

*what the Bible
says about*

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

MY COURAGEOUS FRIEND...
WELCOME!

I don't think you've found this download by accident. If you've been through difficulties in your relationships or marriage, I get it. I've been there too. My first marriage was full of emotional and spiritual abuse, betrayal, deception and addiction. And more recently, I've been able to identify the cycle of insanity with more clarity. I'd been the victim of narcissistic abuse.



I wish that I'd known about the insanity of this insidious abuse long ago, but my naivety was the very thing that made me vulnerable in the first place. Thankfully, God's wisdom gave me the power to break free! As difficult as it was, I'm stronger and more confident today. My Savior took the pain of my past and transformed it into strength for my future.

And that's my prayer for you! As you dive into His truth, not just with head knowledge of scripture, but with the courage to put it into practice through faith and action, I'm fully persuaded that He WILL turn your sorrow into joy.

When we recognize that we can't go around the pain, that we must go through it, He prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies. Did you get that? In the presence of our enemies!

I'm telling you, that's where God does His best work with us. He takes us through the valley of the shadow of sorrow. And when we get to the other side, we understand. The hardship is what God used to strengthen us. What once tried to break us has equipped us. Transformed us. Restored us!

My dear sister, I'm standing in faith for you. The best is yet to come!

Christy

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YOU'RE INVITED



Stop the toxic relationship cycle!

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COACHING
CURRICULUM
COMMUNITY

BEST U is a faith based monthly membership group for women who want to find emotional freedom in relationships. Through coaching, curriculum and community you'll find the wisdom you need to prosper in life, love and relationships!



LIVE COACHING sessions with me covering tough relationship topics

CURRICULUM created to challenge you to grow and thrive

COMMUNITY support from me and women just like you



MY HAPPILY- NEVER-AFTER

1

I stood at the baggage claim watching a sea of suitcases rotate around the conveyor belt. The fuchsia Aloha tag strapped around the handle made my luggage easy to spot among the ocean of black look-alike bags. The tag should have made me smile, but weary from travel and the numerous fights I'd had with my husband on vacation, I was spent. Besides, I knew what was on the inside of my suitcase—stinky underwear and dirty laundry.

That was a lot like my life. From the outside, my world looked Samsonite. Normal. Typical. Maybe even admirable and exciting to some. But on the inside...I was loaded down with shame and unworthiness. My marriage had not turned out like I'd planned.

My happily-ever-after morphed into a nightmare and I had no idea how to escape.





LOVE WAS NOT PATIENT OR KIND

Nothing I did seemed to work to change my husband's verbal and emotional abuse. And now that we were in church, he used another weapon to assault me: spiritual abuse.

We had started going to church and he knew how much I wanted our marriage to honor God. When he couldn't get his way, he'd use scriptures on Biblical headship to threaten, manipulate and intimidate me into compliance.

I'm the spiritual leader, so you have to submit to my choices.

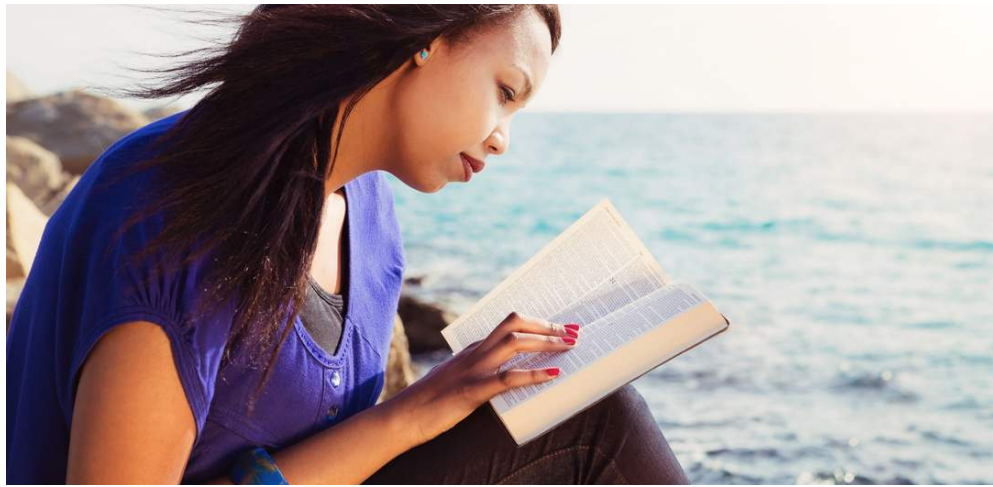
If you disagree with me, you're not honoring God's Word to respect me.

