

God gave us His Word to be divisive, not as we like to think about divisive, but because the cross is a stumbling stone to many. Sinners don't like doctrine, but that's the reason that the Lord gave us His Word the Bible, to cause an offense to a sinner and make them responsible for their sins. That's really what it's all about, we take so much care not to offend the sinners in our midst, that all too often we offend the very God of Creation.

God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly (2nd Peter 2:1-6).

God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness.

Palmberg noted that to be holy for them meant to separate one's self from that which is unclean, including people who are sinners. "You do not touch them, you do not eat with them, you do not have fellowship with them, you do not associate with them.

"But, for Jesus, to be holy is to show mercy," he continued. "It is to move towards sinners with compassion." Palmberg shared some of the ancient Jewish culture in helping listeners to better understand the significance of association with sinners. "Sitting at a table with another human being was an expression of intimacy and fellowship - it implied that you accepted that person.

Palmberg drew another contrast between holiness and mercy in terms of the power each wields. "For the Pharisee and those who follow the holiness code, uncleanness has the power," Palmberg observed. "It can defile. Uncleanness can contaminate. It can make that which is clean, unclean, just by touching it. But, for Jesus, power resides in mercy," he continued. "Mercy can transform and make clean that which is unclean. The need for protection through separation is gone."

To emphasize his point, Palmberg recalled the cleansing of the leper, excluded from the community because that person was considered unclean. "What did Jesus do? He stretched out His hand and touched the leper - the untouchable leper - and said, 'be clean.' It was not Jesus who became unclean, but the leper was made clean."

Looking at today's world, Palmberg called for an understanding that followers of Jesus do not need protection through separation from the world, "for we bring the mercy that can transform the world. To imitate God is not to go through life maintaining separation, it is to go in mercy toward others. All others, not just those who are our neighbors, but even those who are our enemies - even sinners and tax collectors."

There are two kinds of evangelicals, in Palmberg's opinion: those willing to stand up for justice, and those who avoid real issues of justice at all cost. "I know which kind of evangelical the Covenant is," Palmberg said, "and I know what kind of evangelical church I hope we will always be: evangelicals who care about evangelism, compassion, mercy and even justice, as controversial as it sometimes gets.

"It is a part of our call," he continued. "It is part of being righteous. It is part of bearing the fruit worthy of repentance."

Can we be a people who speak to issues of justice?" he asked his listeners. "Can we be a voice . . . for those who experience real injustice and have no access to power? It takes a mature church to discuss issues of injustice and respond, without dividing and fighting and threatening."

In his concluding remarks, he called upon Covenanters to be people of evangelism, compassion, mercy and justice and to intentionally move towards others in response to Christ's call and to carry His grace to our world.

(Editor's note: video of President Palmberg's sermon is available in RealPlayer format, and may be [viewed on line](#) or [downloaded](#). To download a free copy of RealPlayer, visit www.real.com)

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And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. "But I say to you truthfully, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:23-27

Are we who want to follow Christ willing to lay down our lives for Him, submit to Him, give up our valuable possessions in order to follow Him ? Or do we want to follow the ways of the world get caught up in earthly possessions , have everyone as our friend in a charismatic sort of way, thereby ignoring Heavenly aspirations? Which way does your heart yearn for Earthly or Heavenly aspirations?

For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. **James 1:7,8**

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

James 4:8

"The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

Matthew 6:22 NASB

it is a call to deny the lusts of the flesh – the self.

The idea that: we're going to eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

The idea that: no matter what, we're going to take what we want – even at the expense of others.

"You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.'

"But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

"If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

"Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

"Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 5:38-44

As you read this below - when you see "flesh", insert the word, "SELF"

For those who are according to the "SELF" set their minds on the things of the "SELF", but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the "SELF" is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the "SELF" is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the "SELF" cannot please God.

Romans 8:5-8

Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies;

For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you. **Proverbs 23:6,7**

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **Romans 8:9-13**

We're not to seek to satisfy, commend, and exalt SELF – but God above all things and His Son Jesus Christ.

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. **Romans 8:14**

Abuse In Christian Relationships

Malachi 2:13-16

And this have you done again, covering the altar of YAHUWAH with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that He does not regard the offering any more, or receive it with good will at your hand. Yet you say, How? Because YAHUWAH has been witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously: yet, she is your companion, and the wife of your covenant and did He not make you one? Yet, if he the residue of the spirit. Why one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For YAHUWAH, the mighty one of YAsharel, says that he hates the conduct: for one covers violence with his garment, says YAHUWAH of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that you deal not treacherously.

- The word translated as treacherously is 'bagad'. It means to cover, to be deceitful, to offend and transgress against
- The word translated as 'putting away', or 'divorce' in most English Bibles is 'shalak' . It means to send away, to push away, overall conduct and behavior, to forsake. (Remembering that ChristUW taught us that all action begins in the heart and that to think something, or have something in our heart, such as adultery, is the same as the physical action. Therefore we must understand that 'pushing a spouse away' is wrong whether done in mind, heart or action.
- The word translated as 'violence' is 'chamac'. It means violence, wrong doing, to oppress, to damage, unrighteous behavior, to be cruel

'Covering violence with his garment' in this verse has a two-fold meaning. Not only were womens bodies thoroughly covered and therefore physical abuse hidden (*today, clothes, make-up and sunglasses are used*); but also that back then, just as it is today also, many abusers hide their abusive behavior behind their position and reputation (IE: their garments).

People of all kinds of races, religions, educations, occupations and backgrounds - use their public persona to hide their true character.

Millions of women are pouring out their tears at the feet of YAHUWshua because they are being abused in some form.

This scripture is usually used to teach women that the Creator hates divorce. Yes, our Creator designed marriage to be a union between one man and one woman that would last a life time. But this scripture is specifically speaking about spousal abuse and unfaithful husbands. Once again, tradition is being taught rather than truth.

Abuse in any form is NOT ok with our Creator according HIS Word. I have heard Christians teach that it's ok to look as long as you don't touch. This is a lie according to the Word. ChristUW

tells us that to even 'think it' is the same as acting on it in the eyes of YAHUWAH, because He looks at our hearts, our motives and our souls - not just our outward actions.

It is very common to hear the teaching - 'obey your husband in all things unless it goes against the Word - well, abuse of any kind goes against the Word.

