



Life More Abundantly

“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill and to destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10, NKJV)

How I cried out to Jesus for so many years, trying to understand this verse and asking why it didn't apply to me. Have life? What was that? I knew the Scriptures well enough to know it was not about material things. I also knew that while children bring life, losing one's life to them was not what Jesus meant either. But the hardest part of that Scripture was how it *did not* apply to my marriage.

When asked if I was happy and satisfied in my nearly two decades of marriage, I always answered in total: cumulatively we have had about two good years. I could honestly say I was not married to my best friend. I have had “best girlfriends” and, before marriage, close male friends who never treated me as poorly as my husband.

More abundantly? Those words had no meaning to me. Yet “helpful” Christian friends and pastors—who mentioned on several occasions the tension that filled a room when my husband and I entered—proclaimed *I* was the cause of not finding happiness in my marriage, stating that *I* was the tension causer: I need to praise my spouse more, extol him when the simplest thing is accom-

plished (like taking out the garbage or transferring laundry), and change my hardened heart. I believed that thinking for many years. *I* was the problem. I needed to change, and through *my* changing, my husband would change.

One day in prayer, my eyes opened to see this Scripture in a new way. As crazy as it sounds, I wanted to share it with my husband, knowing how he always turned Scripture around and made me feel even more confused. As I was about to speak this revelation to my husband, we were interrupted by one of the children and my focus shifted. Later when talking to a girlfriend and confidante, I told her what I thought God was saying to me. What if this thief, this enemy was actually your husband? And your husband was out to steal your dignity, your identity, and your God-given ability to be a good mom, to kill your dreams and purpose from God—out to destroy every last shred of self-worth, self-esteem, all confidence in ability to hear from God, ability to trust instincts, and ability to matter to someone. Jesus' coming was reassurance that Jesus saw everything, heard everything, and would give me hope,

because living life abundantly is a *promise*. My girlfriend took it all in. She did not call me crazy or say that my interpretation was wrong. We prayed together. When we parted, she said that in her experience interpretation is verified through the Bible. I remember feeling glad I spoke to her, but confused because God had given me Scripture, yet it wasn't enough.

Heeding the advice of my friend and knowing she was correct that words from God will be verified in Scripture, I asked God for further clarification. I was led to Matthew 12:25–37.

But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon

you. Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of

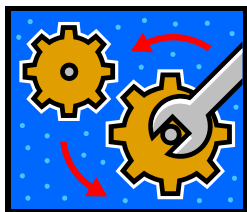
the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

A house divided—we were divided on so many issues, from childrearing to financial matters to intimacy to future plans. I felt the walls crumbling, and I felt powerless to stop it. I knew my husband was bound, that the enemy had come in and tied him up. I prayed and fasted for our lives to change. The problem was that my husband did not see he had a problem. I was the cause of all his problems. After reading this Scripture, I knew Jesus saw what was going on and was giving me answers, and for the first time I was ready to receive them. In tears I read, "For out of the heart the mouth speaks....The evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him." I knew the constant put-downs, the belittling, the taunting songs, and the name calling was not of God. I was comforted by Jesus' words, yet I

still felt powerless. Part of me still believed the word of man—that *I* need to change.

Three years passed from the understanding of this Scripture to separating from my husband. When he left, the oppression left with him. Within a matter of two weeks, my awful health issues were completely gone. For the first time in years, I fell asleep without crying myself to sleep or feeling like I was sleeping with the enemy. As I look back now, Jesus came—he promised to set the captives free and *he* did.

Life abundantly—I am discovering every day what that means. I thought our time on the mission field was full of miracles, but nothing compares to how my children and I have existed over the past two years. I am a single mom, but I am not alone. Jesus takes cares of the widows—even those through emotional abandonment—and orphans—children whose fathers have a presence but are not present. I have peace, and my joy in Christ is back. I trust Jesus. I trust my instincts and know they are God-given. ☞



Is Domestic Violence "A Problem That Can't Be Fixed"?

