

Class Handouts and Lecture Notes

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Legal and Disclaimer	3
You are probably a desperate husband or wife who needs <i>Challenges in Marriage</i> if you.....	4
Problems Addressed	4
The Timelessness of Challenges in Marriage	5
Homework for Challenges in Marriage Classes	8
The Thankfulness Exercise	9
Lesson 1: Profile of Desperate Marriages.....	10
Lesson 2: Abigail: Married to a Jerk.....	15
Lesson 3: Sins That Inhibit Love	19
Lesson 4: Profile of the Habitual Sinner.....	22
Lesson 5: Codependence and the Bible	27
Lesson 6: How to Overcome Codependence	30
Responsibility Regarding the Sins of Family Members	34
Lesson 7: Abuses of Male Leadership	35
Lesson 8: False Concepts of Subjection	38
Lesson 9: Wedlock vs. Deadlock.....	45
Lesson 10: More Character Defects.....	49
Lesson 11: How to Fight Fair	53
Lesson 12: How to Face Anger.....	57
The Cycle of Violence	62
Levels of Abuse	63
Lesson 13: Peer Pressure in the Church.....	64
Lesson 14: Guidelines for Spiritual Counseling	68
Lesson 15: The Secret of the Woman of Great Price.....	72
Resources for Speaking God’s Beautiful Language of Love.....	76
Survey on Spousal Abuse Among Christians for Both Husband and Wife Abuse	77
Patsy Rae Dawson	87

Legal and Disclaimer

The contents of this book are for informational purposes only. It is not the purpose of this material to provide all the otherwise available information. The information provided is on an as-is basis. This information is not intended to be a substitute for professional psychiatric or medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of a qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding any psychological or medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking treatment or diagnosis because of something you read in this book. This book does not provide legal services or legal advice.

The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional when appropriate. Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for any loss or damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, personal, or other damages.

The author's study and faith are not a substitute for any person's own study and faith. Readers are fully responsible for their own well-being, including their choices and decisions, including when using this material. Reliance on any information provided by this material is undertaken at your own risk.

2 Corinthians 13:5: "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!"

Emergency

If you think you may have a medical or safety emergency, call 911 immediately. The national domestic violence hotline is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) 1-800-787-3224 (TTY).

Never Argue with Your Gut Instincts!

All writers and authorities advise those in abusive relationships to take whatever steps necessary to protect their own safety and that of their children. Trust your gut instincts and avoid dangerous situations. If your gut is telling you something is wrong, probably 95% of the time, something is wrong. Don't take a chance on being in the other 5%. Go to a women's shelter or other qualified professional and let a counselor help you analyze what is going on in your home. They are trained. You and your religious leaders probably aren't.

Copyright 1990, 2005, 2023 by Patsy Rae Dawson LLC. All rights reserved. The *Class Handouts and Lecture Notes* may be printed or copied for private use only with the audio and video versions of *Challenges in Marriage: What to Do When Sin Inhibits Love*. For all other uses, contact Patsy@PatsyRaeDawson.com.

Additional resources at PatsyRaeDawson.com and Patsy's [Author Central Page](#) at Amazon.com.

You are probably a desperate husband or wife who needs
Challenges in Marriage if you...

- Are bitter
- Feel like you're losing it
- Feel like you're drowning
- Cry all the time or can no longer cry
- Live with ridicule
- Think you're going crazy
- Fight for emotional survival
- Are told you're stupid
- Work harder at your marriage than your friends do
- Walk on eggshells around your spouse
- Think God has abandoned you in your marriage
- Believe everything is your fault
- Are overpowered by your spouse's anger
- Are paralyzed by codependence

Problems Addressed

- Dealing with spousal abuse: mental, physical, and spiritual
- Handling financial and sexual neglect
- Facing adultery, drunkenness, and drug use
- Living with unreasonable, compulsive perfectionism
- Recognizing sin rather than minimizing it
- When love turns to a personal fight for emotional survival
- Taking charge of your own life while letting the other accept personal responsibility
- Growing up emotionally
- How the church can help by applying peer pressure
- Following Paul's example and appealing to the government for protection
- Repairing a damaged self-image
- Opportunities to teach the gospel to people in desperate marriages
- Befriending or counseling someone in a desperate marriage
- The danger of thinking, "It'll get better with time."
- How silence and tolerance promote greater sin
- Understanding the cycle of violence and love
- How to have a fight without sinning
- The power women have to change the course of an argument
- False Bible arguments that keep the mate submissive to sin
- Misconceptions of subjection that encourage sin
- Harm to the church when sin in the home is covered-up
- Damage to the victim's soul when sin is not dealt with
- False guilt trips—Satan's most powerful weapon
- Learning how to not be codependent
- Discover the wisdom and love of God through problem-solving
- How to keep a marriage happy and avoid a desperate marriage

The Timelessness of Challenges in Marriage

Fifty years ago in 1972, I began studying the Bible's teaching about difficult marriages. I spent the first 18 years teaching marriage classes, working with both women and men, writing and updating two books in the *Marriage: A Taste of Heaven* series, and going through counselor training at the Santa Maria, California, women's shelter.

In 1990, I mailed a 2-page questionnaire to previous students to ask how their marriages had progressed during those years. I included the comprehensive "Survey on Spousal Abuse Among Christians for Both Husband and Wife Abuse" at the end of this book.

Twenty-five women, including several preachers' wives, responded.

In one of the marriages that had continued to deteriorate, I learned that the older wife had covered up her husband's alcoholism. A young wife revealed she had hidden her unbelieving husband's frequent verbal and physical abuse.

Another wife told how her husband, who taught teenage Bible classes, verbally abused her nearly every day. She never exposed him or asked for help dealing with his sins against her because every time she threatened to talk to the preacher, he straightened up for a few weeks. The cycle continued throughout their marriage. Years later, nearly every teen in those classes fell away from the Lord. No one can effectively teach what they do not know or practice.

A wife who filled out this questionnaire on spousal abuse had never thought of herself as being abusive to her husband. However, as she answered the questions about the wife's conduct, she realized that some of the items described her. She had minimized her behavior over the years as, "That's just the way I am when I get mad."

Additionally, the husband of one of my first students said he withdrew his name as a candidate for becoming an elder. He said that although his wife stopped withholding sex after I taught the Song of Solomon, she relapsed and her screaming at him and the kids increased. His wife covered up her sins during our private sessions. She presented herself as a loving, model wife who needed to add a few finishing touches to a good marriage. Her husband was alarmed that their teenage daughter imitated her mother by screaming at her parents and siblings. Of course, he was not qualified to serve as an elder. Both he and his wife had covered up the wife's sins in the home. Decades later, none of their had children married, which is a frequent outcome of severely dysfunctional homes of origin.

Marriages Don't Thrive When Sin Is Covered Up

The questionnaires and surveys showed that sin in the home was covered up in nearly every instance where the marriages had not become loving. Sometimes the wives asked for help while hiding their husbands' abuses. Other times, husbands hid their wives' alcoholism, anger, and screaming. The preachers' wives knew of many of these cases involving both husbands and wives. One participant wrote that another preacher's wife was frequently emotionally, physically, and spiritually abused.

A lack of sexual love on either the husband's or the wife's part is the most common problem I dealt with beginning 50 years ago. Over time, several of the early couples divorced. Others survived in a constant

state of bitterness and hopelessness. In all instances of hidden sins, the couples put on hypocritical, happy faces and displayed affection when having pictures taken or sitting in pews.

The Challenges in Marriage Classes Expose Sin in the Home

I used the information from the candid responses from these first students to put together seven 2-hour weekly classes on *Challenges in Marriage: What to Do When Sin Inhibits Love*. At the same time, I spent several hours each week at the Tacoma Women's Shelter attending their programs and being mentored by one of their counselors so I wouldn't be so naive about marital sins.

Women from all over the Seattle, Washington, area attended the 14 hours of lectures on desperate marriages. I gave them reading and work assignments from my two books to help create a crash course on marriage. For two decades, that material was available first as cassettes and later as CDA albums, including these class handouts and lecture notes.

I Require My Clients to Go Through Challenges in Marriage

In 2015, I turned the four chapters on the Song of Solomon in my first book into a standalone book, now updated to *God's 11 Secrets of Sex for a Lifetime of Passion*. I took advantage of my certification as an Advanced Personality Trainer and began coaching people in sexless marriages. I specialized in helping couples who had problems starting with their honeymoons rather than being distracted by the typical problems of life.

Little did I know when I went through training at two women's shelters and then taught *Challenges* that 33 years later, this material would be exactly what my clients needed. It guides them through the foundational sins of miserable, unloving, sexless marriages to help them work on the real problems. The sexlessness they complain about is only a symptom of deeper 24/7 character and love sins against their mates and God:

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no one violate the rights and take advantage of his brother or sister in the matter, because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you previously and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in sanctification. Therefore, the one who rejects this is not rejecting man, but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you."

It's not enough for Christians to say, "I don't commit adultery or think lustful thoughts." God expects Christians to replace their negative thinking with the positive—to "*know how* to possess their own vessels in sanctification and honor." The ones who withhold sexual love not only mistreat their mates, but they also *reject God and his creation and design for marriage* as revealed by the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible.

Learning to Fight Fair Is Critical for Turning Around Sinful Marriages

Emotional intimacy is absolutely essential for both husbands and wives to enjoy true ecstasy. If couples can't fight fair, then heart-to-heart communication is impossible.

Consequently, one of the first assignments I give new clients is to listen to the classes on "Fighting Fair" and "Facing Anger." I follow those with the two classes on codependency. Husbands and wives who are trying to survive in sexless marriages are usually dealing with distorted anger, unreasonable perfectionism, and walking on eggshells with their inhibited spouses.

Learning how to talk with each other helps them address the sin in their homes and begin to solve the core issues. Then I advise them to start at the beginning and go through all the *Challenges* classes. Recognizing

and dealing with sin is critical if they are going to be able to touch their spouses' hearts.

I also ask clients to read all the "Stacey's Story" segments in *God's 11 Secrets of Sex*. Stacey shares how she spent a year teaching her husband Joe how to fight fair. Once they started really communicating and studying together, they began to create a loving home environment. The whole family changed when Stacey and Joe started growing together in love.

The Challenges Classes Apply Equally to Husbands and Wives

Although I taught the original material to women, nearly all the scriptures apply equally to husbands trying to live with angry, abusive, sex-depriving wives. Indeed, I witnessed some of these men successfully teach their wives how to fight fair, per the example of Jack in the book version of *Challenges*.

I considered changing the handouts to include husbands as I did in the commentary that I added to Dr. Marie N. Robinson's book *The Power of Sexual Surrender for Christians*. However, the *Challenges* book (publication sometime in 2023) includes a transcription of the original classes and changing the pronouns would affect the tone of the lessons. I elected to keep the focus on wives dealing with sinful husbands as I have not had a problem with male clients being unable to apply the material to their own marriages.

Sexless Marriages and Sin Do Not Respect Gender

In the paperback version of *Challenges* (scheduled to be released in late 2023), I address the husbands' suffering through updated additions. This includes material from my *Sexless Marriages Survey: With Self-Assessment Checklists*. At this time, over 400 men and women participated in the survey. Slightly more women than men, aged 24 to 80, filled out the checklists. Plus, the respondents' answers reveal how this original *Challenges* work that highlighted spousal abuse addresses the sinful cruelty that goes hand-in-hand with being without natural affection.

One of the surprises of the *Sexless Marriages Survey* is that I cannot tell from the answers if sexually deprived mates are the husbands or the wives. Likewise, it is impossible to distinguish between male and female sexual deprivers from the answers on the checklists. Thus, the principles in these lessons apply equally to men and women.

I invite you to come with me as we look at God's scriptures that expose sins in the home that inhibit intellectual, emotional, sexual, and spiritual intimacy. Make the necessary applications to yourself whether you are male or female. Learn how to fight a spiritual battle in your home to free your family from the clutches of sin. Get the sin out into the open and fight to help love thrive in your home. You will be amazed at how much God loves you and provides multiple ways of escape from desperate marriages, including ungodly sexless ones. One of the first ways is addressing the sin and ensuring you don't fight your spouse's sins with your own sins, which only makes the situation worse.

May God bless you on your journey of love,
Patsy Rae Dawson
Dallas, Texas USA
January 2023

Homework for Challenges in Marriage Classes

This is the original homework that I gave with the classes. I taught an 8-week series on *The Song of Solomon: God's Sex Education for Ages 11 to 99* before spending 7 weeks on *Challenges in Marriage*. The Song of Solomon had similar homework taken from my *Marriage: A Taste of Heaven* books. *Vol. I: God's People Appreciate Marriage* (revised edition) and *Vol. II: God's People Make the Best Lovers*. [*God's People Appreciate Marriage* has been updated to two standalone books: *Male and Female: God's Genius* and *God's 11 Secrets of Sex for a Lifetime of Passion*.] A third standalone book is planned.

At the end of the 15 weeks, the students had completed a crash course on marriage by supplementing the classes with reading both books and completing half the homework. See "Resources" at the end of these handouts for additional material for help growing love.

The Thankfulness Exercise: At the end of this homework is The Thankfulness Exercise, which I now give all my clients regarding reading my books and listening to these classes. If you don't want to do the extra reading and homework at this time, I suggest you at least do The Thankfulness Exercise to get the most out of this study.

Week 1 (Lessons 1 and 2):

- A. The Problem—Profile of a Desperate Woman
- B. Abigail and Nabal
- C. The Role of Wisdom
- D. Assignment:
 - 1. Vol. I, Chapter 1: God's Plan for Men and Women
 - 2. Vol. I, Chapter 2: Solving All Marriage Problems
 - 3. Do study and research exercises at end of chapter 2.

Week 2 (Lessons 3 and 4):

- A. Profile of a Sinner
- B. Types of Sin
- C. Assignment:
 - 1. Vol. II, Chapter 9: The False Promise of an Affair
 - 2. Vol. II, Chapter 14: The Sin Against the Whole Body
 - 3. Do study exercise at end of chapter 14.

Week 3 (Lessons 5 and 6):

- A. Codependency Defined
- B. Codependency and the Bible and Damage to the Self-Image
- C. Assignment:
 - 1. Vol. I, Chapter 3: The Plight of Silly Old Women
 - 2. Vol. I, Chapter 4: The Secret of True Happiness
 - 3. Do study exercise at end of chapter 4.

Week 4 (Lessons 7 and 8):

- A. Misconceptions of Subjection that Encourage Sin

B. False Bible Arguments to Keep the Spouse Submissive to Sin

C. Assignment:

1. Vol. I, Chapter 13: Subjection for Both Men and Women
2. Do the study exercise at the end of chapter 13.
3. Vol. I, Chapter 16, False Concepts of Subjection
4. Do personal exercise at end of chapter 16. Do not turn in.

Week 5 (Lessons 9 and 10):

A. How Arguments Start

B. Why Help Often Fails

C. Assignment:

1. Vol. II, Chapter 5: The Sexually Frustrated Woman.
2. Vol. II, Chapter 6: The Sexually Fulfilled Woman.
3. Do study and problem-solving exercises at end of chapter 5.

Week 6 (Lessons 11 and 12):

A. How to Face the Spouse's Anger

B. Problems with Compulsive Perfectionism

C. Assignment:

1. Vol. II, Chapter 4: Victorian Morals and Feminists
2. Vol. II, Chapter 10: The Older Wife an Exciting Lover
3. Do study and problem-solving exercises at end of chapter 10.

Week 7 (Lessons 13 and 14):

A. How the Government Can Help

B. How the Church Can Help

C. Guidelines for Counseling

D. Opportunities for Teaching the Gospel

E. Assignment:

1. Vol. II, Chapter 15: Obeying the Law of Compatibility
2. Vol. II, Chapter 16: Sexual Problems in Perspective
3. Do study and problem-solving exercises at end of chapter 16.

The Thankfulness Exercise

Developing gratitude is part of God's formula for solving all marriage problems in 1 Timothy 4:1-5. Putting on a spirit of thankfulness makes the journey to embrace love easier and is required for lovemaking success. Once thankfulness begins to become a habit, it can transform a person's whole life as it helps chase away negativity, anger, and bitterness and replaces it with love.

Keeping a grateful heart is so powerful that one of the first things I ask my clients to do is "The Thankfulness Exercise" for each chapter they read in my books. This exercise has produced such good results that I strongly recommend you start a "Thankfulness Notebook" and answer the following four questions for each chapter you read in my books and for each of the lessons in *Challenges in Marriage*:

1. What Bible verse especially spoke to your needs now? Why?
2. What things did you learn about to thank God for as gifts from him?
3. What do you need to ask God to help you with in your life?
4. How can you change your routine to make it happen?

Lesson 1: Profile of Desperate Marriages

“**Jerk**” means “foolish” (Webster). “Foolish” implies “the character of being or seeming unable to use judgment, discretion, or good sense” (Webster).

Marriage can be harmful: mentally, physically, and spiritually if the woman marries a “jerk.”

The Problem

A. Three Classes of Women

1. Older women: Frequently bitter and insist that everything be proved, not only from the Bible, but also from life.

2. Young brides: Love still shines in their eyes, and they are ready to go home and practice anything God says.

3. Women outside the church: Their problems generally are much more extreme—husbands practice adultery, etc. and are unwilling to try to resolve conflicts.

Christians expect more: Christians expect God to give them something better than those outside of Christ. They are often unwilling to settle for second-best. Women outside the church view good marriages as the exception rather than the rule. Divorce is common and accepted.

B. Learn the ABCs of Marriage

1. Subjection and leadership: (1 Peter 3:1-2) If a woman still says, “It’s not fair, why do I have to make all the sacrifices?” she’s doesn’t understand Bible subjection and leadership.

2. Healthy sexual attitudes: (Proverbs 5:18-19) The wife enjoys initiating lovemaking and has resolved sexual conflicts of the past such as being molested or involvement in fornication.

3. Reverence: (Ephesians 5:33) This quality brings out the best in a man and makes him want to please his wife. It is essential for a happy marriage. Its absence complicates problems.

C. Four Basic Marriages

1. Courtship: If a woman learns her role before marriage, she makes a better choice for a mate and begin with fewer problems.

2. Good marriages: These marriages respond quickly to the wives’ study and become even better.

3. Problem marriages: Many problems arise from ignorance. Most problem marriages quickly improve and become what they should when the wife learns her role.

4. Desperate marriages: These marriages result from sin on the mate's part such as intimidating outbursts of temper, physical or verbal abuse, failure to provide for family, sexual defrauding, adultery or homosexuality, bitterness, judging motives, drunkenness, hindering the wife from serving God, etc.

At first these marriages seem to improve when the wife learns God's plan for her life. But after time, the happiness begins to stagnate as the problem continues. When this happens, the wife frequently sinks into extreme bitterness and may eventually reject both her husband and God. The marriage may go along for a while until a crisis occurs. At that point, the problem will either be solved, and the marriage will go on to become much better, or they will separate either emotionally or physically, and the marriage will sink to a new low. Sometimes, if the wife follows the example of Abigail, she can often resolve the conflict and the marriage saved if the husband is willing to listen like David did. However, all marriages cannot be saved.

D. The Desperate Wife

She is on the verge of leaving her husband and may be ready to turn her back on God as well. Many of these wives are hard workers in the church. On the outside, they often seem to have everything going for them. They don't deserve the tragedy that happens to them.

1. Marries expecting happiness: She wants to be a good wife.

2. Marriage problems arise: Women possess a single-mindedness that makes it impossible for them to ignore even simple problems, which drives them to find solutions. On the other hand, men can think about two complex subjects at the same time and possess the ability to ignore problems.

3. Blames herself: While the example of Adam and Eve shows that both men and women possess the tendency to assign blame, wives usually blame themselves when it comes to marriage problems more than husbands blame themselves. The apostle Paul commands husbands to love their wives as they love themselves (Ephesians 5:28). Generally, men have the ability to love themselves better than wives do. This self-blame drives wives to find solutions and better themselves.

4. Other husbands respond: She sees the husbands of other women responding to the changes in the woman; however, her marriage only improves slightly if at all.

5. Marriage problems continue: Sometimes a husband possesses such serious personal problems that a wife learning her role can't counteract them. Thus, the wife sees her friends enjoying good marriages while hers stagnates. Her husband's sins continue to torment her.

6. Blames herself even more: The wife tends to blame herself even more for the unhappiness in the marriage as she begins to blame herself for things she cannot control: "If only I were more lovable." "If only I were prettier." Etc. Etc. Her blame of herself becomes irrational and illogical.

7. Depression sets in: When the wife first blamed herself, she found seasons of refreshing (Acts 3:19) because she really needed to improve. But irrational self-blame leads to depression.

8. Self-image deteriorates: Jesus said to love others as one loves himself (Matthew 22:39) and does not criticize self-love. This self-blame may go on for years before her self-image reaches such a low point that she must fight for emotional survival.

9. Fights for survival: She must repair her self-image just to survive as a person. Few people may know of this turmoil. She realizes that she cannot continue to blame herself and survive.

10. Blames her husband: A woman can fool her conscious mind into thinking something is her fault when it isn't for a while. But when she reaches emotional exhaustion, her subconscious reminds her of all the past wrongs of her husband. She reacts to all of them—not just the present ones.

11. Confronts her husband: Her husband usually responds with anger or ridicule (Proverbs 29:9). The wife views his anger as making the problem worse and often backs off. She may even apologize to smooth things over. From now on, she brings up the subjection only when depressed.

12. Depression deepens: She feels hopelessly trapped in an impossible situation. She often seeks help from the preacher or elders. If she is the only one in counseling, she tries to resign herself to accepting the problem. Women seldom possess this ability and bitterness invades her thinking.

13. Begins to blame God: In a last desperate effort to survive as a person, she turns to blaming God. Since she has worked hard to make a success of her marriage with little to show for it, it seems logical and safe to blame God. After all, God won't shout at her or abuse her. The resentments go so deep that she may make the decision to leave her husband and the church. Women are extremely hard to win back to God at this stage.

14. Leaves her husband and the church: In many ways she sounds like Job questioning why God reached down to punish him when he hadn't done anything. Unfortunately, her brethren often sound like Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar and say she must have done something wrong for her husband to treat her this way. She is often told to just be submissive and her husband will respond. This alienates her more.

E. The Desperate Husband

[Note: This section on the desperate husband was added after the classes were taught so it is not available on the video or audio.]

1. Marries expecting happiness: Men get married expecting happiness just like women do. One desperate husband explained that he told his wife to be, "I'll give you the babies you want. I'll work and provide for you and the children. You just give me sex—all I want is great sex." While other problems in the marriage can lead to a man being a desperate husband—the number one reason I've encountered is a wife's sexual neglect and that example will be used throughout this profile. For either a husband or a wife to fail to fulfill the God-given sexual desires of the mate is a sin that violates many scriptures including 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

2. Marriage problems arise: Every marriage has problems—it's just part of being human in an imperfect world. The problems either get solved and the marriage grows or they fester and get bigger.

3. Blames his wife: At this point the profile of the desperate husband and wife differ. The wife's femininity causes her to look inward for a solution and her tendency is to blame herself. Women have a lot of influence in solving problems and a lot of times this leads to a solution. It is when the self-blame is unreasonable that it leads to desperateness.

However, the husband's makeup causes him to first blame his wife. In Ephesians 5:28 God tells husbands to love their wives as they love themselves. Men normally do not have a problem loving themselves and God does not criticize that self-love. The man's self-love helps him be competitive and go out and succeed in the world to provide for his family—to be the best he can in taking care of them. God just cautions the

man to make certain that he loves his wife in the same way he loves himself. This blaming of the wife is often harbored secretly, and the wife may have no idea that her husband is unhappy. Or if it is brought up, the wife does not realize the depth of the pain her husband feels. Or the husband may blow up at his wife and the wife just views that as a sensitive subject to avoid.

