy. The very religious priests thought themselves to be so holy, but their piety was only on the outside; on the inside, their hearts were vile.

Jesus says that: *“Everything they do is for show”* (Vs.5). In their case, [they wore on their arms] “extra wide prayer boxes with Scripture verses inside, and they wear robes with extra long tassels. And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues. They love to receive respectful greetings as they walk in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’.” (Vs. 5-7) In the abuser’s case, his outward behavior may be to sit in church with his arm around his wife, and call her “Hon” or “babe” when he is with her in public. But like the Pharisees, everything the abuser does is just for show! The outside is clean but inside he is *“filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence!”* (vs. 25) He is like “whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you *look* like righteous people, but *inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.*” (Jesus) Vs. 28 [Emphasis mine]

Case B. In Matt.7:15-20 Jesus gives us instructions on how we can identify those who wear religious garb (both proverbially

and practically) to look righteous, from those who truly are. “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing; but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. *By their fruit you will recognize them.* Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, *by their fruits you will recognize them.*” (Jesus) [Emphasis mine] The Scripture also give us specific details of what the fruit that Jesus talked about looks like. Galatians 5:22 says “But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

The truth of the matter is that most men who are abusers (“Christian” or otherwise) don’t show their true colors outside the home. Based on Jesus’ description and the fruit he produces at home, those closest to him can best determine if that husband or that father is a real Christian, regardless of his profession of faith and his religious behavior. It is important that Christian women who are victims of professed Christian men use this criterion to identify whether or not their husbands have had a true conversion experience. For a Christian woman who desires to have a Christian family, it is difficult to reconcile how her husband can say that he is a Christian and do religious things, but godliness and the fruit of the Spirit is absent in his life.

Jesus gives His Church the litmus test for them to identify the good tree from the bad tree. Jesus gives His people a detailed description of the bad fruit so we can make an assessment. Galatians 5:19-22 says “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft (rebellion included²³³); hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of

God.” Personal and religious claims can be disputed if the fruit in one’s life is rotten.

Jesus gives no credence to what people do or how they appear on the outside. Many things which are common to Christianity like church attendance, worship practice, signs and wonders like speaking in tongues and miracles of healing, are all things that can be mimicked. These are things that can be seen on the “cover” so to speak. But the inside is where the real issue of life lies; the inside is where the truth lies (Proverbs 4:23). The Fruit of the Spirit cannot be faked and nobody will ever have a complaint against it. Love is one part of the Fruit of the Spirit and love is one thing that cannot be faked. Church leaders, counselors, victims, and others must always remember that Jesus never judges a book by its cover, and neither should they.

CHAPTER 13

The Chameleon-like Character of the Abuser

“Smooth words may hide a wicked heart, just as a pretty glaze covers a common clay pot. People with hate in their hearts may sound pleasant enough, but don't believe them. Though they pretend to be kind, their hearts are full of all kinds of evil. While their hatred may be concealed by trickery, it will finally come to light for all to see.” Proverbs 26: 23-26 NLT

“...note those who cause divisions and offense....but their smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” Romans 16:17-18 NKJV

“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are really wolves that will tear you apart.” Matt 7:15 NLT

One young man that I know always has a smile on his face; it created an appearance which I could call either whimsical or quirky. Each Sunday, he'd come to church with his girlfriend (they were in a sexually intimate relationship). I would greet her with a hug and we'd exchange small talk. He was not one to talk a lot but he'd always give me his little smile along with a hug as a means of saying hello. They'd sit together in church, and seemingly all appeared well. Then one day, to my surprise, I met her brother at my doctor's office. He told me that she was there with him and that her boyfriend had beaten her up pretty badly.

The interesting thing is that our Pastor had just warned them about living a fornicating lifestyle and he rebuked this man for his explosive temper and begged him to repent (all hearers in the assembly were surprised that this mousey appearing man with the quirky smile, was volatile).

I saw this man about four days afterwards at the shopping mall. After the customary hug and smile, I told him that I saw his girlfriend at the doctor's office and that her eye was a mess. I asked him what had happened to his girlfriend's face. He told me as innocently as ever that he does not have a clue, because they had broken up and he thinks that she is seeing some other guy. I told him that I didn't believe him. However, the thing that made an impression on me was that I left our encounter feeling like *I* was the idiot for believing that this soft-spoken, genteel man with the quirky smile was a woman-beater.

Have you ever heard similar stories, or had similar experiences? On one hand, there is this regular guy who is real likeable and respected, but behind closed doors this monster comes out. Proverbs 26: 23-26 talks about this type of a person; one who talks smoothly and sounds pleasant, but it's only to hide a heart full of wickedness. He is a Jekyll and Hyde, a two-face, a chameleon! He is a master of deception because he has to hide his true nature.

Rev. Dr. Dorothy Ann Valin in her dissertation (2006) entitled, "Do You Hear Their Cries?" A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregation", speaks clearly on the chameleon characteristics of the abuser. She says "The abusers' ability to construct a positive persona... can fool their partners, therapists, and clergy. They deny and minimize the consequences of their behavior to themselves and to others. They have suppressed their angry, violent side that then erupts in places where they can express it without being accountable. Some of the domestic

violence research has explored whether abusers are in control of themselves or not. Many researchers have concluded *that they are in control of themselves, and point out that abuse does not often occur in public.*²³⁴ Abuse occurs privately in the home. Abusers can control and misuse power without being *accountable*. Our culture has maxims that we use to speak of this privatization. For example, we say, "Who knows what goes on behind closed doors?" We say this with a shrug of the shoulders and the implication that what goes on behind closed doors is none of anyone's business. We say, "Dirty laundry should not be aired." *In private space the shadow side of the abuser comes out. Survivors sometimes call their experience of an abuser as one of a "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". Clergy and parishioners only see Dr. Jekyll, who, to all appearances, is a fine upstanding and charming pillar of the church. Mr. Hyde hides and appears only to the survivor and to children in the family. The abuser covers his actions with a veil of illusion and denial.*²³⁵ (Valin, 2006) Emphasis mine

The abuser will do anything so he will not to be found out. It's self-preservation; nobody wants their darkest secrets to be revealed. The abuser will go to incredible lengths to employ various tactics of denial to veil his true nature. According to Pryde and Needham, one of the most common characteristics of an abusive person is a *passionate defensiveness*. This defensiveness will be extreme; he will *feverously* deny that he is abusive. If one were to confront him he would use whatever skill and force that is in his arsenal to divert attention from himself in order to prevent anyone from finding out his true behavior. He is very skilled and practiced at manipulating people so that his private life will not be known; he's had a lifetime of practice. In fact, just merely suggesting that he did something wrong, can provoke a strong emotional reaction. If perchance he admits to abusing his wife in some way, or even *acts* like he is sorry about it, he will turn the attention away from himself and towards his wife by blaming her and by pointing out all her deficiencies (even

if he has to make them up) in order to justify and convince himself (and others) that he has valid reasons for in his actions. An abuser who is exposed will often go to *incredible lengths* to gain support and get people on his side by convincing them that he was falsely accused. If a church leader or other is not aware of just how influential and persuasive an abuser can be, he or she will often be seduced into the abuser's desperate attempts to justify and defend himself. Believing the abuser will further damage any effort to bring him to a place of genuine repentance, reform, and restoration.²³⁶

What are some of the specific tactics which the abuser uses to keep others from finding out the ugly truth about him? Proverbs 26 talks of some: smooth words, pleasantness, flattery, and lies. Here are other ways which are explained by authors Debi Pryde and Robert Needham of A Biblical Perspective of What To Do When You Are Abused by Your Husband: ardent denial (John 7:20), shifting blame or making accusations (John 7:20, 8:48-52, 10:36b), twisting his wife's words and using them against her so that he can blame her in any kind of confrontation (John 7:20), manipulating the Scripture as a means of confusing or undermining a wife's confidence in her ability to think biblically (John 7:52, 8:48-52), misapplying or taking the Scripture out of context to stonewall her expressed concerns about his behavior, while also emphasizing that it is her responsibility to be submissive without any qualifying or modifying truth (John 7:21-23, John 7:19,22-24) [and] flying into a rage (John 10:33).²³⁷ I inserted the scriptural reference beside these behaviors that the abuser exhibits because I want to show, by comparison, that the Pharisees exhibited those same types of behavior towards Jesus. Also, this kind of vehement denial and passionate defensiveness, which Pryde and Needham speak about, is also corroborated by many studies.²³⁸

²³⁹In one study on male perpetrators , Levitt's, et al (2008), found a strong indication that the abuser knows exactly what

he is doing, and he knows it is wrong, and he also knows that God doesn't approve of how he expresses his anger. Mainly, he *does not want his behavior to become public knowledge. His strongest fear is that others will find out and betray his trust.* This deceptive chameleon type characteristic is what Jesus referred to as "white washed on the inside but filled with dead men bones on the inside." Jesus had much experience with this chameleon characteristic of deception with the Pharisees, and He shows us by example how we, the Church, ought to respond to it.

WWJD: Jesus would go public, uncovering and revealing the sin of abuse so that people will fear God.

"For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops" (Jesus) Luke 12:2-3 NKJV

"And if he refuses to hear them (two or three witnesses), tell [it] to the church." (Jesus) Matthew 18:17 NKJV (Notations mine)

Case A. Jesus revealed and uncovered abuse and He rebuked the (religious) abusers publicly in the hearing of all the people. There are occasions when He does this, but before citing those instances, it is important for us to first understand that everything Jesus did, was done in accordance with God's will and that there was a scriptural premise for such an action.

First, if done God's way, public exposure of sin causes a blow to the mind of the abuser. Embarrassment, shame and other social stigmatizations like being ostracized, mocked, loss

of like prestige, respect, esteem, status and even economic empowerment can occur. Secondly, public exposure of sin among God's people was also a precursor to physical death as well (See Numbers 16). Public disclosure coupled with swift penalty (death) is especially effective in discouraging sin (Deut. 19:20; Ecclesiastes 8:11). By so doing, God's people can *learn* to fear God.

God wants to discourage his people from sinning and so He instituted and executed penalties so that they can *learn* to fear Him. Learning doesn't occur by osmosis, one must be taught. "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that [is] within the gates, that they may hear, and that they may *learn*, and *fear the Lord your God*, and observe to *do* all the words of this law." (Deut. 31:12)²⁴⁰

One thing that came to my attention from this passage of Scripture, is that even the *strangers* (which can be symbolic of non Christians, nominal Christians, and religious hypocrites) can *hear* and also *learn from this open display, thereby building a reputation* that God (and His people) have a no-tolerance policy for evil.

God's people are all individual parts of one Body, and one person's sin impacts the entire Body. Therefore, for the benefit of the Body, the "cancer" has to be cut off before it spreads. If it is not exorcised, then the entire Body/Church/Christian community becomes sick. The fact that this is not being implemented today is one reason why the Church is in the current "sick" state that it is in today.

In Numbers 16, we see an example of where "private" sin impact the entire Body, and it was public exposure followed by quick punishment that caused God's people to fear Him. Numbers 16 tells of Korah's, Dathan's, and Abiram's rebellion - and of God's public response to it. He opened the earth and

swallowed them and all that pertained to them. He did this “and all Israel that [were] round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, lest the earth swallow us up [also].” (Vs. 34 KJV) After that, the people complained against what they felt was God’s unsavory actions (they still hadn’t *learned*) and so God sent a plague that wiped out 14,700 more (vs.49). In addition to that, God ended up doing an object lesson with Aaron’s rod. The Lord told Moses to “Place Aaron’s staff permanently before the Ark of the Covenant²⁴¹ as a *warning* to rebels. This should put an end to their complaints against me and prevent any further deaths.” Numbers 17:10 NLT (Emphasis mine)

There are many other occasions in Jesus’ life where He followed the Old Testament’s mandate and went public. In Mark 12: 38-40, we see Jesus *speaking out* publicly against the deceptive nature of the Pharisees; being *specific* and telling the people to beware! Also Luke 12:1-5 records, “...*when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together so that they trampled one another*, He began to say to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.” Jesus certainly made what was secret known, and though He was speaking to His disciples, He chose a public forum which was so crowded that it could be described as a mob.

Furthermore, Matthew 23 records one of Jesus’ “great exposures” of the hypocrisy of those religious leaders, where he also told them *repeatedly* that they will not escaped the punishment of hell (Vs; 13,15,16, 23, 25, 27,29, 33,and 36). Other places in the scripture also testify that God does not hide sin; God is the revealer of secrets (Daniel 2:28, 29, 47; Acts 5:1-11) not just spiritual revelatory secrets, but those sinful secrets kept in the closets of His people.

One of my favorite occasions where Jesus publicly exposed sin, was the incident with the woman caught in the act of adultery as recorded in John chapter 8. When Jesus told them to let the one that is without sin throw the first stone, we see the abusers (the Pharisees), responding with conviction and dropping their stones, they *dropped their weapons and walked away* (John 8:9b). Notice also that by the example of one (the eldest), the others followed. *By openly rebuking the religious leaders, others curtailed their own compulsions, and the fear of God resonated in their hearts.* The Scripture says that they were *“convicted by their own conscience.”* John 8:9a KJV It is a demonstration reflective of the Old Testament times; open rebuke impacts the entire community and causes them to fear the Lord.

Paul also expressed this manner of going public in a matter when an accusation is brought against an elder in the Church. First, he says that an elder in the Church who by his post of elder, is to be honored (I Tim. 5:1, 17), *but* if there is an accusation against him, there is a process which includes that his “sin [be] rebuked *before all, that others also may fear.... if* by two or three witness it’s found to be true.” I Tim 5:20 KJV (Emphasis mine)

Furthermore, Proverbs 26:26 refers to the man whose speech is charming but who has seven abominations in his heart (vs. 25), and when this is known, “his wickedness [should] be exposed in the church” (vs. 26). Open rebuke is better than secret love,²⁴² and serves many purposes, but mainly it gives God the glory by causing the church to fear God and also, shun sin.

Open rebuke, as demonstrated in the Old Testament, and as demonstrated by Jesus, and by the apostles, should be practiced by the Church today. The pulpit is one of the platforms that today’s church leaders can use to tell the sheep that an

abuser is in their midst. They need to follow *the pattern* which Jesus used when He cried out against the Pharisees in Matt. 23: 1-7, “Beware, there’s a wolf in sheep’s clothing among us! He verbally abuses and assaults his wife, and for a pretense he puts his arms around her, and says loud ‘Amen’s’ in the church service.”

Case B. Jesus called a spade, a S-P-A-D-E. He spelled things out. He told it like it is. In reference to the Pharisees’ hypocrisy, which is that deceptive and chameleon-type characteristic (See Prov. 26:23-26), Jesus “spelled out” their sins, as He denounced and criticized the religious leaders in Matthew 23:1-39. “Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, “The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses. So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example. For they don’t practice what they teach. *They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. “Everything they do is for show.”* (Vs: 1-5)

In this section alone (Matthew 23:1-39), Jesus denounced these religious abusers as hypocrites six times (vs:13,14,15, 23, 27,29), murderers (29, 30, 31, 34-36), who are blind (16,17, 19, 24, 26), who are snakes (33), and who will not escape judgment of Hell which is waiting for them (13,15 16, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33, 36). It was an explosive and passionate judgment which imaginably sent shockwave and fear through all the hearers.

In this same exposé, Jesus made a clear distinction between what was being displayed on the outside, and what really was on the inside of the Pharisees. He said, “What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, *but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence!* You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too. “What

sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.” Matt. 23:25-28 NLT

Jesus spelled out the details of those things they’d done in secret; they were scheming and taking money that belong to widows. Proverbial speaking, Jesus not only put their dirt on the overhead screen during the church service; He put it on *YouTube* and emailed it to the wider Body of Christ on the world-wide-web.

Many times throughout the years, sordid and unsavory behaviors of celebrated personalities like television evangelists, movie stars, sports heroes and politicians have been publicly exposed. Their reputations have been tarnished, and their indiscretions have shocked the world, but they quickly do things to amend how people perceive them. They do so by such actions as calling a press conference and declaring their remorse and their pledge to change their behavior (if for no other reason that their sin was exposed and it cost them millions in sponsorship). The lesson here is that it is a universal truth that public exposure followed by rapid consequence such as lost favor, lost following, lost sponsorship, etc. curbs bad behavior. It’s true when God did it (in the Old Testament), when Jesus did it (in the New Testament), and it’s true for the Church today if we would obey as Jesus did, and do what God says to do.

As a side note, have you wondered why Jesus would doom those religious leaders to Hell? Where was His mercy? It could be that Jesus knew that the sin of having a proud un-teachable heart is one that the Pharisees would not *repent* of. Similarly, the chances that an abuser, of whom these traits are characteristic, will repent and make restitution are slim to none.

In fact, one reporter, who researched the data, says that there are hardly any studies done on abuser reform. Perhaps this remains “intentionally anecdotal”. However, from his best professional guesstimate from what’s been done, he’d say perhaps 1-5% will change their behavior, but mainly they switch from one form of abuse to another.²⁴³ This should be a “reality check” for many Christians, who often times, are too quick to dispense “cheap grace” and “quick-forgiveness” to abusers. That is like a doctor dispensing a couple of Tylenol capsules as the treatment for cancer.

WWJD: Jesus would not side with the abuser regardless of how passionate and righteous he seems.

“This they said testing him that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.” John 8:6 KJV

Case A: One of the common character traits of abusers is that they, like the Pharisees are very passionate in their defense of their “righteous” position. When presented with the allegation of abuse, they will become emotional, and passionately deny any possibility that they would even consider doing such malevolence, not even in their *wildest* imagination. This ability to appear sincere is honed into a well developed skill from a lifetime of seeking to divert attention from their “other” life. It’s like a bird that flaps its wings, wildly squawking and dancing or even feigning injury in order to divert a predator’s attention away from its nest and its chicks.

This kind of diversionary tactic is seen in an example of wicked Hazeel whom God instructed Elisha to anoint as the next

king of Assyria. Hazael played out that defensive façade very masterfully when Elisha confronted him with the “outrageous” charge-- that he would murder women and children (II Kings 8:8-15). Hazael responded incredulously, “But what, *is thy servant a dog*, that he should do this great thing?” (vs.13). Here he is implying that never in his wildest imaginings would he ever do such an evil thing, only *a dog*, scum, a Hitler, would ever even *dream* of such an atrocity. Yet no sooner had he left Elisha that he lied to the king (vs.14), and *killed* the King the next day by putting a wet cloth over his face and suffocating him to death (vs.15).

