

# The Epidemic of Domestic Abuse – A Hidden Sin Exposed

Calvary Bible Church – Pastor David Saxton – June 6, 2021

*Behold, I cry out, “Violence!” but I am not answered; I call for help, but there is no justice (Job 19:7). O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more (Psalm 10:17-18).*

## 1. Introduction.

a. There is an epidemic of abuse today.

b. Lundy Bancroft: “Even if we leave aside cases of purely verbal and mental abuse and just look at physical violence, the statistics are shocking: 2 to 4 million women are assaulted by their partners *per year* in the United States. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared that attacks by male partners are the *number one cause* of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 45” (*Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*, p. 7).

b. The prevalence is no surprise to the Lord, even in religion – 2 Tim. 3:1-5 – But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. <sup>2</sup> For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> heartless, unappeasable, slandrous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, <sup>4</sup> treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

## 2. What is Domestic Abuse?

a. “Abuse then, is a mentality of entitlement and superiority in which an abuser uses various tactics to obtain and enforce unjustified power and control over another person.” (Jeff Crippen and Anna Wood, *A Cry for Justice*, p. 18).

b. “Abuse occurs in marriage when one spouse pursues their own self-interests by seeking to control and dominate the other through a pattern of coercive, controlling, and punishing behavior” (Darby Strickland, *Is It Abuse*, p. 24).

c. “Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive, controlling, or abusive behavior that is used by one individual to gain or maintain power and control over another individual in the context of an intimate relationship. This includes behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, and exploit, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound an intimate partner,” (Holcomb, *Is It My Fault?* p. 57).

## 3. Some Biblical Sketches of Abuse.

a. Satan, the Abuser. Abuse is sin in a pure form. He slanders, destroys, deceives, twists, hates, questions, accuses, intimidates, confuses, counterfeits, condemns, opposes.

- John 8:44 – You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- Hebrews 2:14-15 – He himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,<sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.
- Mark 1:32 – That evening at sundown they brought to Him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.
- 1 Peter 5:8 – Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. See also Revelation 12:10-11; Job 1:9-11.

b. King Saul and David.

- 1 Samuel 18:8-15 – Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?”<sup>9</sup> And Saul eyed David from that day on.<sup>10</sup> The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand.<sup>11</sup> And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David evaded him twice.<sup>12</sup> Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul.<sup>13</sup> So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people.<sup>14</sup> And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.<sup>15</sup> And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him.

c. Nabal and Abigail (1 Samuel 25).

d. Abusers of Jesus.

- Matthew 27:28-29 – And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” 26:67-68 – Then they spit in His face and struck Him. And some slapped Him, saying, *Prophesy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?*

e. Pre-conversion Saul.

- 1 Timothy 1:12-15 – I thank Him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He judged me faithful, appointing me to His service,<sup>13</sup> though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,<sup>14</sup> and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.<sup>15</sup> The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.
- Acts 8:3 – But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Acts 22:4 – I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women.

f. Diotrephes in 3 John.

- 3 John 9-10 – I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.<sup>10</sup> So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.

#### 4. What types of abuse are there?

- a. Physical Abuse – “Physical abuse may include hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, spitting... and denying or restricting access to medical care or treatment,” (Moles, p. 23).
- b. Intimate Partner Abuse. I deal with this in the institute session.
- c. Emotional Abuse – “Emotional abuse systematically degrades, diminishes, and can eventually destroy the personhood of the abused.... When the abusive behavior is perpetrated by someone who promises to love and cherish you, it is even more devastated and destructive” (Leslie Vernick, *The Emotionally Destructive Marriage*, p. 11).
- d. Verbal Abuse – “Subtle diminishing or angry outbursts, cool indifference, or one-upmanship, witty sarcasm, or silent withholding, manipulative coercion or unreasonable demands are common occurrences,” (Patricia Evans, *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, p. 17).
- e. Spiritual Abuse – “Spiritual abuse occurs when an oppressor establishes control and domination by using Scripture, doctrine, of his ‘leadership role’ as weapons.... When a spiritual abuser twists Scripture and uses it to attack, his abuse can feel as though it comes from God Himself,” (Darby, p. 212).
- f. Financial Abuse – “Financial Abuse is a way of controlling a person by making her economically dependent or controlling a person....They include concealing financial information, limiting a victim’s access to assets, controlling her ability to acquire money, exploiting her resources, or dictating how all family funds are spent” (Darby, pp. 235, 237).

#### 5. The Church and Domestic Abuse.

- a. Difficult to spot – “Abuse is easy to miss, but it is even easier to minimize,” (Darby, 15).
- b. Ignorance in the church – “The local church is one of the favorite hiding places of the abusive person.... In Christian settings, the victim is accused of being unforgiving and of refusing to obey Scripture’s commands to reconcile.” (Crippen, pp. 12, 19, 22, 24).
- c. “When a very legalistic, highly traditional worldview is adopted by men who have ‘exaggerated needs for dominance vis-à-vis their wives, poor verbal skills to enable them to establish such dominance, poor access to their emotions, exaggerated anxiety about relationship issues’ and difficulty with intimacy, such factors can provide fertile ground for the emergence of violent behavior” (Alsdurf, *Battered into Submission*, p. 17).
- d. Objection: “Can’t they just go to regular marriage counseling?”

#### 6. Conclusion: How can we respond to and help the sin of abuse?

- a. For Abusers.
  - 1) Call to heart repentance and submissive faith in Christ. Totally open and honest with relationships and committed to personal accountability.

- 2) Church must not fall into the trap of just putting out the fire, and not just deal with tactics, but root heart issues.
- 3) Abusers cannot expect immediate restoration with family and others, but to humbly focus on persevering in repentance and faith and allow the Lord in His timing to restore relationships, if ever.
- 4) Brad Hambrick provides 4 key evidences of genuine change in abusers: humility, patience, external accountability, and not being concerned with groveling (pity party) (pp. 30-36).

b. For Those Abused and Those Caring for Them and Walking with Them.

- 1) Listen well to the survivor's stories to understand the abuse.
- 2) Help create a safety plan (see Appendix A in Darby's *Is It Abuse?*)
- 3) Involve many in the church to help the abused in a team approach.
- 4) Be committed to the long process together of learning the love and care of the Lord, and how Jesus heals our wounds in the Gospel of His grace.

## 7. Some Recommended Books.

- ✓ Bancroft, Lundy. *Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*. New York: Berkley Books, 2002.
- ✓ Crippen, Jeff and Anna Wood. *A Cry for Justice: How the Evil of Domestic Abuse Hides in Your Church*. Calvary Press Publishing, 2012.
- ✓ Hambrick, Brad. Editor. *Becoming a Church that Care Well for the Abused*. Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2019.
- ✓ Holcomb, Justin and Lindsey. *Is It My Fault? Hope and Healing for Those Suffering Domestic Violence*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.
- ✓ Moles, Chris. *The Heart of Domestic Abuse: Gospel Solutions for Men Who Use Control and Violence in The Home*. Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2015.
- ✓ Strickland, Darby. *Is It Abuse? A Biblical Guide to Identifying Domestic Abuse and Helping Victims*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2020.
- ✓ Thorne, Helen. *Walking with Domestic Abuse Sufferers*. London: InterVarsity Press, 2018.