

Breaking the Silence

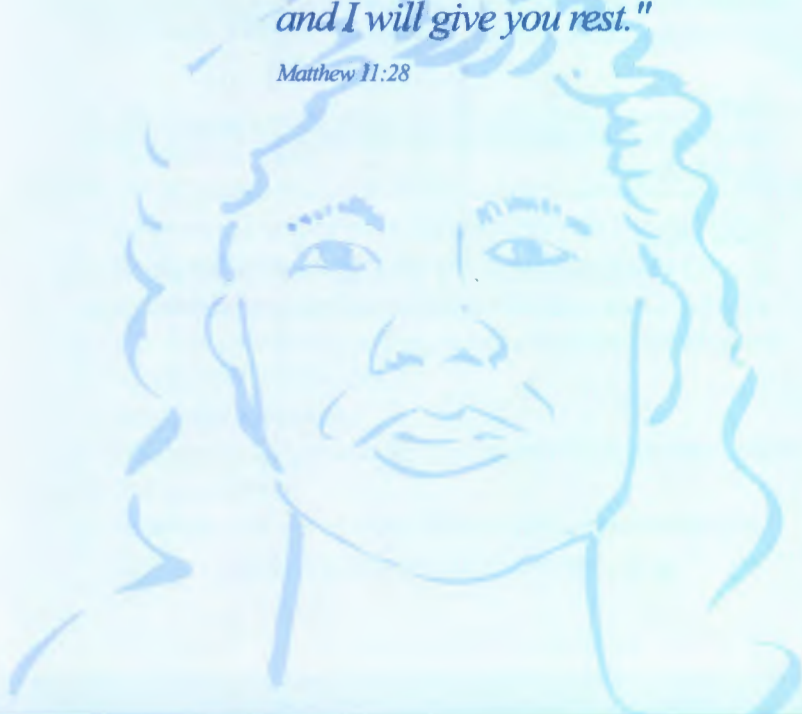
# **BREAKING** the *SILENCE*

You can stop  
the violence

and help them all

*"Come unto me, all ye that  
labor and are heavy laden,  
and I will give you rest."*

*Matthew 11:28*



## What is Abuse?

*To abuse someone is to intentionally or unconsciously injure or damage him/her physically, psychologically/emotionally, or sexually with the purpose to intimidate, dominate, control and/or exercise power. Abuse can be isolated or habitual, premeditated or spontaneous. The one who inflicts the abuse is typically called the **abuser**, the one who is abused is typically called the **victim**.*

## Types of Abuse:

### **Physical:**

actions which cause humiliation, physical pain or injury, such as kicking , pushing, or punching.

### **Psychological/Emotional:**

actions which cause loss of self-esteem, and/or loss of self-determination, such as name calling, isolation, or criticizing.

### **Sexual:**

actions of a sexual nature that are unwelcome, uncomfortable, or forced; this includes rape.

### **Child Abuse:**

all of the above definitions, as well as neglect. This includes not providing for a child's basic needs such as food and clothing, and abandonment.

## **Abuse Is Wrong Because...**

### **It destroys the body**

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

I Corinthians 3: 16, 17

### **It robs children of their innocence**

“But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Matthew 18:6

### **It lowers self-esteem**

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it might benefit those who listen.”

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

### **It warps the perception about God**

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [and daughters] of God.”

I John 3:1

### **It is not God's plan for families**

“...The Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts.”

—Counsels On Health, p.101

### **It is not God's plan for our lives**

“‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.’”

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

## **These Common Beliefs Are *Not* True:**

- Abuse is only a momentary loss of temper.
- Husbands must abuse their wives in order to gain respect.
- Abuse only happens among uneducated people or in developing countries.
- A victim could always leave an abusive relationship if they really wanted to.
- Men cannot be abused by women.
- A victim of abuse has psychological disorders.
- Abuse is caused by the use of alcohol and drugs.
- High levels of stress make people abuse.
- Children are not affected when one parent abuses the other.
- Abuse survivors exaggerate.
- Some people ask, provoke, or want to be abused.
- It is a sin for Christian victims to seek to prosecute their abusers.
- Some people deserve to be abused.

## **These Common Beliefs About Child Abuse Are *Not* True:**

- Parents will be able to tell if their child has been sexually abused.
- Children need to be beaten in order to learn to respect their elders.
- Boys cannot be sexually abused.
- Violently shaking a baby will not hurt or kill him/her.
- Playing with a child's genitalia is harmless.
- Children are not affected when one parent abuses the other.
- Only strangers molest children.
- Children will quickly outgrow effects of abuse.
- If children walk around naked they are asking to be sexually abused.
- Denying a child food or other basic needs is not considered abuse.
- If a child's body reacts to fondling it is because he/she enjoys it.
- Children lie about being abused in order to get adults in trouble.

## **Victims May Experience One or More of the Following as a Result of Abuse:**

- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts
- General anxiety or paranoia
- Sleeping disorders
- Eating disorders
- Sexual disorders
- Physical disorders
- Distrust of authority figures, or people in general
- Loss of self-esteem, feelings of helplessness and worthlessness
- Loss of job and/or income
- Feeling of isolation
- Drug and/or alcohol addiction

## **You Can Help!**

- If he/she is in immediate danger, call the authorities and accompany him/her to the appropriate offices.
- Don't try to solve the abuse situation by yourself. Find out about abuse prevention agencies in your area and initiate contact to offer him/her the help needed.
- Listen without interrupting and don't feel as if you need to offer advice.
- Allow him/her to cry, and talk when he/she is ready.
- Encourage him/her to seek professional counseling from a licensed therapist who specializes in abuse cases.
- Don't bad mouth the abuser.
- Offer to be a prayer partner, to daily pray and offer encouragement when he/she feels weak or lonely.
- Invite them to join you on outings without bringing up the abuse situation.
- Keep your word and daily follow-up to see how he/she is doing.

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**National Domestic Violence Hotlines**  
USA: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)  
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