Qualities of A Healthy Christian Marriage:
A Sermon on Domestic Violence Awareness
By The Reverend Al Miles

Let us pray. God, you are Love and Life-giver. We thank you for your grace, justice and mercy. We firmly embrace your egalitarian nature. Through your son, Jesus Christ, all humans have the right to live life free from abuse and violence. May we treat one another with the same love and respect you give unconditionally. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Today we will address an issue that has unfortunately often been denied or overlooked by Christian leaders and laity: abuse and violence within Christian marriages.

In Christian traditions marriage between a woman and man is indeed a sacred covenant; an oath taken by two people before God and Christ usually in the presence of family, friends, and other well-wishers, to stay together until parted by death. As part of most Christian wedding ceremonies, the couple also vow to honor, love, respect, and be faithful and kind to one another.

The author of a letter written to all Christian churches near the city of Ephesus (many scholars believe this person was the apostle Paul), comments on the holy and mysterious nature of this bond.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each

one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Eph.5:21-33 NIV).

Situations of domestic violence clearly stand outside of the Ephesians author's admonishments on the principles husbands and wives need to follow in a healthy Christian marriage. A married couple must love and respect each other, just as Christ loves the church. Domestic violence disregards these instructions and disrespects Christ and his church. Abuse is neither loving nor respectful. It is a crime.

As a "body of Christ" it is imperative that we gain knowledge on the many complexities associated with domestic violence. The problem involves a pattern of abusive behavior in which a person uses coercion, deception, harassment, humiliation, manipulation, and/or force to establish and maintain power and control over that person's intimate partner or former intimate partner. Perpetrators use economic, emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, spiritual and/or verbal tactics to get their way.

We Christians must also grow in our understanding of who within an intimate partnership is most likely to be victimized and the victimizer.

While a small percentage of men are violated, in both heterosexual and homosexual intimate partnerships, the American Medical Association estimates that two million women in this country are assaulted by an intimate partner every year. The actual numbers are probably much higher because victims often do not report attacks, fearing both the stigma associated with abuse and the threat of reprisal from their perpetrators.

Domestic violence is the number one public health problem for women in the United States. According to the United States Surgeon General, domestic violence is the greatest single cause of injury among U.S. women, accounting for more emergency room visits than traffic accidents, muggings, and rape combined.

These alarming statistics do not include many of the emotional, psychological, and spiritual tactics male perpetrators use to abuse their female victims.

It would require a great deal of naivety on our part to think, given the overwhelming figures just cited, that Christians are somehow spared the scourge of domestic violence. To put it bluntly, there are men who sit in the pews, and speak from the pulpits, of churches in every Christian denomination and faith group—who also beat, curse, rape, and in many other ways violate their wives and girlfriends. And, there are Christian women, and their children, who live not in God's peace, but under the constant terror of being tortured emotionally, physically, psychologically, and sexually by males calling themselves "men of God."

Some of these men are ordained Christian clergy.

Tragically, clergy and congregants have also misinterpreted and mistranslated holy texts and doctrine to support male dominance and female subjugation. The practice continues to this day.

The patriarchal system has certainly always been alive and well in Christianity. Both the Hebrew Bible and Christian Scriptures have an androcentric, or male-centered, perspective and emerge from patriarchal societies. Some texts, which are misogynist (women-hating), are lifted up to the exclusion of other texts that clearly affirm mutual respect between the sexes. Still other texts have been twisted—inadvertently and intentionally—to suggest that our loving and merciful God and Jesus Christ for some reason grant males authority and privilege over females. Because of all the above, men have received special dispensation from Christian clergy and laity alike to do whatever they desire with their wives, girlfriends, daughters, and all other females, without any fear of accountability.

One passage of Scripture that has been used frequently down through the centuries to justify man's abuse of woman is our text today—Ephesians 5, verses 21-33. Viewed in its entirety, the passage offers clear guidelines regarding principles that must be followed by both Christian husbands and wives. Love and respect are the virtues that need to be at the center of every interaction.

But, over the centuries, the instructions put forth in Ephesians 5 have been used to elevate the status of men and put women down. Seldom do Christian clergy or congregants discuss the fact that nine of the twelve verses carry instructions for Christian husbands to follow. An inordinate amount of attention has been paid to what these verses tell wives, rather than what they demand of men. The passages clearly instruct husbands to love their wives as they do their own bodies. Nevertheless, the verses are often used to instruct women on what they are to do for their husbands—even husbands who abuse their wives.

The manner in which some Christian clergy and laity have used Ephesians 5:21-33 is

blasphemous. True blasphemy occurs when a teaching that was intended for good is distorted and misused to bring suffering and death.

Let us take a closer look at what the author of Ephesians actually intended to communicate to first century Christians about the qualities of a healthy marriage.

Verse 21 of Ephesians 5 introduces a litany of instructions for household members. Called "the household code," the writer of Ephesians borrows from the instructions on duties of household members found in Colossians 3:18-4:1. As biblical scholar, Andrew T. Lincoln, states regarding the household code:

Typical of the content of all such discussions is the notion that the man is intended by nature to rule as husband, father, and master and that failure to adhere to this proper hierarchy is detrimental not only to the household but also to the life of the state. Setting the household code within this tradition becomes significant for assessing its use within early Christianity. The tradition reveals that proper household management was regarded as a matter of crucial social and political concerns. Any upsetting of the household's traditional hierarchical order could be considered a potential threat to the order of society.

Even though the household code reflects a common patriarchal social and political position held in ancient times, this truth remains: domestic violence is never condoned by Scripture.

Nevertheless, the concept of female submission has frequently been misrepresented by abusers, clergy members, and churchgoers to excuse men's violence and blame women for their own victimization.

In fact, many of us who grew up in the Christian church were trained to think that the famous instructions to husbands and wives in the book of Ephesians, chapter 5, begin and end with verse 22: "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord" (NIV). Proclaimed by the clergy and other pastoral ministers from pulpits and at weddings, and by parents, teachers, and other congregants as well, Ephesians 5:22 has established a foundation on which countless numbers of Christian marriages have been built.

The verse has also been a perfect setup for millions of women to suffer acts of domestic violence.