4. Finds other husbands with the same problem: The desperate husband may make generalized remarks to other men about the sexual coldness of women. If the other man doesn't respond, the desperate husband assumes that man doesn't understand his problem. However, if the other man also criticizes women's sexual nature, then the desperate husband has found a buddy to commiserate with. This only makes the problem worse.

5. Marriage problems continue: As the problem continues the husband is very susceptible to temptation even if he is committed to remaining true to his marriage vows. One husband explained, "Even a waitress or clerk in the store who speaks kindly to you can arouse all kinds of feelings if your wife is mad at you." Having to fight temptation all the time makes him resent his wife even more.

6. Bitterness sets in as he blames his wife/women even more: Bitterness is a very real masculine danger as God cautions men to love their wives and to not be embittered against them in Colossians 3:19. Bitterness results from this blame of the wife without dealing with the problem in a way that will really solve it. As a later lesson shows, bitterness takes away a person's ability to think rationally and affects everything they do.

7. Depression sets in: As a husband feels like his problems are hopeless and he is trapped in a loveless marriage, depression sets in.

8. Bitterness deepens: While the wife's self-image deteriorates at this point, the husband's bitterness deepens and is overwhelming at times. Yet the wife may still have no idea that her husband is harboring these strong feelings against her.

9. Fights for emotional survival: Although many wives don't think their husbands display many emotions, at this point the husband will begin to fight for emotional survival. The husband may go through what the world calls a "mid-life crisis" which can result in career changes or even an affair in an effort to just survive.

10. Blames his wife/women: At this point the husband is extremely bitter against his wife. One desperate husband described it as a type of emotional breakdown where he could not stop crying for several weeks. While women's emotional nature changes as they lose their ability to cry over the problem, men's emotional nature also changes as they easily cry over the situation. One preacher who counsels lots of couples said he often has men in his office sobbing while their wives are dry-eyed and hard as stone.

11. Depression deepens: The husband's depression deepens as he feels more and more that the situation is hopeless. He is desperate to survive as a whole person.

12. Begins to blame God: The husband also begins to blame God for allowing him to be in this situation.

13. Leaves his wife and the church: Even men who seem so strong in the Lord and who are tireless workers in the congregation can reach a point of desperation where they leave their wives and families and their brethren in an attempt to find some earthly happiness. Once they reach this point, it is very hard to bring them back. Often after so many years of giving in to bitter thinking, that even if the

wife wakes up to her sin and stops it, the husband has a difficult time recognizing her changes and accepting them.

F. Differences Between Women and Men

These overviews of the desperate wife and husband show several basic differences between *their responses to sin in the home*.

1. Blame: The loving wife is prone to blame herself for her spouse's sins against her, but the loving husband is prone to blame his wife for her sins against him.

2. Self-Image: The wife's self-image greatly deteriorates, and the man becomes bitter toward his wife.

3. Depression: Both the wife and the husband become depressed due to the rejection and sin that thrives in their homes.

4. Emotions: If the sin is not dealt with, eventually the wife's emotions become so hardened that she cannot cry while the man's emotions rise to the surface, and he sobs perhaps for weeks.

5. Spirituality: Both the wife and the husband can reach a stage where they blame God and are ready to leave their families and cut off all ties with fellow Christians.

Lesson 2: Abigail: Married to a Jerk

The purpose of this lesson is to try to learn how to restore the desperate wife's confidence in God by looking at an extreme example of marriage problems. If a woman can understand the example of Nabal and Abigail, she can see how to solve more simple problems when they first begin and before bitterness takes over.

The Characters—1 Samuel 25

A. Nabal—A Jerk (vs. 3)

“Harsh” means (7176) “severe (in various applications):—churlish, cruel, grievous, hard (-hearted), thing, heavy + impudent, obstinate, prevailed, rough, sore, sorrowful, stiff (-necked), stubborn” (Strong, p. 105).

“Evil” means (7451) “bad or evil (nat. or mor.):—adversity, affliction, bad, calamity” (Strong, p. 109).

No one can speak to him—vs. 17 even when his life depended upon it.

Worthless man (son of Belial)—vs. 17, 25 Both his wife and servants called him “son of the Devil.”

“Worthless” means (1100) “without profit, worthlessness; by extens. destruction, wickedness:—Belial, evil, naughty, ungodly (men), wicked” (Strong, p. 21).

Folly is with him—vs. 25 The word we looked at earlier—a strong word.

A drunk—vs. 36

B. Abigail

Intelligent—(lit. of good understanding)—vs. 3:

“Intelligent” means “intelligence: by implication success:—discretion, knowledge, policy, prudence, sense, understanding, wisdom, wise” (Strong, p. 116).

“Intelligent” is probably not a good English word to translate this Hebrew word because it gives a false impression. Out in the margin, the *New American Standard* says “of good understanding.” Intelligence is more than having a high I.Q. or a college degree. It's not book knowledge, but it's success, it's understanding what is going on and acting wisely. Abigail had what people today call “street smarts.”

“Understanding” means (7922) “intelligence: by implication success:—discretion, knowledge, policy, prudence, sense, understanding, wisdom, wise” (Strong, p. 116).

Beautiful in appearance (countenance)—vs. 3

Discernment (advice)—vs. 33

“Discernment” means (2940) “properly a taste, i.e. (figuratively) perception; by implication intelligence; transit. a mandate:—advice, behavior, decree, discretion, judgment, reason, taste, understanding” (Strong, p. 46).

C. David

Fighting the battles of the Lord—1 Samuel 25:28—The people knew this since Abigail said it.

Anointed king of Israel—1 Samuel 25:30, 1 Samuel 13:14.

About to take vengeance—into his own hands and commit murder.

Intellectually honest—Being intellectually honest is what separates David from Nabal. When Abigail rebuked David, he was man enough to admit he was wrong and take a different course of action. When a woman rebuked David, he could admit he was wrong. Many men today will accept rebuke from a man, but not from a woman. Later in his life, when David became king, he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then killed her husband to cover up the adultery. When confronted with the truth, David admitted that he had sinned. David accepted rebuke from both men *and women*.

This characteristic separates the problem marriages from the desperate ones. Men in problem marriages are willing to listen to their wives; thus, their marriages improve. Men in desperate marriages refuse to listen to any criticism at all from their wives. This causes their marriages to deteriorate. Intellectual honesty is the most desirable trait of all in a spouse, whether he is a Christian or not.

Nabal’s Folly

A. David served Nabal—(1 Samuel 25:4-9) While Nabal’s shepherds were in the wilderness with their flocks, David, who was hiding from Saul, did not harm Nabal’s sheep and shepherds (had not stolen from Nabal when it would have been easy) and protected them from harm.

B. David asked for food—David sent ten young men to Nabal to remind him of what they had done for him and to ask to partake of the feast which Nabal had prepared since they had earned it. David instructed his men to tell Nabal to ask his men and not take his word for what he had done for Nabal. David’s request was legitimate.

C. Nabal rebuked David—(1 Samuel 25:10-11) Nabal asked, “Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master.” Thus, Nabal pretended to not recognize David’s anointment as king. Then Nabal rejected David’s right to enjoy the feast by asking if he should take away food from his workers and give it to men he didn’t know.

D. David decided to kill Nabal—(1 Samuel 25:12-13,21-22) This made David so angry because this was not a handout—this was something he earned. The entire time Nabal’s shepherds were in the hills with David’s men, David could have easily stolen from him and eaten royally for months. Instead, David did not allow his men to take even one lamb from Nabal and protected Nabal’s shepherd from others who

would steal from him. David's anger was so kindled that he determined to not leave even one male of Nabal's alive.

E. Abigail accepted her responsibility—(1 Samuel 25:14-38) One of the servants told Abigail what had happened and that David and his men had helped them—that they were worthy of partaking in the feast. Then he told her that evil was plotted against Nabal and his entire house, but Nabal was worthless, and no one could speak to him—no one could warn him of the danger. (Nabal's condition of mind—where no one could speak to him—was such that his servants could not even tell him that he and they were about to be killed because of something he had done.) Abigail hurried and gathered food that was already prepared and loaded it on donkeys to take to David. She met David and his men as they were coming toward her to slay Nabal and his entire house.

Abigail and David

The way Abigail treated David shows how a woman should treat a good husband who slips occasionally. Proverbs 9:9 says that even wise men make mistakes. This is also a good way to treat children who are influenced by their fathers' sins.

A. Abigail accepted blame for her wrong—(1 Samuel 25:24, 27-28) Abigail accepted personal responsibility for paying a debt they owed to David. The servants told her that he and his men had earned the food. She knew that he earned it, that he was the anointed king who was out fighting the battles of the Lord. She accepted personal responsibility.

B. Told David not to sin because of a jerk—(1 Samuel 25:25) Abigail did not make excuses for what Nabal had done—she told it like it was. Then she told David that Nabal's sin didn't justify his. If she had this attitude toward David, certainly, she had that attitude for herself. Neither would she sin because her husband acted foolishly.

C. Abigail saw the good in David—(1 Samuel 25:28) Abigail saw the good in David and reminded him of that good—that he was fighting the battles of the Lord. Even though he was a man of war, this murder was beneath him and uncharacteristic.

D. Appealed to David's authority—(1 Samuel 25:30) Even though her husband claimed not to know David, she recognized his right to lead as the anointed king (1 Samuel 13:14). As a leader, he would regret taking his own vengeance in the future.

E. Reminded David of the consequences—(1 Samuel 25:31) Abigail let David know that he alone was responsible for his actions. When he became king this would be something he would be ashamed of.

F. David forgave Abigail—(1 Samuel 25:32) David didn't tell her that it was all right. Sin is never all right. David had nearly committed murder to avenge himself as a result. Instead David said, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."

G. David called Abigail a blessing from God—(1 Samuel 25:32-33) Rather than God inspiring Abigail's speech when she went to David, Abigail acted as God created women to act—submissive but determined not to sin. In this way she used her influence for good and became a blessing. God gave Abigail credit for being intelligent before the story of her confrontation was ever recorded. David gave her credit when he said, "Blessed be your discernment."

Abigail and Nabal

Abigail still had a problem with Nabal that she had to deal with. When she went back home, she didn't duck the issue, but sought out Nabal.

A. Abigail was submissive—(1 Samuel 25:36) She recognized that God's laws override man's opinions (the only area where God gives man the right to exercise dominion) and refused to sin (Colossians 3:18—"as fitting in the Lord"). Yet she showed respect to both David and Nabal at all times. She recognized Nabal as her leader by determining to tell him what happened. Since she had taken care of the situation, she could have just assumed that what Nabal didn't know wouldn't hurt him or her. When a woman must disobey her husband in order to obey God, she should tell her husband. When she carried out their financial responsibilities that Nabal should have taken care of, she was submissive in the true sense of the word.

B. Abigail picked the right time—(1 Samuel 25:37) Abigail waited until Nabal was sober and could understand and was in control of himself, then she told him what had happened. She didn't nag, harangue, ridicule, get mad, refuse to speak, or preach to him. She simply "told" him, "David nearly killed you and all the servants of our household because of what you did." Then she shut up and let Nabal deal with it.

C. Nabal became as stone—(1 Samuel 25:37) "Heart" is used "very widely for the feelings, the will, and even the intellect" (Strong, p. 58). "Stone" means "to build, a stone:—mason" (Strong, p. 8).

Nabal had no liquor in him. He was coming face to face with the consequences of his deeds. Nabal was so wicked that his servants couldn't even speak to him to warn him that his life was in danger (1 Samuel 25:17). Then after ridiculing David, he learned that he and all his servants would have been slaughtered if Abigail hadn't interceded. Then instead of repenting and saying, "I'm sorry. You were right to do what you did." Nabal, because of his stubbornness and obstinance became as stone.

According to Jay Adams in *Competent to Counsel* this is a common phenomenon when a person comes face to face with the horribleness of his sins and refuses to repent. In the past, Jay Adams worked in psychiatric hospital where people were like stone like Nabal. But when the people would confess what they'd done, they would come out of the stupor and be normal. Thus, even after a person goes into a stupor, he can still repent and come out of it.

This is what happened to Nabal. He came face to face with the horribleness of his deed. But because of his evilness, he was unwilling to confess his sin and he became as stone. This shows Nabal's stubbornness in that he stayed like that for ten days—horrified at what he'd done but unwilling to repent.

D. The Lord struck Nabal Dead—(1 Samuel 25:38) God gave Nabal ten days to confess his sin—ten days to realize what a horrible man he was. But Nabal would rather shut down his whole system than confess that he had done anything wrong. After ten days God took Nabal's life because of his impenitent heart. Some women use the example of Abigail to teach that a woman should obey her husband no matter what—that God will strike him dead if he makes life too miserable for her. However, the example doesn't apply because Abigail did not submit to Nabal in sin. She took care of their financial responsibility when Nabal refused. God struck him dead because of his attitude toward repentance.

David Married Abigail

1 Samuel 25:39-42: When David heard of Nabal's death, he sent for Abigail and asked her to marry him—this woman who had rebuked him. He recognized her wisdom and the value of it to him. She was a helper who was truly meet for him even though she corrected his sin. In contrast to Nabal, David was able to appreciate the woman who rebuked him and turned his back on sinning.

Lesson 3: Sins That Inhibit Love

Types of Sin

This lesson deals with what is going on with the woman's husband while the woman is fighting for emotional survival. In a desperate marriage there is always some kind of sin in that marriage. Because that sin is not being dealt with, that marriage is growing in a desperate state. First, we want to look at the most common types of sins that plague marriages. Once we understand these common types of sin, we can look at how sin grows and takes over the marriage.

A. Bitterness

Hebrews 12:15

“Root” means “a root; metaphor. cause, origin, source” (Thayer, p. 563).

“Bitterness” means “bitter gall, i.e. extreme wickedness, a bitter root, (and so producing bitter fruit; bitterness, i.e. bitter hatred, of speech” (Thayer, p. 509).

“Springing” means “1. to beget, bring forth, produce; pass. to be born, to spring up, to grow, 2. to shoot forth, spring up” (Thayer, p. 661).

“Cause trouble: means “to excite disturbance, to trouble, annoy (abSolomon of the growth of a poisonous plant, figuratively representing the man who corrupts the faith, piety, hater of the Christian church)” (Thayer, p. 217).

“Defiled” means “1. to dye with another color, to stain, 2. to defile, pollute, sully, contaminate, soil; to defile with sin” (Thayer, p. 414).

Ephesians 4:31

“Wrath” signifies “both the spirit panting as it were in the body, and the rage with which the man pants and swells, 1. passion, angry heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again” (Thayer, p. 293). This is talking about a hot-tempered person who gets mad instantly and it boils up into an explosion.

“Anger,” on the other hand, “denotes indignation which has arisen gradually and become more settled” (Thayer, p. 293). “Anger, wrath, indignation” (Thayer, p. 452). This may be anger that a person harbors within himself, a person who is coming to a slow boil.

“Clamor” means “a crying, outcry, clamor” (Thayer, p. 359). Some of the translations use the word “screaming.” In other words, a screaming or a shouting contest.

“Slander” means “railing, reviling, a. univ. slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name, b. specifically, impious and reproachful speech injurious to the divine majesty” (Thayer, p. 102).

“Malice” means “1. malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure.

Colossians 3:19

“Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.”

“Embittered” means “to embitter, exasperate, i.e., render angry, indignant, irritated.”

B. Judging Motives—1 Corinthians 2:11; 4:5

C. Emotional Abuse—1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:9-10; Proverbs 25:24

“Reviler” means “railer, reviler” (Thayer, p. 382). Since this is such an important concept, Webster lists the following synonyms:

- “Scold” implies rebuking in irritation or ill temper justly or unjustly.
- “Upbraid” implies censuring on definite and usually justifiable grounds.
- Again, the person may have “justifiable grounds” and a legitimate reason for reviling that person.
- “Berate” suggests prolonged and often abusive scolding.
- “Rail” (at or against) stresses an unrestrained berating.
- “Reville” implies a scurrilous, abusive attack prompted by anger or hatred.
- “Vituperate” suggests a violent reviling.

D. Physical Abuse

Titus 3:1-2

“Uncontentious” means “commonly not to be withstood, invincible; more rarely abstaining from fighting” (Thayer, p. 31). This word is used only twice in NT in 1 Timothy 3:3 for qualifications of elders where an elder is not to be a striker and here in Titus 3:2.

Romans 1:29-30; 1 Corinthians 5:8; Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8; Titus 3:3; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1, 16; 3:7

“Wickedness” means “depravity, iniquity, wickedness, malice, evil purposes and desires” (Thayer, p. 530).

“Malice” means “1. malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure; 2. wickedness, depravity (wickedness that is not ashamed to break the laws); 3. evil, trouble” (Thayer, p. 320).

The difference between malice and wickedness: “malice denotes the vicious disposition, wickedness the active exercise of the same” (Thayer, p. 320). The second malice is a form of the first, but means “bad character, depravity of heart and life, specifically used of malignant subtlety, malicious craftiness” (Thayer, p. 320).

E. Sexual Abuse—1 Thessalonians 4:3-6; 1 Corinthians 7:2-4

“Fulfill” means “put away by giving, give up, give over; 1. deliver (relinquish what is one’s own) hence to sell; 2. pay off, discharge (what is due [because a debt, like a burden, is thrown off, by being paid]; a debt); 3. give back, restore; 4. requite, recompense” (Thayer, p. 60).

“Duty” means “that which is owed, a debt, conjugal duty” (Thayer, p. 469).

F. Spiritual Abuse—1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; Hebrews 10:22-26

G. Child Abuse—Ephesians 6:4; Galatians 5:19-21

H. Adultery/homosexuality—1 Corinthians 6:9-10

I. Drunkenness/Drug Abuse—1 Corinthians 6:9-10

“Drunkenness” means “drunken, intoxicated” (Thayer, p. 396).

“Intoxicate” comes from the word “*toxicum*” which means “poison.” “Intoxicate” means “a. to excite or stupefy by alcohol or a drug esp. to the point where physical and mental control is markedly diminished, b. to excite or elate to the point of enthusiasm or frenzy” (Webster, p. 634).

Galatians 5:20

“Sorcery” means “a. the use or the administering of drugs; b. poisoning; sorcery, magical arts” (Thayer, p. 649).

J. Sexual Neglect—1 Corinthians 7:2-5

“Deprive” means “defraud, rob, despoil, deprive one of a thing, defraud of a thing (withdraw or keep back a thing by fraud)” (Thayer, p. 68).

“Time” means “a measure of time; a fixed and definite time” (Thayer, p. 318).

“Tempt” means “1. try whether a thing can be done, attempt, endeavor; 2. try, make trial of, test” (Thayer, p. 498).

“Lack of self-control” means “want of self-control, incontinence, intemperance” (Thayer, p. 23).

1. Victorian Morals

2. Past Sexual Abuse

3. Bitterness

4. Masturbation

K. Financial Neglect—Genesis 2:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 5:28-29

Lesson 4: Profile of the Habitual Sinner

We want to see how a person becomes a habitual sinner and what is going on with the husband while the wife is going through the process of becoming a desperate wife.

A. One Step at a Time—Jude 22-231

1. Mercy on Some Who Are Doubting

“Mercy” means “to be gracious; to have mercy; to console; to succor one afflicted or seeking aid; to bring help to the wretched” (Thayer, p. 203).

“Doubting” means “2. to separate one’s self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with, dispute, contend; 3. to be at variance with one’s self, hesitate, doubt” (Thayer, p. 138).

2. Save Others, Snatch Out of the Fire

“Save” to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction” (Thayer, p. 610).

“Snatching” means “to seize, carry off by force, to seize on, claim for one’s self eagerly, to snatch out or away” (Thayer, p. 74).

3. Mercy with Fear for Some, Hating the Polluted Garment

“Fear” means “fear, dread, terror” (Thayer, p. 656).

“Hating” means “to hate, pursue with hatred, detest” (Thayer, p. 415).

“Garment” means “a tunic, an undergarment, usually worn next to the skin” (Thayer, p. 669).

“Polluted” means “to defile, spot, (a fault, moral blemish)” (Thayer, p. 584).

B. Caught in a Trespass—Galatians 6:1

“Caught” means “to take one by forestalling (him i.e. before he can flee or conceal his crime), i.e. surprise, detect” (Thayer, p. 540).

“Trespass” means “1. properly a fall beside or near something; 2. a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness; a sin, misdeed” (Thayer, p. 485).

1. Unhappy

2. Judges Motives

- 3. Yells and Uses Bad Language**
- 4. Slaps**
- 5. Reads Pornography**
- 6. Commits Adultery**
- 7. Engages in a Homosexual Act**
- 8. Drinking Everyday/Tolerating Drink/Drug Abuse**
- 9. Masturbation or Head/Back Ache**
- 10. Loses Job, No Hurry to Find Another**

C. Gets Away with Sin

Ecclesiastes 8:11—Note the verse focuses on what they did, not the motive behind it.

Hebrews 5:13-14

“Not accustomed” means “inexperienced in, without experience of” (Thayer, p. 56).

“Practice” means “a habit, whether of body or of mind; a power acquired by custom, practice, use” (Thayer, p. 224).

“Senses” means “an organ of perception, external sense; faculty of the mind for perceiving, understanding, judging” (Thayer, p. 17).

“Trained” means “1. properly to exercise naked; 2. to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind” (Thayer, p. 122).

“Discern” means “distinguishing, discerning, judging” (Thayer, p. 139).

Proverbs 14:15: “The naive believes everything, but the prudent man considers his steps”

- 1. Spouse doesn't know about it**
- 2. Spouse naive and doesn't realize danger**
- 3. Spouse denies and minimizes**
- 4. Spouse afraid to confront sinner**
- 5. Spouse judges motives for good**
- 6. Spouse tries to nice-ie-nice him out of sin**

7. Spouse “toughs it out,” hopes it will go away

8. Spouse is a rescuer or enabler

9. Spouse thinks she/he deserves mistreatment

10. Spouse sympathizes with why sinned

11. Spouse grew up with sin in the home

12. Spouse thinks would be gossiping to seek help

D. Can’t Think Clearly—Hosea 4:11; Matthew 7:5; 2 Peter 1:9; 1 John 2:11

E. Blames Spouse—Genesis 3:12-17, 4:3-8

F. Conscience Seared

Ephesians 4:19

“Callous” means “to cease to feel pain or grief; a. to bear troubles with greater equanimity, cease to feel pain at; b. to become callous, insensible to pain, apathetic” (Thayer, p. 53).

Proverbs 12:15

“Fool” means “stupid, silly, wicked, vile person, perverse” (Strong).

G. Angry When Confronted—Proverbs 29:9

H. Demands Keep Sin a Secret—John 3:19-21; Ephesians 5:11

I. Marriage Ceases to Grow—Hebrews 5:11-14; Matthew 24:12

“Mature” means “brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect; full-grown, adult; of full age, mature” (Thayer, p. 618).

J. Becomes Enslaved to Sin—2 Peter 2:19

“Slaves” means “a slave, bondman, man of servile condition; one who gives himself up wholly to another’s will, or dominion” (Thayer, p. 158).

“Corruption” means “1. corruption, destruction, perishing, in a state of corruption or decomposition (of the body at burial); 2. in an ethical sense, corruption i.e. moral decay” (Thayer, pp. 652-653).