Of course all of those tactics made me angry, but early in our marriage the only tools for conflict resolution I had were yelling, screaming, crying and arguing. That's what was modeled in my home growing up. As you can imagine, those weren't effective ways to manage disagreements.

Well, sometimes, they changed things for a day or two, but the insanity always returned.

Desperate for answers, I threw myself into God's Word. Through Bible studies and sermons on marriage, I dove headlong into truth. I wanted a blue ribbon for my efforts. Honestly, I would've settled for a gold star. But all I got was more failure.





DESPERATE FOR ANSWERS

None of my efforts produced lasting results. Submission, patience, long-suffering. More understanding because men are from Mars you know. Kindness, prayer and fasting. Words of affirmation, acts of service, physical touch, you get the picture. I tried them all.

I envied my friends who had healthy marriages. They were the ones that encouraged me to pray for my mate, to grow in patience and speak the truth in love. It worked for them.

My husband, however, didn't budge. His addictions grew out of control. His deceit, insults, manipulation and control multiplied. He twisted scripture to scare me into compliance. His empty threats multiplied.

Despite years of toxicity, I never considered the possibility of leaving. I'd been taught that it wasn't an option for a Christian.

If you're reading this, you probably get it.

You've struggled with scripture. You've been tormented by thoughts like, How could God allow this? You've wrestled with what you'd been taught about divorce and concluded that you just have to stay.

There's no way out. God hates divorce.



I struggled with those thoughts, too. As much as I hated the insanity in my marriage, I never prayed for divorce. But I'll never forget the day when God released me.

My husband had been in the hospital for several days.

Again.

Exaggerating pain to seek drugs. His show of theatrics could have won an Academy Award. The doctors ran all kinds of tests while my husband drove the nurses crazy. When the morphine drip button didn't produce more drug, he threw temper tantrums demanding more.

After five days of tests, the group of doctors who'd been treating him found nothing wrong.

I was watching TBN when the door squeaked open. The look on the doctor's face was resolute. Locking eyes with my husband, he lowered his glasses and gave his final diagnosis.

"We're ordering a chemical dependency evaluation and a psychiatric assessment."

Filled with rage, my husband hurled insults about his incompetence. Refusing both evaluations, he demanded another physician.

The doctor tapped his clipboard with his pen and raised his glasses. My husband's fury and refusal gave the doctor no choice.

"I'll prepare your discharge papers. You'll be released in the morning."

The TBN logo rotated on the television while the words, "You'll be released in the morning," seemed to echo around the room.

Like a sudden gust of wind swirling a pile of leaves into a tiny tornado, I sensed a release of my own. A divine pardon. I knew. My marriage was over. The battle was done.



HIS SPIRIT TESTIFIES WITH OUR SPIRIT

Trying to reconcile the release I'd experienced from God with what I'd learned in church, however, tormented me. The contradiction appeared insatiable. Rubik's Cube confusing.

Still.

I heard God.

Not audibly. But inside. And I couldn't unhear Him.

Even so, I grappled with thoughts.

Did. God. Really. Release me?

How would I make it on my own? Would He provide for me and my children? What if I misunderstood Him? Would He forgive me?

To say I was scared would be an understatement. I'd been a stay-at-home mom for eight of the ten years we'd been married and I had three children to care for.

I had no idea how I'd make it financially, especially given the fact that my husband's work ethic was sporadic at best.



THE WILDERNESS

2

Divorce was like taking a leap off of the Grand Canyon.

It wasn't easy. It was a journey through a wilderness that at times I thought might never end.

Today, I'm glad I didn't consider leaving before God released me. In my brokenness I'd have left one toxic relationship and no doubt found another.

God didn't tell me when I got married, that my marriage was the tool He was going to use to deliver me. After all, He knows the end from the beginning. He may give us a glimpse of our future, but seldom does He disclose the middle.

The desert.



GROWTH IN THE VALLEY

In the beginning of our relationship, I'd made my husband the source of my confidence. I'd gained approval from his pursuit. He liked me. Paid attention to me. Flattered me.

But as time went on, his flattery turned into criticism and control. And my shallow confidence plummeted into despair.

When my despair turned to desperation I prayed nonstop for God to change my marriage. Ninety percent of my Bible was either highlighted or smudged with tear stains.

Instead of getting better, my marriage grew worse. But in the middle of all of the chaos and insanity, gradually something happened that I didn't expect. As I began to transfer my trust from my husband to God, the cloud of confusion lifted.

