

God is not Deceived!

Tamika cautiously slipped into the last row of the sanctuary. Worship had already begun. Songs of praise could be heard, but the words were not penetrating her heart. She sat instead of standing trying to remain hidden from anyone's view.

This had been her church in which she served and worshipped for years, but all had changed. Her husband no longer sat next to her instead he was near the front so all could see how godly he was.

She recalled the biting words of the elders and pastor when she was told to meet with them not long ago. She had sought help for issues that were destroying her marriage. Every day she had been assaulted with words and actions from her husband that were whittling away her personhood. Nothing she could do or say was right in her husband's eyes.

Tamika was filled with shame after church discipline was administered to them. Everyone in the congregation knew there were having "marital issues," but no one would label it domestic abuse. Her husband appeared so repentant before others, but his behavior at home had not changed but intensified. "Why couldn't others see through his deceptive statements," she wondered, "in fact many contradicted each other."

As she sat with her Bible in her hands, she decided to continue reading in the psalms to soothe her anxious heart. Her eyes began reading verse after verse. Psalm 55 caught her eye.

Psalm 55:1-5 NIV

Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me.

Psalm 55:16-19 NIV

As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change—he will hear them and humble them, because they have no fear of God. My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant. His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.

Psalm 55:22-23 NIV

Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken. But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay; the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.

"But as for me, I trust in you," she repeated the words in a whisper. God knows what is going on even though others do not see. God cannot be deceived. He knows the hearts of all the players in this situation. He can't be fooled.

As the service ended, Tamika resolved in her heart that she would trust God for the outcome. She would remember times of His faithfulness even though the journey was tough.

Are you in a difficult situation in which you have been unfairly judged, criticized, and admonished? Turn to the One who knows your heart. Put your trust in God for he cares for you.

Paula Silva

Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by International Bible Society

Breaking Free

I was raised in an abusive home. I didn't know it was abusive at the time. In 1994 I was admitted to the "Survivors of Abuse" unit of an area psychiatric hospital. I felt I didn't belong there because I didn't have memories of sexual abuse even though I wore all the scars of it every day. When they told me I belonged there based upon what I did remember, I was shocked. I tucked that in the back of my mind but didn't accept it, didn't own it, didn't process it for many years. I wasn't a believer at the time – that came later – but in looking back, I can see God's hand. He protected me from remembering until He was there to love me through the remembering.

There is so much I want to share. God has done so much in me and for me. How do I explain that He transformed me from this fearful creature surviving on self hatred to this strong, confident woman who knows that she knows that she knows that her worth is far above rubies? How do I put to words the amazing truths He has written in my heart? How do I accurately convey how incredible it is to go from the walking dead to living life and life more abundantly? Words cannot do it justice.

It has not been an easy process, but nothing worth having is easy. And it has been so worth it. I lived with daily suicidal thoughts from age ten to age 34. Constant. I just wanted to die. I just wanted the pain to stop. I didn't believe I deserved any better than the treatment I received from my abusive husband. I didn't

realize how black my life was until the light of Christ showed me what light was.

Has it cost me? Dearly. Everything of this world.

After I became a Christian, I was more committed than ever to my marriage. Everyone knows God hates divorce. I viewed God as this harsh, cruel Being just watching me, giving me this impossible task to complete, ready to condemn me if I failed. It was quite a shock to me to realize that He too cried for the treatment I endured on a daily basis.

Breaking free began inside of me. I know many women whose healing begins when they leave their abuser. For me, I had to heal quite a bit in order to leave my abuser. I believed him when he abused me. Because I viewed myself the same way he did, I didn't see it as abuse. When he would tell me if I were any kind of mother, my kids wouldn't misbehave, it rang true with the deep wounds in my soul. When he would tell me I was frigid, it would trigger hidden lies about me first placed there by another abuser long ago.

When he'd buy me books to show me the right position to perform in bed and then yell at me because I still didn't do it right, I didn't know there was more to it than the position. I was deeply ashamed that I couldn't perform such a basic function as satisfying my man. When he would angrily force himself on me in the middle of the night to "make up with me" after verbally and physically abusing me for the last seven hours, I didn't know that wasn't reconciliation but rape.

God had to redefine me before I could realize I was being abused. God had to strengthen me before I could stand, somewhat wobbly at first, and say, "No more abuse. I exist. I count. This is my life too and I will never be abused again." That process of standing is something I am profoundly thankful for.

I have walked through the valley of the shadow of death. I know that He is faithful. I know that nothing can separate me from the love of Christ. I know that Jesus Christ is my rock, my fortress, my strong tower, my shield, my strength, my glory and the lifter up of my head. That is something my abuser cannot touch.

He may have taken my children, my reputation, my dreams, my financial well being, my credit rating, and my youth, but he cannot touch my God. He cannot have my dignity. He cannot lay claim to my self respect. He cannot possess my humor, my joy in the Lord, or my ability to dream new dreams.

He no longer owns me. I am free. In the eyes of the world, it may look like he won. But he didn't. He lost. He no longer controls me, which is the one thing he wanted. He lives a life of hatred while I am loved. He is in wretched bondage, while I have a freedom nobody can ever take from me. For the first time in the seventeen years we were together, I won.

"Liz"

DEAR CHILD:

I just wanted to remind you today of how beautiful you are because there is a father of lies who will try to deceive you. He will try to tell you that you are not good enough, not attractive enough, not thin enough, not strong enough, not smart enough, not righteous enough, and that you are simply unimportant to Me.

He will try to tell you that you have broken one too many promises, that you have fallen one too many times, that you have lived one too many lies, and that you've been going in the wrong direction so long that it is pointless to turn back now.

But guess what?

YOU DO NOT BELONG TO HIM. HE IS NOT YOUR FATHER.. I AM.

