



FOCUS

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



September 2004

Volume 9 Issue 12

Love is not Silent!

"Be submissive and love your man." Those words were etched into Annie's mind from her mother and grandmother, as well as from the pulpit at church. *"If you keep your man happy at home, he won't look elsewhere for love."* This and other well-meaning, but misguided, clichés comprised Annie's philosophy of marriage.

It was easy for Annie's husband to heap coals of guilt on her head when she found out he was being unfaithful. *"If you were the kind of wife you should be, I wouldn't have to go out looking for someone else to meet my needs."*

Not only did Annie's husband refuse to put an end to his illicit relationships with other women, he asserted his role as head of the house and walloped her over the head with scripture saying, *"Wives, be submissive to your husbands."* He fully expected her to close her eyes and keep quiet about his extramarital affairs, and yet keep the bed warm when he chose to return home.

Whenever Annie meekly questioned other inappropriate behavior, a quick slap across the face and a clenched fist raised in her direction was all it took to "keep her in line." A stern look, a few slaps, and a threat to leave her financially destitute was reinforced by selected, out-of-context scripture to prove his point and keep her paralyzed with fear and confusion.

Believing she would win him over by being the submissive wife he expected, even if she didn't agree with what he was doing, Annie kept silent. This was her way of showing love.

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**Christ offered himself
as an unblemished sacrifice,
freeing us from all those dead-end efforts
to make ourselves respectable,
so that we can live all out for God.**

Hebrews 9:15 *The Message*

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.
- ◆ **Wood Dale, IL**, 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Call Paula at 630-595-7023 for directions.
- ◆ **Palos Heights, IL**, 1st Saturday of each month at 9:30 a.m. Call Debbie at 708-499-5058 for directions.
- ◆ **Westmont, IL**, First and third 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.
- ◆ **Carbondale, KS** Call Vicki at 785-836-7475 for more information.
- ◆ **Madisonville, KY** Thursdays at 6:00 p.m. Call Brenda at 270-825-2423 for directions.
- ◆ **Lexington, KY**, 1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Call Kim at 859-977-2742 for directions.
- ◆ **Olmsted Falls, OH** 1st & 3rd Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Call Sally at 440-427-7700 for directions.
- ◆ **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!



Train the Trainer Seminar
Looking Back, Forging Ahead
Just For Fun, Bookshelf, and Recipe of the Month
The Princess and the Predator (a story of God's grace)

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Although Annie thought she was expressing love by being silent and submissive, she was really enabling evil to continue.

Real love always does what is best for the other person, even if it means they suffer consequences that may cause them pain.

The true test of Annie's love for her husband would be to hold him accountable for his actions and refuse to keep silent or be held hostage any longer by his distortion of scripture and immoral behavior.

Pastor Jones had just finished a series of messages on the Christian family. He was pleased with the church's policy against abortion, divorce, and other social issues. The parishioners in his church were real pillars of the community, and most seemed to be financially stable, morally pure, and spiritually mature.

The church building was a flurry of activity almost every day of the week due to children's programs, lunches for senior members of the community, ladies' and men's Bible studies, child care for working moms, craft classes for happy homemakers, and choir practices for people of all ages.

It was more of a country club for VIPs than a hospital for the wounded and dying.

Pastor Jones wanted his congregation to be known as a warm, loving church. Occasional church socials and small group activities helped keep the glow of Christian love burning bright.

But something happened to chill the warm and fuzzy feelings in Pastor Jones' congregation. It all started with a tearful prayer request from a quiet, reserved woman in one of the adult Sunday School classes.

She endured many years of verbal and physical abuse from her husband, a well-

Love is not silent! It does not wink at sin or cover up evil. Love speaks up and exposes darkness with the motive of healing and reconciliation.

respected leader in the church. Out of desperation to maintain her sanity and protect herself physically, she had filed for divorce.

Her plea for compassion and prayer support through the difficult time threatened the comfortable environment which the church members had worked so hard to achieve.

