

## GOD'S RENEWAL FOR HOUSEHOLDS

### "Part XVI: Renewing Household Marriages: Addressing Roadblocks - Overcoming Abusive Spouse Trials"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) On March 7, 1997, the Waterbury Republican-American ran a story about a battered woman and her local assaulter.

After a 46-year-old Collinsville man had allegedly beat a woman, and had been ordered to stay away from her by the court, she bailed him out of jail and he immediately proceeded to beat her up again at a home on South Main Street in Torrington!

(2) This case represents the tip of the iceberg of spousal battering problems in this country. One account states that the number of women beaten by lovers or spouses in America each year equals the entire population of the state of Idaho!

The Verbally Abusive Relationship points out on p. 18-19 that "Verbal abuse is, in a sense, built into our culture. One-upmanship, defeating, putting down, topping, countering, manipulating, criticizing, hard selling, and intimidating are accepted as fair games . . . ". She points out that (a) verbal abuse is often secretive -- only the partner of the abuser hears it so it cannot be validated by others. (b) When you try to discuss your upset feelings, the abusive partner doesn't seem to "kiss and make up" so that you get the feeling that the issue has never been fully resolved. That is verbal abuse! (c) If the partner seems to take the opposite view from you on almost everything you mention, and his view is dogmatic as though you view it is always wrong, you are being verbally abused!

Bibliotheca Sacra on a conversation he had with Jonathan Chao of Taiwan. According to this theologian and Sinologist, **suffering Chinese Christians** view **America's** Christians as under suffering like they are! No, Americans are not suffering ... torture, but these Chinese brethren "have observed that the suffering of American Christians is focused in their **families** ... The rise in divorces, child and **spouse abuse**, infidelities, and resulting emotional pain have been explosive."

How do we address the delicate problem of spousal abuse if we face it in **families we KNOW?!**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

***Need:*** "When people marry supposedly out of LOVE, the LAST thing we would expect is spousal ABUSE to be their lot! Yet it happens all too often! Is there any help for such couples?!"

- I. **When a spouse has JUST been abused to the EXTENT of being BATTERED, there are IMMEDIATE steps to take as follows:**
  - A. **Step One** - In view of the Holy Spirit's **prophetic warning** that people in our latter days would be "abusive" and "brutal" (2 Tim. 3:1-3 NIV), God **orders** battered spouses, or spouses with battered, helpless minors under their care to **withdraw** geographically as far from the batterer as is necessary for physical protection, 2 Tim. 3:5 with Tit. 2:4; Eph. 6:4. (The verb "turn away" (KJV) or "Have nothing to do with" (NIV) in 2 Tim. 3:5 is in the middle voice, meaning to "pull back ties with **for the sake of one's self**" [Liddell & Scott, Grk.-Eng. Lex., p. 224; Machan, N.T. Greek For Beginners, p. 57])
  - B. **Step Two** - **Once withdrawn**, as a battered spouse, aim for **eventual reconciliation** as God offers **no** grounds for divorce, 1 Cor. 7:10-16:
    1. The Apostle Paul was **commanded by the Lord** to urge married couples not to divorce one another, 1 Cor. 7:10-11.
    2. In fact, even if an **unbelieving** spouse divorces a believer, the hope is for reconciliation, and that calls for wise dealings on the part of the innocent, divorced, believing spouse, 1 Cor. 7:15-16.
    3. This all corresponds to Jesus' strict call for there to be no divorce in an unconditional manner, Mtt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:11-12.
  - C. **Step Three** - If **guilty** of battering, resist feeling so bad that you resort to suicide or murder-suicide over the incident. It is our **sin** -- **NOT** our **person within** -- that is worthless, 1 Tim. 1:12-17; 2 Cor. 2:7, 10-11 with footnote to 2:11, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV.
- II. **As for LONG-TERM efforts, AFTER the emergency steps taken above, or in cases of verbal abuse, Scripture suggests the following:**
  - A. Understand that sin causes a party to abuse his spouse:
    1. An abuser is one who is wrongly convinced that achieving in relating to others is based on a pecking order of control and dominance. He believes that the greater the force he can exhibit over another, the higher his level in the pecking order, and the higher that order the better he views his chances of success in relating, Patricia Evans, The Verbally Abusive Relationship, p. 22.
    2. Thus, from the Biblical view, (a) with people yielding to sin natures (Gal. 5:19a, 20), to the world's lusts (Gen. 4:4-8 with 1 Jn. 2:15-16) and to demonic forces (Jn. 8:44), and (b) the decrease of **trusting GOD** for protection from the abuses of others, and for gaining fulfillment **without** resorting to abuse themselves (1 Sam. 26), spousal abuse has risen to be a notable problem in our land!
  - B. Accordingly, we address this sin for all parties involved as follows:
    1. The abusive party needs realignment as follows:
      - a. One who abuses a family member must believe in Christ as Savior to be made a new creation in Christ, Jn. 3:16; 2 Co. 5:17.

