

Overcoming Family Abuse

***** Trigger Warning, This Message Will Contain Discussions About Abuse Which Some Individuals Might Find Distressing Or Triggering, We Encourage You To Take Care Of Yourself. If You Need To Step Out At Any Point, Please Feel Free To Do So!!!*****

Today we are going to address family abuse and how to overcome it. Abuse is a true cancer on our society and the consequences can go on for generations within a family. When it comes to abuse we know that it comes in all shapes and sizes. Men who abuse their wives and/or children. There are also women who abuse their husbands and mothers who abuse their children. This abuse can be physical and/or verbal & emotional. Today's message is not just for those who have been victims of abuse but it is also for the abuser. We care about the abuser and we believe that God can redeem you with His grace and mercy just like he can heal the one abused. It is not uncommon for those who abuse to have been abused themselves.

If you are an abuser, if you have been abused or have suffered from abuse, here is the promise God makes to you!

Psalm 147:1-6 (NIV) **1** Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him! **2** The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel. He gathers those who feel like outcasts **3** He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. **4** He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. **5** Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit. **6** The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground. **7** Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp.

God will not enter into closed doors. He doesn't enter where He isn't welcomed. You must open your heart to Him and allow Him to heal you. You must invite Him into your pain and your difficulty. If you will, He promises to bring healing.

Let's Pray with this as our focus this morning and ask God to do only what He can do!

Welcome to **Week 5** of our series called **FIGHTING FOR YOUR FAMILY**. Through this series we are hoping to encourage you and help strengthen your family as we are looking at 6 areas where the FAMILY is under attack. So far we have looked at **A Mother's High Calling, A VISION for Parenting, What Marriage Is and Isn't**, and just last week we looked at **The Enemy Inside Our Home** dealing with technology and its spiritual impact on our families. Even though today's topic is difficult for us to talk about, we believe in the power of healing and that God can restore anything that is broken. So today we are going to address the issue of ABUSE. If there is anything that has caused more damage to our families it is this issue. It can be a generational curse that leaves in its wake broken marriages and lots of broken people.

The word abuse is used to describe the mistreatment or misuse of virtually anything. At the core of abuse, is the presence of a sinful heart. People abuse for a variety of reasons, but the underlying position comes from selfishness. Anyone can be an abuser, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or background. The Bible regards abuse as sin because we are called to love one another (**John 13:34**). Abuse disregards others and is the opposite of this command to love one another. An abuser desires to satisfy their natural selfishness regardless of the consequences to themselves or others. **Here's the hard truth, Everyone is guilty of abuse at some level, because everyone falls short of God's command to love others sacrificially**

Unfortunately though, when we think of abuse, our minds automatically think of just physical abuse. When in reality, there are many different types that are prevalent in our culture today. There is

- Verbal Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Self Abuse
- Spiritual Abuse

If you are suffering from one of these areas of abuse, please know that God can restore and heal your heart. So while this message gets deeper, we pray you would open your heart to what God can do in it. If you are the abuser, please know God can and will forgive the hurt that you have caused. Just as the abused, we pray you open your heart to what God wants to say to you as well.

Today, we will be looking at a relationship that God ordained that went south because one allowed his heart to become selfish and filled with jealousy. This relationship is none other than King Saul and David. Before we jump into our scripture, a little background on this relationship is very important. Years before Saul's rule, Samuel the prophet was Israel's religious leader but not a king. The Philistines were Israel's sworn enemies, and war broke out between the two on a fairly regular basis. Because of the constant threat of war and a desire to be like the surrounding nations, the people pressed Samuel to appoint a king to rule over them. Though this was displeasing to Samuel, God allowed it. The people had rejected God as king, forsaken Him, and served other gods. God told Samuel to anoint a king as the people had asked and Saul was secretly anointed the first king of all the tribes of Israel before being publicly selected by lot.

Saul's reign over Israel started peacefully, but the peace did not last. He went on to lead the nation through several military victories. However, a series of very serious mistakes, beginning with an unauthorized sacrificial offering (**1 Samuel 13:9–14**), started Saul's downfall from his kingship. Saul's downward spiral continued as he failed to eliminate all of the Amalekites and their livestock as commanded by God (**1 Samuel 15:3**). Disregarding a direct order from God, he

decided to spare the life of King Agag along with some of the choice livestock. He tried to cover up his transgression by lying to Samuel and, in essence, lying to God (1 Samuel 15). This disobedience was the last straw, as God would withdraw His Spirit from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14). Some say the relationship between God and Saul is arguably one of the saddest occurrences in Scripture. While Saul would be allowed to serve out the rest of his life as king, he was plagued by an evil spirit that tormented him and brought about waves of madness (1 Samuel 16:14–23). However, it was a young man brought into the king’s court named David who became the soothing influence on the troubled king by playing music that temporarily restored the king’s sanity. The king embraced David as one of his own, but all of this changed as David became a fine military leader in his own right. In fact, a popular song of the day was “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands” (1 Samuel 18:7). When Saul realized that God was with David, the king sought to kill David, and here is where the jealousy and abuse began.

