



If He Doesn't Hit You, Is It Still Abuse?

God Cares

Leslie Vernick MSW
www.leslievernick.com



One in Four Christian Women Report Being in an Emotionally Destructive Marriage

Are You...

● Confused ● Ignored ● Objectified ● Controlled ● Scared

Why is it important for you to be part of this workshop?

Proverbs 31:25 describes the woman of virtue this way: Strength and dignity are her clothing and she smiles at the future unafraid.

Seeing It

Four Common Elements of All Abusive Systems

Thomas Pryde, Psalm 82 Initiative

1 Isolation: Your worst enemy

Isolation creates dependence on him for your social life, well-being and safety. It breaks apart your external support system.



God made us to belong.
He also made us to become.

Common Elements of All Abusive Systems

TIME TO REFLECT



- What does it cost to be you?
- What happens when you think for yourself or question things, when you stay true to your values or resist his control over you?

God wants you to become a God-centered woman, not a husband, man or marriage-centered woman.



What Might Be Possible if You Put God as Your Source for your identity and well-being?

Common Elements of All Abusive Systems

2 Characteristic of Abuse: Pattern of Deflection

- Deflection is when there is intense disregard for your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, or experience. His needs, thoughts, ideas, experience or feelings always trump.
- Deflection magnifies his experience and minimizes yours.

All of us here are sinners. We all stumble in many ways. James 3:2

A Healthy Sinner

Stops
Reflects
Makes Amends
Doesn't Repeat

An Unhealthy Sinner

Blames
Minimizes
Lies
Ignores
Repeats

“ Common Phrases of a Deflector

- I can never make you happy
- I can't please you
- I can't do anything right
- You're unreasonable.
- Your standards are too high
- You expect perfection
- You're never satisfied.
- It's never enough for you.

The goal is to shift the negative attention off of him and onto you.
It creates confusion.



It's not just what you think or say anymore; it's now seeing into who you are.



Common Elements of All Abusive Systems

3 Characteristic of Abuse: Pattern of Manipulation

He believes you should never say no to him; it's unsubmitive and unloving.

The Guilt Trip is a common strategy to make you comply. You don't have to take that trip.

4 Characteristic of Abuse: Pattern of Intimidation

Every abusive relationship includes intimidation when all else fails to control you.



This “power over” control dynamic is confusing for a conservative Christian woman who has long been taught that her husband is head of their marriage and home, the final authority and that her role as a godly wife is to respect his authority, not question, and to submit.



What does God say about the use of power and control in marriage?

Having power is not sinful. How we use power can be sinful.



Power OVER you: Suppresses your choices.

- Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites. Ephesians 6:9
- Never take advantage of poor and destitute laborers, whether they are fellow Israelites or foreigners living in your towns. Deuteronomy 24:14
- Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Colossians 3:19



See: Exodus 22:22, Proverbs 22:22, Ezekiel 22:29, Zechariah 7:10, Jeremiah 22:17, Psalm 73:8, Psalm 119:34, Leviticus 25:43, Deuteronomy 24:14

Many Christian women married to controlling men start by wanting to please him, desiring to submit to his leadership.

True Love never forces control over another person.



Even God does not force us into relationship or force us to do what he wants.

Common Elements of All Abusive Systems

Control Over someone can be physical but it also is mental, emotional, psychological, financial, sexual and spiritual.

Is Control over women God's will?

Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. Genesis 3:16

No. The Bible teaches mutuality and reciprocity of marriage. Nowhere does it endorse a “power over” model of marriage.

See Ephesians 5:21-30; Colossians 3:18,19; 1 Corinthians 7 Galatians 3:26-28

Jesus warned his disciples how to use the power they would be given.

You know the rulers in this world lord it over their people and officials flout their authority over those under them (POWER OVER) but among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant.
(Mark 10:42-45; Matthew 20:25; Luke 22:25,26)

Katakurieuo – Greek Word ‘Lord over’ means using your authority, power, against a person’s interest to push them downwards in order to better CONTROL through FEAR. Jesus specifically warned us NOT to use our power in that way.

See Psalm 10:17,18 and Psalm 72:14

Nowhere in the Bible does God endorse a “power over” use of authority.



Read the Old Testament book of Micah for numerous examples of leaders misusing their power and God’s response. Exodus 22:22, Proverbs 22:22, Ezekiel 22:29, Zechariah 7:10, Jeremiah 22:17, Psalm 73:8, Psalm 119:34, Leviticus 25:43, Deuteronomy 24:14



TIME TO REFLECT

? What belief might be causing you to confuse biblical headship & submission with compliance and abuse of power?



All believers are called to submit not just women or wives. (We're to submit to one another Ephesians 5:1; to authority, Romans 13:1, and to God James 4:7.)

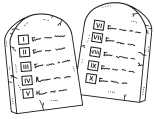


Love does not demand it's own way. 1 Corinthians 13:5
There is no difference (power over) between male or female, slave or free, Jew or Gentile. Galatians 3:26-29



Belief #1: Submission = Compliance

? What belief around headship and submission, power and authority do you need to break up with in order to get healthy and walk in God's truth?