- b. In the process, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell him, Rom. 8:9b.
  - c. He then needs to depend upon that Spirit for new behavior control (Gal. 5:16-23) and to trust God's Bible promises for what he needs in relating to others so that **GOD** will achieve it **without** his having to **force** the issue by abusing another, Phil. 4:19 with Ps. 27:10 and Ps. 23:5.
  - d. He needs to adopt the noncompetitive will of God as his life's goal rather than the world's goals for which one must compete against others to achieve, 1 Jn. 2:16-17; Rom. 12:2. That removes him from the temptation to be abusive or to batter!
2. The abused spouse or family member must adjust as follows:
- a. To gain God's power and inner healing, believe on Christ to be made a new creation in Him, Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17.
  - b. Depend on the Holy Spirit for a demeanor of fullness (Gal. 5:16, 22-23) and for the power to obey God's Word, 1 Jn. 2:3-6.
  - c. In this state, pray for the abuser's spiritual renewal, 1 Jn. 3:22.
  - d. **Only** as **GOD** opens the door should the abused or battered party **witness to** or **begin to relate to** one who has hurt him!
  - e. Be **sure** to take the **time** to see a **viable** change in the abusive party **before** making reconciliation! (Mtt. 3:7-8; 1 Tim. 5:24-25)
  - f. (As a minor who has been abused by an adult, ((a)) **next to Scripture**, ((b)) use the **legally** assigned, non-abusive guardian's input for God's intended guidance for you, Romans 13:1-4).

**Application:** *As one who has been abused or battered, or one who is an abusive party, realize that it is the SIN WITHIN one rather than the PERSON within that is made in God's image that must be countered, and, resisting divorce as the abuse d party or suicide as the abuser, seek solutions by God's means so that God can drive a wedge between the wretched sinner's SIN and his priceless SOUL!*

**Lesson:** *As spousal abuse has SPIRITUAL causes, only Christ's salvation and Christian life provisions offer solutions to couples affected.*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

Christian American that demonstrates the power of God to deal with abusive situations and their past defeats.

A Christian woman in a witness protection program who is named Leisha shares the testimony. She was repeatedly raped since she was eight years old after her father died and her mother lived alone and brought her boyfriend's home. Almost totally emotion ally destroyed after 4 years of such trauma, Leisha was led to Christ by some caring believers at the age of 12.

The Cross and the Switchblade account of his being held at knifepoint by gang leader, Nicky Cruz. Nicky had told him to shut up or he'd slice Dave into a million pieces. Wilkerson responded, "Go ahead and every piece will still love you." Leisha remembered thinking, "Oh, if I could only be like that, if I could just have that much faith in God" to handle her nagging fears of past abusive attacks!

Then it happened. Upon returning from a grocery store to her car in a parking lot, Leisha was grabbed and forced into her car and an intended rapist started tearing off her clothes. She repeatedly kicked and screamed, and started praying out loud to the Lord. The attacker who had a revolver with a silencer suddenly said, "You shut up or I am going to blow you into a million pieces."

Leisha quickly responded with the remark she had read of David Wilkerson's, saying, "You go ahead, and every piece will continue to love you. Every piece will cry out that God loves you."

The attacker's face contorted. He looked confused, bewildered and began to shake and tremble violently.

He tried to get out of the car just as fast as he could. As he exited, he held up his gun with the silencer on it, and tried to shoot Leisha. He was shaking so badly, and was so upset that he couldn't pull the trigger, and ran off to his own car parked nearby. Leisha memorized his license plate, and the police quickly arrested him.

The power of the Holy Spirit had worked an amazing miracle in the heart and life of Leisha, a previous repeat-rape victim, to give her victory over the dread of violent physical abuse. The victory over abuse comes by a personal relationship with Christ, the Almighty! If afflicted, try Him!