



Breaking the Cycle of Violence Seminar

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At least four times Jesus used the same words to describe the relationship that should exist among His disciples:

- John 13:34(NKJV): A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
- Again in vs. 35: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Two chapters later, Jesus stated His words even more strongly:

- John 15:12: This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- And again in verse. 17: These things I command you, that you love one another.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Is love a feeling or a decision? How do the texts above help us understand which it is?
- Can love be commanded?
- Can you love someone and at the same time abuse them?



Jesus wasn't simply suggesting, or inviting, or encouraging us to love one another. . .

He was commanding us to love one another if we are going to be His disciples.

"Allow nothing like strife or dissension to come into the home. Speak gently. Never raise your voice to harshness. Keep yourselves calm. Put away faultfinding and all untruthfulness. Tell the children that you want to help them to prepare for a holy heaven, where all is peace, where not one jarring note is heard. Be patient with them in their trials, which may look small to you but which are large to them.

“When fathers and mothers are converted, there will be a thorough conversion of their principles of management. Their thoughts will be converted; their tongues will be converted. . . . “There will be no loud, angry talking in the home. The words will be of a character to soothe and bless the hearer. . . . Take all the ugly features out of the voice.

“We must subdue a hasty temper and control our words, and in this we shall gain great victories. Unless we control our words and temper, we are slaves to Satan. We are in subjection to him. He leads us captive. All jangling and unpleasant, impatient, fretful words are an offering presented to his satanic majesty.

And it is a costly offering, more costly than any sacrifice we can make for God; for it destroys the peace and happiness of whole families, destroys health, and is eventually the cause of forfeiting an eternal life of happiness.”

Ellen G. White, *Adventist Home*, p. 436, 437.

Statistics on Domestic Violence

- [Family Violence Prevention Fund \(FVPE\)](#), **one in every three women** in the world has experienced sexual, physical, emotional or other abuse in her lifetime.
- The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) reports that in forty-eight surveys from around the world, **10-69% of women** stated that they had been physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives.

Types of Abuse

1. Emotional Abuse/Verbal Abuse
2. Financial Abuse
3. Physical Abuse
4. Sexual Abuse
5. Digital Abuse
6. Religious Abuse



QUESTION FOR THE GROUP:

- Don't raise your hand, but do you know of anyone who has been or is being abused in any of the ways mentioned?



THE CYCLE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic violence often follows a pattern. It may seem unpredictable—simply an outburst related just to the moment and to the circumstances in the lives of the people involved. In fact, however, domestic violence follows a typical pattern no matter when it occurs or who is involved. The pattern, or cycle, repeats; the level of violence may increase each time.

Establishing the Visual

The domestic violence cycle is cyclical in nature. *Imagine a clock face, with only the 12, 3, 6 and 9 showing.* Imagine the clock at the 3:00 o'clock position. But, instead of the 3:00, there's a label that reads:

1. The False Honeymoon Phase



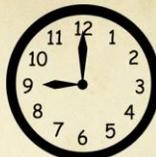
- The False Honeymoon Phase is just like it sounds. The batterer is very nice to the victim, bringing her flowers and candy, being affectionate and cuddly, calling her by pet names, and so on. This is a wonderful time, and the survivor loves it.

2. The "Normal" Phase



- The False Honeymoon Phase slides quietly and subtly into the "normal" phase." Things are still good; they've just settled down a little. The batterer is no longer actively romancing the survivor with candy and flowers and pet names, but they are both enjoying normal life.

3. The Rising Tension Phase



- Now picture where the 9:00 is on the clock, three-quarters of the way around. That should be labeled "The Rising Tension Phase," and the "Normal" phase slides quietly and subtly into this phase just as subtly as the honeymoon phase slid into the normal phase. Things are still good. The survivor has pretty much decided that her troubles are behind her. But there is an edge in the air.

4. The Explosion



- Then you get to the "12:00" on the clock—the explosion. It can take many forms. Usually it is physical violence. Sometimes the violence is purely emotional and not physical—it varies with the abuser. But when the explosion happens, there's no mistaking it.

Everybody is Different

This cycle has no set time span to it. Some couples go through the complete cycle in a month; some go through it in a week, some go through it in a day. Some take an entire year to go through a complete revolution of the cycle.

More Bad News

As the batterer goes through the cycle of violence again and again, you will notice a change in the cycle. The honeymoon phase will get shorter and shorter. Eventually, it may disappear. And then the normal phase will get shorter and shorter, until the victim is only left with the rising tension phase and the explosion phase.