A “Hazael” is the kind of person that may be quoting the Scripture one minute in passionate denial of his abusive and violent behavior. The next minute he may be emotionally and/or physically pulling the trigger of a gun aimed at his wife’s temple. This “Hazael factor” is why it is never recommended that one confronts an abuser until after the victim’s safety is ensured, as 75% of domestic violence homicides occur during or after the victim has left the abuser.²⁴⁴ Remembering this may just prevent the wife from being further abused or even killed once the abuser has left the Pastor’s or counselor’s office.

We see from Hazael’s example, that however passionate or sincere the abuser may appear on the exterior, it serves only one purpose - and that is to make one believe that there is righteousness and not the hate and murder that truly is in his heart.

The Pharisees were very skilled at this also, as demonstrated in their persistence in presenting their case on that occasion with the woman caught in adultery.²⁴⁵ They did have a valid point, even if it was skewed, *but* despite their passionate and persistent arguing, they were not successful in enticing Jesus into being on their side. “When they persisted in questioning him he stood up ...” because He had taken a

stooping posture and was occupying Himself with writing on the ground the entire time they were trying to get Him on their side (John 8: 6,7).

With that type of persistence one has to stand firm by remembering that a man's eternal soul and a woman's life and soul, are both at stake. If Jesus had been 'won over' by the Pharisees' persistence over their rightness, that woman would have been stoned to death and her accusers would have left feeling justified in their sin. Likewise, church leaders and others must not be won over by the "Hazel" behavior of the abuser. If care is not taken, it can end up costing that sister, who the church is to protect, such things as a verbal battering, increased and tightened control (for security measures against future exposure of the abuser), a costly beating, or her very life.

Case B. Another of the attention-diverting tactics that an abuser may employ is to perform a series of acts that look like he is very sorrowful and repentant. But this kind of sorrow is *not* godly sorrow. This is just another attempt to keep the focus away from his dirty laundry being examined and all the stains of his various sins of abuse being exposed. Esau (described as an unclean and profane person) was truly and sincerely sorrowful for despising his birthright, but there was not repentance for him.²⁴⁶ One of Jesus' own disciples, Judas, had an earthshaking sorrow; he was very sincere but it was not godly, "he was condemned" and he committed suicide.²⁴⁷ By the way, it is not uncommon for an abuser to play the suicide card (threaten to kill himself in order to control or get the victim to comply with his demand) as a part of their sorrowful (yet controlling) act. This is just another manipulation tactic. One might be truly sorrowful but that doesn't mean he or she is sorrowful for the right reasons or that there is a desire to walk in repentance. True repentance is not emotional displays; true repentance is *walking* a changed life.

The Greek word of repentance is *metanoia*. It means: "...to change any or all of the elements composing one's life, attitude, thoughts and behaviors concerning the demands of God for right living." ²⁴⁸ It's evident that repentance involves a 360 degree change manifested in all aspects of a person's life. Doing a sympathy act is just another ploy the abuser uses to get others to side with him, and Jesus does not side with abusers no matter what "face" or what exterior emotional façade or what defense mechanisms they use.

Case C. Abusers are very skilled manipulators and it is not uncommon for them to 'buddy up' with a church leader or counselor. By associating with someone godly in the church, he can cast a righteous reflection while at the same time deflecting suspicion and attention away from his true nature.

This type of behavior of "buddying up" or "feign innocence by association" was seen in the Apostle Paul's ministry in the story of the woman with a spirit of divination. She made Paul's acquaintance. She followed him and his party for *many* days. She was saying all the right things, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." (Acts 16:17 KJV) Anyone who didn't know better would assume that she was one of his entourage. It would seem that her reputation of one having spiritual (spiritist) gifting would only add credibility to Paul's ministry and she would *appear* to have a common vision and purpose by associating with them. However, it was not the Holy Spirit that was operating in her it was a spirit of Satan. Similarly, Church leaders must be careful to not fall for any camaraderie-building behaviors attempted by the abuser. Such behaviors may include: shared jokes, sports conversation, phone calls for prayer support, favors, playing the victim of his wife's poor spirituality, domestic weaknesses or moral lapses. He may even increase his financial gifts and/or his participation in church activities; but his main reason is to be visible and to get

close to the person(s) who is being asked to believe and support his wife.

In addition, if a church leader or person of accountability is “caught up” in the deception, it makes it less likely that the abuser will be brought to a place of genuine repentance and change. This message can’t be stressed enough, especially since men are prone to be more partial and understanding to other men, because they “speak the same language”. Paul however, charges that one should not show partiality or favoritism “in the sight of God, *and* Christ Jesus *and* the elect angels” I Tim. 5:21 KJV (Emphasis mine). As Christians, we have to lay down our own personal propensity for bias and be good shepherds or good brothers or sisters by protecting the little sheep that “the wolf attacks” (John 10:12b).

There *is* hope for both the abuser and the victim. Being caught up in the abuser’s veneer of righteousness will not help him get to the depth of the truth, which is where his hope lies, and also it ties the bonds of abuse more tightly around the victim.

WWJD: Jesus would not be afraid of confrontation; He would go ‘man to man’ and ‘face to face’.

“And the scribe came down from Jerusalem and said He has a demon... so Jesus *called them* to himself and said to them, how can Satan cast out Satan?” Mark 3:22-23 KJV

Case A. In Mark 4:22-23 we see that Jesus did not allow “fear of confrontation” to avoid facing the abuser head one. “And the scribes came down from Jerusalem and said He has a demon... so Jesus *called them* (the Scribes) *to himself* and said to them,

how can Satan cast out Satan?" Mark 3:23 KJV. Like Jesus did, a Church leader is to *call* that sinning husband aside and not act as if he doesn't know about the abuse. Speaking to the abuser can possibly save his soul! Jesus did not talk to the Pharisees behind their backs, but He customarily spoke to their faces. He needed to, in order that the words He spoke may have its effect. We, like Jesus, are not responsible for how people respond to the truth; we are only responsible to speak the words of truth to them.

Case B. It is not an easy task to confront others about their sin. It takes a lot of courage to overcome the fear. Someone fittingly said that "courage is fear that has said its prayers", and Jesus Himself overcame any fear that might have tempted Him to avoid speaking the truth, because there is no fear in love, but perfect love cast out fear (I John 4:18).

We can see that it is love which compelled Jesus to speak the truth reflected in the words He spoke immediately after He condemned the Pharisees' hypocrisy in Matthew 23. One could even hear His broken heart as He bemoans "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem; the one who kills the prophet and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing: See your house is left to you desolate..." (Matt. 23:37).

It is *love* that should compel the Church to speak out and holler "Wolf!" so the sheep can beware. It is *love* that should compel the Church to confront the abuser if *perhaps* he will repent, and it is *love* that speaks the truth despite the fears, because perfect love drives out fear. Jesus is love Himself and it is because of love why He chose to publicly confront people whose sin seeks to destroy members of His body, defame His testimony, and disparage His name.

Chapter 14

Grace: Forgiveness, Repentance, and Reform of the Abuser

Although the primary response of a congregation should include one of advocacy for a victim, for this is what Jesus exemplified, the church also has a responsibility to the abuser. Mainly, that he comes to a saving knowledge of Christ, if he hasn't already, *and* that a new heart through Jesus Christ be made *manifest* in his life (Gal. 2:20). Christ can only become manifest, or clear and visible by putting off the old sinful habits (such as "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language... and lying..." (Col 3:8, 9 KJV) and putting on biblical ones ("mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another...") Col. 3:12, 13 KJV.

In order for the abuser to stop those ungodly habits and walk empowered in godliness, the Church must first overcome its own sin of avoiding such issues as hate, control and lust which is entrenched in the character of the abuser. One main way in which the Church avoids or ignores the abuser's needs is to offer him superficial forgiveness rather than righteous forgiveness. Often times, the Church forgives the abuser so quickly, that it can skirt past or evade his sins and the disaster area that the tornado of his abusive and violent behavior has left behind. The Church needs to better understand God's grace, His forgiveness, and what true repentance really means. These are things which the abuser is in dire need of, and things which he must encounter in order for him to make legitimate steps towards wholeness and reform.

With this in mind, one important way in which the Church can help abusers, is to work with them in being *accountable in their process of change and in making reparation* to survivors. These are actions that demonstrate repentance (Acts 26:20), being careful not to confuse remorse with repentance. Remorse involves only feelings; repentance is God-given and is *evident by one's actions*. [An example of this is seen in Esau who was remorseful after selling his birthright, but he was not repentant (Heb. 12:17). Also, I mentioned earlier that Judas also was remorseful but he was not repentant]. The Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Corinthian Church, "Now I am glad I sent it (the letter with instruction), not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and *change your ways*. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. *You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right.*" 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 NLT (Emphasis mine)

If the abuser just cannot bring himself to repent (he is a slave to sin) he should be encouraged to *pray* and ask God to *give* him repentance. After all God is the holder of man's heart and the giver of repentance (Prov. 21:1; Acts 5:31, Acts 11:18, Romans 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25). The Church cannot work with the abuser without his willingness and cooperation. If the abuser is unwilling to work with the Church, then the Church must demonstrate the love of God by taking the next biblical step of church discipline as outlined in Matt 18:15-17, I Timothy 1:20, I Cor. 5:5 and other places. It is also very important to remember that *the law exists for lawless persons*, and it is godly and right to involve the legal system with *law-breakers*.

John MacArthur makes reference to a person who only gives “lip service” to a profession of faith in Christ, but whose behavior is not consistent with his testimony. He says “*No Christian, will be sinless in this present life, but it is dangerously deceptive for Christians to offer assurance of salvation to a professing Believer whose life is characterized by persistent sin and who shows no shame for that sin or hunger for the holy and pure things of God. They are headed for wrath (Eph.2:2) and Believers must not partner in any of their wickedness (Eph.5:7)*”²⁴⁹ These sagacious words can be partnered with I John 2:4 which says, “He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” KJV

Another important thing that the church is called to demonstrate to the abuser is mercy and forgiveness, but without that multifaceted process of repentance-in-action, quick and superficial forgiveness, just amounts to being soft on sin (God forbid) or, what some term as *cheap grace*.

Because many churches have been all too quick to forgive the abuser without any accountability on the part of the abuser, I think that the church needs to be reminded of how valuable grace really is. Though grace denotes a variety of things, in the context of forgiveness, grace means being forgiven though we don’t deserve to be; it’s unmerited favor (Deut.7:7-8; 2 Chron.30:9; Eph.1:6; Titus 2:11; Heb. 4:16). According to the New Unger Bible Dictionary, “Grace is what God may be free to do, and indeed what he does, accordingly, for the lost, after Christ has died on behalf of them.”²⁵⁰ Jesus died so we can receive that which we don’t deserve. Most Christians have an understanding of that definition, and so tend to want to dispense grace liberally and without thought. They forget that God didn’t give His grace to them without a condition attached, mainly a repentant heart (Luke 17:3, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:38, Acts 5:31,

Acts 11:18, Romans 2:4, 2 Timothy 2:25. Also see Joshua 24:19).

Cheap grace is forgiveness without requiring repentance, without discipline, without personal confession, without the cross, and ultimately without Jesus. As Joshua 24 outlines, forgiveness is conditional and if the conditions as God commands are not met, “He (GOD) will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” Joshua 24:19

In the name of grace, the Church also urges the victim to forgive quickly and reconcile with an abuser, *but put little pressure on abusers to repent or stop their behavior*. This action is unbalanced; it’s an unjust weight which is an abomination (Proverbs 11:1). The Apostle Paul declares, “*I do not frustrate the grace of God.*” (Gal. 2:21) Neither is the church to frustrate the grace of God!

An example of cheap grace being dispensed to an abuser is exemplified in a church members’ response in a study about congregational response to domestic violence. Melanie, a Sunday school worker in a children’s ministry shares her response: “*God is a God of grace . . . and there is a place for appropriate rage . . . but we need to follow God’s example, and not be an unforgiving servant . . . If I run across true domestic violence, I refer them to the counseling center, but they aren’t always strong on children. . . . A lot of families are dealing with alcohol and drugs. . . . I do believe that if an abuser has repented and was forgiven, he could come back and work with children. . . I believe in God’s grace.*”

The researcher who facilitated the interview correctly commented that “Melanie ends her thoughts on forgiveness with the conclusion that she would allow known perpetrators to work again with children... This minimizes the process of repentance and the intractableness of the urge to sexually or physically

abuse children. Keeping our children safe is our primary concern. Melanie's approach can place children in harm's way and this is the last thing a church should want to do."²⁵¹ Cheap grace!

The following story is one which comes out of the same study done by Dorothy Ann Valin (2006). It is the story of a church that has had the experience of having two known abusers in its midst. In both cases, they were child molesters. Here is a situation where the church dealt with the abusers by offering forgiveness as a way of evading their sins (intentional or not). The result of this seemingly religious action and doing what was right "for the good of the church", brought about death and destruction, rather than God's peaceable fruit of righteousness.

The story is introduced here with the assistant pastor of the church telling how he responded to abuse in his church, which is identified as "Rock Church". "I never worked with anyone experiencing domestic abuse or abuse of any kind at this church. . . well, I did get a letter from a person who said, 'I can't tell you who I am but there are people in this congregation who are being abused.' . . . that was pretty frustrating and we couldn't find out who it was . . ." When the researcher asked him what he did about this, such as making a public prayer for the person or preach on it, he said, "I didn't do anything . . . no one ever came to me and said they were abusing anyone either . . . oh well, once a person did say he had sexually abused his two daughters . . . and he wanted to confess it to the men's group. We talked it over and he did confess it and *he got a warm reception.*" (Emphasis mine)

The researcher said that at this point she thought that an abuser who told the men's group about his abuse was really a positive development, until she found out from the other pastor that the confessor never really *said* he had sexually abused his two daughters. The associate pastor said about this man: "He

asked if it was OK (to tell the details of the sexual abuse of his daughters to the men's group) or should he sanitize it? . . . so we told him to sanitize it and he said something like, "I hurt my girls," rather than naming it as sexual abuse. The *men were very supportive*, but I don't know what would have happened if he had named it sexual abuse. . . . *I believe he is forgiven by God, and that in the atonement some kind of cosmic exchange took place and the definitive things is that God and good will win, and evil will lose. . . . that's the good news.*"²⁵² Cheap Grace! (Emphasis mine)

Studies such as this which has direct testimonials from pastors and congregation members, epitomizes the picture of the church saving embarrassment, saving face, showing partiality, demanding no biblical accountability of the abusers, and being soft on sin, even in severe cases. The more severe the case, the bigger risk of embarrassment and deep involvement, but that is really a part of the church's job description, and it shouldn't be shied away from.

In another incident with the same church where the assistant pastor had said, "*I never worked with anyone experiencing domestic abuse or abuse of any kind at this church*",²⁵³ there was a situation where a youth leader was accused by teenage boys of inappropriate behavior.²⁵⁴ After speaking with the youth leader, the church decided that he had used "bad judgment" while staring clear of naming sexual abuse or any immoral or sinful act. A year later the youth leader, who had since moved to another state, was convicted and imprisoned for sexual assault and rape of two teenage boys - an ill-fated consequence which might have been averted if the pastors had not shown partiality and favoritism,²⁵⁵ and had not given out superficial forgiveness. The pastors also acted without conscience towards the abusers' (and the victims') needs.

In the case of the first man, it was evident that he still had some feelings left in his seared conscience that caused him to admit to “hurting his girls”. That was a situation where the embers of hope were still smoking and a flame could have been rekindled. It could also have been that he knew that he would not be held accountable for his actions and that his buddy-group was a safe, non-accountable place for him to confess. We will never know the truth because the opportunity for repentance and healing was denied him. This story of Rock Church’s response to these abusers holds so many object lessons, including that they did not expose the sin in accordance to 1Tim. 5:20-22 and other places in Scripture. However it is apparent that their misunderstanding of grace, forgiveness, and repentance, and their responsibility to help the abuser reform, was not addressed in any way. Because of their blindness, they shared in this youth leader’s sin, and are, in part, responsible for the assault of the two out-of-state teenage boys. Also, the church’s action was a stumbling block to the aforementioned teenage boys whose concerns were dismissed. Years later, these boys cited this incident as a big obstacle to their faith, and one reason why they believe that Christians are hypocrites and Christianity is not the truth. It can be construed that the entire fiasco was a result of the church dispensing *cheap grace* to the abuser!

As the above scenarios implicate, the church is inclined to dispense forgiveness without true repentance. Also, in relationship to this, the Church expects the victim to act in the same manner as it does, and forgive the abuser in the equivalent quick and superficial manner, without any kind of expectation from the abuser. This is seen as one way in which the Church itself reinstates the abuse of women. This type of “cheap grace” is used as a tool of oppression when it is wielded by the church to evoke guilt upon victims by stressing that they need to forgive an abuser.²⁵⁶ Oftentimes, that is the solution the Church offers for the abuse, as if that will have any real effect upon the abuse, by lessening it or by influencing the abuser to change his ways.

Jesus is more concerned about people's salvation (both victim and abuser in this case), and grace, which is a gift from God and not to be cheapened, is available to those who have a broken and contrite spirit exhibited in true repentance.

WWJD: Jesus would grant repentance and forgive to those who *with repentant hearts, ask for forgiveness.*

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with *the mouth, confession is made unto righteousness.*" Romans 10:9-10 NKJV (Emphasis mine)

"He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." I John 2:4 NKJV (Emphasis mine)

"For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." 2 Corinthians 7:10 NKJV

Case A. Whether we forgive or not, is not in question here; most everyone agree that we must forgive. However, the topic of forgiveness can generate many questions. Some include: When must we forgive? Do we forgive without the transgressor(s) asking forgiveness of us? And, how do we ensure that we do not cheapen the gift of grace by using forgiveness in a superficial way? If we look at Jesus' life, and how He dispensed His Grace and forgiveness, we will discover the conditions that existed which caused Him to dispense forgiveness to some but not to others. Also, we will gain some understanding of the state of the

persons who were the benefactors of His forgiveness. By so doing, we can be Christ-like and forgive (or not offer forgiveness) in the same manner as Jesus.

