

## How to Fight Fair and Face Anger\*

Proper communication helps a spouse approach the mate about sin in his/her life. When you can't talk productively, 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.

### Three Levels of Sin

*Jude 22-23: "[1] And have mercy on some, who are doubting; [2] save others, snatching them out of the fire; and [3] on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh."*

The first two parts of this lesson deal learning how to fight fair in the first two levels of sin. The third part discusses facing the spouse's anger, which is the third level of sin.

#### 1. Some Who Are Doubting

These people are just getting involved in sin and may not know any better. Learning to fight fair and 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 to safety. 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 spouse and possibly the children may be in danger of being killed. Everyone facing spouse abuse must consider that possibility and protect themselves and their children. Here's a few statistics found on the National Domestic Violence Hotline website at [www.thehotline.org/resources/statistics/](http://www.thehotline.org/resources/statistics/) in May 2020:

- 1 in 4 women (24.3%) and 1 in 7 men (13.8%) aged 18 and older in the United States have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- IPV [intimate partner violence] alone affects more than 12 million people each year.
- More than 1 in 3 women (35.6%) and more than 1 in 4 men (28.5%) in the United States have experienced rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- Nearly half of all women and men in the United States have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime (48.4% and 48.8%, respectively).

Possibilities for dealing with a spouse in the third level will be discussed later. The first instance of spouse abuse I dealt with 48 years ago was husband abuse. The most recent case I've experienced was also husband abuse.

\* See the footnote for audio options.

---

**1** Copyright 1990, 2005, 2020 by Patsy Rae Dawson LLC. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced without written permission from the author. [Patsy@PatsyRaeDawson.com](mailto:Patsy@PatsyRaeDawson.com). The audio with stories and examples of these classes is available on Amazon as a [single audio CD](#) or as a [digital download](#) of the whole album. Search on Challenges in Marriage in CDs.

## More Information on the Three Levels of Sin

See the following articles:

1. “WARNING: 3 Levels of Sin—3 Levels of Restoration” deals with spouse abuse.  
<https://patsyraedawson.com/difficult-marriages/warning-3-levels-of-sin-3-levels-of-restoration/>
2. “Part 1: 3 Types of Sexless Marriages in the Bible” deals with sexual neglect.  
<https://patsyraedawson.com/sexless-marriages/part-1-3-types-of-sexless-marriages-in-the-bible/>
3. “Part 2: Type 3: The Hardcore Pathological Sexless Marriage” deals with sexual neglect.  
<https://patsyraedawson.com/sexless-marriages/part-2-type-3-the-hardcore-pathological-sexless-marriage/>

### Prepare to Fight Fair

*Proverbs 1:3:*

*“To receive instruction in wise behavior,  
Righteousness, justice and equity;...”*

### Analyze Your Arguing Pattern

*Ephesians 4:26-27: “BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.”*

“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. Both men and women have the power to tone down an argument or escalate it.

Spend some time analyzing your fighting pattern. Identify the triggers. What sets you off? What sets the other person off? What escalates the argument? Does the issue get solved or just postponed? As you go through the fighting fair rules, make plans on how you can apply them to de-escalate your arguments so you can solve the problems of life.

### Do Your Thing to Cool Off

*Proverbs 15:1:*

*“A gentle answer turns away wrath,  
But a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

*Proverbs 25:15:*

*“By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded,  
And a soft tongue breaks the bone.”*

“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: "If the ruler's temper rises against you, do not abandon your position, because composure allays great offenses."*

"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)

## Practice Fighting Fair Principles

### Argue with the Right Person

*Matthew 18:15-17: "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."*

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.)

### Argue About the Right Thing

*Ephesians 4:25: "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another."*

"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."

### Argue at the Right Time

*1 Samuel 25:19: "She said to her young men, 'Go on before me; behold, I am coming after you.' But she did not tell her husband Nabal."*

*1 Samuel 25:36-37: "Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light. But in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him so that he became as a stone."*

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.

### Don't Bring Up Past Fights

*Colossians 3:12-13: "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."*

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.)

### Avoid Name-calling

*Ephesians 4:29: "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear."*

"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 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.

## Be a Good Listener

*Proverbs 18:13:*

*"He who gives an answer before he hears,  
It is folly and shame to him."*

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."