In "The Edge of Darkness," a recent op-ed piece in *The Boston Globe* (10 September 2010), Nathalie Favre-Gilly and Deborah Collins-Gousby wrote that costs (compiled by the Center for Disease Control) of domestic violence exceeded an estimated \$5.8 billion every year. This includes nearly \$4.1 billion in the direct costs of medical and mental health care, and another \$1.18 billion in the indirect costs of

lost productivity. As a result of the brutality they endure, victims of domestic violence lose a total of nearly 8 million days of paid work—the equivalent of more than 32,000 full-time jobs—and nearly 5.6 million days of household productivity each year. In this article, the authors raise the question: "What does it say about us as a society that we continue to view domestic violence as a problem that can't be fixed?" The church of Jesus Christ has a long career of throwing itself against insurmount-

able evils. Only consider the abolition of slavery that was accomplished through the efforts of dedicated Christians such as Wilbur Wilberforce and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The church has spearheaded efforts to eliminate poverty, hunger, ill health, illiteracy, child abuse and neglect, and a host of other social issues. When will we take domestic abuse off the "impossible" list and apply our powers of prayer and persuasion, our God-given talents, and our conviction to stemming this evil? ☞



Letters from Our Readers

About 25 years ago I was in an abusive marriage. In fact, my husband held me captive with the threat of taking my children while I was at work. So I worked, handed my check over to him, and prayed never to make him angry. Of course, I did and I was beat, pushed out of a window, a moving car, and ultimately stabbed and threatened with death. I was the typical battered woman who left and came back—about seven times in the eight years we were together.

On one of the occasions when I left home, I stayed at a faith-based shelter for the first time. I felt such a sense of security and peace, and it changed my life to know that the Lord loved me and that I wasn't a terrible, worthless person. I wasn't just told this; I was treated like I was someone loved by God! I believe God planted a seed in me to shelter and help other battered women as I had been helped.

It wasn't until 2007 that I stopped ignoring that call on my life. I was a little reluctant at first to tell other people about my dream of helping battered women. When I told my husband of fifteen years that I wanted to open a faith-based shelter, he was totally supportive. When I spoke to my pastors, they not only supported our mission but provided covering for us; they support us monetarily, with 10% of the church's offering going to the House of Lydia. We are working now on raising money to purchase a house to use for the shelter. Many people in our church and in the secular community have joined with us in providing as many services as possible to battered women and

their children. We will offer the women and children shelter, food, and spiritual guidance to strengthen them for their new life ahead.

*Janice Gunn
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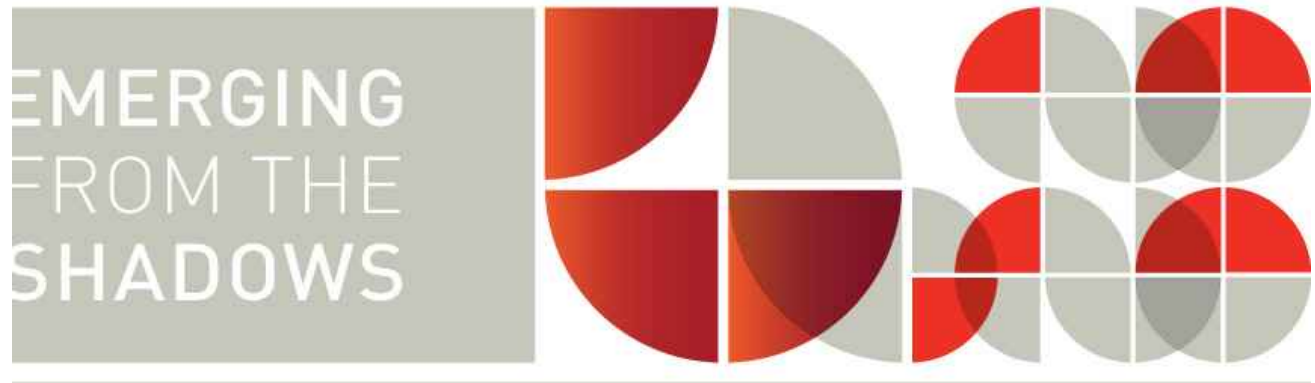
I want to join your organization and would like to know ways that I can help. Although my abuse was more mental and emotional, it was obviously bad enough that I had a nervous breakdown. This was further exacerbated by the abuse from my church, which included having my family brought on stage in front of the congregation on a Sunday morning with an announcement before everyone that my husband and I were having marriage problems. I confronted the pastor afterward to tell him how humiliating that was and that it was not appropriate to do that to my children, to which he responded that he had been led by the Holy Spirit. And when I went to pastoral counseling, I was told that my husband and I were supplying the pastor with two stories that were "like day and night," and that clearly my husband was believed over me. I could go on, but the point is that I want to join PASCH and to help in any way I can.