Impact of ABUSE



We are made for love and connection. We thrive best in loving safe relationships:
All ten commandments deal with protecting our relationship with God & others



Sin damages people and relationships.

Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit Proverbs 15:4

Your tongue cuts like a sharp razor; you're an expert at telling lies. You love evil more than good and lies more than truth. You love to destroy others with your words, you liar! Psalm 52:2-5

Listen to the filth that comes from their mouths, their words cut like swords. Psalm 59:3

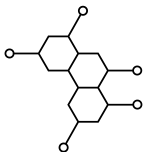
Their insults have broken my heart and I am in despair. Psalm 69:20

The human spirit can endure a sick body, but who can bear a crushed spirit? Proverbs 18:14

Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow. Proverbs 25:18

A lying tongue hates its victims, and flattering words cause ruin. Proverbs 26:28

See: Proverbs 12:4; Proverbs 15:4; Proverbs 17:22; Proverbs 21:19; Proverbs 25:24; Proverbs 26:18,19; Psalm 35:11,12; Psalm 52:2-5; Psalm 55: 2,4,5,13; Psalm 59:3; Psalm 63:3,4; Psalm 69:20



Science and scripture confirm that toxic relationships impact people physically, mentally, emotionally, and generationally. Deuteronomy 5:9-10



Belief #2: God Wants Me to Sacrifice & Suffer

The belief in the Heroic sacrifice.



TIME TO REFLECT



- What does it mean to do good, even if it means suffering in an abusive marriage?
- Does it mean enabling abuse to continue to cause you and your children harm?

True love is action that seeks the highest good for the other while still respecting his God-given freedom to choose his own way.

A wife is doing what is good, true, and right by holding her husband accountable:

Telling the truth may cause suffering. Loving and honoring your husband does not mean lying and pretending.

But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. 1 Peter 3:14

Belief #3: God Hates All Divorce; Therefore I Have to Stay if I Want to Please God

What's the truth?

Malachi 2:16 was mistranslated in the NKJV. The original Hebrew never said God hated divorce. It said God hated when a man treated his wife treacherously and divorced (discarded) her like a used tissue. Newer translations, like NIV, have corrected this.

Other passages indicate God's heart for women and their protection in a patriarchal culture where they had no rights. Exodus 21:11

God values the sanctity of marriage but not more than the safety & sanity of the people in it.

God does not hate all divorce. He hates the things that cause divorce. Proverbs 6:16-19

A safe, trusting relationship is NOT POSSIBLE with a person who continues to exert power OVER you, attempts to control you, uses power to harm you and cause you to live in fear.

Break Up with Beliefs # 2 & 3

TIME TO REFLECT



- How would you feel if you no longer believed that God said you must heroically suffer by enduring abuse, lying and pretending to keep the image of a happy family together?
- What would be possible if you believed that God NEVER said he hates all divorce and he does not require you to stay in an intimate relationship where vows are repeatedly broken, you are being harmed and don't feel safe?

Get yourself Healthy

All progress begins with telling the truth. We cannot change something we do not see.”
- Dan Sullivan

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. John 8:32

You desire truth in our inmost being. Psalm 51:6

One mark of a healthy person is they don't allow themselves to be a repeat victim if they can help it.

TIME TO REFLECT



- What lies have you believed about God, life, and yourself that keep you stuck, scared, and sick in this toxic relationship?
- What's going on with you that you've allowed yourself to be dominated, deceived, degraded, dismissed, and devalued, not once, but over and over and over again in this relationship?

Breakup with Belief # 4. I'm Not Worthy

Jesus doesn't want you just to believe in him, he wants you to believe him.

God made you and he doesn't make junk, therefore God declares you worthy even if you don't feel like it.

So we have come to know and believe the Love that God has for us.

God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 John 4:16).

Jesus said the work of God was to believe. John 6:29

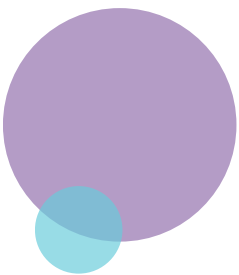
God created you for honor and purpose. He says you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139: 14

He tells you that you are his masterpiece, so you can do the good things he has planned for you to do. Ephesians 2:10.

TIME TO REFLECT



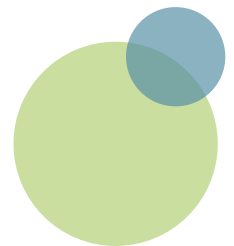
- What stops you from believing God and what He says about you?
- What stops you from taking responsibility for your well-being, safety, and sanity?
- What might be possible if you learned to love and value your own self, even if your husband doesn't?



Grace
Forgiveness
Acceptance
Submission
Being a wife
Marriage
Truth



Enabling
Permission
Tolerance
Compliance
No Choices
Ownership
No Hurt



“At any given moment, you have the power to say, ‘This is NOT how my story is going to end.’” - Christine Mason Miller

Your Next Right Step ...

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