“Overcome” means “to make less, inferior, to overcome, to be conquered by one, forced to yield to one” (Thayer, p. 281).

Titus 3:3; 1 John 1:6

“Walk” means “to walk; to make one’s way, make progress, to make a due use of opportunities, to associate with one, to be one’s companion, to live, to regulate one’s life, to conduct one’s self” (Thayer, p. 504).

Romans 6:17-19

- 1. Chronically Depressed**
- 2. Compulsive Perfectionist**
- 3. Dangerous/Highly Dangerous**
- 4. Predatory Sex Offender**
- 5. Womanizer**
- 6. Homosexual**
- 7. Drunk/Drug Addict**
- 8. Avoids Sexual Contact**
- 9. Won’t Work/Selfish**

K. Breaks Promises/Not Sanctified

1 Timothy 4:1-5

“Sanctify” means “render or declare sacred or holy, consecrated; 1. render or acknowledge to be venerable, hallow; 2. separate from things profane and dedicate to God, consecrate and so render inviolable” (Thayer, p. 63).

“Sanctify” basically means “to set apart from others for special use.”

“Sanctified” and “renewing by the Holy Spirit” are used interchangeably in 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Titus 3:5-7. Note the parallel use of “washed,” “sanctified”/“renewing by the Holy Spirit,” and “justified.”

Romans 12:2

“Conformed” means “fashioned; the *habitus*, as comprising everything in a person which strikes the senses, the figure, bearing, discourse, actions, manner of life, etc., Philippians 2:7-8” (Thayer, p. 610).

“Transformed” (*metamorphow*) means “to change into another form, to transfigure, transform” (Thayer, p. 405).

“Renewing” means “a renewal, renovation, complete change for the better” (Thayer, p. 38).

“Prove” means “1. to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not as metals), 2. to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy” (Thayer, p. 154).

“Perfect” means the same as mature given earlier.

1 Corinthians 7:14—no more adultery, no more beatings, no more drinking, and no more financial neglect, even if the man is not a Christian.

1. Sexual Life Sanctified—1 Thessalonians 4:2-8

2. Anger Sanctified—Titus 3:2-3, 5-7: Note washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, justified which is parallel to 1 Corinthians 6:11. Malice is the same word given earlier.

3. All Types of Sin Sanctified—1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Colossians 3:5-10

L. May Even Lead to Murder

Mark 7:21-23; Romans 1:28-31; James 4:1-2 deal with murder in connection with sin.

Lesson 5: Codependence and the Bible

Codependency Defined

Melody Beattie, *Codependent No More*: Codependent means “a person who has let someone else’s behavior affect him or her and is obsessed with controlling other people’s behavior.”

Bible words: “intimidated, cowardly, fearful, responsibility.” Not doing what is right (sacrificing God’s principles) to keep the peace.

1 Peter 3:13-15

“Do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.”

“Fear” and “intimidation” both come from the same root word and mean “to terrify, frighten, to put to flight by terrifying (to scare away), 1. to be put to flight, to flee, 2. to fear, be afraid, to be struck with fear, to be seized with alarm, 3. to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience” (Thayer, pp. 655-656).

“Troubled” means “to agitate, trouble, to cause one inward commotion, take away his calmness of mind, disturb his equanimity; to disquiet, make restless, to stir up” (Thayer, p. 615).

“Defense” means “verbal defense, speech in defense” (Thayer, p. 65).

“Gentleness” means “gentleness, mildness, meekness” (Thayer, p. 535)” Self-control, like having

Revelation 21:8

“Cowardly” and “fearful” mean “timid, fearful (of Christians who through cowardice give way under persecutions and apostatize)” (Thayer, p. 127).

Codependent Behaviors

See *Codependent No More*, pp. 37-45

1. Obsession: Worrying about everything—the person has no life of own, life revolves around kid acting up, addicted, compulsive, preoccupied.

2. Repression: Pushing thoughts and feeling aside—don’t know who they are. It’s only by expressing our feelings and hearing them with our own ears: mad, glad, sad, and scared. Speech has a lot of third person, they don’t use a lot of “I” and feelings.

3. Controlling: Afraid to let events happen naturally—fear of unknown, don’t feel they have it altogether enough that they can deal with whatever happens and get on with their lives. Control by helplessness,

threat, advice giving. Controlling people believe they know the right way for self and everyone else. Get frustrated and angry when others don't do as they should.

4. Low Self-Worth: Rejecting compliments and praise—take everything personally. They settle for being needed.

5. Denial: Ignoring problems, pretending, excusing, lying—children can make things up and even believe them. People want to believe their own lies. Judging motives for good is a form of denial.

6. Dependency: Looking outside self for approval and happiness—equate love with pain, self-sacrifice, being needed. Usually seek love from someone incapable of giving love.

7. Caretaking: Thinking and feeling responsible for other people—over commit themselves, angry when help not effective, say yes when mean no. Wonder why others don't anticipate their needs. Find themselves doing things they really don't want to do, feel compelled or forced to help another such as offering unwanted advice.

8. Sex Problems: Trading sex for love and caretaking in the bedroom—forget own desires. Some have affairs or reduce sex to technical act or caretaker. Was it good enough for you? Some do when don't want to. Some fantasize about others. Some wish would die or go away. Some refuse to enjoy because angry at partner.

9. Lack of Trust: Placing no faith in anyone, not even a higher power—cannot make a decision. Lose faith in God. Don't talk to anyone, just their own mental codependent committee with themselves.

10. Anger: Hiding true feelings and making others responsible for hurting—we don't know how to express anger—afraid of it. Hide anger by crying a lot, getting sick.

11. Poor Communication: Not saying what is meant and not meaning what is said—Don't say what they mean, don't mean what they say, and don't know what they mean. Frequently talk too much, say everything is their fault, believe their opinion doesn't matter, apologize for bothering other people. Lie to protect and cover up for people they love. Ask indirectly for what they feel and need.

12. Weak Boundaries: Not setting self-limits while accusing others of violating limits—tell people what they will not tolerate while tolerating it. Blame while they continue standing there, complain while they continue standing there, angry outburst after being tolerant. People don't know how to respond to your communication.

Set Boundaries

1. Intellectual—To feel that your thoughts are okay. “You cannot tell me what to think. I do not have to think your thoughts. Your ideas are worthy, but I will come to my own conclusions.”

2. Emotional—Told you shouldn't feel that way. It'll be better tomorrow. “When I'm hurting, don't tell me not to hurt.” When your feelings are repressed it's easy to soak up another's feelings and the feel like a victim. Child hears you are unlovable and unworthy. Can include verbal abuse.

3. Physical—Overt physical and sexual abuse. Learn to say, “It's my body.” Overt sexual seduction to children and comments.

4. Spiritual—Freedom from self-deception. Intellectual honesty. Values in life. What is important to us and gives our life meaning, and direction and purpose.

5. Summary—“I recognize my limitations, recognize that all things are not possible, also recognize that I have some talents and can achieve worthwhile goals.” “I’ve been putting up with a lot of this because I’ve been afraid you would leave, but I’m unwilling to sacrifice my self-respect any longer to keep you here.”

Road to Recovery

Major way to recovery—communication. Emotional health is a balance between silent endurance (passive aggression) and outburst of unreasonable anger. Both are usually found in desperate marriages—wife silently enduring injustices while seething on the inside and husband reacts with outbursts of unreasonable anger. Both are wrong. It’s ok to love someone and not like all his or her behaviors.

Example of poor communication: A kid wants to talk to Dad so asks Mom to talk to Dad. No one can talk to anyone else directly and on the level. An emotionally healthy person can talk directly and levelly to the other person.

It’s imposing to be told a secret, especially to a child—abusive to a child to be told, “Don’t tell Dad.”

People don’t know how to make amends when they do something wrong. They think a mistake is for life and don’t give themselves the right to make mistakes and grow. (Proverbs 9:8-9: Correct a wise man and he will be still wiser—even wise men make mistakes and need correction.)

Lesson 6: How to Overcome Codependence

Love God—Matthew 22:36-39

Love (*agapeo*) is an attitude that causes a person to always act in the best interest of the object loved.

A. Live as a Christian—1 Corinthians 7:12-16: A woman married to a non-Christian is to dwell with him as long as he is content to live with her while she *conducts herself as a Christian*. In other words, she does not compromise her principles of faith to please him. However, when the Christian decides to get help or starts doing right, it is a threat to the spouse. It threatens the spouse's support system for sin that is based on denial. He either has to give up his sin, thus becoming sanctified, or he has to beat her back into her position of enabling him, or find someone else to support his old habits.

Being a Christian makes someone a better wife or better husband even when married to a non-Christian. However, Paul acknowledges that a spouse may be so depraved; he cannot appreciate the sanctification of his marriage. In this case, God does not guarantee that a person can save his spouse by doing what is right. Every person has a freewill choice even when married to a Christian who treats him right. This passage applies equally to men and women.

B. Act in God's Image—2 Corinthians 3:18

“Transformed” is the same word as in Romans 12:2 and means “to change into another form, to transfigure, transform” (Thayer, p. 405).

The way Abigail treated both David and Nabal is exactly the way God treats sinners. God expects everyone to be responsible for his own actions and doesn't cover-up sin. God focuses on what the person did instead of why. Abigail's marriage portrays the character of God and teaches about His justice.

C. Be a Woman of Faith—1 Peter 3:6

“Frightened” is the same word as “fear” and “intimidation” in 1 Peter 3:14.

“Fear” means “to be afraid with terror, to be put in fear by any terror” (Thayer, p. 556).

Faith is the courage to do what God expects and what is right in every situation. While God created the woman as the weaker vessel physically and mentally, He did not make her spirit weaker than the man's—she is joint-heirs with him. The Bible continually portrays women as displaying great courage in the face of danger.

D. Pray for the Sinner—1 John 5:14-16: A sin not leading to death is when the sinner has a heart that will repent. A sin leading to death is when he will not repent.

E. Practice Gratitude—1 Timothy 4:3-4: Gratitude may have to be forced or willed in the beginning. Gratitude keeps a person from becoming bitter and developing a warped attitude toward all members of the opposite sex.

F. Benefit from Solving Problems—James 1:2-4; Romans 8:28: Codependents don't solve problems. They endure problems for years and then pass them on to their children to continue for generations.

G. Experience God's Wisdom—Ephesians 3:10: The "church" is the people, not the organization of the local body. God's wisdom is seen in the way the people, who have come in out of the world, treat each other and solve their daily problems with each other.

H. Give Your Marriage to God: God does not guarantee marital happiness. Sometimes it is God's will that a marriage not be everything it should for God's benefit. While God desires everyone to be happy, sometimes He requires the happiness of a marriage for the Christian to obey Him.

1. God Told Hosea to Marry a Harlot—Hosea 1:2-9; 3:1-2: This enabled Hosea to teach how God felt when the Jews committed spiritual adultery.

2. God Told Jeremiah Not to Get Married—Jeremiah 16:2-7: This helped Jeremiah teach the Jews about the coming destruction, that they weren't going to be enjoying marriage because of the captivity that was coming upon them. They needed to repent.

3. God Told Ezekiel His Wife Would Die—Ezekiel 24:16-21: Ezekiel was told not to mourn for his wife when she died so he could warn the Jews how God was going to take their sons and daughters in punishment.

4. God Told First-Century Christians to Make Sacrifices—1 Corinthians 7:25-38: The first-century Christians were told to be willing to sacrifice their marriages and owning land because of the persecutions that were coming upon them. They would have to endure these persecutions to remain faithful and God wanted them to give up these normal pleasures of life.

5. Jesus Commands Us to Love God More Than Spouse—Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 12:51-53: A woman's husband may choose not to live with her if she's going to act like a Christian.

Love Ourselves

If we don't know how to love ourselves, it isn't possible for us to truly love other people. First, we need to accept responsibility for ourselves.

A. Recognize Your Responsibility—Proverbs 9:12; 1 Peter 1:13-15: "Holy" is a form of the word "sanctify." You be set apart, you be different, you be in control of your actions. First of all, we need to recognize our own personal responsibility.

B. Keep Life Right with God—Matthew 7:1-5: Peter commands even a woman married to an unbelieving husband to practice the ABCs—subjection, reverence, and purity (1 Peter 3:1-2). In this way she might win him with her example even when he rejects the gospel. This clears her own mind from the influence of sin so that she can think clearly. Many desperate wives harbor bad attitudes toward men in general and their husbands in particular as a result of their frustration and pain.

After several weeks of coming to class and enthusiastically doing the homework, a woman will come to class as mad as she can be. One woman stormed, “It’s not fair! Why do I have to make all the sacrifices? He doesn’t do a thing but soak up what I do!” She was ready to quit and turn her back on God’s plan. However, this was the perfect time for true faith to take over. She had to make the decision about whether to continue to try to obey God only if it would help her manipulate her husband, or if she was going to obey God out of love for Him and a desire to please Him. Once a woman decides to obey God regardless of what her husband does, her actions cease to be manipulative. Often her husband responds to her new Christ-like behavior. Even if her husband continues in his old ways—his God-given right—she finds true inner-peace.

C. Confess Faults to Reap Benefits—Matthew 5:23-24: Let your spouse know you’re changing because of conviction. Both Christian and non-Christian women have reaped the most benefits from confessing their wrongs to their husbands and then not doing them anymore. This prevents the husband from having to guess about what is going on.

D. Don’t Participate in Sin—2 Corinthians 6:14-18: Set personal boundaries. A wife must let her husband know that she is going to conduct herself as a Christian and that she will not participate in sin. This means she will not listen to harangues, participate in motive judging or shouting matches. She will not “lie” either by her words or by her silence or make false excuses for him. She will not shelter him from creditors by writing letters asking for more time, nor will she deliver their messages to him. She will not buy his alcohol or drugs. She will not tolerate an adulterous life. She will be faithful in worshipping and serving God. There will be no physical abuse. She will not even smooth things over for him with the children, Christians, or relatives. She will expect him to work at solving sexual problems whether reading books or discussing the matter with someone.

While she will not do all these things, she will show respect, practice subjection as long as God’s word does not override his. She will also maintain a healthy attitude toward lovemaking, and she will control her thoughts so that she truly reverences him honestly.

E. Maintain a Healthy Self-Image—Song of Solomon 2:1; Proverbs 31:18, 25: The Shulammitte shows that a woman needs to bring a healthy self-image to marriage by saying she was the rose of Sharon and could be particular about who she married. The woman of great price shows that a woman needs to keep a healthy self-image after marriage. This helps protect her from Satan’s temptations. Having a healthy self-image protects both the young woman and the older woman.

Abigail had a good self-image as evidenced by her ability to assume responsibility for her failures and by refusing to accept the blame for the sins of others.

When a woman develops a codependent attitude, it damages her self-image. Accepting responsibility for the other person’s faults probably does more harm to a person’s self-image than any other aspect of lack of self-love. It causes her to not think as highly of herself as she should. When she rids herself of this codependent attitude and starts accepting responsibility for her life and not participating in sin, then she begins to heal her self-image.

Love Others

A. Recognize Their Responsibility—1 Peter 1:17: God judges everyone individually and impartially. And when we allow the other person to accept his personal responsibility, this is what codependency calls detachment. Abigail did this with Nabal. She told him what had happened and what she had done. She didn’t nag, belittle, or sermonize.

One woman who filled out the questionnaire said, “‘Abigail told Nabal’ conveys a world of formality, distance, and self-protection which are the coping mechanisms that a wife married to a jerk must cultivate if she wishes to maintain her mental health and salvation. ‘Told’: What a world in a word!” See homework at the end of this lesson for a list of husbands and wives being judged separately.

God gives everyone the right to be a jerk and even a wife cannot take that right away from her husband. (Ezekiel 3:27; Psalm 110:3) However, she does have the responsibility of pointing it out without nagging or coercing so that his “jerky” behavior won’t rub off on her. The wife’s responsibility is to warn about the dangers of sin, not to participate (Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:2-9).

There is a thin line between helping people and hurting them. If what we do for others takes away their personal responsibility, then we’re hurting them. If we encourage them to assume their responsibility, we’re helping them to grow.

B. Refuse to Cover-up Sin

Ephesians 5:11

“Expose” means “1. to convict, refute, confute (generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted); 2. to find fault with, correct; a. by word; to reprehend severely, chide, admonish, reprove, to call to account, show one his fault; b. by deed; to chasten, punish” (Thayer, p. 203).

Women cover up their husbands’ sins for a variety of reasons—pride, shame, fear of retaliation, hoping good will rub off on him, their standing in the community or church, etc. However, cover-ups bring about lasting harm. We have a spiritual battle to fight (Ephesians 6:14-17).

AA says women contribute to their husband’s drinking problem by calling in for them at work and saying they are sick, etc. The AA calls these women “enablers” because they enable their husbands to keep on drinking by covering up for them. This prevents the husbands from facing the responsibilities of their actions. Likewise, battered women cover up their husbands’ physical and verbal abuse by making excuses about why they have black eyes and broken bones, etc.

People frequently won’t admit they have a problem. Alcoholics say they don’t have a drinking problem—you do. Verbal abusers say they don’t have problem—you do.

Proverbs 27:6: Sometimes the best way to be on someone’s side is to not take his or her side.

C. Don’t Assume Job of Making Someone Happy—Colossians 3:19: If a wife assumes the job of trying to make her husband happy all the time, she is going to become codependent in a hurry. Lots of wives have tried for many years to make their husbands happy. All they’ve done is make their husbands more unhappy because the more a wife tries to make her husband think happy thoughts, the more he depends on her make him happy and the less he depends upon himself, and the more unhappy he becomes, and the more emotionally worn out she becomes. This doesn’t work.

Abigail didn’t accept responsibility for the happiness of others. Nabal was obviously unhappy (vs. 25); David was full of anger and resentment. She simply told David and Nabal the consequences of their actions and let them deal with them. David received happiness by making his life right with God. Nabal went into a stupor and died as a result of his miserable thoughts.

D. Forgiveness Doesn't Mean No Consequences—God's example shows that just because a person repents, it doesn't take away all the consequences of his sin. In 1 Kings 21:25 God pronounced judgment against Ahab and Jezebel plus their sons and male servants. "And when it came about when Ahab heard these words, that he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and fasted, and he lay in sackcloth and went about despondently" (vs. 28). When God saw this, He forgave Ahab for all his extreme wickedness. Then God softened the consequences, but He did not take them away. He told Ahab that he would still die, and his wife and descendants would still die, but He would not take the lives of his family until after Ahab's death.

Just because a spouse forgives the sins of the other, it doesn't mean that the sinner doesn't still have to get counseling or suffer some consequences. It may take years before a spouse can fully trust one who was involved in adultery or homosexuality. The one involved in adultery will have to prove himself worthy of trust. Where verbal or physical abuse has gone on, the love and closeness in that marriage will not be what it could have been, had the sin never taken place..

Responsibility Regarding the Sins of Family Members

Read Deuteronomy 13:6-11 and Ephesians 5:11 and answer the following questions:

1. What can be learned about the wife's responsibility regarding sin in the home from the way God punished Ananias and Sapphira? (Acts 5:1-11)
2. What can be learned about the wife's responsibility regarding sin in the home from the way God punished Achan and his whole family? (Joshua 7, especially verses 1, 11-13, 19-25)
3. What can be learned about the wife's responsibility regarding sin in the home from the way God punished Ahab and Jezebel and their sons? (1 Kings 21, especially verses 25-29)
4. A husband, who has temper tantrums and verbally abuses his family, is nominated for elder or deacon. (1 Timothy 3:2 [temperate], 4-5, 12) What is the wife's responsibility?
5. A husband, who has temper tantrums and verbally abuses his family, waits on the Lord's table and leads public prayer. (1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Peter 3:7) What is the wife's responsibility?
6. A husband, who has temper tantrums and verbally abuses his family, teaches teenage classes. (2 Timothy 2:15, 19-21) What is the wife's responsibility?
7. Looking back over your answers, summarize what you learned.
8. How can you apply what you've learned to your marriage and relationships with others?

Lesson 7: Abuses of Male Leadership

This lesson came about after one of my visits to the women's shelter. As I was talking to one of the counselors, when she found out I was a minister's wife, she said, "Somebody needs to write a book about all the false arguments these men make from the Bible to keep their wives submissive to wife abuse. So I said, "I guess I'm your lady. Tell me some of the arguments they use." I added that question to the questionnaire and I've been collecting arguments husbands make. These arguments come from the women's shelter, the questionnaire, and some of the books I've read. The Bible is a very powerful tool that these men use to keep their wives submissive to an abusive situation.

Misconceptions of Subjection

A. Men Know They Have Authority

1. Men in the World—Even non-Christian men use Bible arguments to keep their wives submissive. Just ask one of the workers at a women's shelter.

2. Men in the Church—**1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12; 1 Peter 5:3**

"Lord-it-over" means "to bring under one's power, to subject to one's self, to subdue, master, Acts 19:16, Genesis 1:28, b. to hold in subjection, to be master of, exercise lordship over, Matthew 22:25, Mark 10:42, 1 Peter 5:3" (Thayer, p. 332).

Men often don't study about how to use their authority. They just know it's there and try to assume it. A counselor at the shelter said they see more serious battering with Christian men than non-Christian. One shelter is set up just for Christian women.

Craig Vetter, the president of the company that makes Vetter motorcycle fairings, said, "Authority is a poor substitute for leadership." Basically, in these problems we find that men are defending their authority, but they are not being leaders.

B. Apostles Had Trouble with Authority—This problem is common with mankind.

1. Jesus Told Them He Would Die—**Matthew 16:21-22**: Long before His death, Jesus began teaching His apostles that He must die

2. Apostles Didn't Believe Jesus—Peter didn't believe Jesus and rebuked Him (Matthew 16:21-22) and the other apostles didn't believe either (Luke 18:31-34; John 16:16-20). Even after Jesus died, they still didn't believe what He told them about His death (John 20:9); Luke 24:21-22). Then after they saw Jesus had risen, they still expected a military kingdom (Acts 1:6).

3. Apostles Wanted to Know Who Was Greatest—**Matthew 18:1-10, Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48**: On the way to Capernaum, the apostles argued with one another which of them was the greatest. Jesus called a child to Himself and stood him in their midst to rebuke them.

4. Mother of Sons of Zebedee Asked for Authority—The mother of the sons of Zebedee asked for authority for her sons in Jesus' kingdom (Matthew 20:20-28). This made the other apostles indignant, and Jesus rebuked all the apostles for their attitude toward authority. Jesus said the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over their subjects, but it would not be so with them.

5. Apostles Argued at Passover Who Was Greatest—Even at the Last Supper, a dispute arose about who was the greatest. Jesus again told them about the Gentiles lording it over each other. So once again, Jesus is trying to teach them about humility and about serving. Then in John 13:1-17 Jesus washed their feet to teach them how to be humble.

6. Mary Understood Jesus Would Die—Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him teach (Luke 10:39-42). Then six days before the Passover while Jesus was dining in their home, she anointed the Lord's feet with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair (John 11:2; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8). When Judas Iscariot objected and said the money should be given to the poor, Jesus acknowledged that she had saved the perfume for his burial. Then He said, "I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." Mary learned the lesson about Jesus' death that the apostles couldn't learn because they were too busy arguing about who would be the greatest in the Lord's kingdom.

C. God and Jesus Set the Example—1 Corinthians 11:3: In the universal law of authority.

1. God Over Christ: This line of authority represents a tremendous amount of wisdom, for God is a God of order. For example, the divine relationship of God the Father to God the Son and to God the Holy Spirit rests upon authority and subjection. God exercises supreme authority, Christ submits to Him even to the point of dying for man's sins (Matthew 26:39; John 5:30; Hebrews 5:8), and the Holy Spirit submits to Christ (John 14:26, 16:13-14) and to God. This efficient organization results in a very powerful working unit that has blessed and continues to bless the world.

