



FOCUS

a newsletter for women who find themselves in difficult circumstances, feeling emotionally and spiritually alone



December 2004

Volume 10 Issue 3

Welcome Home!

God was not silent when He expressed His love to us. From the baby's cry in the manger to the pounding of the nails on the cross, God shouted so all of us could hear:

"I love you . . ."

- Even if you don't have it all together
- Even if you have made wrong choices
- Even if others think you are unlovable
- No matter what you've done, no matter how many times you've messed up . . .

"I love you. I will not wink at your sin or cover up evil, but I will die in your place."

In the devotional book, *Boundless Love*, (Women of Faith) God's love for you is described as:

- **Boundless**—overflowing toward you with no danger of ever running out
- **Fearless**—unafraid of the worst in you, confident of the best in you
- **Stubborn**—refusing to ever give up on you
- **Lavish**—holding back nothing of its best treasures from you
- **Outlandish**—proving its character in wild, impossible ways
- **Intentional**—devoting its every act to your highest good

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"Jesus answered,
 'If anyone loves me,
 he will keep my word,
 and my Father will love him,
 and we will come to him
 and make our home with him.'"

—John 14:23



You're Invited!

*Come as you are . . .
 no cost, no obligations, no requirements*



FOCUS Support Groups

- ◆ **Cedar Rapids, IA** Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Call Celeste at 319-447-1963 or Pat at 319-395-0021 for directions.
- ◆ **Aurora, IL** 1st Saturday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Call Brenda at 630-370-0138.
- ◆ **Palos Heights, IL** 2nd Saturday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Call Debbie at 708-499-5058 for directions.
- ◆ **Westmont, IL** 1st and 3rd Saturday at 9 a.m.. Call Stephanie at 630-852-5273.
- ◆ **Wheaton, IL** 1st & 3rd Saturday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Call Joan at 630-690-0976 for directions.
- ◆ **Wood Dale, IL** 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Call Paula at 630-595-7023 for directions.
- ◆ **Savannah, GA** Call Patty Jean at 912-629-4720 for date and time.
- ◆ **Carbondale, KS** Call Vicki at 785-836-7475 or email at vmcgoyne@yahoo.com.
- ◆ **Lexington, KY**, Saturdays at 9 a.m. Call Leslie at 859-224-1619 (x143) for directions.
- ◆ **Madisonville, KY** Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. Call Brenda at 270-825-2423 for directions.
- ◆ **Olmsted Falls, OH** Call Sally at 440-234-8430.
- ◆ **Danville, PA** 1st & 3rd Thursday at 6:45 p.m. Call Janet at 570-208-5900 (x.5649).
- ◆ **Knoxville, TN** Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Call Roberta at 865-470-2820 x226 for directions.

Contact Paula Silva at 630/595-7023 or email at Paula@focusministries1.org for details on starting a group in your area!



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How does one respond to this kind of unconditional love? By surrendering your brokenness (stop trying to make life work on your own terms) and turning your heart toward the Father who loves you. Like the prodigal son's father in Luke 15, Jesus will run toward you with open arms, cover the distance between you and a holy God, and throw the biggest party you've ever seen to celebrate His love for *you*.

All you have to do is take the first step toward home. God will do the rest.

In the book of Hosea, there is a description of how God passionately pursues those He loves to bring them back home:

"Therefore I will block her path
with thorn bushes;

I will wall her in so that she cannot
find her way.

She will chase after her lovers
but not catch them;
she will look for them but not find them."

Then she will say,

'I will go back to my husband as at first,
for then I was better off than now' . . .

Therefore I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the desert
and speak tenderly to her . . .

In that day, declares the Lord,
you will call me 'my husband,'
you will no longer call me 'my master' . . .

I will betroth you to me forever.
I will betroth you in righteousness and
justice, in love and compassion."

(Hosea 2:6-7, 14, 16, 19)

Isn't that the desire of every woman's heart—to be truly known and desired, to have someone defend and fight for you, to stand with you in hard times, and to love you passionately and faithfully?

