



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Assault on a Woman's Worth



HOPE  
for the Heart

June Hunt

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JUNE HUNT



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Domestic Violence: Assault on a Woman's Worth

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Dear friend,

*“Intelligent, competent, assured”*

These words painted the picture of an attractive, energetic young woman whom I had known casually for over ten years. But when I received word that, at the hands of her husband, she had been a victim of repeated violence, my first thought was, *How could this be?*

After all, she had worked for several years at a Christian ministry training people how to study the Bible. Then she attended a respected seminary where she met her future husband. However, after they married, her confidence decreased and her fear increased. Unbeknownst to family and friends, she was being abused.

How could she tell anyone? She wanted to protect the image of her little family. Surely if she “tried hard enough” he would stop; typically that’s what all abused women think. But not so. Now he was divorcing her for another woman, and they were in the midst of a custody battle over their two young sons.

The judge ruled that until a decision was made as to which parent would have custodial care, this arrangement was to be followed: The children were to stay in the home, and each parent would rotate in and out every other week. So every other week for about a year and a half, she stayed in my home.

We had many late night talks. The one that stands out most in my memory was the evening I asked if she had any pictures to prove to the judge that

her husband was an untrustworthy, violent man. Immediately she went to the guest bedroom and returned with pictures of herself—police photographs that showed her head severely bruised and swollen. I was stunned. I hadn't expected such graphic pictures. (Her husband had denied the abuse, claiming instead that she had inflicted the injuries on herself—a common “blame game” tactic!)

When I gave her this material on domestic violence, she quickly identified with the “Scripture twisting.” This simply means that many wife batterers are adept at manipulating their wives with Scriptures, such as Ephesians 5:22—“*Wives, submit to your husbands*”—but are careless about heeding all the verses against violence. (And sadly, as of yet, I have never talked with an abused woman who has heard Scriptures presented from the pulpit that encourage her to seek the protection she so desperately needs.)

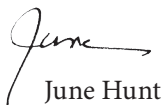
Rather, after an incident of abuse, too many women hear foolish statements like, *What did you do to cause it?* This indicates that his violent sin is her fault. (Now she is being doubly victimized.)

It is no surprise that many women who suffer abuse are disheartened, confused and distressed. They wonder, *Must I really suffer at the hands of someone who has sworn to protect and cherish me? And where is God when I am hurting so much?*

The greater truth is that God is not only with those who suffer, but that He also has provided a way of deliverance through His Word. The joy of victory and healing is available to any who seek it. My

prayer is that the biblical truths shared within the pages of this book will be used by God to free you or someone you know from the shackles of unjust suffering.

Yours in the Lord's hope,



June Hunt

P.S. Now, for the rest of the story: First, after two years, my friend was awarded custody of her children. Second, the judge admitted that, in retrospect, his better judgment would have been to assign only one parent custodial care until a permanent decision was made. And last, my friend's ex-husband served no time in jail and received no sentencing for his abuse.

*“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man,  
do not associate with one easily angered.”*

(Proverbs 22:24)

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## Assault on a Woman's Worth

This story is real. The facts are true.

He is prominent and highly esteemed, praised for his significant contributions to the community. What woman wouldn't feel fortunate to be his wife? She certainly has all the finer things in life. And the children have the best that money can buy. How could she think of destroying such a picture-perfect family? How could she risk losing her security or stepping into an unknown future?

Where would she go? What could she do? How would she support herself? Even worse, if she began to expose the terrible truth, would she lose her children?

She feels hopeless. Who would believe her? No one could conceive that such a pillar of the community could pummel his wife night after night with painful punches. She is skilled at hiding her feelings, as well as her bruises. With swollen, tear-stained eyes, she wrongfully reasons, *It's mostly my fault anyway!*

But her Creator God knows the undeniable truth:

**“You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted;  
you encourage them, and you listen to  
their cry, defending the fatherless and the  
oppressed, in order that man, who is of the  
earth, may terrify no more.”**

**(Psalm 10:17-18)**





## DEFINITIONS

God designed the marriage relationship to balance, to benefit, and to better one another. With the first marriage on earth, He created Eve to be the perfect companion for Adam. He intended the pair to love, honor, and cherish each other all the days of their lives, just as He intends for every married couple today.

But in too many homes around the world, the marriage bond has become bondage—shared lives have become shattered by abuse. Husbands are berating, belittling, betraying their wives. Yet these secret assaults stay hidden from the outside world. The sacred relationship created by God has been undermined by one mate hurting—even harming—the other.

Any form of abuse is a flagrant violation of the marriage vows, “To have and to hold from this day forward ... to love and to cherish, ‘til death do us part.” And although such abuse is too frequently “behind closed doors,” it is blatantly in open view before the eyes of the Lord.

**“Nothing in all creation  
is hidden from God’s sight.  
Everything is uncovered and laid bare  
before the eyes of him to whom  
we must give account.”  
(Hebrews 4:13)**

## WHAT IS Abuse?

While abusive acts are committed by both men and women, in cases of domestic violence approximately 95% of victims are women.<sup>1</sup> Although abusive treatment has a long history of being tolerated socially and even legally, abuse has always grieved the heart of God.

In certain countries, wife beating is considered a cultural norm. The majority of health-care workers in those countries, both male and female, condone husbands using physical force against their wives under certain circumstances, resulting in abused women who are receiving little or no emotional support from the national health-care system. For example, if a Turkish wife criticizes her husband, the public supports his inflicting her with painful blows as her rightful punishment.<sup>2</sup>

Often, women suffering in other countries get little help from those around them, but help is available from Someone above them. God promises to be close to the brokenhearted, to compassionately care, and to comfort the abused.

