

## Understanding Abuse Biblically

### Course Introduction

#### I. The Need

- 1 in 4 women have experienced domestic abuse at some point in their lives.
- Between 90 and 95% of the survivors of domestic abuse are women.
- Abuse by a husband or boyfriend is the leading cause of injury to women ages 15 to 44.
  - More women are treated in emergency rooms for injuries from domestic abuse than for rapes, muggings, and traffic accidents combined.
- 50% of all homeless women and children in America are fleeing domestic abuse.
  - Yet the United States has three times more animal shelters than shelters for battered women and children.

#### II. Definition of Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse: a form of oppression in which a person uses certain behavior patterns to control their intimate partner.

Oppress: to crush or burden someone by the abuse of power or authority.

#### III. Oppression in the Bible

The Bible's description of oppression fits the experience of domestic abuse:

- Psalm 10:7: "His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity."
- Psalm 55:
  - "I am restless in my complaint and I moan, because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me." (vv. 2-3)
  - "My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant." (v. 20)
  - "For it is not an enemy who taunts me—then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me—then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend." (vv. 12-13)

### God's Heart for the Oppressed:

- Psalm 9:9: “The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.”
- Psalm 56: “Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker *oppresses* me... You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me.”

### God's Response to Oppression:

- Deuteronomy 26:6-8: “And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.”
- Luke 4:17-21: “And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’...And he began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ ”

***In Scripture, God is always on the side of the oppressed.***

### God calls us to protect the oppressed:

- Isaiah 58:6-7: “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, *to let the oppressed go free*, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

## IV. HEAL

**H**ear the cries of the oppressed

**E**stablish safety

**A**pply the gospel

**L**ead in developing new patterns