***All you have to do is take the first step
toward home. God will do the rest.***

It's time to let good men off the hook!
Although some men come very close, there
is no man alive who can completely fulfill
the desire of a woman's heart and soul.

That's because the longing within us was
created by God *for Himself*.

In her video series, *A Beautiful Offering*,
Angela Thomas talks about the danger of
holding out the cup of your soul for others
to fill. "They may spit in it, but they can't
fill it up. Hold your cup out to Jesus—
He will fill it so full that it spills over to
others."

Angela says, "The man you love cannot
make you whole—you were designed
for a Savior!"

"Your children cannot make you whole.
No child should be your savior!"

"Accumulating stuff won't make you
whole. The feeling of contentment will
only last a little while."

You are a designer woman, an image-
bearer of God, designed for intimacy
and relationship. Your identity comes
from the heart of God.

In *The Sacred Romance*, John Eldredge
writes, "If God is the pursuer, the age-
less romancer, the lover, then there has
to be a beloved, one who is the pursued.
This is our role in the story."

"We don't have to get God to love us by
doing something right—even loving
Him."

*"This is love, not that we loved God, but
that He loved us and sent His Son as an
atoning sacrifice for our sins."*

(1 John 4:10)

"Someone has noticed, someone has
taken the initiative. There is nothing we
need to do to keep it up, because His
love for us is not based on what we've
done, but who we are: His beloved."

*"I am my beloved's, and his desire is for
me."* (Song of Solomon 7:10)

Since God has made His home in us
(John 14:23), we must learn to abide in
Him. The abundant life God wants for
you is not about *doing*, but about *being*.
It's resting in His strength and waiting
for His timing.

"I lift my eyes when I am troubled.

I lift my hands, I lift my heart.

And there I stand, knowing nothing can
defeat me

Just as long as I know where You are.

In You alone is where I find
my comfort.

In You alone, You're my only hope.

In You alone, my heart has found
a resting place.

(*"You Alone"* by Kim Hill)

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**The mission of FOCUS Newsletter
is to encourage women
who are struggling in difficult circumstances
to find strength and hope in Jesus Christ.**

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In the News . . .

Dear Friends at FOCUS Ministries:

"I heard your interview on Midday Connection and am greatly concerned for a friend. Her husband, a deacon at our church, was arrested at work and ordered to leave the home after an episode of physical abuse.

My friend was a virtual prisoner at home. In the name of submission, she was not allowed out of the house without his permission. If she disobeyed, she was punished. She was not allowed to have friends, and her phone calls were monitored. She was not allowed to receive mail.

After his arrest, he received counseling and she allowed him to return home since she believed he had truly changed. He professed his love for her while at the same time making sure she had no access to their bank accounts. She is allowed to go to church with her husband and to the grocery store once a week. She is given cash for the groceries and must provide her husband with a receipt and change when she returns home.

She endures extreme verbal abuse and mind control, and feels she is at fault.

She has a degree from Bible college and is an intelligent woman, yet she believes she must fulfill her marriage covenant because she cannot find scripture that says a man should not abuse his spouse.

I will be so thankful if you can give me some kind of advice as to what I might do to help her."

—J. Illinois

Response from FOCUS:

And people don't believe this occurs in the church!

We highly recommend a book called "To Be An Anchor In The Storm" which can be ordered from our website at (focusministries1.org) by clicking on the *Amazon.com* icon.

What your friend needs the most is to know you are there when she needs you. Keep your friendship active as much as you can without causing her more harm from her husband. Educate yourself on the aspects of domestic violence so you will be able to talk to her with authority instead of opinions.

Keep hope alive for her in practical ways and continue to pray for her. There is a lot of power in prayer, as you know. Ultimately, she has to make the choice to leave. We will send you some literature which you can use to educate yourself and then pass along to her when it is safe. You will find many scripture references condemning violence in our brochure, "*What Does The Bible Say?*"

New Resource Helps Agencies Work With Men & Boys To Stop Abuse

A first-of-its-kind comprehensive new toolkit is now online to help domestic and sexual violence prevention agencies work with boys and men to stop gender-based violence.

