

Encourage
Enrich
Equip



THE BARNABAS

2021

**Crisis Care
Training International**

A Ministry of

WEC International

Phyllis Kilbourn, Founder

Tami Snowden, Director

Amy Wilson, Editor

**Bob Joyce, Pics-n-Pixels LLC,
Graphic Design**

Prepared By: Amy Wilson

VOLUME: 18 No.4
JULY 2021

DATE ISSUED:
07/27/2021

CONTACT:
AWILSON@CCTI-WEC.ORG

www.crisiscaretraining.org



TABLE OF CONTENT

COVER //1

IN FOCUS //2

MY JOURNEY THROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE //3-6

Q&A WITH A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCATE //7

RESOURCES //8

FOCUS

In Focus

"Our world needs education on domestic violence. Christians twist scripture, and churches twist scripture. Men become power-hungry and feel they have power over their wives. How can we further educate our communities and how to reach younger children to teach what healthy Godly relationships truly are?"

This statement and question came from a victim of domestic abuse that God recently dropped into my life through her children. I was substituting throughout the spring in varying classes as the church struggles to get volunteers back in place as yet another result of COVID 19. Each week as I volunteered in the various classes, God let me see the struggles of two individual children. The mom then "happened" to be at an event with me the following weekend and shared their journey with me, as you will read below. Through these God moments, I have had the privilege to come alongside this mom and children of four, ages four through nine. The further God has brought me into their story, the more awareness He has brought to me of how prevalent this has become, especially now with COVID. My past three months have been a whirlwind of education and empathy as I have learned more of what resources there are and what is still needed.

CCTI will spend our July, September, and November issues of the Barnabas Letter sharing various facets of this family's story, as well as that of an advocate who works with this family. Gratefully, more churches are trying to learn how to step into a messy and challenging issue for many. Our hope and prayer are that these next three issues can help anyone involved, or wants to help, with the many facets and trauma that domestic abuse ensues. As always, we pray that this issue enriches, equips, and encourages you as you seek the Lord for how to be involved!

Serving Him Together,

Amy Wilson
Director of Education



MY JOURNEY THROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE

About the author: *Anonymous to protect the identity of all involved.

I met my husband eleven years ago. I was ready for a fresh new start after coming out of a difficult time in my life. Still, I had no idea that I was about to encounter abuse, which escalated into enduring domestic violence as the years went on. We met a couple of weeks and had one date before I learned he was moving to North Carolina for a new job and a fresh start on life.

How It All Began

A couple of days before he was moving, he met with me, my sister, and her husband. We sat around a bonfire chatting and laughing. We were having a great time. I wasn't in too deep, and I wasn't upset about him moving away. But when we were alone, he sat me down, hugged me, and held me. He then demanded I decide if we were going to continue the relationship we had. I was hesitant. I couldn't understand why he was putting me on the spot. We had only known each other for a few weeks. Why did this need to be decided now instead of going with the flow and continuing with phone calls? We weren't even referring to each other as boyfriend or girlfriend. I was incredibly uneasy and under pressure, and I caved. I let him have that power because he was manipulating me without my realizing it at the time.

The day before his move, I agreed to an actual movie and dinner date. Afterward, he brought me back to his parent's house to meet his mother. She gave us both a devotional book. This gesture touched my heart. I was so glad to have this spiritual support and encouragement for our budding relationship to be founded in Christ.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-ND](#)

From a distance, we had many long phone calls. We talked about Jesus in every conversation. I desired to grow a God-centered relationship. He was capable of conversing about the Bible, and we even began doing daily devotions together. I enjoyed listening to him talk to me about his upbringing in the church and the things he did until becoming an adult. These were the conversations that made me feel more connected to him and genuinely wanting more. I went down to visit him twice, and he came to our home state to visit with me. During these visits, he would put me on the spot and heavily pressured me about what I was going to do about our relationship. I can look back now and admit that I was suffering from pleasing a man instead of pleasing the Lord. He took advantage of my submissiveness and desire to avoid conflict. These were the beginning stages that led to much more dangerous and controlling situations and experiences. I had no idea the oppression that I was about to endure further.

Continued...

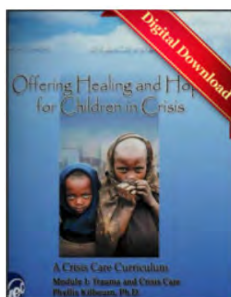
MY JOURNEY THROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE

...continued

And then came marriage.

