

FOCUS Newsletter

Focus On Christ—Ultimate Satisfaction

Death . . . Bondage

July/August 2009

Life . . . Freedom

Ann sits in the pew of her church every Sunday morning trying to smile to keep the wounds from her relationship inside her heart from being discovered. Slowly the life within is dying. Dreams have been shattered, and life seems hopeless.

Fearful of anyone knowing she clenches her hands together trying not to be anxious. She longs for friendship, but trust is an issue. Will this church love and accept me as Jesus does? She listens carefully to the sermon. The parable in Scripture catches her attention.

Luke 10

²⁵ On one occasion an *expert in the law* stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘*Love your neighbor as yourself.*’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to *justify himself*, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. *They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.*

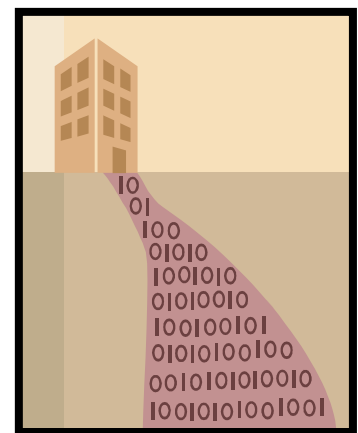
³¹ A *priest* happened to be going down the same road, and when he *saw* the man, he *passed by* on the other side. ³² So too, a *Levite*, when he came to the place and *saw* him, *passed by* on the other side.

³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he *saw* him, he *took pity on him.* ³⁴ He *went to him* and *bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.* Then he *put* the man on his own donkey, *took him to an inn* and *took care of him.* ³⁵ The next day he *took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper.* ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will *reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.*’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “*The one who had mercy on him.*”

Jesus told him, “*Go and do likewise.*”



In this parable a man had been beaten, robbed, and left to die. Bloody and dirty this man was in desperate need of help. His very life was in the balance.

How did the priest, Levite, and the Samaritan love his neighbor? What were their actions when they discovered this wounded man?

A Priest

- Saw the messy, dirty, bloody man
- Passed by on the other side

A Levite

- Saw the messy, dirty, bloody man
- Passed by on the other side

A Samaritan

- Saw the messy, dirty, bloody man
- Took pity on the man
- Went to him
- Bandaged the man's wounds pouring oil and wine on them
- Took the man to an inn, a place of safety and away from evil
- Took care of him
- Paid for all expenses

Unlike the priest and Levite, the Samaritan went beyond seeing the problem. He became involved in the messiness of the wounded man's life and willingly risked even his own safety to reach out.

He used the resources he had to dress the wounds after assessing the situation. Realizing he could not do it all, he took the man to a safe place away from any further attack where he could recover. He was willing to pay whatever it cost to assist him.

The Samaritan did not ask the man to pay him back nor did he ask about his finances at home. He did not question him to see if he provoked the attack nor did he demean him for being on the road alone.

He did not tell the man to pray harder and hang in there. "Suffering is just part of life." He did not judge the man claiming he received his just punishment. The Samaritan did not require the wounded man to prove his need for help.

The Samaritan simply saw the need and did something about it. He knew of a safe place and sought out other resources. He was willing to be involved in a complicated situation despite the dirt and mess.

*"Thus says the Lord God:
Enough, O princes of Israel;*

*Put away violence and
oppression, and execute
justice and righteousness."*

Ezekiel 45:9

He extended mercy to the helpless man.

If this parable is Christ's example of loving our neighbor, why do we not apply it to women and children who are victims of domestic violence when they approach the church? Why do we place condemnation on the victims by assuming they provoked the violence? Why is the perpetrator believed and not the victim?

Why do we tell them to pray harder, submit more, and place the total responsibility for the relationship on their shoulders? When we see the victim's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, why do we give with strings attached? Shouldn't the church be the hospital for the wounded and hurting?

The domestic violence victims with barely any strength and resources left turn to the church for help sometimes as a last resort. Often times they are met with resistance. Their relationship is quickly categorized as a marriage issue, or lack of communication and conflict resolution skills. The real issues in the relationship are power and control, sense of entitlement, and superiority by the perpetrator.

In too many incidences, the church pushes for reconciliation in the relationship without proof of consistent change by the perpetrator just because he **seems** repentant. The preservation of life and safety is more important than reconciliation. If a victim goes back into the relationship too soon, the perpetrator will often be more abusive and all accountability will stop.

