Remarkable You!

When we were born, our innocent life was totally dependent on those that were supposed to love and care for us. We had been so intricately formed in our mother’s womb by our masterful Creator. He proceeded to fill us with abilities, talents, and personality that would be uniquely our own. He breathed life into us and delighted in his creation. He placed a twinkle from his eyes to ours as a signature of his masterpiece.

Just bask in that thought for a while. God’s interest in you has not diminished since the day you were born. His desire is to maintain a relationship with you. Imagine the God of the Universe knows every detail of your life and is so concerned about the direction we choose especially when his plan for us reveals his purpose.

At birth, we are given a first and middle name by our parents. Have you ever looked up the meaning of your names? I would suggest you invest some time in discovering the meaning. It can have an impact on how you look at yourself.

Names can be very descriptive of a child as they mature into adulthood. Sometimes it appears that the parents have some special insight into the character of their young child. For example, Nabal in scripture means “Fool.” He certainly was a card carrying fool according to Proverbs. There are many names mentioned throughout scripture. Insight about the person can become evident when learning the meaning of those names. Let’s look at a few.

- Adam - man
- Eve - to breathe
- Cain - acquired
- Abel - breath
- Jacob - heel snatcher or one who deceives
- Esau - hairy

Some people in the Bible had their names changed after an event. For example,
- Abram (high father) changed to Abraham (father of many)
- Sarai (my princess) changed to Sarah (lady or princess)
- Jacob (deceiver) changed to Israel (may God reign)
- Simon (he has heard) changed to Peter (rock)
- Saul (asked for, prayed for) changed to Paul (humble)

Over the years of your life, other given names are added to our birth name. Some build us up and others tear us down.

We can choose to discard the names that are destructive, demeaning, and distorts who you are. We can reclaim our standing as God’s child, the image bearer of God and the beloved of the Father. We go from insignificant to remarkable!

Paula Silva
We are hearing in the news more and more about abuses perpetrated by members of churches but there are still Christians that say, “That doesn’t happen in our church, we’re all Christians”. That is like saying that Christians never sin after coming to Christ. The Church needs to stop acting like an ostrich and get its head out of the sand.

In the past FOCUS has spoken with pastors and church leaders about abuses being perpetrated by members of their congregation. It is our hope that the church would get involved with the family and counsel the husband and wife separately about their marriage.

More times than FOCUS would like to admit we have been told that abuses just don’t happen in Christian families. This reminds me of a child that closes their eyes and plugs their ears and sings la-la, la-la, la-la hoping the bad thing goes away.

The Bible says, “In this world you WILL have trouble,” not might or will not, but we WILL have trouble. It is the Bible telling us that even after we become followers of Jesus there will be trouble/sin in our lives. The good news is “Take heart, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) Meaning Jesus will see us through our troubles.

This article is a call for the Church to admit that Christians do sin and that not everyone in a church is a committed follower of Jesus Christ. Churches are for the saints AND the sinners who have not yet become saints. Church leadership needs to be informed and educated about how to deal with abuses that occur in ministry, marriages and relationships. In general someone that is abusive in marriage will usually be controlling, manipulative or abusive in how they relate to other people they encounter as well.

Some abusers may be on church boards, small group leadership, your most prolific contributor or even the pastor. There is a saying, “absolute power corrupts absolutely”, and in some cases abusive people are in high leadership positions in churches.

FOCUS has ministered to the wives of pastors, elders, CEOs and presidents, doctors, lawyers and business owners; men in powerful positions in the community inside and outside the church.

Many people stereotype abusers
No More Ostrich Christianity

as uneducated, unemployed, undershirt wearing, alcoholics without all their teeth; that is far from the reality. There is even a slang expression for the tank type undershirts men wear, “wife beaters”. Many times abusers are the highly educated, suit wearing, non-drinkers that sit in our pews. And yes, some abusers may be women.

Christians are skilled mask wearers. One woman told me how her husband would rage at the family all morning long, including on the drive to church and the minute they drove into the parking lot he said, “Smile everyone, we are at church.” Just because there are smiles in the pews it doesn’t mean all is well in people’s lives.

A participant in one of my groups was told by her pastor that no one in his congregation has any problems and he wouldn’t know how to help her with her situation. Would you trust him to counsel you with your problems?

