



**Wiping the Tears: A Caring
Response to Abuse**
*Recognizing Abuse/Domestic
Violence*

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Safe Harbor Ministries

www.safeharborministries.org

The image shows two hands held out in prayer, palms up, against a dark background. The hands are positioned symmetrically, with fingers slightly spread. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the veins on the palms. The overall mood is solemn and contemplative.

God's Word and Heart Concerning Violence

Psalm 55 (NLT)

Jeremiah 8:21-9:1 (NLT)

A pair of hands, palms up, held out against a dark background. The hands are positioned at the top of the frame, with fingers slightly spread. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the skin and the veins on the palms. The overall mood is one of offering or presenting something.

Why do we need to talk about abuse in the church?

- Abuse exists in every country, every people group, every faith tradition and every socioeconomic group.
- **Research consistently indicates that the rates of family violence inside and outside the church are similar.**
- Some statistics about domestic violence



Domestic Violence/Battering

- A pattern of behavior where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs, or actions of a partner, friend, or any other person close to them.
- People often think of domestic violence as physical abuse. Physical abuse includes slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, choking, using weapons and murder.
- Domestic violence also includes many other behaviors, including emotional, verbal, psychological, sexual and economic abuse.



It's All About Control

- Batterers use abuse to gain power and control over their intimate partners.
- Abuse is behavior that harms (psychologically and/or physically) or creates fear in the victim.
- Batterers are not “out of control” due to poor anger management, stress, or substance abuse. They use anger and abuse to get what they want.
- The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that more than 90% of all domestic violence victims are female and that most abusers are male.

A pair of hands is shown from the wrist up, held out with palms facing upwards. The hands are positioned symmetrically, one on the left and one on the right, against a dark, textured background. The lighting is soft, highlighting the skin tones and the lines on the palms. The overall mood is one of offering or presenting something.

Warning Signs of an Abusive Relationship

Are you with someone who...

- Is jealous and possessive toward you, won't let you have friends, checks up on you, or won't accept breaking up?
- Tries to control you by being very bossy, giving orders, making all the decisions, or doesn't take your opinion seriously?
- Is scary? You worry about how they will react to what you say or do? Threatens you or owns weapons?



Are you with someone who...

- Pressures you for sex, is forceful or scary around sex? Thinks of you as a sex object? Attempts to manipulate or guilt trip you (If you really loved me you would...)? Gets too serious about the relationship too fast?
- Abuses alcohol or drugs and pressures you to take them?
- Blames you when they mistreat you? Says you provoked them, made them do it, pushed their buttons, led them on?



Are you with someone who...

- Has a history of bad relationships and blames the other person for all the problems?
- Believes that men should be powerful and in control and that women should be passive and submissive?
- Has hit, choked, restrained, or physically abused you?
- Your family and friends have warned you about this person or told you they were worried for your safety?

A pair of hands, one on the left and one on the right, are shown holding a white cloth. The cloth has a large, jagged tear down the center, revealing a dark background underneath. The hands are positioned as if they are presenting or holding the cloth. The overall image has a somber and symbolic tone, representing the theme of domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Handouts

- The Power and Control Wheel
- The Equity/Healthy Relationship Wheel
- The Cycle of Domestic Violence
- Myths about Domestic Violence
- The effects of domestic violence on children



Christian Women and Abuse

- As a Christian wife, you can keep faith and separate yourself from violence and abuse.
- Malachi 2:13-16 (NIV)
- A spouse who uses abuse and violence is breaking faith and the marriage covenant.
- Although God is displeased with frivolous divorce, He also hates violence and wants you to live in safety.
- You are the temple of God and should not be desecrated by abuse. 1 Cor. 3:16 NIV

A pair of hands, palms up, held out against a dark background. The hands are positioned at the top of the frame, with fingers slightly curled. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the skin and the veins on the hands. The overall mood is one of offering, support, or release.

Breaking Free

- Break the silence and tell someone
- Recognize that when you are attempting to leave an abusive relationship you are in the most danger. You must use wisdom.
- Make a safety plan for you and your children.
- Access resources: spiritual, psychological, medical, legal, economic, shelters, housing, support groups



How Can I Help?

- Recognize and raise awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence and God's view about abuse.
- Model loving, nonabusive relationships for others.
- Teach our children and our youth healthy patterns for relationships, respect for others, and healthy ways to resolve conflict.
- Take time to *listen* to the survivor's story, empathize with her pain, and validate her experience.
- Provide practical help and spiritual support when you have the opportunity.