Looking at Jesus' life, we see examples of Him forgiving many individuals. "Your sins are forgiven you" He said to the paralytic, who didn't even ask for it with his mouth, but who demonstrated repentance by his actions (and that of his friends). He demonstrated that he wanted nothing of his old life; he only wanted the new life which only Jesus could give him (Luke 5:19-20; Matt. 9:2).²⁵⁷ The other end of the spectrum was also in play on that occasion, in that while Jesus was offering forgiveness to the paralytic on one hand; on the other hand, He was chiding the Pharisees for the evil condition of their heart (Matt 9:3). He did not turn to *them* and say "your sins are forgiven" because He was in a forgiving mood. *They* desperately needed forgiveness but they didn't see where they had a need to be forgiven. Jesus knew they had a need but He did not cheapen His gift of forgiving their sins since they would have despised it. The only thing the Pharisees got was a rebuke: "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?" (Vs. 4)

Case B. Jesus was on the cross with two thieves who needed forgiveness but He only offered forgiveness to the one who, out of a broken and contrite heart, asked Him to remember him when He gets into His Kingdom (Luke 23: 38-42). The other thief was in the exact same position, but Jesus did not cheapen His grace by giving what was holy to dogs, and offer him the keys to His Kingdom because he would have trampled them under his feet like a swine in slop (Matt. 7:6).

Case C. The woman who kissed Jesus' feet and wash them with her tears and dried them with her hair and anointed them with oil, had the privilege of hearing Jesus' words, "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). She had done something demonstrating her faith,²⁵⁸ which Jesus said had saved her. "Your faith has

saved you” He told her. In the same house, Jesus was surrounded by others who seemingly wanted Him. Simon, the host of the party, had invited Jesus. Offering Jesus an invitation into his personal space and having an intimate dining experience with Him, by all appearance, indicated that He wanted a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus. However, Simon didn’t want Jesus on Jesus’ terms; he wanted Jesus on his own terms. Some men are just like Simon, they want to get the benefits of being around Jesus but they don’t want to change their lives to line up with His. Would the forgiveness that Jesus gave to Mary be a benefit to Simon? No, it would not. However, Jesus did give Simon what Simon was most in need of, and that was a corrective word.

Case D. In Luke 17 (which is a follow up of the account of the rich man dying and being in Hades, while Lazarus was in Abraham’s bosom), Jesus confirmed that what is done in this life counts for eternity.²⁵⁹ And therefore, whoever offends another in this life is at risk of eternal damnation (Luke 17:1-2). However, with the light of eternity in mind, Jesus Himself challenges us to forgive the offender, *if he repents*. Jesus is clear that forgiveness is only followed by repentance.

WWJD: Jesus would require the abuser to “do works befitting repentance” (Acts 26:20b).

“...they should repent and turn to God, and *do works befitting repentance*.” Acts 26:20b KJV (Emphasis mine)

“And if a man borrows anything from this neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall make it good.” Ex. 22:14 NKJV

Case A. In Luke 19: 1-10, we read the story of Zacchaeus. A man who though an abuser of the power he had as a tax collector, wanted Jesus desperately, as evident in his actions of climbing the sycamore tree to see Jesus. Zacchaeus was evidently joyfully that Jesus invited Himself to his home. He didn't even ask Jesus into his life, but Jesus knew from Zacchaeus' efforts that He wanted the hope of a new life which was promised in Jesus. In the presence of Jesus and other invited guests, a repentant "Zacchaeus stood, and said to the Lord; 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore it fourfold.'" (Vs.8). What was Jesus' response to Zacchaeus? Did He say that's not necessary Zacchaeus, your change of heart is enough? No, Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house..." Jesus echoed what the prophet Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 33:15 "[if] the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die." Also, verse 19 says "When the wicked turns from his wickedness and *does* what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it." Zacchaeus demonstrated real repentance by making compensatory and restorative actions to those whom he had taken advantage of and abused; Jesus commended his actions as righteous according to God's commandment.

Case B. Jesus was specific in His admonishment to bear fruits worthy of repentance, which shows a restorative pattern of repentance, not only to the Pharisees, but to others as well. Matt 3: 8 and Luke 3:8-14, records an instance where Jesus told the religious abusers, not only to repent, but to "bear fruits worthy of repentance". Luke 3: 8-13 also records that Jesus told the tax collectors (known abusers of power) who came to be baptized; that there is more required of them after their repentance as demonstrated by being baptized, they are to now collect no more than what is appointed for them to collect. Likewise, he also told repentant soldiers (known abusers of power) that their fruit

of repentance is that they are not to intimidate or falsely accuse anyone, and that they should be content with their wages. This principle of making restitution to those, whom one sins against, is not only common to the way of the world, but it is a Kingdom principle which Jesus taught, endorsed, and commanded.

Case C. Leviticus 6:1-7 records God's own words to Moses saying, "If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely-in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: then it shall be , because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen...*He shall restore that which he took violently away....He shall restore its full value, add one fifth more to it,* and give it to whomever it belong, on the day of his trespass offering. ...so the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these thing that he may have done in which he trespasses." NKJV (Emphasis mine) Exodus 22:14 also echo the same message; it says, "... If a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall make it good." NKJV

An abusive husband who injures his wife, and robs her of such things as her peace of mind, her sanity, her right to self autonomy, her money, her teeth, and such things, is commanded to make things right. As seen in Lev. 6: 1-7, when a man causes harm to others he is really sinning against the LORD, and making restitution is one condition by which he will obtain forgiveness. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and works that are evident of repentance, is what Jesus would require.

If the Church is to help the abuser and bring him to a right standing morally, ethically, and spiritually, the abuser must be taught that he must demonstrate his repentance with acts of righteousness as God requires him to do, so that, according to Ezekiel 33: 15, 19, “he shall live.”

WWJD: Jesus would do godly and righteous things rather than religious and nice “Christian” things that the church mistakenly thinks He would do.

“Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it...” Luke 19:45 NKJV

Case A. Today’s the true Body of Christ is experiencing a lot of social pressure to be popular, have mega ministries, be politically correct, and be tolerant of sins like homosexuality and other anti-Christ religious expressions. Along with that, there is the fear of being labeled as narrow-minded, homophobic, and of being stigmatized. Such pressures have caused the Church to compromise godliness in order not to be offensive, therefore it is guilty of being religious and nice, rather than being like the Jesus who said “I did not come to bring peace but a sword, For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” John 10:34-37 NKJV

Jesus said these words within the context of sending his disciples out to “the lost sheep of Israel” - those members of God’s people who have “gone astray” in some ways; similar to

the Christian man who is an abusive mate and who suppresses the fact that he is a backslider. Jesus' disciples were sent out with gifts to give to these "lost sheep". They were to proclaim the good news that the Kingdom the Heaven is near, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons, and freely give all that they themselves had received from Jesus (Matt. 10:7-8).

These things are what the true Church of Jesus Christ has to offer the abuser today. But, because the Church does not want to pay the price (See Matt. 10:16-25)²⁶⁰ of being hated, possibly being sued for "slander" and "emotional distress" caused by speaking the truth to "bottle-sucking, pacifier-popping, diaper-changing" Christians,²⁶¹ it has failed to do the things for the abuser which Jesus really would do.

Many secular programs geared at reforming abusers/sinners are not as effective as what Jesus has given the Church the power to do for the abuser. The studies which I've found about abuser-reform programs indicate that abusers don't reform, and if they do change, they only exchange one form of abuse for another.²⁶² It is found that the best reform measures in the secular world community do not work. Neither counseling, protective orders,²⁶³ arrest, nor can any other innovative program affect any significant change in the behavior of the abuser.²⁶⁴ Jesus' actions are radical, they are offensive, they don't compromise nor do they tickle people sensibilities, but if His disciples today do as Jesus would, the abuser can have a chance at hope, health, peace, and life as shown in Matthew 10.

Case B. Another thing Jesus would not do, even though many Christians today believe that He would, is that Jesus would not send His followers to mental health specialist. Jesus was (and still is) *the* mental health specialist. He went about healing his own people who exhibited symptoms of what we would now refer to as mental illness labeled schizophrenia , bi-polar, multiple

personality disorder, or anything else that would make someone, for example, throw himself down to the ground and have violent convulsions when there is nothing organically wrong with him (Luke 9:42).

Jesus would not even send outsiders (or non-believers) to specialist as seen in His dealings with the Syro-Phoenician (Gentile) woman whose daughter was so terribly afflicted mentally, psychologically, and emotionally (Matt.15: 21-28). He healed her Himself.

Nowadays however, psychology, psychiatry, and psychotropic drugs are very much a part of the social fabric, and it is woven into the Church. Church members seek relief from these means just as much as other members of society. Many Christians think that if a “Christian” label is attached, it’s sanctioned by Jesus. Many Church leaders choose to send their hurting members (victims, abusers, and others) to “specialist” rather than going to the “specialist of all specialists”, Jesus.

The things of the world are never a substitute for the things of God. Jesus did refer persons to others for follow-up *after* he healed them (like the priest) in agreement with the law,²⁶⁵ (as should the Church). In addition, Jesus had nothing against physicians,²⁶⁶ but Jesus did not wash His hands of His responsibilities, He did not minimize His responsibilities, and He did not utilize means outside of God’s directive. He did not cuddle those who use excuses (psychological, physical, or otherwise) to minimize or justify their sins against God and man. Jesus was radically righteous even if He was not very “Christian-like”.

For example, as far as Jesus is concerned, drunks today have to go to the foot of the cross for salvation and deliverance from their sins, just as they had been doing for centuries. But nowadays, drunks are no longer classified as sinners but are

diagnosed as having a disease called alcoholism, and the cross of Christ is no longer seen as effective. Salvation for the drunkard is now found in group counseling and in programs with several steps. Church leaders in general believe that they are not specialists in dealing with drunkards, so they send them outside into the world to specialists like “Anonymous Alcoholics”²⁶⁷ for healing and deliverance, rather than leading them to the cross of Jesus Christ. By doing the “Christian” thing, the Church has lost sight of the Christ-like thing.

It is unscriptural to label a drunkard sick and it is also unscriptural to attach a “sick” label to an abusive and violent man; as far as Jesus is concerned, a man who is an abuser (verbal, violent, or otherwise), has a *sin* problem. He wasn’t excused because he was labeled as “sick” and given a diagnosis of Intermittent Explosive Disorder. He wasn’t left at the mercy of his sin to keep him a lifetime slave to his sin-pattern. He wasn’t left hopeless, being told that even with such help as cognitive therapy or such drugs as Tegretol,²⁶⁸ he is doomed to be bipolar all his life.²⁶⁹ Jesus cured the sin because Jesus Himself *is* the cure for sin. If therapy and drugs can cure sin, then Jesus died in vain, and His Word is as good as toilet paper, but that is not so.

The Church needs to be the source of hope and new life for the abuser. Let the Church do as Jesus would do, and offer grace as expressed in repentance and forgiveness as Jesus models it. In so doing, the abuser can be free of the sin pattern that enslaves him and live a life which can be a blessing to his family, and many others.

CHAPTER 15

Counseling the Abuser by Using the Biblical Approach

In our modern times, we are entrenched with knowledge; the Bible says that in the end times, knowledge will increase (Dan. 12:4). Today like never before we have available such philosophical theories, psychological approaches/methodologies, and psychotropic drugs that address almost every imaginable concern there is about the workings of the mind, mental health, and man's behavior. We are in a sense very fortunate to be living in such times of increased knowledge, but the downside for the church is that, with all this mass of "wisdom", it has lost sight of the only consistent, never-changing, always sufficient, absolute in authority on the mind, Word of God -THE HOLY BIBLE (2 Tim 3:16-17; Matt. 4:4; Ps.19:7-11; Heb. 4:12).

The Bible does not need to be complimented or partnered with anything else. It's not God's words plus psychotherapy, or God's Word plus psychotropic drugs, or God's Word plus psychology. The Bible stands all by itself, and it does not apologize for its exclusivity in declaring that it is the single and only true Word of God.²⁷⁰ It makes no excuses and it does not compromise.

When used to treat the ailments of the heart, soul or mind, the Bible has clear solutions to all problems and does not have to rely on conjectures, theories, or guess-work like secular mental health treatments do. Rather than having to guess and explore around into various areas of one's life to get an

indication of how well he or she is coming along in the counseling process, the Bible has specific and clear indicators which are used to measure one's degree of success in resolving a problem or sin. The Bible has concrete and specific standards of right and wrong; whereas the "science" of psychology vacillates, shifts, changes with the times, and view an individual's concerns through the lens of relativism. Relativism brings confusion because Dick, Tom, Harry, and Fido, each has their own version of what truth is, whereas, the Bible is the Truth.

The Bible is foolishness to the world, but it is the main tool which the Church has (and needs to use) to rebuild the brokenness of all emotional, psychological, and relational walls damaged by abuse and sin. The Scripture outlines God's prescription for a successful life. Jesus' behavior and His overall mindset exemplifies and models God's standard for man, and the Holy Spirit empowers man to go through the process of changing into the image of Christ by using God's Holy Word. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4 KJV) Jesus customarily quoted and used the Scripture in His ministry and the Church is to follow His model.

WWJD: Jesus would use the Scripture (and His own Word which is akin to God's) as the main resource to minister healing and wholeness to the victim and to the abuser (Heb.4:12, Matt.4:4) ²⁷¹

"All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Tim. 3:16-17 NKJV

Case A. Would Jesus still use the Scripture at a time when mankind's knowledge of psychosomatic "illnesses" and the use of psychotropic drugs are at an all-time high? Is the scripture still relevant and effective in light of our modern advance knowledge? I can safely say that such worldly knowledge is foolishness in light of God and His Holy Word (1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor.2:15-17). Unlike man's knowledge, all Scripture (not all translations or manuscripts) *is* God inspired (2 Tim. 3:16). There is no other material or resource that equals that of the Holy Bible. It is the only existing manuscript, spiritually speaking, that as an autographic text is inspired by God. Naturally speaking, the integrity of the manuscripts, specifically the Textus Receptus (from which the King James Version is translated) surpasses the highest standard of textual criticism.²⁷² It is applicable to the health of the whole man: spirit, mind/heart/soul, and body (2 Tim. 3:15, Ps.19).²⁷³

David testified that God inspired his words ("The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word [was] in my tongue." 2 Sam 23:2). Jesus affirmed that the Holy Spirit inspired David ("For David himself said *by the Holy Ghost*, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Mark 12:36 KJV). Peter also affirmed that the Holy Spirit spoke through David, and other holy men of God (Act 1:16). God even wrote a portion of it with His own finger (Ex.31:18; Deut.9:10). Furthermore, Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 declaring that Word of God is indeed the source of man's life (Matt 4:4). It is unfeasible that Jesus would consider any other resource as having the same level of effectiveness in ministering to His Body, the Church.

Case B. Jesus had confidence not only in the authority of God's Word but in the effectiveness of God's Word to work powerfully on the heart, on the mind, and in the life of the sinner, the abuser among them. According to 2 Tim. 3:16-17, "*All* Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in

righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” KJV (Emphasis mine)

Chuck Smith in his commentary on 2 Tim. 3:16 said that the Bible’s purpose is declared in this portion of scripture. He outlines those six purposes:

“1. That you might have the correct systematic understanding of God, Jesus the Messiah, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, the plan of redemption, the hope of our heavenly future.

2. That you might know how God would have you to live; to reprove us when we go astray from His straight path.

3. To correct us when we are wrong, or do wrong.

4. To instruct us in the right way to live so that our lives might be pleasing to God, and that we might live in fellowship with Him.

5. That we might come into a spiritual maturity.

6. That we might become thoroughly furnished for every good work.

a. That we might become equipped to be everything that God would have us be.

b. The Word of God in our hearts will give us power over sin. "Thy Word, have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee."²⁷⁴

This outline helps expand upon 2 Timothy 3:16 and provokes one to give more carefully consideration to the purpose and also to the effectiveness of the Scripture in meeting all their emotional and psychological needs.

Case C. The word of God is especially effective in matters of the mind and heart or to put it more succinctly, the Bible is the single most effective psychological resource to heal any mental non-organic ‘disorder’, emotional upset or “chemical imbalance”²⁷⁵...period! I did not make this claim myself; God said it! “The law of the Lord is *perfect converting* the soul.” (Psalm 19:7a) Can perfection be improved?

In Psalm 19: 7-9, the most incredible listing of accolades about the virtues of the Scripture are presented: God’s Word, the Holy Scripture is perfect²⁷⁶ (complete, whole , entire, unimpaired, sound, upright, full), sure²⁷⁷ (firm, supported, reliable, trusty, established, steadfast, lasting), right²⁷⁸ (fitting, proper, pleasing, straightforward, correct, just), clean²⁷⁹ (pure on all counts: morally, ethically, ceremoniously) and true²⁸⁰ (having sureness, reliability, stability, continuance, faithfulness; as divine instruction, and true doctrine).

What other acclaimed cures or means of treatment can meet such a standard? Put this instrument to work in the area in which it is designed (the mind and heart of each and every man), and it can meet any need. If Christians chose to apply it, it can be the hope of Christians in every circumstance. According to Ps.19:7-11,²⁸¹the Scripture is the perfect instrument to convert the disobedient back to living out God’s ways in their relationship to Him and to others. The miracle is that it is not just a surface change, but the change occurs in the deeper places of the mind: our emotions, our passions, our desires and appetites, our will and our character (vs.7, 8).

It can make a person who is gullible, susceptible to deception, even self deception, wise; they will come to their senses whereas before they were clueless and gullible (vs7b). Sadness, heaviness in heart, feeling weighed down and other feelings that are associated with what is commonly called depression, is resolved by doses of Scripture, which produce

gladness, happiness, contentment and thankfulness, thereby restoring the emotions and rejoicing the heart (vs.8a).

Most times, the reasoning behind life's adverse and overwhelming experiences is not understood, but the Scripture also gives a Christian understanding (vs.8b). Additionally, the Scripture is the answer to any and all types of non-organic emotional conditions which many blame for causing compulsive and addictive behavior patterns that have dominion over us (verse 13). Verse 13 of Psalm 19 particularly speaks of those behaviors that are habitual behaviors (sin) produced from arrogance, pride, insolence and presumption; sins which manifest in abusive behavior patterns in the abuser's life.²⁸² It is the Scripture that specifically promises victory over the practice and power of sin so that the Believer can be righteous in thought as well as in behavior. The Scripture offers hope to both the abuser and the victim, and it is what Jesus would use to minister healing to them.

WWJD: Jesus would use the Scripture to reform the abuser by impacting and changing his heart and mind.

“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12 NKJV

A new life requires a new heart. Conviction and repentance takes place in the heart; and in order for true change to occur in the abuser's behavior, his *mind* and *heart* has to be transformed. The heart of a person is the seat of his feelings, and his desires (good or bad); it is the source of his emotions,

his affections, his disposition, and everything that influences his behavior. If an abuser's heart is not transformed, any positive behavior change that is manifested may be a mask put on by the abuser to the serve some dishonorable motive. Psychotropic drugs will also change one's behavior because it organically affects the workings of the brain, but it does not touch the heart of a person.

