

The Dynamics of Childhood Sexual Abuse in Women:

A Lay Counselor's Primer

Thesis: Understanding the cause and effect sequences that result from childhood sexual abuse will aid the counselor in helping these women heal.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Abuse Factors and their Impact	2
3. Age of the Child	3
4. Relationship with the Abuser	5
5. Type of Abuse	9
6. Female Genital Mutilation	10
7. Satanic Ritual Abuse	11
8. Duration of Abuse	12
9. Shame, Fear, and Rejection	13
10. Why Children Don't Tell	16
11. True vs. False Guilt	19
12. Addictions	22
13. Self-Mutilation	25
14. Eating Disorders	28
15. Drugs and Alcohol	31
16. Fantasy	32
17. Masturbation	34
18. Promiscuity	35

19. Sexual Abuse of Others	37
20. Other Abuse	38
21. Sexual Dysfunction	39
22. Fear	39
23. The Tough Girl	43
24. Codependence	45
25. Depression	46
26. The Dissociative Spectrum	51
27. Dissociative Identity Disorder	57
28. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	59
29. Borderline Personality Disorder	61
30. Spiritual Warfare	65
31. Why God Let It Happen	66
32. The Father Block	72
33. Strongholds	74
34. Lies of the Enemy	74
35. Wrong Thinking	76
36. Demonic Influence	76
37. Spirit Guides	77
38. Nightmares and Night Terrors	78
39. Intrusive Thoughts and Voices	79
40. Curses	81
41. Soul Ties	83

42. Suicide	84
43. Bitterness	85
44. Physical Aspects	88
45. Healing	89
46. Conclusion	89
47. Bibliography	91
48. Appendix	106

Introduction

Childhood sexual abuse is a plague that is ravaging America’s children. One out of every three girls will be sexually assaulted by the time she is eighteen years old.”¹ The statistics will continue to get worse as abuse of women is glamorized in rock and rap music and in the increasingly violent movies and television that generation X’ers have been reared on. In a society where the focus is increasingly, “If it feels good, do it,” our little girls may end up paying the highest price.

Sexual abuse can result in a multitude of incorrect perceptions, fears, and harmful behaviors. It is important for the counselor to know what problems to watch for, one seldom sees what he doesn’t expect to find.² She needs to understand why the victim thinks and responds the way she does, and to know how to help the abuse survivor see her struggles the way God does.

Unfortunately many people are critical of women who are hurting, or else they are apprehensive of getting involved in their lives. One abused woman described the way

¹ *Surviving to Thriving* 27 February, 2004 <<http://www.survivingtothriving.org/csa1>>.

² Freda Briggs, *From Victim to Offender* (St Leonards, Australia Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd 1995) 138.

people had responded to her, “I viewed myself like a picture window, with clear glass and a white frame. As my journey began, I could not see clearly, I needed a helping hand to guide me. Later on, someone threw a stone. It hit the glass and made a small crack that I could not fix. Many stones came and cracked my spirit with each blow. Eventually it fell and broke. I could not get back up. I did not know how. Many walked by, ignoring the broken pieces. Some came by and crushed me under their feet.”³ ⁴ God is very passionate in His feelings about those who hurt children. In Matthew 18, He says that it is better for the one who would hurt a child to have a heavy stone tied around his neck and be thrown to the bottom of the sea than to abuse a child and face God’s wrath.⁵

It is important for the counselor to understand why the victim is acting in inappropriate ways, so she can trace those behaviors to wrong thinking. Ultimately, the goal is to find the lies the victim believes, so they can be brought to the light and replaced with God’s truth that will bring about real healing.

Abuse Factors and their Impact

There are many factors that influence how much a child is impacted by abuse. Some of these factors are how old she was when she was abused, who abused her, the types of abuse she was subjected to, and the length of time the abuse persisted. Every abuse situation is unique, and every victim will respond differently.

A child who receives help from a caring adult to correctly understand and process the abuse and allow the child to express her feelings, will normally experience little long-

³ Michelle Comeau, *The Transformation* 27 August 2003 <<http://www.mirror-mirror.org/physex.htm>>.

⁴ 2 Tim 2:25-25

⁵ Matthew 18:6

term damage.^{6 7 8} Most women who were sexually abused as children but received comfort and support shortly after the abuse do not even think of themselves as victims. This thesis will focus on the implications for children who do not receive emotional support for the abuse they have suffered.

Age of the Child

One of the important factors to consider about child abuse is the age of the child when she is abused. Cognitive memory recall is believed to begin only after a child is able to speak. An infant who is abused will probably not be able to recall abuse later in life but may develop a fear of being touched that can result in developmental delays and failure to bond with her mother.⁹ An infant may also experience physical injuries due to penetration and may contract sexually transmitted diseases from the abuse. She may also experience demonic trouble from the abuse, especially if it was Satanic Ritual Abuse.

Young children, those who are between the ages of two and six years old, generally have the hardest time processing abuse and unfortunately that is when most sexual abuse begins.¹⁰ Four year olds experience the highest percentage of sexual abuse.¹¹ Over half of the children who are sexually abused before the age of six, dissociate from at

⁶ Neil Swan, "Some Child Abuse Victims Are More Vulnerable Than Others to Drug Abuse." *NIDA NOTES* 13. 2 (July, 1998).

⁷ John N. Briere Diana M. Elliott, "Immediate and Long-Term Impacts of Child Sexual Abuse The Future of Children" *SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN* 4. 2 Summer/Fall 1994 2 September 2003 <http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol4no2ART3.pdf>.

⁸ Robert Hicks, *Failure to Scream*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1993) 85.

⁹ Bruce D. Perry, Thomas S. Trammell "Sexual Abuse of Infants" *Child Trauma Academy*. 28 February 2004 <http://www.childtrauma.org/ctamaterials/infant_abuse.asp>.

¹⁰ "The Trauma of Sexual Abuse" National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. 28 February 2004 <<http://www.pathwaysup.org/brochures/abuse.html>>.

¹¹ Snyder, Howard N. *Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics* July 2000, 2 August 2003 <<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>>.

least some of their memory of the abuse.¹² This is especially true if the abuse is repeated, and it usually is. Once an abused child develops the ability to dissociate from traumatic memories, it is likely that she will continue to use this coping behavior throughout her life. Many of these children will develop Dissociative Identity Disorder, because they are unable to process the trauma. While children may not have conscious memory of the abuse, they will most likely experience fears, regressive behavior, and inappropriate sexual behaviors. As abused children grow up, they may also experience emotional distress in the form of panic and attachment disorders without knowing why.

Children who are seven to ten years old when the abuse first happens are more likely to remember the abuse. They will generally have a sense that what is happening to them is morally wrong and shameful. Threats not to tell will bear a lot of weight at this age especially if they are not aware of the help that is available to them. Even one incident of abuse at this age can be the impetus for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

It is common for abuse that began when the child was only three or four to continue into the teenage years and even, sometimes, into adulthood. By the time the child reaches adolescence, the young person generally has enough knowledge to get herself out of the situation by telling a teacher or calling a help line. Unfortunately, if the abuse has continued for a long time she will tend to have accepted it as normal and inevitable. The teens who do get out generally tend to be runaways. Thirty-two percent of runaway girls were sexually abused at home.¹³ Many who do not runaway end up marrying early in an attempt to find a better life. Sadly, they often end up marrying

¹² *Amnesia In Childhood Sexual Abuse Victims*. Sidran Institute, 28 February 2004
<<http://www.sidran.org/refs/ref3.html>>.