My husband didn't change, but I did. I learned to overlook insults, not take things personally and to change my expectations. I learned to encourage myself in the Lord and find my satisfaction in Him.

And what I found out is that I grew. I found peace and hope started growing.





My confidence increased. Joy and contentment returned as I learned to find satisfaction apart from my marriage. My husband's actions no longer made me feel ashamed.

Something I never thought possible.

Because he did a lot of embarrassing things that I took responsibility for. I'd once thought that his actions were an extension of me, as though I was the one acting a fool.

Yes, it was sad. Sad that my prayers and attempts to fix my marriage didn't do anything to restore my love life.

But I was being restored! I was not the same wounded, insecure, defeated co-dependent woman I used to be.

And for that I'm forever grateful.

If God had told me that was the plan from the get go, I would have bailed years before.

But then I'd never found freedom. I'd still be bound. Misssss-erable. Depressed and defeated.

It took years of toxicity for me to realize that marriage takes two invested partners to make it work. I fell for the lie that I hadn't prayed long enough. Hard enough. Or I didn't memorize the right scriptures.

CYCLES OF ABUSE

3

The revelation that brought clarity and understanding.

It wasn't until years after our divorce that I stumbled upon information that gave me the words to define what I'd experienced in my marriage. The unpredictable cycle of overwhelming affection combined with sudden dismissal and alienation was...

Narcissistic abuse.

The love-bombing, followed by lying and deceit, control and manipulation, and gaslighting.* It all finally made sense. It wasn't me. I wasn't crazy. I'd been naïve and vulnerable. I trusted too much. I believed what he said and minimized his actions. The perfect qualities that a man with narcissistic tendencies looks for.

Proverbs says that wise women are cautious in friendships, but no one had ever taught me to be cautious. Instead, I'd believed everything I heard without waiting to examine actions and character. Music, movies and media taught me to follow my heart.

#badadvice

- * If this is the first time you've heard these terms, hang tight...we'll talk about them in a bit. Also, it should be noted that a man who has narcissist tendencies may or may not have Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). That diagnosis can only be made by a professional.





Narcissistic abuse is a deliberate and systematic attempt to woo someone in order to control. It is often characterized by love bombing in the beginning of a relationship.

Love bombing is an explosion of synthetic love. It's a lavish, overwhelming expression of intoxicating affection. Compliments. Gifts. A relentless pursuit at the speed of light with the intent to corner you in order to isolate you from outside influences.

This idealization phase is all a plot to captivate you. He wants you all to himself so he can control you. It feels wonderful to be so adored and pursued, but it's all a strategy.

He'll often use flattering statements. ***You're so perfect. You're my soul mate. I've never met anyone like you. Nobody understands me like you do.***

Once the idealization phase has done its work and you've fallen for the trap, the devaluation and discard phases begin.

The devaluation phase includes a sudden distancing with criticism, insults or withdrawal intended to shatter the victim's self-worth, leaving them wondering what went wrong. She's convinced that he wasn't like that before. The reality is that he was. He was just hiding his intentions.

Once the narcissist has completely crushed your confidence and they no longer need you to supply their craving for applause, the discard phase begins which often causes you to work harder to please him. Then the whole cycle begins again. Phase two of idealization. Apologies. Flattery. Attention. You think they've changed, but it's only a mirage. A calculated deceptive attempt to gain even more control.



THE TRAP OF FLATTERY

Flattery is used as a trap and the compliments are hard to resist. Once the narcissist is confident that the object of his affection has surrendered to his spell, the victim is left stunned and confused by the sudden change in behavior.

Instead of gushing compliments, criticism and sarcasm abound. Instead of adoration, tactics like gaslighting, neglect, silent treatment, raging and dismissiveness begin.

Oh, the first time I read about this malicious behavior, I think my eyeballs dangled out of my sockets and bounced around like a slinky going down a set of stairs.

Say, what?

I'd been in a marriage filled with narcissistic abuse??

No wonder I felt so crazy. I was targeted. Then like a hunter stalks prey, I was baited, isolated and groomed.

By the time I discerned something wasn't quite right, I was already trapped. The deliberately disguised deception worked.

Narcissistic abuse... Just comprehending those words brought revelation and shock at the same time.

It wasn't me! I DID try hard enough. Pray hard enough. Suffer long enough.

Maybe I got that gold star after all.

But on the other hand, why didn't I see it? How could I have been so blind? So naïve. Ignorant. Gullible.

MARITAL ABUSE

4

I can't believe my pastor never talked about this

The answers I found in psychology provided stunning descriptions of what I'd experienced. It was hard to believe I'd never heard a sermon on marital abuse.