Only the creator of man can change man's heart and His main tool is the Scripture made alive to man's mind by the Holy Spirit. Jesus used the only thing that impacts and changes the heart; He used God's word! (Heb. 4:12)²⁸³ What other psychological instruments can come close to changing a man's soul: his heart and his mind?

Case A. Jesus used His words, which brought conviction, and changed the behavior of self righteous sinners. We see that when Jesus spoke to the abusers of His day, His words had a changing effect upon the behavior of the abuser. His words also had a saving effect on the victim.

In the story of the woman caught in adultery²⁸⁴ when the Pharisees tried to set Jesus up by asking what they should do to the woman, Jesus answered "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone" (John 8:7). What effect did these words have on the abusive Pharisees? John 8:9 says it had the effect of "convicting the conscience" of the abusers! "...and they who heard it, **being convicted by their own conscience,** went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the least; and (until) Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in their midst." KJV

Not all translations spell out so clearly the reason that these accusers left the woman alone with Jesus. This same verse (John 8:9) translated in the New International Version says "At this time those who heard began to go away one at a time..." It doesn't say *what* caused their change of heart and behavior.

However, the King James Version spells it out clearly that it was *Jesus' words that* convicted their own conscience. To better understand what took place, it is useful to look at the word "convicted". In Greek, the word convicted is "*elegchō*, it means to expose, to rebuke, to refute, to show fault, tell fault, to convince.²⁸⁵ Jesus' words had the *effect* of exposing them, of rebuking them, of reflecting their faults back to them and of convincing them of their wrong to the point that they changed their behavior and dropped the stones. That important message of **conviction of sin**, is lost in some translations, but it is exactly what Jesus did, and it is what the Church (church leaders, counselors, and lay members, etc.) need to expect from God's Word. Using the Scripture brings conviction, which purposes to expose, rebuke, show fault, and *sear* the *heart* of that husband who is abusing that one whom he is commanded "to nourish and cherish like Christ does the Church." (Eph.5:29)

Case B. Another example of the Word of God at work upon man's heart as described in Heb. 4:12, is found in Acts 2:37. After the Pentecost experience, Peter explained the Scripture to give the people an understanding of the Gospel, "Peter's words *convicted* them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" (NLT) The word *katanyssomai (Gk)*, which is translated as convicted in this context of Scripture, is one that means a piercing of the mind to extreme sorrowful emotions. If there is going to be any change in the abuser's life, the only tool that has the power to work on the inside where the change *needs* to occur is the Word of God! It's the only mind and behavior modification tool that will work, if implemented as directed.

WWJD: Jesus would use the Scripture to change the *behavior* of the abuser.

“...put off... your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,... putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.... Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the Devil.... Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ... Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers... Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.”
Ephesians 4: 25-31 NKJV

The world does not have any such tool which can pierce the mind of the abuser to extreme sorrowful emotions, or bring conviction of sin to his conscience. There is a consensus that abusers do not change their ways. As previously mentioned, this hypothesis has been researched, and findings show that neither counseling, protective orders, arrests, nor innovative programs, indicate any significant change in the behavior of abusers.²⁸⁶

Babcock et al (2004)²⁸⁷ did an analytic review of 22 studies of treatment programs for violent males who are domestic abusers. One main type of treatment is the Duluth model which educates men to change from “power and control” behaviors, to “equality” behaviors. The other main type of therapy is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) which seeks to re-teach men (who they believe learned violent behaviors and sexist attitudes) non-violent behaviors using anger management and other similar types of techniques. There were also other treatment-models evaluated in the 22 studies. Overall, findings from this analytic review showed that the treatment programs had no measureable significant benefit in preventing abusers from relapsing back into abusive behavior patterns, and neither

did the result reflect that one method of treatment is better than another.²⁸⁸

Furthermore, one abuser-reform program called *Emerge*, which was founded in 1977 and claims to be the first abuser education program in the United States, speaks from decades of experience as a leader in working to end violence in intimate relationships by educating the abuser. According to Emerge's webpage entitled "*Can abusers Change?*" abuser-reform is a flawed concept. Regarding abusers changing their abusive behavior, Emerge states that "...change does not occur overnight, *if it occurs at all*, and many group members drop out along the way. Long-term improvement in behavior is more likely for a group member who has a personal investment in making changes and completes the full program, *but even that is no guarantee. Many abusers continue to be violent and controlling after attending batterer intervention groups.*"²⁸⁹ (Emphasis mine)

Additionally, other studies from the past done by B.D. Rosenfeld (1992)²⁹⁰ Dr. Edward W. Gondolf, EdD, MPH (2000),²⁹¹ and Nora K. Puffet and Chandra Gavin (2004),²⁹² support the belief that abusers rehabilitation programs have no measurably significant rehabilitative benefits.

However, when people walk in obedience to Jesus' words (the Scripture), 100% success is guaranteed and their lives are changed regardless of such factors as age, race, social status, or the size and seriousness of a problem.

The goal of all Believers is to be transformed into the image of Christ by the renewing of their minds (Rom. 8:29; Rom. 12:20). Therefore, every Christian must live a lifestyle where they make daily choices to deny their fleshly inclinations and put off their sinful choices, however habitual (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:8-9; Rm. 13:12). Instead, in place of the old and familiar, they are to put

on righteousness by making the godly choices (like Jesus made) in accordance with God's Word (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:12-13).

For example, a person who is abusive should receive guidance that can help remind him to make choices to stop the old habit by "Putting off...anger, wrath, malice...filthy communication out of [his] mouth..." (Col.3:8-9). After he has chosen to stop himself, in place of the old responses and behavior, he must purpose to "put on...bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering... [and] charity" (Col 3:12,14). *He can only do this by the power of the Holy Spirit however.*

Case A. This is not just "lip service". This is a process of creating new *habits* which will develop into a lifestyle made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit. This change is seen in Jesus' encounter with a man whom I'd imagine, as a rich tax collector for the government in those days, had the 'bling', the 'crib', the 'ride', and such trappings that goes with his notorious position. That man, Zacchaeus was an example of someone whose life as an abuser of the constituents was totally changed by putting on new godly habits. He put off financially abusing others with his deceiving, manipulating, and stealing ways, and he demonstrated repentance by creating a new habit of giving money back (four times more). His new lifestyle of making restoration was empowered by faith in Jesus (Luke 19:1-9).

Case B. Jesus' encounter with Saul of Tarsus had a dramatic and revolutionary impact on Saul's behavior. Saul was a murderer, a zealous persecutor and henchman of Believers; he was a violent man whose religious beliefs were his motivating factor for abuse (similar to most so-called Christian abusers). However, one encounter with Jesus changed his heart, *and* his behavior. He chose to put off the old behavior pattern and put on righteous behavior. Among other things, he preached the gospel, planted churches, wrote epistles, and saved lives.

This “put off/put on” principle is seen throughout the Scripture; in fact, our faith is demonstrated by active obedience (‘put on”) to God’s word. A Christian must even subject his thought-life to active obedience. An example of this is shown in Phil. 4:8, where we are to put off or “take captive” old thoughts by “demolish[ing] arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.” 2 Corinthians 10: 5 NIV

The second part of active obedience, is *putting on* thoughts that are obedient or in line with Christ’s. Phil. 4:8 tells us the type of thoughts that we are to put on. In place of evil thoughts we are to put on (or think upon) whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good, and virtuous. The mind can be changed, thoughts can be changed, and behavior can be changed. Also, Romans 12:2 states, “Don’t *copy* the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God transform you to a new person** by **changing the way you think**. Then you will **learn to know** God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” NLT (Emphasis mine)

Jesus used His words to make that transforming behavioral change happen. Other reform or rehabilitated programs do address a changed mindset, and they do address behavioral change, but the one thing that is lacking is the person of Jesus Christ who through His Holy Spirit can empower the abuser/sinner to successfully reform and change his behavior.

While rehabilitation programs are spending valuable resources aimed at transforming the abuser by getting him to change his behavior, the Church has the answer. Why does the Church transfer its faith from what is certain to what is of little or no effect? It is not hard to discern what Jesus would do; Jesus would use the word of God quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit, to change the abuser’s old heart and mind - a transformation from which derives new behavior patterns grounded in love. The Church has the best resource in the world

to help the abuser change his heart, his mind, and his behavior.
The Church has the Holy Bible.

PART IV

THE CHURCH

FOLLOWING

JESUS' EXAMPLE

CHAPTER 16

Changed Lives: From Destroyer to Restorer

There are many who would say that *their* situation is impossible for God to fix. Some believe that although God has the ability to change circumstances, He would not do that for them personally. The Scripture say otherwise. I Corinthians 10: 13 states that whatever situation one person is going through, it's not that unique to that person, it's rather common to mankind, and that God can turn things so that a trial or temptation can be endured. The Word also says that the heart of the King is in the hands of the Lord and the Lord turns that heart whichever way He wants (Proverbs 21:1). God can and does change people; He can change their hearts and He can change their circumstances, no matter how terrible a shape they're in. The Scripture also says that God is not a respecter of persons, meaning that what He does in the life of one person, He will do for another, regardless of who he or she is. (Acts 10:34, 35; Eph. 6: 9; Col. 3: 25; I Pet. 1: 17).

And God changes lives. He rescues His people from the hands of abusive and violent men (Psalm 140:1)), and He also changes those who are hard-hearted and cruel, into people who love and who give love to others. He makes destroyers into restorers.

Case A. The Bible records in Acts 5:15, that some of those who were among Jesus' own abusers were converted. Their former state of blindness and hardness to the things of God was changed to where they had become followers and worshipers of

Jesus. Acts 15:5 says “But there rose up certain of the sect of the **Pharisees which believed**, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses”(Emphasis mine). Pharisees! Were there former abusers of Jesus among them, former companions of abusers of Jesus, former consenters of abuse, and former enablers of abuse? I believe there were because this is the sect with the same religious doctrines, traditions, beliefs and behavior that Jesus encountered. Apparently they still had some of their legalistic ways as this verse attest to, however *they were Believers!* Not perfect, mind you, but former abusers and religious hypocrites who made a radical choice to die to self and religiosity, and live for Christ. These men were former abusers who were now born again by the Spirit, transformed by the renewing of their minds, and behaving in a manner that more and more reflected the glory of God.²⁹³

Of course the most infamous Pharisee was Nicodemus who did not participate in any abusive behaviors towards Jesus, but by his silence and secretiveness, he unwittingly gave consent to it. Nicodemus was a “closet” disciple, and one of the two men who embalmed Jesus’ body and laid Him in the tomb (John 19:38-42). One can also imagine the incredulous and transforming impact that Jesus’ resurrection must have had on him. It is reasonable to think that he was among the sect of Pharisees who were transformed and living new lives as true Christians.

Also, along with some of the Pharisees, the scriptural record tells us that *a great many* of the *priests*, who formerly were against Jesus, also believed and became disciples of Jesus. Acts 6:7 says, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and *a great many of the priests* were obedient to the faith.” Priests could be Pharisees or Sadducees (Acts 23:1-9); the one thing

Priests had in common was that they were from the tribe of Levi. So, even though we are not told what religious or political sects these priests were from, we do know that they were formerly enemies of Jesus, who were converted to become believers in Jesus. We also know that it was a *large* number of them - former destroyers who became restorers through Jesus Christ.

Case B. Undoubtedly one of the most renowned conversations recorded in the Bible is that of the Apostle Paul. This former religious zealot and persecutor of Christians personally testified, "I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it" (Galatians 1:13). Without embellishment or lengthy comments, the scriptural record describes the atrocious behaviors which categorize Paul (formerly Saul) as an abusive and violent person. Act 8:1-4 said among other things that "he made havoc (stigmatize, defile, injure, ravage, devastate, ruin) of the church, entering into every house, and haling (dragging) men and women committed them to prison." Acts 8:3 KJV (Insert mine)

Also, we have on record that there was at least one murder that he personally took part in. We know this because the book of Acts tells us that he was commissioned by the Chief Priests with a legal contract designating him to be the hit man for his sect (Acts 26:10-12), and as the head-honcho, "[he] was consenting unto his (Stephen's) death." Also, he was present at the scene of the crime (Acts 7:58), in unity as one with the murdering mob where, "they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord." (Acts 7:57) The murder was immediately followed by the crowd's act of paying homage to Saul (as one would a leader) by laying down the clothes at his feet (Acts 7:58). Therefore, along with Paul's own testimony of his insane rage against Christians (Act 26:11); it is not unreasonable to speculate that he personally participated in the actual stoning of Stephen.

Additionally, Acts 9:1 tells us that Saul (Paul) was a man who was “breathing out threatenings and *slaughter* against the disciples of the Lord...” (Acts 9:1 says he was “*still*” doing that, indicating that this was how he customarily operated). He ascertained “contracts” on the lives of Christian men and women, disseminating letters to “Damascus and to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.” Acts 9:2 KJV By his actions, deeds, and words, which reflect his heart, he certainly was a murderer as defined by God.

This description of Saul paints a picture of an abusive and violent man, for whom any previously mentioned secular abuser reform program, would not have made an inkling of a difference. Saul could not be transformed from an abuser to a person who restores life to others he’s wounded by learning new non-violent behavior or learning respect or tolerance for others who believed differently. Saul had an ingrained religious belief and mindset that was rooted in centuries of generational religious beliefs about God and what his duty was as a devout religious man and leader in his synagogue. The only thing that could change Saul into a new person - heart, mind, and soul - was a personal encounter with Jesus which he had as he journeyed to Damascus.

That conversion experience is recorded in Act 9:3-9. The transforming effect that this encounter had on Saul’s (Paul’s) life was immediate! For three days immediately following, his repentant heart was reflective in neither eating nor drinking; afterwards upon receiving his sight, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and being baptized, he “*straightway*... preached Christ in the synagogues, that He [Jesus] was the Son of God.” Acts 9:20 KJV (Emphasis mine). Paul made it his life’s calling to restore and to build up what he had sought to destroy. He lived like Christ and encouraged others to believe in Jesus and to also live their lives modeled after Jesus.

By his own acknowledgement, he was the hardest working apostle of Jesus Christ (“I labored more abundantly than they all; yet, not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” I Cor. 15:10). His life was so radically transformed that even his name, which is an essential part of one’s identity, was changed.

Today when we think of Saul, we think of a different kind of person than the individual we identify as the Apostle Paul. Saul the abuser was changed to Paul the restorer by the person of Jesus Christ, and that same hope awaits each abuser today because God is not partial; He not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes. His mercies endure forever and ever. The same God who changed the hearts of those who formerly abused Jesus, and the same God who changed a murdering zealot of Christian men and women, is the same God who can change the wicked heart of any abusive and violent man today! He can turn a heart of stone into a heart of flesh; He can heal what is hurt, mend what is shattered, and restore what is destroyed.

CHAPTER 17

Jesus in Action within the Church

There are many church leaders who are being Jesus in their “Christ-like” response to domestic violence and abuse towards Christian women and others. Their names are not publicized in the media and no songs are written about them, but to the sheep they shepherd, they are heroes because they care for their welfare and they express their love in actions. They preach the entire Word of God without compromise and they, by their radical walk of obedience, exemplify Jesus. They walk in humility, they are true servant leaders, and being good shepherds, they are not afraid to call out evil and protect the sheep from wolves.

There are also many church members, Christian women and Christian men, who avail themselves to help those victims that they know, are in need of their help. In the cases presented below are examples of three pastors who are responding to Christian women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse as Jesus would. Their stories are followed by a testimony of one Christian woman, who chose to love a victim of abuse as Jesus would have, even at the risk of her own life.

Case A. Essex is neighbor to Baltimore City, and the congregation at New Life Sanctuary Church of God in Essex, Maryland, is in part, and made up of mainly urbanites who are working class people. Some are on welfare, unemployed, and many have a colorful past which include drug addiction and prostitution. Domestic violence and abuse is usually woven into

the fabric of their past lifestyles. The pastors of New Life Sanctuary Church of God, Dr. Larry Miller and Pastor Blaine Kubin, are examples of Jesus in action within this Church. The eldest co-pastor, Pastor Miller, who is often mistaken for the janitor or maintenance worker (though he has three PhDs), is the most exemplary servant leader to those he shepherds. Some church members think it is embarrassing to see their pastor haul trash and do the other menial things which he does, but he says Jesus is a greater servant than he is. He also says that his PhDs are synonymous to toilet paper and everything else which he has acquired over the years is just “stuff”.

He is no tolerance for church leaders who “lord” it over their mates or those they shepherd. He preaches servant leadership to fellow pastors, and he leads by example. “Never asks someone to do something you are unwilling to do yourself”, he customarily says. He preaches on the issue of what constitutes a godly marriage, the role of husbands and wives, and the issue of domestic abuse and violence is publicly addressed. He is not a power-hog; and he empowers and has birth a record number of leaders throughout his 40 plus years in ministry.

Pastor Miller also has a heart for the underdog. He is especially intolerant of domestic violence in the Christian home. He has gone to the house of the victim to stand up to her abuser, and he takes the additional steps necessary to ensure her safety. He has posted pictures of abusers in the church foyer so that the ushers and church members can be vigilant to ensure that particular abusers do not come on the church property to intimidate and harass Christian sisters. He has taken money out of his own account many times to give to victims and he also gives them food from the food bank (he stocks the food-bank by picking up the food himself). He also allows them to “shop” at the church’s flea market for anything they need. Once a police chaplain for the local county police, he has a high regard for the

legal system, and he does not embrace abusers who are lawbreakers. He is a compassionate soul and he counsels many people who are in need of emotional help, and he also uses God's Word to guide them into changing their ungodly behaviors to behaviors that are more Christ like.

The other pastor of New Life Sanctuary Church of God is Pastor Blaine Kubin. Pastor Blaine, who often declares is that he is not there to win a popularity contest, creates a no-tolerance atmosphere for sinful behavior or mindsets. He spends countless hours counseling hurting church members through the Scripture, prayer, and deliverance. He preaches the whole Scripture in context, bursting the religious bubble many members have, and he also provokes them to study the Bible for themselves.

He has, and does publicly call out single individuals (and couples) who (married or not) the Holy Spirit shows to be living in such unrighteousness as fornication, anger, and abuse. He lovingly encourages their public repentance as he calls them up to the front of the church. He vehemently warns abusers and others who are practicing habitually sinful behavior patterns, of the high price which they will have to pay if they don't repent and he encourages them to submit to the Holy Spirit and to the process of sanctification.

Pastor Blaine honors women in his sermons and repeatedly preaches that wives are to prefer Jesus and love Jesus more than their husbands; and if a husband wants her to do something dishonoring to Jesus, it is *unbiblical* for her to obey him.