The church leaders were so concerned about disrupting the status quo, they took the hurting woman aside and asked her not to make any more public prayer requests unless it was about the health of her children, or anything unrelated to her marital problems. After all, their church had a

policy to uphold against divorce—regardless of whether or not women were being pounded by Christian fists and emotionally battered by pious, scripture-wielding bullies.

The Women's Ministry Committee discussed whether there was a need to organize a support group for victims of domestic violence, but their consensus was, "*We really don't have problems like that in our church.*"

When discussing the need for divorce care classes, one lady arrogantly sniffed and said, "*Well, I think if they made their bed, they should lie in it. They'll never learn their lesson if we come to their aid.*"

Pastor Jones and his congregation believed they were reflecting Christ's love to the community with its programs and policies, while in reality they were insensitive to and unaware of the many suffering families in its congregation who hid deep pain and hideous secrets underneath their plastic smiles.

This church should be commended for their desire to teach family values and uphold the sanctity of marriage, but they are missing out on the joy of touching people's lives with the grace and mercy of the gospel.

They are so consumed with maintaining a spotless image that they have lost sight of compassion. Their well-rehearsed songs sound like noisy static to those who so desperately need tangible proof of God's unconditional love.

Love does not come in a neatly wrapped package with a beautiful bow to be given to perfect, attractive people. It is often messy, always sacrificial, and offers itself to those who may be dirty, smelly, or entangled in years of physical or emotional bondage.

Love is not silent! It does not wink at sin or cover up evil. Love speaks up and exposes darkness with the motive of healing and reconciliation.

Love was God nailed to a tree—*exposing* our sin, providing Himself as our sacrifice, and offering healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation to the loving Father whose image we bear.

What if God had kept silent?

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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.**

Subscriptions: \$15 per year (12 issues). Send check or money order made payable to FOCUS, P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413. Complimentary subscriptions are available for those who cannot afford a subscription.

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FOCUS Ministries (and all individuals affiliated therewith) disclaims any personal liability for information presented within this newsletter or in seminars, workshops, and support group meetings. You should always consult a professional for medical, psychological, legal, financial, or biblical advice.



***FOCUS Support Group Leaders
Training Weekend
March 11-13, 2005
Drury Inn, Evansville, IN***

You are invited to attend a weekend training seminar for women who are:

- Interested in starting a FOCUS Support Group (domestic violence/dysfunctional relationships)
- Currently leading a Bible study or support group for women
- Interested in helping other women deal with domestic violence, spousal abuse, or divorce.
- Interested in a forum for current support group leaders

As you travel life's journey, hurting women will come across your path. Discover in this seminar what you can do to help.

Friday, March 11 7-10 p.m. Session 1: Starting the Journey

- **Which way do I go?** (*How to start a support group; advertising; structure of a support group*)
- **Reading the road map** (*Dynamics of a support group; team approach; curriculum; resources*)
- **Barriers in the journey** (*Identifying and handling conflict and difficult people*)

Saturday, March 12 8 a.m.—10 p.m. Session 2: What's in the Knapsack?

- **What's dysfunctional about relationships?** (*Dynamics of domestic violence; effects of DV on children; why does she stay?; teen dating violence; why does he do that?*)
- **How can I help?** (*Being an anchor in their life storms, setting boundaries with members of the group, self-care*)

Sunday, March 13 8—11 a.m. Session 3: Spiritual Direction on the Journey

- **Companions on the journey** (*Reaching hearts/touching souls; choosing companions wisely*)
- **Journeying to know God** (*Being in rhythm with the Spirit; looking at your personal journey*)

Conference Registration

- | | |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Bird Registration | \$50.00 |
| <i>includes training manual and snacks</i> | |
| Note: Each person is responsible for making their own hotel reservations! | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Registration after Feb. 12 | \$60.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support Group Leader's Guide * | \$30.00 |

Total: _____

Accommodations

Drury Inn 812-423-5818 www.druryhotels.com
3901 U. S. 41 North
Evansville, IN 47711
Close to Evansville Airport

Special rate if you book before Feb. 24:
\$56/night + tax for double room (1-4 people)
Complimentary breakfast
Mention FOCUS Ministries to get special rate.

