

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Too often, Pastors who lack knowledge of the dynamics of abuse, utilise Scripture in a simplistic, condemning way, that disempowers the woman and leaves her in even more danger than before she went for help in her situation of domestic violence. The Pastor, in effect, becomes a criminal accomplice to the crime of abuse.



“Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives’ conduct” (1Peter 3:1)

Too often, pastors use this Scripture to tell wives to go back to their husbands and be a better example of a Christian wife so that they will win their husband over for Christ and then the abuse will automatically stop.

This Scripture is a great text for a wife or husband to use when they have an unbelieving spouse in an otherwise reasonable marriage. But it is DOWNRIGHT DANGEROUS to utilise this Scripture in an abusive setting.



Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. (Ephesians 5:22)

Too many Pastors still don't take a woman seriously when she tells him she is being abused. Pastors are still found to tell a woman that all she needs to do is to be more submissive, (subject) to her husband and he will feel more respected and will stop losing his temper.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)

If we look at the Scripture verse before this we read that husbands and wives are to submit (be subjective) to each other. To 'submit' or to 'be subjective' in Biblical Greek, is to 'respect and honour' each other. Do you feel respected and honoured?

A Pastor who tells you that to separate and divorce is to go against the will of God, isn't even thinking what it is like for the children. God is very angry with those who put little children in danger and will hold the abuser and the pastor accountable. You, on the other hand, are being a good mother by trying to get yourself and your children to safety.

‘If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:6)



To the woman he said, ‘I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’

(Genesis 3:16)

Some churches teach that God is telling us through this Scripture that men **are** to “rule over” their wives. This is not true and is an heretical teaching. God is telling us through this Scripture that men will now have a tendency to behave sinfully by trying to **rule over women.** True Christian men will treat their wives with **“respect and honour”** (Ephesians 5:21) as we should all treat each other. There is no excuse for abuse. It is a crime and against the law of the land and against the law of God.



To “Forgive” in Biblical Greek, is to “Let go.” If we are to ‘let go’ then we need time, sometimes years, to discover the depth of pain that we are letting go of. Jesus is the “Mighty Counsellor, so he understands this.

The offender is responsible for his own repentance. This is Judicial forgiveness of sin which is granted only by God (**Psalm 32:5**). It is not the victim's responsibility to go back and “save” her abuser. Her responsibility is to herself and her children.

Also, the word “forgive” in Greek includes a “turning away;” turning her children away from the sin of abuse and giving them safety and to no longer facilitate her husband's abusive behaviour.

Pastors and churches too often use **Matthew 6:12** to tell an abused woman that unless she forgives her abuser and goes back, then she will not be forgiven by God for her sins. This is cruel and wrong to tell an abused woman. By suppressing her pain and trying to forgive straight away without even discovering how much harm she has experienced is to put herself at great risk for Post Traumatic Stress. **The Pastor's job is to hold the abuser accountable and to provide safety for the woman as Jesus did in John 8:3-11.**

