

The Deep End

Week 2: God's Word to the Abusive

Weekly Summary: Should a church welcome those who have been abusive? If so, what should that welcome look like in order that all of God's children might feel safe as they gather together? How can we, like Jesus, be a church that is full of both grace and truth to both the abused and the abusive?

◆ Abuse is a **pattern** of behavior that uses **fear/force** to maintain **power/control**.

1. Look at **you**.

◆ Psalm 11:5 - The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked, those who love violence, he hates with a passion.

2. Look at **Him**.

◆ Matthew 10:2-4 - These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

1 Timothy 1:13-14 - Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.



3. Look at **them**.

4. Look at **me**.

- ◆ 2 Corinthians 7:11 - See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

Points to Ponder

1. What happens when the church is too quick to “forgive and forget” the sin of abuse? What happens when the church has no place for repentant abusers among its members? What would you write about abusers if you were tasked with creating the church policy on addressing abuse?
2. Agree/Disagree — If Jesus was known for loving prostitutes, tax collectors, and the worst sinners of his day, faithful Christians should be known for loving the abusive, registered sex offenders, and the worst sinners of our day.
3. Evaluate — God wants our church to tell the abusive to repent/change, to offer them the free gift of God’s grace, and to have unwavering boundaries as a necessary consequence of their past behavior.

Homework For Next Week: Isaiah 1:17

922 MINISTRIES

Abuse—Resource List

I. Local Help

- A. **Your Pastors**—While your pastors are not trained/licensed counselors and should not replace a professional therapist, they are equipped to help you deal with the effects of sin on your soul, including those sins that have been committed against you. Their confidential, Christ-centered guidance can be one vital piece of your recovery and healing.
- B. **Harbor House** (www.harborhousewi.org)—Harbor House, which is less than one mile from The CORE, exists to end domestic abuse in our community. Their many resources include support groups for men and women, survivors of abuse and abusers themselves. Call their 24-hour crisis helpline at 920-832-1666.
- C. **Christian Family Solutions** (www.christianfamilysolutions.org)—CFS is a professional, Christian counseling organizations that exists to help and heal people in need. Dr. Brandon Hayes, their clinical director, told one of our pastors, “We have many counselors on staff who are trained to help individuals who have been abused. We would love to partner with you in any way we can to help the Kingdom.”

II. Websites

- A. **G.R.A.C.E.** (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment; www.netgrace.org)—GRACE helps Christian ministries recognize, prevent, and respond to abuse in its various forms. Pastor Mike found this website to be a rich resource of videos and articles for anyone looking for biblical answers on sexual, emotional, verbal, and/or physical abuse.
- B. **Freedom for the Captives** (www.freedomforcaptives.com)—This ministry was created to help protect children from abuse in addition to empowering abuse survivors. Filled with scripture and free resources, Freedom for the Captives is a wonderful place for the members of our congregation to learn about how to make 922 a safe place for every child to worship Jesus.

III. Books

- A. **Rid of My Disgrace** by Justin and Lindsay Holcomb—This was the first book that Pastor Mike ever read on the topic of abuse and, nearly a decade later, continues to be one of his favorites. This work focuses on sexual abuse and guides the reader to the cleansing, purifying, and restoring work of Jesus.
- B. **The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma** by Bessel van der Kolk—This book, recommended by Dr. Brandon Hayes, explores the connection between various types of trauma and the way our brains ability to trust, practice self-control, and experience pleasure afterwards. This pioneering work has become a New York Times best seller.