- **Checks or Money Orders should be made payable to FOCUS Ministries.**
- **Credit card payment can only be made online at www.focusministries1.org.**

* You do not have to purchase a Leader's Guide in order to attend this seminar. However, it is a helpful resource for anyone leading a FOCUS Support Group. Manual may also be purchased at the seminar or ordered later. **Note: Leader's Guide is not the same as the training manual.**

Looking Back . . . Forging Ahead

True Stories of God's faithfulness through darkest moments

When I first began to write this paper, I was in spiritual and literal turmoil. My husband had become excessively violent and I had been forced to seek help. Emotionally, I was done, finished, spent, incapable of submitting to the insanity even one more day.

The reason I was still there after all that had happened over so many years was because I thought I didn't have a choice. I didn't know there was a line. If I was going to honor and obey God, I thought I had to submit to anything that was thrown at me. If you knew all that is covered up and encouraged by the term submission, you would be amazed and probably devastated at the misuse of God's Word. This submission to sin stripped away my hope and left me lonely, broken, and bitter.

Anyway, I thought I was being obedient to the Word of God, even though it seemed to make the situation worse. At church, a few remarks were made about my circumstances that seemed to be the precursor for yet another lesson on the role of a submissive wife.

I spoke of my concerns to my counselor at church. She asked if I had ever written about my feelings regarding submission. I said, "Not exactly, here is what I have written." I then read to her the deepest burdens of my heart from my journal. She paused and then asked if I would write about submission.

That is how I started this journey, and this paper is where God has led me. I didn't have a purpose when I began other than to pour out all the ponderings and prayers I had made for years. Yet God began to expose His Word and His will to me in an utterly new light. My focus began to change from seeking to be a godly wife to seeking God's will.

What thrilled me even more was to realize the answer was in the Word of God, not just to my pain but to so many others caught or trapped because they had been restricted to one part of God's Word. You see, God did not limit me to one truth the day I said my marriage vows. He wrote every word for me and all I had to do was dig deep into His wonderful wisdom and find Him and all that He loves.

Right now many women are taught that if they will just submit, serve, and love more, this will make their husbands love them. I must emphasize that I absolutely agree that I am called to submit, serve, and love. Yet my submission is not capable of changing my husband's heart. That is a job the Holy Spirit has reserved for Himself.

Also, I think we have it backwards. The church did not submit to Christ, serve Christ, and love Christ to initiate Christ's love for her. Instead, He loved and died for her while she was dead in her sins. The church, brought to life by this great love, responded in love, service, and submission to Christ. Christ is the initiator; His bride, the responder. The same is true in marriage.

While I certainly speak forthrightly in this piece, it is by no means intended to offend, but rather to tell the truth and direct the hearts of His people to Him, His Word, and to all that He loves. You see, I also want to see God's covenant of marriage restored, and I want to see Christ's bride, beautiful and righteous, standing bright like a city on a hill, beckoning to His world.

Yet, if there is to be cultural change regarding marriage and divorce, then it must begin His way by defending what He loves and what He died for—me, the bride, the one made in His image.

The way to do that is to seek truth, spoken in love, followed by justice, while always loving mercy. Only then will righteousness follow.

—Anonymous

For our God who sees all, even the sparrows who fall.

The kids' toy at Chick Fillet this week was the Harriet Tubman cassette tape. I played it in the car for the kids, but it was I who was moved nearly to tears, but mostly to resolution.

You could hear the crack of the whip and feel the hot tears and anger that fell with the injustice and cruelty she experienced. You understood her determination and conviction that "God gave me the right to be free or to die tryin'."

You rejoiced at her escape and marveled at her courage to rescue her family and others. You could plainly see God's hand leading the modern Moses.