Developed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and guidance from 14 state domestic and sexual violence coalitions, the toolkit shares lessons learned and details the experiences of many organizations that are doing this work in the U.S. and throughout North America.

Among many other tools, the toolkit offers case studies, handouts, community-building tools, a sample work plan, tips for building cross-cultural solidarity, a database with more than 300 online resources, and a Discussion Board that is available to those who want to share their experiences in reaching out to men and boys to prevent violence.

"For those of us who work to stop domestic and sexual violence, hope is an especially precious commodity," said FVPPF President Esta Soler. "Violence against women is so pervasive, and its consequences so deep and lasting, that at times it can be difficult to remain optimistic. But by working with men and boys, we can change social norms and make violence unacceptable. This work offers enormous promise and real hope. The new toolkit is an invaluable resource for those who are just starting out and for those who want to learn from the experiences of others.

The materials in the new toolkit can be used to complement the FVPPF's Coaching Boys Into Men public education campaign, which many agencies around the country have localized for their communities.

The online toolkit is at www.endabuse.org/toolkit.



Reprinted and adapted from "News Flash" (<http://www.fvppf.org/newsflash>), an online newsletter of the Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Looking Back . . . Forging Ahead

True Stories of God's faithfulness through darkest moments

This is the last portion of a paper written on submission which has been published in the September, October, November and December 2004 issues. The author has asked to remain anonymous.

Your comments and feedback on the topic of submission may be sent to FOCUS Newsletter, P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413.

There is a great song out right now (recorded by Casting Crowns) that clearly states the mission of His church. *"If we are the body, why aren't His arms reaching; why aren't His hands healing; why aren't His words teaching? If we are the body, why aren't His feet going; why is His love not showing them He is the Way. He is the way."*

Of course there are risks, big, messy risks and strong, smelly sin. However, we cannot fear bad reports if they are true, or turn from hurting people because they bleed.

"He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them are like an abomination to the Lord. It is not good to show partiality to the wicked, or overthrow the righteous in judgment." Proverbs 17:15; 18:5.

We must do His work regardless of the cost, as Janani Luwum, shot for defying the cruelties in Uganda said, *"Whenever I have the opportunity I have told the president the things the church disapproves of. God is my witness."*

And as Mother Theresa said, *"God does not ask us to be successful, just faithful."* Or better yet, as G. K. Chesterton said so audaciously, *"If a thing is worth being done, it is worth being done badly."*

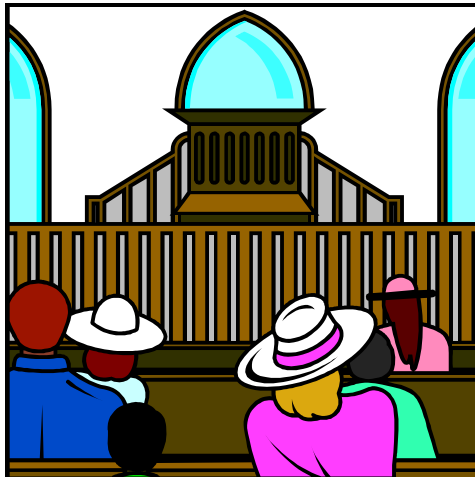
The church must seek His righteousness which will not be found without Truth, and cannot be attained apart

from justice, for these are crucial to His kingdom. *"By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue, by cowardice and submission the sad choice of a variety of evils,"* said Thomas Paine.

What will the world think if the church stands up for righteousness and protects the oppressed of her own flock? *"Bear one another's burdens."* (Galatians 6:2)

What will the world think if we not only reveal our sin, but deal with and heal our sin with His redeeming, unfailing love?

What if we, the bride of Christ, could be that place where people find out in very real life terms *"Come unto me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28)



The church and the elders, responsible to God, must give women permission to speak truth and be a haven of safety and compassion for the ensuing whirlwind it will stir up. *"Prepare the way; remove the stumbling block out of the way of my people."* (Isaiah 57:14b)

If we are strong and courageous enough to take on pornography, let us be strong enough to take on oppression in our midst and stop sin! As Christ said, *"Go, and sin no more,"* for it is He who leads and guides us.