My story is not unlike hundreds of other women. My ex-husband is an abuser, and the churches we attended over the years actually promoted some wrong behaviors under the guise of submission. Our family was highly involved at church and looked upon as church pillars, but it was a facade. Some people in the church saw through that facade and would tell me so, but they were too scared to confront or to hold

my husband accountable. When the "line in the sand was crossed" and I had the strength and courage to leave my marriage, the church and especially the pastor were condemning. I had gone to the pastor in desperation, only to have him call my husband and me in and tell my husband all I disclosed. It made matters worse, and after that all my phone calls were listened to and e-mails read. My children and I left the church over eighteen months ago and have not really found a church home since. We could not listen to any more sermons about divorce being wrong no matter what and my kids hearing that I was a sinner due to divorcing their dad.

As I was reading the NLT Study Bible, I was reminded of your spring 2010 newsletter article comparing Ezekiel 16 to an ancient marriage contract. In this article, you compare the book of Deuteronomy to ancient vassal treaties. Both Ezekiel and Deuteronomy use very powerful images to describe a traumatic experience. Ezekiel 16 uses the example of abuse in a marriage, showing how trust is lost in a personal relationship. Deuteronomy 28:20–57 describes a decline in a civilization: sickness, famine, starvation, foreign invasion, plunder, the loss of independent government, the breakdown of society caused by war, and finally deportation.

I know that healing is one of the goals of PASCH's ministry. You helped me learn how to use the Scriptures as part of the healing process. When we get insights from God's Word, we know he understands our feelings. I've read that one of the first steps in the process is to name the problem. ☪



Fifth International PASCH Conference

May 12–15, 2011
Columbia Bible College
Abbotsford (Vancouver) British Columbia, Canada

Featured Speakers

- *Catherine Clark Kroeger, Massachusetts*
- *Eva Sanderson, Zambia*
- *Juan Carlos Areán, Massachusetts*
- *Rus Ervin Funk, Kentucky*
- *Nancy Nason-Clark, New Brunswick*
- *Natalie Collins, United Kingdom*

Tentative Program

Thursday, May 12

- 7:00–8:00 Registration
8:00–9:00 Prayer Service: Gwen McVicker

Friday, May 13

- 8:00–9:00 Registration
9:00–9:15 Welcome, Introductions and Music by Cathy Hardy
9:15–10:00 Catherine Clark Kroeger and Eva Sanderson with Q&R
10:30–12:00 *Plenary*: Juan Carlos Areán, “The Effects of Love on Children”
1:00–2:30 Workshops and Paper Presentations (Group A):
“Churches Recognizing and Responding to Domestic Violence Issues”
3:00–3:45 *Plenary*: Natalie Collins, “Restored”
3:45–5:15 Workshops and Paper Presentations (Group B):
“Faith-based Responses to Domestic Violence”
7:00–8:30 “Road to Healing”: Music, Poetry, and Stories

Saturday, May 14

- 9:00–9:30 Welcome, Poetry, and Music
9:30–10:30 *Plenary*: Rus Ervin Funk, “Engaging Men in Learning to Promote Gender Respect”

11:00–12:00 “Working With Men” Panel: Jane Katz, Rus Funk, Magi Cooper
 1:00–2:30 Workshops and Paper Presentations (Group C):
 “Barriers and Opportunities within Faith Communities”
 3:00–3:45 RAVE Team Presentation: Nancy Nason-Clark
 3:45–5:15 Workshops and Paper Presentations (Group D)
 7:00–8:30 *Panel:* “Innovative Practices in the Justice System”
 (including advocate, police officers, crown, survivor)