When a woman who experiences domestic violence comes to the church, she needs to be viewed as the beaten, bleeding, and deeply wounded person found in the parable. Stopping the "bleeding" is critical for her to live. Standing up against evil, holding the abuser accountable, believing her, and taking action against the abuse is essential. Just seeing the wounded is not enough. It is the beginning of walking the difficult journey with her. Are we in the church willing to get our hands dirty and take a risk or will we further oppress and re-victimize the victim?

As the body of Christ, the choice is ours to be like the Samaritan or the priest and Levite. Are we going to be part of setting the captives free or putting them in more bondage? The Lord is watching and will judge our choices.

"Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to avoid responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God knows all, hears, and he sees you. He keeps watch over your soul, and he knows you knew! And he will judge all people according to what they have done."

Proverbs 24:11-12, NLT

By Paula Silva



Letters/E-Mail

Dear FOCUS:

I'm not in a physical abusive relationship but a very mentally abusive relationship. I am in **extreme pain** inside. I don't know what to do. . . I just don't know what to do. My 4 year old cries and cries and tells me to call someone to take us away cus Daddy's being mean again. He doesn't hurt anybody physically but can make an otherwise wonderful day turn into a nightmare in a matter of seconds. He has an uncontrolled temper.....always has. I've been married for 23 years and raised 2 other children in that atmosphere. I know how he is and he has never changed. I've tried.....from my heart and as God is my witness, I have tried to talk and make things better. I only make things worse. He never sees that anything is a bad thing. I am wanting control of my life so I can be a good mother to my girls. I am out of control at times in **tears and pain** beyond what I can tell you in this e-mail. I can't help this alone. I don't know what to do anymore. I use to talk to my Mom, who felt I should stay in the relationship because my husband is so good to us. She heard the stories but never really believed. . . Please, can anybody talk to me?

—Email

Editor's note: Emails like these come to us all the time. We begin ministering by listening and affirming who she is and the courage it took to reach out for help. Often women want to know that they are not crazy in what they are perceiving. How should the church reach out to her, a neighbor?



Words That Heal

“Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you? Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up. You will increase my honor and comfort me once again. . .”

“My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.”

Psalm 71: 19-21, 24 NIV

FOCUS Support Groups

- Conway, **AR**
Sundays 3 p.m.
- Brandon, **FL**
The second and fourth Saturday of each month
- Eustis, **FL**
Saturdays 10 a.m. to Noon.
- Bolingbrook, **IL**
Monday - 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Saturday - 2:00-3:30 p.m.
- Naperville, **IL**
Thursday evenings 7-8 p.m.
- Glen Ellyn, **IL**
Third Monday of every month
- Wheaton, **IL**
The first & third Saturday 9:30 a.m.
- Wood Dale, **IL**
Second Thursday at 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.
- Lexington, **KY**
Saturdays at 9 a.m.
- Akron, **OH**
The second and fourth Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m.
- Findlay, **OH** The second Thursday of every month 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Olmsted Falls, **OH**
Wednesdays at 7 p.m.
- Felton, **PA** The second Thursday of each month 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Knoxville, **TN**
Tuesday at 7 p.m.
- Lynnwood, **WA**
Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- Weston, **WI**
Thursdays 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

If you are interested in information about a particular support group or would like to start a support group in your area, contact Paula Silva at 630-595-7023 or paula@focusministries1.org..

Emotionally Destructive Relationships

Emotionally destructive relationships are not always evident to those on the outside. Deep wounds are created which over time will destroy the victim of the relationship. Why would the perpetrator inflict these wounds?

The answer lies within the heart of an emotionally destructive person. In Matthew 15:18-20 (NIV), Scripture says, *“But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean’. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”*

Our heart contains our feelings, thoughts, beliefs, values, desires, motivations, and decisions. Behaviors and words reveal what we try to conceal in our heart. Themes of the heart as expressed in Leslie Vernick’s book, *The Emotionally Destructive Relationship*, disclose the dynamics of emotionally destructive relationships.

The Proud Heart

Proverbs 16:18 NIV

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

- ♥ The proud person is his own god.
- ♥ Their life is centered on themselves
- ♥ “I’m wrong,” “I need help,” and “I don’t know” are not in their vocabulary.
- ♥ The proud person refuses to be held accountable for his/her actions.
- ♥ They are blinded to their own sin yet clearly see the faults in others.
- ♥ The proud person determines reality and truth based on what they believe and not necessarily

what is biblical or factual.

- ♥ Pride fuels the angry heart.

