

Deep End

Abuse Week #2: The Abuser

Weekly Summary: Sadly the number of church people who are abusers is no different than the number of those who aren't. Why is that the case? The sinful heart wants to get what it wants and will cause some people to do whatever they need to to get it. Aggressive people—verbal threats, belittling slander, or physical violence—scare people into compliance. So what would our Father say to abusive people? How would he open our eyes to the damage? How would he save us from the despair? How would he help us make abuse a part of our past?

Abuse: **A pattern of behavior that uses fear and force to maintain power & control.**

Galatians 5:19-21 - The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery...hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition...I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

God **condemns** abuse.

No matter the **why**, God never justifies the **what**.

Colossians 3:8 - But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

3 Truths Abusers Need to Hear

1) **Hurt** people **hurt** people.

Luke 6:43-45 - No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briers. 45 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

2) There's **hope** for your **heart**.

Psalms 51 (various verses) - Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions....Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior...You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt

offerings. 17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

Luke 23:24 - Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

3) People who hurt people need **help**.

Points To Ponder

- 1) We rarely hear domestic violence referred to as sin. Why do you think that is the case? Why do people often use other terms for domestic violence (Ex: "a lovers quarrel", "a private matter", or "a marital problem")? How does each of these terms fail to hold abusers accountable for their actions?
- 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.
- 4) Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." If you were speaking with someone who has abused people in the past, which one of today's three truths would you begin with? If you were speaking with someone who is currently an abuser, which one would you begin with? Be ready to share why did you chose the truth you did.

Homework: Isaiah 1:17-20

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.