

Three Ways Women React to Domestic Violence

by Donald Stewart

Refuge: Pathway Out of Domestic Violence and Abuse

Passively

A passive woman says nothing and allows the abuse to continue.

She becomes the abuser's enabler.

She grows weaker and the abuser grows stronger.

Her passivity prolongs the loss of her own honor and dignity, and encourages the abuse to continue.

Aggressively

An abused woman has every right to be angry at her husband, but far too often, her righteous anger deteriorates into a sinful rage that seeks revenge.

Her response might include anything from filing for divorce to using violence against her husband.

There are many women in prison in the U.S. today because they killed their abusive husbands, not out of self-defense, but out of retaliation.

How should a godly woman react?

She flees to a place of refuge when the time is right.

She exposes her husband's sinful bullying behavior by reporting him to the police, her pastor, and her family.

She walks in a way that enables the heart of God to be revealed through her to her sinful husband.

She challenges him from a position of safety.

She remains steadfast in her dependence on God.

She remains innocent of all wrongdoing as she participates in the process of holding her husband accountable for his wicked behavior.

Although she is rightfully afraid of him, she breaks free from the bonds of fear so that her life is not controlled by fear.

She does not retaliate by allowing her anger to become sinful. Instead, she trusts God to bring about justice for her in His time.

She does not let her husband off the hook easily and allows the criminal justice system to impose on him whatever punishment they see fit. This means that if he is arrested, she shouldn't bail him out of jail. If a restraining order is issued, she shouldn't secretly let him back in the house.

Detective Sgt. Don Stewart is the author of "Refuge—A Pathway Out of Domestic Violence & Abuse." He is a veteran officer of the sheriff's department in Green Bay, WI (now retired), and certified by the federal government to train other police officers and health care professionals to respond to domestic violence.