2. Christ Over Man—Matthew 28:18: Jesus delegates authority to man in the area of human opinion. Anything that can be proven from the Bible constitutes the authority of God and Jesus and is not within man's authority to change. Those under him must obey God rather than man and obey the higher authority when disagreements occur. These principles control the man's authority over the woman.

3. Man Over Woman—1 Corinthians 11:11-12: From the beginning of creation God determined that the man and woman would share a relationship of order, just as God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit share an orderly working relationship. God created men and women to work and to reach goals in their personal lives. Subjection and leadership simply allow them to become their most productive selves. The expression "in the lord" qualifies the woman's subjection. God's authority overrides the man's opinions in every instance of conflict.

D. Subjection/Leadership Show Devotion to God—For the man, loving leadership begins when he subjects himself to the will of God regardless of what his wife does. Neither subjection nor leadership reflect a person's love for the spouse or the spouse's love for him. Subjection and leadership demonstrate the individual's love for God.

1. Husband's Devotion to God—1 Peter 3:7: Peter told husbands that if they failed to treat their wives properly or didn't live with them according to knowledge, God would not hear their prayers. It doesn't matter how long or how beautifully a man prays or how many times he is called upon to lead public prayers. If he fails to treat his wife right, his prayers don't go any higher than the ceiling.

2. Wife's Devotion to God—Colossians 3:18

“Fitting” means “to have come up to, arrived at, to reach to, pertain to, what is due, duty” (Thayer, p. 45).

A wife doesn't practice subjection because she's not smart or because she's a coward or because she's inferior to her husband. Instead, a wife practices subjection to her husband because she loves God, and it is her “duty” to the Lord. In this way, submitting herself to her husband's opinions enables a wife to work with him and to accomplish what God created her to do. As a result, subjection becomes part of a woman's service to God and glorifies God as a good work.

E. Subjection/Leadership Promote Marital Success: When both subjection and leadership are practiced, personal happiness and a successful marriage results.

1. Husband Promotes Marital Success—Ephesians 5:28-30

“Nourish” means “1. nourish up to maturity; 2. nurture, bring up” (Thayer, p. 200).

“Cherish” means “1. properly to warm, keep warm; 2. cherish with tender love, foster with tender care” (Thayer, p. 282).

That little word “ought” refers to a debt owed to someone else. What debt? The debt a husband owes his wife to love her as his own body! The word “love” comes from the Greek word *agapeo* and refers to the husband's attitude of always acting in the best interest of his wife. “As his own body” means that a husband places his wife's needs on an equal plane with his own desires.

2. Wife Promotes Marital Success—1 Peter 3:3-5: While women fear subjection, men readily recognize the power it holds over them. Just as a husband loving his wife as his own body makes sense to women, being submissive makes sense to men. It makes him love and value her more. It makes her precious in his sight. In a normal marriage, men recognize that a wife's subjection brings out the best in them and makes them become better husbands.

F. Subjection/Leadership Portray the Heavenly Marriage

1. Husband, a Picture of Christ—Ephesians 5:23: Just exactly as Christ leads the church, God wants a husband to lead his wife. This means that when others look at a husband's relationship with his wife, they see a living picture of Christ's relationship with His bride, the church.

2. Wife, a Picture of the Church—Ephesians 5:24: Just exactly as the church submits to her husband Christ, so God wants a wife to submit to her own husband. Thus, when a person looks at a wife he should see a living picture of the church's obedience to Christ.

When the husband and wife are practicing true subjection and leadership, then their marriage is a powerful sermon to the world about the church and Jesus' relationship to the church. It's a powerful sermon about leadership and Jesus' love and concern and care for those under Him. Both the husband and wife preach a strong sermon to the world by the way they treat each other.

Lesson 8: False Concepts of Subjection

False Arguments Husbands Make

1. “I’m the Leader, I Can Do What I Want”

Argument: This means, “You’re a woman, you have no rights.” or “I have the right to make that decision, don’t I?” The husband demands an answer.

Answer: This selfish attitude violates all of Ephesians 5:22-33. It especially violates vs. 25-29. Essentially, God gives the husband no rights because God commands the husband to give up all his rights and do what is best for his wife. What is best for her may not be what he wants to do and it may not be what she wants. A husband is accountable to God for nourishing and cherishing his wife. A wife knows when she is cherished—she can feel it. Invariably, abused wives don’t feel cherished.

2. “Wives Are Supposed to Submit to Their Husbands”

Argument: “Look, I’m a Christian husband, and I try to live up to the standards of conduct set out in the Bible. I’m head of my home, and I bear the responsibility for what goes on there. I have a right to have my way—the Bible gives me that right. My wife has to submit to me and obey me. When she doesn’t do what I say, it is up to me to see that she does.” (Holly Wagner Green, *Turning Fear to Hope*, New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984, pp. 111-112.)

Answer: The Bible nowhere tells a husband to put his wife in subjection. The command is always to the wife to put herself in subjection, Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1. The husband’s responsibility is to lead in such a way that his wife will want to gladly submit to him, Ephesians 5:27-28.

3. “I Love You, That’s Why I Discipline You”

Argument: The husband justifies his abuse under the disguise of love.

Answer: 1 Corinthians 13 describes the kind of love (*agapeo*) a husband is commanded to have for his wife in Ephesians 5:25. Notice some of the characteristics of love: “love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous, love is not arrogant, love does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered...” Wife abuse and love have nothing in common.

4. “You Want to Be the Boss”

Argument: This argument is usually made when the wife disagrees with her husband about something. Instead of dealing with her objection, he judges her motives, “You just want to wear the pants” or “You just want to be the leader” or “You’re just a feminist.”

Answer: Judging motives is a sin (1 Corinthians 2:11). A woman can be submissive and still disagree with her husband. A wise leader gathers all the facts before he makes a decision. Since he’s obligated to

act in her best interest, he needs to know what her desires and opinions are, even if they disagree with his. In Colossians 3:19 God commands husbands to love their wives (act in their best interest) and not be embittered against them. Thus, a husband is not to resent having to do something for his wife because he is the leader. While a wife is not a feminist just because she disagrees with her husband, wife abuse creates feminists. It poisons women's minds against men.

5. "Promise Not to Tell Anyone"

Argument: This pledge is usually extracted after the husband has been exposed in some sin and is often coupled with the wife's feeling that she must be submissive to it.

Answer: Desiring to keep sin a secret is a characteristic of sin, not wise leadership (John 3:19-21; Ephesians 5:11). Submitting to this sin may take away the man's consequences and the opportunity to learn and correct his behavior. It also denies the wife the opportunity to get help with her problems (Galatians 6:2).

6. "You're Just Unforgiving."

Argument: This argument is usually given after the wife has forgiven her husband many times without anything changing. When she grows weary of forgiving, this is used to shame her back into subjection. This argument was used against one woman when she refused to take her small children around a relative who had been convicted of child molestation.

Answer: Acts 3:19; 26:20 says that when a person truly repents, he should "perform deeds appropriate to repentance." Just because a wife expects her husband to get help for overcoming his sin, it doesn't mean she doesn't forgive him. There is more to correcting a sin than seeking forgiveness. By expecting him to put effort into overcoming the sin, a wife acts in his best interest.

7. "If God Is so Great, Why Doesn't He Help You?"

Argument: This argument is used to tear down a woman's faith.

Answer: 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." Sometimes the way God helps people is to help them escape the temptation. Wives need to use the avenues of escape available to them.

8. "If You'd Been the Right Kind of Wife"

Argument: This argument blames the wife for the abuse. If she'd done better, the husband wouldn't have abused her.

Answer: Colossians 3:19 gives the husband the personal responsibility for keeping his behavior right before God even when he is tempted to be embittered against his wife. It is not the wife's responsibility to make her husband assume his proper leadership. God has already shown in the account of Adam and Eve that He doesn't accept a husband blaming his wife as an excuse.

9. "You Are Only My Helpmate, You Meet My Needs First"

Argument: This argument reflects extreme selfishness and a lack of understanding of why God created women.

Answer: God created the woman as a helper that man is to hold in honor (1 Peter 3:7). While God created the woman as a specialized helper for man, God also warned the man about being selfish and inconsiderate of her needs in Ephesians 5:33. Indeed, since the man is to place the woman's needs above his own, he has his argument backwards. He should say, "You are a helper meet for me, so I must meet your needs first."

10. "You're Not Interpreting the Bible Properly"

Argument: This argument is used when a wife tries to show from the Bible that her husband is mistreating her or perhaps, he is misapplying scriptures to her.

Answer: 2 Timothy 2:15 says that we are to "handle accurately the word of truth." Just because a husband says he is using the scriptures accurately, that doesn't make it so. He should be able to study with his wife and show her in an intelligent manner if she is misapplying it. Likewise, he needs to keep in mind Psalm 119:160, which says the sum of God's word is truth. If he is trying to bind all the passages that teach the wife her role while ignoring the ones that apply to the husband, then he has neither the sum of God's word nor is he handling accurately the scriptures.

11. "People in the Bible Used Alcohol for Medicine"

Argument: "I can use alcohol because people in the Bible used it for medicinal purposes and I have a headache."

Answer: 1 Peter 4:3 lists three different types and levels of drinking sins: drunkenness, carousals, and drinking parties.

"Carousals" means "a revel, carousal, i.e. a nocturnal and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows...feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry."

"Drinking parties" means "the drinking bout, the banquet, the symposium, not of necessity excessive (Genesis 19:3; 2 Samuel 3:20; Esther 6:14), but giving opportunity for excess (1 Samuel 25:36)."

Proverbs 20:1: "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whoever is intoxicated [deceived—AS] thereby is not wise."

Proverbs 23:29-30: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine."

Wine in the Bible is not the same as today. The Arabians invented distilled spirits in the 9th and 10th centuries. Wine was fermented grape juice that was mixed with water 20:1; 8:1; and usually 3:1. It would take 22 glasses of 3:1 wine to equal 2 martinis. In the Bible "wine" always refers to mixed fermented grape juice and water. "Strong drink" refers to undiluted fermented grape juice. Only barbarians drank their wine unmixed. (Robert H. Stein, "Wine Drinking in New Testament Times," *Christianity Today* (June 20, 1975).

12. "It's None of Your Business"

Argument: This argument is used when the husband stays out late at night or does something else that seems questionable to the wife.

Answer: Matthew 18:15-17 says that when a brother sins, it is the business of the ones who know about it. If a wife suspects that her husband is involved in sin, it is her business. If he's committing adultery, squandering the family finances, verbally or physically abusing her or the children, harboring bitterness, etc., it is her business—it affects her and the marriage.

13. “Judge Not That You Be Not Judged”

Argument: This is a favorite line of nearly anyone involved in sin. The sinner thinks it is guaranteed to shut the complainer up.

Answer: Matthew 7:1-5 condemns hypocritical judgment. When a person has sin in his/her life, he cannot see clearly to point out the sin in someone else's life. This is one reason it is so important to keep one's life right with God. At the same time, Matthew 18:15-17, demands that a person make judgments in regard to sin. 1 Peter 3:16 tells Christians to “keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

14. “I Discovered God”

Argument: A husband stood beneath his wife's window at the women's shelter and waving a Bible. He said, “I've discovered God.” His wife said, “Oh look, he's really changed, it'll be ok now.”

Answer: What has he discovered about God? Has he discovered how to be sanctified? (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 7:14) What has changed? Has he been to counseling?

False Arguments Wives Make

1. “My Husband Isn't a Christian”

Argument: What the wife means is, “I don't have the right to expect proper treatment from my husband because he's not a Christian and following the Bible doesn't mean anything to him.”

Answer: Romans 1:28-32 shows that whether or not a person is a Christian, God still expects everyone to obey basic laws of human kindness. Everyone, whether Christian or not, has a strong sense of justice and fair play. The basic difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is the Christian has access to forgiveness for his sins. The non-Christian does not have access to that forgiveness.

2. “I'm Gossiping If I Ask for Help”

Argument: Women are afraid to get help because they don't want to be guilty of gossiping.

Answer: There is a lot of difference in just telling everyone about a husband's sins and in seeking help for dealing with them. Christians enjoy the blessing of being able to go to others for help with their burdens (Galatians 6:2). One of the qualifications of an older woman who is able to train young women is that she is not a malicious gossip.

In fact, after a wife confronts her husband with his sins, if he will not repent and get help for overcoming the sins, she is obligated to go to others in an effort to restore her husband (Matthew 18:15-17). By refusing to repent, the husband chooses how many people end up knowing about his sins.

3. “I Don’t Want to Ruin His Reputation”

Argument: Sometimes women think their husbands are such good spiritual workers, they don’t want to hurt their influence in the church by exposing their sins.

Answer: 1 Peter 3:7 says that if a husband is not treating his wife right, God doesn’t hear his prayers. Likewise, 1 Timothy 2:8 says that men are “to pray, lifting up holy [sanctified] hands, without wrath and dissension.” A man who mistreats his wife is not qualified to lead prayer or to partake in any other religious service. It is a mockery to God when he attempts to. The wife needs to be careful that she does not participate in his sin and encourage him by keeping silent.

4. “It’s My Job to Be Submissive”

Argument: Women use this argument to submit to sin in their husband’s life.

Answer: Colossians 3:18: “As is fitting in the Lord” refers to the woman’s “duty” to the Lord. A woman is submissive as part of her service to God. God’s laws always override the husband’s when there is a conflict. Yes, it’s the woman’s job to be submissive, but she’s to be submissive to God first.

False Arguments Preachers, Elders, and Helpers Make

1. “If Husband Gets too Bad, God Will Take His Life Like Nabal’s”

Argument: “When she [Abigail] told him what she had done, he suffered a stroke of God, and in ten days he was dead. Did God, looking down, see Nabal’s unyielding heart and take his life to spare Abigail any more heartache? Surely so. And so it will be, the Scripture seems to indicate, for any godly woman who obeys lovingly, from the heart, every command of God and her husband. If he will not change his ways and be worthy of such devotion, then God, it seems, will remove the obstruction.” (Elizabeth Rice Handford, *Me? Obey Him?* [Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1972 (a Baptist publication)], pp. 48-49.)

Answer: This whole argument is based on the story of Abigail and Nabal. Yet it misapplies the story in 1 Samuel 25. Abigail went against Nabal’s expressed wishes. She was not submissive in the way this author views subjection. Abigail was submissive to God first and Nabal second.

2. “The Wife Submits Like Slaves Submit”

Argument: “Consider the divine instructions regarding mistreatment, given to those in another binding relationship requiring submission...Master—slave (1 Peter 2:18-20). Servants, like Christ, were to submissively endure even when buffeted.” (Unpublished preacher’s outline.)

Answer: The relationship of the master to his slave was closely regulated in the Old Testament. For example, Exodus 21:7-11 explains the rights of a slave who was also a wife. She had the right to expect three things: (1) food, (2) clothing, and (3) conjugal rights. If the man would not do these three things for her, she was to be granted freedom. The basic difference between a slave who was a wife (known as a

concubine) and a free woman who became a wife was that the free woman had a lot more rights and privileges.

In addition, beatings and mistreatment of slaves was regulated (Exodus 21:20-21, 26-27; Deuteronomy 23:15-16). Leviticus 24:19-20 gave the regulations for injuries to a free person, in that case “just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.” A free wife enjoyed the protection of her family. If her husband mistreated her, then her father and brothers had the obligation to treat him exactly the same way. God provided restitution for both the slaves and the wives when they were mistreated.

3. “The Wife Suffers as Christ Suffered”

Argument: “In 1 Peter 2:21-24 Peter elaborates on the subject of Christ as our example in such suffering, who was not reviling or threatening but ‘trusting himself to one who judges righteously.’ In the following verse he directs this example to the wife....As fear did not stop Christ from submitting to unjust and cruel treatment, it was not to stop servants. Wives were to submit ‘*in the same way,*’ without fear.” (Unpublished preacher’s outline)

Answer: No one advocates that women revile or threaten their husbands when their husbands mistreat them. These things are clearly sins. What is advocated is that the wives not commit sin with their husbands just as Christ “committed no sin.” Women who listen to harangues, submit to physical abuse, etc. are participating in their husband’s sins as accessories to assault and battery (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Their husbands find encouragement from this and become even more steeped in their sins even though the wives do not intend to encourage them.

Such wives need to be like Christ who exposed sins whenever He had the chance and expose their husbands’ sins (Ephesians 5:11). Jesus did not passively submit to all mistreatment. For example, when an angry mob tried to throw Him down a cliff, He escaped (Luke 4:28-30). He submitted only when it served a purpose, such as the Father’s eternal purpose that He die for the sins of mankind.

4. “It’s Not as Bad as It Seems”

Argument: “While experience indicates that claims of mistreatment are often exaggerated or fabricated, still, some are true. Experience teaches that if partners get mad enough, they can come up with pretty good stories, whether true or not. (Many need to be reminded that the Bible requires that accusations be ‘established’—Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1-2.) Real circumstances can be presented in a way to make them appear much worse than they actually are.” (Unpublished preacher’s outline)

Answer: Hebrews 5:14: The mature have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. This argument comes across as naive. Experience indicates that husbands and wives usually try to cover up sins in the home when they ask for help. They minimize the problems rather than exaggerate them. Even when specific questions are asked, they may hide facts and try to make it look better than it is.

5. “Just Be Submissive and Love Him”

Argument: When wives ask for help, this is often the answer given to them. Frequently, their husbands are not even approached about being in sin.

Answer: Psalm 119:160 says the sum of God’s word is truth. The man needs to understand his role just as much as the woman does. If he is abusing his authority, it really doesn’t matter how much his wife submits to him. She won’t be able to please him no matter how hard she tries.

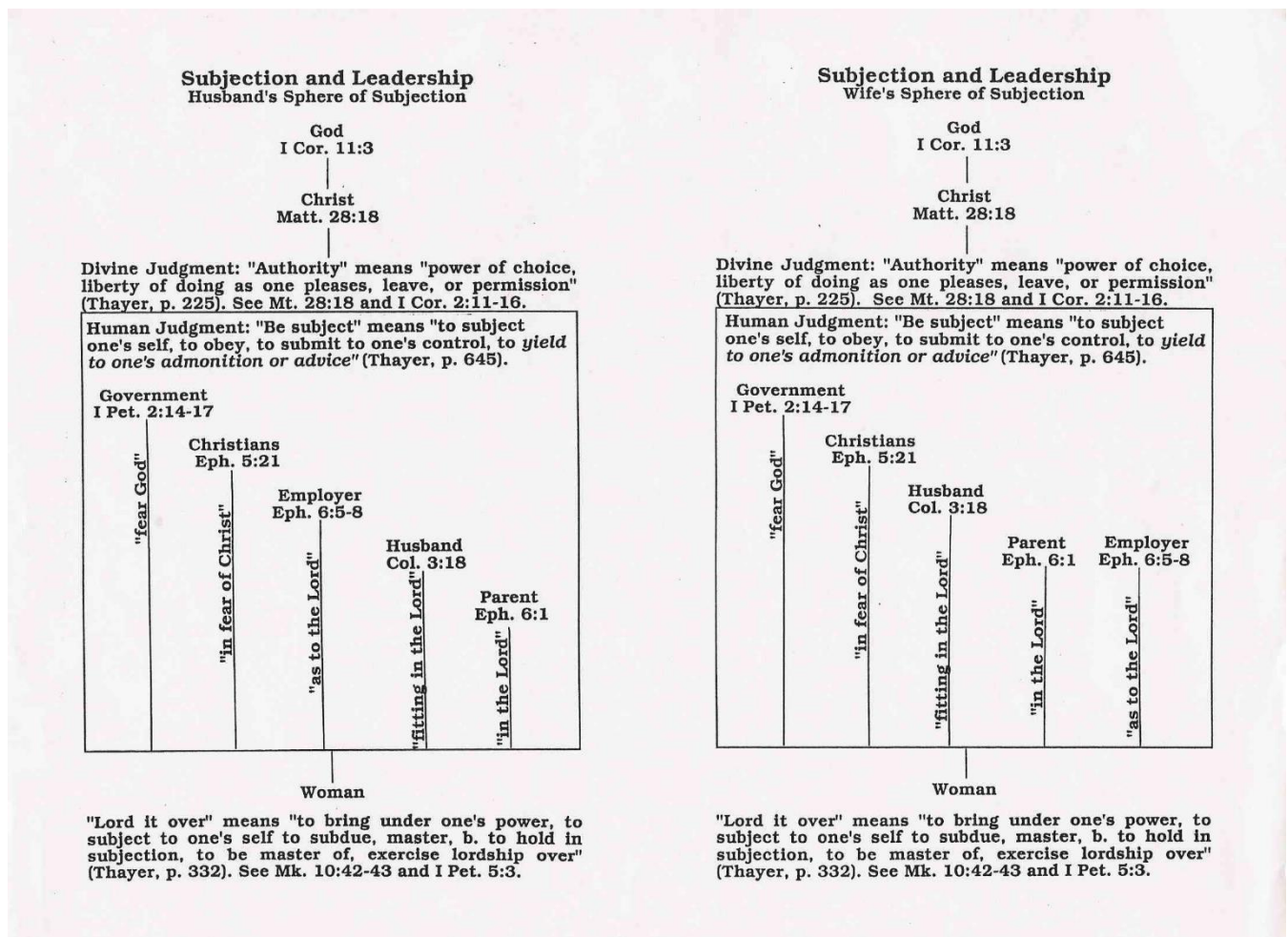
Conclusion

Shameful for Wicked to Quote Scriptures—Psalm 50:16-21: God says the wicked do not have the right to tell anyone else how to obey the Bible. They don’t even have the right to quote scriptures. God specifically names several sins that take place in the home: adultery, letting the mouth loose in evil, speaking against someone, slander, etc.

God Desires Mercy, Not Sacrifice

Matthew 9:13: Jesus many times said that to treat others right was more important than attending the right church or doing all the right acts of worship. Wife abuse that seeks to find justification in the scriptures is the highest form of mockery to God.

Peter stressed that this same principle also applied to the marriage relationship in 1 Peter 3:7. When a man mistreats his wife, God refuses to hear his prayers.



Lesson 9: Wedlock vs. Deadlock

Personality Defects that Make a Person Prone to Problems

First key to solving problems is looking to ourselves: “What kind of person am I? Am I the cause of the problem or is the other individual really the cause of the problem?” The following characteristics make a person become “problem-prone.”

A. A Touchy Person Is Super Sensitive—Ecclesiastes 7:20-22:

“Sins” means “to miss, hence to sin.”

“Take seriously” or “heed” are “used widely for the feelings, the will, and even the intellect, the heart.”

“Curse” means “to be (cause, make) light, trifling, make bright, bring into contempt, light (-ly esteem).”

Not talking about someone who walks in sin, but someone who slips occasionally. Don’t wear your feelings on your sleeve. Give other people the right to make mistakes and slips, because you make mistakes, too.

B. A Fool’s Vexation Is Known at Once—Proverbs 12:16:

“Fool” means “stupid, silly, wicked, vile person, perverse.”

“Vexation” or “wrath” means “to trouble; by implication to grieve, rage, be indignant:—be angry, be grieved, take indignation, provoke (to anger, unto wrath), have sorrow, vex” (Strong, p. 56).

“Conceals” means “to plump, i.e. fill up the hollows, by implication to cover (with clothing or secrecy) clad self, close, conceal, cover” (Strong, p. 56).