Over the years, hundreds of violated Christian women have personally disclosed their stories of horror to me. They've shared how their Christian husbands have beaten, cursed, raped, and violated them in several other ways. Often, the women have said, the husbands justified their criminal and sinful behavior by citing verse 22 of Ephesians, chapter 5. It's a husband's right, the battered women are instructed, to do whatever he wants to his wife. And, no matter what acts of atrocity these husbands commit, Christian wives are told that they need to graciously submit to them in all things.

Sadly, this treacherous lie is also propagated by some Christian clergy and laity. Violated Christian women have been told that Ephesians, chapter 5, verse 22, demands that they "stay, pray, obey and everything will be okay." Because of this inappropriate teaching, many Christian women have suffered greater abuse from their Christian husbands. Some of the women have even died.

In truth, the admonitions in the book of Ephesians to Christian husbands and wives begin not at verse 22, but at verse 21: "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Inclusion of this one sentence puts on a whole new light and brings clarity to the entire passage. No longer can Christians view marriage as a male hierarchical union. Instead, we are challenged to observe the covenant of matrimony like God and Christ intended: as a mutual and egalitarian bond.

The Greek word *hupotasso*, which the New International Version of the Bible translates in

Ephesians 5, verse 21, as to submit, also means to align oneself with, to behave responsibly toward another, or to relate to one another in a meaningful way. Thus, the author of this book is instructing Christian husbands and wives to behave responsibly toward one another, align themselves and to relate to one another in a meaningful and respectful way.

There must never be a hierarchical structure in Christian marriages. Even when husbands are both loving and respectful, when there is no abuse whatsoever in the nuptial, male headship and female submission work against wives because this type of union disallows a woman to be a full and equal partner with her husband. The hierarchical structure is ultimately disadvantageous for husband as well because it prevents them from reaping the benefits of sharing life with a woman who is equal to him in every way.

Let us now move on in our chosen text to verses 23 and 24. "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

What exactly did "headship" mean in early Christian thought? The Greek word *kephale*, often translated as "head," has a number of metaphorical uses in the Christian Scriptures. Ordinarily it denotes "source," "origin," or "preeminence," rather than "authority over" or "ruler." Greek language scholar, Catherine Clark Kroeger, states in an article addressing the classical concept of "head" as "source":

To declare that man was the source of woman, that she was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, was to give woman a nature like man's own. She was no longer of the substance of the animals but of man. She was a fit partner, his glory and his image. "Neither is the woman independent of the man nor the man of the woman in the Lord; for just as the woman is from the man, so man is from the woman, and all things are of God" (I Cor. 11: 11,12).

What is clear, whether we are discussing first century or twenty-first century Christianity is this: there is no justification for Christian husbands to abuse their wives in any way, at any time. Let me repeat: Husbands have no right—not by God, Jesus, Scripture, beliefs, teachings, or tradition—to abuse their wives in any way. Equality and mutuality in marriage also help Christian women to understand it is never their duty, responsibility, or lot in life to have to endure the illegal and sinful actions of their Christian husbands, whether these inappropriate actions are emotional, physical, psychological, sexual, or spiritual in nature. Domestic violence is always worthy of condemnation.

The remaining passages in today's text, Ephesians, chapter 5, verses 25-33, focus primarily on a Christian husband's responsibility to his wife.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

These verses clearly instruct husbands to love their wives as they do their own bodies, just as Christ loved the church. Christ never cursed, raped or threatened harm upon the church in any other emotional, psychological, physical, or spiritual manner. Husbands must follow Christ's example of self-sacrificing love.

Let's return for a moment to Colossians, chapter 3. Recall that much of what the writer of

Ephesians has to say about the household code was adapted from this earlier work. In Colossians, chapter 3, verse 19, we find a stern warning: "Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them."

Domestic violence is harsh. This type of inappropriate behavior causes wives and children a great deal of harm, and destroys marriages and families. I want to say a few words directly to husbands.

If you are in any way abusing your wives—emotionally, psychologically, physically, sexually, spiritually, know that your behavior is both criminal and reprehensible. Please seek help for your problems from individuals who are trained specifically to work with men who perpetrate violence against their wives. See me at the end of today's service and I'll provide you more information about various programs in the area. I will also be happy to accompany you to these places.

In addition, I invite you to schedule weekly spiritual care sessions with me. During our times together we will pray and read passages from Scripture that teach equal value and dignity of husband and wife. We'll also discuss the larger theological dimensions of how God views men and women.

Please don't attempt to walk the long and bumpy road alone that can lead you to a healthy, violence-free life. I want to walk with you.

However, let me clearly state my limits: I will in no way accompany you further down the path you've already been traveling. In other words, I expect you to be honest with me—and to take full responsibility for the damage you've caused your wife and children. Blaming alcohol, children, pets, Satan, and your wife for the abuse you are perpetrating will inform me that you're not ready to trod the long and very difficult road that can lead to lasting change.

I hope you choose to get the help you need. The process can lead you to becoming the type of Christian husband God intends.

The qualities that make for a healthy Christian marriage today, are the same ones addressed by the writer of Ephesians in ancient times. In order for a marriage to be sustained and grow, both husband and wife must commit to the biblical virtues of love and respect. They must also recognize that this love, which comes from God, binds them together as equals rather than ordering them in a hierarchy. In addition, a wife and husband must behave responsibly toward one another, align themselves and relate to one another in a meaningful and respectful way.

Last, we must acknowledge that a healthy Christian marriage has no place for abuse. Domestic violence is not of God; it breaks apart women and children. Therefore, Christian clergy and laity must always condemn this behavior.

Let us pray. Loving God, in both ancient and modern times there have been scores of Christian men, both clergy and laity, who have used you, Jesus Christ, the holy scriptures, and church doctrine to justify their criminal and sinful acts of violence against their wives. There have also been far too many nonabusive Christians who have chosen to remain silent, even after knowing of the destruction committed by so-called "men of God." We call upon your holy spirit to empower us to respond more faithfully to the needs of victimized Christian women and children, and to hold accountable those Christian men who perpetrate these heinous crimes. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

The End

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Know. Both works are published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers and can be ordered in the U.S. by calling 1-800-328-4648. They also can be ordered on line at www.augsburgfortress.org.

