



# FOCUS Newsletter

a newsletter for women in difficult relationships, feeling emotionally and spiritually alone

## What are you so afraid of?

Psychologists tell us that people like to be scared, that they get a thrill from the sensation of being “scared to death.” It’s okay when you know the monster in the movie can’t come through the TV screen and get you. But what about real-life terrors that don’t go away at the click of a button?

Terrors like . . .

- Another demeaning conversation at dinner that ties your stomach up in knots
- Never knowing when you’re going to say or do something to ignite his anger
- Feeling scared to death that he’ll make good on his threats to leave
- Being consumed with guilt that maybe he is right about how “worthless” you are
- Feeling convinced you can’t leave because you don’t have what it takes to support yourself and the children
- Being afraid to confide in someone about the abuse because if he ever found out . . .
- Feeling scared of being alone and unloved for the rest of your life
- Being too intimidated to ask for help or confront the evil
- Wondering if this time he will go too far and actually kill you
- Feeling terrified that he will hurt the children or take them away from you in a custody battle
- Feeling terrified of his stalking and threats to harm you and anyone else who helps you.

Maybe you don’t have to worry about an abusive spouse, but your greatest nightmare is waking up to the reality that you are alone, financially insecure, with no hope for the future. How will you survive financially? Who will take care of you if you become sick or disabled? Will you be able to provide for your children’s education?

Perhaps your fear has more to do with what lies within

***The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?***

***The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?***

***Psalms 27:1 KJV***

the depths of your soul—behind the mask you wear to impress or intimidate others. If those you love knew the *real* you, would they abandon you?

Fear is like a paralyzing poison that freezes your emotions, causing you to withdraw and hide behind walls that protect you from ever being hurt again.

The longer you hide behind those walls, the harder it is to trust or reach out to others for help. You become defensive and rigid, with a dogged determination to never allow anyone into that

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vulnerable place that was wounded so long ago.

Some victims of sexual abuse shut down physically, emotionally, and spiritually in an attempt to protect themselves from future sexual assault. Instead of opening up to God and others for help and healing, they deny desire, withdraw trust, and padlock their heart with heavy chains. They may function well in structured settings, such as

at work or church, but on the inside they are empty, unresponsive, and scared.

They are like tightly wrapped rosebuds, with layers of protective defenses that never allows them to fully bloom into a woman who enjoys her femininity, shares her heart openly, and invites others to know her intimately. Tragically, their attempts at self-protection prohibits significant growth. Their spirit and passion dries up, causing them to wither and die on the inside while remaining efficient, inflexible, and formidable on the outside.

Perhaps you aren't even aware that fear has gripped your heart and held you captive. Use the list below to check your vital signs.

Fearful women . . .

- Hold back from expressing their opinions or desires so they will be loved and accepted
- Refuse to confront evil because they may be assaulted or abandoned
- Deny their desire for intimacy because they have been rejected or sexually abused
- Do not enjoy expressing their femininity or sexuality because they have been previously humiliated or assaulted; may become frigid
- May become promiscuous and equate sex with love
- Have trouble feeling or showing joy; laughter is subdued; passion is stifled
- Become so guarded they display very little excitement over good news or happy moments for themselves or others; flat affect becomes the norm
- Have trouble trusting others; may be fearful of men or intimidated by other women

- Rarely take risks on their own initiative
- Don't question authority figures such as pastors, doctors, and husbands; are gullible and easily controlled
- Manipulate others to get what they want instead of being direct and honest
- Feel guilty if they don't measure up to others' standards
- Have trouble accepting affirmation because they feel like they're not good enough
- Hide their glory (abilities, talents, desires, hopes and dreams); feel like they're too much; suppress their passion, intelligence, and creativity because it makes others feel uncomfortable or threatened
- Become weak, needy, and overly submissive and codependent
- Hurt others before others have a chance to hurt them
- Wear a mask to look good on the outside so others won't see the turmoil and confusion on the inside

Did you find yourself in this list? If so, you are not alone. We have all been fearful at some time in our lives. The question is . . . "Are you still living there?"

