

LECTURE # 13

SPOUSE ABUSE

I. INTRODUCTION

A. “Julie and Jay”

B. What should you do now?

1. Should you send her to the local woman’s shelter or is it the church that’s responsible for her safety?
2. How are you going to help?
 - a. How can you help Julie?
 - b. How can you help Jay?
3. If you can get them together what kind of counseling can you give them?
4. Where are you going to go in the _____ to help them?
5. How can the church be enlisted to help in the process?

C. Spouse abuse is gaining great notoriety today (especially with the O.J. Simpson trial).

1. Statistics:

- a. Every 15 seconds in the United States some woman is beaten.
- b. Over 4,000 killed annually by a partner.
- c. It is estimated that annually between 2,000,000 and 6,000,000 women are abused.

2. Always be careful with statistics.

- a. Remember - the survey no doubt is composed of a sample that is primarily _____.
- b. When you look out at the congregation do not assume that _____ out of every _____ women is abused.

- c. Yes, it is a _____ that the church must face, because there are those who bring with them their former ways of handling _____/_____.
 - d. Remember too that statistics can be distorted/exaggerated for _____ and _____ purposes.
3. This problem transcends all racial, social and economic boundaries - but that shouldn't surprise us since _____ TRANSCENDS ALL RACIAL, SOCIAL and ECONOMIC BOUNDARIES.
 4. But then, with Julie standing in front of you, you're not interested in statistics - you have someone who is _____; a couple who needs help!!
 - a. This evening, let's get a biblical framework in hand that will be useful in helping hurting people in a way that will exalt Christ and honor God!

II. GETTING A PROFILE.

A word of caution: These are merely tentative descriptions drawn from secular sources and experience. Not everyone will "fit the profile."

A. The "abuser"

1. Attempts strict control/domination.
 - a. Seeks to keep the family isolated.
 - b. Jealous (reacts to wife's success)
 - c. Competitive ("king of the hill")
 - d. Learns to control and manipulate and does so when he's not the center of attention (e.g. ruins the graduation party).
2. Blames others for his problems.
 - a. Violence is an acceptable way to gain power.
 - b. Low tolerance of stress
 - c. Minimizes, denies, blames others (victim mentality).
 - d. Impulsive, aggressive, manipulative (He will be gracious and charming, - great at deception).
 - e. Many have past history of violence (especially in the home where he grew up).

- f. Insensitive to others - incredibly _____ - _____ and often makes _____.
- g. Great trouble communicating to solve problems.
- h. Often charming and gracious in public.

**Not everyone fits the profile

B. The “abused”

- 1. Loves her husband and hopes for change.
- 2. Has a high view of marriage.
- 3. Fearful
 - a. Fears that “no one will believe me”.

* Remember, she married a guy who is a “charmer” and who is still a charming, gracious fellow in public.

- b. Fears what will happen if she tells or acts.
- 4. Proud and deceptive - will go to extreme measures to conceal the problem.

If this gets out my reputation will be ruined (How could you be so stupid to marry a guy like that?” or “You are a failure at marriage”).

... his reputation will be ruined (“I could never do that to him”)

- 5. Confused - they have heard for years, “You’re the reason I hit you. You’re stupid and incompetent.”
- 6. Aggressive (non-submissive)
 - a. Neil Jacobson, Ph.D., University of Washington: “The stereotype of battered wives as fragile, passive, placating, docile and self-deprecating does not do justice to their actual role in relationships. Women prove to be more functional members of these couples. What’s more, during confrontations, they reciprocate anger and contempt tit for tat and don’t back down. They do not act as if they fear being beaten later. But no matter what they try, once the violence starts, nothing they do can stop it. ‘The wives are beaten’ say Seattle’s Jacobson, ‘but not beaten into submission.’” (Psychology Today, Nov/Dec 1993, p. 51).
 - b. My own counseling experience.

NOTE: That is not to say that they should be beaten.
Absolutely not! Inexcusable!

III. COUNSELING THE ABUSED SPOUSE.

A. Define the problem biblically.

1. Avoid psychological labels - “unhealthy marriage,” “dysfunctional family,” “low self-esteem,” etc.
2. You are suffering for _____ sake (1 Peter 3:14,17: cf. Matthew 5:10-12).
 - a. The Bible has much to say to you then!!
 - b. But it also means that you must _____ to determine if you are suffering for righteousness sake (1 Pet.4:15).
 1. Log Lists
 2. Journal of Upsets
 - c. Counselors should not shy away from helping these women change where necessary.