Even though scripture teaches that a husband and wife are to submit one to another, I'd only heard teaching about a woman's need to submit. And what about the scripture that says a husband is to love his wife as his own body?

Why were teachings primarily targeted toward women?

Add to the mix common beliefs that only allow divorce where adultery has been proven, women who submit to pastoral counsel are often left with no choice but to endure and forbear. Scriptures are often used as spiritual handcuffs to keep a woman bound to an abusive marriage. The lack of safety is not a legitimate excuse for divorce. Far too often, the covenant trumps the need for security.



SUZEE'S STORY

Suzee's story is a tragic example of this hypocrisy. Here's what she posted on my blog:

I married a 'Christian' man in 2014 who said all the right things. He was involved in church and attended small groups on a regular basis.

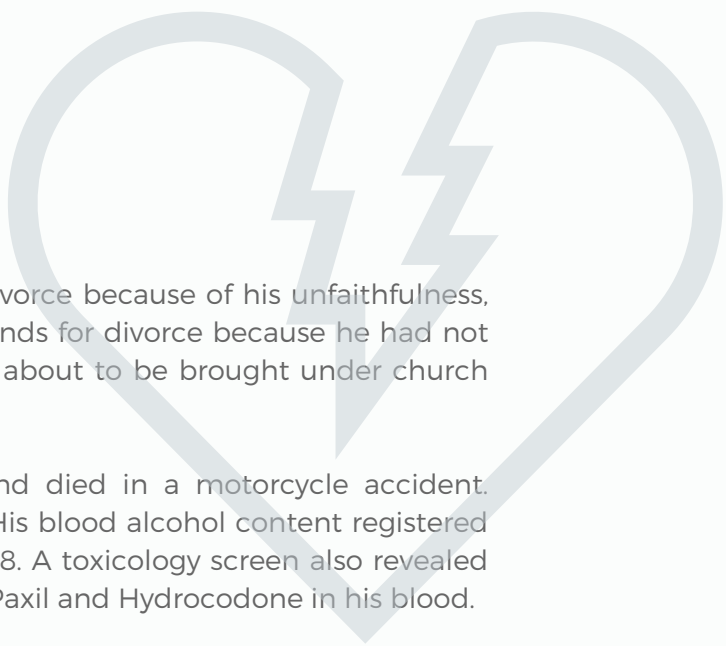
1. After we'd married, however, everything changed. He no longer seemed interested in praying together or getting involved in a discipleship groups. When we attended church, he hustled out to the car as soon as service ended and sat there ranting to my kids about how long I was taking.

When we met, he was sober, but he started drinking a month into our marriage. I found a terrific Christian counselor who helped me understand that our marriage problems were not just alcohol related. She helped me recognize the emotional, spiritual and financial abuse I was under. I was also pretty sure he was in to porn. When physical intimacy has no spiritual or emotional intimacy and you feel more like a device than a person, it's likely. But I had no proof.

A month shy of our two-year anniversary I asked him move out due to his continued drinking. My pastor supported me in this initially. However, he eventually sided with my husband when he pretended to want reconciliation.

He sobbed and cried, citing that I'd abandoned him and that I kept changing the criteria for him coming home once he'd met the previous criteria. He circled the wagons for his cause and even joined a men's group to try to discredit me. They didn't fall for his tactics, but my pastor did.

At one point, I thought I'd seen some positive changes, but after seven months of separation I discovered that he was actively using a dating app. He was in the shower when I noticed that he received a text from another woman. That was the last straw.



I told my pastor that I was seeking divorce because of his unfaithfulness, but he said I didn't have Biblical grounds for divorce because he had not broken the one-flesh covenant. I was about to be brought under church discipline because I filed for divorce.

Tragically, a month later, my husband died in a motorcycle accident. Thankfully no one else was involved. His blood alcohol content registered at .174, well above the legal limit of .08. A toxicology screen also revealed high amounts of marijuana, Ambien, Paxil and Hydrocodone in his blood.

After going through his belongings in his apartment, I found sex toys, loads of alcohol, and porn on his computer. Now there was no denying that he was a high-functioning alcoholic and master manipulator.

While I've come to terms with our marriage and his death, I find I harbor resentment toward my pastor. I understand he was duped as well, but four years later I'm still angry with him. I don't understand why he would take the word of a man who bore no fruit and with whom he was barely acquainted. He disregarded me, someone who had been an active part of the church body for six years prior to marrying my husband.

I feel more abused by the church.