When I listened to the remarkable details of how God provided and protected her missions, I was left with one undeniable fact—God wanted her to be free! And not just her, but her family and others as well, just like He wanted His people free from Pharaoh's hand; just like He wants the sex slaves free in Southeast Asia; just like He wants battered women released from their silent oppression.

I must confess I felt odd writing about submission. I know what it should look like. I have heard it from the pulpit, read about it in books, been wisely instructed on it, and seen it in others' homes.

One dear friend commented she had no problem with the idea of submission because her husband did such a good job making her feel loved and honored. I was in awe of what she said. It sounded so beautiful, yet I was hurt that my own marriage was so completely one-sided.

The love and honor I gave my husband was repaid with anger, cruelty, selfishness, and violence. Ideally, I thought, there should be a mutual love, respect, care, and dedication between two individuals joined into one covenant rela-

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tionship, where each are equal in worth but different in duty and authority. The husband takes the role as the servant leader and the wife takes the role of helper, lover, and friend—willing to contribute, support or even follow as situations arise.

However, it does not matter what submission is *supposed* to look like or how a husband *should* treat his wife if that is *not* the reality. After hearing a few details of how my marriage worked, my father exclaimed that was just not how a marriage was supposed to function—to which I replied that it didn't matter how things should be because that was just not the way things were, and I had no right, no power, and no authority to change anything.

However pathetic or ridiculous that may sound, it was the down to earth truth. I am reminded of the reaction to Amy Carmichael's *Things as They Are*, a frighteningly accurate account of the situation in India. The people of England scoffed, "Things can't really be that bad. Why would you write such things?" Her response—"Because it's true!"

For example, we in the United States proclaim that every human has "certain unalienable rights endowed to them by their Creator, and among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." (Interestingly, Jefferson's original draft dubbed these rights as life, liberty and "property", which was omitted for a more illusive "pursuit of happiness.") We charge other nations with violations of these rights, and yet their oppression goes on mercilessly. Why? It is such a simple concept. Unless someone in authority acknowledges and gives the people these rights, or some with courage, strength, and conviction fights for these rights, they are just empty words that leave hearts and souls shriveled and without hope.

The same is true in marriage. I have heard it said that marriage halves your rights and doubles your duties. But I know there are marriages where a

wife's rights are stripped and her duties are made into burdens, leaving her heart defrauded of any love or kindness, her body aching for tenderness or a gentle touch, and her spirit longing for peace and freedom from fear.

I know this because I have been this woman for eight years. For eight years, I prayed for God to be enough, for grace to be sufficient, for me to be content with His love and Him alone.

While I would love for you to think these prayers were motivated only out of a love for my Lord, in truth they were a cry for help, hope, and love in a desperately bad marriage where the abuse of my husband only grew stronger, bolder, and invaded new territory.

There would usually be a few glimpses of hope after an incident, but even they vanished after a while, and he would act as if nothing had happened . . . and I had better act that way too. Unthinkable, you say! No . . . common!

But what right does a wife have when her body and spirit are not her own, and she is not allowed the privilege of having feelings? Is she to give everything and expect nothing while enduring cruelty and hate?

When I searched the scriptures for direction, all I found was duty, not rights—duty to forgive, submit, suffer, turn the other cheek, be kind, and love despite the circumstances, the number of offenses, or even the individual involved because this is what Christ did for us.

How could I ignore the clear directives of Ephesians 5:1-2, 1 Timothy 1:16, Philippians 2:1-16, 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, Luke 6:27-31, Matthew 5:43-48, Romans 12:14, 1 Peter 2 & 3, and the 13th chapter of John?

It seems clear that God Himself abdicated all His glory and rights when He humbled Himself and came in the likeness of man, served, suffered, loved, and died. If Christ humbled Himself to death, what right or reason do I have to claim any rights when I am a recipient of His very grace by His very death?

I read and prayed all these familiar passages in God's Word and begged for

grace to live them. My own love was insufficient in the face of such day-to-day cruelty and selfishness. It was clearly obvious my only value to my husband was to keep house, raise his children, and be the recipient of any frustration he might be feeling. I guess the reason I found submitting so hard was because of what I had to submit to.