“Dishonor” or “shame” means “confusion, dishonor, reproach, shame; from a word meaning to be light (as implied in rapid motion), but be (causing to hold) in contempt:—base, contempt, despise, lightly esteem, set light, seem vile” (Strong, p. 103).

You don’t have to wonder what irritates him, because he tells you. What we get mad over shows whether we are a wise individual or a foolish one.

C. Jealousy Causes Problems—Proverbs 27:4; James 4:2:

Wives are jealous because husband gets to go to work. Husbands are jealous because wives get to stay home.

D. Selfishness or Not Getting One’s Way Causes Fights—James 4:2-3; Proverbs 23:6-8: (Tim LaHaye’s book, *Understanding the Male Temperament*, has a good section on selfishness.)

E. A Guilty Conscience Makes One Ripe for Problems—Genesis 4:3-7; Proverbs 28:18:

F. The Evil Person Finds No Good—Proverbs 21:10: A person may have such an evil disposition that nothing anyone does pleases him.

“Typically, husbands blame their wives for the violence. ‘If only she would change,’ the batterer says. Out of a bottomless need for control, however, he may want an endless list of changes. As the school teacher admits, ‘If I said “Jump” and she did, then I’d say, “Jump higher.”’” (Claire Safran, “Why Men Hurt the Women They Love,” *Reader’s Digest*, January 1986, p. 78.)

G. Drinking Causes Contentions and Complaining—Proverbs 23:29-35: When a person drinks, nothing anyone does pleases him.

H. A Crooked Mind Finds No Good—Proverbs 17:20:

“Crooked” or “froward” means “distorted; hence false:—crooked, froward, perverse” (Strong, p. 91).

“Good” used in the widest sense.

“Perverse” or “perverted” means “to turn about or over; by implication to change, overturn, return, pervert” (Strong, p. 33).

He can’t see the good in things; he perverts the good. This may be due to excessive perfectionism where instead of focusing on the 95% good in a situation, he focuses on the 5% that is lacking and makes himself and everyone else unhappy. This is called the “red pencil mentality,” referring to teachers who always keep their red pencils out to check everything you did wrong. People who have a “red pencil mentality” go through life putting a red mark by everything that’s wrong. They never see the things that are right. If we have this type of attitude, God says we have a crooked mind and are perverted in our language.

This type of person is continually surrounded by problems. And they are continually causing problems for other people. This is a powerful personality type that often influences others to be more like it. Easy to start checking off everything the perfectionist does as a defense mechanism.

I. A Griping Disposition Causes Problems—1 Corinthians 10:10; Philippians 2:14: One of the chief causes of burnout is griping—nurses, teachers, Christians, etc. getting together and griping. Griping is a habit that sometimes whole families get involved in. Griping becomes the family dinner conversation, or maybe it’s a game. They may be third and fourth generation gripers. Griping is contagious.

J. Scoffers Promote Contention, Strife, and Dishonor—Proverbs 22:10:

“Scoffer” means “properly to make mouths at, i.e. to scoff; hence (from the effort to pronounce a foreign language) to interpret:—have in derision, ambassador, make a mock, mocker, scorn, (-er, -ful)” (Strong, p. 59).

“Contention” means the same as Proverbs 17:14, “a contest or quarrel” (Strong, p. 62).

“Strife” means “to rule, by implication to judge (as umpire); also to strive.”

“Reproach” or “dishonor” means the same as Proverbs 12:16, “lightly esteem, despise, etc.”

We call this a sarcastic attitude, someone who can take anything and twist it around and turn it into something else. It isn't good-natured humor but turning things into ridicule. This is a way couples fight publicly and think that no one knows they are fighting. The husband may make a sarcastic remark about his wife. Then she may make one back at him. If everyone laughs, then the couple really get to going digging at each other. Other couples may think this is humorous and get pulled into the sarcastic game and start ridiculing their spouses. However, if they knew the first couple well, they'd know that the husband or wife was really using humor to disguise the criticism of the mate.

K. Man Who Hardens His Heart Falls into Calamity—Proverbs 28:14; 29:1:

“Hardens” emphasizes, “first, the subjective effect exerted by an overly heavy yoke, which is hard to bear, and secondarily, the rebellious resistance of oxen to the yoke...like rebellious oxen” (Theological Wordbook, p. 2085).

“Calamity” or “mischief” comes from a root word which means “properly to spoil (literally by breaking to pieces); figuratively to make (or be) good for nothing, i.e. bad (physically, socially or morally):—afflict, break (down, in pieces)” (Strong, p. 110). It “denotes physical injury or times of distress...but mostly denotes unethical or immoral activity against other people, whether by speech or by practice” (Theological Wordbook, pp. 854-855).

L. Depression Makes Bad Days—Proverbs 15:15:

“Afflicted” means “depressed in mind or circumstances” (Strong, p. 90).

“Bad” or “evil” means “bad, evil:—adversity, affliction, bad, calamity.”

“Cheerful” or “merry” means “good (used in wide sense):—beautiful, best, better, bountiful, cheerful” (Strong, p. 45).

M. Lack of Gratitude Causes Unhappiness—Philippians 4:6, 11-12: Marriage is sanctified by gratitude (1 Timothy 4:3-4), being thankful that we even have a husband or wife to have to work problems out with. Widows know this.

Even if the children are sick, thank God for medicine and that children don't die like they used to. Thank Him for a washer even when it breaks down because you don't have to wash on a rock like women used to. Give God thanks for a husband who is a hard worker even if he forgets to call when he's going to be late. With an attitude like that, what can the world do to you?

N. Pride Brings Strife—Proverbs 13:10:

“Pride” or “presumption” means “arrogance:—presumptuously, pride, proud” (Strong, p. 34).

It's hard to help children overcome pride. When the parents try to teach them about life, they think, “What do Mom and Dad know?” Children have a lot of confidence in their opinions. If they don't outgrow this, it causes all kinds of marriage problems.

O. Listening to Gossip Makes One Sensitive—Proverbs 18:8; 26:20: Even if a person thinks gossip is not affecting him/her, gossip creates suspicions about others.

P. Disregard for Reproof Produces Hate—Proverbs 9:8-9: Wise people love those who correct them; scoffers hate those who correct them—they begin to look for things to criticize in the one who corrected them.

Q. Contentious People Kindle Strife—Proverbs 26:21: A contentious individual works *against* others instead of *with* them. These people often love verbal sparing.

R. Meddlers Promote Problems—Proverbs 26:17:

“Meddlers” means “to cross over, used widely of any transition” (Strong, p. 85).

This is codependency—trying to solve other people’s problems for them or offering advice when it isn’t requested. Sometimes parents meddle in their married children’s problems and try to solve their problems for them.

S. Prejudice Creates Problems—James 2:1-4, 9:

T. Impatience Makes One Sensitive—Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-14: If a person is too busy or unorganized, they may snap at others, not because of anything the other person has done, but simply because they’re not good time managers. The woman of great price had her life in balance and a good disposition.

U. Hot-tempered People Abound in Transgression—Proverbs 29:22; 22:24-25:

“Angry” means “properly the nose or nostril; hence the face, and occasionally a person; also (from the rapid breathing in passion) ire:—anger (angry).” It comes from a primary root which means “to breathe hard, i.e. be enraged:—be angry (displeased)” (Strong, p. 15). It means “anger from the dilation of the nostrils and is the most widely used of the six words for anger” (Theological Wordbook, p. 808).

“Hot-tempered” or “furious” means “heat; figuratively anger, poison (from its fever):—anger, bottles, hot displeasure, furious (-ly, -ry), heat, indignation, poison, rage, wrath (-ful)” (Strong, p. 40). This is one of the strongest words for anger and “refers to a burning and consuming wrath” (Theological Wordbook, p. 808).

Both the man given to anger and the hot-tempered man create problems. The hot-tempered man abounds in transgression. He commits more sin in a few minutes than he can take care of in hours.

Lesson 10: More Character Defects

How People React to Problems—Proverbs 16:25

“Way” means “a course of life or mode of action” (Strong, p. 31).

“Right” means “straight, convenient, just, equity, pleasant, prosperous” (Strong, p. 53).

“Death” means “death, naturally or violent, figuratively pestilence ruin” (Strong, p. 64).

Men and women know how to make a mountain out of a molehill. Thus, their way of solving problems often makes them worse and leads to the destruction of the relationship. Humankind often reacts to problems rather than solving them.

A. Problems Always Start Out Small as a Minor Irritation—Proverbs 17:14:

“Strife” means “a contest or quarrel:—brawling, contention (-ous), discord, strife” (Strong, p. 62).

“Leave” means “properly to pound, i.e. smite, reject, let alone” (Strong, p. 78).

“Quarrel” or “contention” means “A contest, grapple, wrangle, i.e. hold a controversy” (Strong, p. 108).

“Breaks out” or “meddled with” means “to be obstinate:—(inter-) meddle (with)” (Strong, p. 27).

Proverbs 17:9: It was an oversight; therefore, overlook it. It was done through forgetfulness; therefore, forget it. It made nothing of you; therefore, make nothing of it.

B. The Person Becomes Deceitful—Proverbs 26:23-28; 10:18; 27:6; 16:6: The tone of voice, the face, and the posture all change. The spouse notices these things and isn’t always fooled by claims that nothing is wrong. The offended party may give the silent treatment.

1. Becomes Vulnerable and Easily Offended—Proverbs 18:19: Once a person is offended, it becomes impossible for the offender to do anything right in his eyes. The offender may not even know what he’s done wrong.

2. Over-reacts to Simple Irritations—James 1:13-20: They draw extreme conclusions such as, “You don’t love me” or “You don’t care” or “You don’t appreciate me” or “You never...” or “You always...” They keep track of wrongs. James says, “Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.”

C. The Person Begins to Judge Motives—1 Corinthians 2:11; 4:5: They focus on “why” something was done rather than “what” was done as God did with Adam and Eve. God knows people by their motives; we know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:20). To the degree that a couple judges motives, to that same degree the marriage problems are magnified.

Some people are proud of their ability to judge motives. They say, “I’m really a good judge of character. No one can put anything over on me.”

1. Resentfulness and Bitterness Grow—Hebrews 12:15: Bitterness completely changes a person and turns him into another person so that he cannot perceive events accurately.

2. Blames Others or Things for Problems—Proverbs 16:2; Genesis 3:12-13: Sometimes women blame their husbands by saying, “I would make a better man than my husband does. I’ve got better financial ability than he has or better such and such.” Husbands and wives often try to blame others or things rather than holding the mate responsibility for their conduct.

D. This Starts a Chain-reaction War—James 4:1-3; Proverbs 30:11-14: At this point, they no longer act like adults, but start to act like children or babies, continually fussing and fighting. Severe problems can arise when a couple is in childish behavior mode: threaten suicide, divorce, beatings, etc. This war takes many forms:

1. Quarrels—Proverbs 12:18; 15:28; 18:21: Verbal abuse may escalate. The couple may say so many harmful things to each other in just a few minutes that may take years to get over.

2. Ridicule—Proverbs 26:18-19; 29:9: When someone is offended by the ugly things someone else says, the person may defend himself by saying, “I was only joking. You’re just too sensitive.” Yet Proverbs compares him to the madman that goes out and randomly kills other people.

3. Hardened—Proverbs 21:29:

“Bold” or “hardeneth” means “to be stout (literally or figuratively):—harden, impudent, prevail, strengthen (self), be strong” (Strongs, p. 87).

When husbands and wives are hurt, they are tempted to build a wall around themselves so they can’t be hurt again. They don’t fuss and fight, they just emotionally divorce each other and just exist with each other. The silent treatment is one way people harden themselves.

4. Murder—James 4:1-2: Violence that can eventually lead to murder may become a way of life: 75% of murderers are a family member, 53% of the murders are committed by men, and 47% are committed by women.

E. The Person Seeks Comfort from Others—Proverbs 12:15; 15:12: The person seeks comfort because he/she really feels that he/she is innocent. A woman may rationalize, “Yes, I’m not letting him have sex with me, but he hasn’t been spending time with me.” To “rationalize” is to “tell a ration of lies.” She feels justified in her misdeeds. The person usually seeks out the weakest, worst person who will be sympathetic and help appease the conscience.

2 Timothy 4:3-4: People nearly always seek comfort from someone who will agree with them rather than point out what they are doing wrong because of their self-centered attitude.

Proverbs 15:12; 18:13, 17: They don’t go to the wise who could possibly help them.

1. Pour Out Grievances—James 3:6: This makes the problem worse because hashing something over only ingrains it in the mind and makes the person more sensitive than ever. They may take events that happened ten or twenty years ago and tell them as if they happened last week.

2. Share Suspicions and Motives—Proverbs 18:13, 17: Unless a person asks what another person thinks, he doesn't have any way to determine what his motives are (1 Corinthians 2:11, 4:5). The person may even think the spouse is crazy and find comfort for this suspicion from the one he/she goes to. This characteristic is very common in cases of wife abuse or alcohol use.

3. Avoid Talking to Spouse—Matthew 18:15-18: The other person may not even know there is a problem. Yet they avoid talking to the very person he/she has the problem with.

4. Comforter Recommends Special Help—1 Corinthians 6:1-6: Christians are to find a wise Christian to help them instead of going to unbelievers. However, many Christians do the opposite.

F. Finally Gets Profession Help—Proverbs 12:5; Psalm 1:

1. Psychiatrist—The person may choose to go to a psychiatrist or want the spouse to go. Yet, many psychiatrists have problems of their own and can't give good, sound advice (2 Timothy 3:1-6). Many of them advocate immorality or selfishness as a means of solving marriage problems. For example, they may say, "You're henpecked. Have an affair and you won't be henpecked anymore." Or "Wait until he leaves town, then draw all the money out of the bank, and go live with your lover." They often aren't committed to saving the marriage.

2. Doctor—God through Paul tells Christians to deal with their problems and not let the sun go down on them (Ephesians 4:25-27). Many doctors give tranquilizers to help people solve their problems. A person may have a real psychosomatic illness and need to deal with it spiritually (Psalm 32:3-4; 38:3-11; James 5:14-16) as well as medically.

3. Lawyer—The person may go to a lawyer just to find out what his/her rights are. The lawyer's specialty may be divorce and he recommends that he/she take the situation in hand by filing for divorce and get a huge property settlement and control of the children.

4. Last Resort: Preacher, Elders, or Mature Christian—This should help because the Christian has genuine concern for the person and the marriage and believes in one man and one woman for life (Proverbs 13:20). The Christian defends values, chastity, justice, self-control, etc. The Christian has much to offer in helping the person grow to maturity and to overcome their problems, rather than encouraging them to run away from them. However, this often does not work because the person goes to the preacher or elder to make their mate straighten up. Titus 2:1-15: The preacher or elders should be able to help, but frequently this fails because of wrong attitudes:

a. Wrong Attitude Toward Others—James 4:3: James says their prayers aren't answered when they ask for the wrong motives—selfishness. Christians should ask how they can please God, not how God can please them.

b. Wrong Attitude Toward Self—James 1:22-24: James says that if Christians do not obey the will of God, it does them no good. They are like a man who looks in the mirror and then forgets what he looks like. Basically, they are dishonest with themselves. People who admit what they do wrong can solve their problems. But as long as a person denies that he has the problem, he can't solve it.

c. Wrong Attitude Toward God—James 1:25: A person achieves success only when he obeys God and does not try to change God's laws to suit his own personal ambitions. A person has to put

God first to solve problems. If he/she has the attitude, “Make him/her straighten up and then I will,” the person is doomed to failure.

Man Has a Choice

- 1. Man Can Resist the Devil—1 Peter 5:8**
- 2. Or Man Can Resist His Wife—1 Peter 3:7**

H. Woman Has a Choice

- 1. She Can Resist the Devil—1 Peter 5:8**
- 2. Or Woman Can Resist Her Husband—1 Peter 3:1-6**

Study Exercise

Answer all question in your own words:

1. When are problems the easiest to solve? Why?
2. How does a guilty conscience cause problems?
3. How does griping magnify problems?
4. How does excessive perfectionism cause unhappiness?
5. How can listening to gossip make a person be sensitive?
6. Does impatience cause problems? Why?
7. What should a person do if he has a quick temper?
8. How can ridicule between a husband and wife be a way of fighting?
9. How can a simple irritation lead to murder?
10. Why is talking to people not involved in the problem a sin?
11. Will talking to others make the problem better or worse? Why? Who should we talk to?
12. Can people fight without saying a word? Name several ways.
13. Who always starts the fights, men or women? Why?
14. How does pride cause problems?
15. Why does James say a person often fails to solve his problems?
16. Is there anything in the lesson with which you disagree? If so explain in detail giving scriptures for your reasons.

Research Exercise

Read about the following people. You can do this exercise with your spouse by dividing the reading and then discussing what you learned.

1. Sarah: Genesis 16:2-8; 21:1-12
2. Cain: Genesis 4:3-7
3. The Ungrateful Son: Proverbs 30:11-14
4. The Woman of Great Price: Proverbs 31:25-31
5. David: 2 Samuel 11:1-12:24
6. Saul: 1 Samuel 15:9-24; 18:1-20:33

Answer these questions about each:

1. Did they solve their problem or make it worse?
2. Based on this lesson, list the sin, or sins, they committed.

Lesson 11: How to Fight Fair

Three Levels of Sin

Proper communication helps a spouse approach the mate about sin in his/her life. Without good communication, all problems are magnified. But first, the mate needs to determine the level of sin in the marriage. All sin does not respond to the same techniques.

Jude 22-23: The first two parts of this lesson deals with facing the husband's anger in the first two levels of sin. "III. Face the Spouse's Anger" deals with the third level of sin.

1. Some Who Are Doubting—These people are just getting involved in sin and may not know any better. Facing anger at this level is relatively easy compared to the other two levels.

2. Some in the Fire—These people are more involved in sin and may take more drastic measures to snatch them out. The spouse still has a good chance for success in saving the marriage.

3. Some Wear a Polluted Garment—These people are overcome by their sin—slaves to it. Once the anger has progressed to this level, the wife and possibly the children may be in danger of being killed. Whatever a wife does, she must consider that possibility and protect her and her children. Four thousand women are killed every year through wife abuse. Some possibilities for women whose husbands are in the third level will be discussed later.

The How to Fight Fair Rules Proverbs 1:3; Ephesians 4:26-27

"Angry" means "to be provoked to anger, be angry, be wroth" (Thayer, p. 452).

"Opportunity" means "place, indefinite; a. portion of space viewed in reference to its occupancy, or as appropriated to a thing" (Thayer, p. 490).

Just one person knowing the rules of a fair fight can completely change the course of a fight. By refusing to fight dirty, one person can usually force the other person to fight fair, too.

1. Do Your Thing to Cool Off—Proverbs 15:1; 25:15:

"Ruler" or "prince" comes from a word "that is a military term. It signifies the man responsible for recruiting, an administrator in the army" (*Theological Wordbook*, p. 807).

Ecclesiastes 10:4:

"Ruler" is from the same word that is translated "rule" in Genesis 3:16 where the husband shall "rule" over you. It is a general word for authority over someone. (*Theological Wordbook*, p. 534)

2. Argue with the Right Person—Matthew 18:15-17:

“This means that we should argue with the person we are really angry with and not pick on an innocent party. For instance, if you are angry with your boss, don’t take it out on your wife. If it’s your wife that’s the problem, don’t take it out on the kids or the dog. A definite sign that you’re arguing with the wrong person is when your anger is all out of proportion to the actual offense.

“Some psychologists refer to this type of arguing as ‘dumping’—piling your frustrations, angers, and hostilities on others, taking out your built-up wrath on innocent people. Children are often victims in this game of ‘dumping.’ They are scolded, spanked, or criticized, sometimes because their parents are frustrated with others, not really with them.

“Dumping is cruel, and it allows a person to escape a confrontation with the real issue at hand. It resolves nothing.” (David L. Antion, “Fighting Fair in Love and Marriage,” *The Plain Truth*, August 1976, p. 18.)

3. Argue About the Right Thing—Ephesians 4:25:

“Falsehood” means “a lie; conscious and intentional falsehood; in a broad sense, whatever is not what it professes to be” (Thayer, p. 676).

“Truth” means “1. universally what is true in any matter under consideration (opposed to what is feigned, fictitious, false)” (Thayer, p. 26).

“A husband may criticize his wife’s housekeeping when he really may be upset with her lovemaking. Or a wife may criticize her husband about always being at work, when, in reality, she is hurt because she doesn’t feel he gives her enough attention.

“When we argue, we need to carefully examine ourselves to find out how we feel and exactly what is the source of our irritation. A husband should ask himself, ‘Am I really angry about my wife’s housekeeping? Is that really the issue? Or could it be something else?’” (Antion, *ibid*, p. 17.)

Avoid side issues. When a person begins to lose an argument, it’s easy to pick a small detail where the spouse wasn’t completely accurate and to build a whole case around it. You may need to rehearse in front of the mirror the phrase, “You’re missing the point. That was just an illustration that wasn’t accurate to the finest detail.” Then refuse to discuss the side issue. Repeat however many times necessary, “You’re missing the point.”

4. Argue at the Right Time—1 Samuel 25:19, 36-37: Abigail had a desperate marriage, but she knew how to choose the right time for a discussion. She didn’t try to talk to Nabal while he was drunk, but waited until he was sober. Choosing the right time can mean the difference between a friendly discussion and a heated argument.

5. Don’t Bring Up Past Fights—Colossians 3:12-13: “Many people have trouble loving and doing loving actions because they don’t feel like forgiving. Jay Adams suggests that forgiveness is not a feeling, but a promise or commitment. It is a promise or commitment to three things:

1. I will not use it against my mate in the future.
2. I will not talk to others about my mate.
3. I will not dwell on it myself.” (LaHaye, *Anger Is a Choice*, p. 116.)

6. Avoid Name Calling—Ephesians 4:29:

“Unwholesome” means “1. rotten, putrid; 2. corrupted by age and no longer fit for use, worn out, hence in general, of poor quality, bad, unfit for use, worthless” (Thayer, p. 568).

“Edification” means “(the act of) building, building up, edifying, edification, i.e. the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness” (Thayer, p. 440).

If the husband appeals to his authority as his right to fight dirty, remind him that Ephesians 5:28 says, “So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies.” Remember, “ought” means that the husband owes a debt to his wife to treat her like he wants to be treated. Tell him, “I can’t believe that you really want me to call you every dirty name in the book.” Then refuse to go back to the basic cause of the argument until this aspect of fair fighting is settled. If necessary, tell him, “You don’t deserve to be talked to the way you are talking to me, and I don’t deserve to be talked to that way either.” Even if a woman is married to a man who is not a Christian, she doesn’t deserve to be called names.

7. Be a Good Listener—Proverbs 18:13: Not only should a wife be a good listener, but she should expect good listening in return. Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t interrupt you. And if you interrupt me, you can’t possibly know what I’m going to say.”

8. Don’t Judge Motives—1 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Proverbs 10:18:

“Slander” means “defaming, evil report, infamy, slander. It is used for a report of evil character” (*Theological Wordbook*, p. 177).

No one, except God, knows the motives of another person. God does not want His people judging motives even for good. Judging motives is not fair fighting. It brings into the argument issues, which are just a figment of someone’s imagination, and clouds the issue. If the partner’s motives are questioned, the spouse should ask what his motives are rather than assuming he/she knows.

9. Finish the Fight—Proverbs 15:22: Sometimes couples argue over the same thing time and time again. All their arguments seem to accomplish is to clear the air. Then they go back to their old ways and the tension begins to build once again. The end result of an argument should be to either find a solution to the problem or determine to think about a problem and discuss it again at a later specified time with the goal of finding a solution.