## Don't Judge Motives

*1 Corinthians 2:11: "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."*

*1 Corinthians 4:5: "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God."*

*Proverbs 10:18:*

*"He who conceals hatred has lying lips,  
And he who spreads slander is a fool."*

"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.

## Finish the Fight

*Proverbs 15:22:*

*"Without consultation, plans are frustrated,  
But with many counselors they succeed."*

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.

## Admit It When Wrong

*Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."*

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

He corrected those who didn't fight fair.

### Corrected the Officer Who Struck Him

*John 18:21-23: "Why do you question Me? Question those who have heard what I spoke to them; they know what I said." When He had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, 'Is that the way You answer the high priest?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify of the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike Me?'"*

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.

### Quoted Scripture When Satan Tempted Him

*Matthew 4:1-11: "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."' Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, "He will command His angels concerning You"; and "On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone."' Jesus said to him, 'On the other hand, it is written, "YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST."' Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go, Satan! For it is written, "YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY."' Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him." 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 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.*

*Proverbs 1:3*

*“To receive instruction in wise behavior,  
Righteousness, justice and equity.”*

### **Face the Spouse’s Anger**

*Proverbs 16:27:*

*“A worthless man digs up evil,  
While his words are like scorching fire.”*

*Proverbs 21:23:*

*“He who guards his mouth and his tongue,  
Guards his soul from troubles.”*

*Proverbs 29:9:*

*“When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man,  
The foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest.”*

*Proverbs 29:11:*

*“A fool always loses his temper,  
But a wise man holds it back.*

*Proverbs 19:19:*

*“A man of great anger will bear the penalty,  
For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.”*

“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.”

### **Don’t Endure Verbal Abuse**

*Ephesians 5:11: “Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.”*

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 takes 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.

### Appeal to His Authority

*1 Samuel 25:30-31: "And when the LORD does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."*

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?

### See the Good in Him

*1 Samuel 25:25-26: "Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal."*

Abigail recognized that David's murderous desires were uncharacteristic of him. She told him not to sin because of a jerk like Nabal. ("Jerk" is a modern translation of the Hebrew word "fool.") She recognized David as the anointed king and pointed out the good in him.

### Small Penalty to Pay

*1 Peter 3:14: "But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED."*

Facing the mate's anger is a small penalty to pay in comparison to losing your own confidence in God, perhaps becoming willing to give up your children, or just disappearing one day. It's also a small penalty to pay in comparison to the spouse continuing in sin and perhaps becoming enslaved to it. Facing the spouse's anger is better than getting a divorce. At Level 1, the spouse's anger is small compared to the damage that is done to both the husband and wife by one of them being too afraid to face the anger. It's better to face the anger and correct the situation while it is small.

As the anger and the fighting escalate to Levels 2 and 3, the anger may necessitate going to a women's shelter or calling the hotline for abuse to get advice. Christians must protect themselves from violence.

### Levels 2 and 3 Anger—Avoid Threatening Situations

*Proverbs 4:16:*

*"For they cannot sleep unless they do evil;*



*And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone stumble.*

“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.”

## Cycle of Violence

As you look at the pattern of your arguments, watch for what is called the “cycle of violence.” That’s where the verbal and physical attacks occur according to a pattern. The cycle of violence goes through three stages.

### Build Up of Tension

The first stage of battering is an incredible building of power: noticeable change in body language and may include minor pushing, shoving, verbal abuse. This can go on for a year, months, or maybe the cycle is down to once a day.

### Release of Tension

During the second stage, the pressure gets so great that release must take place. The explosion blows. The spouse may scream, call names, and judge motives. Women get killed at this stage or end up in the hospital. Men can also be killed or suffer injuries requiring medical attention.

### The Honeymoon

The third stage is called the honeymoon. The spouse promises, “I’ll never do it again” or “I didn’t mean to do it.” The honeymoon stage may be just not getting hit. This stage progresses into blaming, “Why did you make me do this to you?” After the honeymoon, the pressure begins to build and the cycle starts all over.

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

## Bible Examples

### David

*1 Samuel 18:10-11: “Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul’s hand. Saul hurled the spear for he thought, “I will pin David to the wall.” But David escaped from his presence twice.”*

Repeatedly, when Saul tried to kill David, he fled to protect himself from harm.