<http://eaandfaith.blogspot.com/2005/07/qualities-of-healthy-christian.html>

Abuse and Christian Divorce

Abuse in its different manifestations is the most destructive tool that can be used by anyone against another person. It is designed to distort a person's view of reality and of God, thus keeping that person from having a fruitful life. When there is abuse going on in a relationship, it's time to separate. It doesn't matter how holy or good the person seems who is doing the violating.

There are different types of abuse and they are all designed for one thing and one thing only, DESTRUCTION! I believe all types of abuse can be put into one of these categories:

Physical Abuse: which is body torture that is used to subdue and control another person.

Sexual Abuse: torturing both a person physically and emotionally using unlawful sex acts as the weapon, i.e. prostitution, adultery, incest, homosexuality, rape, marriage rape, anything immoral or illegal sexually.

Verbal Abuse: designed to distort the truth a person holds about something or someone, including themselves in order to gain control over someone's mind.

Spiritual (religious) Abuse: used to manipulate another person to serve any other god than Jesus while many times exalting the abuser. At its worse, it's satanic ritual abuse, which many times include all the other categories of abuse.

Most sadly, all these types of abuses deeply scar the emotions of a person and usually greatly alters their perception and their ability to live life to its fullest. But there is hope. His name is Jesus. He has come to heal the broken-hearted.

If you have been abused and are hurt deeply inside, there is hope, healing, and full restoration. If you will yield your heart to the Holy Spirit sent from God to be our helper, He will lead you through every traumatic situation that you have been through into wholeness. The process is painful. However, on the other side of each "door of pain" is a place of joy, peace and rest.

The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God (the Bible). Which means, you must diligently give yourself to study of the Bible daily, surround yourself with godly people, turn your ears and eyes away from the secular media including TV, radio, movies, books and the like, and turn all of your heart over to Jesus, He will tenderly minister life to you instead of death. Share the pain of your heart with Him while searching the Scriptures for the answers. As you're doing that, turn your eyes and ears to godly Christian books, tapes, videos, TV, radio stations and music that God can use to administer healing to your heart. (You heard it said, "Eat the hay and leave the sticks?" There is a lot of christian stuff out there that has a lot of 'sticks'. Pick through them until you find a good hay mound.") As you do these things you will gradually and continually become a whole, hurt-free, peaceful and joyful person. You will even start to like yourself. And how good that will feel!

For another article, click on [Verbal Abuse, Marriage And Relationship](#).

There are many critical keys in this book regarding divorce, remarriage, submission, interracial marriage and relationships. Click on [Divorce: God's Will?](#) to order.

<http://divorcehope.com/abuseinmarriage.htm>

Verbal Abuse

I am not going to discuss physical or sexual abuse because there are many good books written on the subject already. I'd rather expose the other two types of abuse that are rarely ever mentioned.

A person can be so verbally abused that they don't know what's true anymore. This abuse is designed to put a person in a numb state so they are unable to make clear, concise decisions. The path of verbal abuse leads a person from what they know as truth into a confused state. This confused state arises because the abuser consistently interjects lies as truth until the abused no longer knows what to believe. For example, we can see this happen when the abuser uses truths from the Bible to justify a lie, or the abuser twists the Bible's true intent to satisfy his own selfish motive. The sad part comes when the abused embraces the lies from the abuser as truth, thereby disregarding the real truth. At this point the abused feels like they are in chains of bondage with no way out. A trusted godly person is like a life preserver to the abused at this point. For "the mouth of the righteous is a well of life" (Proverbs 10:11a).

There are three very important factors in verbal abuse. They are deception, confusion and reality or truth. We go through these steps during our lives until our belief system is built on a firm foundation of truth. The verbally abused spend most of their lives without a foundation of truth in their hearts and minds, but are in continual deception and confusion.

Confusion is a path — a means to reality (truth). Confusion is good ONLY when leaving deception and entering into reality (truth). When the Scripture says, "*...God is not the author of confusion...*" (1Corinthians 14:33), it is saying that GOD DOES NOT GIVE BOTH TRUTH AND A LIE TO DECIDE FROM. HE IS TRUTH!

The three factors are:

Deception:

You think you understand, and believe you know the truth, when in fact you have embraced a lie as truth. Remember, THE POWER OF DECEPTION IS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE DECEIVED.

Confusion:

You have opened your heart to receive new understanding, which now conflicts with what you believed to be true. You're no longer sure. The "previously held" belief or knowledge may not be true in light of the new belief. TWO OPPOSING THOUGHTS APPEARING TO BE TRUE IS CONFUSION.

Reality (Truth):

We understand which is truly REAL and which is the counterfeit or false, then make the decision to embrace the truth; we leave confusion and enter into reality (truth). TRUTH IS ALWAYS ABSOLUTE. IT DOES NOT CHANGE IN THE PRESENCE OF "NEW TRUTH."

If someone is "ignorant" instead of deceived, that is, they hold no knowledge or belief one way or another, they go from "ignorance to reality" without passing through any confusion. This is because the decision to choose between a lie and truth does not have to be made. A lie and truth are not always present at the same time to choose from.

The opposite often happens to people concerning their relationship with the true God. Instead of progressing from deception or being ignorant to truth, they digressed by exchanging the truth that they knew for a lie, and went back into deception — darkness. “Because they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. WHO EXCHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD FOR A LIE ...they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, [so] God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting...” (Romans 1:21,25,28). We must retain the truth of God in our hearts, which is the ONLY truth; otherwise we are dead while we live.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Even though God instituted marriage, He does not approve of ALL marriages. This can be clearly seen in the lives of the people of Israel written in Ezra, chapter 9 and 10, and Deuteronomy 7:15. In Ezra, God disapproved of the marriages and His judgment was on them until they corrected the situation by divorcing their spouses and even separating from their children that were born from those marriages. In Deuteronomy, God said, *“NOR SHALL YOU MAKE MARRIAGES WITH THEM. For they will turn your sons away from following Me”* (Deuteronomy 7:3,4). In this situation, God hated these kind of marriages!

When people say, “God hates divorce” as quoted from Malachi 2:16, normally that has been taught to mean that divorce is not allowed AT ALL. We shall see that this is only a half-truth.

In Jeremiah the eighth chapter, Jeremiah mourns over the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The Lord gave them a warning through the prophet in verses 4-22. In verse 5, it says that they were *“...in a perpetual backsliding [condition]”* and in verse 9 that *“...they have rejected the Word of the Lord.”* Our wrong motives and attitudes will always reject “the Word of the Lord.”