SEEKING WISDOM

It's sad and unfortunate, but Suzee's story is far too common. Pastors are not always well equipped and qualified as marriage counselors. Especially when manipulative men use charm and deception to persuade them for their own selfish motives.

Don't get me wrong. I'm a proponent for marriage counseling, but it's important that who we seek wisdom from is well trained in the area we need help with. Scripture says there's wisdom in the multitude of counsel. When emotional and physical safety are at risk, seek the advice of unbiased qualified counselors who have experience dealing with the deceit often involved in destructive and abusive marriages.

BIBLICAL INSIGHT

5

MOCKERS AND SCOFFERS AND FOOLS, OH MY!

As much as psychology provided insight about the narcissistic abuse, as a lover of God's truth, I wanted to see if scripture agreed with secular wisdom. As I searched, I soon discovered that God has much to say about the topic.

The Bible may not use the same terminology as psychology, but I found plenty of wisdom about control, manipulation and narcissistic abuse packed in the pages of scripture.

While you won't find the word narcissist in the Bible, you'll find plenty of verses that talk about those who are arrogant, deceitful, abusive and lovers of themselves. Those who are fools, mockers, scoffers, scoundrels and the wicked.



WICKED METHODS

2 TIM 3:1-5

People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

IS 32:6

For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: They practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD; the hungry they leave empty and from the thirsty they withhold water (Isaiah 32:6).

PROV 21:24

The proud and arrogant person—“Mocker” is his name—behaves with insolent fury. NIV

A proud and haughty man— “Scoffer” is his name; He acts with arrogant pride. NKJV

IS 32:7

Scoundrels use wicked methods, they make up evil schemes to destroy the poor with lies, even when the plea of the needy is just.

PROV 9:6

Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.

ABIGAIL AND HER FOOLISH HUSBAND

Abigail, a woman that the book of Samuel describes as full of wisdom, was married to Nabal, a mean and surly man. When Nabal refused to provide David and his men with food in exchange for protecting his land, David planned an attack. Abigail didn't waste any time and took action. She knew if she confronted her husband, she'd have incurred abuse. Instead, she confronted the situation and quickly gathered resources for David and his men. And check this out. When she approached David, she didn't excuse Nabal's behavior or gloss over his character.

"Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him (1 Samuel 25:25).

She called him a wicked fool! Other versions refer to him as a worthless fellow, an ill-tempered man, a fool or a scoundrel.

Abigail didn't make excuses for her husband's lack of integrity. Neither did she submit to his decision. In fact, scripture indicates that she used good judgment and discretion.

And for her prompt reaction, she was blessed. The Lord struck Nabal dead about ten days later. Soon after, she became David's wife.

Here's a question to consider: Does the directive to respect our husband mean that we turn a blind eye to his evil behavior? What if Abigail submitted to Nabal's foolish choices and ignored his character in the name of respect?

Her story would have a deadly ending. David would have destroyed Nabal's property, killing him and every male belonging to him. Then Abigail would have been left with nothing.

CLARITY

Abigail's story is a great example of the difference between a directive and a demand.

Consider how the book of Timothy admonishes overseers and deacons to live lives worthy of respect. To earn respect through a good reputation. To demonstrate and show by their actions that they are temperate and trustworthy, so that God's name and his teachings are not slandered.

Why would husband not be held to the same standard? Respecting our husband is a Biblical directive, but **when respect is demanded by a husband who treats his wife treacherously or acts with evil intentions, the demand to submit is an abuse of power.**

The church in general has a long way to go to care for and support women in abusive relationships and marriages. If you're not getting the help you need from your pastor or leadership, if you feel condemned and afraid, confused and alone, I hope what I've found in God's Word will provide you the clarity you need to see your relationship realistically.



WHEN WOLVES PREY

6

For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people (Romans 16:18).

One of the qualities that make women vulnerable to narcissistic abuse is their love for God's Word. Men that use control and manipulation prey on women that they believe will honor their husbands and submit to them in everything.

Blindly.

These wolves in sheep's clothing use God's Word to control and lord over their women. Like a toddler taught first-time obedience, these women are manipulated and deceived with twisted truths about submission.



WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

In addition, when women are vulnerable to manipulative relationships, they are often drawn to churches that are controlling as well. When their partners are abusive and controlling, they have no one in their corner to protect them and hold the abuser accountable.

Instead, women who are preparing for marriage are taught that respect is mandatory. Her husband will be the head. Regardless, he will have the final authority.

Women who are married are told to submit more, pray harder, have more sex and above all, respect their husband. Scriptures that instruct husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25) are ignored in favor of tempering the wife's behavior.

