

I'm So Busy!

As the years fly by, I have noticed our lives get busier and busier. We fill each day to the brim with activities, work, and maintaining life's needs. Little time is devoted to smelling the roses, taking in the warmth of a summer's breeze, watching a colorful sunset, and delighting in the carefree play of children.

Summer can be a time of slowing down, engaging in fun activities, and enjoying days of more daylight. Yet even on so called vacations, plans are made for almost every moment of the day. We feel uncomfortable when there is "nothing to do."

Busyness can be a coping mechanism to keep our mind off of things we don't want to do or relationships that we don't know how to handle. At the end of the day, our problems are still there. Busyness does not cause our problems to go away. It just postpones the inevitable.

In our busyness, we miss the glimpses of God's presence and provision. When things go wrong in our life, we declare that God does not care because we feel he has abandoned us. God never

promised us that we will have an "easy" life if we just believe on Him, but He does promise to never forsake us.

Busyness can cover up the loneliness inside. You can be busy but not connected or plugged into life. It appears on the outside that you are happy, but distrust and feeling unaccepted can linger below the surface.

Sometimes we feel that we need a steady stream of accomplishments to feel worthy and valued. Performance becomes our goal. We are in a constant mode of striving to be the best at everything. This only leads to weariness and fatigue. It is truly exhausting.

Busyness can be a means to prove to ourselves that we have value especially when we receive words of affirmation or praises for the many things we are involved in. Often times we add more to our plate than we should because we need a constant flow of people's acceptance.

Eventually our plate will be too full or too many plates have



been added that things do not get done or not done to the best of our ability. We become frustrated and disappointed with ourselves. We lean toward giving up and to not pushing through difficulties or assessing what we need to take off our plate.

Feeling exhausted because of busyness? Step back and ask yourself why.

- Are you using the busyness to hide from certain life's problems?
- What are the fears you are trying to avoid?
- Is your busyness fueling your self-worth?

Take a deep breath, read reassurances in the psalms, discover through counseling ways to resolve difficult issues, and find support within a trusted community of Christ followers.

Paula Silva

The Secret

Ann carried a secret within her heart as she slowly seated herself in the pew. She cautiously looked around wondering if anyone noticed the bruise on her forearm. She tried to concentrate on words coming from the pulpit, but her mind wandered to the incidences of the past week. She was confused by the control she felt.

An instant replay revealed the repeated pattern of her husband's behavior. The demeaning, threatening words pierced like bullets into her heart. She felt like a child at the mercy of an adult accounting for her time and money spent.

Walking on eggshells had become part of daily living. Fear and anger reigned in her home. How could a man who claims to know Christ treat her this way? Why does he act one way in public and another at home?

In our churches, women just like Ann sit silently suffering wearing plastic smiles to cover the secret hidden inside. Fear, shame, and hopelessness grip their being.

This secret permeates their lives spreading like cancer slowly destroying those within their

home. The secret is domestic violence.

The Christian community needs to be a safe place for women to reveal the secret. It takes a great deal of courage for a victim to come forward for she faces the possibility of not being believed. We must be "Jesus in skin" to those that are being oppressed held in bondage and captivity.



"Rescue those who are unjustly sentenced to death; don't stand back and let them die. Don't try to avoid responsibility by saying you didn't know about it. For God knows all, hears, and he sees you. He keeps watch over your soul, and *he knows you knew!* And he will judge all people according to what they have done."

Proverbs 24:11-12, NLT

As their anchor in the storm, it is critical to know how to respond.

Listen and affirm the victim as she tells her story

Assess her level of safety by noting the frequency and the intensity of explosive episodes

Develop options and a safety plan for the victim

Don't push for reconciliation or **couple's counseling** for this places the victim and children in danger

Educate oneself about domestic violence

Advise counseling for the victim with a Christian counselor who understands the dynamics of domestic violence

Maintain a referral list for domestic violence services

Confront the abuser with truth and grace

For the victim of domestic violence, there are two choices. The first is to silently suffer alone. The second choice is to take steps to find hope and healing in Jesus Christ and others. Are we willing to walk this difficult journey with her?

Paula Silva

Characteristics of a Victim of Domestic Violence

In our everyday world, victims of domestic violence may not be readily identified especially if they do not exhibit physical injuries. Behind many plastic smiles are women suffering from wounds that scar the heart and systematically whittle away their personhood.

There are some common factors that appear in all victims. Women in abusive relationships often remark that they feel like they are **walking of eggshells**. Tension runs high within their home which causes their **anxiety levels** to elevate.

Accompanying these factors is the element of **FEAR**. There could be the fear of losing their children or becoming homeless and penniless if they take a stand against the abuse. Many times it is the verbal threats from the abuser that instill fear.

There are many characteristics that could help us to identify a victim of domestic violence. Not all victims will exhibit all of the following characteristics, but many will be evident.

- Exhibits codependent behavior
- Pins her self-worth and self-esteem on perceptions of abuser
- Afraid to confront in conflict situations
- Easily intimidated by the abuser
- Lacks healthy boundaries
- Usually puts others first and her needs last
- Feels responsible for holding the family together
- Feels trapped in her situation
- Believes the abuse is her fault
- Fears abandonment and loneliness
- Feels guilty for telling anyone
- Believes no one will be able to help her
- Fearful of retaliation by the abuser
- Thinks no one will believe her if she tells
- Maintains hope that the abuser will change
- Has unrealistic relationships expectations
- People pleaser
- Clings to false hope
- Feels responsible for keeping the peace at all costs
- Feels her love and submission will change her partner's abusive behavior
- Does not have a clear understanding of what a healthy relationships looks like
- Feels she is suffering for Jesus if she remains in the abusive relationship
- Exhibits distorted thinking, back and white thinking
- Things appear to be either all bad or all good in their mind
- Doesn't trust her own perceptions
- Doesn't feel good enough in the relationship

When a victim identifies these characteristics, they can take a step forward, seek help, and allow God to define them. *“For we are **God’s masterpiece**. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”* Ephesian 2:10 NLT

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Paula Silva





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:

My husband had a sexual affair with another married woman for a whole year, and he even made a serious suicidal threat when he realized that the other woman didn't want him after all. So then he had to be taken to the hospital and placed on the psych. ward. This all happened when I was pregnant with our third child and three weeks from my due date. We were also living overseas, so when the baby was born, we were in two separate hospitals. I found pictures that he had taken - pictures of married women sunning themselves in their skimpy little bikinis at the swimming pool. I found a love letter that he had received from the other woman - it began, "My love..." I found a note from him to me, saying that he had been married to the other woman for four months. Needless to say, we separated when this whole disaster happened.

After I explained this whole incident to my church officials (the ones at that time), they told me that God's law required me to forgive him and return to him in obedient submission. I didn't do it.

—Email

Editor's note: Since Christ came to save us, we are no longer under the law. God does not want us to submit to someone else's sin. The husband broke the covenant. One is not to be married to two women at the same time. Trying to save a marriage at all costs where there has been no repentance, remorse, and restitution is not God's plan. The response from this church put this woman in harms way and not put accountability on the husband.

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

Life can have many concerns. Sometimes those concerns evolve into constant worry. We worry about the “what if’s” to the point that they consume our present living. Our focus more often is on the future than living each day as it comes.



What worries consume you?



Words that Heal

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^a?”

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:25-34

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

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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.

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](#)



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