Because their motives and attitudes toward God and people were so bad, God said in verse 10, *“Therefore I WILL GIVE THEIR WIVES TO OTHERS, AND THEIR FIELDS TO THOSE WHO WILL INHERIT THEM.”* Notice God’s attitude concerning the marriage. The marriage itself was not first priority, but second. God did not save the marriage, but broke it up because of their continual disobedience. There is a curse that actually comes upon the marriage relationship because of continual disobedience to God (See Deuteronomy 28:30).

DIVORCE ITSELF IS NOT WHAT GOD HATES, BUT THE “WHY,” AND “HOW COME” BEHIND THE DIVORCE.

GOD’S FIRST PRIORITY IS THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THEN THE INSTITUTION THESE INDIVIDUAL’S MAKE UP. If we try to save the marriage, we will probably lose the couple. But if we try to save the couple first, we have a very good chance to save the marriage, but more importantly, we will save one or both of the couple.

We must not forget God is with us when He’s getting us out of a marriage. This may seem confusing, but remember: if God is FOR the marriage, He will lead you INTO it; if God is FOR the divorce, He will lead you OUT of the marriage. If God is against a marriage or a divorce, He will lead you away from it. In all situations, He will lead you to Himself so you can find His heart on the matter if you seek Him.

Being led by the Spirit of God through a divorce is crucial. There are many steps the Lord will take a spouse through as He leads them through a divorce. Maybe it’s praying to know the right timing of the divorce itself. Maybe it’s deciding which spouse will actually do the divorcing or who will physically stay in the house and who will leave. We need to pray with right motives. We need to have forgiveness in our heart toward our spouse. We need daily direction from God for all those major decisions both before and after the final separation. Most importantly, we need to receive the deep work that God wants to do in our own heart so we don’t repeat old sins and mistakes but become changed more and more into His likeness.

God wants to direct ALL of our life. For “in ALL your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct [ALL] your paths” (Proverbs 3:6).

Being led by the Spirit of God through a divorce will leave us free and at peace. When we go through a divorce being led by what is called “the flesh,” we will not be at peace or rest.

On the contrary, we may be legally divorced but we will still be bound by unforgiveness, resentment, anger and blame. As the Spirit of God leads us out of the marriage, He will lead us to “...bless those who curse you, [and to] do good to those who hate you, and [to] pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). As we willfully do these actions our heart will be transformed, enabling us to walk in love for those who hate the very ground we walk on.

Being led out of the marriage by the flesh (which is bitterness, resentment, anger, unforgiveness, and other wrong attitudes and motives) will cause our heart to change also. The change will not be for the better, but for the worse. The difference between those who have gone through traumatic emotional situations whose hearts are now healed and those whose hearts aren't, is that the one who is healed worked through their pain with God. The one who is not healed did not work through their pain even though they may know God personally.

Is Adultery Mandatory Grounds For Divorce? No!

The belief and teaching that adultery is always grounds for divorce, is not true! It CAN be grounds for divorce. However, adultery is not a MANDATORY reason for getting a divorce as we shall see.

Adultery, Grounds for Divorce?

Again, the Son of God confronted the hardness of heart of the religious leaders. This time, they dragged into the temple (the church building) someone's wife who was caught in the very act of adultery. (I wonder why the man wasn't brought in, too?) This incident took place in John 8:1-11.

After the accusations and indictments have been hurled out, Jesus said, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first” (John 8:7). Jesus then stooped down again and wrote in the dirt. When He stood up, every one of her accusers were gone, and not a stone was thrown. He said to her, *“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”* She said, *‘No one, Lord’*. And Jesus said to her, *‘Neither do I condemn you; GO and sin no more’*” (John 8:10-11).

Go where? Go back to her husband and be the kind of wife that God wants her to be. Jesus did not say that adultery was grounds for divorce. He did not even tell her to make it right with her husband, even though she may have been convicted to do just that. But Jesus did say, “Neither do I condemn you; GO AND SIN NO MORE” (John 8:11).

The religious leaders said that she should be stoned to death for adultery, NOT DIVORCED! There were different adulteric situations in applying the law to have her stoned. The stoning punishment that they applied was for a man and woman caught in the act, and a “betrothed damsel” — an engaged young lady. This was spelled out in Deuteronomy 22:24 and Leviticus 20:10. It appeared that Jesus applied the law of Numbers 5:11-31 because this woman was “another man's wife”. In this case the wife was to be taken to the Priest. The curses were pronounced and written down regarding her supposed sinfulness. She was then to drink a certain mixture prepared by the Priest and then to say, “Amen, so be it”. She was then able to leave and the punishment was left up to God according to what was written. This is probably why Jesus was writing in the dirt — the curses of the sin. But Jesus showed mercy. Even though there are consequences, He wanted to forgive and to cleanse.

ADULTERY IS NOT A MANDATORY REASON FOR A DIVORCE. If it were, that would mean that we could, according to Jesus, divorce our spouse if they only committed the act of adultery in their heart. Jesus said, *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘you shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that WHOEVER LOOKS AT A WOMAN TO LUST for her HAS ALREADY COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER IN HIS HEART”* (Matthew 5:27, 28). If this were the case, every man would probably have been stoned to death.

((Also, stoning is NOT a Christian punishment as some try to say the bible describes stoning as a form of punishment for adultery. Stoning for adultery was a societal practice of the times, NOT of God. It was a law in their society that people invented. God NEVER said, nor did Jesus, to stone was acceptable behavior for any reason.))

“Is abuse an acceptable reason for divorce?”

Answer: While it seems obvious abuse should be an acceptable reason for divorce, the Bible gives only two reasons in which divorce is permitted: the first is in the case of abandonment of a Christian by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15), and the second is if one partner is involved in a lifestyle of infidelity (Matthew 5:32). Although God allows it in these circumstances, He has never been an endorser of divorce. It should be assumed that two Bible-believing Christians will not mutually agree to divorce, but should practice the forgiveness and love that God freely gives us. *“For I hate divorce!”* says the Lord, the God of Israel...” (Malachi 2:16).

