



## Wrestling with Spiritual Leaders

March 19th, 2023 | Conversation Three | Rev. Baly Botten

“Unlike physical abuse that often results in bruised bodies, spiritual abuse leaves scars on the psyche and soul. It is inflicted by persons who are accorded respect and honor in our society by virtue of their role as religious leaders and models of spiritual authority. They base that authority on the Bible, the Word of God, and see themselves as shepherds with a sacred trust. But when they violate that trust, when they abuse their authority, and when they misuse ecclesiastical power to control and manipulate the flock, the results can be catastrophic.”

*Ronald M. Enroth*

**4** You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. **5** So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. **6** My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill.

*Ezekiel 34:1-6, NIV*

“Be careful. Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees”

*Matthew 16:6, 11, NIV*

## Twisted Values that Enable Spiritual Abuse:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ : “David shepherded them with integrity of the heart...”  
*(Psalm 78)*

\_\_\_\_\_ : Doers of the word *(James 1)*

\_\_\_\_\_ : “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” *(1 Corinthians 11)*

\_\_\_\_\_ : “He must increase, but I must decrease.” *(John 3)*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_

**34** “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

*John 13:34-35, NIV*

3. \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.  
*(Matthew 20:25-26)*

Now the overseer is to be... not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. *(1 Timothy 3:3)*

Be shepherds of God’s flock... not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. *(1 Peter 5:3)*

And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.” *(2 Timothy 2:24)*