You see, you are My creation. My workmanship. You have been borne of My thought, every part of you placed together by My hands. You have My thumbprint upon you. You are a prince/princess, did you know that? You are My child, the child of THE King!

I look at you and see a precious, priceless pearl. There is no ocean I would not swim, no mountain I would not climb, and no price I would not pay to have you and to be with you and call you My own.

I already have.

I have done all that I could, given all that there is. I desire to be with you every moment of every day. How I long for you to talk to Me every day. My love for you never grows cold. My promises are never broken (contrary to what he might lead you to believe). My character never changes. And you, my child have been made in My image.

I love you dearly, unconditionally and completely. I understand every emotion that you have. I've been there. I count every tear that you cry. I know every hair on your head.

And do you know what?

I even know your weaknesses and your failures and your fears. I know those hidden parts of you that you wish would go away. Those dark corners of your world that you stuff deep down, praying that no one will ever see. I have already seen them and they will not change my love for you.

Nothing will.

I love your heart and I desire all of it.

I just wanted to remind you today of how beautiful you are and how precious you are to Me.

*With Unmeasurable Love,
Your Heavenly Father*

Author Unknown



FREE ADMISSION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015

9:00 A.M.— 2:00 P.M.

COMMUNITY FUN: EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN

A Small Town Saturday Benefit Event Supporting FOCUS Ministries, Inc.

*Vendors, Crafters, Garage Sale, Concessions,
Nails, Chair Massage, and Much More!*

Location: Harvard Ave. Evangelical Free Church
206 W. St. Charles Road
Villa Park, IL 60181



FOCUS Ministries, Inc. is a 501 c3 nonprofit organization that provides a safe place for teens, women, and families who experience domestic violence and abusive relationships to find hope and healing in Jesus Christ.

For more information, call 630-617-0088.
www.focusministries1.org



Letters/E-Mail

Dear FOCUS:

I would appreciate some counselling. I am at an all time low in my life and not sure how to handle it. It has become out of control for me. I'm so lost and scared. I'm 47 and have never been in this situation in my life. I've pretty much lost everything. I've screwed up too many times. My family has more or less abandoned me or I them. Too proud to say I'm sorry or to ask for help. I've lost all self- respect and have nothing left to give anymore. I am going on raw nerves right now and don't know where to start. I've been with this man for 7 years, alcoholic, and abusive. Sad thing is I keep going back because i love him.....or I think I love him...I think its codependency. I'm just learning of this.....after 40 some years...how stupid am i?

I guess I bury my head in the sand a lot, ignorance is bliss. not sure how I'm supposed to go on. I know in my head the right thing to do but my heart doesn't listen. How do I make my emotions stop and the real brain take over? I know I'm a good person and I know that I'm semi smart, but he has stripped me of all dignity and self worth. I don't belong to a church anymore. I've lost all faith and God doesn't want to know me any more...I don't want to know me anymore.

—Email

Editor's note: This woman has taken an important step by seeking help to figure out what is broken inside of her. She may feel she is unlovable so she clings to a "relationship" that harms her. She possess a distorted definition of love. She is on a self destructive path. She has equated her selfevaluation to how God must feel about her. God still views her as his precious child and grieves that she has walked away from Him.

FOCUS Support Groups

ALASKA

- Craig – 2nd Tuesday of every month, 7:00 pm – 8:30 p.m.
- Klawock -3rd Saturday of every month, 12:00 pm – 1:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

- Sonora – Mondays, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

FLORIDA

- Leesburg – Thursdays, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

GEORGIA

- Conyers – 2nd Tuesday of every month, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

KENTUCKY

- Burkesville – Tuesdays 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

ILLINOIS

- Arlington Heights – 3rd Thursday of every month 7:00 pm – 9:00 p.m.
- Carol Stream – Every Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- Mt. Prospect – Every other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.
- South Holland – Thursdays 7:00 pm
- Wood Dale – 2nd Thursday, 7:00 pm – 9:30 p.m.

- West Chicago—1st & 3rd Sunday 6 -8p.m.

MISSOURI

St. Louis – Every other Tuesday, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

OHIO

- Hartville – 2nd and 4th Sundays, 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

PENNSYLVANIA

- York – 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

WASHINGTON

- Lynnwood – Wednesdays, 6:30 pm – 8:30 p.m.

Thoughts to Ponder

How has your church responded to your relationship situation?

- Supportive
- Judgmental/critical
- Held abuser accountable
- Used church discipline on husband and wife
- Shamed you
- Treated it as a “marital issues” instead of a “abuse” issue
- Isolated you
- Other _____



How did you respond? What was the outcome? How did you feel?



Words that Heal

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.

Psalm 46:1-3

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

Praises:

- **Attendees that came to Partners in the Journey and Faith Based DV trainings**
- **Dedicated financial supporters**
- **Dedicated support group leaders**
- **Devoted volunteers**
- **Transformed lives in our clients**
- **Churches that financially support the ministry**

Prayer Requests:

- **Pray for our TEEN FOCUS team** as they develop our teen program
- **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 those** that come to the ministry for help that do not know Jesus.



Upcoming Events

Author, Editor and Publisher: Paula Silva
Copyright © 2015 FOCUS Ministries, Inc.. All Rights Reserved

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.

- **October 3, 2015:** Community Fun: Everything Under the Sun Fundraiser, Harvard Ave. Evangelical Free Church, Villa Park, IL
- **October 23-24 2015:** Partners in the Journey Training, FOCUS Office in Villa Park, IL

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

contactus@focusministries1.org

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

Ways You Can Help FOCUS Ministries



Please consider making your online purchases from Shaklee through:
www.focusmin.myshaklee.com/us/en/ A portion of your purchase will be credited toward FOCUS Ministries. More on: [Shaklee](#)



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>.