The Angry Heart

Proverbs 29:22 NIV

“An angry man stirs up dissension, a hot-tempered one commits many sins.”

- ♥ They use anger as a tool to get what they want.
- ♥ Entitlement thinking fuels the angry heart.
- ♥ The angry heart allows anger to become dominant in their life.

The Envious Heart

James 3:16 NIV

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

- ♥ Envy is always destructive.
- ♥ Comparison thinking rules the envious heart.
- ♥ The envious heart transforms the person into a critical, bitter, hateful, and resentful person who despises the good in others.

The Selfish Heart

Philippians 3:19 NIV

“Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.”

- ♥ The selfish heart is a *taker* not a *giver*.
- ♥ Their needs, wants, desires, and rights take precedence over anyone else’s.
- ♥ Because it is all about them, the selfish heart cannot love well.
- ♥ To avoid consequences for their actions, deception will be

part of their pattern of behavior.

The Lazy Heart

Proverbs 18:9 NIV

“One who is slack in his work is brother to one who destroys.”

- ♥ The lazy heart has no meaningful purpose in their life and lives for the moment.
- ♥ There is no motivation to change. “You’ll just have to accept me the way I am.”
- ♥ They want the good things in life, but put forth no effort to work for it.

The Evil Heart

Proverbs 21:10 NIV

“The wicked craves evil; his neighbor gets no mercy from him.”

- ♥ The evil heart shows no remorse and delights in doing evil.
- ♥ They enjoy seeing someone suffer and do not regret the pain and hurt they inflict on others.
- ♥ They are deceptive and often disguise their actions to appear as good.

The Fearful Heart

Proverbs 29:25 NIV

“Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.”

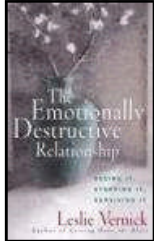
- ♥ Because they are afraid their fears will come true, they control others.
- ♥ They are afraid of rejection, conflict, being hurt, not loved, loss, and seeing the truth.

Proverbs 16:23 NIV

“A wise man’s heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.”

By Paula Silva

Book Review



**THE EMOTIONALLY
DESTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP:
Seeing It! Stopping It! Surviving It!**
By Leslie Vernick

Just because there are no visible bruises or broken bones does not mean the person is not in a destructive relationship. By reading this book you will discover

- Ways to identify emotionally destructive relationships
- Themes of the heart that play a role in these types of relationships
- Choices that one can make to stop the effects of the destruction
- Steps to move beyond the emotional effects to healing

Author, Editor and Publisher: Paula Silva
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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.**

Funding: FOCUS Ministries is a not-for-profit organization. This ministry is 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, and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, please send your gift to FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 2014, Elmhurst, IL 60126.** A tax-deductible receipt will be provided for all contributions.

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 Ministries Domestic Violence Training for Churches/Groups/Organizations

Topics:

- What is Domestic Violence?—A Closer Look at Verbal, Emotional, Sexual, Physical, and Spiritual Abuse
- Characteristics of an Abuser/Why Does He Do That?
- Recognizing a Victim of Domestic Violence
- Why Women Stay or Leave/Developing a Safety Plan
- How Does Domestic Violence Affect the Family Especially Children
- Teen Dating Violence
- What Can the Church Do?
- Do's and Don'ts of Counseling
- Signs that the Abuser Has Changed
- Church Safety Plan/Risks
- Becoming an Anchor in the Storm/How to Help Someone in an Abusive Relationship

Development of Domestic Violence Program in Churches

- Do's and Don'ts of Counseling Victims and Abusers
- Development of Domestic Violence Policies and Procedures for Churches
- Step By Step Approach for Churches to Address the Issue of Domestic Violence
- Training for support group leaders

Other Topics:

- Behind Closed Doors: Hope for Women in Difficult Relationships
- Unmasking Relationships
- What Color is Your Elephant?
- Shhhh...Don't Tell

Your Invitation

Invite your friends, family, coworkers, and members of your church.
Reserve a table and/or be a sponsor.

*Support FOCUS Ministries as we minister to women and families experiencing domestic violence by providing emotional, spiritual, and physical needs.
Reservations can be made online or by calling 630-595-7023.*

Give a voice to the children, the hidden victims of domestic violence.



