

The Heart of Violence

Domestic Violence and the Christian Home

Introduction:

Rethinking Some Past Approaches

Here are a few responses to domestic violence I've encountered from the Church and my reaction.

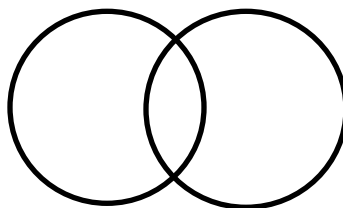
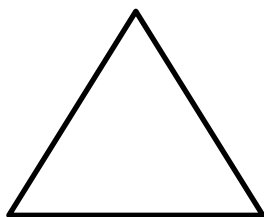
1. A Justice Problem: Violence in the home is criminal and primarily the responsibility of law enforcement and the courts. Therefore, abusive men must be incarcerated.
 2. An Anger Problem: Violence is the result of anger and therefore, we address the perpetrators anger and anger cues.
 3. A marriage Problem: Domestic violence is a result of conflict within the marriage. "It takes two to tango." Therefore, we must offer Biblical marriage counseling.
 4. The Wife has a Problem: Violence is the result of frustration with an un-submissive wife. Violence is not justified but understandable. Violence is exaggerated. Therefore, we must teach Biblical submission and a theology of suffering.
- A Heart Problem: Violence begins in the heart of an abusive husband. Therefore, the gospel is his only real hope.
 - The most effective means of reducing violence against women is addressing the heart of men.

Redefining a common problem

Definition: "An abuse of power, manifested through selfishly motivated patterns of behavior intended to exercise or maintain control over one's partner."

"An abuse of power"

Is power, authority, or position _____?

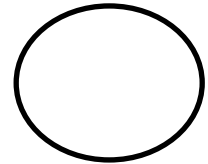
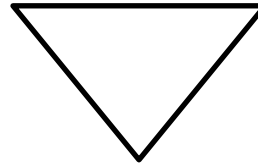


When Jesus teaches on leadership He calls us to “power under.”

- Matthew 20:20-28

Abusive men need a redeemed view of power, position, and leadership.

- Ephesians 5:22-33
- Colossians 3:19
- 1Peter 3:7



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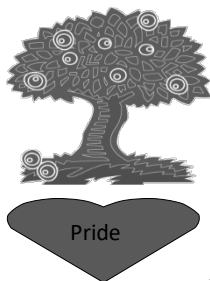
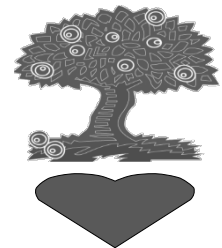
“An abuse of power, manifested through selfishly motivated patterns of behavior intended to exercise or maintain control over one’s partner.”

“Selfish motivation”

Pride is at the heart of violence:

“An abusive man is often so preoccupied with himself that he sees himself as misunderstood, not wrong.”¹
-Brenda Branson

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. 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. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” Luke 6:43-45

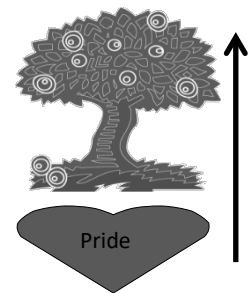


“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” James 4:1-6

¹ Branson Brenda, Violence Among Us: Ministry to Families in Crisis. Valley Forge, PA. Judson Press, 2007

Pride distorts our view of authority.

- Inflating our own importance.
- Making demands of others.
- Unfair expectations.
- Allowing us to justify inappropriate behavior.
- Denies or pushes aside responsibility.
- Quickly offers excuses or justifications.
- Resists accountability.
- Positions us to question real authority.
- Quickly voices concerns and opinions.



“There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”

Proverbs 6:16-19

Control is often the goal

“An abuse of power, manifested through selfishly motivated patterns of behavior intended to exercise or maintain control over one’s partner.”

“exercise or maintain control”

“Intimate partner violence is at its core an attempt to dominate and control by whatever means necessary”²

-Lundy Bancroft

Controlling others may include physical violence.

Intimidation	Manipulation	Threats
Verbal Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Economic Abuse
Using the Children	Spiritual Concerns	Isolation
Blame-shifting	Accusations	Destruction of Property
Animal Abuse	Suicide/Homicide	Shaming

² Bancroft Lundy, The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the impact of domestic violence on family dynamics

Process of Change

1. Acknowledge sinful behavior.

- Encourage responsibility.
- Establish accountability
- Draw attention to specific actions
- Promote Biblical confession
- Highlight the impact of his Actions
- Offer Hope (Real Hope)

2. Address the heart.

- Learn his intentions, desires, and expectations
- Consider approaching each abusive behavior with a what question
 - What...
 - did you want to see happen?
 - did you expect her to do in response?
 - did you hope to accomplish?
 - did you not want her to do?
 - etc
- Promote Biblical repentance

3. Plan of Action

- Set Concrete Goals for Spiritual Growth and Change
 - Church Discipline/Restoration
 - Beware of collusion
 - Consistent with Court Orders and Victim Requests
 - Not just hoops to jump through
 - He needs to pursue the highest goal throughout the process (2Cor 5:9)

Recommended Resources:

Jones, Robert. [*Pursuing Peace*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Jones, Robert. [*Uprooting Anger*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 2005.

Moles, Chris. [*Heart of Domestic Abuse*](#). Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2015.

Powlison, David. [*Anger: Escaping the Maze*](#). Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Co, 2000.

Powlison, David. [*Good & Angry*](#). Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016.

Priolo, Lou. [*Complete Husband \(revised and expanded\)*](#). Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 2007.

Sande, Ken & Johnson, Kevin. [*Resolving Everyday Conflict*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011.

Sande, Ken. [*Peacemaker*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991.

Scott, Stuart. [*Exemplary Husband*](#). Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2009.

Welch, Edward. [*Living with an Angry Spouse*](#). Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2008.