¹³ Dean Schabner, "Forced Out?" ABC News.com (11 July 2003) 5 August 2003
<<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/runaways020711.html>>.

abusers.

If the abuse begins when the girl is a teenager, it will most likely be from a non-family member.¹⁴ The adolescent will usually be devastated by the betrayal of her abuser. Generally, she will either have put herself in a compromising situation, as in the case of date rape, or she will have been abused by someone she thought was safe. Because she is older, she will better understand the implications and the stigmas that go along with the abuse. Sometimes the abuse even continues on into adulthood even if the woman is married. She becomes conditioned to the abuse and does not know how to stop it.

Relationship with the Abuser

The relationship of the child to the abuser is also an important factor to be considered. While many parents are careful to warn their children of “stranger danger,” only about twelve percent of abusers are strangers to the child.¹⁵ Being abused by a stranger, whether it is exhibitionism, molestation, or rape, is obviously very traumatic to a child.

Abuse by a stranger is often more violent, because the stranger is not usually dependant on the silence of the child for protection. Initially the abuse is very traumatic for the child. She may develop many new fears, and she will probably become quite clingy as she tries to feel secure again. She will also most likely have nightmares, flashbacks, and a fear of strangers. These should all fade over time.

Stranger abuse tends to have less long term effects than abuse by someone the child knows, for three reasons: the abuse is not continued on a long term basis; the abuse

¹⁴ Snyder

¹⁵ “Perpetrator Relationship to Victim by Maltreatment Type.” Administration for Children and Families 1999 28 February 2004 <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cm99/fig3_3.htm>.

was not committed by someone she knows and respects, and, usually, she will receive emotional support from her parents if they find out.

If the abuse was committed by an acquaintance, perhaps someone in the neighborhood, a teacher, a relative the child sees infrequently, or by another child, the abuse will be far more haunting. It is less likely that the child will tell someone about the abuse and it is more likely that the abuse will be repeated. The more closely involved the child is with her abuser, the greater the impact the abuse will have on her life. People the victim frequently interacts with, especially those whom she loves and trusts, can cause the most devastating abuse. She will likely develop a fear of all men.

Being abused by a sibling can have an even greater stigma than being abused by a father. Sibling abuse is usually terribly degrading and shameful. It creates a tremendous amount of insecurity on the part of the little girl, and the parents are usually completely unaware that it is going on. The brother may be taunting his sister, and all the parents perceive is “normal sibling rivalry.” It makes for a terrifying childhood, as the child never knows what is going to happen when mom and dad are out of sight. One woman recounts her suffering as she was growing up:

In order to stop me from telling my mother or anyone else of their nightly raids, my stepbrother and his friend would tell me they were coming in the night to cut off my head if I ever told. They took my dolls and decapitated them to show me they meant it. He locked me in the closet in the dark, or when I was walking down the hall, he would jump out at me and yell (I became very jumpy.) I do not remember all of how they scared me into silence, but the final scare was to kill my favorite bird. Actually it was the

family's bird but I took a particular interest in the parakeet. He was very trained, and since I was always sick with asthma or the flu, he would keep me company. He would cuddle under my chin or peck me kisses. When I walked around the house, the little yellow bird would ride on my shoulder. I was extremely fond of him. My eldest stepbrother unbent a wire coat hanger and screwed the bird through the chest."¹⁶

Mothers or other women perpetrate about four percent of sexual abuse.¹⁷ This type of abuse is often hard for a woman to admit to, even during counseling.¹⁸ One woman expressed her feelings, "I felt that I must be a complete freak of nature for this abuse to have happened to me. No one is sexually abused by a woman. I must be crazy."¹⁹ Abuse by a woman carries such a social stigma, that the desire is to bury it. It is the ultimate betrayal, and the little girls who suffer through it will tend to develop a tough guy personality. Forced female sodomy is almost always physically painful, and it is usually more violent than abuse by a man. Fifty percent of the women in a survey of convicted female sexual abusers said that they derived sadistic pleasure from inflicting pain on victims.²⁰

If a mother is sodomizing her daughter, it is likely that the father is also abusing her. One study found that 28.7% of female abuse victims were abused by a male and female together at least once.²¹ Conceptual problems are common in all types of abuse,

¹⁶ *An Angel's Kidnapping* 2 February 2004 <<http://www.geocities.com/ranebow5/storya.html>>.

¹⁷ Perpetrator Relationship to Victim by Maltreatment Type

¹⁸ Michelle Elliot, *Female Sexual Abuse of Children*, (New York: Guilford Press 1993) 16.

¹⁹ Elliot1.

²⁰ "The Sexual Abuse by Women of Children and Teenagers" (UK TV Program Panorama BBC1, 6 October 1997 Transcript by SPIG) 9 September 2003 <<http://www.menweb.org/panosumm.htm>>.

²¹ Hollida Wakefield, Martha Rogers, Ralph Underwager, *Female Sexual Abusers: A Theory of Loss Institute for Psychological Therapies*. 05 April 2003, 9 September 2003 <http://www.ipt-forensics.com/journal/volume2/j2_4_1.htm>.

but it is especially confusing when the one she is supposed to look to as a role model of how to be a woman and how to love is sexually abusing her. One woman said, "It's odd that the abuse by my father was not as awful as the abuse by my mother. There's something about a mother. When you're small, she should be the first person you go to if you're hurt, the first person to cuddle you. She should clothe you, feed you, and give you physical love and care, as well as emotional support. So when she's the one who abuses you, it leads to an even greater sense of despair than when your father abuses you."²²

When a father abuses, the child is often torn between her perception of a loving father and a predator that she must protect herself from. The more closely involved the child is with her abuser, the greater the impact the abuse will have on her life. "The intimate, devastating, and clandestine nature of abuse destroys a child's natural trust, instead typically leaving feelings of low self-esteem, foreboding, and helplessness."²³

It should also be noted that the home setting can be divided into three categories. The most common are the homes where abuse is going on but only the victim and the perpetrator are aware of the abuse. Then there are homes where the mother knows that the abuse is going on but chooses not to acknowledge it or protect her child. Sometimes this is because the mother fears her husband or feels like she could not live without him. Often when a mother permits her child to be abused it is because she does not want to meet the sexual demands of her husband. In one sense she feels relieved that someone else is lessening that pressure. Most mothers in this category and the next were abused as children.

The final type of home is the one that looks fine to people on the outside but is

²² Elliot 125

²³ Swan

completely different behind closed doors. In these homes, abuse would often be more accurately described as torture. Severe physical and emotional abuse usually goes along with the sexual abuse. Several accounts of homes like these have now been published. Books like, *A Child Called It*,²⁴ *The Chained Lion*,²⁵ and *Glenda's Story*²⁶ tell of such horrific abuse that most people do not want to believe that such cruelty is possible. Accounts of children being beaten, starved, burned, locked in closets, and many other tortures devised by Satan need to be dealt with. Recovery for women who grew up in this type of home will likely be long and difficult but necessary.

