

THE ROLES OF CHRISTIAN MEN AND WOMEN
Part IV: Biblically Identifying And Responding To Spousal Abuse
(2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13-17 with Jeremiah 17:5-8)

I. Introduction

- A. Verbal & physical abuse afflicts many marriages (cf. Patricia Evans, The Verbally Abusive Relationship).
- B. **Secular** works *often* offer correct **definitions** on spousal abuse but suggest *unbiblical* responses to it.
- C. This lesson offers a **primer** on **BIBLICALLY** identifying and *responding* to such spousal abuse!

II. Biblically Identifying And Responding To Spousal Abuse, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13-17; Jeremiah 17:5-8.

- A. If a party does not believe in Christ and live by means of the Holy Spirit's power, he or she is controlled by the sin nature and fails to relate wholesomely to his or her spouse (cf. Lesson I; Galatians 5:16-17).
- B. If unchecked, that state **may** lead to the sinful party performing **verbal** abuse and possibly **physical** abuse toward the spouse. This ruinous problem's characteristics are described in 2 Timothy 3:1-5a (as follows):
 - 1. In the **Church's** latter days (**today**), Paul wrote the Spirit **warned** hard times would come, 2 Tim. 3:1.
 - 2. These days would be marked by **people** with the following **abusive characteristics** (as translated from the Greek N. T., cf. UBS Grk. N. T., p. 735; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Engl. Lex. of the N. T.; Moulton & Milligan, The Voc. of the Grk. N. T.): people will be (a) **self-centered**, (b) **lovers of money**, (c) **boastful**, (d) **proud**, (e) **injurious in speech**, (f) **disobedient to parents**, (g) **ungrateful**, (h) **unholy (not separate from evil)**, (i) **without normal attraction to others**, (j) **irreconcilable**, (k) **slandering**, (l) **without self-control**, (m) **untamed**, (n) **not loving what is wholesome**, (o) **traitors**, (p) **reckless**, (q) **conceited**, (r) **lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God** and (s) **having an outward form of godliness but denying it spiritual power**, 2 Timothy 3:2-5a.
- C. When a party **REGULARLY** exhibits **any, some** or **all** of these attitudes and their related behaviors, God calls the believer to "**pull back from**" that party (*apotrepou* = middle voice of *apotrepo*, "pull back ties with, shrink from"), *Ibid.*; cf. also Thayer, Liddell & Scott lexicons). This means one must **NOT** let himself become **emotionally, mentally** or **physically vulnerable** to that party so as **NOT** to be **forcibly mentally, emotionally or physically enslaved** by his or her actions to one's **own harm** (to *protect* one's self, the *purpose* of the *middle voice*, cf. J. Gresham Machan, N. T. Greek for Beginners, p. 57, par. 109).
- D. This directive **applies** to **ABUSE** in **MARRIAGE** in view of what **other Scriptures** teach (as follows):
 - 1. There is a **technical contradiction** between (1) first, (a) the directive in 1 Peter 3:6 for a woman to practice self-imposed slavery to her husband, and second, (b) the call for a wife to submit to her spouse in Eph. 5:22, and (2) **conversely** (a) the call in 2 Timothy 3:1-5a for a believer to "pull back ties with" an abusive party **and** (b) God's call in 1 Corinthians 7:23 NIV ordering a believer not to **let** himself or herself be **forcibly ruled BY** any **other** party, which would also include forcible rule by one's **spouse!**
 - 2. Thus, we must **here** use the "mercy" Scripture-application principle taught by Jesus in Matt. 12:1-7:
 - a. **Generally**, a wife is to practice **SELF-imposed** slavery to her spouse as 1 Peter 3:6 says, but **not** if her spouse tries to **force** her (**abuse**) into **subjection** in ways 2 Timothy 3:1-5a reports in **technical contradiction** to 1 Peter 3:6, for **she is to apply that Scripture in technical contradiction with the other that most reflects God's "mercy" as clarified by Jesus Christ in Matthew 12:1-7.**
 - b. Thus, to the **degree** a spouse **must go to protect** his or her (or a dependent's) welfare, he or she is to "pull back ties with" the **abusive** spouse (i.e., restraining orders, geographical relocation, etc.).
 - c. **Yet**, God does **not** advocate **initiating a divorce**, for the errant one may still repent, 1 Cor. 7:12-14.
- E. **In the process**, one lets his or her **view** of **reality** be defined **ONLY** by **Scripture**, Jeremiah 17:5-8; 2 Timothy 3:13-17. This will offer **comprehensive protection** against abusive mind controllers.

Lesson Application: (1) *Though we ALWAYS seek the IDEAL in marriage (lessons I-III), if one discerns from 2 Tim. 3:1-5a he (or she) is being mentally, emotionally or physically abused by the spouse, for his (or her) own walk with God, and in keeping with God's mercy in applying Scripture's technical contradictions as Matthew 12:1-7 reveals, what steps short of divorce are needed should be taken to "shrink back" from the abusive spouse for protection of the afflicted spouse [or vulnerable dependents] in accord with 2 Tim. 3:5b! (2) The afflicted should make Scripture his or her SOLE source of reality for help against being mentally controlled by the abuser, 2 Tim. 3:13-17; Jer. 17:5-8!*