

# Victim Care

Chris Moles

## What is Domestic Violence?

### Definitions:

“A pattern of abusive behavior in an intimate relationship used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over the other. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, isolate, frighten, terrorize, coerce, threaten, blame, hurt, injure, or wound someone.”

“An abuse of power, manifested through selfishly motivated patterns of behavior intended to exercise or maintain control over one's partner.”

“A godless pattern of abusive behavior among spouses involving psychological, emotional, and/or physical means to exert and obtain power and control over the spouse for the achievement of selfish ends.” Henderson

## The Weight of Domestic Violence

*“Domestic violence is always on an escalating pattern. It always gets worse... Whatever my gut instinct is about a particular marriage, or a particular husband I can never say to a woman, “well, you won’t be a statistic, or your husband is a non-escalating sinner.” I must look at each woman I counsel as a statistic in the making.”*

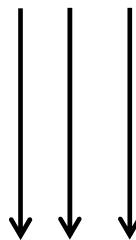
– Jeffery Black<sup>1</sup>

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briers. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” Luke 6:43-45



### Tactics/Fruit

Intimidation  
Ridicule  
Isolation  
Minimization Denial and Blame  
Using the Children  
Male Privilege  
Economics  
Coercion and Threats



<sup>1</sup> Domestic violence: ending the silence. CCEF Lecture

# Victim Care

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## A profile of brokenness

*“None of us can escape the brokenness of our world. We are sinful, hurting people in a universe groaning under the curse of sin. The reality of physical and sexual abuse in our world provides a blatant and painful proof of this brokenness.”*  
John Henderson<sup>2</sup>

- Physical Injury
- Anger and Resentment
- Shame
- Helplessness and Hopelessness
- Isolation and loneliness

## Potential Landmines

### Safety, suffering, and the sovereignty of God:

The most common questions I have been asked by Christian victims of domestic violence.

1. What does the Bible say about abuse and divorce?
2. Does God expect me to suffer in this relationship?

A theology of suffering is tremendously beneficial to the biblical counselor, but in regards to victims of abuse a theology of suffering without considering God’s response to violence and oppression can lead to some dangerous advice.

There are many great truths available to us in suffering.

- Purpose in pain. (Romans 8:28-29)
- Provision in pain. (1Cor. 10:13)
- Power found in enduring pain. (James 1)
- Promise in the pain. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

However, in cases of domestic violence, a theology of suffering alone may prove dangerous.

“This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the

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<sup>2</sup> Abuse: Finding Hope in Christ.

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gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people.”  
Jeremiah 22:3-4

## Turning the Tables:

Belief and support can be incredibly empowering to victims of domestic violence, as it should be. Be aware that this may be the first time she has felt powerful or in control in a long time and the temptation may be to seek revenge, hold hostage, or to rely on this new found power for her safety and security rather than God.

- Anger is not only understandable but acceptable (Psalm 5; 10; 69)
- Anger should be limited, even if its justified. (Ephesians 4:26)
  - Guard against and repent of bitterness (Ephesians 4:31)
  - Guard against revenge while pursuing justice (Romans 12:19)

“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”

## Hope and Healing

### Basic Commitments

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the Abuser
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the Victim

Both imply an end to the abuse, not endurance of the abuse.

### Prevention:

- Continue Education
- Speak Publicly
- Connect with Local Service Providers

### Disclosure:

- Believe Her
- Assure Her (It’s not your fault)
- Assist Her (Based on Her desires)
- Document/Record

### Intervention:

- Meet Physical Needs
- Offer Her Options
  - Shelter
  - Police
  - Courts
  - Victims’ Advocates
- Be Aware of the Dangers
- Document/Record

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## Post-vention:

- Speak the Truth (Ephesians 4:15)
  - Safety is a Priority
  - Acknowledge the Truth and Put Off Denial (Ephesians 4:25)
  - Mourn Loss and Embrace Hope (John 10:10)
- Embrace the Realities of the Cross
  - Evidence of God's Compassion (Galatians 3:13)
  - Connection to Christ's Suffering (Hebrews 4:15)
  - The Defeat of Evil (Colossians 2:15)
- Experience and practice Forgiveness
  - Letting go of hurt and extending grace
  - Offense is clearly acknowledge
  - Confession and repentance are made
  - Appropriate boundaries are set/enforced
    - Does not remove consequences
      - Numbers 14:20-23
      - 2Samual 12:11
      - Hosea 3:1-5

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## Strategies and Systems

1. Leadership buy-in: Conversations and support from key church leadership is essential to developing victim-care ministries.

- a. Elder agreement and statement: I recommend the elders/leadership speak against abuse from the pulpit and consider adopting a statement or policy against abusive behavior.

Example from Bethlehem Baptist (MN)

- “We, the council of elders at Bethlehem Baptist Church, are resolved to root out all forms of domestic abuse (mental, emotional, physical, and sexual) from our midst. This destructive way of relating to a spouse is a satanic distortion of Christ-like male leadership because it defaces the depiction of Christ’s love for his bride. The shepherds of Bethlehem stand at the ready to protect the abused, call abusers to repentance, discipline the unrepentant, and hold high the stunning picture of how much Christ loves his church.”

- b. Empower key leaders to assemble a team response. (Female leadership/voices)

Examples – Lone Oak Church (75-100) and Bethlehem Baptist (5000+)

- The Pastor’s wife at Lone Oak Church was inspired to do something after speaking with local law enforcement. Under His Wings is a support ministry that serves women and children experiencing abuse in an underserved area of our county.
  - The DART Team at BBC was formed by the elders and a group of compassionate ladies who realized the church had handle abusive situation poorly in the past. They have created church-wide systems that are enabling the leadership and responders to address the needs more appropriately.
    - Passionate
    - Willing to learn
    - Willing to organize/create systems
- c. Consider hiring a consultant to coach, review, and evaluate your church’s own domestic violence response ministry. (wink)

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## Resources

Books I recommend:

1. Abuse by John Henderson
2. Is it my fault by Justin and Lindsey Holcomb
3. Mending the Soul by Steven and Celeste Tracy
4. The Heart of Domestic Abuse by Chris Moles
5. God's Protection of Women by Herb Vander Lugt
6. When Words Hurt by Jeff Olson
7. When Violence Comes Home by Tim Jackson and Jeff Olson
8. When Power is Misused by Jeff Olson

Websites

1. Focus Ministries at [www.focusministries.com](http://www.focusministries.com)
2. Peace Works at [www.chrismoles.org](http://www.chrismoles.org)
3. The RAVE project at [www.theraveproject.com](http://www.theraveproject.com)

Videos:

1. When love hurts by Our Daily Bread Ministries is an excellent series featured on their day of discovery program. The full video can be viewed at [www.mendingthesoul.org](http://www.mendingthesoul.org) or purchased as a DVD at [www.ourdailybread.org](http://www.ourdailybread.org)

Sermons:

1. Fooled by false leadership by Jason Meyer April/25/2015 [www.hopeingod.org](http://www.hopeingod.org)