Type of Abuse

The severity of the symptoms will depend to a great extent on the type of abuse and the severity of that abuse. Some of the more mild forms of abuse like viewing pornography and verbal sexual assault or voyeurism are often overlooked, but they are traumatizing, and the child may still experience guilt and shame. Even though these types of abuse are considered mild, they bring fear and insecurity.

Fondling is the most common type of abuse. It can vary from a child being stroked on the arm for the purpose of sexually arousing the adult, to the perpetrator touching the child's genitalia. Tickling and play wrestling with the child are common ways to disguise the fondling. A child may yell and beg for the abuser to stop, but that is seen as being part of the game to anyone within earshot. It can also be a very confusing introduction to abuse. While these games are fun at first, the child senses that something is wrong, but she does not know how to identify it or how to stop it. A child who has

²⁴ David Pelzer, *A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive* (Health Communications 1995).

²⁵ Elaine Pakkala, *The Chained Lion: God's Victory in the Life of a Little Girl Chosen by the Enemy* (Colorado Springs: Lydia Press 1999).

²⁶ Revell, Glenda. *Glenda's Story*. (Lincoln NE: Back to the Bible 1994).

been abused while she is being tickled may react very violently to being tickled later on in life. A child who loses control of her body, when someone else is using her sexually, will likely develop problems with control that may be seen in anything from eating disorders to promiscuity.

“Vaginal penetration has been reported to occur in approximately one-half and anal penetration in one-third of female victims of sexual abuse.”²⁷ Oral rape is also common because it does not leave any physical evidence and can be performed on a very young child. Sometimes penetration is in the form of inserting objects in a child’s vagina or anus. Later those objects may become triggers to remind the woman of the abuse. Penetration at an early age can also cause internal damage that may leave a woman sterile.

Female Genital Mutilation

As more and more people from other cultures immigrate to the United States, the counselor should be alert to the possibility of female genital mutilation or female circumcision. It is “the partial or total cutting away of the external female genitalia, (and) has been practiced for centuries in parts of Africa, generally as one element of a rite of passage preparing young girls for womanhood and marriage. Often performed without anesthetic under septic conditions by lay practitioners with little or no knowledge of human anatomy or medicine, female circumcision can cause death or permanent health problems as well as severe pain.”²⁸ The procedure is also believed to enhance the man’s

²⁷ Margaret R. Hammerschlag “Key Points” (December 2002. 28 February 2004)
<http://www.ncjrs.org/html/ojdp/portable_guides/csa_02/key.html>.

²⁸ “Female Circumcision: Rite of Passage Or Violation of Rights?” (28 February 2004)
<<http://www.sistahspace.com/nommo/fgm10.html>>.

sexual pleasure and prevent the woman from being unfaithful.²⁹

It is especially common among Africans, Asians, and Muslims. In some countries in Africa almost one hundred percent of the women have had their genitalia altered. It is usually done between the between three years old and puberty depending on the culture. “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that ... 168,000 girls and women living in the United States in 1990 either had or may have been at risk for FGM ... An estimated 48,000 of these were under 18 years of age, and about three-fourths of these girls were born in the in the United States.”³⁰ It is believed that forty-five percent of these women live in New York City, Washington DC, Los Angeles-Long Beach, Houston, Chicago, Philadelphia (including surrounding new Jersey suburbs), Atlanta, Oakland, Newark, Dallas, and Boston.³¹

“Long-term complications include sexual frigidity, genital malformation, delayed menarche, chronic pelvic complications, recurrent urinary retention and infection, and an entire range of obstetric complications.”³² The psychological consequences of FGM are not well documented, but stem from trauma, loss of trust in caregivers, and sexual dysfunction due to painful intercourse and reduced sensitivity. When the procedure was done to enhance male sexual pleasure, the girl may feel like fulfilling men’s sexual desires is all she is good for, and it is her lot in life. Regardless of why it was done, the woman will likely seek to find her sense of worth in her sexuality.

Satanic Ritual Abuse

²⁹ “What is female genital mutilation?” (28 February 2004)
<<http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/intcam/femgen/fgml.htm#a3>>.

³⁰ Carmen Retlaff, “Female Genital Mutilation: Not Just "Over There" (28 February 2004)
<<http://www.fgm.org/Retzlaff.html>>.

³¹ Retlaff

³² Marianne Sarkis, *Female Genital Cutting (FGC): An Introduction* (28 February 2004)
<<http://www.fgmnetwork.org/intro/fgmintro.html>>.

Ritual abuse is usually the most severe and extreme type of abuse. It is purposely designed to bring the maximum amount of trauma and anguish to the victim. The crimes are so heinous that most people reject the possibility that what the victim is recounting is possible. Acts like torture, electric shock, drugging, being forced to eat human excrement, killing of animals, and the killing of babies are repeatedly reported. In the case of Satanic Ritual Abuse, the children are often programmed to develop a complex form of Dissociative Identity Disorder to insure that the occult programmer will be able to control the victim throughout her life. Care should be taken when counseling with a SRA victim, because often one of the victim's personalities is programmed to report what goes on in counseling to her programmer. If the counselor is getting too close to cult secrets, the woman may be beaten or killed.³³ "As a result of the trauma, these are people often afflicted with things like severe paranoia, schizophrenia, multiple personalities. They are people almost off the scales in terms of addictions/compulsions, depression, [and] self-mutilating behavior..."³⁴ There are also many high functioning survivors of Satanic Ritual Abuse. They hold highly respected positions at work and in their communities. Most have no idea that they were even abused but wonder why they have so many struggles in their lives. Counseling someone who has been ritually abused is usually very complex and difficult. It is a challenge that should generally be left to experienced counselors.

Duration of Abuse

An isolated incident of abuse will not usually have severe long-term effects, but it

³³ "Hypnosis in MPD: Ritual Abuse," delivered at the Fourth Annual Eastern Regional Conference on Abuse and Multiple Personality, (25 June 1992, Alexandria, Virginia. 18 November 2004) <<http://agenturus.i8.com/hammond%20on%20Greenbaum.htm>>.

³⁴ Daniel Ryder *Cover-up of the Century: Satanic Ritual Crime and Conspiracy*. (14 November 2003) <www.care1.org/articles/a09rituasalbuse.htm>.

will cause fear, insecurity and perhaps a questioning of God's ability to protect. When a child has been abused once, it is far more likely that she will be abused again, often multiple times, especially if the victim knows the abuser. In one study seventy-eight percent of abused women had been abused two or more times.³⁵ Some people feel that this is due to a victim mentality that the child develops. She forms thinking patterns and behaviors that are characteristic of someone who has been abused. Some of the indicators that are easy to detect are shyness, fear and nervousness around men, and sadness. Predators are experts at picking up on these hints. They know that if a child has been abused before, she will be an easier victim. She is more likely to cooperate and less likely to tell.

Sometimes the counselor may find a woman's life story hard to believe because of her accounts of multiple abuses. It is difficult to face the reality that one person can be the target of so much evil. The counselor should also be aware that some victims might share about one abuse incident at a time, often starting with the mildest event. This is possibly an attempt to see how the counselor will respond and a fear that if she told the whole story, the counselor would not believe her. She also may begin to recall more abuse as she is dealing with the abuse she remembers.