The church has even further instruction in Hebrews 12:12-15: *"Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord, looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."*

I have heard from every person with a soapbox that *"the biggest threat to national security is the unraveling of the family."* I agree, but would take it even further—the unraveling of the family is a threat to Christ's bride which He bought with His life. If this is true, wouldn't women, children, families, the body of Christ, justice, mercy, and liberty be better served, and ultimately saved, by destroying this tyranny rather than destroying the women by ignoring their plight. Because that is exactly what submission to sin does—sweeps the tyranny under the rug until she suffocates from the stench.

So if the future of the church, the family, and the child must be saved, so must the woman be saved from her present oppression. If the woman is to be saved from her present tyranny, then the tyranny must be revealed. If the tyranny must be revealed, then it must be brought down.

If the tyranny is to be brought down, then justice must prevail. If justice must prevail, then it must be the justice of the Lord. If the justice of the Lord is required, then it must be the church who fights for it.

If it must be the church who fights for the justice of the Lord, it must be through His power, His wisdom, His Spirit, and through Him, Truth.

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For it is He who died for her and it is His image she bears. *"She is the human and sacred image; all around her the social fabric shall sway and split and fall; the pillars of society shall be shaken, and the roofs of ages come rushing down; and not one hair of her head shall be harmed."*

(G. K. Chesterton)

I realize no one wants to open up and see how far the cancer has spread, but we are called to pursue His kingdom and His righteousness.

With the Holy Spirit to guide, we can walk this path. The result will be this: *"Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him and shall make His footsteps our pathway."* (Psalm 85:10-13)

For the day has come.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

(Isaiah 61:1-3)

—Anonymous

More on Submission

Excerpts from *Boundaries in Marriage* by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend:

"Husbands have used the apostle Paul's teaching (Eph. 5:22-23) to justify control and abuse of their wives. In fact, we have rarely seen a client in marriage therapy bring up submission unless a big part of the problem is a controlling husband. Usually a husband wants to control and not serve his wife, and he is in denial of his own controlling behavior. When his wife has finally had enough and stands up to him, he plays the submission card as a way of getting back in control and avoiding whatever problem she is confronting. This is not what this passage had in mind. Basically, this passage establishes a sense of order in a marriage. It places final responsibility for the family on the shoulders of the husband. He is the "head," or the leader of the family, as Christ is leader of the church. The passage asks the wife to submit to her husband's leadership, as we all submit to Christ's leadership."

"What submission does not mean is that a husband just tells a wife what to do. Leadership does not mean domination. Marriages that work best have equal partners with differing roles. Decisions are best made mutually, as both parties with their different strengths bring in different perspectives. The husband should always submit to his wife's needs as Christ did for ours . . . (Eph. 5:21)"

"The idea of submission is never meant to allow someone to overstep another's boundaries. Submission only has meaning in the context of boundaries, for boundaries promote self-control and freedom. If a wife is not free and in control of herself, she is not submitting anyway. She is a slave subject to a slave driver, and she is out of the will of God. (Gal. 5:1). Seek each other's best out of freedom, and submission issues will disappear."

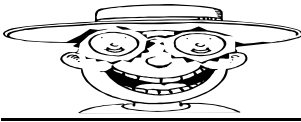
Excerpts from *Men & Women* by Larry Crabb:

"Headship and submission represent masculine and feminine movements in the dance of relationship. Headship and submission . . . are neither rules to follow nor roles that demand conformity. Rather, they are mature and loving expressions of our distinctive sexuality in the marriage relationship. A better solution is to define submission in more explicitly relational terms that accept masculine leadership as an essential and good element in biblical headship and grant to the woman an authority from God to intelligently, creatively, and sincerely serve her husband with the unique resources of her femininity."

"God does not grant authority to the "position" of husband and then permit whomever occupies that position to use this authority whenever he sees fit without a priority concern to serve the well-being of his wife. The authority of a husband is not an "authority-in-reserve." It is not a badge that, when pinned to his chest, makes him a sheriff."

