John 4:4-18 NIV

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9 The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10 Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

11 “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

15 The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

17 “I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

Many of us are familiar with the story of the “Woman at the Well.” Over the years many sermons have been preached about this woman. Some have noted the compassion Christ had toward a Samaritan who was a woman that most Jews would not have anything to do with.

Some have expounded upon
this “divine appointment” for Jews did not usually travel through Samaria. Others have emphasized the offer Christ gave of “Living Water” to her.

Every single sermon I have heard has included the emphasis on an immoral woman because she had five husbands. They imply or outright state that she was divorced and an adulterer. Scripture does not say she was divorced. Maybe some of her husbands died. Maybe her husbands divorced her because of their lust for other women or they were just tired of her.

It is so interesting how we put the blame on her for having multiple husbands. We add a twist that she is looking for love in all the wrong places. What about the men and their accountability?

Can you imagine the shame she carried that even caused her to draw water at midday when others more than likely would not be around? Along with the shame, she probably felt unworthy and devalued just tossed aside when she was no longer useful.

She could have been a woman who could not bear children. There was a great deal of importance on having children in those days. She could have been shamed by others since she didn’t produce offspring.

Yes, she was living with a man who was not her husband. That was not a wise choice, but maybe she did it for financial reasons or was afraid of marriage.

Times were different back then. Women were dependent on men especially for daily living needs. Her lack of self-worth could have led her to think that she was nothing more than a man’s property to be used and discarded.

Christ saw beyond her circumstances and any sin in her life. He saw the woman he had created. His desire was to show her that she could bloom into a godly woman with His Living Water, His Acceptance, His Forgiveness, and His Everlasting Love.

I wonder if the people in her village felt shame for how they treated her when they saw how Christ valued her. Would Christ’s acceptance cause them to treat her differently from then on? Did the village people ask her to forgive them for their judgments and condemnations?

Let me not be put to shame, Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and be silent in the realm of the dead.

Psalm 31:17

- Have you ever felt like this woman filled with shame from your own sins and shame from those that have sinned against you?
- Have you had those in the Christian community make judgments about you that were not true?
- Have their accusations wounded your heart?
- Has this caused you to lower your head in shame and withdraw from the community around you?

You can choose not to live in shame. Change what you need to change in your life. Take your shame to the cross and drink from the Living Water that Christ offers. Bask in His acceptance, forgiveness, and love. His Living Water will wash away your shame.

Jesus is waiting for you!

Paula Silva

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Arising Out of Bondage to Freedom

I had a friend call me today. She said, “Turn your radio on. I think you need to hear this.” I found the program you (FOCUS Ministries) was on. You were talking about domestic abuse. The last section was about abuse in the pastor's home. This is my story.

I was married 35 years. In 1984 we started an independent church. For 22 years, I was a pastor's wife. During the first 5 years of my marriage, my husband was an alcoholic, paranoid, and very angry with an awful temper. He could explode without any sign. I was beaten with a leather belt, hair pulled out, and a lot of hits, but the worst was the mental and verbal abuse.

In 1975 we both were saved. During the next 20 years, life was better. There were still times of temper and abuse. He was very controlling and possessive. Then in 1995, he became a full time minister. Both our daughters got married and left the home about the same time.

During this time, we bought a new church. The church began to grow. As more women came, my husband began the pattern of flirting again and doing things he shouldn't. At the same time, he was accusing me of flirting with men in the church. He lost the fear of God and became addicted to pain medication which exploded his paranoia just like alcohol did. He became violent again.

The last 2 years we were together, I left in the night 5 times, but he would beg me to come back. I went back because of our children, our church, and because I loved him.

People I knew would say, “How could you love him?”

On August 12, 3:30 in the afternoon, I left for good on foot. I walked 5 miles in the heat. When my daughter picked me up she said, “That’s it. You’re not ever going back.”

I wasn’t the only one who left. Everyone in the church left except for a woman and a couple. Since then there have been many abusive emails.

I lived in bondage to this man for 35 years. I would go to church after a night of abuse, and had to sit on the front pew and amen him. It had gotten so bad the last two years that I would go into the closet and begged to die. I would plead with the Lord to take me in my sleep because I didn't see a way out.

I felt responsible to keep the church, the family, and everyone together. I know today that God had a time for me to leave. When it had gotten to the point that he was mentally and spiritually evil, the Lord said, “That's enough.” I left.

I have been gone for 2 years. He divorced me and wants to give me nothing. We are still waiting for the court to settle. He has lied so much. Although this has happened, I am grateful for my wonderful family, my two daughters that never gave a minute of trouble.

I kept a lot of this a secret from our church family who thought I was the most submissive woman they had ever seen. After I left though, many people came to me telling me they could tell that I was troubled, but they didn't understand. Some who had been abused knew that something was wrong.