The Bible is silent on the issue of marital abuse as a reason for divorce, although it is obvious that God despises the mistreatment of wives by their husbands (Colossians 3:19, 1 Peter 3:7, Ephesians 5:25-33). Abuse should not be tolerated by anyone. No one should have to live in an abusive environment, whether it involves a family member, friend, employer, caregiver, or stranger. Physical abuse is against the law, and the authorities should be the first ones contacted if this occurs.

The best way to prevent ending up feeling trapped in an abusive marriage is to get to know a potential spouse before making the commitment to marry. The signs of being an abuser are manifested in one's personality. These “red flags” are always there, but are often overlooked or even ignored when attraction and infatuation take over. These signs can include: irrational jealousy, the need to be in control, a quick temper, cruelty toward animals, attempts to isolate the other person from his or her friends and family, drug or alcohol abuse, and disrespect for their partner's boundaries, privacy, personal space, or moral values.

A wife who is being abused should get herself, and any children, out of the situation immediately and find a new temporary home. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that separation (not divorce) in this instance would be wrong. Although friends and family will likely tell the woman to immediately file for divorce, God places a much higher value on marriage than the world does.

Once separated, the abuser has the responsibility to reach out for help. First and foremost, he should seek God. *“For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks”* (Matthew 7:8). No one has more power to heal individuals and relationships than God. He must be the Lord of our lives, the Master of our assets, and the Head of our households.

Both husband and wife must commit themselves to God and then develop a relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. *“And this is the way to have eternal life – to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth”* (John 17:3). This should be accompanied by intensive Christian counseling – first individually, then as a couple, and even for the entire family if necessary.

During this time, the wife should let her husband know of her unconditional love and support, and

devote herself to much prayer. Although the effort must be made on the part of her husband to make the changes, she should not give up hope if he is at first resistant. However, if he never even takes the first step, she should not consider returning to him until he does.

The abused spouse should not return home until a trained Christian counselor decides that the family will be safe in the same home as the former abuser. Together, the couple should then commit to serving and obeying God. They should spend individual time with God daily, attend a Bible-believing church, begin serving God through a ministry, and get involved in small Bible study groups that fit their needs. "What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun" (2 Corinthians 5:17)!

Recommended Resource: [No Place for Abuse: Biblical & Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence.](#)

Question: "What are Biblical grounds for divorce?"

Answer: When discussing what the Bible says about divorce, it is important to keep in mind the words of Malachi 2:16, "I hate divorce, says the Lord God." Whatever grounds the Bible possibly gives for divorce, that does not mean God desires a divorce to occur in those instances. Rather than asking "is _____ a grounds for divorce," often the question should be "is _____ grounds for forgiveness, restoration, and/or counseling?"

The Bible gives two clear grounds for divorce: (1) sexual immorality (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) and (2) abandonment by an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:15). Even in these two instances, though, divorce is not required or even encouraged. The most that can be said is that sexual immorality and abandonment are grounds (an allowance) for divorce. Confession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration are always the first steps. Divorce should only be viewed as a last resort.

Are there any grounds for divorce beyond what the Bible explicitly says? Perhaps, but we do not presume upon the Word of God. It is very dangerous to go beyond what the Bible says (1 Corinthians 4:6). The most frequent additional grounds for divorce that people inquire about are spousal abuse (emotional or physical), child abuse (emotional, physical, or sexual), addiction to pornography, drug / alcohol use, crime / imprisonment, and mismanagement of finances (such as through a gambling addiction). None of these can be claimed to be explicit biblical grounds for a divorce.

That does not necessarily mean, though, that none of them are grounds for divorce which God would approve of. For example, we cannot imagine that it would be God's desire for a wife to remain with a husband who physically abuses her and/or their children. In such an instance, the wife should definitely separate herself and the children from the abusive husband. However, even in such a situation, a time of separation with the goal of repentance and restoration should be the ideal, not necessarily immediately beginning divorce proceedings. Please understand, by saying that the above are not biblical grounds for divorce, we are definitely not saying that a man/woman whose spouse is engaging in such activities should remain in the situation. If there is any risk to self or children, separation is a good and appropriate step.

Another way to look at this issue is to differentiate between biblical grounds for divorce and biblical grounds for divorce and remarriage. Some interpret the two biblical grounds for divorce mentioned above as the only grounds for remarriage after a divorce, but allow for divorce with no remarriage in other instances. While this is a plausible interpretation, it seems to come too close to presuming upon the Word of God. For more information, please read the following two articles:
<http://www.gotquestions.org/divorce-remarriage.html>
<http://www.gotquestions.org/divorced-remarry.html>

In summary, what are the biblical grounds for divorce? The answer is sexual immorality and abandonment. Are there additional grounds for divorce beyond these two? Possibly. Is divorce ever to be treated lightly or employed as the first recourse? Absolutely not. God is capable of changing and reforming any person. God is capable of healing and renewing any marriage. Divorce should only occur in instances of repeated and unrepentant heinous sin.

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Delighting in the Lord means we find pleasure in knowing Him and doing His will and trust that He will delight us in return when we obey Him. He will put His desires into our hearts, and in this situation, that means desiring for ourselves the type of spouse He desires for us and who He knows will delight us further. Proverbs 3:6 tells us, "In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Acknowledging Him in the search for a loving and respectful, kind, giving, considerate spouse means submitting to His sovereign will and telling Him that whatever He decides is best is what we want.

After committing ourselves to God's will, we need to be clear on the characteristics of a godly husband or wife and experience Godly joy when our partner qualifies on a spiritual level.

<http://www.gotquestions.org/husband-looking.html>

Question: "What should I be looking for in a husband?"

Answer: When a Christian woman is looking for a husband, the primary quality she should be seeking is a man "after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22). The most important relationship that any of us have is our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. That relationship comes before every other relationship. If our vertical relationship with the Lord is on a day-by-day grace basis, then our horizontal relationships will reflect that reality. Therefore, a potential husband should be a man who has his focus upon walking in obedience to God's Word and who seeks to live so that his life brings glory to God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

What are some other qualities to look for? The apostle Paul gives us a great source for the qualities we should look for in a husband in 1 Timothy chapter 3. In this passage are the qualifications for an elder / pastor / overseer / deacon in the church body. However, these qualities should grace the lives of any man who walks "after God's heart." The qualities can be paraphrased as follows: This man should be patient and controlled in his demeanor, not filled with pride but of sober mental attitude, able to master his emotions, given to graciousness to others, able to patiently teach, not given to drunkenness or uncontrolled use of any of God's gifts, not prone to violence, not overly focused upon the details of life but focused upon God, not a man who is apt to be a hot-head or be thin-skinned so that he takes offense easily, and one who is grateful for what God has given, rather than envious of what gifts others have received.

