

FOCUS Newsletter

Focus On Christ—Ultimate Satisfaction

How Big is God? . . . How Big is the Mountain?

May/June 2009

We live in an era of uncertainty for the future. A sense of security seems lost and life's problems loom like dark clouds overhead. Media pictures doom and gloom causing us to sink into despair and fear. Are these times any different than the ones found in Scripture?

- The Israelites facing the Philistines (giants)
- Moses facing Pharaoh in Egypt
- Israelites' fear after scouting out the Promise Land
- Captivity of the Israelites in Babylon

The circumstances in each story appeared to be impossible to resolve. The future seemed to be uncertain and unknown. Yet the God of the impossible was there all along showing His glory and faithfulness. He wasn't vacationing on some tropical island.

David empowered by God slew Goliath with just a sling and a stone. God provided a way for the Israelites to escape Egypt by parting the Red Sea. Years later God made a way to enter the

Promise Land by parting the Jordan River for the Israelites.

To the human eye and understanding, these circumstances faced by individuals in Scripture seemed insurmountable, yet to God nothing was beyond His power. The impossible was made possible.

When the disciples questioned Jesus as to why they could not drive a demon out of a boy, He replied.

"Because you have so little faith, I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20-21 NIV

Sometimes the fear of the circumstance is larger than the situation. Fear alters our view of God. In our mind, we put limits on what God can do and our unbelief takes over and faith diminishes. The walls of our mind form a box for God to dwell.

Our focus turns to worry and anxiety. Fear enters our thought



processes keeping us in bondage to our circumstances. Our circumstances along with fear are then placed on the throne that God should occupy and an idol is created. In our mind, our circumstances/fear tower over the one true God, the Source of power to resolve the problems.

In Scripture, we read, *"But seek first His kingdom (God) and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Matthew 6:33-34 NIV

Chip Ingram states in his series on stress, "If you have a big God, you have a small problem. If you have a big problem, you have a small God." God, the Creator of the Universe, can move the problem mountains.

Meditate on the lyrics to this song.

You Shine

*Why should I fear man,
when you made the heavens,
Why should I be afraid,
when You put the stars in place.
Why should I lose heart, when
I know how great You are,
Why should I give up
when Your plans are full of love*

In this world

*we will have trouble
But You have
overcome the world.*

*You shine brighter
than the brightest star;
Your love, purer
than the purest heart;*

*You shine filling us
with courage and strength
To follow You.*

*(Brian Doerksen,
© 2001 Integrity's Hosanna! Music)*

We are not on life's journey alone. When the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ occurred, the Holy Spirit was sent to empower each believer to courageously stand against evil, lift up and minister to the oppressed,

To the human eye and understanding, these circumstances faced by individuals in Scripture seemed insurmountable, yet to God nothing was beyond His power. The impossible was made possible.

set captives free, and speak truth boldly filled with grace.

Instead we rely on our own power and strength to deal with life's uncertainty. We try harder by giving our best and relying on our own abilities. We say we trust God, but our actions reveal what is really in our heart.

In *Experiencing the Spirit*, Henry and Melvin Blackaby state, "You can put your trust in your ability, or you can put your faith in God. The choice is yours. When you rely on your own talents, you'll experience your best. But when you put your faith in God and allow His Spirit to work in you, you'll experience God's best."

God's best far outshines ours. As God molds us and shapes us into vessels of His, we will experience the cutting away of ungodliness that will hurt but not harm us. The molding and shaping creates a pure heart.

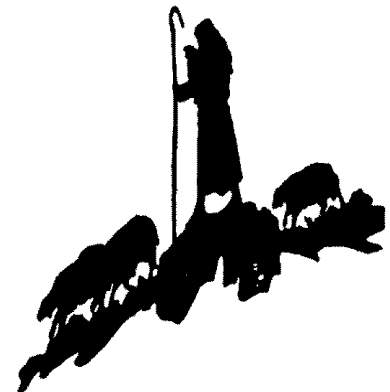
In Matthew 6:8 (NIV), we read "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*" Do you see God's best for you in this passage of Scripture? God's desire is for each one of us to know Him to the fullest. Does this match your desire?

We will not experience God's best for us until our desire matches His. This requires us to become totally dependent on God leaning on His understanding not ours and trusting Him to work in us and through us. Are you surrendering your will and control for His? Are you allowing your faith as small as a mustard seed to take root and grow?

As the darkness of your circumstances forms a fog around you and life is unclear, look to the Shepherd who loves and cares about you. Rest and graze in the green pastures as one of His sheep. Jesus, our Shepherd, stands guarding the gate to your pasture. He won't let the wolves in to devour you.

Just trust Him even if it is moment by moment.

By Paula Silva





Letters/E-Mail

Dear FOCUS:

I am struggling. I go to counseling, read books, take bible studies, seek guidance, etc. I've been told many times by Christian counselors that it will take a miracle from God for my batterer to ever be any different. I've been told that he has narcissistic personality disorder and is an anger addict. I separated from him twice. I even divorced him last summer. . .

I'm a total wreck. I live in fear---not so much physically but mentally, emotionally, spiritually. He is like a heavy, dark spirit that keeps me bound. I'm weakened to the point that many times when he's raging I wish he would just "get it over with" and be done with me. I can't move. I just want to hide under the covers all day long. I can breathe only when he's not around. . .