FOCUS has been told by pastors that seminary does not equip them to counsel for domestic abuse or violence and they usually will refer out to a therapist. FOCUS is willing and able to train pastors, church leaders and lay leaders how to counsel families in these situations.

At our booth at the AACC convention (American Association of Christian Counselors) we are told by therapists that their education doesn’t train them thoroughly to counsel domestic abuse/violence situations. FOCUS has had many therapists attend our Partners in the Journey training to gain further education on domestic violence.

Many people stereotype abusers as uneducated, unemployed, undershirt wearing, alcoholics without all their teeth; that is far from the reality.

Many people stereotype abusers as uneducated, unemployed, undershirt wearing, alcoholics without all their teeth; that is far from the reality.

As long as the Church continues to hide its head in the sand, play see no evil, hear no evil; we are giving abusers fertile ground to perpetrate their crimes. The Church needs to get educated how best to minister to families, the men, the women and the children.

Referring out might be the best route to take especially in a small church where the Pastor does everything; but allow the church to be the first place for people to turn, not the last. The Church is full of hurting people not just from abuses.

Both the abuser and abused have been wounded; learn how to minister to both. In sermons speak out against all forms of abuse, sexual, physical, verbal, emotional and financial. Invite FOCUS to come along side to train and equip your church leadership how to minister to these families. I beg you, do not miss this opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus in these circumstances.

Karen Ferguson

The FOCUS team is available to come to your church for a women’s retreat, seminars, DV training or other speaking engagements.

contactus@focusministries1.org
Since 1995, FOCUS Ministries has been diligently reaching out to those that experience the devastating effects of abusive relationships. We have ministered to thousands seeing them grow through difficult circumstances. Their faith in God has increased and restoration has occurred.

On March 23, 2011, the Lord birthed a vast vision for FOCUS Ministries. We are eagerly anticipating the development of our FOCUS Hope and Healing Campus in IL. The campus would cover several acres. We are looking for individuals, businesses, organizations, and churches to partner with us to make this a reality by donating land and funds. Since we are a 501 c3, we can give a tax deductible receipt.

Our Hope and Healing Campus would include:
- **FOCUS Administration Building**
- **Women’s Center** for counseling, support groups, discipleship, job training, financial and legal services
- **Transitional Housing** in which residents could choose to have a job on the campus
- **TEEN FOCUS Center** for counseling, support groups, and discipleship
- **Children’s Center** for play therapy, counseling, support groups, and discipleship
- **Women’s Retreat Center** with lodging and meeting rooms plus a place for women in DV to get away for a few days
- **Teen Retreat Center** with lodging and meeting rooms
- **Conference Center** for seminars, workshops, conferences, and trainings
- **Chapel** for worship services, prayer, and quiet reflection
- **Dining Hall with Living Water Lake** (based on the story of the woman at the well in which she received living water from Jesus)

**Partner with us by donating land and by making a tax deductible donation.**

Questions?
contactus@focusministries1.org

Vision given by God on March 23, 2011
In the News with Teen Focus

On March 15, Alice, our TEEN FOCUS coordinator, and I headed to Des Moines, IA for an Ignite Shout youth conference. Upon arriving at Grace Church, we were greeted warmly by a group of teens, all of them shouting.

That evening we started to become acquainted with the teens that came to our exhibit. Part of the plan was to have teens make FOCUS bracelets with various colored beads and beads with the letter F-O-C-U-S as we engaged them in discussion.

Hayley approached us and smiled. On her name tag she had written “free hugs”. She was surprised when Alice proceeded to get up from the table and gave her a hug. From then on various teens, her friends, came up to us and gave us each a warm hug. That became the “joke” for the rest of the conference. The evening ended at 11 p.m.

The next day after not getting much sleep due to the active teens in the hotel, Alice and I headed back to the church at 8:00 a.m. Once again this group of teens found us and greeted us with a hug. They were still just as hyper.

In the afternoon, Alice presented two workshops on God’s Design for Healthy Relationships. The response from the workshops especially the second presentation was overwhelming. Abusive relationships do occur in our churches whether it is in dating relationships or family of origin.

Teens as well as adults came to us telling their stories. One young man had been shuffled from one foster home after another because of the abuse that was occurring in his family of origin. He was finally adopted by a kind Christian couple. Although his situation is better now, he is sad for he does not know where his siblings are.

