

## **Sermon Notes and Discussion Questions**

### **Ephesians 5:7-14**

#### **Sermon Title: Selective Exposure**

**October 7, 2018 – Domestic Violence Awareness Sunday**

**Pastor Howard T. Washington**

- The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence defines domestic violence as the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault and/or other abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another.
- Domestic violence is an epidemic that affects individuals in every community, regardless of age, economic status, race, religion, nationality or educational background.
- Violence against women is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior and part of a systematic pattern of dominance and control.
- Domestic Violence results in physical injury, psychological trauma and sometimes death.
- The consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and can truly last a lifetime.
- It is important we seek the Lord and find ways to counter this epidemic.

This message will address the silent cries of women abused. A 2011 survey conducted by National Violence Against Women reported 1 in every 5 women in the US have been raped. Over 50% of the females raped reported being raped by intimate partners. The U.S. Department of Justice reported that historically women were most often victimized by someone they knew. Women or men can be victims of domestic violence.

Paul is talking about the practices of a Christian. How do Christians live with one another? If you are a Christian, walk in light and not in darkness.

#### **What does it mean to have the courage to walk in the light?**

Everybody has secrets. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Not everything that is a secret needs to be exposed. There are secrets that have power. Some things need to be exposed. Without it, there is no possibility of healing. The Bible is clear—some things that are done in the dark need to come out in the light. The last thing a person may want to do is talk about secrets. There are unfruitful deeds that need to be exposed because they are killing us. We don't need to talk about every secret. We are going to talk about breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

#### **Step 1 – Breaking the cycle of family violence is recognizing the signs.**

- Abuse can be physical, digital, emotional, sexual.
- Physical – Force with the intent to cause fear or injury—pushing, pinching, using an object.
- Verbal or emotional abuse includes insults, threats, embarrassment, isolation, intimidation and stalking.
- Sexual abuse – Any action that impacts a person's ability to control their sexual activity or the circumstances in which the activity occurs.
- Digital abuse – Use of social media to intimidate, harass or threaten a current or ex-dating partner. Includes demanding passwords, checking cell phones, cyber bullying, sexting, excessive or threatening texts, or stalking on Facebook or other social media.
- For more on dating or domestic violence visit [www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)

If you are concerned that you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, you may want to ask the following questions:

Does your partner or the partner of someone you know...

1. Embarrass you in front of family and friends?
2. Insult, intimidate or make you feel inferior?
3. Threaten you verbally? It can start as a nudge and progress.
4. Pressure you into doing what you decided not to do?
5. Isolate you from your family and friends? Keep you from doing things you like to do?
6. Tell you not to go to church?
7. Punish you because you made them angry?

Are you:

1. Afraid of the reactions or actions of the person you are with?
2. Do you make excuses for the person?
3. Accommodate everything your partner wants regardless of what you want to do?
4. Do you stay in the relationship because you are afraid of what the partner would do if you left?

When you are close to someone, sometimes you can't see it. The challenge to breaking the cycle—take the blinders off.

## **Step 2 – Stop and acknowledge to yourself that there is an issue.**

Something is wrong. Reporting and sharing is the hardest thing to do. You never thought I would be here—I am here and I need help.

- Pray that God will protect you and those who are being impacted. With God's help you can be healed. He will give you strength and strategy
- Do not accept the guilt that comes along with being in the circumstances. It is not your fault. You may put up with the nonsense because you begin to believe the lie that you did something wrong.
- Share your feelings with a counselor or someone who can provide help.

If you are an abuser:

- You are in the right place at the right time.
- Take full responsibility and admit you are wrong. Just because you were abused or hurt, does not give you an excuse to hurt or abuse other people.
- Be concerned about someone other than yourself and get some help. If you are sorry for the crime, God will heal you. However, it does not mean you will not have consequences.
- Get counseling to deal with your anger. Don't delay.
- Ask God to remove the root of your abusive behavior from your heart and mind. Commit to making the changes you need to make to get healed.

For all of us:

1. **Promote Awareness** - Look for ways to give a hotline number to someone who needs help. Remember the signs and be aware of the signs. Respond if you are aware. Share information.
  - a. Domestic Violence National Hotline - 1-800-799-7233 – Put this in your phone
  - b. Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence [www.ccafvl.org](http://www.ccafvl.org) provides resources for victims.

- c. C.H.O.I.C.E.S. For Victims of Domestic Violence – 614-224-4663. See brochures on the table in the Troy Wing
  - d. Ohio Domestic Violence Resource Center [www.odvn.org](http://www.odvn.org) – community resources to stay safe and get legal protection.
  - e. Visit [www.womenslaw.org](http://www.womenslaw.org) to research resources available to prepare a plan to get help
2. **Personal Assessment** — Am I a victim? Is there someone in my family? Am I covering up for anyone? Do I need to take the blinders off? Would I see the signs if they were in front of me? Ask God to forgive me for not saying anything until now.
  3. We may either not know what to do or we are afraid. To better understand the signs of domestic and family violence visit [www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org)
  4. **Practical Action** – No one deserves to be abused. No one has a right to abuse someone else. Establishing and maintaining control over a partner is domestic violence. If someone is struggling, ask the right questions.
    - Are you afraid sometimes when you are home?
    - Why are you afraid? Is that something you are comfortable with?
    - Are you willing to do what it takes to be free? We serve a God who is able to protect and set free.
  5. **There is hope and there is help.** It is not a fleeting hope. This is not a situation you have to put up with. Some of us have accepted what God never approved of. How do you manage the darkness? The text says bring the darkness to light. Jesus is the light. He is the one to strengthen and empower you, to protect you from the hand of the enemy. Sometimes we are sleeping with the enemy.

There must be practical feet put on the word. Faith without works is dead. Someone may be dealing with a post traumatic impact. There are triggers even if you are in a new relationship. God's presence is here to heal. I want to see it happen for you. He gave his life so we can walk in the beautiful light.

**Discussion Questions:**

*Note: It is recommended to proceed with these study questions in a safe setting with others who can provide help or support. Whether you choose to study these questions alone or in a group, pray before, during and after reviewing them for God's presence through the Holy Spirit to lead, guide, comfort and heal. Remember, there is hope and there is help.*

1. How does this passage in Ephesians apply to the issue of domestic violence?
2. What is the potential impact when the issue of domestic violence remains in the darkness or is kept a secret?
3. What will you do with what you have heard?
4. Why is it important to be able to listen to a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault without judgement or criticism?
5. What are some of your ideas on how our church family can continue to help in the fight against domestic and family violence?