Eventually, I stayed locked in my room because he was here all the time. Then I started having anxiety attacks/losing weight rapidly, etc. I went on meds, etc. The policeman said that my ex-husband is totally in denial about the divorce/our relationship. He told me that I would have to act like a "b*****" constantly to keep him away. My ex is much smarter than that. That would be far too easy. I am totally trapped and see no light at the end of the tunnel. Each day my hope is that Jesus will come back this day.

—Email



Words That Heal

*The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed,
A stronghold in times of trouble .*

*Those who know your name
Will trust in you,*

*For you, Lord, have never
forsaken those who see you*

Psalm 9:9-10 NIV

*The Lord is in his holy temple,
The Lord is on his heavenly throne.*

He observes the sons of men;

His eyes examine the righteous,

But the wicked and those

Who love violence his soul hates. . .

For the Lord is righteous,

He loves justice;

Upright men will see his face.

Psalm 11:4-7 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.
- 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..

*An exquisite vase and a ball peen hammer
Met and married one May
The vase was strong, but the hammer was stronger
And set out to prove it each day*

*With unkind words, accusations and threats
The hammer marred the surface of the vase
But the vase was strong and hid the cracks on the inside
And pasted a smile on its face*

*"It's all your fault"—ching! "I despise you"—ching!
"If only you lost more weight!"
The vase felt devalued, the cracks began to show
It soon wondered about its fate*

*Sometimes there was slapping and shoving and hitting
Ching! Ching! The hammer dealt each blow
Then it said it was sorry and promised to change
And took the vase out to show*

*Then, whack! "I ought to just kill you!" the hammer screamed out
As it began to choke
The vase was off balance, its foundation was shattered
It tried to stand tall—but it broke!*

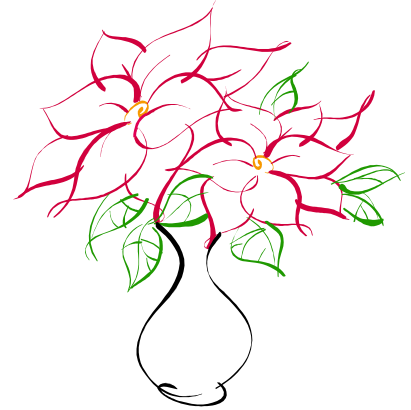
*Now I'm breaking the silence on domestic violence
A victim of abuse no more
With encouragement from family, counselors and friends
Came strength to walk out the door*

*But this vase once strong—now broken and shattered
Looked up and said "God what now?"
"I'll never be the same—I'm scared and confused
Why am I here anyhow?"*

*Then God in His wisdom picked up all the pieces
And began to put them in place
And when He had finished, I stood back and wondered
Why I was no longer a vase*

*Every crack was smoothed over, every piece placed just so
I said "God that just can't be me"
He said, "You are strong and valued and loved—
Now become all I've created you to be"*

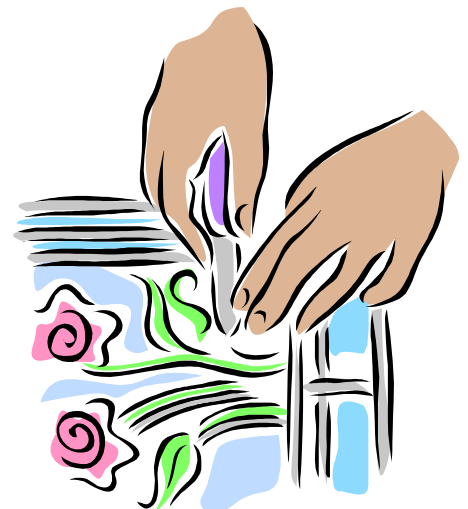
*A beautiful mosaic—a window to the world
Through which others can see
If we but break the silence on domestic violence
All vases can be free!*



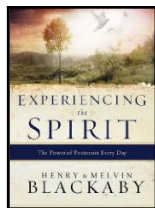
Breaking The Silence Of Domestic Violence

By Kathy L. (Vowels) Stone

Used by permission



Book Review



EXPERIENCING THE SPIRIT By Henry & Melvin Blackaby

Have you ever wondered what it is like living by the Spirit and understanding the power that is given to each believer?

Within this book, you will explore the foundational truths about the gifts and work of the Holy Spirit as each believer walks daily in his relationship with God. Discover and experience fully living in peace, joy, power, and purpose of God.

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:

- KY house was sold.
- 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. Within one week, three pastors' wives contacted our ministry for help.

- Pray for individuals, churches, and businesses 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

- **May 8, 2009**—Speaker at Emmanuel Bible Church, Berwyn, IL
- **May 10, 2009**—Speaker at Alpha Missionary Baptist Church, Bolingbrook, IL
- **May 19, 2009**—Speaker at The Kings Daughter Ministries, Life Springs Center, Aurora, IL
- **July 15 & 22, 2009**—Speaking at God's Heritage Full Gospel Ministries, Maywood, IL
- **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 Fund-raiser Luncheon, Diplomat West,

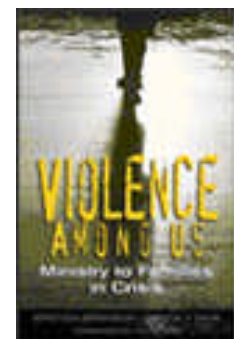
Elmhurst, IL, Guest speaker, **Leslie Vernick**, Singer, **Marie Barlow Martin**, Anita Lustrea, host of Midday Connection, and **Rachel Mohn**, www.panicdots.net. **Tickets can be purchased online at focusministries1.org or 630-595-7023.**

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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Phone: 630-595-7023
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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