Sunday, May 15

9:30–10:00 Catherine Clark Kroeger and Eva Sanderson
 10:00–10:30 Music, Poetry, Remembrance
 10:30–11:00 “The Journey”: Nancy Nason-Clark with Catherine Clark Kroeger
 11:00–11:30 Challenge: Local Pastor

For more information, contact administrator Walt Goerzen by phone (604-850-4851) or by e-mail (wgoerzen@telus.net). For more conference details, visit www.fromtheshadows.ca. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

An Open Invitation to Two Conference Workshops
From Julie Owens, Founding Board Member

As the Fifth International PASCH Conference draws near, the excitement is steadily building. Those of us who have been with PASCH from its beginning know how incredibly powerful and life-changing these gatherings can be. We eagerly await the opportunity to share with you what we have learned, to meet all of you and to learn from you, and to take the time to be refreshed and renewed in beautiful British Columbia.

I am once again privileged with the opportunity to speak and offer training at this conference. I will be offering two workshops, and I hope you will consider joining me. The first is entitled “Exploring the Complexities of Domestic Violence.” During this time, I will distill much of what I have learned in my twenty-plus years working in the field of domestic violence in a variety of capacities, including shelter manager, victim support group facilitator, hospital crisis response team director, substance abuse counselor, expert

witness, and national trainer. During this session we will dissect the many common but dangerous myths and



misconceptions about what domestic violence is, who it affects, and why it occurs. I will discuss the complex relationship dynamics involved and will offer an in-depth look at both victims and abusers and the differences between them. We will explore why victims “stay” and what is necessary for an abuser to stop his behavior. Finally, this workshop will address the many ways in which victims may change over time as the abuse escalates, and what we must do to support them.

The second session I will offer is entitled “Best Practices for Supporting Victims of Domestic Violence.” I believe that nothing is more important, once a person really understands the above issues, than deeply internalizing the empowerment philosophy of victim support. This workshop will address the ways in which volunteer and professional helpers in all fields should approach victims of DV in order to best support them. Specific “do’s and don’ts” of victim advocacy will be included. A strong emphasis will be placed on how to avoid the “rescue triangle,” which can result in a victim’s resentment of the helper (and/or vice versa). Helper self-care and ways of recognizing and avoiding vicarious trauma/compassion fatigue will also be discussed.

I hope you will join me in one or both of these workshops. I look forward to meeting each of you. I know that our time together will be a blessing and time of learning from one another. ☞



Snippets of Scripture

While ordinarily we need to examine Scripture extensively in context, searching what comes before and after, sometimes we need brief passages in moments of duress. Short texts can be very effective as we seek to sustain the souls of those in despair and distress. As you need them, try these nuggets from Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Through you I am saying to the prisoners of darkness, “Come out! I am giving you your freedom!” They will be my sheep, grazing in green pastures and on hills that were previously bare. They will neither hunger nor thirst. The searing sun and scorching desert winds will not reach them anymore. For the Lord in his mercy will lead them beside cool waters. And I will make my mountains into level paths for them. The highways will be raised above the valleys. (Isa. 49:9–11)

O Israel, how can you say the Lord does not see your troubles? How can you say God refuses to hear your case? Have you never heard or understood? Don’t you know that the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. (Isa. 40:27–31)

But now, listen to me, Jacob my servant, Israel my chosen one. The Lord who made you and helps you says, O Jacob, my servant, do not be afraid. O Israel, my chosen one, do not fear. For I will give you abundant water to quench your thirst and to moisten your parched fields. And I will pour out my Spirit and my blessings on your children. They will thrive like watered grass, like willows on a riverbank. Some will proudly claim, “I belong to the Lord.” Others will say, “I am a descendant of Jacob.” Some will write the Lord’s name on their hands and will take the honored name of Israel as their own. (Isa. 44:1–5)

I the Lord your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, says: I am the Lord your God who teaches you what is good and leads you along the paths you should follow. Oh, that you had listened to my commands! Then you would have had peace flowing like a gentle river and righteousness rolling like waves. (Isa. 48:17–19)