Both pastors of New Life Sanctuary Church of God are instrumental in creating an atmosphere where the church members would desire to be free from such strongholds as abuse, victimization, addictions, curses, and other sins which

customarily afflict individuals whose lifestyle and philosophy is serving self, rather than serving God.

Most particularly on a Tuesday night service it is not uncommon to see a drag queen, street people, homeless, prostitutes, drug addicts, punk rockers, repentant Satanists, along with young and old Christians alike, at the altar requesting prayer, seeking deliverance, and crying out to God for salvation. God's love has a magnetic effect on people.

People gravitate to the love of God and the power of God manifested in the ministry of His Church. When Jesus is "in the house", the atmosphere is not "safe" or traditional; Jesus' love activated by the power of the Holy Spirit, sets the captive free and heals hurting hearts. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and by His Church giving and helping folks in practical ways, abuser's change, and victims live victorious lives through Jesus Christ.

Case B. Another church whose leadership reflected Jesus in action was reported in a study done by Rev. Dorothy Valin (2006).²⁹⁴ This Church is La Iglesias Vida Nueva (New Life Church); it's in an urban community, its congregation is mainly Puerto Rican, and Pastor Jorge (a pseudonym) is the Pastor. What I like about Pastor Jorge, is that this man has failings, and yet, his passion for salvation, sanctification, and discipleship in the area of domestic abuse and violence among Christian women and others, is evident in his radical behavior. He demonstrates many of the same things which Jesus exemplified in His dealings with abuse and violence.

Pastor Jorge admits that he himself has been abusive in his behavior towards his son. He also admits his past ignorance on the issue of domestic violence but he chooses to be open-

mindful and be knowledgeable by being personally involved in people's lives and by educating himself and his congregation. He showed the film "The Burning Bed" and invite experts more versed on the topic to speak to his congregation. He is a compassionate man who listens to the victim and who seeks to restore the abuser. He is not fearful of confrontation and he relates how he once threatened to beat up this brutish father who was beating up his daughter. God used that act of intervention to halt those beatings and to bring that man to a place of being a regular attendee at the church. Pastor Jorge addresses the abusers of both children and spouses, and young men who were raped in foster homes.

Pastor Jorge also addresses gender issues in his church and he tells the members to respect women. He involved other resources in the community that are there to meet the needs of the lawless, etc. He has reported abusers to Division of Child and Family Services. He names domestic violence for what it is and he does the same with racism, even if some of his parishioners don't like him doing that. Pastor Jorge's radical actions are more in alignment with what Jesus would do, more so than most church leaders today and because of this he is able to say, "...I have seen the power of God in transforming the lives of men and women...who have gone through abuse and domestic violence...Faith is not a closet experience."²⁹⁵

Case C. One Christian woman's testimony

One brave Christian woman tells her story of her encounter with another Christian woman who was a victim of domestic violence and abuse: "I was a victim of domestic abuse. My husband would tell me that I was the most hardened Christian he'd ever met, and that I was going to hell. He'd taunt me about hell's fire so much that, in my mind, I could feel the fire on me feet, and I would scream out loud like a crazy person. That man was such a terror, but thanks to the many women who

talked some sense into me and showed me love, I am at a place emotionally where I could help someone else.

When I met her (the victim) I never met somebody so fragmented before. I've never been to war but I imagine that's what war victims are like. I met her at church when I simply greeted the person sitting next me and asked "How are you?" My question was like a trigger bursting a dam because we ended up leaving the sanctuary where she uncontrollably blurted out this incredible story. It was unbelievable, but I gave her the benefit of the doubt because I was married to an abusive man for 15 years at the time.

She told that her husband was a police officer and an ex-military officer trained in espionage and interrogation. His brother and other relatives were also police officers in the same county. Throughout her years of abuse, she could not call the police for help because they covered up for each other. She told other people but no one believed her. She went to the women's agency in her county, but since her victimizer was also a county employee- and an officer of the law, they went from initially advocating for her to becoming a part of her nightmare.

She was in a legal battle at the time, and her attorney was referred to her by her husband's friend and he worked on her behalf like it was her husband that was paying his fees, and not she. Her attorney was soaking up all her money. The judge in her case was a golfing buddy of her husband's attorney and his bias was evident. She was the joke in the legal system in that county since all the agencies, and all persons of the legal system (who were involved in her case) were unwavering in their support of her husband. She was ordered psychiatric evaluation and the psychiatrist turned around everything that she said, and used it against her, corroborating her husband's story in court. There was no justice for her.

Her husband lied about her to the principal of her children's school, the teacher, and to fellow mothers and neighbors whom she had a relationship with for many years. They dismissed her as the crazy person and as the drug-user that her seemingly upright and respected police-officer-husband, told them she was.

I did not swallow her story initially but I was willing to trust her until I could find out "the truth" for myself. I decided to be her friend and help her in whatever way I could. I kept her company and avail myself for endless phone calls. She could talk without taking a breath it seems; just hoping someone would believe her story. She spoke and moved like a jittering motor that lost its control. She was propelled by artificial stimulants like caffeine (she was constantly drinking coffee); nicotine (she chained smoked) and she took prescription pills.

Along with that, her husband had done a number on her mind. Her emotions were so frazzled that in court, it was she who was her own enemy at times. Her attorney would just have to outright tell her to "Shut up!" That didn't help her case any.

My choice to stay by her side for the next two years was because Jesus gave me a heart for this woman. I chose to be her mentor and supervisor each time she was allowed to see her children. Her husband was granted temporary (later permanent) custody of her children and she was ordered not to be alone with them. Her children were taken from her. Her husband moved three hours away with her children to live with another woman, whom her children were encouraged to see as a true mother figure. She had to do a six-hour round-trip drive to see her children, and I would go with her sometimes.

Each day I took notes and documented unbelievable things I saw her husband doing. I realized that I was pretty much going by faith in believing her because it wasn't until I witnessed

some of her husband's antics that I fully believed her. Once he tripped his child and made him fall down some steps; he then looked up at her from the bottom of the steps and yelled at her for pushing the child down. She was nowhere near the steps; she didn't even move from where she was standing. I could see the whole thing from where I was positioned in the house but he didn't see me watching.

I took off from work to be at the courthouse each time to testify, even if the hearing was a sham; the judge didn't even call any of *her* witnesses, but he'd give plenty of time to her husband's. I did finally get called up (the only one on her side) and after one minute of actually going over my record, the judge interrupted me and sent me back to my seat.

She was abandoned all around. Her siblings and even her own *mother* behaved like her enemy (her stepdad was also a police officer). There was fear all around; old friends were also afraid of being targeted by the police so they stayed away from the whole mess. I could have been targeted by the police and I believed that I was in danger, but I had a mother who was praying for me and I myself walked in constant prayer and faith, being careful to stay under the protective umbrella of Jesus Christ.

I let the Lord use me anyway He wanted to. I know I was His 'mop' a few times because I cleaned house like I never had before in my life. (She was too overwhelmed emotionally to even do housework and she was even ordered out of her home). I also did what I could to protect her from other men in our church who were not true Christians. One man's idea of ministering to her was borrowing money from her after he had "ministered" to her in the bedroom (He never repaid the money). Another man also wanted to "comfort" her by having sex with her but when she refused; he maliciously lied about her to cover his reputation.

I told the pastors about them and one of them was asked to stop praying over people at the altar.

I was her spiritual mentor because though she had made a decision to follow Jesus at one time, her lifestyle at the time no little semblance of Him. I prayed with her, studied the Bible with her, and in general, became a surrogate spiritual mother.

I recommended her to the manager of my office, who hired her on a temporary basis. I trained her for a secretarial position which she moved into when it became vacant. Also, she received a grant for school, and I supported her in a graduate program in Business Administration. And I also mentored her while she was in the program. She now is a salaried professional and she is in a safe place financially.

It has been a few years since we last spoke but as of our last meeting, she was in a good place. She no longer took prescription pills and she drank coffee like a normal person. Her children spend weekends and the summer months with her and she was rejoicing about how good God was to her.

This lady has testified, and I know that it is true, that if I were not there for her during that time of her crisis as a victim of domestic violence and abuse, *she would have killed herself!* Praise God, I allowed Jesus to use me.... She said that she had gone to two churches before coming to ours (where she met me) and both pastors of the previous churches told her to stop crying and be a submissive Christian wife. I'm glad the Lord used me and I knew other women like myself who let the Lord use them to help women who are in need."

As this Christian sister's story testifies, there are people within the Body of Christ who are behaving like Jesus would toward women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. They are pastors who care for hurting people, both those who

are victimizers and those who are victims. There are leaders in the Body of Christ who risk their ministry by preaching the whole truth and who do not compromise for the sake of popularity or for the sake of not causing offense. There are fellow Christian women who were victims themselves and who have now become helpers to other victims of domestic violence and abuse in many forms. There are Christian men who were former abusers who are now ministering to other men and to the general body of Christ by bringing a message of hope to both victimizers and victims. There are church leaders, biblical counselors, and others who are sold out to God's Word and to Jesus Christ, and who are ministering to victims and to abusers by helping them to become whole human beings.

Jesus Christ offers hope to all. He is calling all men whose lives are out of control, and He is calling *all* women who want to be free from being controlled. One doesn't have to be a victimizer or a victim of domestic violence and abuse, to receive the inexpressible joy and glorious peace which Jesus has to offer. Jesus wants each of us to be like Him and to do as He would do. He is calling you today.

EPILOGUE

A New Life: An introduction to Jesus

We've looked at this area of domestic violence and abuse towards Christian women in the Church; with the primary message being that there is hope for change. Hope that faith in Jesus and what He has done, and commanded the Church to do, will be restored. Hope that the Church can be a means of help for its own people, hope that the church can change the tide of negative influence in patriarchal and male dominance mindset that it has had upon society. Hope that faith can be restored in the effectiveness of God's word-the Bible, and in the work of the Wonderful Counselor- the Holy Spirit. Hope that Church leaders and persons of influence within the Church (pastors, counselors, and lay members) will reclaim the church's former role as counselor, rather than depending on secular mental-wellness experts of psychology. Hope that Christian women will be set free from religious strongholds about their roles as wives (and that of their husbands) by knowing what Jesus teaches, what He would do, and what He expects of them and others. However, the source of real hope to everyone is found in the person who is The Truth, and that is Jesus the Christ (Messiah). In order for this hope to manifest on a personal level, multiply in the Church, and expressed to others, one has to come to the place of actually having a personal encounter with Jesus.

This book was written with the understanding that though many readers may profess to be Christians or may be church goers, they may not have a personal relationship with God. Going to church does not make one a Christian anymore than standing in a garage makes one a car, or going to Burger King

makes one a hamburger. Therefore I'd like to explain "the purpose of life" so to speak, for the benefit of those who are tired of religion, and would like to have a true relationship with God.

The importance of knowing God

Most of us give more thought to planning a vacation than to a relationship with God, and what that means to our present life and to our eternal life which begins after we die. In my early years, I personally spent more time planning the outfit I would wear the following day than I did to planning my entire life, both here and after I leave this earth. I took for granted that I was OK with God because my mother was the godliest person I knew. She was a saint. I never thought that God had anything to say about what He expected from *me*. I had a Christian mom, I went to Church, I never killed anybody, and I tried to be a good person all the time. Also, I believed in God.

At the time it didn't occur to me that all the reasons which I thought was enough to make me OK, didn't cut the mustard with God. I was religious, but as we have seen from Jesus' response to the Pharisees' religious ways, God is not a fan of religion. The devil himself is a strong believer in God; he is the author of religion²⁹⁶ but he is *not* OK with God. Yet, I expected religion to save me. My ideas about getting to know God intimately and finding meaning to my life was different than God's, and I needed to get on board with God's way of doing things, rather than resting on my own ideas about life.

God has set standards

In this world, there are rules and laws that govern everything. There are laws of physics, laws of nature, laws of society, moral laws, and spiritual laws. Most people will consent that there are laws that govern our universe, our solar system,

and even our lives. They will also consent that if a law is broken; chaos will pursue. For example, if the gravitational pull of our planet was off even slightly, catastrophic universal chaos would ensue. When moral laws are broken, we experience inner discontent and unrest. Societal laws are in place to keep social chaos under subjection. Yet when it comes to spiritual laws, we think it is OK to make our own spiritual rules, and relate to God in the way we think is right for us. We even make up our own gods or think we are justified giving consent to some mysterious or mystical "higher power".

It stands to reason that there are spiritual laws, and that if these laws are broken, chaos will be the end result. There is one God and He has put spiritual laws in place that, if we do not align ourselves aright with His laws, our lives will result in chaos. Lack of peace, lack of meaning, emptiness, un-fulfillment, are some of the chaos which we experience in our daily lives because we are not aligned spiritually with God's plan for our lives.

We see the importance of following set standards even in the mundane things of our everyday lives. Here are some other examples for consideration: A plant does not grow because one chooses to put the seed wherever he wants to, like under a pillow perhaps. The seed must be planted and light and water must be present for it to grow. We don't get issued a driver's license because we can ride a bicycle; we have to meet the criteria set by the state's motor vehicle department. We don't get a college degree or a high school diploma just because we show up for class every day; we have to meet the criteria set by the educational system. Nor are we hired for a job without meeting the job's qualifications. There are even set standards and protocol for gaining audience with our leaders. For example, to gain an audience with the President of the United States, we can't just walk up to the White House and expect to see him just

because we voted for him. There is a set standard which one has to follow for gaining audience with the President.

If such standards of operation are applicable in our human society, why do we imagine that we can come to God in any way which we determine is OK, as if Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, has no set standards or criteria? It is paramount that you and I know what God's protocol is, in order to gain access to Him. If we don't know for certain, we are left to follow whatever religious means we personally choose, whether it's for traditional, historical, customary, or individual reasons. When we know for certain what God's criteria or set standards are regarding our relationship to Him, we can then make a purposeful choice to follow God's way or exercise our free choice and go our own way; at least we will no longer be ignorant even with the knowledge that chaos will be the result.

Fortunately for us, God does have a criterion and a way by which we can know Him, have a personal relationship with Him, and fulfill the purpose of our existence. No one can have a relationship with God apart from going through the one and only means which God provided. That way is Jesus, the Messiah/Christ, and the Savior of the World. Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6 NKJV

Meeting God's Standard:

In order to fulfill the purpose for which we were created via having a personal relationship with our creator, we have to explicitly and accurately follow *His* roadmap, follow *His* plan and meet *His* standard of righteousness. We have to meet *His* criterion. Let's face facts, most of us would not meet the academic or financial criterion necessary to go to an Ivy League school like Yale or Harvard, nor would most of us meet the

criterion to have an audience before any of the world's leaders or dignitaries. If most of us fall short of meeting standards which are set by mere man, what chance does anyone have of meeting the standards or criterion set by God. God's standards are so high that nobody can qualify or attain it - *apart from His help*.

Most people, if they were asked why they believe that God should let them into Heaven (or into His good graces), would likely reason that God should let them in because they are essentially good people. Some perhaps would list specific deeds on their life's resume (like giving to charity or working among the poor), or some may just honestly say that they are hoping that God, in His goodness, would have mercy on them and let them in. However, the Scripture says that good works, a good personality, or hoping and praying for God's favor, does not meet God's criterion. On our own we fall short. Below are some Scripture verses that tell us so.

- “But we are all like an unclean thing and all our righteousness (good works) are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah 64: 6 NKJV
- “...yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and *not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*” Galatians 2:16 ESV
- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, *not of works, lest anyone should boast.*” Ephesians 2:8, 9 NKJV
- “And the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as the person who has broken all of God's laws.” James 2:10 NLT

Nicky Gumbel, renowned leader of ALPHA,²⁹⁷ gives this illustration to demonstrate how pathetically man's standard of doing good works and having a good heart, measures up to God's standard: Imagine you took a marker and drew a line on a wall beginning from the floor by your feet and stopping somewhere in the middle of the wall by your shoulders. The bottom of the line represents the worst-of-the-worst human beings (where we'd probably put Adolph Hitler who is responsible for 11-17 million deaths or Mao Tse Tung right below him since he is responsible for the death of about 70 million people). The very top represents the best of people (where we'd probably put Mother Theresa, my mother, and probably yours also). Where on that line would you put yourself? (Most people, including myself would probably put themselves somewhere in the middle or close to the top). The question is then asked: where on this measurement, would a line be drawn to indicate God's standard? God, by definition, is above Mother Theresa or the best of us; so we'd likely say that God's standard goes beyond the top of the line - to the height of the ceiling perhaps. However, the truth is that God's standard is absolutely unattainable and out of reach; it passes the ceiling and through the sky, it soars pass our planet's atmosphere into the heavens above, and beyond that. God is God. He is Yahweh. He is pure and holy. There is no way any human can be holy as God is holy; yet God says "Be Holy for I am Holy."²⁹⁸ How can that ever be?

All men are sinners and we all fall short of God's standards, the Scripture tells us (as if we don't know that ourselves).

- "All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God."
Romans 3:23 KJV
- "For [there is] not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin..." Ecclesiastics 7:20 NKJV

- "...your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you ..." Isaiah 59:2 NKJV
- "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I John 1:8 NKJV
- "...the whole world is a prisoner of sin" Gal. 3: 22 NIV

If doing the best we can possibly do is not good enough, where is the hope? Fortunately, God knows that there is nothing mankind could ever possibly do to come back to the perfect communion and relationship which we originally had with Him in the Garden of Eden before sin separated us, so *He did everything for us*. We just have to follow the steps of *His* criterion.

God created a plan bore out of His unimaginable love for you and me. A plan meant to restore us back to that place of sweet unity, sinlessness, perfection, and eternal and abundant life which mankind had with Him before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. That is why immediately after Adam and Eve breeched that relationship by sin, God promised to repair it (Genesis 3:15). That is also why God told Abraham that all the earth will be blessed by his seed. Jesus is the realization of God's promise; He is the means, the seed, by which God plan for salvation for mankind is revealed. "The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ (Messiah)" Gal. 3:16 NIV. Jesus' testimony of Himself is that He is the fulfillment of God's promise, He says He is God incarnate,²⁹⁹ God's Messiah,³⁰⁰ the Savior of the world, the answer to man's salvation.

Jesus is the Answer

“Jesus is the Answer”. This is a popular slogan that I occasionally see on bumper stickers. The logical response to that slogan would be: “What’s the question?” The question most likely is “What is the meaning and purpose to my life?” Each of us has a hole inside us which needs filling, a longing which seeks satisfaction; we want to know what the meaning to life is and what the purpose for our existence is. That need inside us is a hunger to know God because we were *created* to have relationship with Him. Jesus says He is *the answer* to satisfying that hunger in our souls.

- Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” John 6:35 KJV

He says He is the bread that makes our souls live, just like natural bread keeps our bodies alive.

- “I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. *I am the living bread* which came down from heaven: if any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” John 6:48-58 KJV
- “For the Bread of God is He who comes down from Heaven and gives life to the world.” (Jesus) John 6:33 KJV

As human beings, our souls are thirsting to drink from that perpetual but seemingly elusive fountain of peace and happiness.

- Jesus says, "... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14 KJV

Jesus is God's answer to satisfy the hunger and the thirst for longing and fulfillment in man's soul. That missing emptiness or hole in the inner most part of the human heart is really created by God's absence in man's heart; Jesus is God's answer to connecting mankind back to Himself so mankind can be the whole beings He created them to be.

If Jesus is the answer, what's the problem?

The problem is that man is not "essentially good" as some are told by some revered religious leaders of the world. We are lawbreakers; we are sinners. We think badly, we say bad things, and we do bad things. But our "bad" is not against one another or even against our selves; it's against *God*. We do the crime and we have to pay the penalty. It is reasonable that God would have laws, and penalties for law breakers. We humans operate under the same system. If someone were to rape a little child, most people would prefer not wasting tax dollars on a trial, but rather hang the bastard-after we leave him in the care of the state's finest hardcore inmates. If someone broke in and stole from us, we would expect justice in the form of jail time, and hopefully, full restoration of what was taken from us. We even frown on someone who would lie to us; the price might be a lost friendship, or lost job, or lost trust. If we who are humans, exact punishment when laws (ethical, moral, legal) are broken; is it not reasonable to expect that a holy, just, fair, and perfect God would have penalties for those who break His spiritual laws, those who sin against Him? God does have a penalty for sin. The penalty for sin is death.

- “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23 KJV
- “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...” Romans 5:12 NKJV
- “The soul that sins, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4:20 NKJV

God is just (unlike many judges these days), and *someone* will *have* to die, if not you and me! But God loves us so much that He made a way to fulfill His requirement of our punishment, without us having to die spiritually on earth, and also die eternally by spending the rest of our eternal lives in hell (where Jesus says the fire never quenches and worms never die).³⁰¹ That *someone* who would die, that *someone* who would pay the penalty for our sin against God, is Jesus. That is why Jesus said, “I shall give [my flesh] for the life of the world.” (John 6:53 NKJV Context: Vs.47-58) He is the “pound of flesh”³⁰² so to speak, that God demanded as payment for *our* crimes against Him. By Jesus paying the price for our sins, God’s promise that through Abraham’s seed all the nations of world would be blessed was fulfilled (Gen. 12:3; 22:16-18). Jesus is the gift of salvation, and the world’s blessing, is that He died for the sins of the entire world so that the world will not have to die, but that through Him, the world can live! That’s the blessing!

God’s plan of Salvation unfolds

Before Jesus came and died for the sins of the world, God made a covenant with the children of Israel, whom He separated from the rest of the world’s citizenry, and called his own, because their forefather Abraham had *faith* in Him. He gave *them* His directions on how to cover their sins and be justified before Him. God gave Moses instructions, in the law, to take the lifeblood of animals to make an atonement (temporary) for their souls; i.e. the animals’ death instead of theirs. The rest of the

world was not that blessed. This is only applicable to Jews and Gentiles who through *faith* in the God of Abraham, *obeyed* and followed God's commandments.³⁰³

- “For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.” Lev. 17:11 KJV”
- And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (of sin).” Hebrews 9:22 NKJV

However, the blood of cattle, sheep, and goats were only meant to be a *temporary* solution. David's messianic prophecy tells of the temporary nature of this arrangement and of its fulfillment in Psalm 40:6-7.³⁰⁴ This redemptive arrangement was temporary because “The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. That is why, when Jesus came into the world, He said to God, “*You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings. But you have given me a body to offer. You were not pleased with burnt offerings or other offerings for sin. Then I said, ‘Look, I have come to do your will, O God—as is written about me in the Scriptures.’*”³⁰⁵ “...He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. For God's will was for us (Jews and Gentiles) to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time... And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,

*“This is the **new covenant** I will make with my people on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”*³⁰⁶

Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds."³⁰⁷

And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices. Hebrews 10: 1-10; 15-18 NLT (Emphasis mine)

"Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity. Just think how much more the blood of Christ *will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God.* For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as *a perfect sacrifice* for our sins. That is why He is the one who mediates a *new covenant* between God and people; so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant. Heb. 9:13-15 NLT "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come." Gal. 8:19 NIV

Your part in God's plan

I can still remember the day I was told that God loved me so much that He sent Jesus to die in my place. I remember feeling two things: first I felt overwhelmed that God loved me to such a great degree (I'd gone to Church all my life and never understood that before). Secondly, I remember that I wanted to surrender my life to God at that moment, but I hesitated doing so, because the real Christians I knew lived a lifestyle which I believed was restrictive. I wanted my future to be filled with things which I believed to be fun (like sex, drugs, and rock and roll). As if on cue, the youth pastor who was sharing about Jesus at the time quoted Jesus' words, "I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly." [(Jesus) John 10:10 KJV]. To me,

God was answering my concerns. Giving my life to Him would not be restrictive. He promises not only eternity with Him, but an abundant life here on earth where my heart, mind, and spirit, will be filled with peace, joy and fulfillment from having a personal relationship with Him, and no circumstance in life can take that away. Right there I decided to pray and ask Jesus to come into my heart and take over my life. I can still remember the feeling after taking that first step of *faith*.

Faith is still the only way that man can please God; for “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Heb. 11:6 NKJV Abraham’s faith is the reason why Abraham was promised that the entire world would be blessed by his seed. Abraham had faith; he is the Father of *faith*. It is the same way today. Only by *faith* can anyone, now not only the Jewish people, but anyone, can qualify for God’s salvation of having their sins remitted (paid for) and being considered by God to be righteous (in right standing with God) Rms. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23. God doesn’t respond to natural seed, (being *born* Jewish or being *born* a “Christian”), but to the spiritual seed. Faith is that spiritual seed that qualifies you to receive His blessings. Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons (children) of Abraham. And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Gal. 3:6-9 NKJV

How can we (both Jews and Gentiles) be part of the blessing which God promised the entire world? The answer is given above. Faith is the main ingredient needed to get to God through Jesus. In other words, Jesus is the walkway that God provides to bridge the gap between us and Him. Faith is our footsteps across the walkway. God built that bridge for everyone;

it's up to each person to choose to take that step of faith and walk across to God.

Unfortunately many people want to make their own bridge or expect God to be satisfied with the bridge they choose. But every other means of connecting with God is an illusion and it's false. Jesus says He is the truth and He tells us the truth. But for God's grace, we are naturally inclined to believe the devil's lies than God's truth. Jesus asked the Pharisees, "... Why don't you believe me when I tell you the truth?" And Jesus also answered the question: "It is because you are unable to do so! For you are the children of your father the Devil, and you love to do the evil things he does...I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? Anyone whose Father is God listens gladly to the words of God. Since you don't, it proves you aren't God's children." John 8:44-47 Jesus says that those who don't believe Him are children of Satan; they not children of God (contrary to popular belief that all people are God's Children). "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal 3:26-29 NIV

Do *you* want to be a child of God? If you do want to be a child of God you have to, by faith, believe that Jesus is who He says He is and that He is indeed the way, the truth, and the life and the one and only means which God provides, as He promised, for you and I to move from the kingdom of darkness into His marvelous light.

Deciding whether or not to receive God's gift of salvation is the most important decision you and I will ever make. The Scripture says that "no sacrifices can be made for people who

decide to sin after they find out about the truth. They are God's enemies and they can look forward to a terrible judgment and a furious fire. If two or three witnesses accused someone of breaking the Law of Moses, that person could be put to death. But it is much worse to dishonor God's Son and to disgrace the blood of the promise that made us holy. And it is just as bad to insult the Holy Spirit who shows us mercy. We know that God has said that He will punish and take revenge. We also know that the Scripture says that God will judge His people. It is a terrible thing to fall into the hand of the living God." (Hebrews 10: 26-31 CEV)³⁰⁸ For those who want to take God's offer' by faith, here is what God requires us to do; here is *His* criterion.

Taking Your first Steps to God

1. Recognize and confess that you are a sinner.

"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, And You forgave the iniquity of my sin." Psalm 32:5 KNJV

"... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans `10:9 NKJV

2. Repent of your sins; ask Jesus to forgive you.

"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *Repent*: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17 NKJV

"But go and learn what *this* means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, *to repentance*." Matt 9:13 NKJV (Jesus quoting the prophet Hosea (6:6))

"I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (Jesus) Luke 5:32 NKJV

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before." Acts 3:19-20 NKJV

"...repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" Luke 24:47 NKJV

"Then He said to them, "These [are] the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and [the] Prophets and [the] Psalms concerning Me. And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ [Messiah] to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that *repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" (Jesus) Luke 24:44-47

"The Lord is... long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance". 2 Peter 3:9 NKJV

3. Give your life to Jesus, confessing Jesus as your Lord of your life.

"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart...that *if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* Romans 8:9-10 NKJV

“And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and *believes* in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day”. (Jesus) John 6:40 NKJV

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*" Romans 10:12-13 NKJV[™]

“By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,” I John 4:2 NKJV

“Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God.” (Jesus) Luke 12:8 NKJV

“And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.*" Acts 16:33-31 NKJV

“And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and now is already in the world.” I John 4:3 NKJV

“Therefore whoever confesses” Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.” (Jesus) Matt. 10:32 NKJV

Each of us has a choice; that’s how life is. Not everyone wants to have the peace of God that passes all human understanding, not everyone wants the love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, and self control that the Holy Spirit gives.

Not everyone wants to be free from bondage of addiction and sin which overtake us. Not everyone wants to deny being their own god, choosing their own way, believing their own beliefs, and surrendering to God's way. However, if *you* are ready to commit your life to God and become a Believer - a Christian as Jesus defines a true follower of His, below is a prayer which is intended to help you express that desire within your *heart* to know the true God, Yahweh.

WARNING: If the *heart* is not true, this prayer or any other thing else, will not help. This prayer is just a *model* to help those who may be appreciate the help, however God hears the cry of the *heart* of one who is crying out for Jesus; and if the cry of one's heart comes out in indistinguishable words, God still hears and answers joyfully.

"Dear God, I am sorry for going my own way; I am sorry for all the wrong things which I have done. Show me my wrongs and break my heart so that I can repent. I confess all my sins and ask you please to forgive me. Thank you for sending Jesus to pay the price for my sins and for dying on the cross for me.

I confess you Jesus as my Lord and as my savior who died and rose again from the dead so I can live eternally with you. Please take my life; I give everything over to you. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit. Please be with me forever. I promise to learn Your ways by reading the Bible, praying, and worshiping You with Your children. Please make me your child. I pray in *Jesus'* name, Amen."

More of God's promise to those who through faith believe in Jesus:

The Scripture says that God's angels rejoice when one person repents and makes that decision to enter in God's family through Jesus Christ (Luke 15:10). If you are one which makes the angels rejoice today by your decision to give your life over to

Jesus, WELCOME TO THE FAMILY OF GOD! Myself, and numerous others were like you, “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:3-7 NKJVTm

God promises an abundant eternal life for all His children; all those who live their lives in total surrender and obedience to Him. Here are some more of those promises.

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may [continue to] believe in the name of the Son of God are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.” 1 John 5:11-13 NKJV

“And this is the promise that He has promised us--eternal life” 1 John 2:25 NKJVTm

“Verily verily I say unto you, he who believeth on Me hath everlasting life” (Jesus) John 6: 47

“Most assuredly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.” (Jesus) John 5:24 KJV

Believing in Jesus as Jesus defines belief involves a person's whole being, mainly living a life of obedience to God. "And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk (our actions) in all his ways, and to love him (by obeying His word), and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul (passionately encompassing all areas of your life)." Deut. 10:12 NKJV (Parenthesis mine)

Growing in faith

Jesus said "If you love me, *keep* my commandments." John 14:15 NJKV (Emphasis mine) However, keeping God's commandments is not automatic for us human beings, we develop over time with the right spiritual nourishment, similar to how a new baby develops with the right care.

Here are six important things to help a Believer grow spiritually; these will help ensure that he or she matures in the Faith; rather than fall back and return to old behavior patterns and mindset, or "die on the vine" because of lack of spiritual nourishment. These things are to help a Believer live his or her life in obedience to God. "He who says, 'I know Him,' and *does not* keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." I John 2:4 NKJV

1. Read your Bible every day. Please note that the Scripture is the anointed word of God but not all *translations* are.³⁰⁹

"All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, *as newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” 1 Peter 2: 1-3 NKJV (Emphasis mine)

I recommend that new Believers read the book of JOHN as a means of getting to know the real Jesus; John says that “these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah], the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” John 20:37 NKJV

Always pray before reading the Bible; ask God’s Holy Spirit to help you understand His word. “And He (Jesus) opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the scriptures.” Luke 24:45 NKJV

2. Pray. ³¹⁰

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” Ephesians 6:18 NKJV

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6, 7 NKJV

“Evening, morning, and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud. And He shall hear my voice.” Psalm 55:17 NKJV

“Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” Luke 22:40b NKJV

3. Meet regularly at Church with your new family (You are now a part of the family of God).

“But as many as receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God.” John 1: 12-13 NKJV

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much as you see the Day (of Jesus’ return) approaching.” [Hebrew 10: 23-23 NKJV (emphasis and insert mine)]

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine *and fellowship*, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts 2:42 NKJV

4. Share your experience with God (testify) continually.

“and they overcome him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony...” Rev. 12:11 NKJV

“And he said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature...’ Mark 16:15 NKJV (Also Rev. 16:6, Romans 1:15,16; Romans 1;10-12)

5. Be a giving Christian.

“Give and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down and running over will be put into your bosom.” Luke 6:38 NKJV

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes³¹¹ into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. “And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,” Says the LORD of hosts...” Malachi 3:8-11 NKJV

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written:

“He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 NJKV

6. Be Baptized with water and ask God to baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

“I (John) indeed baptized with water, but He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” John 1:8 NJKV (Parenthesis mine)

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Jesus) Matthew 28:19 NJKV

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls.” Acts 2:38, 41 KJV

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Galatians 3:27-29 NKJV

“and you are complete in Him (JESUS), who is the head of all principality and power ...buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2: 10, 12 NKJV

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4 NKJV

The like figure³¹² whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” I Peter 3:21 KJV

I will end with this prayer which I patterned off the Apostle Paul’s prayer for the Church in Ephesus:³¹³

I thank God for you the reader and for all my brothers and sisters in Christ, and I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give to you, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus and what He would do in all things, especially those things related to domestic violence and abuse among all who claim His name. I pray that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened that you may walk in the glorious riches of your spiritual inheritance. May you come to know what is the exceeding greatness of God’s power to all who believe-the same working of God’s mighty power which He demonstrated in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His right hand in Heaven.

AMEN.

REFERENCE & NOTES

¹ John 14:15, 21; I John 2:3-4, I John 5:2-5; 2 John 2:6-7

² Acts 7:38

³ Comments on the textual evidence on John 7:53-8:11 taken from:
http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Biblical_Studies/New_Testament_Commentaries/The_Gospel_of_John/Chapter_8

⁴ Calvin's comments as quoted in Concerning the story of the Adulteress; <http://www.bible-researcher.com/quovadis.html>

⁵ John 12:45; 14:9 John 8:19; John 5:23; Luke 10:16; and also John 1:11,12; 10:10; 15:4,5; Gal. 2:20 which shows us that Christian must be dependent on Jesus.

⁶ Luke 4:18

⁷ A movie directed, co-written and co-produced by Mel Gibson, Released Feb.2004.

⁸ A play on the word 'educated'

⁹ "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3:17

¹⁰ "You shall know the truth and the truth shall *make* you free"

[italics mine] John 8:32 and “where the spirit of the Lord is there is freedom.” 2 Corinthians 3:17

¹¹ One of Mike Murdock’s wisdom keys available at

www.mikemurdock.com

¹² To read about the positive impact of religion on domestic violence and women see: [Is Religion an Answer? Marriage, Fatherhood, and the Male Problematic](#) W. Bradford Wilcox. Research Brief No. 11, June 2008 available in PDF form at: http://center.americanvalues.org/pdf_dl.php?name=researchbrief11

Also, [Violence Against Women](#). Volume 13 Number 11, November 2007 1094-1112© 2007 Sage Publications, 10.77801207308259.<http://vaw.sagepub.com>.

¹³ <http://insession.blogs.cnn.com/2010/03/25/preachers-power-and-the-pulpit/?iref=allsearch/> posted 3/15/10

¹⁴

<http://www.abcnews.go.com/GMA/LegalCenter/story?id=2667042&page=1> ABC News, 11/20/06

¹⁵ <http://www.news8.net/news/stories/0409/614568.html>

4/20/09

¹⁶ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-wilmette-murder-suicide-04-mar04,0,5682355.story>

By Tara Malone, Lisa Black and Emily S. Achenbaum | Tribune reporters 3/4/09

¹⁷ <http://news.aol.com/article/accused-killer-reportedly-tried-suicide/423487> CBS News. 4/15/09

¹⁸ FamilyLifeToday.com

¹⁹ Webster's definition as cited in: Pryde & Needham, A Biblical Perspective on what to do when you are abuse by your Husband, Publisher: Iron Sharpeneth Iron Publications (2003). Page 15.

²¹ Sara Glazer, "Violence, Against Women" CO Researcher, Congressional Quarterly, Inc., Volume 3, Number 8, February, 1993, p. 171

²² "Violence Against Women, A Majority Staff Report," Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 102nd Congress, October 1992, p.3.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2002 Homicide Data: Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/Single Offender Incidents (2004), Provided by The Violence Policy Center and available at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2004.pdf>

²⁵ FBI 2000 Crime Report.
<http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel01/cius2000.htm>. Also see for additional statistics:
<http://www.hawthornedvrt.org/Women-and-Domestic-Violence.htm>

²⁶ Source; <http://www.mcedv.org/domviolence/leave.htm>

²⁷ Provided by the American Bar Assoc. Source: Africana Voices Against Violence, Tufts University, Statistics, 2002
www.ase.tufts.edu/womenscenter/peace/africana/newsite/statistics.htm

²⁸ Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1991.