One of the moms of a teen began to cry as she related her story of domestic violence. Her fifteen year old daughter was also crying thinking about what her mom had experienced.

But it was the story of one teen that just broke our heart. Alice spent a great deal of time privately talking to her. This seventeen year old young lady had been sexually assaulted by a boy in her school. Her mom did not believe her when the teen told her.

This young lady has begun to cut herself and has become bulimic. She is in so much pain. Fortunately she is seeing a counselor but still has little support. She is afraid to report it to the police. At this point, we are not sure how supportive her church has been. Alice has been communicating with her offering support. Please pray for wisdom as she reaches out to this young lady.

Both Alice and I are grateful for the opportunity that God provided at this conference.
Thoughts to Ponder

Perseverance is a complex word. It doesn't mean we just put up with the behaviors of destructive people and settle into the thinking that this is our lot in life.

Perseverance does not mean we hold on when we need to let go. Perseverance is staying close to God through difficult times trusting in his faithfulness even when we don't understand and the way is unclear.

Words that Heal

For it is God
who makes both us and you
stand firm in Christ.

He anointed us,
set his seal of ownership on us,
and put his Spirit in our hearts
as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

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
Prayer Requests & Urgent Needs

**Urgent Needs:**
- New board members with expertise in fundraising, marketing, and the law
- An office space to accommodate the increasing need for the ministry

**Praises:**
- Dedicated support group leaders
- Development of TEEN FOCUS relationship workshops

**Prayer Requests:**
- Pray for our TEEN FOCUS team as they develop our teen program
- Pray for a facility for our FOCUS Women’s Center. It would enable us to expand our services
- Pray for funds to hire much needed staff
- Pray for board members as they make critical decisions regarding the direction of the ministry
- Pray for women and families who contact our FOCUS Women’s Center.
- Pray for pastors’ wives that are being abused.
- Pray for individuals, churches, and businesses to commit to monthly giving.
- Pray for all the FOCUS support group leaders
- Pray for houses in IL, to be donated for use as transitional homes.
- Pray for churches to understand the gravity of domestic violence and will develop appropriate responses.
- Pray for FOCUS as we plan for 2013.
- Pray for those that come to the ministry for help that do not know Jesus.

**Prayer Requests:**
- March 15-16, 2013: Ignite Shout exhibitor and workshop presenter
- April 12-13, 2013: Partners in the Journey Training (Support Group Leaders Training), Oakbrook Terrace, IL
- May 4, 2013: ‘Remarkable You!’ Restoring the Hope Conference
- June 21-22, 2013: Partners in the Journey Training (Support Group Leaders Training), Oakbrook Terrace, IL
- Sept. 11-14, 2013: AACC World Conference exhibitor, Nashville, TN
- Oct. 25-26, 2013: Partners in the Journey Training (Support Group Leaders Training), Oakbrook Terrace, IL

The FOCUS team is available to come to your church for a women’s retreat, seminars, workshops, DV training or other speaking engagements.

The mission of FOCUS Ministries is to provide a safe place for teens, women, and families who experience domestic violence and abusive relationships to find hope and healing in Jesus Christ.

**Funding:** FOCUS Ministries is a not-for-profit 501 c3 organization funded by contributions and grants. **If you would like to help us minister to hurting people through our educational materials, support groups, counseling, and financial assistance to victims of domestic violence, please send your gift to FOCUS Ministries, Inc., P. O. Box 2014, Elmhurst, IL 60126 or online at www.focusministries1.org.** 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.

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

Ways You Can Help FOCUS Ministries

Go to GoodSearch.com. Enter FOCUS Ministries as your favorite charity in the box provided, verify and search. The search engine is powered by Yahoo! and each time you search, designate FOCUS Ministries as your charity, verify and search. GoodSearch will then make a donation to FOCUS.

Go to GoodShop.com. Enter FOCUS Ministries as your favorite charity in the box provided, verify and browse the online mall. Choose from over 500 popular online merchants from Best Buy to Wal Mart. A portion of your online purchase will be donated to FOCUS Ministries and the shopping experience through GoodShop is exactly the same as going to the online retailer's websites directly.

Please Choose FOCUS as your favorite charity at iGive.com. You can help FOCUS Ministries when you make online purchases! For more information, please visit http://www.focusministries1.org/igive.asp.