As you take notes, we want to share with you 6 Action Steps to take towards finding healing!

Action Step #1: Stop Denying What Has Happened or is Happening

Denial is what happens when a person is going through something or been through something and the pain is unbearable. We think that if we stay busy, it’ll just pass. We begin to self medicate and pretend things are different and when things don’t go well, we have an excuse. There are many families that have an unspoken rule that says, “We don’t talk about family issues and pain.” So we create mistrust and a generational pattern of denial.

1 Samuel 18:5-11 (NIV) Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul’s officers as well. **6** When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. **7** As they danced, they sang: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.”

8 Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. “They have credited David with tens of thousands,” he thought, “but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?” **9** And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David. **10** The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand **11** and he hurled it, saying to himself, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” But David eluded him twice.

1 Samuel 19:8-10, “Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him. **9** But an evil spirit from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the

lyre, **10** Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape."

David was Saul's son's best friend, Jonathan. David served King Saul loyally. David understood that God ordained King Saul. Yet, when Saul threw the spear and became the abuser; David didn't allow his allegiance to the king to get in the way of life and death. His denial period lasted only enough for two spears to miss. How many spears have you let go by without leaving? Have you been hit by a spear? Are you in denial of being or have been abused? Or are you in denial of being an abuser?

Action Step #2: Recognize Abusers Have Two Sides

Saul trying to murder David makes this the worst type of abuser, but the fact that Saul is even considered an abuser is mind blowing. Why? Saul shows us that an abuser can have two sides. An abuser can have a good reputation in the community, a prominent position or even be used by God in the past. Matter of fact, Saul has some amazing attributes.

- Saul was appointed by God: **1 Samuel 10:1**, "Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance?"
- Saul had the gift of prophecy: **1 Samuel 10:6**, "The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person."
- Saul appears to be humble: **1 Samuel 10:22** "So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."
- Saul is impressive in appearance: **1 Samuel 9:2**, "**2** Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.
- Saul won great victories for God **1 Samuel 14:48** He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.

But there was a dark side to Saul. If we are not careful, we can hide the dark side of ourselves as well. The problem with Saul is that he didn't allow God to work through the jealousy and selfishness in his heart. Rather than see that God was working through David the way He had worked through him earlier in his own life; Saul became enraged with the way David was being praised.

We have to be cautious of the dark parts of our lives. Sometimes we deny our own faults and weaknesses; even if someone else points them out. So what happens is we ignore what we're

pushing deeper in selfishness and never present it to God to redeem. Just as we can deny the dark side of ourselves, we can easily deny the dark side of others. Instead of realizing that person is an abuser we keep going down the path of hurt because of the good they do in other parts of life. Have you allowed God to reconcile the dark areas of your heart?_Saul let his dark side get the best of him, will you?

Action Step #3: Run If You Have To

How did David handle the abuse? He ran! **1 Samuel 19:10** Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape. David didn't say, "He's just having one of those spells," or "Look at all he's done for me." No, David recognized his life was in danger, so he ran. **Sometimes, the best solution for healing is to run to healing!** Where did he run?

- **David ran to God: Psalm 31:1-5 (MSG)** "In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. **2** Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. **3** Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. **4** Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. **5** Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God." David ran to God, he cried out to God, he looked to God for his safety. He looked to God to be his place of refuge. Healing and safety and security is found in Him. David looked for wisdom and guidance from God as well. The beautiful thing is that God has promised wisdom to all who will ask for it. God has said that he will lead us by his Spirit. Sometimes these situations are not the easiest to navigate. But like David we can run to God and make Him our refuge.
- **David ran to physical safety:** David found himself in many different places of refuge, we have read the names of some of these places in the Word. Whether it was the Cave of Adullam, the Wilderness of Paran, the Wilderness of En Gedi, or the Forest of Hereth, those places became David's safe place. David said, I am going to find a place of physical safety. The story of David running and fleeing from his abuser parallels the story that many have. It's not easy to start over. It's not easy to move out of a house into an apartment. It's not easy to move back to your old home town, or back in with your parents. **But the key is that your life is valuable.** David knew God would protect, and He will do the same for you. Don't be afraid, trust in Him!
- **David ran to a support system:** God's plan is not that you handle everything by yourself. You are created for community. **You may have been abused in isolation but your healing may come in community!** David had Jonathon, found a wife by the name of Abigail, God brings 400 men around him. Who do you have? Who's your support system?