In other words, what we have here is the description of a man who is actively engaged in the process of becoming a mature believer. That is the type of man a woman should look for as a potential husband. Yes, physical attraction, similar interests, complementary strengths and weaknesses, a desire for children, etc., are things to consider. These things, though, must take a secondary role to the spiritual qualities a woman should look for in a man. A man whom you can trust, respect, and follow in the path of godliness is of far greater value than a man of good looks, fame, power, or money.

Finally, when "looking" for a husband, we must be of the mindset that is surrendered to God's will in our lives. As we rest in God's provision for us, He will bring into our lives opportunities and tests. Not all things that seem like opportunities are good, and not all tests are bad. It is the choice to rest in God's grace in whatever situation that is at issue. Every woman wants to find her "prince charming," but the reality is that she will probably marry a man with as many flaws as she has. Then, by God's grace, they will spend the rest of their lives together learning how to be a partner to, and servant of, each other. We must enter into the second-most-important relationship

of our lives (marriage), not under an emotional cloud, but with eyes open. Our most important relationship, with our Lord and Savior, has to be the focus of our lives.

Question: "What should I be looking for in a wife?"

Answer: The most important personal relationship that a man can have, outside of his spiritual relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, is his relationship with his wife. In the process of looking for a wife, the utmost principle is to look for a woman with a personal faith in Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us not to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). Unless a man and woman are in full agreement on this most crucial issue, a godly and fulfilling marriage cannot take place.

However, marrying a fellow believer does not guarantee the full experience of being "equally yoked." The fact that a woman is a Christian does not mean she is necessarily a good match for you spiritually. Does she have the same spiritual goals as you? Does she have the same doctrinal beliefs as you? Does she have the same passion for God as you? The question of what qualities to seek in a potential wife is crucially important. Far too many men marry for emotional or physical attraction alone, and that can be a recipe for failure.

The Lord asked of Israel, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). This is the ideal, but the reality is that married couples will not always agree. However, we can agree to disagree within the structure of God's order. Therefore, a clear mental attitude about our expectations and communication one to the other about them is important, and it should take place before marriage, not after. Negotiations are easier before the contract is signed and sealed. We must never marry with the idea that we can change our partner after marriage.

What are some godly qualities a man can look for in a wife? Scripture gives us some principles we can use to create a picture of a woman with wife-potential. She should first be surrendered in her own spiritual relationship with the Lord. The Apostle Paul tells the wife that she is to submit to her husband as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-24). If a woman is not surrendered to the Lord, she will not be likely to see submission to her husband as necessary to her own spiritual well-being. We cannot fulfill the expectations of anyone else without first allowing God to fill us with Himself. A woman with God at the center of her life is a good candidate for a wife.

The Apostle Paul also gives some quality traits for a woman in his instructions about the qualifications that a leader in the church should have (1 Timothy 3). We find those qualities in 1 Timothy 3:11: "In the same way, their [deacons] wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." In other words, this is a woman that is not overly proud, knows when to speak and when to be silent, and is able to take her place beside her husband in confidence. She is a woman whose first focus is upon her relationship with the Lord and her own spiritual growth.

The responsibilities of marriage are greater for the husband, for God's order places him as the head of his wife and his family. This headship is modeled after the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:25-33). It is a relationship based in love. As Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, the husband is to love his wife as he does his own body. Therefore, a man's personal spiritual relationship with the LORD is of supreme importance in the success of his marriage and his family. Willing sacrifice, and the strength to choose to be a servant to the betterment of his marriage, are the marks of a maturing spiritual man who honors God. Wisely choosing a wife based upon biblical qualities is important, but of equal importance is a man's own ongoing spiritual growth and his surrender to God's will in his life. A man with his eyes on God and who is seeking to be the man God wants him to be will be able to help his wife be the woman God desires her to be and will be able to build the marriage into the union God, he, and his wife desire it to be.

Recommended Resources: [The Ten Commandments of Dating by Young & Adams.](#)

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

John 14:13-14

Confronting Abuse As Sin

God sees abuse as "sin."

There are many Bible verses that describe behaviors commonly seen in domestic violence. These scriptures clearly call these behaviors sin. One such biblical passage is found in Galatians 5:19-21:

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; 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. (Galatians 5:19-21, NIV)

Let's see how these sins relate to domestic violence:

- **Jealousy** -- Jealous behavior is often one of the first warning signs of an abusive personality. At first it may be excused as love and caring, but it can quickly become a form of abusive control and coercion.
- **Fits of Rage** -- An abuser's raging can effectively intimidate and control his partner and children. By being scary and threatening, he can have his way.
- **Discord and Dissensions**-- Even in the absence of physical abuse, verbal and psychological abuse destroys relationships and homes. See [The Continuums of Abuse](#) and the [Types of Verbal Abuse](#) describe other abusive behaviors that bring discord and dissension.
- **Drunkenness**--Though alcohol and drug abuse are not the cause of domestic violence, they are frequently present with domestic violence. An abuser may use them as an excuse for battering, claiming they "made him out of control."
- **Selfishness**--Abusers are often self-centered and narcissistic (lover of self).
- **Sexual Immorality, Impurity and Debauchery**-- Sexual abuse is frequently found in domestic violence relationships. The ["Continuums of Abuse"](#) describes some types of sexual abuse. Abusers may also have "affairs" or engage in pornography due to an accompanying sexual addiction, or a desire to hurt and demean their partner.