Have you set up camp and planted roots there, believing things will never change?

The antidote for fear is love. God's love for you is stronger than any fear that will ever possess you. He is able to raise you up to become more than you ever imagined you could be. But you must surrender your fearful heart to Him instead of clutching it tightly in your own fists.

You must expose and expunge the lie of the enemy that tells you God cannot be trusted with your heart or the wounds of

your soul. As you begin to loosen your death grip on your fearful heart and offer it to God, He will gently and patiently begin a work of redemption that will dispel your fear, revive your spirit and restore your soul.

Listen to the heartbeat of Annette Ford through some excerpts of her journal:

*"Lord, I feel an amazing sense of your peace. More than I've felt perhaps than at any time of my life. Help me not to fear that dark times will come, and that I will struggle to live in joy and power. Thank you, though, that because of those risks, I must keep clinging to you.*

*On sunny, clear days, I ride up high on Father's shoulders. I clap my hands and sing for joy. He carries me through unfamiliar, exciting territory. He guides my willing hands, skillfully works through them, and delights in my delight at His creativity. Feeling the gentle breeze caress my face, I close my eyes and stretch my hands up in the warm rays of the sun. And I shout with joy, 'All is well! Praise the Lord! He is good!'*

*When heavy rain beats down on me, when I am cold and wet, and darkness oppresses me, I put my arms around Father's neck and cling to Him for warmth and protection. I hide my face in His chest so that the pelleting rain won't sting me. The dark clouds close in around me; the wind whips the clothes on my back. But I am not afraid, for He is much stronger than I am. He will carry me through the storm. I snuggle close to Him, and learn from His heartbeat and His gentle whisper in my ear. My feeble voice is not unheard. It cuts like lightning through the storm:*

*'All is well!*

*Praise the Lord!*

*He is good!'"*

## Letters/E-Mail



Dear FOCUS,

It has been on my heart for a very long time to open up a center for women in the Middle East to help the abused. I am an engineer by education, but I really want to do something for the women here.

There are stories that will tear your heart apart of teenagers who were raped by family members, but then killed when they became pregnant. The government has a very secure shelter, very similar to a prison, but they fear for the safety of the teenage girls. If the girls are not married by age 18, they move them to a prison to protect them from being killed by family members.

I really want to get training to do this, but I am not sure how or where to do that. I want to dedicate my life to this as you have been doing in your ministry. I believe God can move mountains to make this a reality, and I have the heart to make it happen for God's glory. Please help.

—R.

**Note from Editor:** *FOCUS offers free literature and consultation to individuals and ministries throughout the world. Please pray for this international outreach and partner with us financially to provide help to women in need and provide scholarships to our "Train the Trainer" seminars for those who need financial assistance (including the lady who wrote the letter above).*

## In The News . . .

In 2003, 1,817 females in the U.S. were murdered by mates in cases in which a single offender killed a single victim. In more than nine in ten of these cases (92%), the victim was murdered by someone she knew. Three in five victims who knew their offenders (62%) were wives or intimate partners of their killers.

Those are among the findings of *When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2003 Homicide Data*. It finds that firearms were the most common weapons used by males to murder females. The average age of female homicide victims killed by single male offenders was 36. Ten percent of these victims were under age 18, and eight percent were 65 or older.

Alaska ranks first in the nation in the rate of women killed by men. Next are Nevada, Louisiana, New Mexico, Tennessee, South Carolina, Arizona, Georgia, Mississippi and Texas.

The study is available online at [www.vpc.org](http://www.vpc.org).