10. Admit It When Wrong—Matthew 5:23-24: Even if the mate refuses to acknowledge the wrongs he has committed, the wife/husband should confess wrongs she/he has done. This keeps a person in good standing with God even if the mate refuses to forgive him and uses the confession against her/him. Pride not only separates a person from God, but it also is a worthless quality for solving problems.

Follow the Example of Jesus

1. Corrected the Officer Who Struck Him—John 18:21-23: Jesus corrected those who didn’t fight fair. When the officer struck Him for telling the high priest to bring forth witnesses against Him, Jesus pointed out the injustice.

2. Quoted Scripture When Satan Tempted Him—Matthew 4:1-11: When Satan took Jesus into the wilderness to tempt Him, Jesus countered Satan’s arguments with scripture. Women have tremendous power to change the normal pattern of arguments within a marriage to a more constructive vein. If a wife

follows the pattern of pointing out unrighteousness, injustices, and inequitable behavior (Proverbs 1:3) and quoting scripture when appropriate, she can frequently change the natural course of arguments with her husband. It may take persistence during many arguments before results are seen. If she is patient, the wife should reap benefits in due season.

Lesson 12: How to Face Anger

The Rules for Facing Anger

1. Don't Try to Rescue an Angry Person—Proverbs 16:27; 21:23; 29:9, 11; 19:19:

“Rescue” or “deliver” carries the “basic physical sense of drawing out or pulling out...generally with the sense of deliver or rescue. Nevertheless, here too a physical snatching away or separating can be involved” (Theological Wordbook, p. 1404).

Once the anger in the marriage has progressed to the third level of sin, the wife and possibly even the children may be in danger of being killed. Whatever she does, a wife must consider that possibility and protect herself and her children.

One lady said, “My husband always took baths and was clean. But when he was verbally abusing and hitting me, he always gave off the most foul and wretched odor. He would get red in the face and the blood vessels would pop out on his forehead and neck. He perspired heavily.”

“I learned that if I told my husband, ‘Supper is ready,’ and he said, ‘I’m not hungry,’ I knew he was going to abuse me that night.”

2. Don't Endure Verbal Abuse—Ephesians 5:11: A husband and wife using verbal abuse or cussing each other out has no place in a wonderful marriage. They can do more damage in just a few minutes than hours of apologizing can remedy. Indeed, it may take days, weeks, months, or even years for the hurt to leave the mind and heart of the other.

Many women have grown up with verbal abuse and they think it is normal and to be expected in marriage. Verbal abuse is not normal and is damaging to the marriage in many ways. Most physical abuse begins with verbal abuse, which may continue for years before turning to physical violence.

3. Appeal to His Authority—1 Samuel 25:30-31: When a woman's husband is not controlling his temper, a wife should follow the example of Abigail when she faced David's anger. Abigail appealed to David's authority as the one God had appointed to rule over Israel. Was David's plotted murder the act of a leader? Or was it something he would be ashamed of later?

4. See the Good in Him—1 Samuel 25:25-26: Abigail also recognized that David's murderous desires were uncharacteristic of him. She told him not to sin because of a jerk like Nabal. Likewise, Abigail could probably have appreciated the fine home Nabal provided for her and perhaps even his sexual abilities.

5. Small Penalty to Pay—1 Peter 3:14: Facing his anger is a small penalty to pay in comparison to losing her confidence in God, perhaps becoming willing to give up her children, or just disappearing one day. It's also a small penalty to pay in comparison to the husband continuing in his sin and perhaps becoming enslaved to it at a later date. Facing the husband's anger is better than getting a divorce. In the beginning, the husband's anger is small compared to the damage that is done to both the husband and wife by the

wife being too afraid to face it. It's better to face the husband's anger and correct the situation one way or another. Correcting may involve going to a women's shelter. A woman must protect herself from violence. See the next lesson for more options.

Avoid Threatening Situations—Proverbs 4:16

“Evil” or “mischief” denotes “unethical or immoral activity against other people, whether by speech or by practice. It denotes physical injury” (Theological Wordbook, p. 855).

A police officer, pointing to prisoners in ankle chains and handcuffs, told a husband, who had been arrested for the first time for wife abuse, “Those men sitting there, beat their wives faces in because they like to. If you don't get control of this, someday you will be just like them.”

A. Cycle of Violence

1. Build Up of Tension—The first stage of battering is an incredible building of power: minor pushing, shoving, verbal abuse. This can go on for a year, months, or maybe the cycle is down to once a day.

2. Release of Tension—During the second stage, the pressure gets so great that release must take place. The explosion blows. Women get killed at this stage or end up in the hospital.

3. The Honeymoon—The third stage is called the honeymoon. The husband says, “I'll never do it again” or “I didn't mean to do it.” The honeymoon stage may be just not getting hit. After the honeymoon, the pressure begins to build again.

The cycles always get shorter, and the violence always gets worse. It doesn't get better because nothing has happened to break the cycle.

B. Bible Examples

1. David—1 Samuel 18ff: Repeatedly, when Saul tried to kill David, he fled to protect himself from harm.

2. Jesus—Luke 4:28-30: When the people in Jesus' hometown became angry and would cast Him down a cliff, he did not submit to them, but escaped.

3. Saul—Acts 9:22-25: When the Jews plotted to kill Saul and tried to prevent him from getting away, the disciples lowered him down the wall in a basket.

4. Christians—Acts 9:26-27: Later when Saul tried to join himself to the Christians in Jerusalem, they still thought he was a Christian killer. They protected themselves from him until Barnabas vouched for him that he had really become a Christian

C. Protection and Reconciliation

1. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11: God does not leave a woman trapped in an abusive marriage. But an abusive marriage does not constitute grounds for remarriage unless adultery has taken place. If a separation is necessary for protection, ideally, it should be used in such a manner as to bring about a true reconciliation.

When a wife leaves the home as an act of self-defense, she should take the children with her if at all possible. Leaving the children endangers them. Also, if some legal separation should take place later, the wife might be charged unjustly with abandonment. Many husbands in this stage of abuse use the children as a way of controlling their wives.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: Reconciliation with God takes place when men and women give up their sinful behavior. If a woman is going to imitate God, reconciliation with her husband should take place when the man seeks forgiveness for his sins in the marriage and does what is necessary to become sanctified. These two sections of scripture are the only places where this word “reconciliation” is used in the NT.

When a marriage has reached violent proportions, a woman must take extra measures to protect herself. “Many of the worst injuries—and deaths—happen as women try to get away.” (Safran, *ibid*, p. 79.) This is one reason it is important for wives to deal with this problem while it is relatively little. If they wait too long, it may cost them not only their marriages, but also their lives.

Called to Account by M’Liss Switzer and Katherine Hale gives the struggle of one family to overcome violence. It is an excellent book for giving a woman courage to face the job of saving her marriage and ending the violence. Following is part of the advice it gives a woman for self-protection:

“Once we understood the cycle of violence, Paula asked us to identify the cues that told us the escalation process was beginning. What did we sense about our husbands that warned us of the approaching danger? We all responded. Some said their husbands became ‘moody,’ others said ‘crabby,’ I listed ‘impatient.’ The inventory went on and on: ‘not listening, name-calling, withdrawing affection, uncooperative.’ We were all surprised at the similarities.

“Next we listed our cues, what we noticed about ourselves that indicated things were escalating. This was harder. Paula got us started by asking if we did anything when we sensed the tension building. I responded, ‘I fix Chuck something to eat.’ ‘I ask how he feels,’ said someone else. ‘Usually, when he tells me how he feels, I can better decide how to take care of him, to calm him down. If he says he’s tired, I suggest he take a nap and I’ll keep the children quiet and out of the way for him. Or, if he is bored, I’ll turn on the TV for him and in this way divert his attention.’

“Next we focused on the earliest sign for each of us that told us our husbands’ tension levels were escalating. For me, my chest would get tight. Also, my listening and observation senses were more alert.

“Now we were ready to learn what to do when we noticed these signs. Paula taught us to ask for a simple ‘time out.’ When we perceive that our husbands are moody, impatient, under pressure, and we are feeling scared, tense, nervous, or we start staring ahead, it’s the moment to call a ‘time out.’ At this point, the escalation has not advanced high enough for an explosion and it is still calm enough to get away. This ‘time out’ must be done way back at the beginning while everyone is still fairly calm and under control.

“My mistake in the past had been to try to escape when the level of escalation was too advanced and Chuck would anticipate my leaving and block the way. I could readily see that this new system for getting away for a break might really be possible.

“So it was important for each of us to work out our own individual protection plan. Paula helped us look at what we could do the next time we saw our husbands’ tension levels escalating, where we could go,

what options were available to us.” (M’Liss Switzer and Katherine Hale, *Called to Account*, Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 1987, pp. 86-87.)

Let the Government Help Romans 13:1-8; 1 Peter 2:13-15

The government is one way of escape that God provides for women because the government is an agent of God. For a woman to use the government for protection and to help wake a husband up to his sin is as righteous as partaking of the Lord’s Supper or teaching a Bible class.

The apostle Paul did not hesitate to appeal to the government for protection when the Jews threatened his life (Acts 22:24-29). Then when the Jews tried to have him taken back to Jerusalem so they could kill him, Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:9-12).

1. File Assault Charges—One way of escape that God provides is that if a person is threatened with physical harm, that person can call 911 and have a police officer step in to protect him/her. The officer will arrest the batterer if he sees signs of abuse. If the officer sees a man just push his wife, that is considered abuse and he will be arrested. Every state in the union recognizes wife abuse as assault and it is a crime against the state. Women can also be arrested for using physical violence against a husband.

2. Use the Handcuff Cure—“A Minneapolis study documented that when violent family members are arrested, repeat offenses during the next six months occur half as often as when the suspects are not charged. ‘Arrests have tremendous therapeutic value. They shock people into realizing that they’re involved in a crime, not just a private dispute.’...The experts predict that the new tactics will also reduce homicides.” (“Spouse Beaters—the Handcuff Cure,” U.S. News & World Report, March 2, 1987, p. 12.)

One very respectable looking woman at the anger-control classes for women said that all of her husbands got to be “good duckers.” But it seems that her third husband called 911 when she hit him in the mouth with an ashtray. After spending the weekend in jail, she enrolled in some anger-control classes. Too bad one of her earlier husbands didn’t call the police and cause her to get help because she said she never saw her son because he was too violent. Wonder where he learned it?

3. File a Restraining Order—A restraining order is usually filed along with a divorce or some other legal action. It is used mainly by married women who are filing for divorce. It can include custody rights and division of property. It usually lasts for the length of time necessary to finalize the divorce. It is very flexible and fine-tuned by lawyers on both sides.

4. File a Protection Order—The protection order is filed by anybody who is related by blood or in an intimate relationship. A judge grants it for an emergency 2-week period. A hearing date is set for the end of the two weeks and both parties appear before the judge to tell their sides. At that time, the judge can extend it for up to a year. Sometimes people play games with protection orders, so the law limits it to being filed three times a year. If the woman doesn’t follow up and appear for the two-week hearing, she may not be allowed to file for future protection orders. If the man does not show up, the judge automatically extends the protection order for the length of time requested by the woman. If the husband goes to anger-control counseling sessions and makes progress for overcoming his sin, the wife can have the protection order dropped.

5. Contact Women’s Shelters—The national hotline number for wife abuse is 1-800-333-SAFE. A woman can call this number for advice and the location of the local shelter. Generally, shelters take in women and children under a certain age at no charge.

“In a survey of women who had used the system, 87 percent were living without violence two years later. Among the rest, the violence was far less severe and less frequent.” (Safran, “Why Men Hurt the Women They Love,” p. 80.)

6. Get Anger-Control Counseling—Anger-control counseling or group sessions are designed to help a man learn how to control his anger and to find non-violent ways of expressing displeasure.

7. Call Sexual Assault Hotline—The national hotline number for sexual assault is 1-800-422-4453. Counselors at the national number and local offices can furnish a wealth of information for dealing with sexual abuse of children or a wife or stranger rape or incest.

Establish the Facts

Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize the need for witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1-2). A wife needs to keep this in mind and document the abuse. Following are some suggested ways:

1. File Police Reports—The police generally ask the wife to fill out a report even if they arrest the husband. Sometimes if they do not arrest the husband, they leave a report with the wife to fill out and return later. Filling out these reports is very important and may be extremely valuable later if the abuse escalates. If possible, the wife should keep a photocopy for her files.

2. File CPS Reports—The Child Protective Service has the authority to step in and protect children from physical, mental, and sexual abuse. They are interested in wife abuse cases when the child is endangered. They may take a child away from a woman simply because she refuses to do anything about the abuse her husband heaps upon her. Abusive husbands have been known to file false reports with the CPS in an attempt to get the children away from their wives. The Tacoma Shelter recommends that a woman lay a paper trail of her abuse by contacting the CPS on her own if the father abuses the children. The CPS has the authority to force the husband to get counseling or lose custody.

3. Go to the Hospital—If a woman is harmed in any way, no matter how minor, she should go to the hospital to be examined. The hospital will take pictures and give a report to the police. The pictures and report can later be used as evidence if the case comes to trial.

4. Have a Friend Take Pictures—If the woman cannot get to the hospital, she should have a friend take pictures of her bruises and injuries. The pictures should be dated, and the friend should keep them until they are needed.

5. Let Christians Be Witnesses—A woman can ask mature Christians to talk to her husband. If the husband admits his sins to them, they can later be called as witnesses if the matter needs to be brought before the church. If the husband will not admit any wrongdoing, the wife needs to gather evidence in other ways.

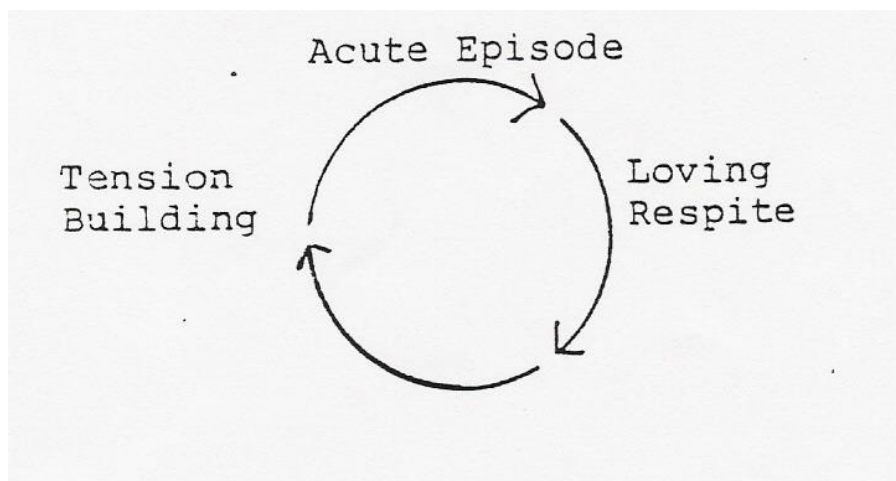
The Cycle of Violence

A woman often feels like there must be something she can do to stop her partner's violence. She feels if she could just try harder and please her husband better, things will be all right. The truth is, though, that the beatings tend to increase in frequency and severity no matter what she does. Unless she leaves and/or the batterer seeks help. In battering relationships, a pattern, or "cycle," is often found. This cycle occurs in three stages.

1. Tension Building Stage: This stage comes before the actual violence. The batterer starts getting uptight, bothered by little things, perhaps paranoid and jealous. The woman tries to reduce the tension, but nothing works. She may feel responsible and guilty, but powerless to do anything. She knows something is going to happen and is in constant anticipation. She may even do something to aggravate her partner, just to get over with what she knows will happen eventually.

2. Acute Episode: This is the stage where actual violence occurs. The tension, which has built up in the batterer finally explodes in a fit of rage. It is a brief stage compared to the other two. Often it seems surrealistic, with a disconnected, dreamlike quality.

3. Loving Respite Stage—"The Hook": After a violent episode, there is a great need felt by both partners to believe everything is okay. They sense a conflict between what they believe should be happening in their relationship and the reality of what has just happened. At this stage, a lot of energy goes into reducing this cognitive dissonance. The batterer becomes apologetic, charming, and loving, and may be genuinely sorry, promising never to do it again. She may believe this promise, hoping it will really be different this time. Both denial and minimization are common, as one or both partners may convince her/himself that it did not happen at all, or that it was not as bad as she/he originally thought.



This loving phase may last awhile, but eventually the tension starts to build again, and the cycle is repeated. With each repetition of the cycle, the loving respite stage becomes shorter (and may even disappear), and the acute episode is more frequent and more severe. (From Women's Shelter in Santa Maria, California.)

Levels of Abuse

Potentially Dangerous

1. Physical Abuse: Pinch, squeeze, push, shove, restrain, jerk, pull, shake, slap, bite, hair pulled.

2. Mental Abuse: Ignoring woman's feelings, withholding approval as punishment. Repeated humiliation; public and private. Blaming victim for all faults. Labeling "crazy, bitch, whore." Acts of psychological abuse may be compared to acts of brainwashing during war time; depriving person of food or sleep; example—victims usually report psychological abuse worse than physical. Psychological abuse is effective because the victim of the abuse is also threatened with acts of physical violence and/or death—not only to themselves but their families as well. Example—threats to kill her parents. Jokes about the roles of women. Denying victim her history, heritage and religion.

3. Sexual Abuse: Looking at and making jokes about women as sex objects. Jealousy may become extreme. Minimizing her feelings and needs regarding sex. Sexual criticism.

Dangerous

1. Physical Abuse: Shaking, with bruises, hits, punch, kick, choking, objects thrown, targeted or repeated hitting for punishment.

2. Mental Abuse: Threatens violence, retaliation. Puts down abilities as worker, mother lover. Tells her about affairs. Demands all her attention; resents kids. Threatens her with abusing or getting custody of children. Isolates victim by no friends; repeated moves. Economic dependency (gets her fired, takes her money, etc.) Threatens to hurt her family. Man stays isolated and demands control of environment.

3. Sexual Abuse: Forces victim to touch or look at genitalia. Withholding sex and affection. Forces victim to strip in front of others, maybe children. Forces to watch sex with others.

Highly Dangerous

1. Physical Abuse: Household objects as weapons; restraining and hitting. Broken bones, internal injury, medical treatment needed. Use of knives, guns, poisons for disabling or disfiguring.

2. Mental Abuse: Following are examples of reactions of victims: powerless (learned?), unpredictable consequence of actions, nervous breakdown, depression, "mental illness." Destruction of property; hits, punches or kicks walls, chairs, not her. Deprivation of food, sleep, medicine, etc. Destroys pets. Incest or child abuse. Man threatens suicide.

3. Sexual Abuse: Demands sex with things. Forcing uncomfortable sex, sex after beatings, sex with others. Rape. Sadism: sex for the purpose of hurting; use of weapons and objects.

Lethal

1. Physical Abuse: homicide

2. Mental Abuse: suicide

3. Sexual Abuse: murder

(From Women's Shelter in Santa Maria, California)

Lesson 13: Peer Pressure in the Church

Steps for Dealing with Sin in the Home

When sin invades the home and creates a desperate marriage, a spiritual battle must be fought. But the warfare is not of the flesh, nor are the weapons of the flesh. The battle is not won by a husband and wife slugging it out and calling each other horrible names. If the battle is to be won, a Christian must use the weapons God provides. One of the weapons or means of escape that God provides is peer pressure in the church when the sinner is a Christian and subject to that pressure. For example, in the case of wife abuse, “the men are very confrontive and the peer pressure is very powerful.” (Karen White, “Domestic Violence: Counseling of Both Parties Breaks the Pattern,” *Santa Maria Times*, 10/6/87, p. 10.

A. Request Church Discipline—Matthew 18:15-17: When a fellow Christian sins, we are to go to that person in private. If he hears us, we’ve won our brother. If he does not hear us, we are to take one or two more witnesses so that every fact can be established. This gives the added advantage that if the first Christian is wrong instead of the accused, or if both Christians are wrong, the witnesses can correct whoever needs it. Many times in marital disputes, both parties contribute to the problem. If the sinner refuses to hear the witnesses, they are to take the matter before the church so that the church can apply moral pressure.

1. Quickly—Ecclesiastes 8:11: Sometimes, Christians hold off on dealing with the spouse’s sins in hopes that they will go away in time. However, just the opposite is more likely to happen because when sentence is not executed speedily, it encourages sinners to continue in their sins. Covered-up sin is one of the greatest tools Satan has for promoting sin.

2. Avoid Discouragement of Good—Matthew 24:12:

“Lawlessness” means “1. properly the condition of one without law,—either because ignorant of it, or because violating it. 2. contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness” (Thayer, p. 48).

Love comes from *agapeo* and means “to have an attitude of acting in the best interest of the object loved.”

When lawlessness increases most people’s love grows cold. Not dealing with sin in the home harms other members of the family and the church. It discourages them from doing good. For example, if someone is tempted to commit adultery and he sees someone else apparently getting away with it, he reasons that he, too, can commit adultery and not suffer the consequences.

3. Avoid Discouragement of Wicked—Isaiah 26:10: Sometimes Christians think that if they can just be patient, the sinner will come to his senses. While this may happen occasionally, God says that the sinner does not learn righteousness from this tactic.

B. Purposes of Withdrawal—Bringing a Christian before the church presents several benefits:

1. Destruction of the Flesh—1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 5:24: Withdrawal is simply the church’s recognition of what has already taken place. But withdrawal isn’t quite enough. The idea of formally handing him over is for the purpose of destruction of his flesh—to cause him to repent of serving Satan.

2. Salvation of the Spirit—1 Corinthians 5:5: The purpose of withdrawal is to bring the sinner back to Christ so he might not suffer eternal loss.

3. Make the Sinner Ashamed—2 Thessalonians 3:14: Treating the person different or like a sinner will cause him to feel shame for what he has done. Ideally, the shame will cause him to repent.

4. To Protect the Church—1 Corinthians 5:7-8:

“Sincerity” has reference to the custom of filling the cracks in a vase with wax. A “sincere” vase was one that could be held up to the light and proven to be genuine or free of cracks.

“Truth” means “universally what is true in any matter under consideration (opposed to what is feigned, fictitious, false” (Thayer, p. 26).

Many times wives allow leaven to enter a church because they do not promote the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” For example, wives lie through silence when a sinful husband is suggested for becoming a deacon or elder.

Joshua 7:1, 11-12: Sin in the camp affects the whole congregation. Thus, wives who cover up their husbands’ sins may well affect the work of the church. In his tapes for teaching, Rodney Miller talks about the “Vanishing Breed”—active men workers in the church. He says the workers in the churches are mainly women even though their husbands are Christians. One reason for the “vanishing breed” may well be wives who cover up their husbands’ sins and thus thwart the growth and productivity of the church.

5. To Obey God in Everything—2 Corinthians 2:6-9: When a church properly carries out church discipline, it shows God that the congregation is willing to obey God in everything. Churches, who do not practice discipline, are not “sound” congregations.

C. How to Withdraw—Matthew 10:34-37: Even from a family member.

1. Gentile and Publican—Matthew 18:16-17: If the sinner refuses to hear the church, then God says let him be to you, the one who originally went to see him, as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer. The Jews looked down upon Gentiles and tax-gatherers and did not associate with.

2. Have No Company With—1 Corinthians 5:11: Most of these sins take place primarily in the home and are sins committed against the spouse or in the spouse’s presence.

3. Withdraw Yourself—2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10-14: They were not to associate with a brother who walked disorderly. If any would not work, they were not to feed him.