Action Step #4: Set Boundaries

Boundaries are verbal statements that help us to define who we are and what will and will not be tolerated by us. We gotta learn when to say no, and when to say yes; and of course abusers do not follow boundaries. David had 2 boundaries. He would not touch God's anointed King Saul. This was a personal conviction for David. He had two opportunities to kill the person that was abusing and trying to kill him and he wouldn't couldn't cross the boundary he put in place.

He also had a boundary put in place to say goodbye to Jonathon. This was his best friend. Obviously it hurt, but by seeing Jonathon, it would continue to put his life in danger. The issue with abusers and those who are being abused is usually a boundary issue. That is why you need people in your life to assist you in this process. Abusers are those who do not see boundaries. And many times, those who are abused do not know how to set appropriate boundaries. We need to remember that God is the inventor of boundaries. God is the creator of boundaries. He tells the sea, go this far and no further. The issue with abusers and those who are being abused is usually a boundary issue. What boundaries do you need to set in your life? Are you letting boundaries be crossed?

Action Step #5: Find Forgiveness

Out the gate, you see that we did not say forgive and forget. What we are saying is that forgiveness is a choice that has to be made on your part and you may never forget what has happened. Abuse may not have been something you could have avoided, but neither is forgiveness. Forgiveness breeds freedom and healing. **James 5:16**, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Forgiveness breeds love and not vengeance. **Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)** **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Forgiveness is not putting yourself in a place to be hurt again. It is not saying that what happened to you didn't matter or wasn't wrong. Forgiveness is simply releasing the pain and hurt and the situation into God's hands.

Scripture does not necessarily say that David forgave Saul in those words, but his actions after Saul's death seem to show that David found some sort of healing and freedom.

- In **2 Samuel 1** David writes a lamentation following Saul's death. In that lamentation he honors Saul for his accomplishments. He says good things about him.
- The man who announced that he had killed Saul made a mistake by thinking David would be happy about that, David had him put to death.
- And then, David looked for someone in Saul's household that he could show kindness to. **2 Samuel 9**, He found Mephibosheth who was one of Saul and Jonathans relatives who was lame in his feet and David brought him to his own house and had him sit around his table.

It's hard to truly forgive when you don't understand God's forgiveness and when we don't forgive we are just allowing ourselves to be tied to the pain that is like a shackle wrapped around our feet.

Action Step #6: Spend Time In God's Presence

No one teaches us more about spending time in God's presence than David. After all that David went through in his life; good or bad, he understood the need for worship! David knew how to sing, to dance, to worship, to meditate and enjoy his God. He knew that whatever he faced on this side of eternity; the only remedy was his God. **Tragically, for most; if not careful, we see worship as a last result compared to being the only solution!** How's your worship life? Does it depend on the day of the week? Does it depend on your circumstances? Does it depend on how you're feeling? Or is your worship a lifestyle? For healing to have a true impact on our lives, worship has to be necessary and not sporadic.

As we close today, we wanna make sure that you understand we are not putting God in a box to these 6 steps. God can allow you to completely find healing in a moment, or it may take time through prayer, worship and possibly even therapy. Healing could happen through a season of mourning or through one sermon. God can do the impossible which includes helping you find healing though the abuse you may have suffered.

The same thing can be applied to those who may struggle with being the abuser. God can change your heart. God can change your motives and the selfishness that is poking through. God can help breed life through your words and actions, rather than death. The question for both parties is will you let Him? Are you willing to try it His way? Is your family struggling because of your lack of willingness to let go of whatever is standing in your way to healing?

Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Don't allow what you think is impossible to stand in the way of what God wants to do in and through your family!

Invitation:

Are you in denial regarding being abused presently or in the past?

What dark area in your heart needs to be reconciled through the love of God?

Are you in a place where you need to run? To God, Physical Safety or a Support System?

What boundaries need to be put in place?

Who needs to be forgiven in your life? Is reconciliation a possibility?

How's your worship? Are you spending enough time with God that He knows you're even there?