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

## FOCUS Support Groups

- Savannah, **GA**—Saturdays. Call Patty Jean at 912-629-4720
- Cedar Rapids, **IA**—Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Call Pat at 319-395-0021.
- Aurora, **IL**—Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Call Brenda at 630-370-0138.
- Tinley Park, **IL**—Tuesdays at 7 p.m. Call Stephanie at 708-503-4470.
- Wheaton, **IL**—1st and 3rd Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Call Joan at 630-690-0976.
- Wood Dale, **IL**—2nd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call Paula at 630-595-7023.
- Lexington, **KY**—Saturdays at 9 p.m. Call Leslie at 859-224-1619 (x 143).
- Madisonville, **KY**—Thursdays at 6 p.m. Call Brenda at 270-825-2423.
- Olmstead Falls, **OH**—Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Call Sally at 440-234-8430
- Knoxville, **TN**—Tuesday at 7 p.m. Call Roberta at 865-470-2820 (x226).

If you are interested in starting a support group in your area, contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023.

**"Train the Trainer"** weekend seminar (for support group leaders or those interested in starting a support group):

**March 31—April 2  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL**

Register online at [focusministries1.org](http://focusministries1.org) or call Paula at 630-595-7023.

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## FOCUS Heartbeat!



### *Celebrating 10 Years!*

#### **Thank You!**

As of September 2005, we began our 10th year of ministry to women who are hurting due to dysfunctional relationships or domestic violence.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has helped us along the way—praying, encouraging, and giving. It is your partnership that has made it possible for us to meet needs and offer hope. Thank you for responding as God directed.

#### **Our Mission**

God has led us on a journey which has been both fulfilling and terrifying, which has blasted us out of our comfort zones and stretched us beyond our abilities.

The passion of our hearts is to point women to Jesus Christ, to help them find their identity and worth through God's eyes, and teach them how to celebrate and release the woman God created them to be.

#### **Vision for the Future**

During the next 12 months, we hope to move forward with the vision God has given us to provide transitional housing, expand services at our women's centers in Kentucky and Illinois, and schedule retreats for women who are in pursuit of God, called "*A Woman's Journey To God.*"

#### **Capital Campaign for KY Women's Center**

The next step will be to purchase a school building in Madisonville, KY in spring of 2006.

Some of the programs we hope to provide include:

- Transitional apartments
- Domestic violence support groups for women
- Play/therapy groups for children
- "Girl Talk" program for teenage girls
- Parenting classes
- Satellite seminars
- Financial Planning
- Drug and alcohol counseling
- Health clinic for women and children
- Bible studies
- Arts & crafts
- Tea Room
- "Dress Your Best" (free professional clothing for work or church)
- Professional and lay counseling
- Library and bookstore
- Computer Lab
- Resume and Interview Preparation

These programs will require a committed staff and dedicated volunteers. Most of

our proposed staff members are available as soon as FOCUS can offer full-time employment.

The school building is in good condition, but will need renovation to convert classrooms into apartments and install a new heating/cooling system.

We cannot take this next step (actually a huge leap!), until individuals, churches, and organizations partner with us by investing in the lives of women and children.

*Please respond to this immediate need as God leads you.*

#### **Illinois Women's Center**

We are praying for God's direction to find a facility (church or school building) or a large house in the western suburbs of Chicago where we can expand our services and provide transitional housing.

Please pray with us that the facility we need will either be donated or that funding will be provided through grants or donations.

Many of the same services planned for the KY Women's Center will also be offered at the proposed IL Women's Center.

#### **"A Woman's Journey To God"**

As part of our mission to point women to Jesus Christ and help them find their

identity and worth in God, we are offering weekend retreats for women. Sessions include:

*Divine Romance*—where women will get a glimpse of God's heart and the great romance He initiated before the dawn of time.

*Redemption*—where women will identify wounds and untrue messages they have believed, and open the door for Jesus to bring healing and hope.

*Release*—where women will learn to see themselves through God's eyes, and learn how to celebrate and release the woman God created.