The more a child is abused, the more long-term problems she is likely to have. If the victim has been abused over a long period of time she will likely have trouble with irrational thinking, dissociation, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as well as a myriad of other problems.

Shame, Fear, and Rejection

³⁵ Trent Petrie, Margie Tripp, "Sexual Abuse and Eating Disorders: A Test of a Conceptual Model" *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* (January 2001, 25 August 2003)
<http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m2294/2001_Jan/77384284/p7/article.jhtml?term=eating+disorders>.

Jennifer was seven years old when her father started coming into her room at night while her mother was at work. She couldn't understand why her daddy was doing those things to her, and she didn't know what to do about it. She had hinted to her mother about what was happening, but her mother didn't notice. She couldn't notice; it would have cost her too much.

Jennifer didn't have anyone to turn to for comfort and support, so instead she turned her focus to food. Eating became an obsession for her. Sometimes her mother would find her hiding in a closet, eating bags of junk food.

Jennifer's father stopped abusing her at the age of twelve, when she reached puberty but her emotional turmoil and obsessive eating continued. By the time she was twenty-four years old, she weighed nearly 600 pounds. Her weight problem was so serious that her doctors told her that she would die in less than a year if she did not lose weight.

She had an operation on her stomach that prevented her from eating as much. Within two years she weighed less than 175 pounds. She had quickly gone from being seriously overweight to being a beautiful young woman. Now that she was attractive, she also became popular. She began to hang out with the fast crowd instead of her friends from church that had accepted her when she was overweight. It was not long before she embraced the immoral lifestyle of her new friends. Drugs, parties, and sleeping around became her new coping mechanism.

This brings up a question. Which was God more concerned about, her weight problem or her immoral lifestyle. Most people would see her gluttony as the lesser of the two problems. Actually, God is not nearly as concerned with either of the two as He is

with her failure to turn to Him for comfort. She was trying to find comfort and security apart from God. In John 8:11 when the woman taken in adultery was brought to Jesus, He did not make an issue of her surface problem. He was satisfied that she had turned to Him for mercy. Then He admonished her to change her ways, “Go and sin no more.”

Jennifer’s story illustrates an important counseling principle. Jennifer was treated for her surface problem but the real issue, her effort to get her needs met outside of God, was not confessed and solved. Therefore, more surface problems were inevitable when she was no longer able to get comfort and distraction from eating. When the root problem has been dealt with, the surface problems rarely go away by themselves but they are usually much easier to solve. Habit patterns are hard to break. Sinning is much easier than fighting the flesh.

Sexual abuse causes a crisis in the child’s life. The natural response for a child is to try to protect herself from the hurt and to try to prevent the trauma from happening again. In doing this she takes the duty to protect upon herself, instead of allowing God to be her protector. This trying to protect herself in ways that God has not chosen for her is the core of many of the long-term problems of child abuse. In this section we will be identifying and defining surface problems, tracing them back to their root causes, and looking at Biblical ways to overcome them. In most cases addictive, compulsive, and panic disorders come from three roots, shame, fear, and rejection. All three of these root causes can be traced back to the failure to trust God for His protection and His sovereign choices.

Shame

Shame is almost always one of the immediate results of sexual abuse. The story of

Tamar being raped by her brother Amnon gives a picture of the devastating affect of abuse. Tamar said, “And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?... and Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colors that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying... So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom’s house.”³⁶

Feelings of shame can be an open door for the enemy to torment the victim with thoughts that she was responsible for bringing the abuse upon herself. Counseling resources stress the need to assure the victim that the abuse was not her fault. Almost everyone who has been abused will feel like she is somehow to blame. This may be because the abuser told her it was her fault, saying things like, “If you didn’t dress so seductively, I wouldn’t do this,” or “You are becoming a beautiful woman.”³⁷ Often when a child does work up the courage to tell her mother about the abuse, she finds no comfort or help, for the mother, not wanting to put the blame on her husband, frequently makes comments about how the child probably led on her abuser.

Why Children Don’t Tell

“Ninety percent of sexual abuse victims never tell.”³⁸ But why? The natural instinct in dealing with sin is to hide it; even if the child did not sin willfully, she has been sinned against. Keeping what happened a secret is one of the primary ways the enemy holds the victim in bondage.³⁹ The enemy begins to plant fears and misconceptions in the child’s life that can lead to a whole gamut of problems, from

³⁶ II Samuel 13:13a, 19; 20b

³⁷ In this case the child may blame herself for her own sexual development and harbor deep shame for her body.

³⁸ Forward, Susan. *Innocence and Betrayal Overcoming the Legacy of Sexual Abuse*, (25 July 2003) <www.allaboutcounseling.com/sexual_abuse.htm#sa5>.

³⁹ John 3:19-20

fibromyalgia to suicide. These will be discussed later in this text.

One of the biggest reasons why children don't tell is that the abuser intimidates them. This can be done in a myriad of ways. Some of the most common are telling her that he will hurt or kill her mommy if she tells, or telling her that if her mother found out, she would be very angry. It also is common for the abuser to threaten to hurt or kill the child herself.

Each of these things creates a tremendous burden of responsibility for a child, whether it is a feeling that she must protect her mother or that she must keep her father out of prison. It is important to note that there is usually some truth in the threats. A man who tends to display violence will threaten violence to keep the child quiet; if the child has an unstable mother, the perpetrator may use that to his advantage. The more compliant the child is, the more negative effects she will likely experience from the threats.

If the girl has an emotional attachment to the abuser, he may tell her that if she tells anyone, then they will put him in jail. He may also convince her that they have a special relationship, and others wouldn't understand. This is a form of what is referred to as Stockholm Syndrome.

In 1973 four people were held hostage in a bank vault in Stockholm, Sweden. When they were rescued five and a half days later the captives had developed emotional attachments to their captor. This behavior has been seen repeatedly in victim / perpetrator relationships. It begins when the victim starts to identify with the perpetrator. This is usually initiated as a defensive mechanism, a desire to make what is happening less offensive. She tries to see things from the perpetrator's perspective, making excuses for

him. Eventually she may become not only cooperative but also supportive in an effort to win the perpetrator's favor.⁴⁰

A child may not tell anyone about the abuse, because she is ashamed of what was done to her. Often a child cannot even imagine anyone else knowing what atrocities she went through, let alone trying to recount them. In a study of 116 confirmed cases of child abuse seventy-nine percent of the children either denied the abuse or did not want to admit it.⁴¹

Children are usually taught that the kinds of words and topics they would need in order to express what happened are bad. Many children fear that they will not be believed; often, they are not. The child is even less likely to be believed if the abuser was a woman. One study found that seventy-eight percent of those who were abused by a female could not find anyone willing to help or believe them.⁴²

Most children who are not believed by the non-offending parent will not try to tell anyone else. Often the non-offending parent does know about the abuse, or at least should know about it. This is called a denial of external reality. The failure of the non-offending parent to protect the child can be as devastating as the abuse; it may even be necessary to resolve rejection issues regarding the non-abusing parent first. The child may also minimize the abuse, telling herself that it is not that bad, or she may believe that sexual abuse is a normal thing, especially if she has friends who have also been abused. Others like the physical sensations the abuse brings. Many children have been taught that what is

⁴⁰ Charles T. Brusca "The Stockholm Syndrome," *The Peace Encyclopedia* (25 October 2003) <<http://www.yahoodi.com/peace/stockholm.html>>.