We dated for two years, and we were married for eight years and a few months before I made my final escape. I always thought we just had a marriage problem. I encouraged and asked for marriage counseling for several years of our relationship, but he refused. When things became so severe, I decided to share some details with a close friend. She immediately got me on the phone with her friend from church that works with Family Life. All of this had to be secret because if my husband found out I was seeking help, I would suffer his consequences. I had several phone sessions with this counselor. We were focusing on my relationship with Christ and working on my self changes and growth. On a random day, my new counselor called me up and asked me to listen to a couple of podcasts by Leslie Vernick and take a questionnaire. I'll never forget listening to that podcast. After this, I realized that I was in a destructive relationship. I took the questionnaire about my relationship and partner. I was astounded with my answers. I was not in a "normal" marriage; I was in an emotionally destructive marriage. However, I did not yet know that this was domestic violence. My counselor reviewed my answers and told me that she could no longer counsel me as she did not have the education on this level. She referred me to a local church to start meeting with the counselor on staff.

I met with the church counselor a few times, again to only focus on my relationship with Christ since I could not do marital counseling without my husband. Things continued to escalate in my marriage. I started furthering my help and began meeting with one of the pastors at the church to discuss what was happening to me. The advice given to me was to go into the bedroom when things escalated with my husband, to get away from him. I was told that I did not deserve to be treated this way; God did not intend this treatment. After several meetings and phone calls, I started feeling panicked, as my children and I were in imminent physical danger. The pastor advised me to go to another room, but we could leave home if I thought we were in physical danger. I felt like this was too vague and that I did not have the full support from the church. After a couple of more incidents, I began packing overnight bags for my children and myself. This was our first attempt to escape, and we did. However, my husband ended up being involuntarily committed, and the abuse continued while he was gone. He did not respect my request to remain separated or to get individual help. After one week of being in the psychiatric ward, he showed up at our home in the middle of the night. I was still trapped!



Module 1: Trauma & Crisis Care
Digital Download

\$25.00

Digital Download

Add to cart

When coping wasn't cutting it anymore.

The abuse tactics slowly shifted and were somewhat different from that point because I believe he knew I was strong enough to seek help and involve authorities. After approximately seven months, I could no longer cope with these issues. I slowly started wondering again if the children and I needed to leave. A couple of months after that, I contacted my counselor from the church and told her that I needed help. My counselor informed me of the new ministry the church had implemented, which was for domestic abuse. She read over the power and control wheel, asking me to answer if any examples applied. All but just a couple were applicable. I then told my counselor that I needed to get out. She told me that she would be looking for an advocate to contact me, help me with the process, and prepare for an escape.

Continued...

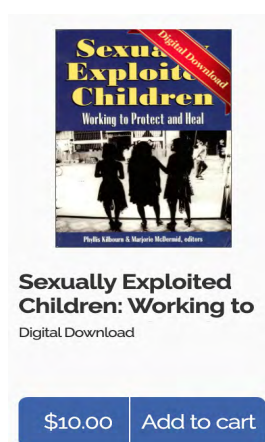
MY JOURNEY THROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE

...continued

A few weeks went by, and there was not an available advocate. I started calling the local women's shelters to see if there was availability. This was in the middle of Covid 19, right after the shutdowns. Shelters were very limited on space due to the Covid restrictions. My counselor was able to get me a copy of the "Safety Plan" booklet to start to line things up to leave. As soon as I had an advocate, I was determined to be prepared to go. By the sweet grace of our God, the advocate called me and met with me the next day. When we met, she told me that a family in the church was opening their home to women in my situation. I did not know this family. The only choices I had were to take the offer to move my children in with this family or wait for a spot to open in the women's shelter. I decided to make my final escape the next day. The children and I went to live with another family temporarily.

The transitions was horrifying and challenging.

This transition was so horrifying and challenging. I went from one type of survival mode to another. I had to shut my phone off, and nobody (including family and friends) was allowed to know where we were living due to safety. My husband was calling everyone he knew that had contact with me. He was harassing my family. He involved the police in reaching friends and family. Did you know that the first 48 hours of a woman leaving her abusive partner is the most deadly time? Talk about FEAR! I then had to go to the courts to ask for a [Domestic Violence Protective Order](#) (DVPO). This was incredibly terrifying, and the paperwork was horrific. I was put in contact with the local women's shelter for abused women and children. Thankfully, there was an advocate there that walked me through the tedious paperwork for the DVPO. After a few days of filling out these forms, I went before the judge. Another blessing from the Lord because I was granted the DVPO. Each move that I made (including fleeing my home) was a traumatic event. Nothing about these things was easy or calm. I was an emotional disaster. I was able to get a copy of the DVPO to the children's school just in time because my husband started contacting the school and asking to talk and see the children. He was then served his DVPO papers and began to obey the orders.



A couple of weeks passed. The church was then offering a bible study called Hope for the Hurting. The study read and went through the workbook called ["Called To Peace: A Survivor's Guide To Finding Peace And Healing After Domestic Abuse"](#) by Joy Forrest. This was a beautiful gift of timing by God as the new class began right after the holidays. God provided me with every single need and support I could never have sought out for myself. This group of women that I was with became a support group. This book was incredibly eye-opening and validating for what I had been living through and further grew my relationship with the Lord. The truths were coming to light, and the Lord was revealing to me the severity of the oppression I was never able to process.

Continued...