The Counselor—Proverbs 12:15

“Counsel” means “advice; by implication plan; also prudence” (Strong, p. 90).

2 Timothy 2:24-26: The role of the counselor.

A. The Spiritual—Galatians 6:1: The wicked have no right to quote scriptures (Psalm 50:16ff).

B. One Whose Life Is in Order—Matthew 7:5: A person whose personal life is in order can see clearly to help others.

C. A Bible Student—2 Timothy 3:16-17: A Bible student can give teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. The unlearned wrest the scriptures to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:17).

D. The Mature—Hebrews 5:12-14: Through practice, the mature have their senses trained to discern good and evil. The immature need someone to teach them the basics.

Due to the prevalence of wife abuse, the Christian may have many occasions to help someone deal with it. Thus, learning about the cycle of violence and how it gets worse prevents the Christian from being so naive and can thus save a lot of time in counseling. This knowledge may save the counseling from

dragging out for years and consequently save years of misery in the victim's life. Likewise, Christians who have had experience with people involved in adultery are not so naive when working with these people.

E. The Wise—1 Corinthians 6:5-6: The wise man or woman is able to decide between his brethren when disputes arise.

F. Preachers—Titus 2:1-2, 6-8:

“Urge” or “exhort” is a very broad word which refers to a large range of addressing and speaking to someone. It includes “to admonish, beg, entreat, encourage and strengthen, instructing, teaching” (Thayer, p. 483).

“Sensible” means “to be of sound mind, i.e. a. to be in one's right mind, b. to exercise self-control; think of one's self soberly; to curb one's passions” (Thayer, p. 613).

Preachers have a special obligation to urge or exhort both the older men and the young men to think sensibly. Problems which create desperate marriages usually occur early in marriages except for disaster striking. Thus, Paul commanded Titus to be a good example to young men and to work with them to get their personal lives in order at the time when problems are just appearing.

G. Elders/Men Working Toward—1 Timothy 3:4-5: An elder is to know how to manage his own household so that he can know how to take care of the church. Sometimes, couples cover up sins in the home; and thus, elders are naive about helping with desperate problems. Expecting elders to follow through with church discipline helps these men develop the skills to help others.

H. Deacons/Men Working Toward—1 Timothy 3:12-13: Deacons are to be good managers of their children and their own households. This necessarily implies that their lives are free from sins in the home. Such men ought to be able to give good advice to couples in trouble.

I. Qualified Older Women—Titus 2:3-5:

“To train the young women” means “to make one, restore one to his senses; duty; to admonish, to exhort earnestly” (Thayer).

After women have raised their families and have more time, God commands them to teach the young women to think sensibly regarding their husbands and families. All women should work toward possessing the qualifications of the older women so that their later years can become more productive.

1. Reverent in Behavior—Means “befitting men, places, actions, or things sacred to God, reverent.”

Although elders and deacons are commanded to have believing or submissive children, no such requirement is made of the older woman. Instead, God expects her to have the proper attitude toward men, places, and things. In other words, she understands subjection and her place in the world and knows how to teach this to others.

Thus, an older woman may have an unbelieving husband or one who has fallen away from the Lord. Her children may have grown up and gone their own way. This recognizes the personal responsibility of the husband and the children. The woman may have done everything right and her family has chosen not to obey. God said in 1 Corinthians 7:16 that He can't guarantee that a wife doing everything right will save her husband.

2. Not Malicious Gossips—Means “not accusing falsely” and comes from a word which means “devils.”

This is necessary for privacy's sake and for keeping sins as small and uncomplicated as possible. This quality also implies the lack of judging motives. A woman, who regularly judges other people's motives,

is not able to teach this principle to young women. Since judging motives causes more problems in marriage than nearly any other characteristic, a good counselor avoids it.

3. Not Enslaved to Much Wine—This implies self-control. Such a woman does not have the other problems that go along with alcoholism such as strife and woes, etc. (Proverbs 23:29ff).

4. Teaching What Is Good—The woman of great price had her life in balance so that she was able to teach what was good in every realm of family life. (Proverbs 31:26)

J. Qualified Widows—1 Timothy 5:9-10:

“List” means “1. properly to lay down. 2. to narrate at length, recount, set forth. 3. to set down in a list or register, to enroll, (especially soldiers).” Thayer’s commentary says, “of those widows who held a prominent place in the church and exercised a certain superintendence over the rest of the women and had charge of the widows and orphans supported at public expense, 1 Timothy 5:9” (Thayer, p. 333).

This passage contemplates putting a widow on “the list” if she meets certain qualifications. These qualifications are a more specialized version of the older woman’s qualifications.

- 1. Not Less Than Sixty Years Old**
- 2. Having Been the Wife of One Man**
- 3. A Reputation for Good Works**
- 4. Has Brought Up Children**
- 5. Shown Hospitality to Strangers**
- 6. Washed the Saints’ Feet**
- 7. Assisted Those in Distress**
- 8. Devoted Self to Every Good Work**

Lesson 14: Guidelines for Spiritual Counseling

Bear Fruit as a Spiritual Counselor

John 15:8: One-way Christians prove that they are Jesus' disciples is by bearing fruit, by being productive and having something to show for their efforts. This requires that the Christian examine each possible counseling session to determine whether he can bear fruit in it.

A. Learn to Say, "No"—Matthew 25:1-13: The five wise virgins were wise because they took enough oil for their lamps and they knew how to say, "no" to people who would deplete their supply. Christians shouldn't take false guilt trips. They must be like the five wise virgins and look out for their own spiritual welfare.

B. Avoid Unstable, Doubleminded People—Proverbs 24:21-22:

"Associate" or "meddle" means "to braid, i.e. to intermix:—engage, (inter-) meddle (with), mingle (self): (Strong, p. 91).

"Change" means "to fold, i.e. duplicate (literally or figuratively); by implication to transmute:—do (speak, strike) again, alter, double, (be given to) change, disguise, (be) diverse, pervert, prefer, repeat, return, do a second time" (Strong, p. 119). (Jeremiah 2:36; Malachi 3:6)

James 1:6-8:

"Double-minded" means "double-minded; a. wavering, uncertain, doubting; b. divided in interest" (Thayer, p. 153).

"Unstable" means "unstable inconstant, restless" (Thayer, p. 22).

Christians who are involved with others often see this quality in people they work with. Instead of learning how to solve their problems and how to avoid them, these people want other Christians to talk them out of their bad attitudes and motivate them to do right. While they're willing to listen and seem to respond, they never do anything on their own. If the Christian doesn't call, they back-slide.

C. Take Time Out to Rest—Mark 6:31-32: Jesus told the apostles to go away and be by themselves for a little while when they got so busy, they didn't even have time to eat. Jesus said this even when there were so many people around wanting to be taught.

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6: The writer recognizes that neither extreme is good—that of the fool who folds his hands and does no work or that of the work alcoholic who works without ceasing. God wants balance.

D. Don't be an Emotional Garbage Dump—Proverbs 4:23: It isn't necessary to listen to *all the intimate details* of other people's lives to help them. The Bible is full of basic principles that the Christian can

teach the other person to apply to his own life. While the person may need some specific help in applying those principles, generally, it is not necessary to learn all the dirt in that person's life.

Counseling in the New Testament

Some preachers and older women spend an enormous amount of time working with certain couples. Yet, they never seem to accomplish much with these couples. Studying the examples of Jesus and the apostles shows how to work successfully with others.

Jesus Gave Assignments

Jesus was not codependent. Over and over, Jesus expected people to help themselves and not take advantage of Him. Sometimes Jesus accomplished this by giving assignments to those who requested His help. Even Jesus, a divine being, was not 100% successful in helping everyone who came to Him for help. He helped only those who were willing to help themselves.

1. The Lepers—Luke 17:12-19: Before healing the lepers, Jesus gave them an assignment: “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” As they were going, they were cleansed.

Mark 1:40-45: Jesus healed another leper and gave him the assignment to tell no one, but to show himself to the priest and to present the offering that Moses prescribed.

2. The Rich Ruler—Luke 18:18-23: Jesus told the rich ruler to obey the Ten Commandments. When the ruler said he had done all those things from his youth, Jesus gave him an assignment: “Sell all that you possess, give it to the poor, and come follow Me.”

3. The Blind Man—John 9:1-7: Jesus healed a blind man by spitting on the ground and making clay. Then he applied the clay to the blind man's eyes. Then he gave the blind man an assignment: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.” When the man did, he came back seeing.

4. The Lame Man—Luke 5:18-24: Some men brought a man to Jesus who was paralyzed. When they could not get in, they cut a hole in the roof and lowered him down. When Jesus healed him, He gave him an assignment: “Rise, and take up your stretcher and go home.”

5. One Who Wanted to Bury the Dead—Matthew 8:21-22: One of Jesus' disciples asked, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” But Jesus gave him an assignment: “Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead.”

6. The Hungry 5000—John 6:5-66: After Jesus fed the 5000 men plus women and children with five barley loaves and two fish, the people wanted Jesus to feed them all the time like Moses gave their fathers manna in the wilderness. Jesus became angry because they rejected the sign and didn't believe (vs. 26-30, 36). As a result, many of His disciples withdrew and did not walk with Him anymore (vs. 66). Jesus was not willing to do things for people that they should do themselves.

Paul Taught the Teachable

Acts 19:8-10:

“Reason” means “1. to think different things with one's self, mingle thought with thought, to ponder, revolve in mind; 2. to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss” (Thayer, p. 139).

“Persuade” means “to persuade, i.e. to induce one by words to believe” (Thayer, p. 497).

“Hardened” means “to make hard, harden, to be hardened i.e. become obstinate or stubborn” (Thayer. p. 579).

Paul taught in the synagogue for three months while they would listen. As soon as they became hardened and disobedient, he took the disciples and left. They went to the school of Tyrannus where Paul taught for two years. Paul was so successful there that all in Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

Techniques for Counseling

A. Richard Radke’s Approach—Richard starts off by telling the person that his time is valuable. If the person paid a lawyer for advice, it would cost about \$150 an hour. If he paid a doctor, it would cost from \$50 to \$100 an hour. If he paid a psychiatrist, it would cost from \$75 to \$100 an hour. If the person wants Richard’s time for free, he’s going to have to work. Richard uses a program he calls, “The Six P’s.”

1. Problem—The person writes the problem down in one sentence of twenty-five words.

2. Passages—Richard gives the person a few passages that relate to the problem to get him started. Then he tells the person to bring back a certain number of additional scriptures when he comes back the next week. In other words, Richard doesn’t do the other person’s studying for him.

3. Prayer—Richard asks the person to pray at the same time every day for at least five minutes. The time is set to get the person past thanking God for the beautiful day and family and to get him involved in praying about his problem or sin. This is similar to the interview type prayer in the formula for solving all marriage problems in 1 Timothy 4:5.

4. Plan—Next Richard has the person make a specific plan for solving the problem. This plan includes a time for prayer and Bible study. If the person wants to give up smoking, the plan might include a time for physical exercise.

5. Progress—Richard tells the person to prepare a progress report. This is a chart to check off each planned activity as the person does it to keep track of both the problem and progress. This tells Richard if the person is really trying to do something or just taking up time. For example, the person may have a problem with disciplining a child. When the person comes for help, he/she may be spanking the kid eleven times a day. The person may not think he/she is making any progress, but the chart shows he/she is spanking only once a day, then once every other day, etc. The chart shows the progress.

6. Penalty—Richard also gives the person a penalty for not carrying out the plan. The person has to buy Richard and his wife a steak dinner because he has taken Richard away from his wife, yet the person is not working hard enough toward the goal. Another penalty is that if the husband loses his temper with his wife, he has to come to Richard’s house and chop wood for him. Richard says he has woken up at midnight to find a husband in his backyard chopping wood. It doesn’t take very many wood chopping incidents to help a man control his anger.

B. My Approach

1. Will Spend Time If...—I tell the person God expects me to bear fruit, so I can't just waste my time. I expect them to be responsible. I may even give them a list of things to do and say we will not get together again until you've done them. I do not take calls in the middle of the night.

2. Read the Books—I wrote the marriage books so I wouldn't have to personally say every word to an individual. This is more effective since he/she reads the scriptures and sees the word definitions. Sometimes I assign certain chapters to be read first, depending on what the person's problem is.

3. Do the Homework—I absolutely insist that the person do the homework before we get together again. The homework is designed to help the individual make personal changes. All of the activities help the individual train his/her senses to discern good and evil.

4. Listen to Classes—Depending on the problem, I may instruct the person to listen to some classes I've taught or sermons or classes of someone else.

5. Get Special Help—I may insist that the person get some outside help before I will continue to work with him/her. I may recommend anger-control classes, etc.

C. Why Counseling Fails—If the person views the counselor in any of the following ways, the sessions will not succeed. Likewise, if the counselor tries to function in any of the following roles, he will not succeed:

1. Policeman—He will police the spouse and make him/her straighten up.

2. Parent—He will take care of things and he/she won't have to worry.

3. Friend—He will take his/her side against the spouse.

4. Superman—He won't make any mistakes.

5. Martyr—He'll gladly sacrifice himself and his family to solve his/her problems.

6. Genius—He knows all the answers and he/she won't have to think for him/herself.

7. Religious Giant—All things are possible through God so he will have all the right answers to make him/her happy.

Opportunities for Teaching the Gospel

Preparing oneself to help others with their problems presents many opportunities for teaching the gospel to relatives, neighbors, co-workers, club members, and friends. Many people often wonder what the Bible says about their problems but lack the know-how to find the answers. Giving them the answer to a specific problem helps show them God's love and the wisdom of the Bible. It opens the door to teach them more about what it means to be a Christian.

Lesson 15: The Secret of the Woman of Great Price

Meet the Woman of Great Price

Seattle, Washington Ladies Seminar Presentation

An Older Woman—Proverbs 31:10-31

1. Older daughters—Verse 15

“Portions” means “an enactment; hence an appointment (of time, space, quality, labor or usage):-- [translated] appointed, bound, commandment, custom, decree (-d), due, law, measure” (Strong 42).

“Maiden” means “a girl (from infancy to adolescence):--[translated] damsel, maid (-en), young (women)” (Strong 79).

2. Married to an elder—Verse 23

3. Children rise up—Verse 28

A Virtuous Woman

“Virtuous” means “a force, whether of men, means, or other resources; an army, wealth, virtue, valor, strength:--[translated] able, activity, army, soldiers, (great) forces, host, might, power, strength, strong, valiant” (Strong).

1. Strength comes from exercise, not a charmed life—Verses 17 and 25. Philippians 4:11: She is a teacher—vs. 26, Hebrews 5:14:

2. Fruits and own works praise her—Verse 31

Compared to Good Women—Verse 29

1. “Many daughters have done nobly”—“Nobly” or “virtuously” is an adverb describing the type of action.

“But thou excel them all”—**Verse 10:** “Virtuous” woman is an adjective describing the type of person.

Contrasted with Worldly Women—Verse 30

1. “Charm is deceitful”

2. “And beauty is vain”—Society says, “Not getting older, getting better.”

3. “But a woman who fears the Lord”

4. “She shall be praised”—She’s getting older, but she’s also getting better. The effect of a lifetime spent fearing the Lord is to make one more precious than rubies and hard to find.

5. Put on Virtue or Excellence

Expect to Have Problems as the Proof of Your Faith

1 Peter 1:6-7: In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;....”

1. Greatly rejoice

2. Various trials

3. Proof of your faith

Be a soldier ready to fight, not surprised when war comes. Be trained, willing, and confident.

Problems Common to Man, 1 Corinthians 10:13:

1. Marriage
2. Leadership and subjection
3. Sexual adjustments
4. In-laws
5. Parents
6. Baby
7. Baby
8. Baby
9. Adolescence
10. Schools and peer pressure
11. Job changes
12. Financial problems
13. House changes
14. Grandchildren
15. Retirement
16. Health problems
17. Death

Problems Common to Christians

(Woman of Great Price’s husband was an elder.)

18. Problems with relatives, Matthew 10:34-37:
19. Problems with brethren, Book of 1 Corinthians
20. Slandered and reviled, 1 Peter 3:16-17:
21. Bearing one another’s burdens, Galatians 6:1:
22. Persecutions from without, Hebrews 10:32-34:

Don’t Say, “Why Me?”

Don’t say “Why me?” but “Why not me?” Life is a series of problems—one after the other. But it’s not the problems that cause our problems. It is our attitudes toward the problems, *Matthew 5:44-45:*

Expect to Solve Problems Through Faith

- 1. Marriage is sanctified through the word of God and prayer, 1 Timothy 4:5**
- 2. Quickly, Ephesians 4:25-27, Ecclesiastes 8:11**
- 3. Endure, 1 Corinthians 10:13—Paul’s thorn in the flesh, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**
- 4. Say, “No,” Matthew 25:1-13—Don’t take “false guilt trips”**
- 5. Have the balanced life of the woman of great price.**
- 6. Take Time Out, Mark 6:31-32, Ecclesiastes 4:6**
- 7. Bear One Another’s Burdens, Galatians 6:1**
- 8. Personal Pride Is Useless, Proverbs 16:18**
- 9. Don’t Be an Emotional Garbage Dump, James 3:6, Proverbs 18:8, 13, 17; 4:23**
- 10. Give Others the Right to Make Own Choices, John 4:24**
- 11. Possess the Book of Job—Designed to possess and captivate our emotions.**
 - a. Poetry is active**
 - b. Dialogue is active**
 - c. Verbs are active**

Expect to Reap Benefits from Solving Problems

- 1. Meaningful Relationships, Proverbs 9:8-9**
- 2. Mature, James 1:2-4**
- 3. Glorify God, Isaiah 43:7**

Pass the Tests

Battles the Woman of Great Price Won

1. Subjection—vs. 11-12
2. Admiration of husband—vs. 11-12
3. Love of money—vs. 13-14, 16, 20, 24
4. Parenting—vs. 15, 21, 28
5. Keeping the home—vs. 15
6. Self-Image—vs. 17-18
7. Poor—vs. 20
8. Dress—vs. 13, 21-22
9. Husband’s spiritual potential—vs. 23

10. Feminism—vs. 19, 24
11. Attitudes—vs. 25
12. Tongue—vs 26
13. Teacher—vs. 26
14. Time—vs. 27
15. Strong faith—vs. 28-31
16. Problem solver—vs. 25, 31

Battles Older Women Lost

1. Contentious
2. Resentful and bitter
3. Worldly or miser
4. Disgraced
5. Overwhelmed
6. Depressed
7. Self-centered
8. Sloppy or youth seeking
9. Husband not qualified to be an elder
10. Feminist
11. Cynical and bitter
12. Gossip
13. Can't be approached
14. Unorganized
15. Weak faith
16. Problem causer

Make Your Choice

Young Women “Do Virtuously”

Older Women “Be Virtuous”

Resources for Speaking God's Beautiful Language of Love

Growing in love is a lifetime duty of marriage. However, deeply inhibited spouses prevent both themselves and their mates from *speaking God's beautiful language of love™* that transcends human words. To transform, you must address all four parts of one-flesh love—intellectual, emotional, sexual, and spiritual intimacy. I can't overstress the importance of the husband and the wife working together. But just one person deciding to learn can start the process. Here's an overview of the resources to help you make your journey of love:

The Sexless Marriages Survey: With Self-Assessment Checklists: The intensely personal, simple questions in these checklists help you analyze the core issues in your relationship so you can begin to solve the real, hidden problems. Available at PatsyRaeDawson.com.



The following books in the *Marriage: A Taste of Heaven* series are available on Amazon:

The Power of Sexual Surrender for Christians—Awaken Orgasmic Attitudes to Overcome Inhibited Desire and Pleasure: This book teaches the formula for changing your mindset to release your body for sexual ecstasy by overcoming childhood myths, trauma, and inhibitions.

God's 11 Secrets of Sex for a Lifetime of Passion—Embrace the Song of Solomon's Soulmating and Lovemaking Guide: This verse-by-verse study serves as the foundation of marriage as it portrays the 4-parts of one-flesh love—intellectual, emotional, sexual, and spiritual intimacy.

Male and Female: God's Genius—Soulmate to Fall in Love All Over Again: This book develops the fine points of God's formula for solving all marriage problems. Beginning with the creation, it promotes love and admiration for oneself and the opposite sex.

God's People Make the Best Lovers—Thrill to God's Way of a Man with a Maid: This book studies the intellectual, emotional, sexual, and spiritual love necessary for enjoying vaginal orgasms and cervical kisses. It exposes the Victorian and feminist mindsets that still harm couples today.

Your Marriage Will Never Be the Same!

Survey on Spousal Abuse Among Christians for Both Husband and Wife Abuse

For the abused and those who help them

Although spousal abuse is normally thought of as “wife” abuse, the first incident where the author was called upon for help was “husband” abuse. The wife, who was a Christian, threw things at her husband, chased him down the stairs with a skillet of hot gravy, and screamed at him in stores and in their front yard. The husband finally asked for help when his wife began harassing him at work causing problems for his whole department.

Another wife who filled out this questionnaire had never thought of herself as being abusive to her husband. However, as she answered the questions about the wife’s conduct, she realized that some of the items described her. She had minimized her behavior over the years as, “That’s just the way I am when I get mad.”

You can help uncover the seriousness of spousal abuse of both husbands and wives among Christians by filling out this questionnaire. Results from previous surveys were used in preparing the lessons for the cassette album *Challenges in Marriage: How Sin Inhibits Love and What to Do About It*. Your response may be compiled with others and used in future publications. However, your response will remain anonymous, as we are not collecting names or addresses. We are interested in the trends of data, not individual cases. Please print the questionnaire and send it to the address at the end of the form. By taking the time to answer these questions, you will aid other people in identifying and solving their problems. You may even recognize areas of spousal abuse or sin that you have minimized in the past or perhaps even thought were normal.

Sharing your experiences and feelings may help alert church leaders to the secret misery and suffering of their members. Seeing your pain and hopelessness may prompt them to obey Paul’s instructions in Titus 2:2-8 to teach the older men and women and the young men and women how to act sensibly. Proper exercise of the husband’s responsibilities is serious since God warns that He does not hear the prayers of men who mistreat their wives in 1 Peter 3:7. Possibly one reason so many congregations fail to prosper is because of hidden sin in the homes (Joshua 7). Not until husbands and wives make known their needs and the injustices done to them can godly leaders in the churches respond with appropriate support for their members. Then perhaps our leaders will teach more marriage and problem-solving classes for both husbands and wives and give better help on a personal level.

One woman who struggled to survive spousal abuse for nearly twenty years wrote on a previous questionnaire, “There needs to be lots of practical how-to examples. A woman whose husband is sinful is not in control. Even a woman who works hard to maintain mental health and Christianity cannot see clearly her situation. She needs specifics. The daily judgments of ‘Is he going too far right now?’ and ‘How can I be submissive but refuse to participate in his sin?’ are exhausting and time-consuming. A woman becomes convinced that she is in the wrong.”

She lamented, “I cannot describe how it is to be under the control of a ‘godless’ person, but it is a real, incapacitating situation. A woman will become incapable, as true as if she were chained, of making healthy decisions in order to remove herself from the situation.” Your response may well help both men and women to think more clearly.

The questions describing the different levels of violence against women were adapted from the training manual for Shelter Services for Women, Inc. in California. Other questions are adapted from previously filled out questionnaires and the author’s experience in working with couples and in attending training sessions at women’s shelters. The questions describe the different forms of spousal abuse and the characteristics of those who submit to it. By identifying problems and focusing on solutions, your questionnaire will help determine what works, what fails, and why; and thus, can be used to help others.