Excerpts from *Intimate Allies* by Dan Allender and Tremper Longman III

"Husband and wife need to submit to one another. (Ephesians 5:21) Mutual submission means we will lay down our lives for our spouses' glory. Christian men are not to be abusers; they are to be considerate to their wives . . . to treat them with honor and respect. (1 Peter 3:7) Women are told that their attitude toward their husbands needs to be marked by submission, a bowing of their will to the will of their husbands. Headship is not to be understood as the dictatorship of the husband wielding his own will over the rest of the household. The male is not superior to the female any more than God the Father is superior to the Son, who is equally God and said to look to the Father as his 'head.' (1 Co. 11:3) A continual dominance in the name of submission will damage the union of two equal beings."



Just For Fun

Man & Woman In the Garden

by Pastor Steve Holt

Mountain Springs Church, Colorado Springs, CO

From Genesis 2:18:

- The first time in the Bible that God says something is “not good.” Men, if you are married, God looked at you and said, “This one needs help. It is not good for him to be alone.”
- Man is not complete without Eve. The Hebrew means “suitable helper” which means a “compliment to man,” “corresponding partner.” Corresponding means she responds differently than you:
 - ☺ You say “ping,” she says “pong.”
 - ☺ You say “right,” she says “left.”
 - ☺ She says, “Let’s pull over and ask for directions,” and you say, “No, let’s drive another thousand miles.”

Book Review

by Brenda Branson



Men & Women—Enjoying the Difference

by Dr. Larry Crabb

This is one of the best books I’ve read describing why some relationships don’t work and how others work well for a lifetime.

It will help you understand:

- God’s purposeful design of man and woman
- Lessons from the Trinity (model of other-centered relationships)
- Stain of self-centeredness—how to become “other-centered”
- Headship and submission in marriage
- How to appreciate and celebrate our differences
- How to be truly masculine and freely feminine

Larry writes, “The path to change begins with a hard look at our self-centeredness and at the wounds in our hearts that we use to justify the demand that others treat us well. As repentance occurs, the path continues with an exploration of who we are as men and women. When we learn to warmly give what our sexual identity equips us to give to bless the masculine or feminine heart of our mate, then we will become men and women who enjoy the difference.”

Recipe of the Month

Chocolate Almond Croissants

1 (12 1/2 oz.) can almond filling

12 small croissants, split in half horizontally

1 cup semisweet chocolate morsels or double chocolate morsels

1 cup sliced almonds, toasted

Set tops of croissant aside. Stir almond filling and spread 2 T. on each croissant bottom.

Cover with croissant tops and place on large foil-lined baking sheet.

Bake at 325° for 7 minutes.

Microwave chocolate morsels on high for 1-2 minutes (or until melted), stirring once.

Spread melted chocolate over croissants. Sprinkle almonds over chocolate.

Let stand at room temperature 2-3 hours, or until chocolate is firm.



Will You Help?

- In May 2006, we have the opportunity of bidding for a school building in Madisonville, KY which will be renovated and used for **transitional housing** (*Homes of Refuge*) and as a women's center which will provide programs and resources for women, teens, and children. Donations can be made online at focusministries1.org or mailed to FOCUS, P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413.
- Shop online at ***www.igive.com*** at your favorite stores (including Dell Computers; brand-name clothing stores and outlets; favorite books, electronics, and appliance stores, etc.). Designate FOCUS Ministries as your favorite charity and we will receive a percentage of the amount you spend online.
- When you need to buy a **book or CD**, log on to our new website at focusministries1.org and go to "Recommended Books." We have a link to Amazon.com from which you can order any book or CD (just click on Amazon logo) and FOCUS will receive a percentage of the proceeds.

Did you know donations can now be made online at www.focusministries1.org?

Words That Heal

Long before He laid down
the earth's foundations,
God has us in mind,
had settled on us as
the focus of His love,
to be made whole and holy
by His love . . .