**“He heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.”  
(Psalm 147:3)**

- ▶ **Abuse** means “to mistreat, hurt, or injure.”<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ **Abuse** and **violence** are often used interchangeably, although the word *violence* implies an escalation of abuse and introduces the element of fear of harm as a means of control.<sup>4</sup>

- ▶ **Violence**, in Hebrew, is most often a translation of the word *chamas*, which means “to wrong” or “treat violently.”<sup>5</sup> *Chamas* is also translated as “malicious, destroy, wrong, crime, ruthless, plunder,” and “terror.”<sup>6</sup>

God feels the strongest opposition against anyone who is abusive or violent toward another.

**“I hate a man’s covering himself with violence ...’ says the LORD Almighty.”  
(Malachi 2:16)**

- ▶ **Domestic violence** and **family violence** are the legal terms for physical spousal abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, or any other physically abusive relationship within the home or family.<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ **Domestic violence refers to a pattern** of coercive and violent behaviors exercised by one adult in an intimate relationship with another.<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ **Domestic violence is *not*** an issue of “marriage problems” or “irreconcilable differences” solved by “conflict resolution.” This kind of abuse ...

**A**—Affects everyone in the family

**B**—Bridges all levels in society: racial, religious, geographic, and economic

**U**—Undermines the value of others

**S**—Seeks to dominate others

**E**—Escalates in intensity and frequency

Spiritual leaders, community officials, family, and friends need to be responsive when informed of domestic violence. Abuse of any kind should never be tolerated nor hidden under the cover of male supremacy or “godly submission.” To the contrary, the God of the Bible is our God of refuge—a stronghold of support and defense against violence.

We are to call upon Him:

**“My rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield  
and the horn of my salvation.  
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my  
savior—from violent men you save me.”  
(2 Samuel 22:3)**

## **Abuse and Punishment for Sins**

**QUESTION:** “Would God condone my mate abusing me in order to punish me for my sins?”

**ANSWER:** No. Many instances in Scripture show where God used one nation to bring judgment on another nation. However, there is no instance where God used the violence of one mate to punish the other mate. God hates sin, and abuse is sin. The truth is:

- An abusive mate is abusive simply as a result of choosing wrong over right.
- While you may be the recipient of abuse, you are not the *reason* for that abuse.
- Your mate’s violence exposes his sinfulness, not your sinfulness.

God's instruction for all of us is to ...

**“Do what is just and right. ...  
Do no wrong or violence.”  
(Jeremiah 22:3)**

## **WHAT ARE** the Different Types of Abuse?<sup>9</sup>

Do you think you can always identify abuse when it is happening? The truth is, probably not. Abusive behavior can be aggressive or passive, physical or psychological, direct or indirect. Regardless of the method, all abusive behavior comes from those with hardened hearts who want to punish, coerce, and control.

Although abusers treat their mates unjustly, they blame their mates for their abusive actions: “You made me do it!” “If it weren’t for you I would never have done it!” It is never the abusive man’s fault—or so he hurtfully says.

After the pileup of put-downs, harsh beatings, and even sadistic sexual acts, women can tragically start to believe, *He’s probably right*. It really is all my fault. But God knows the abusive man is entirely wrong. And He knows precisely what is in the abuser’s heart: Along with deception resides another evil—injustice.

**“In your heart you devise injustice,  
and your hands mete out  
violence on the earth.”  
(Psalm 58:2)**

## Verbal Abuse

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**Verbal abuse** is the use of words or tone of voice in an attempt to control, hurt another person, or to destroy that person's self-worth. Like physical abuse, verbal abuse is devastating within a relationship—a destroyer of respect, trust, and intimacy.

Place a check mark (✓) beside any of the following behaviors that you have used or that have been used against you.

- ▶ **Verbally abusive language** is characterized by:
- Badgering* with excessive questioning or accusations
  - Belittling* by mocking or name-calling
  - Blaming* you for the abuse
  - Confusing* with mind games or twisting what is said
  - Controlling* with criticism or sarcasm
  - Degrading* with public or private put-downs
  - Demoralizing* by making light of the abusive behavior
  - Devaluing* by demeaning family or friends
  - Disempowering* by continually dictating orders
  - Disrespecting* by denying that the abuse ever happened
  - Insulting* with coarse language or profanity
  - Intimidating* with yelling or threats
  - Manipulating* with threats of self-injury or suicide

- Overpowering* by always claiming to be right
- Paralyzing* by threatening to report you as an unfit parent
- Shaming* with humiliation or “guilt trips”
- Silencing* with constant interruptions or by changing topics
- Telling* half-truths or lies

The internal negative impact of verbal abuse can last much longer than the external negative impact of physical violence. Name-calling, derogatory comments, persistent shaming, ridicule, and threats are devastating and highly destructive, making the victim (whether man or woman) even more vulnerable to being controlled by the abuser.

The psalmist says of the verbal abuser:

**“His mouth is full of curses and lies  
and threats; trouble and evil  
are under his tongue.”  
(Psalm 10:7)**

## **Emotional Abuse**

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While all forms of mistreatment are emotionally abusive, certain overt behaviors can be labeled as *emotional abuse*. All acts of emotional abuse will fit into one of two categories: passive or aggressive.

Place a check mark (✓) beside any of the following behaviors that have been used against you.