A Complication

Domestic violence prevention agencies know about this phenomenon, and can help you deal with the doubt and the accusations. Don't be confused; don't accept any of the blame. The problem is not your triggering incident. The problem is the huge buildup of anger and violence in your batterer that is ready to go off at any moment.

So What Can You Do?

Here are some **STEPS** to take if you or someone you know is the victim of spousal abuse or domestic violence.

1. Call the police.
2. Talk to someone you trust.
3. Talk to a counselor.
4. Make a Safety Plan.



QUESTION FOR YOU

- If you know of someone who is being abused by their spouse, what practical help can you provide them with?
- Spend a few minutes (5-10) making a list of what you can tell them and what you can offer to them.



More Advice to a Victim (Or the One Helping an Abuse Victim)

- Call a local women's shelter; in the United States you can also call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-7233 to find out about legal options and resources available to you, before you need them.
- If you have school-age children, notify the school.
- Keep your communication private.

Telephone conversations regarding your situation:

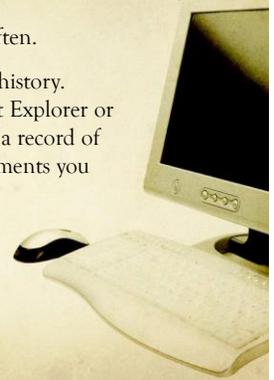
- Avoid making long-distance phone calls from home. Your abuser could trace the calls to find out where you're going.
- Be cautious when using a cell phone.
- Be aware of controlling use of your cell phone.

Computer use:

- If you think your abuser is monitoring your computer use, the safest bet is to access a computer at a friend's house or at the library. If you do use a shared home computer, there are several steps you can take to help maintain your privacy:
- Use a Web-based program for e-mail. Store files on the Internet.
- You can store files online and access them from any computer. You can also store documents as attachments in e-mail programs.



- Change your password often.
- Clear your Web-browser history. Browsers such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator keep a record of the Web pages and documents you have accessed.
- Clear your document history.



Where Else Can You Get Help?

- Your doctor or hospital emergency room treats any injuries and may refer you to safe housing and other local resources.
- Depending on your country, local women's shelters or crisis centers can typically provide 24-hour emergency shelter for you and your children.
- Counseling or mental health centers.
- Your church: Talk privately with your pastor or other professions counselors or social.

GROUP ACTIVITY

- Get together in small groups (3-5), and come up with practical ideas of what your church can do to help the victims of domestic abuse. Be as specific as possible because these ideas could become part of a working plan which would need to be voted on and implemented by the church board.
- After a few minutes (15-20), come back together and write the lists of ideas on a marker/black board. Put the ideas in order of priority. Present this list to your church board as a proposed plan of action.
- (Presenter: If time is an issue, suggest that they set themselves up as an *ad hoc* committee to work on this and present it to their church board).

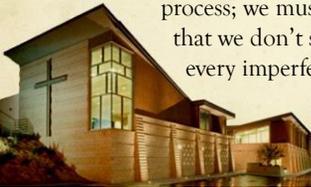
STEREOTYPICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Because abuse toward women has taken place for so long—too long—many assume that domestic abuse only takes place by men toward women. More recent studies have shown a growing trend in abuse and that is of women abusing men.

- Alcohol Abuse
- Psychological Disorders
- Unrealistic expectations, assumptions, and conclusions

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH?

- We need to **educate** our members to the reality all around us. At the same time, the church must be careful in this process; we must be careful that we don't see "abuse" in every imperfect, fallen action.



We need to **intervene** to rescue the abused. It is not appropriate to ask the victim why they stay with the abuser. Nor is it enough to tell them to leave their abuser. If the church is aware that abuse is taking place, the church must intervene to protect, rescue, and become the advocate for the victim.

We need to **help** the victim with their long-range plans. We need to keep in mind that simply suggesting the victim leave their abuser is not always that simple, practical, or possible.

CONCLUSION

Will people know we are Christ's disciples by our love for one another?



- **If we are His disciples**, we should never allow any kind of abuse in our home or in our church.
- **If we are His disciples**, we should educate everyone so they can learn to recognize the signs of abuse.
- **If we are His disciples**, we should intervene on behalf of the victims of abuse by helping break the cycle that keeps them experiencing it.
- **If we are His disciples**, we should help the victims of abuse by making provision for their support once they are finally able to leave such harmful environment.