I would give you some gut wrenching examples, but I prefer not to. Call it pride or maybe my last shred of dignity, but if you need to understand just how bad it can get, there are many stories out there.

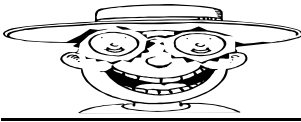
Anyway, it is not that I did not know how to submit. My childhood had trained me well. The best way to avoid the abuse was to keep a low profile, say nothing, zone out during a rage, and make sure everything was as perfect as possible. I am aware of how all this sounds, but my goal was never perfection; at best it was peace at all costs.

I sincerely wanted to be a faithful disciple and godly wife and mother. Yet my efforts seemed so fruitless. I thought maybe this was my mission field, my chance to die again and again to self, to be broken bread and poured out wine, to spend and be spent.

There is a passage by Oswald Chambers that seemed to settle the matter for me. "It is one thing to go on the lonely way with dignified heroism, but quite another thing if the line mapped out for you by God means being a doormat under other people's feet. Suppose God wants to teach you to say, 'I know how to be abased'—are you ready to be offered up like that? Are you ready to be not so much as a drop in the bucket, to be so hopelessly insignificant that you are never thought of again in connection with the life you served? Are you willing to spend and be spent, not seeking to be ministered unto but to minister? Some saints cannot do menial work and remain saints because it is beneath their dignity."

So I submitted and served and gave and loved, all for Him.

To be continued next issue.



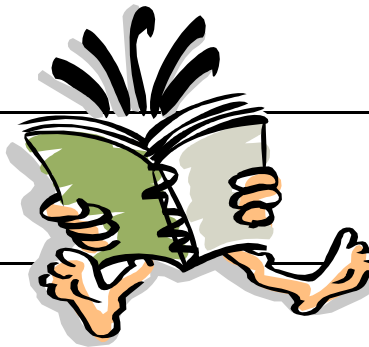
Just For Fun

Understanding Women

A Man's Perspective



I'll never understand how women can take boiling hot wax, pour it onto their upper thigh and rip the hair out by the root, and still be afraid of a spider!



Book Review

by Brenda Branson

Under Grandma's Quilt

by Rho

This little book is the true story of a woman who moved from a childhood home of love and security to a married home of fear and despair, and then to a single-again home of forgiveness and hope. It is written to share the tears and victories of those who know domestic violence and to help others understand the dynamics of it.

"I pulled the quilt from a cardboard box
Where it was stored for many years.
It felt cool and soft against my cheek
Now, under grandma's quilt, I would face my fears.
The old, tattered quilt had seen better days
It was torn; the edges were frayed.
It seemed to reflect how I felt of myself
As it caught my tears while I journaled and prayed."

This book is the perfect gift for someone who needs encouragement and hope. Contact Rho at P. O. Box 131875, St. Paul, MN 55113 or by email at emeequilt@aol.com.

Recipe of the Month

Candy Bar Stuffed Apples

4 medium apples (7-8 oz. each)
1/2 cup coarsely chopped Skor
candy bar
1/2 cup coarsely chopped
Snickers candy bar
2 T. unsalted butter
3/4 cup apple cider
1 T. granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 350°.

Cut top 1/2 inch from each apple. With apple corer or small melon baller, scoop out the stem, core, and seeds, leaving the bottom intact.

Stand apples in a 9" square baking dish, cut side up.

Place 2 T. of chopped candy inside each apple. Add 1 T. of butter on top of candy. Place remaining 2 T. of chopped candy on top of butter inside each apple.

In a small bowl, whisk together the cider and sugar. Pour over and around the apples.

Bake uncovered until tender (about 1 hr. 20 minutes). Remove from oven and let sit for 5 minutes. Serve hot or warm, spooning pan juices over apples. Serve with ice cream!

Emiril Lagasse (GMA Recipes)

Will You Help?

