

**5. Take responsibility for your children's safety and spiritual growth.** Even though children are devastated by divorce, they suffer more long-term effects from living in an abusive home where they learn that daddy hitting mommy is normal. Children often base their view of God on their dad's behavior. If their dad is abusive or controlling, they may have a difficult time trusting God as their heavenly father. They may see God as a tyrannical judge waiting to catch them doing something wrong instead of a loving Savior who is *for* them, who offers unconditional love and forgiveness. An expert in the field of domestic violence believes it is much worse for a child to grow up in an abusive home than in a single-parent household. You need to evaluate your situation to determine the least harmful environment for your child, and then take steps to secure their safety.



**6. Develop a safety plan!** If your husband has already been physically violent, it is likely he will repeat the pattern of behavior. Even if he has only used verbal and emotional abuse to keep you in line, his behavior may escalate to physical violence as you begin to set healthy boundaries or confront his abusive behavior. Contact FOCUS Ministries online at [www.focusministries1.org](http://www.focusministries1.org) or by mail at P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413 for a free, eight-page safety plan that will help you know what to do the next time violence occurs in your home. If you are being physically battered right now, seek help and a safe place *immediately!*

**Maybe you are thinking . . .**

- You don't want to be a stumbling block in God's work.
- You don't want to destroy your husband's reputation.
- If he lost his job, you would have no financial security.
- Who would believe you anyway?
- You don't believe in divorce, and don't want your children to suffer the effects of a broken family.
- You are terrified you will lose custody of the children if you leave, since he is good with words and could easily convince the court that you are an unfit mother with severe emotional problems.

**Dear One,**

You are important and precious to God. You are loved and valued just because of who you are, an image-bearer of the living God!



Even though you have suffered greatly, God offers you hope and joy and the promise to walk with you each step of the way. You are not alone!

Reach out to friends who care and to a God who adores you. Remember, domestic violence is a crime! **No one** has a right to batter you, verbally or physically.

It's up to you to break the silence, confront the evil, and stop the cycle of abuse. May God grant you strength and peace, heal your pain, and restore you to the woman He created you to be! (Joel 2:25, Psa. 71:19-24 NLT)

# Terror In the Parsonage!



*When the abuser is  
your pastor . . . and husband!*

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**“I**’m the worst pastor’s wife in the whole world,” said Julie, sobbing as she described how she had utterly failed God and didn’t deserve to live.”

Julie’s husband was the pastor of a large church in the inner city. At home he was a tyrant who bullied and abused his family, but in the pulpit, he was transformed into a godly man whom the congregation respected and adored. He was compassionate and gave 100% of himself to his congregation, but at home he commanded fear and absolute obedience from his wife and children, using scripture to justify his right to punish and terrorize.



“God isn’t pleased with you,” he’d say as he slapped his wife into submission.

Comparing a perpetrator of domestic violence to the story of the Good Samaritan, a pastor/husband represents the *thief* as he “wounds his wife, robs her of dignity, confidence, trust in men, trust in the church, and perhaps trust in God.”

“She, like the stranger on the roadside, may be left half-dead, either physically, emotionally, or both.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Broken and Battered* by Muriel Canfield

## Signs of Extreme Control & Abuse

- Does he ever threaten you with words or a weapon?
- Do you have to account for your time away from him or every penny you spend?
- Is he hard to please, demanding, and overly critical?
- Does he call you names and criticize your appearance?
- Does he punish you when you don’t submit or obey his commands?
- Are you forced to have sex or perform sexual acts you aren’t comfortable with?
- Does his anger escalate into a rage, with screaming, ranting and raving?
- Does he ever push you or hit you?
- Does he prevent you from leaving a room or follow you from room to room?
- Have you ever needed medical treatment because he injured you, or have you treated your bruises and cuts at home so no one would know?

## What Should You Do?

1. **Tell someone!** Secrecy feeds the power and control of an abuser. If you do not feel comfortable in telling someone at church, tell a close friend or family member whom you can trust to maintain confidentiality. Contact FOCUS Ministries online at [www.focusministries1.org](http://www.focusministries1.org) or call us at 270-825-2423 or 630-595-7023. We will be glad to talk with you and provide you with literature and books that will help.
2. **Identify behaviors that are extremely controlling and abusive.** Are you afraid of your husband? If any of the signs listed in this brochure describe your husband’s pattern of behavior, you are living in an abusive relationship.
3. **Understand that physical assault and battery is a crime!** If he treated anyone else the way he is treating you, he would be arrested. ***It is not your fault!*** The problem does not lie with your behavior, but with his character! The best way to end physical abuse is to hold him accountable, even if it means calling 9-1-1 and charging him with a crime. Often, that is the wake-up call that will convince him to get help. Sometimes the most loving thing to do is to leave, or ask him to leave, and require him to get long-term professional help and show verifiable changes before he is allowed to return.
4. **Realize that God hates violence!** (Psalm 11:5; Malachi 2:14-16) Jesus came to offer freedom to the oppressed. (Isaiah 61:1-3). He loves you and will not abandon you. (Psalm 9:9). He will bring justice in his own time (Psalm 146:5-9; Psalm 10:17-18).

Contact FOCUS Ministries for information about a pastor’s wives’ support group and confidential forum. We will put you in contact with other pastor’s wives who understand what you are going through.