No one notices that the husband's prayers are hindered. He's failed to be considerate and treat his wife with respect as the weaker partner and as an heir (1 Peter 3:7). But who gets blamed?

Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse (Proverbs 2:12).





ADULTERY VS. UNFAITHFULNESS

Some churches have a strict interpretation of scriptures regarding divorce, and endorse the belief that divorce is never an option unless proof of adultery exists.

But what exactly is adultery? Is it always sexual infidelity? Some would agree, but I don't. I find that doctrinal perspective legalistic.

Jeremiah 3:8 uses the word adultery to describe Israel's unfaithfulness against God. Israel wasn't sexually unfaithful to God. Adultery was used as a metaphor to figuratively describe faithlessness, deceit, idolatry and treacherous actions.

Likewise, there are a multitude of ways a man can be unfaithful to his wife or treat her treacherously. When he:

- is verbally abusive
- uses sarcasm to degrade her
- twists scripture to control her
- withholds resources to trap her or to render her helpless and dependent on him
- deceives her
- sexually or physically abuses her

All of those actions are a violation of scripture that admonish husbands to love their wives as they love their own body.

Even if one disagrees with the metaphorical interpretation, Jesus held the law to a higher standard: If a man lusts after a woman, he's already committed adultery in his heart (Mathew 5:28).



EXAMINE THE TRUTH

I don't want you to take my opinion without examining truth for yourself. On the pages that follow, I've included lots of scriptures for you to consider.

Read over them to see what scripture says about evil behavior. I want to leave it up to you to decide. If a man refuses to repent as evidenced by a consistent change in his behavior, would you ever consider these abusive actions an indication of unfaithfulness?

I know that's a tough question and one that needs to be examined through prayer and counsel. But I contend that while God hates divorce, he also hates abuse.

Maybe you've endured your relationship because your spouse or partner has never been physically abusive, however, emotional and spiritual abuse can be just as harmful. Maybe you've been shamed into staying because God hates divorce. And while that is true, I also believe...

He loves you MORE.

*God may hate divorce, but
He loves you MORE!*

7

THE TONGUE AS A WEAPON

With their words the godless destroy their friends, but knowledge will rescue the righteous (Proverbs 11:9).

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words may never hurt me. Do you remember that taunt on the playground? Maybe you believed this lie as a young girl, but now you wonder why you can't just forget hurtful words hurled at you. That's because the tongue can be a weapon and words can be destructive. The words of the reckless pierce like swords (Proverbs 12:18).

Not having scars to prove you've been wounded may increase your confusion. The common coaxing, "Just get over," it is a vain resource. I'm so thankful that scripture provides a better solution: knowledge will rescue the righteous!



WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT VERBAL ABUSE

PROV 16:27

A scoundrel plots evil, and on their lips it is like a scorching fire.

JAMES 1:26

Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.

JAMES 3:6

The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

PROV 10:18

Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips and spreads slander is a fool.

EPH 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

EPH 4:31

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

EPH 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

TITUS 3:10

Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.

PROV 19:19

A hot-tempered person must pay the penalty; rescue them, and you will have to do it again.

2 TIM 2:23-24

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

GASLIGHTING

8

Am I crazy?

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness the lies he told were half truths. He wrapped a lie in a bit of truth to make it sound authentic. That's what deception does. Like bait carefully covering a hook with tempting bait, it conceals the deception underneath.

Psychology defines some of these strategies as gaslighting.

Gaslighting is a strategic form of manipulation and psychological control intended to cause confusion and doubt. The steady stream of lies and twisted truths are deliberate. This systematic deception over time causes the victim to question reality and their own sanity.

Did that really happen? Maybe I've imagined things. Am I crazy?

This insidious form of manipulation leaves victims in a state of perpetual bewilderment. The strategy is to cause the victim to rely even more on her partner. He's often convinced her as well as others that know her that she no longer has a sound mind.

The Bible defines this behavior as deceit! Often men who are deceitful combine sarcasm and slander to further their agenda. Let's take a look at some scriptures that address this conduct.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DECEITFULNESS

PROV 26:24-25

Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit. Though their speech is charming, do not believe them, for seven abominations fill their hearts.

PROV 26:28

A lying tongue hates those it hurts, and a flattering mouth works ruin.

PSALM 50:19

You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.

PSALM 52:2

You who practice deceit, your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor.

ROMANS 3:13-14

Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

ROMANS 1:29-32

They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT SARCASM & SLANDER

PROV 26:18-19

Like a maniac shooting flaming arrows of death is one who deceives their neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"

1 PETER 2:1

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

PROV 29:11

Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end..