I guess I wanted to write just to say that you can make it. There is life after an abusive marriage. I live with my daughter and wonderful son-in-law now. My ex-husband has been so ugly that our daughters have no relationship with him now.

One day I pray that he will come back to the Lord and make things right. Yes, I still think about him. I still love him, but I am getting better each day. I don't cry as much anymore. I know that the Lord has me in the palm of His hand. When I thought I was all alone and couldn't talk to anyone, Jesus was with me. It was a very dark walk but the Lord gave me scripture, "thou hast been delivered from the violent man." God is good!!!!!

I know I didn't go through this for nothing. God always has a purpose for what we go through. If I can help one woman find her way out of abuse, it'll be worth it. I know in my heart that there are many pastor's wives, deacon's wives, church leaders' wives that are suffering in silence like I did. You don't have to be silent. God can provide a way out!

Anonymous
**ADDITIVE LOVE SAYS:** | **AUTHENTIC LOVE SAYS:**
---|---
1. I can’t live without you. You give my life meaning. | 1. I can live without you, but I choose not to.
2. You make me feel valuable. When I’m with you, I am somebody. | 2. I’m a valuable person, and you affirm that value to me.
3. I can’t make it on my own. | 3. I can make it on my own. Having you as part of my life makes it easier.
4. I want you to be a total part of my life, and I want to be a total part of yours. | 4. We are two separate people with two individual lives to lead. I encourage you to pursue your interests, and I will pursue mine. This kind of space and diversity is good for us.
5. All of the hard times are worth the good times. I will be here forever, no matter what happens. | 5. I believe love should seek another’s highest good. To the best of my ability, I will do that for you, even if sometimes I fail.
6. I can’t bear to think of you sharing your thoughts and feelings with someone else. You are the only one who has ever understood me. | 6. We are richer for sharing our lives with other people. I encourage you to have other close relationships.
7. You should be sensitive to my needs. I have feelings, you know, and I need you to take that into consideration. | 7. Mutuality is the glue that holds us together. I enjoy you, and in that enjoyment, I find that many of my needs for importance, belonging, and intimacy are met.
8. If you really care, you will treat me the way I need to be treated to feel good. | 8. I will accept the way you show me you care about me. Sometimes I may have to ask you about your actions, but generally, I will take at face value what you say and do.

Adapted from *Please Don’t Say You Need Me*  
By Jan Silvious
Boundaries in Relationships

In all relationships, it is necessary to establish boundaries. Boundaries define who we are and what we are responsible for. These boundaries protect the things that are valuable about us such as our:

- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Behavior
- Choices
- Talents
- Thoughts
- Desires
- Loves
- Values
- Emotions

These are called our treasures. No one else has the right to control our treasures. By the same token, we do not have the right to control the treasures of another person!

Sometimes we find ourselves in difficult situations because we lack boundaries or are in a relationship with a boundary hater. In examining our relationships, we first need to determine whether we have boundary problems.

There is a boundary problems if:

- We give up activities we enjoy
- We give up relationships

We lose the freedom to be ourselves

We try to become the person “he/she” wants us to be

We are looking for someone to heal our inner hurt

We allow ourselves to be controlled by another person, and we do things we really don’t want to do

We try to protect the other person from the consequences of their actions

We are being mistreated and disrespected, but we won’t take a stand against it, or we deny it is happening at all

We give in to sexual demands that we do not want to do

In this day and age, it is getting increasingly more difficult to maintain sexual boundaries. In many forms of media, sex has been portrayed as part of a dating relationship. But God set apart sex as an intimate part of marriage with value and purpose.

We, though, often mix sex with “love” when it really should be labeled as “lust.”

God established the boundary of sex only within marriage to protect us against:

- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Emotional devastation and pain when a boyfriend/girlfriend leaves us for someone else
- Users who don’t really love us as a person
- Losing a precious part of ourselves which should be saved for a marriage partner
- Cheapening the value of a relationship with someone who isn’t committed to us for life
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Disobedience to God

If we have already messed up in this area, we can ask God to forgive us. He will give us a fresh start and help us to start over with good sexual boundaries.

Boundaries guard your heart and the treasures within. What boundaries do you need to develop in your relationships so that you can grow into the person God designed you to be?

Paula Silva

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Thoughts to Ponder

Those who experience an abusive relationship suffer with feelings of shame. The shame comes from internal messages of being a failure, not being good enough, and taking on the full responsibility of the relationship working, etc. The feelings of shame can be enhanced by outside influences of disapproval.

What has contributed to your feelings of shame?

Words that Heal

No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.

Psalm 25:3

Let me not be put to shame, Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and be silent in the realm of the dead.

Psalm 31:17

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

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### Upcoming Events

- April 10-11, 2015: Partners in the Journey Training, FOCUS Office in Villa Park, IL
- 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

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### 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.

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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.

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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.

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