Other common domestic violence behaviors described as sin in the Bible include:

- **abuse, lack of self-control, treachery, rashness, brutality, inability to acknowledge the truth (e.g., denial) (2 Timothy 3:1-8)**
- **slander and verbal abuse (1 Corinthians 5:11 and 6:9, Mark 7:22, Matthew 15:19)**
- **anger (Matthew 5:21-22)**
- **lies, deceit, and falsehood (Malachi 3:5; Matthew 15:19; Romans 1:29)**
-

malice (Romans 1:28-32; Mark 7:22)

•

arrogance (Mark 7:22)

•

taking advantage of others (Leviticus 25:17)

•

impressing others while covering secret sin (Matthew 23:23, 28)

•

child abuse (Luke 17:1-3)

Abusers are in peril of eternal damnation

The Bible makes it clear that unrepentant abusers who do not turn from their ways will be judged and will not enter the Kingdom (Matthew 5:21-22, Galatians 5:19-21, and Revelation 21-22). Malachi 2:13-14 and 1 Peter 3:7 indicate that abusers' prayers are blocked. If a servant of God abuses others, he will be punished when Jesus returns, and will be treated as an unbeliever (Luke 12:45-46). It is so important that domestic violence be recognized and dealt with as sin, because the abuser's soul is in peril.

When we recognize abuse as sin, it is easier to see what action the Bible prescribes.

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Believers are responsible for confronting sin:

Abuse is a serious matter; the soul of the abuser is at stake. The sin of abuse must not be enabled, but rather be confronted (see Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 5:11, Leviticus 19:17).

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Believers are to pray for those who mistreat them. Abusers are trapped in sin and are in great peril of their souls. Believers are to pray for them, according to Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:28, 1 John 5:16.

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Jesus taught us a formula for confronting sin:

Read Matthew 18:15-17. This plan promotes accountability while providing safety measures for the victim.

NOTE: When confronted, a hardened abuser frequently denies the situation and escalates the abuse and attempts to control. A victim should first have a **safety plan** in place. If the situation is too dangerous, confrontation may be inappropriate. It may be better to allow professionals, relatives, friends, or the courts to confront the abuser.

Discussion Questions:

1. We rarely hear domestic violence referred to as sin. Sometimes people refer to it as "a love spat," "a private matter," or "a marital problem." How do each of these terms fail to hold abusers accountable for their actions?

2. The Bible says that sin can be transferred to future generations (Exodus 34:7) Have you seen domestic violence occur in different generations of the same family?

"MORAL ISSUES CONFRONTING CHRISTIANS"

Domestic Violence

INTRODUCTION

1. A serious problem in our society is **domestic violence**...
 - a. Spouse abuse between husband and wife
 - b. Child abuse between parent and child

2. Domestic abuse has many forms...
 - a. Physical violence, sexual abuse
 - b. Psychological (emotional) abuse, both aggressive and passive aggressive behavior
3. Sadly, Christians are not immune to domestic violence...
 - a. Husbands have been known to abuse their wives, and vice versa
 - b. Parents have abused their children, and vice versa

[Yet problems related to domestic violence could be eliminated if Biblical admonitions concerning family relations were followed. For example, consider what is taught concerning...]

I. RELATIONS BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

A. THE HUSBAND'S DUTY TO HIS WIFE...

1. The husband is to love his wife - **Ep 5:25-29**
 - a. As Christ loves the church
 - b. As a man loves his own body
 2. The husband is to honor his wife - **1Pe 3:7**
 - a. Treating them with understanding
 - b. Respecting her as a fellow heir of the grace of life (a sister in Christ!)
 - c. Otherwise, your prayers will be hindered
 3. The husband is not to be bitter toward his wife - **Col 3:19**
 - a. "do not be harsh" (ESV)
 - b. "never treat them harshly" (NLT)
- **How can a faithful Christian husband physically or verbally abuse his wife?**

B. THE WIFE'S DUTY TO HER HUSBAND...

1. The wife is to love her husband - **Tit 2:4**
 2. The wife is to submit to her husband - **Ep 5:22-24; Col 3:18; 1Pe 3:1-6**
 - a. As to the Lord
 - b. As the church is subject to Christ
 - c. As is fitting in the Lord
 - d. Even if the husband is not a Christian
 3. The wife is to respect her husband - **Ep 5:33**
- **How can a faithful Christian wife physically or verbally abuse her husband?**

[Christians who respect and apply such admonitions do not have problems with domestic violence involving marital relations. The same is true for those who follow Biblical admonitions concerning...]

II. RELATIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

A. THE PARENTS' DUTY TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN...

1. The mother is to love her children - **Tit 2:4**
2. The father is not to provoke his children to wrath (anger) - **Ep 6:4**
 - a. "do not exasperate your children" (TNIV)
 - b. "by the way you treat them" (NLT)
 - c. "lest they become discouraged" - **Col 3:21**

3. The father is to bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord - **Ep 6:4**
 - a. "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (ESV)
 - b. Exemplified by Paul with his conduct among his spiritual children - **1Th 2:11**
 - c. Such discipline also includes chastening when necessary - **He 12:7-9**
 4. In the absence of a father, a mother can provide such training - **2Ti 1:5; 3:15**
- **How can Christian parents provide children anything less than true love?**

B. THE CHILDREN'S DUTY TOWARD THEIR PARENTS...

1. Children are to obey their parents - **Ep 6:1; Col 3:20**
 - a. "in the Lord" - as far as their commandments agree with those of God - **Barnes**
 - b. "for this right" - three reasons given by **Barnes**:
 - 1) It is so appointed by God as a duty
 - 2) Children owe a debt of gratitude to their parents for what they have done for them
 - 3) It will be for the good of the children themselves, and for the welfare of society
 - c. "this is well pleasing to the Lord" - who Himself submitted to His parents - **Lk 2:51**
 2. Children are to honor their parents - **Ep 6:2-3**
 - a. Which means to love and respect them
 - b. Which comes with a promise of a good and long life (that is generally true)
 3. Children are to support their parents - **1Ti 5:4,8,16**
 - a. Especially a mother or grandmother who is a widow
 - b. Failure to do so is a denial of the faith and to be worse than an unbeliever
 - c. A personal duty, not one to be passed on to the church
- **How can Christian children show parents anything less than loving behavior?**

CONCLUSION

1. Through such admonitions, the Bible addresses the problems of domestic violence...
 - a. Producing loving and lasting marriages
 - b. Creating peaceful and harmonious families
2. Indeed, domestic violence disappears overnight if we simply treat one another as Christians...
 - a. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." - **Ep 4:32**; cf. **Ep 5:1-2; 1Co 13:4-8**
 - b. "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;" - **Ro 12:10**; cf. **Php 2:3-4**

"Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing."

- **1Pe 3:8-9**