EPH 4:31

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

EPH 5:4

Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT SPIRITUAL ABUSE

MATT 7:15-20

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

MATT 23:25

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

OPPRESSION & ABUSE

How can the same hands and heart that declare love for you also be the same hands and heart that hurt you?

Not everyone who claims that they love you actually do. Some have immoral character, selfish ambitions, evil intentions and greedy agendas. Maybe you've minimized your partner's behavior because that was the only way you could rationalize what you experienced. He says that you're his princess and the love of his life, but his actions are full of all of the duplicity and betrayal of a Judas kiss.

Don't be deceived...

Kind words + evil behavior = evil.



WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT PHYSICAL ABUSE

PROV 29:22 An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

EPH 5:11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

PROV 24:1-2 Do not envy the wicked, do not desire their company; for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about making trouble.

1 JOHN 3:15 Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them (NLT).

COL 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT OPPRESSION

PSALM 73:6-9 Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth.

JER 22:17 But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.

ISAIAH 59:7-8 Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. They pursue evil schemes; acts of violence mark their ways. The way of peace they do not know; there is no justice in their paths. They have turned them into crooked roads; no one who walks along them will know peace.

WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

GAL 5:19-21 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

EPH 4:18-19 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

EPH 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

2 PETER 2:14 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood!

WHAT THE WORD SAYS ABOUT WITHHOLDING RESOURCES

1 TIM 5:8 Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

PROV 26:15 A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.

AWARENESS

10

Trust is a great quality, but when over-extended, it is the very quality that makes us an easy target for others who have selfish ambitions.

Often the same vulnerabilities and innocence that draw us to abusive men can also make us vulnerable to controlling friendships. Our naivety may even attract us to a legalistic and abusive church culture. That's why it's important to pay attention to our gut instincts.

The gullible believe anything, but those that are prudent give thought to their steps (Proverbs 14:15).

When something doesn't feel right in church or in a relationship, it probably isn't. When you deny your intuition and stuff your emotions, however, you quench the warning they are trying to reveal.



BREAKING THE CYCLE

It's not judging when we try to discern if something isn't right. Scripture cautions us to examine character and to evaluate the fruit in the lives of others. Using intuitive insight allows us to decide if a relationship is safe. Proverbs tells us that wise people are cautious in friendship (Proverbs 12:26). Even children are known by their actions, whether their conduct is pure and right (Proverbs 20:11).

Take a moment to reflect and consider your feelings. Look over the list of emotions below and check the ones you often feel in your relationship or marriage.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> hurt | <input type="checkbox"/> discouraged |
| <input type="checkbox"/> anxious | <input type="checkbox"/> devastated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ashamed | <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> disgusted | <input type="checkbox"/> disrespected |
| <input type="checkbox"/> jealous | <input type="checkbox"/> depressed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> humiliated | <input type="checkbox"/> betrayed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> resentful | <input type="checkbox"/> dismissed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> victimized | <input type="checkbox"/> angry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rejected | <input type="checkbox"/> violated |





THE LIES YOU'VE BEEN TOLD

Maybe you've been told that you're too sensitive. You overreact. You're PMSing. Everything is your fault. You bring it on yourself. That you just need to get over it.

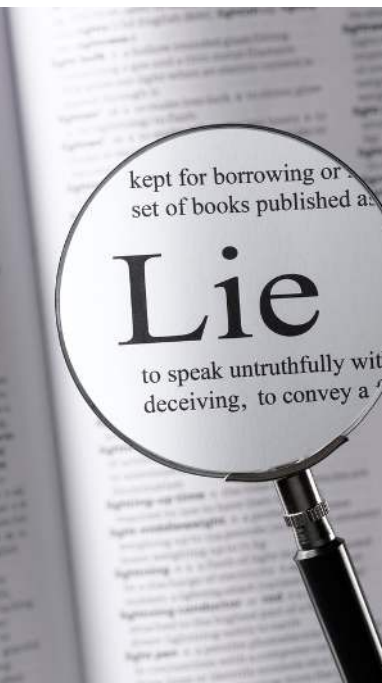
Of course we all have our own shortcomings. Sometimes we do overreact, have angry outbursts or sulk and cry. But when we've been emotionally manipulated with guilt, condemnation and shame, we often fall victim to the strategic conditioning our partners fabricate to maintain control. We end up believing the lies our partners tell us about ourselves. Then we embrace some more.