- **Immediate need:** New or low-mileage van or SUV
- **\$3,000 for trip to Los Angeles in February** (we are presenting a workshop on domestic violence)
- **Approximately \$2,400 is needed each month** to provide salaries for Paula and Brenda, who are now working full-time with FOCUS. Only \$250 per month is currently being pledged. Please consider making a monthly pledge for this immediate need.
- **If 1,000 people pledged \$30 per month**, we would have funding to hire much-needed staff, maintain IL and KY Women's Centers, expand distribution of literature world-wide, and provide transitional housing without government funding or grants.
- 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

May God who puts all things together,
Makes all things whole

Who made a lasting mark through the
sacrifice of Jesus

The sacrifice of blood that sealed
the eternal covenant

Who led Jesus, our Great Shepherd,
Up and alive from the dead,
Now put you together,

provide you with everything you need
to please Him

Make us into what gives Him most pleasure
By means of the sacrifice of Jesus,
the Messiah.

All glory to Jesus forever and always!

Hebrews 13:19-21 *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



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

The Princess and the Predator

continued from Vol. 9 Issue 11

... A True Story of God's Grace

Ron's attorney was a short, stocky man with a thick German accent who appeared to be in his mid-70s. Glenda didn't know what to expect when he invited her to a meeting in his law office.

As she entered his office, he greeted her warmly. However, it was a strategic friendliness designed to instill a false sense of safety in Glenda.

"Come into my cozy web," said the spider to the fly.

However, Glenda remained cautious and alert. She did not volunteer any information and refused to react to the attorney's jabs at her credibility.

Instead of vigorously defending herself against Ron's lies, she remained calm and denied his claims without revealing details which the attorney could use against her in the court room.

The attorney's reaction to Glenda's guarded demeanor was unsettling. When he failed to gain juicy tidbits of information from Glenda, he began taunting her and calling her names.

He compared her to Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet tyrant who smiled at world leaders before pounding his shoe on the conference table to display his anger. The attorney predicted that Glenda's calm confidence was just a smoke screen which would eventually erupt in caustic fury.

Glenda refused to be victimized by Ron's attorney, so she left the meeting early with her dignity and strategy secrets intact.

Ron's attorney filed a petition to vacate the previous judgment which had given Glenda legal custody of Rico.

Ron had effectively used deception and outright lies throughout previous court proceedings, but his new attorney was much more ruthless in twisting the truth and making false accusations.

The new petition made the following preposterous claims:

- That Glenda's attorney had threatened him on several occasions, saying "If you don't do as I instruct, I will make sure you never see Rico again."
- That Ron's first attorney advised him the judge was getting impatient, and a trial was extremely risky due to new evidence against Ron
- That Ron's attorney told him he had no choice but to sign the Parenting Agreement or he could lose visitation completely
- That Glenda spread a rumor that Ron had broken Rico's leg
- That Glenda attempted to set up a fraudulent charge against him of sexually abusing Rico

- That Rico's attorney was also involved in coercing him to sign the Parenting Agreement
- That Ron's second attorney tricked him into signing a settlement agreement which he thought would nullify the parenting agreement
- That Ron signed all agreements under duress, harassment, and against his will.

During the hearing to rule on the petition, Ron's attorney tried to intimidate Glenda by making inappropriate comments and calling her names each time he passed her counsel table on his way to the witness stand.

"I'm going to call your lesbian lover to testify tomorrow," he maliciously taunted. Of course, there was no lover and Glenda was not a lesbian, but since Ron was being accused of sexually molesting young boys, this was his diabolical strategy to discredit the truth.

Glenda guarded her eyes from looking at Ron (that way she wouldn't see him winking or threatening), and her ears from listening to Ron's attorney in his attempts to intimidate and bully.

She could not prevent evil from spewing its poison around her, but it could not penetrate her heart because God was in her, above her, around her, and underneath her as she battled forces of flesh and blood, and as God's Spirit managed the forces of darkness.

to be continued . . .