**Save the Date
October 17, 2009**

Behind the Mask

**FOCUS Ministries Fundraiser Luncheon and Silent Auction
10:30 A.M.—3:00 P.M.**

*Diplomat West
681 W. North Ave.
Elmhurst, IL 60126*



Reservations at
www.focusministries1.org
or call 630-595-7023



Leslie Vernick
Renown author/speaker
and counselor
www.LeslieVernick.com



Anita Lustrea
host of
Midday Connection
www.MiddayConnection.org



Rachel Mohn
Speaker
www.panicdotes.net



Marie Barlow Martin
Christian singer/songwriter
www.MarieBarlow.com

Prayer Requests & Urgent Needs

Urgent Needs:

- **Silent auction items** are needed for our Behind the Mask fundraiser.
- **Volunteers** are needed for our fundraiser in Oct.
- Professional **grant writer and fundraiser**
- An **office space** to accommodate the increasing need for the ministry

Praises:

- Guest on WORD FM and WGBN radio
- FOCUS Ministries is featured in the *Today's Christian Woman Magazine*, March/April 2009



Prayer Requests:

- Pray for God to provide the three and a half million dollars to purchase a church building in Elmhurst, IL. This would be a great facility for our FOCUS Women's Center. It would enable us to expand our services and provide more trainings, seminars, and conferences.

- Pray for funds to be able to hire Brenda Spivey as vice president of FOCUS Ministries..
- Pray for the development of our teen/tween curriculum
- Pray for woman and families who contact our FOCUS Women's Center. We have had to turn away women who have come to us with physical needs because of the lack of funds.
- Pray for pastors' wives that are being abused.
- Pray for individuals, churches, and busi-

nesses to commit to **monthly giving.**

- Pray for all the **FOCUS support group leaders** in the U.S
- Pray for **houses** in IL, to be donated for use as transitional homes.
- Pray for more **invitations** from churches to train pastors, staff, and congregations about domestic violence.



Upcoming Events

- **June 30, 2009**—Guest on WGBN radio
- **July 8, 15 & 22, 2009**—Speaking at God's Heritage Full Gospel Ministries, Maywood, IL
- **July 14, 2009**—Guest on WORD FM radio
- **July 23, 2009**—Podcast on DV
- **Sept. 16-19, 2009**—Exhibitor at the American Association of Christian Counselors World Conference, Nashville, TN
- **Sept. 25, 2009**—Breakout session speaker at NACCFA Conference, IL
- **★Oct. 17, 2009**—Behind the Mask Fundraiser Luncheon, Diplomat West, Elmhurst, IL, Guest speaker, **Leslie**

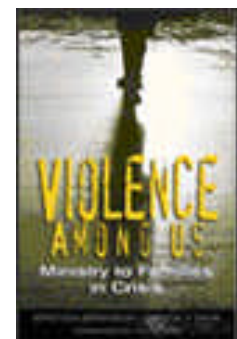
Vernick, Singer, **Marie Barlow Martin**, **Anita Lustrea**, host of Midday Connection, and **Rachel Mohn**, www.panicdots.net. **Tickets can be purchased online focusministries1.org or 630-595-7023.**

If you would like the FOCUS team to come to your church for a women's retreat ("A Woman's Journey To God"), seminar on domestic violence, or other speaking engagement, please contact us as soon as possible as our calendar for 2009 is quickly filling up!

Contact Paula at 630-595-7023 or contactus@focusministries1.org.



www.MarieBarlow.com



Paula Silva, Coauthor



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www.focusministries1.org

Endorsements:

"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

"I commend FOCUS Ministries for helping the church in its battle against domestic abuse. After seeing the response to a message I preached on this topic, I've come to realize that domestic abuse is much more common in our churches than we would like to admit. The materials and interaction I've had with FOCUS Ministries was helpful and very much needed. I pray that God will use FOCUS to awaken all of us to the reality of abuse as well as bring hope and healing to the victims."

Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer
Senior Pastor, The Moody Church, Chicago, IL



Ways You Can Help FOCUS Ministries

- ★ Join with us in ministering to women and families who experience domestic violence by participating in our Exercise-a-thon. Choose any exercise (run, bike, walk, skip, jump rope, swim, play tennis, baseball, football, lift weights, etc.), set your own goal, raise pledges, and take action against domestic violence! Just print off the [FOCUS Exercise-a-thon form](#) on our website, fill in your name and address by the participant's name, raise support, exercise, and then send in the completed form with the funds raised by November 15. Checks are to be made out to FOCUS Ministries and sent to P.O. Box 2014, Elmhurst, IL 60126. A tax deductible receipt will be given. If you have questions, please email at contactus@focusministries1.org. We want to thank you for your support of this ministry.
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O Lord, You Alone Are My Hope! Psalm 71:5 NLT