THE LIES YOU'VE TOLD YOURSELF

Look at the list below. Which beliefs do you struggle with?

- This is my lot in life.
- I haven't prayed hard enough.
- I must somehow deserve this.
- I'm not good enough.
- I must stay for the children.
- Confrontation is wrong.
- I can't manage financially on my own.
- God doesn't allow divorce.
- I'm not patient enough.
- His anger, rage, deceit, abuse, manipulation, control, addiction, or _____ are my fault.
- He'll change. He's promised.



I'd guess that most of these beliefs probably make you feel frustrated and angry. **Ignoring anger won't make it go away. In fact, it'll do the opposite. Anger ignored grows.**

ANGER IS NOT WRONG

As a young girl, I was taught that anger was wrong. "Go to your room!" was the command when I expressed anger. "Don't come out until you can control yourself." Stuffing and ignoring my emotions was the protocol I'd been taught for anger management.

God, however, gave us emotions and even He got angry. Our response to anger should neither be to stuff it or to let it explode. Both of these reactions affect our emotional and physical health. On the other hand, when we use self-control and learn to manage our anger, it can be the catalyst that compels us to address our issues with confidence.

MANAGING ANGER

In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold (Ephesians 4:26-27).

Anger can be a transforming emotion. It can motivate us to take action. To address inappropriate behavior. To confront someone who trespasses against us. To stand up against abuse. To rally against injustice.

Anger doesn't give us permission to lash out. Uncontrolled anger is dangerous. A person who doesn't rule their own spirit is like a city with broken down walls (Proverbs 25:28).

But ignoring our anger is also harmful. You've probably heard the expression that depression is anger turned inward.

Anger is a signal, a barometer if you will, that something isn't right. To dismiss it is to invite bitterness and depression to stay.

When you control your anger, it can be an ambassador to change. When managed wisely, anger can provoke you to consider the best course of action to resolve a conflict or difficulty.

YOUR EMOTIONS ARE NOT WRONG

God gave you the ability to feel. Your emotions are not wrong! Sadness, insecurity, fear, Feelings of being overwhelmed and hopeless. Resentment. Fear of abandonment, shame and inadequacy. All of these emotions can also be a trigger, not to keep you bound, but to alert you to the fact that something needs to change.

I get it. It would be easier if your partner would change. But you've tried that. I have a better option.

THE CHANGE BEGINS WITH YOU

Acknowledging your emotions can be scary. Acknowledging the reality of your situation can be daunting. Often times a destructive relationship leaves women to believe that they only have two choices.

Stay or leave.

Neither seems like a good option.

I'd like to propose some other alternatives: Finding personal freedom and becoming the best you that you can be. Learning how to manage your emotions, your fears and your anger. Learning how to confront with courage, set healthy boundaries when he violates your wishes and find respectable ways to detach.

When you do the work you need to do to restore your own self-worth and autonomy, one of two things will happen. If you're single, your confidence will be restored and you'll no longer be vulnerable to destructive relationships.

If you're married, either it will motivate your husband to change and your relationship will grow stronger, or **you** will grow stronger.

Either way, you win! The bottom line is this: the only person you can change is you! Wouldn't it be wonderful if you were no longer tossed to and fro by the storms that destructive relationships bring?



IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BECOME YOUR BEST U!

Find out how you can
belong now!

Are you struggling with any of these?

- Manipulation, control, or emotional abuse
- Spiritual abuse or narcissistic behavior
- Attracting the same unhealthy relationships
- People-pleasing and fear of disappointing others
- Constant conflict and poor communication
- Feeling powerless to create change
- Unsure how to set healthy boundaries
- Anger, confusion, and emotional exhaustion
- Feeling like you've lost yourself

For more than 20 years, I've been helping women navigate toxic relationships and find emotional freedom through biblical truth.

Through BEST U, I'd love to help you, too. You can break free from toxic relationship patterns, rebuild your confidence, and rediscover the joy and peace God has for you.





If your relationship hasn't turned out like you hoped it would...

CAN I PRAY FOR YOU?

Father, I pray for my sister, hurting from the despair and wounds created by destructive and abusive relationships. I know you care. Thank you that you cause all things to work together for her good. That you have healing for her brokenness. Please bring comfort, hope and restoration. Give her wisdom and protection moving forward, that she would feel your strength and courage to embrace the freedom that belongs to her as a daughter of the King.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

I wrote this eBook with you in mind. After God transformed my life, my greatest desire was to help you find your own freedom in Christ.



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Above all else guard
your heart, for out of it
flow the issues of life.

THE BOOK OF WISDOM