²⁹ American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence. <http://www.abanet.org/domviol/statistics.html> Also see <http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/links/links.htm>

³⁰ *ibid*

³¹ 2 Sam. 13:16-20

³² 2 Sam. 13: 20. “Tamar remain *desolate* (strong’s 8074: to be desolate, be appalled, stun, stupefy:),” 2 Sam 13:22 “he (Amnon) had *forced* (Strong’s 6031, to be in a state of being downcast, afflicted, humbled, humiliated, depressed, browbeaten, stooped low, weaken) his sister, Tamar”

³³ 2 Sam. 13: 20. “Tamar remain (strong’s 3427) desolate (strong’s 8074) in her brother Absalom’s house.”

³⁴ Judges 19:24

³⁵ Judges 19:19 The Levite refers to his servant, “the young man”. The word here for servant is *naar* (Hb) is used for both a new born child (Ex.2:6, Judges 13:5, 7) as well as for a young

man of about 20 years (Gen. 24:19).

³⁶ Judge 20:4 refers to the Levite as her husband and concubine as Judge 19 and 20 uses to refer to his woman, (*'ishshah-Hb*) means woman, wife, female.

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³⁷ Judges 21:1, 21:3,

³⁹ Judges 21

⁴⁰ ibid

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⁴² ibid

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⁴⁴ ibid

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⁴⁶ Romans 1:28, I Tim 1:6, Titus 1:15, Col. 1:21

⁴⁷ Matt. 5:28

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⁶⁰ “Anything With Two Heads Is a Monster” Religious Leaders’ *Perspectives on Marital Equality and Domestic Violence* Heidi M. Levitt & Kimberly Ware, 2006)

⁶¹ ibid

⁶² ibid

⁶³ Matt. 24:10; 36:16; 26:13

⁶⁴ Rev 21:9 “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife”. KJV

⁶⁵ Revelation 22:17”And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”KJV

⁶⁶ Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

⁶⁷ Jesus said “Give ME TO drink” (KJV) not “Give me A drink” as incorrectly translated in most all versions printed in the 1900s. In John 4:7 (KJV, ASV, YNG, WEB) for “drink” the word *pinō* (Strong’s 4095) is used. *Drink* in this context means “to take in” as in: give me something to swallow/ingest/to refresh. *Pino* is used in such verses as Gen. 24:43. When Abraham’s servant said to Rebecca at the well “Give me, I pray there, a little water of thy pitcher to drink” (to take in, to ingest, to refresh). Also use in Ex: 17:1 “there is no water for people to drink” and in I Cr. 12: 13 we are “all made to drink into one spirit”. Jesus is telling the woman here in John 4:7 that she is to take Him in, to ingest Him, which *He* is the living water for her to take in. It’s an *evangelistic* statement which is consistent with Jesus’ purpose and ministry. Jesus is NOT asking for *a* drink. He is saying that He *is* the drink to be drunk! Modern Bible Versions after the 1900s (NIV, NASB, NLT, NKJV, and others)say ‘give me *a* drink’. Drink as used in these translations is from *another* Greek word “shathah” (Strong’s H8354) which also means drink but in the sense of the *product* that one ingests; like Pepsi is a product or *a* drink. In English we would say “Give me a drink to drink”. In Greek it was be “Give me a *shathah* to *pino*”. By using this word (shathah) Jesus’ designation as the Living Water is set aside to where He is merely a human asking for water to drink. Even though in context He gives no indication of wanting his physical needs met (He refused food which the disciples offered Him). Jesus is not asking for a shathah (drink) because He’s thirsty; He’s saying *He is* the Living Water for us to pino (drink) so we can quench our spiritual thirst. The King James Version is the accurate translation of this verse. Jesus said “Give ME TO drink” (KJV) not “Give me A drink” as incorrectly translated in most all versions printed in the 1900s which use other

manuscripts outside of the Textus Receptus.

⁶⁸ See Gen. 3:16 “Thy desire shall be towards thy husband”

⁶⁹ David Brown’s comments John 8:1-11 “This whole narrative is wanting in some of the earliest and most valuable manuscripts, and those which have it vary to some extent. The internal evidence in its favor is almost overpowering. It is easy to account for its *omission*, though genuine; but if not so, it is next to impossible to account for its *insertion*”. Jamieson, Robert; A.R. Fausset; and David Brown. “Commentary on John 8.”. Blue Letter Bible. 19 Feb 2000. 2009. 30 May 2009 http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=7&contentID=2912&commInfo=6&topic=John&ar=Jhn_8_4

⁷⁰ Blue Letter Bible. 19 Feb 2000. 2009. 30 May 2009. http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=7&contentID=2912&commInfo=6&topic=John&ar=Jhn_8_4

⁷¹ Ephesians 5:25

⁷² As quoted in: Refuge: a path out of domestic violence and abuse. Dt. Sgt. Donald Stewart, page 28. New hope Publisher, 2004.

⁷³ Marriage, Fatherhood, and the Male Problematic. Bradford Wilcox. Research Brief No. 11, June 2008. . Published by The Center For Marriage and Families; at: <http://center.americanvalues.org/?p=75>

⁷⁴ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations. A dissertation submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of philosophy. Dorothy Ann Valin, Evanston, Ill. Dec. 2006.

⁷⁵ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations. Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006. page 99

⁷⁶ *ibid*

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations”. Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006. page 100

⁷⁹ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations”. Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006. page 99

⁸⁰ Matt.23:13,14,16,23,25,28,29,33

⁸¹ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *mikros* (*Strong's 3398*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 12 Jun 2009. ≤ [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?)

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⁸² ibid

⁸³ 1Peter 3:7

⁸⁴ Luke 20:45; 12:1-5

⁸⁵ One such study is: “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations”. Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006

⁸⁶ John 7:19,23

⁸⁷ Matt. 11:2-20, Matt. 23:2

⁸⁸ Matt. 21:13, 21:45

⁸⁹ Matt. 11: 20-24, Matt. 23:37, Luke 13:34

⁹⁰ Ezekiel 34:8,10

⁹¹ Luke 12:3

⁹² Debbie Pryde and Don Steward. Interview on Family Life Today Radio program. Available on CD at www.FamilyLife.com

⁹³ Rm. 16:17-18; John 12:35-36; I Cor. 5:9-11

⁹⁴ “Let no man deceive you with vain words for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” Eph5:6

⁹⁵ MacArthur Study Bible, Pg.1811. John McArthur Editor; ©1997, Word Publishing.

⁹⁶ John 6:48-71

⁹⁶ Some commentators believe that “the flesh” is referring only to the carnal sensuous nature of man, and some modern (post 1900s) versions of the bible translate “flesh” as ‘sinful nature’, however it is wise (and more accurate) to note that the Greek word here for flesh, *sarx* refers primarily to “the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood, of both man and beast.” Quote taken from: Blue Letter Bible. “Dictionary and Word Search of *sarx* (*Strong’s 4561*)”. Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 18 May 2010.

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⁹⁸ Galatians 5:16-21

⁹⁹ Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5,6; I Corinthians 6:16

¹⁰⁰ Blue Letter Bible. “Dictionary and Word Search for *porneia* (*Strong’s 4202*)”. Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 22 Jun 2009. ≤ <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsgs=G4202&t=KJV> >

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¹⁰³ Matt. 23:25,27; Mk. 7:6

¹⁰⁴ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *loidoros* (*Strong's 3060*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 22 Jun 2009. ≤ <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3060&t=NKJV> >

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¹⁰⁷ In scripture a drunk does not a disease (alcoholism); neither does a thief (kleptomania), nor a rebellious person (oppositional defiant disorder) nor a person who lacks self control (intermittent explosive disorder), nor anyone whose sinful habits are cloaked and excused by similar modern psychological terminologies.

¹⁰⁸ The most dangerous time for a woman is an abused relationship is during or after she has left the abuser.

¹⁰⁹<http://www.hawthornedvrt.org/Women-and-Domestic-Violence.htm>

¹¹⁰ <http://www.mcedv.org/domviolence/leave.htm>

¹¹¹ See Genesis 42:21-22

¹¹² “blud-gilt'-i-nes: Found in the King James Version only in Ps 51:14. The Revised Version (British and American) adds Ex. 22:2, 3; 1 Sam 25:26, 33. Ezek 18:13 seems to indicate that the phrase does not necessarily signify bloodshed, but any grievous sin which, if it remains, will block God's favor to His land and people (compare Duet. 21:8; Isa 1:15). Ps 51 is to be interpreted in this light.” Source : <http://www.biblehistory.com/isbe/B/BLOODGUILTINESS/>

¹¹³ John 8:1-11;

¹¹⁴ Mk. 11:15-16

¹¹⁵ To my knowledge, Dis-ease is a term coined by Min. Ometta Martin of Restoration of the Breach an addiction recovery ministry, to denote that most mental diseases are not from any organic malfunction whatsoever, but from a dis-ease of the mind cause by sin which is an indication of man’s need for a Savior, not psychotropic drugs.

¹¹⁶ Wolfe et al 2001, as quoted in: The Complexities of the Religious Response to Domestic Violence. Loretta Pyles, PhD. Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. *Affilia*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 281-291 (2007), DOI: 10.1177/0886109907302271

¹¹⁷ Daniel 12:9

¹¹⁸ Romans 3:20 “Therefore by the deed of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin” NKJV. James 4: 17 “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” NKJV

¹¹⁹ Jesus’ knowledge of the Bible (Old Testament/Torah) is evident throughout the Gospels. There are also extra biblical resources such as Mishnah, *Avot*, 5.21; Mishnah, *Baba Bathra*, 21a.; Mishnah, *Aboth*, 5.21 [The Mishnah or Mishna (Hebrew means ‘repetition’) is the first major cohesive writing of Jewish oral traditions (Oral Torah)reflecting debates between 70-200 AD].

¹²⁰ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *pneuma* (*Strong's 4151*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 3 Jan 2010. <[http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4151&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4151&t=KJV) >

¹²¹ According to Jonathan Went in his article “Jesus the Jew”, in reference to Jesus the carpenter, he writes, “This is still a widely debated topic, however Geza Vermes highlights an Aramaic use of the term carpenter/craftsman (naggar) to metaphorically describe a 'scholar' or 'learned man'”.
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¹²² See Alfred Edersteim’s book *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, particularly Chapter 7 entitled *The Upbringing of Jewish Children*. This can be found at: Edersheim, Alfred. "Chapter 7. The Upbringing of Jewish Children." Hodder and Stoughton. Blue Letter Bible. 6 Jul 2006. 2010. 14 Sep 2010.
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¹²³ John 1:38, 49; John 3:2; John 6:25;

¹²⁴ John 8:4-6,

¹²⁵ John 7:15 “And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?” Meaning that Jesus did not go to any rabbinical school (like Paul did under Gamaliel in Acts 22:3); Luke 4:32,36;

¹²⁶ Matt. 21:15

¹²⁷ John 2:24 “But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew what people were really like” NLT.

¹²⁸ Luke 4:6, 31; Mark 12:35; Matthew 3; John 7:14,28; John 18:20 Luke 4:44;

¹²⁹ Luke 4:16

¹³⁰ Eph.4:24; Col.3:10; II Cor.5:17; Rm.12:2

¹³¹ John 13 4-5 NKJV

¹³² John 13: 12-15 NKJV

¹³³ Luke 22:25

¹³⁴ Eph. 5:23; I Cor. 11:3 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that

you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God

¹³⁵ John 10:11, 10:15

¹³⁶ Romans 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God,”

¹³⁷ Ps. 25:9, 37:11; 22:26; 76:9; 147:6; 149:4; Is.11:4, 29:19; Duet.28:1-13. Also John 13:17

¹³⁸ “Anything With Two Heads Is a Monster”, Religious Leaders’ Perspectives on Marital Equality and Domestic Violence Heidi M. Levitt & Kimberly Ware, 2006, p 1178

¹³⁹ *ibid*

¹⁴⁰ One book which helps both men and women to better understand the God-given roles of the Christian man and one which is richly supported by scripture is What the Bible says about ...being a Man. Richard Fugate. Published by Foundation for Biblical Research (AZ). ISBN 1-889700-29-0. Another book with more interactive is Every Man a Hero; Every Woman a Coach by Dr. Joel Orr and is available at www.joeltrainauthors.com

¹⁴¹ Peter was married. Matt. 8:14, 1 Cor. 9:5

¹⁴² Matt.24:45-51

¹⁴³ “Your attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross”

¹⁴⁴ Consider: (Giesbrecht & Sevcik, 2000; Horne & Levitt, 2003; Horton et al., 1988; Knickmeyer et al., 2003; Pagelow, 1981) As cited in: ‘Battered Black Women’s Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships’ by Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source: Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, pages 262-284. ©2007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438. <http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com>

¹⁴⁵ ‘Battered Black Women’s Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships’ by Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source: Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, pages 262-284. ©2007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438. <http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com>

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*

¹⁴⁷ (Giesbrecht & Sevcik, 2000; Horne & Levitt, 2003; Horton et al., 1988; Knickmeyer et al., 2003; Pagelow, 1981) As cited in: ‘Battered Black Women’s Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships’ by Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source: Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, pages 262-284. ©2007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438.

<http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com>

¹⁴⁸ Eph. 5:25

¹⁴⁹ John 8:44

¹⁵⁰ John 10:10

¹⁵¹ Romans 3:10-12)

¹⁵² Romans 12: 1

¹⁵³ Luke 9:24; Mark 8:35; Matt. 10:39, 16:25

¹⁵⁴ Exodus 20:13

¹⁵⁵ I John 3:15; Matt. 15:19

¹⁵⁶ John 1:1, 5:58, 8:57-59; 10:30-33; 14:6-9, Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:8; Ps. 45:6

¹⁵⁷ I Cor. 15:28

¹⁵⁸ John 19:11; Rev. 17:12;

¹⁵⁹ Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18

¹⁶⁰ Acts 5:28-29

¹⁶¹ Luke 12:40; Luke 12:48

¹⁶² Luke 20:46-47; James 3:1

¹⁶³ “Anything with Two Heads Is a Monster”, Religious Leaders’ Perspectives on Marital Equality and Domestic Violence. Heidi M. Levitt & Kimberly Ware, 2006, p 1178.

¹⁶⁴ Bradford Wilcox W. As of date, Bradford Wilcox is assistant

professor of sociology at the University of Virginia and a member of the James Madison Society at Princeton University. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia and his Ph.D. at Princeton University. Prior to coming to the University of Virginia, he held research fellowships at Princeton University, Yale University and the Brookings Institution. Mr. Wilcox's research focuses on the influence of religious belief and practice on marriage, cohabitation, parenting, and fatherhood.

¹⁶⁵ Affectionate Patriarchs: In the popular imagination, conservative evangelical fathers are power-abusing authoritarians. A new study says otherwise. An interview with W. Bradford Wilcox | posted 8/01/2004

12:00AM

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/august/26.44.html?start=1>

¹⁶⁶ John 8:32

¹⁶⁷ Luke 20:27; Mark 12:24; Also see Acts 23: 6-9

¹⁶⁸ Luke 12:24,27; Matt. 22:29

¹⁶⁹ Mark 7:3,7,9

¹⁷⁰ Mark 7:3

¹⁷¹ An ancient city of central Asia Minor. It was the site of an early Christian church to which Saint Paul addressed his epistle to the Colossians.

¹⁷² Battered Black Women's Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships' by

Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source: Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, pages 262-284. ©007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438. <http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com>

¹⁷³ Battered Black Women's Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships' by Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source: Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, pages 262-284. ©007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438. <http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com>

¹⁷⁴ Koran 4.34 "Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; ...and (as to) those who are a part of you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them.." Quote taken from: <http://johnmarkshicks.faithsite.com/content/asp?CID=6955>

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Also note that data about domestic abuse and Islam is very limited because there are not many studies done on domestic abuse and other religions like Islam. Most studies on religion and abuse involve Christianity.

¹⁷⁶ David Brown's comments John 8:10 "This whole narrative is wanting in some of the earliest and most valuable manuscripts, and those which have it vary to some extent. The internal evidence in its favor is almost overpowering. It is easy to account for its *omission*, though genuine; but if not so, it is next to impossible to account for its *insertion*". Jamieson,

Robert; A.R. Fausset; and David Brown. "Commentary on John 8.". Blue Letter Bible. 19 Feb 2000. 2009. 30 May 2009. http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=7&contentID=2912&commInfo=6&topic=John&ar=Jhn_8_4. *Also see: <http://www.bible-researcher.com/adult.html> for a critical look at this text.

¹⁷⁷ See footnote comment on John 4:10. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." John 6:55. NKJV

¹⁷⁸ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *heuriskō* (*Strong's 2147*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 24 Jun 2009. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2147&t=KJV> >

¹⁷⁹ In John 4:7 (KJV, ASV, YNG, WEB) the word *pinō* (*Strong's 4095*) is used. *Drink* in this context means "to take in" as in: give me something to swallow/ingest/to refresh. *Pino* is used in such verses as Gen. 24:43. When Abraham's servant said to Rebecca at the well "Give me, I pray there, a little water of thy pitcher to drink" (to take in, to ingest, to refresh). Also use in Ex: 17:1 "there is no water for people to drink" and I Cr. 12: 13 we are "all made to drink into one spirit". Jesus is telling the woman here in John 4:7 that she is to take Him in, to ingest Him, that He is the living water for her to take in. It's an *evangelistic* statement which is consistent with Jesus' purpose and ministry. Jesus is NOT asking for *a* drink. He is saying that He *is* the drink to be drunk! Modern Bible Versions after the 1900s (NIV, NASB, NLT, NKJV, and others)say 'give me *a* drink'. Drink as used in these translations is from *another* Greek word "shathah" (Strongs H8354) which also means drink

but in the sense of the *product* that one ingests; like Pepsi is a trademark soda or a drink. In English we would say “Give me a drink to drink”. In Greek it was be “Give me a *shathah* to *pino*”. By using this word (shathah) Jesus’ designation as the Living Water is set aside to where He is merely a human asking for water to drink. Even though in context He gives no indication of wanting his physical needs met (He refused food which the disciples offered Him). Jesus is not asking for a shathah (drink) because He’s thirsty; He’s saying *He is* the living water for us to pino (drink) so we can quench our thirst. The King James Version as translated from the Receptus Textus manuscript is the accurate translation of this verse.