When the poor and needy search for water and there is none, and their tongues are parched from thirst, then I, the Lord, will answer them. I, the God of Israel, will never forsake them. I will open up rivers for them on high plateaus. I will give them fountains of water in the valleys. In the deserts they will find pools of water. Rivers fed by springs will flow across the dry, parched ground. I will plant trees—cedar, acacia, myrtle, olive, cypress, fir and pine—on barren land. Everyone will see this miracle and understand that it is the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, who did it. (Isa. 41:17–20)

Though the Lord is very great and lives in heaven, he will make Zion his home of justice and righteousness. In that day he will be your sure foundation, providing a rich store of salvation, wisdom and knowledge. The fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure. (Isa. 33:5–6)

Until at last the Spirit is poured down upon us from heaven. Then the wilderness will become a fertile field, and the fertile field will become a lush and fertile forest. Justice will rule in the wilderness and righteousness in the fertile field. And this righteousness will bring peace. Quietness and confidence will fill the land forever. (Isa. 32:15–17)

Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant; do not be dismayed, Israel. For I will bring you home again from distant lands, and your children will return from their exile. Israel will return and will have peace and quiet and nothing will make them afraid. (Jer. 46:27)

I will surely bring my people back again to this very city and let them live in peace and safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and mind to worship me forever, for their own good and for the good of all their descendants. (Jer. 32:37–39) ❧

Are We Declining In Empathy?

By Catherine Clark Kroeger

A recent study of college students finds that there is a marked decline in feeling concern for the plight of others. Keith O'Brien in his article "Empathy is So Yesterday" (*The Boston Sunday Globe*, 17 October 2010) declares: "A study conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research found that college students today are 40 percent less empathetic than they were in 1979, with the steepest decline in the last 10 years."

Empathy is that precious quality of being able to understand and care for the feelings of others. The article further explains: "Most concur that empathy is some sort of emotional response to another person's plight, pain, state or suffering." O'Brien quotes Aaron L. Pincus, professor of psychology at Penn State University, as saying, "It's not just putting oneself in another's shoes. It's truly grasping what they're experiencing. Your emotional state will move in a direction more similar to the person you're empathizing with."

St. Paul advised us to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. His writings are full of injunctions to tenderness and compassion, to valuing the needs and afflictions of others as deeply as our own: "When one suffers, all suffer with them" (1 Cor. 12:26).

Yet we are not always faithful, even when others are in a desperate

plight. The prophet Zechariah spoke of those "who will not care for the sheep who are threatened by death, nor look after the young, nor heal the injured nor feed the healthy" (Zech. 11:16b). How often we as God's



people have been guilty of this—especially when it comes to reaching out to situations of domestic violence! Ezekiel declared:

Thus says the Lord God: Here am I! I am going to take thought for My flock, and I will seek them out. And as for you, My flock, thus said the Lord God: I am going to judge between one animal and another. To the rams and the bucks: Is it not enough to you to graze on choice grazing ground, but you must also trample with your feet what is left from your grazing? And is it not enough for you to drink clear water, but you must also muddy with your feet what is left? And My flock graze on what your feet have trampled and drink what

your feet have muddied. Assuredly, thus says the Lord God to them: Here am I, I am going to decide between the stout animals and the lean. Because you pushed with flank and shoulder against the feeble ones and butted them with your horns until you scattered them abroad, I will rescue My flock and they shall no longer be a spoil. I will decide between one animal and another.

(Ezek. 34:11–22)

How then do we respond to a subject as uncomfortable as domestic violence? How can we even acknowledge it in our midst? All too often we have simply condemned or ignored those who are endangered or wounded or desperate.

As with all sin and affliction, we must first acknowledge its presence and then bear our concerns up before God. Those who take the trouble to inform themselves will best understand the problem. They will be ready to reach out to victim and perpetrator alike, to seek to alleviate the suffering of one while holding the other accountable. Perhaps persons of faith have lacked empathy because they have not made the hard decision to engage in the positive action that Scripture enjoins. ☩

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves....Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality....Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another....Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

(Rom. 12:9, 10, 12–13, 15–16, 21)

"When Job's three friends...heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was."

(Job 2:11–13)



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