B. Teach her _____ for her in this situation (Psalm 119:67,71,75).

1. You should _____ in suffering (Philippians 1:20).
2. You must magnify God (Matthew 5:16).

* At the end of our time together, we want people not to be talking about you, but about your God.
3. You must obey God no matter what the cost (Daniel 3:16-18).
4. You must be willing to suffer for righteousness sake (1 Peter 3:14; 4:14).
 - a. Even when we utilize all of God’s means for your protection, you are not guaranteed perfect safety.
 - b. God says this kind of suffering does put you in the place of blessing.
 - c. Safety is not assured through separation or divorce.
5. You need to change to _____ Christ, not to change husband. (2 Corinthians 5:9).

- a. If it is to change husband, you will find disappointment and bitterness.
 - b. If to exalt Christ, you will find joy and peace.
- 6. Pray for abuser!
 - a. See Jesus and Stephen - God forgave - 3,000 added and Apostle Paul saved.
- C. Resources the abused wife can utilize.
 - 1. Utilize biblical submissiveness (1 Peter 2:13 – 3:6, especially 3:1-6).
 - a. Suffering does not exempt anyone from the commandment to submit to authority.
 - 1. Pagan government deserves submission (2:13-17).
 - 2. Abusive masters deserve submission (2:18-24).
 - 3. Harsh, cruel, unbelieving husbands deserve submission (3:1-6)
 - b. Submission in suffering is _____!
 - 1. Is it ever wrong to be like Christ?
 - 2. Is this “wimping out” or “empowering the abuser”?
 - c. Specifically - wives are not to retaliate with their tongues.
 - 1. “In the same way” as Christ (vs. 21-23).
 - 2. Something to keep in mind given my experience and Jacobson’s research.

This runs directly counter to what women are being taught today, even by many “Christian” counselors.

Remember - your husband's disobedience does not mean you can disobey.
 - 2. Utilize _____ (Proverbs 12:6; 16:21; Ephesians 4:25 -32; 1 Peter 2:9).
 - a. Learn to make biblical appeals (Proverbs 16:21; Esther 8:5; 1 Samuel 25:18-35; Daniel 1:8-14).

Proverbs 16:21 - “The wise in heart will be called discerning,

and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness”

- b. Communicate to solve problems (be an example of this).
3. Utilize God’s “Battle Plan for Overcoming Evil” (Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 3:2-6; 9-12).
 - a. God says, “Women, your husband is doing evil; you cannot give up, you cannot despair, you cannot retaliate.”
 - b. “Your mindset should not be, ‘How long can I hold out in the face of this attack?’ but, ‘I’m going after this guy with all the biblical resources I can muster and, by God’s grace, I’m going to persecute him with every blessing I can think of until good triumphs over evil!’”¹
 - c. Good resource in Jay Adam’s book, How to Overcome Evil.
 4. Utilize _____ (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-2; 1 Corinthians 5).

God has given us this dynamic to reconcile believers and to winnow out those who may have made a false profession.

5. Utilize the _____ (Romans 13:1-6).
6. Remember the promises of God.
 - a. Trials are intended to change you (Romans 8:28-29; 5:3-5)

Neither you nor the children will suffer irreparable harm if you are zealous for good (1 Peter 3:13).

This is where most women want the MOST protection.
 - b. Not physical - remember context of this – 1 Peter

Necessary for the concerns of many mothers

Especially in light of worldly advice to “break cycle of violence” by leaving or divorce.
 - c. Remember that God has promised great reward (1 Peter 1:6-9; Matthew 5:10-12).

¹ Lou Priolo, “Resources for the Wife’s Protection”, NANC, 1994

IV. COUNSELING THE ABUSER.

- A. Define the _____ (again, avoiding the psychological labels).
1. You are assuming God's place.
 - a. God alone is God; _____ is not delegated to any. (Mark 10:42-45)
 - b. You are misusing your God-given authority to _____.
(To use my family for me; to keep me “king of the hill.”)
 - c. You are _____ by trying to take revenge (Romans 12:19).
 - d. You are obscuring the glory of God (Deuteronomy 32:51).
 2. You are rejecting the example of Christ (1 Peter 2:21-23)
 3. You are teaching rebellion by example.
 4. You are _____
(Proverbs 22:22-23).
 5. You are evading loving, learning, forgiving, leading, communicating, developing gifts of family, gratefulness in an effort to be in control and king of the hill.
- B. Teach him _____ for him in this situation.
(Ephesians 5:25-32; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10).
1. “Pastor, you’d hit her too if you lived with her!” or as one guy told me, “There is no pleasing that woman!”
 2. You must understand that God has given you this woman to teach you how to be _____ kind of man!
 3. You are responsible for _____ actions. Jesus won’t ask you about your wife!
- C. Counseling goals for the abuser (what he needs to learn and do; areas of growth).
1. He must learn to _____ and _____ responsibility
(Prov. 28:13; 2 Cor. 5:9-10).
 - a. Blame shifting is a major problem with these guys.