MY JOURNEY THROUGH DOMESTIC ABUSE

...continued

When I decided to escape our home, I left without a single penny. It was just weeks before Christmas. We had no idea if we would see the things we left at the house ever again. I was ready to walk away from idols and rely entirely on the Lord. He had never forsaken me amid the abuse or even when I fled the oppression. He brings darkness into light. Isaiah 9:2 "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shown." ESV. The Lord provided food, meals, new friends and support, money for gasoline to drive to all of our appointments. Additionally, I was provided with an integrative doctor to help me answer many of my debilitating health issues. We have received a place to live, protection from my abusive husband, and a church family that has been the backbone for getting us these supports and carrying these burdens. The Lord has not forsaken me! When I had to flee, I solely relied on the Lord for EVERYTHING. I hadn't worked in a few years, and I did not have any income beyond what my husband had provided. But that was never bigger than God! "And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." ESV. I am alive and able to share that I was never alone in the abuse or coming out of it. He has never left me. Deuteronomy 31:8 "The Lord is the one who will go before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged." CSB

I would be lying if I didn't admit how difficult this journey has been.

I would be lying if I didn't admit how difficult this journey has been. But let me be brutally honest, I would choose THIS hard way of life over the difficulties of living with my abuser, ANY day! While punching, hitting, kicking, and slapping are apparent signs of physical abuse, there is a slew of other forms of abuse. I had no idea that I was experiencing domestic violence because my husband never physically touched me (beyond sexual abuse). It took me fleeing for the second time and diving into Joy Forrest's book to realize and face that I was a victim of abuse. Please see the list of resources that I have provided, which proved incredibly helpful to me. The real pandemic that we face is domestic violence. Stand Up! Speak up! Share your story! Please support those who need it! Get Educated! This is NOT a marriage Problem!



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#)

Q & A with a Domestic Violence Advocate

1. What lead you to get involved in Domestic Violence -

My journey ministering to the hurting began in my teens. At an early age, I walked alongside the brokenhearted and those in crisis. I spent a season as an EMS first responder in which I experienced crisis firsthand while helping individuals and families amid tragedies. Over time, God has given my husband and me many opportunities to house, serve, and transport mothers and children in need of refuge and support. Through these opportunities, we can faithfully pour God's love and truth into the ones we serve. I also walked alongside a dear friend in crisis, which led me to Call to Peace Ministries. I started as a volunteer at conferences and then came on staff in 2020 and began proper advocacy training. Our church launched a team to develop a church-wide domestic abuse response strategy in this same year. I desire to see the church become the most significant vessel of hope and healing for the abused, oppressed, and voiceless. We are committed to being a vessel of God's hope and strength and longing to see "beauty from ashes" concerning these horrific situations. (Isaiah 61:3)

2. What are some of the ways you serve the victims of Domestic Violence?

- Advocacy Services
- Crisis Counseling, Trauma, Therapy, and Coaching
- Support Groups
- Survivor Retreats
- Emergency Assistance
- Self Defense

Called to Peace Ministries provides crisis counseling, advocacy, and support groups for women and their families coming through or out of Domestic Abuse. We also educate what destructive relationships look like and how to encourage healthy decisions.

Additionally, we have a way to help Churches and Ministries, counselors, and friends and family who are looking for guidance. It's essential to help these victims bridge the gap out of crisis and form a team to help individuals move forward.

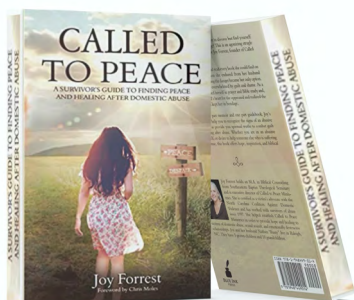
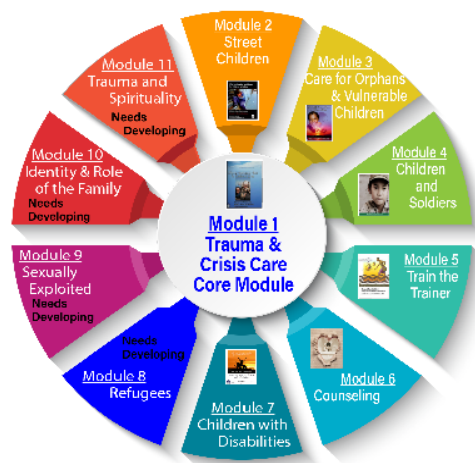
3. What advice do you have to offer women who may be in an abusive situation?

Please take courage! Reach out to a close friend. If she does not believe you, please try someone else. The **Domestic Abuse Hotline 1-800-799-7233** is available and so is our **Called to Peace number 919-374-0778 9-4pm, EST**. Please read through our resources and take the quiz at our website: calledtopeace.org.

**"Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."
Isaiah 43:19**



Curriculum



Websites:

www.calledtopeace.org

www.chrismoles.org

www.wildernesstowild.com

www.leslievernick.com