⁴¹ Teena Sorensen, Barbra Snow. "How children tell: The process of disclosure in child sexual abuse." *Child Welfare League of America*, (Vol. 70 No. 1 January/February 1991. 2 March 2004) <<http://www.medicineau.net.au/clinical/psychiatry/disclosing.html>>.

⁴² Elliot 11

happening is normal.

The child may not remember the abuse due to disassociation or repressed memory. “Once abuse becomes a pattern, victims usually know when it is coming, and they use tricks to persuade themselves that it isn't happening or that it isn't that bad.”⁴³ Sometimes a child lives in two different worlds, a day world and a night world. During the day she may not even be aware that the abusive night world exists.

Betrayal Trauma is a term Dr. Jennifer Freyd coined. She uses it to describe “a child who depends on a caregiver for basic survival. Withdrawing may actually be at odds with ultimate survival goals, particularly when the caregiver responds to withdrawal by further reducing care giving or increasing violence. In such cases, the child's survival would be better ensured by being blind to the betrayal and isolating the knowledge of the event, thus remaining engaged with the caregiver.”⁴⁴

True vs. False Guilt

If the victim has been assured that it was not her fault, but you still sense that she has a hesitancy to believe this, it may be wise to probe more deeply to see whether her conscience is convicting her or the enemy bringing false guilt. It is important to take this route for two reasons. First, if she feels like she is truly guilty, but the counselor insists that it was not her fault, she will begin to assume that the counselor does not understand her, and she will not trust the counselor with her deep and difficult issues. Secondly, if she did do something wrong that led to the abuse, or if she responded to the abuse in a

⁴³ Carolyn Simpson, Simpson, Dwain. *Coping With Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 1997. p. 24

⁴⁴ Freyd, Jennifer J. “What is a Betrayal Trauma? What is Betrayal Trauma Theory?” (1 April 2003) <<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/~jjf/defineBT.html>>.

wrong way, there is valid guilt that needs to be dealt with so she can continue to heal.⁴⁵ It is vital that the counselor be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's timing in pointing out areas where she needs to repent. She does not need a guilt trip; the enemy is already bombarding her with accusations and guilt. Most women just need to know how to make things right with God.⁴⁶ This will require compassion and probably a lot of time and patience.

If she did do something to encourage the abuse, then she has a true and valid guilt that needs to be confessed to the Lord. What she did is still sin, even if it is easy to understand why she did it. With so many parents focusing on their careers or their own problems, many children are lonely and starved for affection. For some children the only physical contact they receive is while they are being abused. Many of these children allow the abuse to continue and may even encourage it so they can get this basic desire met to some extent.

A young woman who was "teased" about her maturing body by her brothers, uncle, and father recalled feeling a sense of power, dominance, and attractiveness when they commented on her shapely form. She had never been valued for any of her academic or social success, but when she was fourteen she began to be the center of male discussion in her family. It dawned on her that she had something that men, including her male relatives, wanted and valued. Her hungry soul soaked up the attention, though she felt embarrassed and cheap.⁴⁷

If a starving street urchin steals an apple we can sympathize with him. So does

⁴⁵ Most abuse victims do not respond in a Godly way to their abuse to some degree.

⁴⁶ I John 1:9

⁴⁷ Dan B. Allender, *The Wounded Heart*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress 1990 p. 129.

God. Proverbs 6:30 says, “*Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;*” but God still requires confession and repentance. The sinful means of fulfilling the God-given desire must be brought to the light of God’s Word. It must be confessed and God’s forgiveness must be received.

Failing to scream or cry out for help can cause guilt. One girl wanted to scream for help as her brother was raping her, but she was so ashamed of what he was doing, that she didn’t want anyone to find out. Later in her life, she felt tremendous guilt when she learned of God’s direction to cry out in Deuteronomy 22, even though she was not aware of the passage when she was raped. She also felt guilt as an adult when she realized that her brother was possibly abusing his own children.

Some other valid causes for guilt are that the girl was in a place she should not have been, she may have been wearing seductive clothing, she may have been flirting with the abuser, or she may have gone some place with him when she knew she shouldn’t have. Like the story above, many adults feel very guilty for not telling what happened when they were children, especially when they realize that the perpetrator could still be abusing other children.

The enemy will use any guilt, whether it is true or false, to torment the victim with lies. He bombards her with thoughts like “I deserve to be punished,” “I need someone or something to be secure,” and “I am a failure.”^{48 49} See the appendix for a list of lies the enemy uses to put victims in bondage. Sometimes the woman needs to ask God to forgive her for her part in the immoral act even though she did not participate

⁴⁸ Regier, John. *Biblical Concepts Counseling Workbook*. Colorado Springs: Biblical Concepts in Counseling (1999) 116.

⁴⁹ *Advanced Biblical Counseling Course 2* (Sioux City: The International Center for Biblical Counseling) 154

willingly. The act itself is an offense to God. It might be explained to her in this way, “If you accidentally knocked over someone’s drink you would say you would apologize.” The victim may find it healing and freeing to ask God to forgive her in much the same way.

It is important for the victim to understand and internalize that she is “solely responsible before God for her behavior, responses, and choices.”⁵⁰ But God is eager to forgive and cleanse her, as I John 1:9 says. Many women have testified of the freedom that comes from bringing what happened to the light and asking God’s forgiveness for their part in what happened.⁵¹

The counselor should also explain to the victim that while there are things that she needs to get right with God, He holds her abuser guilty and without excuse. “But whoso 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.”⁵²

Addictions

The lies that the enemy encourages in the victim’s mind lead to shame and fear. While it is true that shameful things were done to her, she needs to see herself as cleansed and accepted by God. If an abuse victim is not able to rest in the Lord and His cleansing and protection, then she will have a need to medicate the pain that she feels.⁵³ Few young victims have the spiritual maturity to cast their cares on the Lord and allow Him to heal

⁵⁰ Nancy Leigh DeMoss, *Lies Women Believe: And the Truth that Sets Them Free*. (Chicago: Moody Press 2002.) 200

⁵¹ Psalm 51:1-12

⁵² Matthew 18:6

⁵³ Psalm 84:11

them.⁵⁴ Instead, they unconsciously turn to addictive, self-destructive behaviors to control their pain.⁵⁵

Addictions come from two motives; the search for excitement and the desire to reduce tension.⁵⁶ For the abused woman, both motives are an attempt to block out pain. It is vital for the woman to receive healing for her wounded past, or she will break one addiction and move right into another. Whatever she is looking to in order to medicate her pain, she is looking to as an idol. People can become slaves to just about anything.⁵⁷ Addiction is giving something the place that belongs to God.⁵⁸ If it gives comfort but is not given by God, then it is an idol. The abused individual needs to acknowledge this and repent of in order to begin to break the addiction. She must come to the place where she no longer wants to find comfort in the addiction but instead chooses to find her comfort in God.⁵⁹

Terri was molested for the first time when she was five years old by her “daddy,” Paul. Terri has had drug and alcohol problems for most of her adolescent and adult life. It was only when Terri’s addiction became so bad that the state took away her three children, alleging neglect, that she began to address her drug and alcohol addiction. Terri has been clean and sober for over three years now. She has also managed to keep her weight

⁵⁴ 1 Peter 5:7

⁵⁵ “No one who abides in Him [who lives and remains in communion with and in obedience to Him – deliberately, knowingly, and habitually] commits (practices) sin. No one who [habitually] sins has either seen or known Him [recognized, perceived, or understood Him, or has had an experiential acquaintance with Him]. 1 John 3:6 Amp.