- b. The counselor has to constantly confront, call to repentance, and always let him know he _____ responsible for his actions!
2. He must learn _____-leadership (Matthew 20:24-28).
 - a. Problem - this guy believes the family exists to serve him!
 - b. Virginia Goldner, Ph.D., faculty member at New York's Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy: "There is a deep disturbance in the person and he believes it is the female's job to soothe him, to keep him at bay -- he sees her job as to make him feel powerful, to attend to him, to meet all his needs, when he wants. If not, that's when there is violence."²
 - c. He must learn that greatness in God's eyes is tied to how well he served everyone else.
 - d. Jesus describes 2 paradigms of leadership and abusers have adopted the pagan paradigm.
 - e. He must follow Jesus' example and become his family's biggest servant.
3. He must learn _____ (Eph. 5:25-32; cf. 5:1-2; 1 John 4:10).
 - a. Note especially Eph. 5:26 - character of Christ-like love is that you love her in such a way that she will look good; give a good account.
 - b. This guy's view of love is that everyone else exists to make him look good!
 - c. No matter what your wife is like, you must love her (cf. 1 John 4:10).
4. He must learn _____ (1 Peter 3:7).
 - a. Live with her in an understanding way.
5. He must learn to _____ to solve problems (Ephesians 4:25-32).
 - a. One judge in a PBS production, "The Battered Woman" makes the point that these men are NON-VERBAL.
 - b. But by God's grace they must learn to use godly communication.

² Psychology Today, Nov/Dec, 1993, p. 53

6. He must get at the _____ issues/desires (Ephesians 4:22; James 4:1-3).
- a. What are the _____ that drive him, that incubates and give birth to sin?
1. “I must have control.”
 2. “I must be king of the hill.”
 3. “I must be served by all.”
 4. “I must have the respect of everyone.”

Get to those through “Journal of Upsets” or Priolo’s “Heart Journal”

7. He must be _____ (Matthew 18:15-20; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 13:17).
- a. To the _____ - the church must love him enough to hold him accountable through church discipline.
- b. To the _____ - “You must agree that anytime your wife feels threatened she can pick up the phone and call” (made easier through programmable buttons)
If he disagrees step up discipline dynamic.
- c. To _____ (if necessary).

V. GETTING THE CHURCH INVOLVED.

- A. Do not fail to _____.
1. Assure her - God is on the side of the helpless.
 2. World needs to see that the church is indeed on the side of women.
- B. Get her protection.
1. Verify bruises, etc.
 2. Alert others to be used as “safe house” for protection.
 3. This separation would be only for a _____ (hours).

4. Until cooled down and then meet at pastor's office.
 - a. The _____ not women's shelters should be the place of protection.

C. Exercise _____ faithfully (Matthew 18:15-20).

Woe to any church that neglects this important aspect of Christian life!!

Jesus gave this to the church to help people.

1. Helps the abused spouse - she see that the church is vitally concerned for her and the children.
2. Helps the children - shows them that Dad's authority is _____ and that he is responsible.
3. Helps the abuser.
 - a. He understands that he is _____ to change.
 - b. He sees there are _____ and it may be the element that finally prods him to godliness.

VI. CONCLUSION

A. Many today speak of "breaking the cycle of violence."

B. There is _____ in doing that:

1. Through the _____ and _____ power of God the Spirit.
2. Through God's all-sufficient word.
3. Through repentance and change.
4. Through a church that loves enough to discipline.
5. Through shepherds who will not run from these problems but who will _____ and _____ for the sheep God has entrusted to their care.

SOURCES FOR FURTHER HELP:

- Jay Adams, *How to Overcome Evil: A Practical Exposition of Romans 12.14-21*, Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1977.
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- Martha Peace, *The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective*, Bemidji, Minnesota: Focus Publishing, Inc., 1995.
- Lou Priolo, “Resources for the Wife’s Protection.” Presented at the NANC Conference, n.d.
- Ed Welch, *When People are Big and God is Small: Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency and the Fear of Man*, Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1997.