Many who have not personally experienced ill-treatment know husbands and wives who have. If this describes you, fill out the questionnaire for people you know as you will have different insights than those caught in spousal abuse. Answer the first two questions for yourself, then on the remaining questions, instead of placing a check mark in the squares, write the number of women or men you know with each characteristic. You may want to fill out several questionnaires, one for each couple you’ve worked with.

If your spouse abused you in the past but no longer does, mark the answers that describe your marriage at its worst with “P” for “past conduct” and those that describe it now with “N” for “now.” Later questions give you an opportunity to tell how you solved the problem.

Warning! Read This First!

Violence against women, children, and even men presents a real danger in many homes. All writers and authorities advise those in abusive relationships to take whatever steps are necessary to protect their own safety along with that of their children. They should trust their “gut instincts” and avoid dangerous situations. For advice on where to obtain legal or other professional services in your area, contact your minister, local women’s shelter, law enforcement agency, or other suitable agencies or professionals. Women’s shelters and other professionals can also give advice for specific cases and information regarding local laws to people helping those who are abused.

For additional help:

- The hotline for domestic violence in the United States is 1-800-799-7233. They can refer you to women’s shelters and other services in your area. They are available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week and provide translators when needed.
- Search on “violence against women” in the various search engines on the Internet to find information in the United States and other countries.

People Helping the Abused

1. Answers pertain to: you, women you know, men you know, relative, friend, other (specify).

2. Your present religion: non-denominational Christian, Protestant (specify), Catholic, Jewish, Agnostic, other (specify).

3. Your religious convictions: strongly religious, moderately religious, slightly religious, not religious, anti-religious.

4. Your spiritual activities: elder, deacon, preacher, teacher of men's classes, teacher of adult Bible classes, participate in public worship services (specify), elder's wife, deacon's wife, preacher's wife, teacher of women's classes, children's Bible class teacher, other active congregational worker (specify), confidante of others, other (specify).

Background of the Abused and the Abuser

5. Wife's religious upbringing: non-denominational Christian, Protestant (specify), Catholic, Jewish, Agnostic, other (specify).

6. Wife's present religion: non-denominational Christian, Protestant (specify), Catholic, Jewish, Agnostic, other (specify).

7. Wife's religious convictions: strongly religious, moderately religious, slightly religious, not religious, anti-religious.

8. Wife's spiritual activities: elder's wife, deacon's wife, preacher's wife, teacher of women, children's Bible class teacher, other active congregational worker, confidante of women, other (specify).

9. Wife's education: high-school graduate, some college or trade school, college graduate or higher.

10. Wife's age: 18 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51 to 65, over 65.

11. Wife's substance use: alcohol, illegal drugs, tranquilizers, none.

12. Wife abused by: father, mother, grandparent, sibling, other relative, other (specify), mental, physical, sexual, none.

13. Husband's religious upbringing: nondenominational Christian, Protestant (specify), Catholic, Jewish, Agnostic, other (specify).

14. Husband's present religion: nondenominational Christian, Protestant (specify), Catholic, Jewish, Agnostic, other (specify).

15. Husband's religious convictions: strongly religious, moderately religious, slightly religious, not religious, anti-religious.

16. Husband's spiritual activities: elder, deacon, preacher, song leader, leader of prayer, adult class teacher, teenage Bible class teacher, other active congregational worker, confidant of men, respected by Christians, other (specify).

17. Husband's education: high-school graduate, some college or trade school, college graduate or higher.

18. Husband's age: 18 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, 51 to 65, over 65.

19. Husband's substance use: alcohol, illegal drugs, tranquilizers, none.

20. Husband abused by: father, mother, grandparent, sibling, other relative, other (specify), mental, physical, sexual, none.

21. Family income: less than \$12,000, \$12,000 to \$19,999, \$20,000 to \$34,999, \$35,000 to \$49,999, \$50,000 to \$74,999, over \$75,000.

Recognizing the Problem

22. When abuse began: courtship, living together before marriage, honeymoon, first year of marriage, first five years of marriage, first minor problem arose, first major problem arose, other (specify).

23. If saw evidence of abuse in courtship: thought could change spouse, believed spouse's promises to change, thought spouse needed her/him, thought it wasn't important, other (specify).

24. During actual episodes of abuse was there: unemployment, death in the family, financial problems, work problems, problems with children, drug use, alcohol use, natural disaster, i.e. hurricane, tornado, flood, fire (specify), other outside influences (specify). If yes, to any of the above, is abuse limited to these times? yes, no. If no, is the abuse worse during these times? yes, no.

25. Communication about non-problem matters with spouse: talk meaningfully, difficulty talking, seldom talk, never talk

26. Communication about problems with spouse: talk meaningfully, difficulty talking, seldom talk, never talk

27. Communication about wife's personal feelings with husband: talk meaningfully, difficulty talking, seldom talk, avoid talking, listen while she talks, wife gets angry, husband gets angry.

28. Communication about husband's personal feelings with wife: talk meaningfully, difficulty talking, seldom talk, avoid talking, listen while he talks, wife gets angry, husband gets angry.

29. Wife's verbal abuse of husband: gets angry when he discusses problems, yells and screams, harangues, intimidates with outbursts of temper, ridicules looks, belittles things he does, compares unfavorably to other men, says no other woman would want him, badgers to get a better job, says he doesn't know what he is talking about, degrades in front of children, insults intelligence, blames for everything that goes wrong, calls names, denies saying things actually said, says he's crazy, says he's too sensitive, says he shouldn't feel the way he does, denies being abusive, gives him the silent treatment, tells him what to do all the time, says he's getting upset about nothing, claims forgot the incident when he tries to talk about it, says he's making it up, says he's trying to pick a fight, speaks derogatorily of all men, jokes about men as sex animals, ridicules his sexual needs, minimizes his sexual feelings and desires, uses dirty, abusive or ridiculing language during sexual contact, jealous or accuses of being unfaithful, threatens to leave, threatens to disappear, threatens to take the children, threatens suicide, threatens to kill him, threatens to slap or harm him, says no one will believe him, causes problems at his work, harbors bitterness, judges motives, compares with previous lovers, brags about affairs, other (specify).

30. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

31. Wife's physical abuse of husband: throws household objects, breaks household objects, grabs and throws his hand down when he reaches out to touch or hold her, avoids touching him during sexual contact, pinches or squeezes, jerks, pulls, shoves or shakes, slaps, bites, scratches or pulls hair, hits, punches or kicks, creates need for medical attention, withholds sex, engages in affairs, other (specify).

32. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

33. Husband's verbal abuse of wife: gets angry when she discusses problems, yells and screams, harangues, intimidates with outbursts of temper, ridicules looks, belittles things she does, compares unfavorably to other women, says no other man would want her, badgers to get a better job, says she doesn't know what she is talking about, degrades in front of children, insults intelligence, blames for everything that goes wrong, calls names, denies saying things actually said, says she's crazy, says she's too sensitive, says she shouldn't feel the way she does, denies being abusive, gives her the silent treatment, tells her what to do all the time, says she's getting upset about nothing, claims forgot the incident when she tries to talk about it, says she's making it up, says she's trying to pick a fight, speaks derogatorily of all women, jokes about women as sex objects, ridicules her sexual needs, minimizes her sexual feelings and desires, uses dirty, abusive or ridiculing language during sexual contact, jealous or accuses of being unfaithful, threatens to leave, threatens to disappear, threatens to take the children, threatens suicide, threatens to kill her, threatens to hit or harm her, says no one will believe her, causes problems at her work, harbors bitterness, judges motives, compares with previous lovers, brags about affairs, other (specify).

34. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

35. Husband's potentially dangerous acts toward wife: verbally threatens harm, gestures to threaten physical harm, pinches or squeezes, jerks, pulls, shoves or shakes, slaps, bites or pulls hair, physically restrains, expects compulsive perfection, minimizes her sexual feelings and desires, forces abusive sexual contact, wakes in middle of night to do any of these, walks in adultery, practices homosexuality, throws or punches household objects, drives aggressively and curses other drivers.

36. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

37. Husband's dangerous acts toward wife: shakes and causes bruises, hits, punches or kicks, chokes, threatens to kill her or children, threatens to kill her family, demands all her attention and resents children, threatens with abusing or getting custody of children, isolates from friends, forces to look at or watch pornography, tells about his affairs.

38. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

39. Husband's highly dangerous acts toward wife: uses household objects as weapons, breaks bones, breaks or loosens teeth, causes internal injuries, creates need for medical attention, uses knives, guns, or poisons for disabling or disfiguring, demands unreasonable perfection—nothing pleases him, deprives of food, sleep, medicine, etc., destroys pets, engages in incest or child abuse, practices sadism (sex for the purpose of hurting), destroys property by hitting, punching or kicking walls, chairs, etc.

40. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

41. Other types of wife or husband abuse: husband fails to work to provide for family, husband frequently out of work, spends money recklessly, buys luxuries for self while denying family's needs, uncontrolled use of charge cards, expects mate to appease creditors, gambles, neglects mate's sexual desires and needs, harbors bitterness, restricts mate's attendance of worship assemblies, restricts mate's attendance of Bible classes, hinders mate's association with Christians, flirts with members of the opposite sex, accuses mate of jealousy when questions actions in regard to opposite sex, gives mate the silent treatment for days, weeks, or months at a time.

42. Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, other (specify).

43. How abuser deals with his or her abuse: apologetic, genuinely sorry, asks for forgiveness, cries, charming afterwards, loving afterwards, promises never to do it again, promises to get counseling, promises to quit drinking or using drugs, makes promises he or she doesn't keep, makes spouse promise not to tell, makes spouse hide bruises or stay home so others can't see damage, goes with spouse to see doctor, friends, and relatives so mate is never alone with people who might help, minimizes seriousness, i.e. didn't hit, just pushed, claims spouse is too sensitive, says he or she is only teasing, expects spouse to clean up his or her messes in the home, i.e. damaged or broken items, expects spouse to smooth over emotional hurts with others that he or she inflicts, goes forward at religious services to ask for forgiveness and prayers without telling what the specific sin was.

44. Abuser controls abuse around: fellow workers, religious contacts or brethren, friends, relatives, neighbors, police, people in public.

45. Excuses abused wife or husband makes for other's abuse: minimizes, i.e. it's not as bad as it seems, had a bad childhood, too tired, overworked, ok when not tired, friends influence him or her, can't help acting that way because those people were unreasonable, he or she has problems at work, he or she was drunk, he or she was on drugs, didn't know what he or she was doing, mate deserved to be punished, other (specify).

46. Abused wife or husband blames self for abuse: all the time, frequently, occasionally, seldom, never, used to, but doesn't now.

47. Ways abused wife or husband blames self for abuse: appearance, housekeeping, personal habits, job habits, out of work, intelligence, past promiscuousness, got pregnant or got her pregnant, unable to get pregnant or unable to get her pregnant, sexual desires too strong, sets him or her off, can't control emotions, can't control tongue, inability to quit caring, can't do anything right, if could just figure out what he or she wants, then he or she would be happy, other (specify).

48. Abused wife or husband accepts role of making spouse happy: always, frequently, occasionally, never, it's his responsibility.

49. Abused wife's or husband's emotional state: spouse's problem not hers or his, full of guilt, some depression, often depressed, deep, consuming depression, bitter, extreme bitterness, feels trapped, resentful, nervous breakdown, on verge of nervous breakdown, emotionally exhausted, fears losing sanity, suicidal, attempted suicide, paranoid, hopeless, rejected, feels as if drowning, cries all the time, tears have dried up, fighting for emotional survival, emotional paralysis, inability to make decisions, envious of untroubled couples, embarrassed to admit abuse to others, thoughts of divorce, other (specify).

50. Abused [] wife's or [] husband's self-image: [] blames self, [] feels worthless, [] feels like a failure, [] angry toward self, [] accepts bad things spouse says as true, [] thinks is crazy, [] low self-image, [] good self-image, [] high self-image, [] other (specify).

51. Abused [] wife's or [] husband's attitude toward spouse: [] loves no matter what spouse does, [] can't live without spouse, [] spouse needs him or her, [] bitter, [] angry, [] hates spouse, [] wishes for spouse's death, [] blames spouse for all problems, [] respects, [] doesn't respect, [] admires abilities, [] despises abilities, [] afraid of, [] feels secure with, [] other (specify).

52. Abused [] wife's or [] husband's attitude toward marriage: [] equates dominance with masculinity, [] thinks has no rights, [] accepts guilt even when has done nothing wrong, [] feels must help spouse no matter what, [] smoothes things over between spouse and others, [] strong need to be needed, [] tells self things will improve with time, [] believes can do nothing about situation, [] determines self-worth by ability to catch and hold a mate, [] other (specify).

53. Time span of abuse: [] 1 year, [] 2 years, [] 3-6 years, [] 7-10 years, [] 11-15 years, [] 16-20 years, [] 21-25 years, [] over 25 years (specify).

54. How abuse changed: [] stayed the same, [] gradually got worse, [] rapidly got worse, [] stopped completely, [] loving cycle shorter, [] loving cycle disappeared, [] other (specify).

55. How abuser treats children: [] yells, [] ignores them, [] curses them, [] harsh discipline, [] withholds love, [] expects perfection, [] fails to see good in them, [] berates spouse to, [] wakes in middle of night, [] incest, [] terrifies, [] other (specify).

56. Frequency: [] all the time, [] most of the time, [] some of the time, [] seldom, [] never.

57. Abused [] wife or [] husband takes frustrations out on children: [] yells, [] ignores them, [] curses them, [] harsh discipline, [] withholds love, [] expects perfection to keep spouse calm, [] fails to see good in them, [] fails to protect from spouse's abuse, [] fails to protect from spouse's incest, [] secretly berates spouse to, [] other (specify).

58. Frequency: [] all the time, [] most of the time, [] some of the time, [] seldom, [] never.

59. Arguments the abuser uses to make the abused [] wife or [] husband submit or keep the abuse secret: [] "I'm the leader, and I can do anything I want," [] "You're just unforgiving," [] "You just want to be the boss," [] "If you say something, it will only make you look ridiculous," [] "People will think you are crazy," [] "I'll lose my job," [] "People will see what a bad wife or husband you are," [] "No one will believe you," [] "I'll kill your family," [] "I'll get custody of the children," [] other (specify).

Attempts to Find a Solution

60. Abused [] wife or [] husband misses worship assemblies and Bible classes because of marriage problems: [] Sunday mornings, [] Sunday evening, [] mid-week classes, [] never, [] occasionally, [] frequently, [] stopped going.

61. What abused [] wife or [] husband tells people who ask why missed: [] lies, [] deceives by telling something that is true to make them draw a false conclusion, [] pretends to be sick, [] schedules work during meeting times, [] takes advantage of minor illnesses of children, [] plans trips to avoid attending, [] other (specify).

62. Abused wife or husband considers “falling away” from brethren: never, occasionally, frequently.

63. Effect on abused wife’s or husband’s faith: better than ever, faltering, lost confidence in God, blame God, none, other (specify).

64. Abused wife or husband covers-up abuse by lying to or deceiving: his boss, her boss, elders, preacher, his family, her family, children, Christians, friends, neighbors, police.

65. Why abused wife or husband covers-up: hurt his influence, hurt her influence, mate threatened harm, afraid mate will retaliate, embarrassed, thinks mate is just like all the other husbands or wives, hurt other Christians, afraid of financial consequences, other (specify).

66. Abused wife or husband left mate to make abuser straighten up: yes, no, number of times, permanent results, temporary results, divorced. Briefly describe outcome.

67. Abused wife or husband confronted mate about sins: never, occasionally, frequently, other (specify), chose a good time, i.e. not when fighting, chose a bad time, i.e. when fighting or upset, controlled his or her emotions, didn’t control his or her emotions. Briefly describe outcome.

68. Abuser’s reaction to outside help: straightened up temporarily before got help, straightened up permanently before got help, said not to get help, threatened if mate got help, didn’t care. Did abused wife or husband follow through and seek help? yes, no. Briefly describe outcome.

69. People abused wife or husband asked for help (write number of people in each square): mate, mother, father, in-laws, relatives, elders, preachers, older women in congregation, other Christians (men or women), neighbors, friends, women’s shelter, police, psychologists or psychiatrists, doctors, books, other (specify).

70. People who helped abused wife or husband the most: mate, mother, father, in-laws, relatives, elders, preachers, older women in congregation, other Christians (men or women), neighbors, friends, women’s shelter, police, psychologists or psychiatrists, doctors, books, other (specify).

71. How elders treated abused wife or husband: sympathized but did nothing, talked to abuser if he or she volunteered to talk, talked to abuser even if he or she resisted talking, told wife to submit no matter what husband did, told wife submitting to sin is not Biblical subjection, blamed wife for husband’s abuse, preached a sermon, taught a men’s class on marriage, taught a women’s class on marriage, required abuser to confess sin before congregation, told abused mate to forgive abuser because of confession, failed to follow up to see if mate made real changes, followed up to see if mate made real changes, required abuser to get some type of help, i.e. study, get counseling, etc. (specify), practiced church discipline, offered shelter, other (specify), problem got better (specify how long it lasted), problem got worse.

72. How preachers treated abused wife or husband: sympathized but did nothing, talked to abuser if he or she volunteered to talk, talked to abuser even if he or she resisted talking, told wife to submit no matter what husband did, told wife submitting to sin is not Biblical subjection, blamed wife for husband’s abuse, preached a sermon, taught a men’s class on marriage, taught a women’s class on marriage, required abuser to confess sin before congregation, told abused mate to forgive abuser because of confession, failed to follow up to see if mate made real changes, followed up to see if mate made real changes, required abuser to get some type of help, i.e. study, get counseling, etc.

(specify), practiced church discipline, offered shelter, other (specify), problem got better (specify how long it lasted), problem got worse.

73. How other Christians treated abused wife or husband: sympathized but did nothing, told wife to submit to husband no matter what he did, told wife submitting to sin is not Biblical subjection, helped restore wife's self-image, blamed for spouse's abuse, taught the wife's role, taught the husband's role, offered shelter, gave emotional support, confronted the abuser about his or her sin, helped resolve the problem, other (specify).

74. How the police and courts treated abused wife or husband: how many times did police respond, charges filed against abuser, required counseling or treatment for abuser, forbid abuser from living in the home, gave support for the abused wife or husband, restraining order obtained, helped resolve the problem, other (specify).

75. The abused wife's or husband's codependent reactions to help: depended on others to tell him or her what to say and do, called the helpers day and night to help solve problems, relied on the helper's strength instead of developing personal courage, constantly wanted others to talk him or her into doing what was right, needed constant advice and reassurance, unable to take control of his or her own life and develop personal strength to deal with the problem, frequently started a course of action and then backed out when abuser applied pressure, wanted frequent emotional support from others, incapable of acting to resolve the problem without constant coaching, other (specify).

76. The abused wife's or husband's healthy reactions to help: began making personal decisions by self to help self, developed self-confidence, learned to trust and rely on God, when learned how to deal with mate's sin, had strength to apply principles, developed insights into own codependent behavior and overcame it, had courage to do what was right regardless of the consequences, practiced safe methods for not submitting to abuse, followed through on using the police to help, followed through on using peer pressure in the church, quit covering up for abuse, took steps to protect self and children from dangerous situations, insisted that abuser get help to permanently overcome problem, quit smoothing things over with other people the abuser offended, able to reject advice of church leaders and Christians who essentially advocated submitting to the sin, held abuser accountable for his or her sinful behavior, other (specify).

77. Describe how others helped the abused wife or husband:

78. Has the abuser taken a marriage class? yes, no. Describe telling name and author of book, length of class, homework required, who taught, etc.

79. Result on marriage: improved permanently, improved for little while, abuser harped on mate's shortcomings, no effect, abuser quit going.

80. Has the abused wife or husband taken a marriage class? yes, no. Describe telling name and author of book, length of class, homework required, who taught, etc.

81. Result on marriage: improved permanently, improved for little while, discouraged by other couple's successes, made abuser's faults more glaring, no effect, quit going.

82. Has the abuser gone to anger control sessions? yes, no. Describe sessions, how long went, outside work required, who taught, etc.

83. Result on marriage: improved permanently, improved for little while, made abuser's faults more glaring, no effect, quit going.

84. Has the abuser gone to a psychological therapist? yes, no. Describe sessions, how long went, outside work required, type of therapist, etc.

85. Result on marriage: improved permanently, improved for little while, made abuser's faults more glaring, no effect, quit going.

86. Has the abused wife or husband gone to a psychological therapist? yes, no. Describe sessions, how long went, outside work required, type of therapist, etc.

87. Result on marriage: improved permanently, improved for little while, made abuser's faults more glaring, no effect, quit going.

88. What part has prayer played in the abused wife's or husband's life?

89. What helped the abused wife or husband the most?

90. Has the abuse stopped? yes, no. If "yes," briefly tell how long it went on, what stopped it and how long it has been stopped.

91. Give your advice: (on a separate sheet of paper write a short paragraph of advice for each of these people) new brides and grooms, abused wives and husbands, elders and preachers, Christians trying to help abused wives and husbands.

92. Tell how you handled one episode of abuse properly whether in your own life or the advice you gave someone else.

93. Tell how you handled one episode of abuse improperly whether in your own life or the advice you gave someone else.

94. Additional comments: If you would like to address some of these areas in more detail, write your comments on a separate sheet of paper.

Recommended reading:

Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men by Lundy Bancroft

Healing the Trauma of Domestic Violence: A Workbook for Women by Edward S. Kubany, Ph.D., Mari A. McCaig, MSCP, and Janet R. Laconsay, MA

Patsy Rae Dawson



Patsy Rae got her start studying and teaching about marriage as a young bride when an abusive husband baited her: “If a husband tells his wife to eat beans 7 days a week, don’t you think she should eat beans 7 days a week?” She knew only a Bible answer would stop the man from trying to get her to say something he could use against his wife.

Believing the Bible didn’t say much about being a woman and marriage, Patsy Rae was shocked to discover the Bible is full of marital wisdom. She has been studying, teaching, writing, and mentoring both women and men ever since—**for half a century**. She’s fascinated by the power of the scriptures to transform lives—yours and hers.

As an overcomer of a 46-year sexless marriage, Patsy Rae says:

I could not know the things I do if I had not lived the life I did. It gave me insights you can’t find in any book or class. I thank God for what he has done for me and for allowing me to share his love and his marvelous marital secrets with you. What a wonderful life of service he’s given me!”

Sexless Marriages Survey, Self-Assessment Checklists Administrator

Patsy Rae designed a comprehensive set of checklists of intensely personal questions. They help participants recognize the common 24/7 love sins in their sexless marriage so they can work on the real issues.

Sexuality & Personality Breakthrough Christian Coach

Certified as an Advanced Personality Trainer, Patsy Rae specializes in helping clients move out of childhood survival mode into thriving in their loving genetics. This skill helps her get quickly to the core issues of clients who have a variety of sexual problems.

Embarrass the Alligator Newsletter Editor and Author

Patsy Rae shares surprising facts and trends from her survey checklists in her newsletter. Due to participants asking for more information, she’s working on books related to the survey. She’s the author of *The Power of Sexual Surrender for Christians*, *God’s People Make the Best Lovers*, *God’s 11 Secrets of Sex for a Lifetime of Passion, Male and Female: God’s Genius*, and the YouTube classes *Challenges in Marriage: What to Do When Sin Inhibits Love* and *The Song of Solomon: God’s Sex Education for Ages 11 to 99*.

You can contact Patsy Rae and learn more at PatsyRaeDawson.com.