### Jesus

*Luke 4:28-30: "And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went His way."*

When the people in Jesus' hometown became angry and would cast Him down a cliff, he did not submit to them, but escaped.

## Saul

*Acts 9:22-25: "But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Jesus is the Christ. When many days had elapsed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket."*

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.

## Christians

*Acts 9:26-27: "When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus."*

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 and was safe to associate with.

## Protection and Reconciliation

### Reconciliation with the Spouse

*1 Corinthians 7:10-11: "But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife."*

Reconciliation with a spouse should follow the same pattern as reconciliation with God.

### Reconciliation with God

*2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."*

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 reveals one family's struggle 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: "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."*

*1 Peter 2:13-15: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men."*

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: "The commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way. But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, 'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?' When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, 'What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.' The commander came and said to him, 'Tell me, are you a Roman?' And he said, 'Yes.' The commander answered, 'I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.' And Paul said, 'But I was actually born a citizen.' Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains."*

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: "But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me on these charges?" But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also very well know. If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then when Festus had conferred with his council, he answered, "You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go."*

## 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.

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. He was too violent. Wonder where he learned it?

## 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.

## 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.

## 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. Some shelters now take in men.

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.)

## Get Anger-Control Counseling

Anger-control counseling or group sessions are designed to help attendees learn how to control their anger and to find non-violent ways of expressing displeasure.

## 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: "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed."*

*Matthew 18:16: "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED."*

*2 Corinthians 13:1-2: "This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again I will not spare anyone."*

A wife needs to keep this in mind and document the abuse. Following are some suggested ways:

## 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.

## 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.

### 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.

### Have 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.

### 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.

## Overview From the Women's Shelter in Santa Maria, California

### 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, it will get worse. In battering relationships, a pattern, or "cycle," is often found. This cycle occurs in three stages.

#### 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.

#### Acute Episode

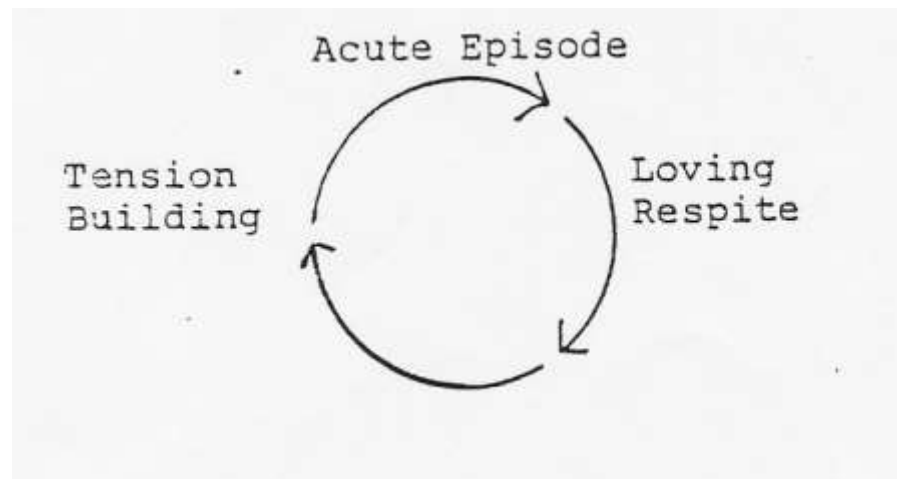
This is the stage where actual violence occurs. The tension, which has built up in the batterer finally explodes in a fit of rage. It is a brief stage compared to the other two. Often it seems surrealistic, with a disconnected, dreamlike quality.

#### 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 is sometimes called the “honeymoon.” It may last for a while, 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.

## Four Levels of Abuse

### 1. Potentially Dangerous

#### Physical Abuse

Pinch, squeeze, push, shove, restrain, jerk, pull, shake, slap, bite, hair pulled.

#### Mental Abuse

Ignoring woman’s feelings, withholding approval as punishment. Repeated humiliation; public and private. Blaming the 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.

#### 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.

## 2. Dangerous

### Physical Abuse

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

### 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.

### 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.

## 3. Highly Dangerous

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

## 4. Lethal

Physical Abuse: homicide

Mental Abuse: suicide

Sexual Abuse: murder.