¹⁸⁰ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *pinō* (*Strong's 4095*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 1 Jul 2009. ≤ <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4095&t=KJV> >

¹⁸¹ See footnotes on John 4:7

¹⁸² Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *aiteō* (*Strong's 154*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 4 Jul 2009. ≤ <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G154&t=KJV> >

¹⁸³ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *legō* (*Strong's 3004*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 4 Jul 2009. ≤ <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3004&t=KJV> >

¹⁸⁴ John 4:6

¹⁸⁵ "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and *drink*" John 7:37

¹⁸⁶ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *thaumazō* (Strong's 2296)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 4 Jul 2009. <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2296&t=KJV> >

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¹⁸⁷ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *kopos* (Strong's 2873)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 6 Aug 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2873&t=KJV>>

¹⁸⁸ Rm.12:2, I Phil.2:5, Cor. 2:16

¹⁸⁹ Luke 8:2

¹⁹⁰ Rm. 9:21; 2Tim. 2:20-21

¹⁹¹ John 4:18

¹⁹² "our father Jacob--for when it went well with the Jews, they claimed kindred with them, as being descended from Joseph; but when misfortunes befell the Jews, they disowned all connection with them [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 9.14,3]." Comment from David Brown on John 4:7. Source: Jamieson, Robert; A.R. Fausset; and David Brown. "Commentary on John 4." Blue Letter Bible. 19 Feb 2000. 2009. 4 Jul 2009. < http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=7&contentID=2908&commInfo=6&topic=John&ar=Jhn_4_13 >

¹⁹³ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *Katakrima* (Strong's 2632)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010.

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2631&t=KJV>

¹⁹⁴ Statistics, National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women, Ruth Peachey, M.D. 1988]

¹⁹⁵ Statistics from the Safetynet site:
<http://home.cybergrrl.com/dv/stat/statkilled.html> which quotes stats of 1990 according to the FBI.

¹⁹⁶ Question brought to my attention from: “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations - a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Joint Garrett/Northwestern University Program in Religious and Theological Studies By Dorothy Ann Valin Evanston IL. December 2006

¹⁹⁷ [A Biblical Perspective of What to do when you are Abused by your Husband](#). Debbie Pryde & Robert Needham. 2003. Page 7.

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.mcedv.org/domviolence/leave.htm>

¹⁹⁹ I Peter 3:1 “Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives” NKJV.

²⁰⁰ Romans 8:1

²⁰¹ Church’s Chicken is a fast food restaurant chain.

²⁰² <http://www.todaysthy.com/news/news.aspx?aid=24863&stor>

[yid=26473&bw](#) written by Allison Courtney,2006. (Designation that Church's is a restaurant: mine)

²⁰³ Statistics from the Safetynet site:
<http://home.cybergrrl.com/dv/stat/statkilled.html> which quotes stats of 1990 according to the FBI.

²⁰⁴ <http://www.mcedv.org/domviolence/leave.htm>

²⁰⁵ "Violence Against Women, A Majority Staff Report," Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 102nd Congress, October 1992, p.3

²⁰⁶ Horton, Wilkins, & Wright, 1988 as referenced in: Battered Black Women's Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships by Hillary Potter, 2007. p276

²⁰⁷ Knickmeyer et al., 2003 as referenced in: Battered Black Women's Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships by Hillary Potter, 2007. p276

²⁰⁸ "Do You Hear Their Cries?" A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations A Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Joint Garrett/Northwestern University Program in Religious and Theological Studies by Dorothy Ann Valin. Evanston Ill. December 2006

²⁰⁹ "Do You Hear Their Cries?" A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations A Dissertation for the degree of Doctor

of Philosophy of Joint Garrett/Northwestern University Program in Religious and Theological Studies By Dorothy Ann Valin Evanston Ill. December 2006. Page 132

²¹⁰ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations A Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Joint Garrett/Northwestern University Program in Religious and Theological Studies By Dorothy Ann Valin Evanston Ill. December 2006.

²¹¹ **anachōreō (Gk)** to withdraw, so as to leave room; as those who through fear seek some other place, or shun light

²¹² Matt 2:23; probably refers to Isaiah 11:1 where the Messiah is referred to as “a rod out of the stem of Jesse”. Luke 2:39, 51.

²¹³ **anachōreō (Gk)** to withdraw, so as to leave room; as those who through fear seek some other place, or shun light.

²¹⁴ **peripateō (Gk)** to walk

²¹⁵ **Kryptō (GK)** means to conceal, to be hid as to escape notice or become known, secretive

²¹⁶ **anachōreō (Gk)** to withdraw, so as to leave room; as those who through fear seek some other place, or shun light

²¹⁷ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *Ephraim* (*Strong's 2187*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 26 Jan 2010. ≤ [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2187&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G2187&t=KJV) >

²¹⁸ Bradford Wilcox W. Bradford Wilcox is assistant professor of sociology at the University of Virginia and a member of the James Madison Society at Princeton University. He earned his undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia and his Ph.D. at Princeton University. Prior to coming to the University of Virginia, he held research fellowships at Princeton University, Yale University and the Brookings Institution. Mr. Wilcox's research focuses on the influence of religious belief and practice on marriage, cohabitation, parenting, and fatherhood.

²¹⁹ “But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such [cases]. But God has called us to peace” I Cor. 7:15 NKJV

²²⁰ John 8:11b

²²¹ <http://www.mcedv.org/domviolence/leave.htm>

²²² Romans 10: 14 “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Vs.17) “So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”.

²²³ Luke 7:38

²²⁴ Duet 22:21

²²⁵ Chastise (yacar/Hb) as used here means to instruct, correct, taught, bound, punish, sore: it's used in such scriptures as I Kings 12:14 which shows a more serious form on chastisement

[‘And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and will add to your yoke: my father [also] chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions” KJV) and in other scriptures like Psalm 118: 8 “ The lord has chastened (yacar) me sore (yacar) ; but He hath not given me over unto death”)] Source: Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *yacar* (*Strong's 3256*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 5 Feb 2010. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3256&t=KJV> >

²²⁶ Matt. 1:19 NKJV

²²⁷ Ellison et al. (1999) as cited in: Gelles, 1997, 163-165, Levitt’s, et al. 2008 as cited in: “Male Perpetrators’ Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence, Religion, and Masculinity”. Heidi M. Levitt & Rebecca Todd Swanger & Jenny B. Butler. Published online: 3 January 2008 # Springer Science + Business Media, LLC 2007

²²⁸ “Affectionate Patriarchs In the popular imagination, conservative evangelical fathers are power-abusing authoritarians. A new study says otherwise”. An interview with W. Bradford Wilcox | posted 8/01/2004 12:00AM <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2004/august/26.44.html?start=1>

²²⁹ *ibid*

²³⁰ “Battered Black Women’s Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships” by Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source:

Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, pages 265. ©2007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438. <http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com>. Page 265.

²³¹ (Ellison et al (1999) As cited in :Battered Black Women’s Use of Religious Services and Spirituality for Assistance in Leaving Abusive Relationships’ by Hillary Potter. University of Colorado at Boulder. Source: Violence against Women. Vol. 13. No 1. March 2007, 2007 Sage Publications 10.1177/1077801206297438. <http://vaw.sagepub.com> hosted at <http://online.sagepub.com> 265-266.

²³² James 2:18,20,26

²³³ I Sam. 15:23

²³⁴ Koss, 1994, 41-95. As cited in: “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregation”, Rev. Dorothy Ann Valin (2006)

²³⁵ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations. A dissertation submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of philosophy. Dorothy Ann Valin, Evanston, Ill. Dec. 2006. Page 14-15

²³⁶ A Biblical Perspective of What to Do When You Are Abused by Your Husband. Debi Pryde & Robert Needham. Iron Sharpeneth Iron Publication. 2003. Page 20,21-22 [insert mine]

²⁴⁰ A Biblical Perspective of What to Do When You Are Abused by Your Husband. Debi Pryde & Robert Needham. Iron Sharpeneth Iron Publication. 2003. Page 20,21-22 [scriptural references and emphasis mine]

²³⁸ Gelles, 1997, 163-165, Levitt's, et al. 2008 as cited in: Male Perpetrators' Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence, Religion, and Masculinity. Heidi M. Levitt & Rebecca Todd Swanger & Jenny B. Butler. Published online: 3 January 2008 # Springer Science + Business Media, LLC 2007

²³⁹ As cited in: Male Perpetrators' Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence, Religion, and Masculinity. Levitt, Todd Swanger & Butler. Sex Roles (2008) vol. 58. Pgs. 435-448. Available in PDF form at:
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/01r0w601441n0255/fulltext.pdf>

²⁴⁰ Also see Deut. 4:10; Deut. 6; 22-24; 31:12; 17:19; 31:12, 13; I Tim. 5:20; Ex. 20:18, 20.

²⁴¹ Hebrew: Ark of the Testimony

²⁴² Prov. 27:5

²⁴³ http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Are_there_any_statistic_regarding_abusers_reformings

²⁴⁴ Source: <http://www.mcedv.org/domviolence/leave.htm>

²⁴⁵ John 8:7

²⁴⁶ See Hebrews 12:16-17

²⁴⁷ Matt. 27: 3,4 (some versions say he was filled or seized with remorse)

²⁴⁸ Strong's Concordance 3340

²⁴⁹ MacArthur Study Bible, Pg.1811. John McArthur Editor;
©1997, Word Publishing.

²⁵⁰ New Hunger Dictionary which quotes Lewis Sperry Chafer,
Systematic Theology 7:178

²⁵¹ "Do You Hear Their Cries?" A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations". Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006, page 105

²⁵² "Do You Hear Their Cries?" A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations". Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006 page 99

²⁵³ "ibid

²⁵⁴ "Do You Hear Their Cries?" A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations". Dorothy Ann Valin, Northwestern University December 2006. Page 98-99

²⁵⁵ Matt. 18:16

²⁵⁶ Bent-Goodley & Fowler, 2006. As cited in Spiritual and Religious Abuse Expanding What is Known About Domestic Violence Tricia B. Bent-Goodley & Dawnovise N. Fowler Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work Volume 21 Number 3, Fall 2006, © 2006 Sage Publications, 10.1177/0886109906288901, <http://aff.sagepub.com>, hosted at <http://online.sagepub.co>

²⁵⁷ The paralytic of Luke 5 may be the same man in Matt 9

²⁵⁸ Heb. 11:1

²⁵⁹ Luke 16:17-31

²⁶⁰ "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles." But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. "When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master." It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they call

those of his household!” Matt. 10:16-25 NKJV

²⁶¹ Phrase originally coined by Dr. Larry Miller. PHD, Co-Author of Cobwebs in My Temple. Derek Press, ISBN: 0871484706

²⁶² Information available at:http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6VB8-4BF5V123&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=10&md5=5df6dd3d3ab041fb8a62aa10153478f6

²⁶³ Re-Abuse in a Population of Court-Restrained Male Batterers: Why Restraining Orders Don't Work (From: Do Arrests and Restraining Orders Work? P 192-213, 1996, Eve S and Carl G Buzawa, eds. -- See NCJ-161517) <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=161527>

²⁶⁴ *ibid*

²⁶⁵ Luke 5:13-14

²⁶⁶ Matt. 9:12. Also His disciple Luke was a physician.

²⁶⁷ Any resemblance to “Alcoholics Anonymous” is not intended to bring castigation to the good name and good works of this or other addiction programs or organization, but only to make the distinction between a secular/social entity and the person of Jesus Christ.

²⁶⁸ Carbamazepine is an anticonvulsant that is structurally related to tricyclic antidepressants such as amitriptyline and

imipramine. In the United States, carbamazepine is sold under the trade names Tegretol and Carbatrol. For more information, see: <http://www.minddisorders.com/Br-Del/Carbamazepine.html>

²⁶⁹ Source: The Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders.
<http://www.minddisorders.com/Flu-Inv/Intermittent-explosive-disorder.html>

²⁷⁰ Specifically referring translations such as the KJV which is translated from the Textus Receptus Manuscript.

²⁷¹ Also see Ps. 19:7-11.

²⁷² One of the best website about the integrity of the manuscripts and textual criticism of the Bible is:
<http://www.1611kingjamesbible.com>

²⁷³ There are numerous scriptural references to physical wellness in the scriptures, among them are my favorites: "This is what the Lord says, 'Your wound is incurable, your injury is beyond healing. There is no one to plead your cause, no remedy for your sore, no healing for you. All your allies have forgotten you; they care nothing for you. ... But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds...'" Jeremiah 30:12-14, 17; .I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." 3 John 1:2; "And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." James 5:15-16

²⁷⁴ Smith, Chuck. "2 Timothy 3:16." The Word for Today. Blue

Letter Bible. 1 May 2005. 2009. 14 Jul 2009. < [http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=1&contentID=5411&commInfo=26&topic=2%20Timothy&ar=2Ti_3_16](http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=1&contentID=5411&commInfo=26&topic=2%20Timothy%20&ar=2Ti_3_16) >

²⁷⁵ “Like the dopamine hypothesis, the catecholamine hypothesis is a theory rather than fact...once replaced by a corollary hypothesis...this corollary has received very little research support” The Broken Brain, p234; “The Medical basis for Psychiatry” has no reference to chemical imbalance in its Table of Content or Index. (As cited in Christian Counselor’s Medical Desk Ref. p.66)

²⁷⁶ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *tamiym* (*Strong's 8549*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 15 Jul 2009. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H8549&t=KJV> >

²⁷⁷ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for '*aman* (*Strong's 539*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 15 Jul 2009. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H539&t=KJV> >

²⁷⁸ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *yashar* (*Strong's 3477*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 15 Jul 2009. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3477&t=KJV> >

²⁷⁹ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *tahowr* (*Strong's 2889*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 15 Jul 2009. <

[http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2889&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2889&t=KJV) >

²⁸⁰ Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for 'emeth (Strong's 571)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2009. 15 Jul 2009. ≤ [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H571&t=KJV](http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H571&t=KJV) >

²⁸¹ The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statues of the Lord are right; rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the lord is pure enlightening the eyes; The fear of the LORD [is] clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD [are] true [and] righteous altogether More to be desired [are they] than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. KJV

²⁸² Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.KJV

²⁸³ Heb. 4:12 "For the word of God living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." NKJV

²⁸⁴ See: Note to reader by Author.

²⁸⁵ Strong's, 1651

²⁸⁶ Babcock, J.C.; Green, C.E., & Robie, C. (2004). Does batterer's treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, 1023-1053.

Also see: Do Arrests or Restraining Orders Work? By Carl G. Buzawa Published in 1996, Sage Publications (Thousand Oaks, Calif).ISBN: 9780803970731

²⁸⁷ Ibid

²⁸⁸ Brett Trowbridge, Ph.D., J.D. Does Court-Mandated Domestic Violence Treatment Work? Page 5 commenting on Babcock, J.C.; Green, C.E., & Robie, C. (2004). Does batterer's treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment

²⁸⁹ <http://www.emergedv.com/canabuserschange.html>

²⁹⁰ Rosenfeld, B.D. (1992). Court-ordered treatment of spouse abuse. *Clinical Psychology Review* 12, 205-226

²⁹¹ Edward Gondolf, Reassault at 30-Months after Batterer Program Intake, 44 Int'l J. of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 111 (2000), available at

<http://www.iup.edu/maati/publications/outcomeabstracts.shtm#outcome4> can also be found at:
<http://old.www.iup.edu/maati/publications/outcomeabstracts.shtm>

²⁹² Nora K. Puffett & Chandra Gavin, Ctr. for Ct. Innovation, Predictors of Program Outcome and Recidivism at the Bronx Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Court (2004), available at http://www.courtinnovation.org/_uploads/documents/predictorsbronxdv.pdf

²⁹³ 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

²⁹⁴ “Do You Hear Their Cries?” A Feminist, Relational and Jungian Ethnography of Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Religious Congregations. A dissertation submitted to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of philosophy. Dorothy Ann Valin, Evanston, Illi. Dec. 2006. All accounts, quotes and interviewer’s reported words are taken from page 117-128

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²⁹⁶ For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Isaiah 13:13-14. Genesis 3:5 “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be open and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

²⁹⁷ A worldwide course which teaches foundational principles of the Christian faith free of charge. For specific details on the ALPHA program or to find one in your community, visit: www.alphausa.org

²⁹⁸ 1Peter 1:16; Lev 11:44,45; Lev. 19:2, Lev. 20:7,26; Lev.21:8

²⁹⁹ John 8:58; 14:9; 17:11

³⁰⁰ John 4:25-26. The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ -Gk). "When He comes, He will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."

³⁰¹ Mark 9:48

³⁰² This expression originated from Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice* [4:1]. Shylock who is a moneylender wanted the pound of flesh for a loan, but Portia responded that he may have it but without an ounce of blood (blood was not a part of the deal).

³⁰³ "Strangers shall submit themselves unto me; as soon as they hear they shall be obedient unto me" 2 Sam 22:45 KJV; "There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them." Joshua 8:35 NKJV God said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: "Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel who offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offering, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering—[you shall offer] of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats..." (Lev 22:18-19 NKJV)

³⁰⁴ Sacrifice and offering You did not desire (does not meet God's standard); My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Psalm 40:6. Paul quotes David, and in the entire chapter of Hebrews 10 Paul explains why it is so.

³⁰⁵ Reference to Psalm 40:6-8

³⁰⁶ Reference to Jeremiah 31:33

³⁰⁷ Reference to Jeremiah 31:34

³⁰⁸ This warning is written to Christians (take heed jokers in the Church). How much worse for those who are not among God's people?

³⁰⁹ Since the 1900's the market has seen more Bible translations than one knows what to do with. The most reliable, bar none, is the Authorized King James Version. I also use the New King James Version, staying away from the Footnotes and Margin writings that, in many Bible scholars' opinion, diabolically cast doubt on the Authorized King James Version by mentioning that a word or words are not found in the NU. NU refers to the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the United Bible Society's third edition (U). This text generally represents the Alexandrian or Egyptian type text of a relative few manuscripts found in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These are ancient manuscripts, but *questionable* ancient manuscripts. *Any manuscripts which, negates the deity and atonement of Jesus Christ, and is Antichrist.* Most all of the modern English translations of the Bible since the 1900s (such as the NIV, NASB, RSV, NLT) are based on this text. Numerous words and verses are omitted or changed, and differ greatly from the KJV which was translated from a different and ancient manuscripts which letters from the Christian founding fathers authenticate, i.e. the Received Text (name 'received' because it was [and still is] widely received).

³¹⁰ Other scriptures regarding the importance of prayer include: James 5:13, Mark 11:25, Luke 11:5-13, Psalm 66:17-20, Mark

2:35.

³¹¹ The tithe is one-tenth of one's income or increase; portions of which is to be used for various purposes. Abraham (Gen.4:18-20), Jacob (Gen. 28:20-22), and all God's people tithe (Mal.3:8-11).

³¹² "This like figure' refer to Noah/the eight souls in the Ark, saved by water-baptism is an antitype. Here is the NIV's translation: *"And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* | Peter 3:21

³¹³ Ephesians 1:15-23

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