⁵⁶ Archibald Hart “Addiction Triggers” *Troubledwith.com* (22 August 2002)

<http://www.troubledwith.com/Web/groups/public//@fotf_troubledwith/documents/articles/twi_013131.cfm?channel=Abuse%20and%20Addiction&topic=Eating%20Disorders§ion=Background%20Info>.

⁵⁷ Mark Jacobson, Lecture on Eating Disorders at the International Center for Biblical Counseling, Course 2. Indianapolis July 2003

⁵⁸ Jeffery Pokone Lecture on Dealing with Addictions at the International Center for Biblical Counseling, Course 2. (July 2003.)

⁵⁹ Pokone

at a stable level. Terri's weight has always increased considerably every time she attempted to refrain from using drugs and alcohol. Now that she has become clean and sober and has her weight under control, Terri has begun to get involved in a series of very short-lived relationships with men. Each relationship promised to be the "one thing" that would make Terri's life complete. Each relationship was also exploitative and abusive.⁶⁰

This section will look at several addictive behaviors. It is important to remember that these behaviors are not really the issues. They are merely thermometers to indicate how the counselee is doing in her relationship with the Lord. Some addictive problems clear up as soon as the core issues have been dealt with. Usually, however breaking the addictive cycle is a long but worthwhile fight. As Dr. Neil Anderson said, "Winning the battle ... is often two steps forward and one back. Then it is five steps forward and one back, until there are so many positive steps forward that the 'one back' is a fading memory."⁶¹ One of the enemy's favorite deceptions is to get the abused woman to believe that there will never be an end to the battle and she will eventually fall anyway, so there is no use in fighting. She needs to remember that "[she] may despair in asking God to forgive when [she] falls again and again, but He never despairs in forgiving."⁶² ⁶³ It is also important to realize that when someone is struggling with an addiction, especially a

⁶⁰ Sandra Knauer, *Sexual Addiction and Sexual Codependency Recovering from Sexual Abuse, Addictions, and Compulsive behaviors*, (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press 2002) 247

⁶¹ Anderson, Neil. *Released From Bondage*, Here's Life Pub. (1991).

⁶² Anderson, *Released*

⁶³ 1 John 1:9

moral addiction, the enemy will try to get her to question her salvation.⁶⁴ She will think thoughts like, “If I were a true believer I wouldn’t do things like this.” He may even twist Scriptures like the ones in first John to make her think that she is not a Christian, because she is having an ongoing struggle with sin.⁶⁵

Self-Mutilation

The first addictive behavior we will consider is self-mutilation. It is believed that at least two million people in the United States self-mutilate.⁶⁶ One survey found that 37.7% of abused women practiced some form of self-mutilation and it was almost always accompanied by suicidal thoughts.⁶⁷ It is done in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. It encompasses what might be considered more benign behaviors like incessantly picking at scabs to make them bleed and gnawing on the inside of her cheek to Munchausens Syndrome, where she purposely injures herself so she can get comfort and attention in a hospital. The most common types of self-injury are cutting, burning, biting one’s self, scratching, pulling out hair, and head banging.⁶⁸ Most women who resort to injuring themselves use more than one type of self-mutilation.⁶⁹

Almost all self-injury is done in secret. For some, having someone else find out about their self-injuring would be worse than having them find out about the abuse. Many feel that they would be considered crazy and would be rejected. Generally a self-

⁶⁴ Marnie C. Ferree, “The Anguish of Sexual Addiction,” (9 September 2003) <<http://www.pureintimacy.org>>.

⁶⁵ 1 John 2:4; 3:6-10; 4:4; 5:4,19

⁶⁶ Alicia Clarke, *Coping With Self-mutilation : A Helping Book for Teens Who Hurt Themselves*. (New York: Rosen Pub. 1999) 5.

⁶⁷ An anonymous Internet survey of 114 abused women. Participants filled out a questionnaire on a sexual abuse counseling website. The raw data can be found at www.myjourney.homestead.com/surveystats.html

⁶⁸ Gerrilyn Smith, Dee Cox, and Jacqui Sarsdjian *WOMEN AND SELF-HARM: Understanding, Coping, and Healing from Self-Mutilation*. (New York, NY: Routledge 1999) 8.

⁶⁹ Smith 11

mutilator will try to keep her secret from her counselor as well, fearing that her coping tool might be taken away from her.

Self-mutilation is usually an expression of the turmoil that is going on in a person's heart as a result of shame. Sometimes it is done because the victim feels like she is bad and deserves to experience pain and destruction,⁷⁰ sometimes it is an effort to block out the pain of her past. Most of the time she is not conscious of the pain she is causing her body. She may continue to injure until she does feel pain to assure herself that she is real and alive.⁷¹ It can be a retribution for allowing herself sexual pleasure, or it can be an effort to destroy her hated body parts. "Having an abusive partner can be a method of self-injury—of continuing to be a victim of the violence a woman grew up with, the only kind of 'love' her body knows."⁷² "Because sexual abuse can arouse a child even while causing pain, sexual arousal and pain can become intertwined and remain so in adulthood."⁷³ "A child who is sexually abused usually does not have the [ability] to feel, let alone speak of the pain they are experiencing. Self-injury is a way of communicating the pain."⁷⁴

Here are some explanations from self-abusive women for why they wanted to hurt themselves: "After everything happened, I've never felt like I've been cleansed of it. It's still on me; it's still there . . . I know that's why I cut. It's almost like I'm trying to cleanse my body of it, trying to get rid of it."⁷⁵ Another wrote, "I was babysitting and saw some tablets in a cupboard. I took about 12 of them without knowing what they were. I just

⁷⁰ Jane Wegscheider, *Women Living With Self-injury*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999) 28

⁷¹ Wegscheider 18.

⁷² Wegscheider 42.

⁷³ Wegscheider 35.

⁷⁴ *The Relationship Between Sexual Abuse, Eating Disorders, and Self-Injury*, (13 November 2003)

<http://www.geocities.com/kristen24k2000/SA_SI_ED.html>.