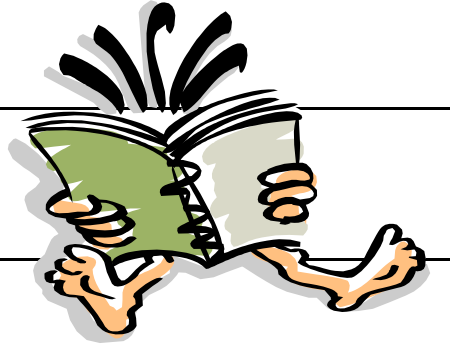
Retreats will be held at various locations in KY and IL. Invitations from churches and women's groups in other states will also be considered.

Please pray for God to direct us to low-cost retreat facilities or to provide a retreat center for FOCUS to purchase (or have donated) in the future.

Please also pray for funding so we can offer scholarships to women who cannot afford the registration cost.

**Thank you for standing with us in the past. Please join us as we move forward into the future, offering hope and speaking life into the hearts of those who are hurting.**

## Book Review



### Captivating

*Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul*

by John and Stasi Eldredge

You are invited to experience the beauty, passion, and intimacy your soul has been craving. The invitation is from God! In the book *Captivating*, you'll get a glimpse of God's heart and the great romance He initiated before the dawn of time.

As you read, you'll embark on a journey to discover the woman God had in mind when He created you. After identifying wounds that have pierced your soul, you will be able to define lies you have believed and take steps toward opening the door for Jesus to bring healing and hope.

This book tells the truth about who you are as a woman, and answers the questions all women want to know: "Do you see me? Do you think I'm beautiful? Do you delight in me?"

Every woman, young and old, needs to read this book and release the beauty, passion, and unique gifts God has placed within them.



**I love you God—  
you make me strong.**

**God is bedrock under my  
feet, the castle in which I  
live, my rescuing knight.**

**My God—the high crag  
where I run for dear life,  
hiding behind the boulders,  
safe in the granite hideout.**

**I sing to God,  
the Praise-Lofty,  
and find myself safe  
and saved.**

**Psalms 18:1-3  
(The Message)**



### Recipe of the Month

#### Baked Potato Soup

4 large baking potatoes  
2/3 cup butter  
2/3 cup all-purpose flour  
6 cups milk  
3/4 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
1 1/2 cups (6 oz.) shredded Cheddar cheese  
12 slices bacon (cooked crisp and crumbled)  
4 green onions, chopped  
1 (8 oz.) carton sour cream  
Sourdough croutons

Wash potatoes. Bake at 400° for 1 hour or microwave 5-7 minutes per potato. After potatoes have cooled, cut in half lengthwise and then into small cubes.

Melt butter over low heat. Add flour, stirring until smooth. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Gradually add milk. Cook over medium heat until thickened and bubbly, stirring constantly.

Stir in potato chunks, salt, pepper, 1 cup shredded cheese, 1/2 cup bacon, and 2 T. green onions. Cook until heated through. Stir in sour cream and cook until heated through.

Top with remaining cheese, bacon, green onions, and croutons.

# Pornography and Sexual Addiction

By Eileen Warren, CADC III, CCS I

The time has come to take an honest look at pornography and sexual addiction. Men and women must wake up and declare war against what Stephen Arterburn calls “*Every Man’s Battle!*” (Waterbrook Press)

The percentage of Christian men (and a growing number of women) who struggle with some form of pornography and/or lust is at an all time high. One recent statistic placed the percentage at about 70% of all Christian men (Renovare’ 2005, Denver, CO).

In order to begin this war, the face of the enemy must be exposed in blunt honesty. The enemy has too long gained ground through unobstructed entry into the sanctity of marriage, the purity of hearts, and the recollection of minds.

There are two basic categories of pornography: “hard core” and “soft porn.” Hard core is more difficult to obtain and can be an expensive habit. It is generally obtained in two ways—the internet and adult video stores. Soft porn is what we see in “R” or “X” rated movies. “X” rated movies usually expose the genitals where an “R” will expose only breast and/or buttocks. In “R” rated moves, sexual scenes are no longer using much restraint in graphic and intense depiction of intercourse.