He wanted us to enter into the
celebration of his lavish gift-giving
by the hand of his beloved Son.
It's in Christ that we find out who
we are and what we are living for.
Long before we first heard of Christ
and got our hopes up,
He had His eye on us, had designs on us
for glorious living."
Ephesians 1:4-9 The Message

Partners In Ministry

- YES! I would like to receive FOCUS Newsletter each month for 1 year at the rate of \$15 per year.
- I want to partner with FOCUS to educate churches and individuals about domestic violence and help families suffering from the trauma of abuse. Here is my faith promise of \$_____ per month as God provides. Here is my one-time donation of \$_____ to use where most needed.
- I want to support the Women's Centers in KY and IL and provide salaries for directors and staff. Here is my donation of \$_____ or my monthly pledge of \$_____.
- Enclosed is my gift of \$_____ to provide complimentary copies of FOCUS Newsletter to women and organizations who cannot afford a subscription.
- Count on me to be a prayer warrior for this ministry. Please send me specific requests.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413



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O Lord, You Alone Are My Hope! Psalm 71:5 NLT

The Princess and the Predator

continued from Vol. 10 Issue 2

... A True Story of God's Grace

In the course of normal, everyday events in this human realm of flesh and blood, Glenda would have been devoured by the seasoned attorney. He had an arrogant smirk on his face that indicated he would win the court battle and squash Glenda as easily as swatting a fly.

Glenda may have appeared weak and defenseless to the courtroom of onlookers and attorneys waiting to plead their cases, but she was supernaturally empowered by the Spirit of the Living God to fight a battle in the human realm while a spiritual battle was being fought on her behalf in the spiritual realm against a much greater foe.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

As the judge granted custody of Rico to Glenda, she was full of thanksgiving to God for being her advocate and strength. She knew without a doubt that she could not claim the rights to this victory. She was just the vessel through which God spoke. He had done all the work!

Glenda was thrilled beyond words. But Ron's attorney was not! His arrogant smirk was quickly replaced with a look of disbelief and rage. As they left the judge's bench, he lost all sense of decorum and belched out a verbal attack with disgust and pure hatred: *"Slut!"*

Glenda chose not to react to his attack, but kept her eyes fixed on the exit where she would leave the court room—

victorious and free to get on with her life and focus on raising her son!

Within a couple of months, Ron's angry attorney died of a heart attack.

Ron's domination lasted 20 years for Glenda and 18 for Rico. Just after his 18th birthday, Rico wrote a letter to Ron "divorcing" him from his life. It was painful, but necessary since Ron refused to seek help and remained a threat physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

How sad that Ron, created in God's image and endowed with many creative gifts, would choose to pursue a path of destruction where he crossed the line from "doing" evil things to "becoming" evil.

Who was the predator in this story?

Was it Ron's attorney who hoodwinked Ron, who tried to terrorize and intimidate Glenda, and who was ruthless in his attempt to win? If you were to look beneath the surface in his life, you would find a great desire for money and prestige—to be acquired at any cost.

Was Ron the predator? He certainly perpetrated many acts of violence toward Brenda and Rico, and allegedly molested several young teenage boys. Beneath the surface of Ron's charming exterior, he will filled with fear and low self-esteem. He needed power and control to feel strong and powerful since he had experienced such tyranny from his father during his childhood and he re-

played the sexual abuse he suffered as a young teenage boy on unsuspecting, trusting victims who looked up to him as a spiritual leader and friend.

Even though Ron was a perpetrator, he was also a victim of the real predator.

"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8)

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." (Ephesians 6:12)

The real predator—Satan himself—sought to devour the individuals in this relationship who were created in the image of God, and then destroy the marriage which should have been a picture of Christ and His bride and a safe haven for Rico to grow and be nurtured.

The predator won on two counts—devouring Ron and destroying the marriage. But it was a short-lived victory. Until Ron's last breath, there is still a chance for his redemption.

The princess met the predator, suffered some scrapes and bruises, but was rescued by a prince. *"The Lord will rescue me from every evil . . . and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever."*

(2 Tim. 4:18)