⁷⁵ Wegscheider 13.

wanted to hurt my insides... even though the abuse had stopped. I became obsessed with destroying my insides because they were contaminated by HIM.”⁷⁶

It is important for the counselor to understand the hormonal factors of the self-harm addiction as well. Endogenous opioids are neurochemicals that bring feelings of relaxation and peace. They are released in stressful and painful situations. Jane Hyman, in her book, *Women Living With Self-injury*, explains some of the hormonal dynamics of self-mutilation:

We can become addicted to our own endogenous opioids and therefore need more to be released in order to bring about a feeling of calm. Ways may have to be found of inducing the body to release more and one way of doing this is by self-harming. After self-harm there can be a feeling of release, calm and pleasure. Also as endogenous opioids are natural painkillers, this may explain why some women say they feel no pain during, and for some time after, they have hurt themselves. In addition when someone is subjected to high levels of stress, they have lowered levels of the neurotransmitter, serotonin. Low levels of serotonin are linked with various kinds of impulsive behavior and lack of constraint, so it becomes difficult to resist the urge to self-harm.⁷⁷

The enemy of our souls is certainly eager to encourage women to harm their bodies, for two reasons. He wants to see the beautiful body the Creator chose for the woman marred and destroyed. He also wants to hold her in bondage and turmoil. If she is addicted to cutting and thinks it helps, then she will not be so quick to reach out for help

⁷⁶ *Surviving to Thriving* (27 February, 2004) <<http://www.survivingtothriving.org/csa1>>.

⁷⁷ Wegscheider 43

from God. The act of self-harm brings secrecy, darkness, and lies. It makes the woman feel like she is strange and must not let anyone know who she is.

The self-abuser needs to see the lies of the enemy about what the abuse does for her. She needs to embrace the truth that God loves her and sees her body as pure and clean. She needs to realize that her body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It is God's beautiful creation; it is to be treasured and cared for. She needs to confess the sin of hating and abusing what God loves and ask God to change the way she feels about her body. She also needs to confess the sin of trying to solve her problems without God.

Eating Disorders

Karen grew up in a dysfunctional family. She does not remember much about her father. She only vaguely remembers his physical and sexual abuse. He left for the last time when she was about four years old.

Because Karen's father left, her mother had a very hard time making ends meet. She started leaving Karen home alone while she went to work, even before Karen was in kindergarten. Her mother also stopped hugging and holding Karen after her father left. This made Karen a very lonely little girl. Her mother would often get angry with her and spank her excessively in anger. Karen loved her mother but was afraid of her. Her mother did not seem to see Karen's need to be loved. Sometimes when Karen would cry, her mother would tell her that she was being a baby, that only weaklings cried when they were not physically injured. Karen learned to keep her feelings to herself.

When she was eight years old, Karen's mother remarried. For a while her new father was kind to her. She was so starved for love that she followed him around everywhere he went. Soon though, he started abusing her. She told her mother, but her

mother did not stop the abuse. Once when her stepfather was abusing her, he told Karen that the abuse was her fault, because of the way she looked and dressed.

From then on she made sure that she wore baggy, unattractive clothes; she was afraid to look nice. She also began to gain weight. For the next twenty years she stayed about a comfortable thirty pounds overweight. Food became her occupation and her comfort. It kept her busy when she was alone. It would be several years before she would realize that she was addicted to food.

Karen's mother would sometimes nag her about how much food she ate, but that only made Karen more angry and insecure. Her mother was also quite a bit overweight. Karen felt like her mother had a double standard. Sometimes Karen would make half-hearted attempts to go on a diet or start exercising. She found it relatively easy to lose weight, but she never stuck with the diets. She thought it was because she enjoyed eating more than she cared about how she looked.

When Karen grew up she still ate far more than she should. At her work a corporate diet program was begun. She was not particularly interested in losing weight, but she had a friend who wanted to do the program with her, so she agreed to participate. She followed the instructions they were given. At the end of the first week most people had lost two or three pounds, but when Karen weighed herself she was stunned to discover that she had lost eighteen pounds! She immediately went into an internal panic. The previous few days people had been telling her how good she was looking and that it looked like she had lost some weight, but she just shrugged it off. All of a sudden she realized that she had lost the protection from abuse that she had felt she had because she was overweight and unattractive. She never realized before that her weight had given her

such a sense of security and fortification.

Karen's food addiction did two things for her. Her weight problem made her feel like she was unattractive and, therefore, less vulnerable to men. It gave her a false sense of control. Eating was also a distraction from her problems, it medicated the pain she feared. Others have eating disorders, because they feel like it is one thing they can control. Sexual abuse tends to make a woman very conscious of her body and very ashamed of it. Sometimes eating disorders, especially anorexia are an attempt by the victim to prevent anything that reminds her that she is a woman, including body development and menses.

Currently, overeating is the most common eating disorder, 43% of the women in a survey of abused women said that they had a problem with overeating.⁷⁸ Bulimia is swiftly gaining ground, especially on college campuses.⁷⁹ 15.8% of the women in the survey identified themselves as being bulimic. Bulimics tend to put up a front. They want to look like they have everything under control.⁸⁰ The double life they live brings guilt, stress, and disgust for themselves. Occasionally anorexia develops as a result of abuse, but it is less common than overeating and bulimia. 12.3% of the women who responded to the survey said that they were anorexic.

Many eating disorders are a result of fear. The enemy uses a myriad of different avenues to provoke them; fear of choking, fear of being attractive, and sometimes a fear of losing control. Rejection is a fear that almost everyone who has been abused struggles with. For those who overeat or have bulimia, "food is

⁷⁸ An anonymous Internet survey of 114 abused women. Participants filled out a questionnaire on a sexual abuse counseling website. The raw data can be found at www.myjourney.homestead.com/surveystats.html

⁷⁹ "Statistics: How many people have eating disorders?" *Anred* (25 August 2003) <<http://www.anred.com/stats.html>>.

⁸⁰ Statistics

the one thing that is always there for them. Food does not yell at them, hurt them and will never leave them. It becomes the one thing in their life that brings them comfort and security.”⁸¹

The object of the fear is not really that important. Fears are distracters from the enemy. The key that brings healing from fear is for the victim to allow the Lord to be her shield, instead of trying to protect herself.⁸² As she meditates on the truth of God’s power, love, and protection for her, the fears will subside. Then the eating disorders become a habit to be overcome, but she will no longer have a drive supporting them. Often the urge to binge can be overcome if she is able to express her heart to other people.⁸³ But eventually, she also needs to learn to tell the Lord about the things that are on her heart.⁸⁴

Drugs and Alcohol

Drugs and alcohol are also common escapes for blocking out rejection, shame, and fear. Women who were sexually abused as children are three to ten times as likely to be addicted to drugs depending on what studies are considered.^{85 86} They are twice as likely to be alcoholic.⁸⁷ For the abused woman, drugs and alcohol are an attempt to blur the pain and rejection of her past, which have followed her into the future.

⁸¹ Colleen Thompson, ABUSE AND EATING DISORDERS (9 December 2002. 10 August 2003) <<http://www.mirror-mirror.org/physex.htm>>.

⁸² Psalm 84:11

⁸³ Anderson, Carol “Thirsting for Wholeness.” (Focus on the Family Radio Broadcast 11 August 2003).

⁸⁴ 1 Peter 5:7

⁸⁵ Patrick Zickler, “Childhood Sex Abuse Increases Risk for Drug Dependence in Adult Women.” *National Institute on Drug Abuse* Vol. 17, No. 1 (April 2002. 29 August 2003) <http://www.nida.nih.gov/NIDA_Notes/NNVol17N1/Childhood.html>.