Porn can be viewed through indirect ways and we call it entertainment and advertisement. American culture seems to have become immune to (and Christians have ceased to be offended by) the exposure of nudity and sexual stimuli when it appears in our every day life. Television commercials that sell jeans and perfumes are often very sexually provocative. Popular movies or television programs that are fun (they make us laugh and distract us from our life) and enjoyable (we feel romantic and warm after watching) are frequently peppered with one or more scenes that are simply soft porn.

In the context of marriage, porn has become a popular prelude to “lovemaking.” Couples view it as healthy “foreplay.” This is especially true in couples under the age of 40 years. It reportedly is used to enhance sexual pleasure and/or increase sexual desire. Even in the Christian marriage, the belief system that has become the standard states that if “both agree,” then “anything goes!”

In the counseling office, therapists hear candid comments like, “My wife would rather that I use pornography than to make her have sex, but we just don’t talk about it.” Men often feel they have had “permission” to use porn and masturbation in a type of silent agreement. This, sadly, seems to work well in the relationship until the wife discovers him “in the act.” It is only then the wife responds in shock and horror. Most men declare that the wife “knew” he was using porn and it was okay as long as she didn’t see it. (This may be a more true perception than simply male rationalization.)

Sexual addiction is a real disorder. It is not simply a problem of the use of pornography. There are individuals who sexualize any relationship and have a high demand for sexual contact without regard to intimacy. They require daily (and multiple times daily) sexual stimulation. This could be taxing on a spouse, and as a result marriage to a sex addict usually ends . . . and badly.

The sex addict will often be “caught” in multiple affairs or be sexually abusive (rape) toward his spouse. A relationship with a sex addict is often characterized with charm and temper tantrums (throwing things, blaming, pouting, but incredibly charming, gift giving, seemingly loving and generous); however, maneuvering and manipulating with one goal in mind—to have sex. There is a strong sense of entitlement to having these overpowering sexual needs met—met now and in increasing intensity.

Adolescent interest in sex has not changed much in the past 50 years, but availability to sexual material has changed dramatically. The sad truth is that addiction to pornographic material has become almost normal for males between the ages of 14-17. The past ten to fifteen years before blocks on TV and computers became somewhat effective has produced profound sexual addiction in the age group of our current 20 to 35-year-old men (and women). Even with parental blocks, chat room language is still sexually explicit—“X” rated. Adolescents today have become so proficient in disguising the sites they use to communicate in these explicit ways. For example, when the kids tell you they are playing solitaire or some type of benign game online, the game is a front for sexual chat room dialog.

Pornography has subtle aspects that must be searched out and uncovered. The life of holiness demands that we begin the task of engaging war, battle by battle. We have been asleep on the issue of soft porn, and we need to wake up to its destructive power.

*Wake up, wake up, O Zion! Clothe yourselves with strength. Put on your beautiful clothes O holy city of Jerusalem, for unclean and godless people will no longer enter your gates. (Isaiah 52:1-3 NLT)*



In Part II (next issue), we will learn ways to react and respond to pornography and sexual addiction. Being proactive rather than reactive is the best course to take in this war. However, we will begin to lay a foundation for change.

In Part III, we will address sexual addiction, signs and symptoms, a course of treatment, and cures.



## 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 FOCUS Women's Centers and Homes of Refuge and provide salaries for 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

Mail to FOCUS, P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413

## Future Events

### 2005

- Oct. 28-30—"A Woman's Journey to God" weekend retreat (Pennyrile Forest State Park, Dawson Springs, KY) led by FOCUS staff.
- Nov. 17-25—Trip to Florida (BB & PS) to present church-wide seminar on domestic violence to Living Faith Assembly of God in Tampa (Nov. 20) and train pastors and church leaders of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale (Nov. 21).
- Dec. 2-3—Seminar on fundraising in St. Louis for FOCUS staff and volunteers

### 2006

- March 24-26—"Know the Hope" Women's Retreat in Davenport, IA. Keynote speaker: Carol Kent (BB & PS will present two workshops). Contact Linda Hall at 563-332-4692 to register.
- March 31-April 2—"Train the Trainer" weekend seminar (for support group leaders and others interested in helping victims of domestic violence) in Oakbrook Terrace, IL. Contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023 to register, or register online at [www.focusministries1.org](http://www.focusministries1.org).
- April 22—"Restoring the Hope" Conference for Women, Hanson, KY. Keynote speaker: Rachael Crabb. Contact Brenda Branson at 270-825-2423 to register, or register online at [www.focusministries1.org](http://www.focusministries1.org).
- May ??—"A Woman's Journey to God" weekend retreat (location to be determined) led by FOCUS staff.
- July 10-19—Trip to Colorado Springs (School of Spiritual Direction) for Jenny, Paula, and Brenda.
- August 10-12—Leadership Summit at Willow Creek, Barrington, IL for FOCUS Board Members.
- Sept. 9—"Restoring the Hope" Conference for Women, Villa Park, IL. Keynote speaker: Rachael Crabb. Contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023 to register, or register online at [www.focusministries1.org](http://www.focusministries1.org).
- Oct. 10-17—AACC Conference in Denver, CO (tentative)

### 10th Anniversary Celebration!!

Watch for information on our website about a 2006 celebration fundraiser in the Chicago area to celebrate 10 years of ministry!



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

270-825-2423 KY  
630-595-7023 IL  
[Focusministries1.org](http://Focusministries1.org)

**Our mission is to encourage women who are struggling in difficult circumstances to find strength and hope in Jesus Christ. “O Lord, you alone are my hope.” Psalm 71:5 NLT**

**Endorsement:**

“These women are called, prepared, and surrendered to their crucial ministry. The stamp of God is on their lives and work. It’s my prayer that God will use their gifts across the world to draw thousands of women to the hope that Christ provides. This is one ministry I’m sold on.” **Dr. Larry Crabb**, New Way Ministries

**Funding:**

FOCUS Ministries is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization funded by contributions and grants. If you would like to help us minister to hurting women through the distribution of printed materials, support groups, workshops, transitional housing, and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, please send your gift to FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 323, Hanson, KY 42413. A tax-deductible receipt will be provided for all contributions.

## Prayer Requests & Urgent Needs

**Urgent Needs:**

- New furnace and air conditioner at KY Women’s Center
- Replacement windows at KY Women’s Center
- Gravel for driveway at KY Women’s Center
- New copy machine for IL Women’s Center
- Facility in western suburbs of Chicago to house IL Women’s Center
- Professional grant writer

**Prayer Requests:**

- Pray for Paula and Brenda as they travel to Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale, Florida (Nov. 17-25) to train two churches about domestic violence.
- Pray for Sylvia Neubauer and the startup of a FOCUS branch office and support group in St. Louis, Missouri.
- Pray for funding to purchase school building in Madisonville, KY (\$50,000) for expanded women’s center and transitional housing.

- Pray for property near Elmhurst, IL to be donated for IL Women’s Center and transitional housing.
- Pray for funding to send Paula, Brenda, and Jenny to Advanced School of Spiritual Direction in Colorado Springs (July 2006).
- Pray for property to be donated for FOCUS Women’s Retreat Center.
- Pray for houses in IL, KY, and MO to be donated for use as transitional homes.
- Pray for God to connect us with partners (individuals, churches, organizations) who will help us fulfill the vision God has for us.
- Pray for funding to provide scholarships for women to attend our weekend retreat, “A Woman’s Journey to God,” and our “Train the Trainer” seminar for support group leaders.
- Pray for more invitations from churches to train pastors, staff, and congregations about domestic violence.

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