⁸⁶ John N. Briere, Diana M. Elliott “Immediate and Long-Term Impacts of Child Sexual Abuse.” *The Future of Children* (2 September 2003)

<http://www.futureofchildren.org/information2826/information_show.htm?doc_id=74240>.

⁸⁷ Joyesha Chesnick, “Hidden crimes.” *Tucson Citizen* (14 October 2002. 30 August 2003)

<http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/local/archive/02/molest/10_14_02molest.html>.

Over time the extreme emotions involved in repeated sexual abuse can cause damage to the cerebellar vermis, a part of the brain that regulates dopamine a hormone involved in addictions. The emotions resulting from the abuse cause a decreased blood flow to this region of the brain. The cerebellar vermis coordinates emotional behavior and is strongly affected by alcohol, cocaine, and other drugs, and may help regulate dopamine, a neurotransmitter critically involved in addiction.⁸⁸ Because of this, someone with damage to the cerebellar vermis will likely experience stronger addictions and therefore have a harder time breaking them.⁸⁹

Fantasy

Many sexual abuse victims live in a fantasy world so they can avoid facing reality. Some escape by imagining that they have loving parents or by creating a make-believe world of adventure. Other victims are in bondage to sexual fantasies, doing mentally what they would not dare to do physically.⁹⁰ One woman frankly explains her sexual fantasies, "...the best way is to pretend I'm in bondage. It's being done to me, and I can't help it. So it's O.K. for me to feel good about it."⁹¹ She is saying that she feels guilty about enjoying sex. Instead of correcting her perceptions, she creates a situation in her mind in which "*it* is O.K."

Some victims' fantasies involve spirit guides, demons who disguise themselves as being friendly companions. If the woman was ritually abused it is likely that she was

⁸⁸ "Study Reveals how Child Abuse can lead to Substance Abuse" (McLean Hospital Belmont, MA 4 January 2002. 30 August 2003)

<http://www.mcleanhospital.org/PublicAffairs/20020104_abuseandaddiction.htm>.

⁸⁹ "Researchers Find Clues Linking Child Abuse to Addiction." *Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Weekly* (14(2) Manisses Communications Group, Inc 2002. 30 August 2003)

<<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/421046>>.

⁹⁰ Beth Moore, *When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman 2002) 30

⁹¹ Lenore Terr, *Unchained Memories: True Stories of Traumatic Memories, Lost and Found*. (New York: Basic Books 1995) 149.

assigned a spiritual “guardian” or “parent.” “These spiritual relationships must be specifically renounced along with any blood pacts uniting [her] to anyone but God.”⁹²

Women have been shocked when they realize that they were having sexual relations with a demon in their fantasies. Sometimes, helping a woman to see her fantasies the way God sees them is enough to help her commit to break free of this addiction. Likely, she will need considerable self-control to break the habit of escaping reality. “If [she is] giving in to sexual thoughts, temptations do not seem so strong, but when you determine not to sin, temptation becomes stronger.”⁹³ She will have to frequently remind herself to live in reality. When her mind drifts into unreality, she may find it necessary to exhort herself by saying something such as, “Lord, I choose to live in the world You chose for me.” She needs to understand that living in a fantasy world is rejecting the path that God has chosen for her.

Many people feel that escapes into make-believe are harmless. Fantasy is certainly accepted and encouraged by the secular world, but in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 we are told to bring every thought into the captivity of Christ and in 1 Peter 1:13 we are told to gird up the loins of our mind. We are to keep our thoughts under control. It is no easy task, especially when a habit of dissociating from reality has been developed. For a while it will require significant mental effort.

Taking every thought captive does not mean that intrusive thoughts and fantasies will not come to the mind. The enemy often sends intrusive thoughts and the flesh also has immoral desires. Even Peter was plagued by sin that would not leave him alone for a

⁹² Anderson, Neil T. “Steps to Freedom” *The Bondage Breaker*. (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers 1993) 207.

⁹³ *Introduction to Spiritual Warfare Course 1* (Sioux City: Institute for Biblical Counseling 2002) 111.

time.⁹⁴ Those thoughts need to be rejected instead of nurtured. Someone said, “You can’t keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.” We are to fully live the life God has chosen for us. God wants us to remove everything that is counterfeit.⁹⁵

Facing reality is one of the weapons that help to pull down the strongholds in the victim’s life.⁹⁶ Instead of trying to escape reality, she must choose to turn to Him. Complete healing will never come to a woman who has been sexually abused, until she faces her pain.

Masturbation

Often masturbation, and other types of sexual acting-out, go along with sexual fantasies. Sometimes the woman may even consciously use the memory of the past abuse to stimulate masturbation or other sexual acts.⁹⁷ Some Christian leaders feel that masturbation is an acceptable way of experiencing sexual pleasure without sinning or harming anyone else. On the contrary, instead of helping to “flee youthful lusts,”⁹⁸ masturbation stirs them up. It is sowing to the flesh. Galatians 6:8 says, “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”⁹⁹ Can the person doing these things ask God to watch?¹⁰⁰ In her heart she knows that masturbation is shameful.

“People with sexual addictions tend to isolate themselves. We need each other;

⁹⁴ Romans 7:15-21

⁹⁵ Harry Schaumburg, *False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction*. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992.)

⁹⁶ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

⁹⁷ Allender 132.

⁹⁸ 2 Timothy 2:22

⁹⁹ Galatians 6:7-8

¹⁰⁰ Introduction 115.

we were never designed to survive alone.”¹⁰¹ The abused woman needs to cultivate good healthy relationships, in which her God given need for fellowship can be met.

God designed sexual experiences and feelings for marriage, and the Bible makes it clear that He intends for them to be used only in the context of a marriage relationship. Experiencing sexual pleasure without giving to another is selfishness – the opposite of God’s design.¹⁰²

Promiscuity

Over many years Alicia had been groomed by her father to be his sexual companion... Alicia’s self-esteem was bundled with her sexuality. For years she had been rewarded with love, privileges, and material goods for allowing her father to molest her. Most of the time the sex had been gentle, and to his twisted mind, consensual. Alicia had found sex with her father to be pleasurable and something she may even have initiated once in a while.

By the time Alicia was fourteen she was wearing tight, provocative clothing. She would try to lure every boy or man that walked by. She found sex to be a game and she liked the power it gave her.¹⁰³

“Since the Spirit of Christ now dwells in the temple of the believer’s bodies, getting a Christian engaged in sexual sin is the closest Satan can come to personally assaulting Christ.”¹⁰⁴ The enemy will do everything in his power to ensnare these vulnerable women in immorality. Studies have found that women who were abused as

¹⁰¹ Introduction 112.

¹⁰² Introduction 115.

¹⁰³ Gay Courter, “All the Possibilities” *I Speak For This Child*. (New York: Crown Publishers 1995) 142.

¹⁰⁴ Moore 24.

children are significantly more likely to have a promiscuous lifestyle.¹⁰⁵ As in Alicia's case, promiscuity can be a learned behavior, perhaps the only way a woman knows to receive companionship or attention. It may be because she has believed the lies of the enemy that "she is good for nothing but sex," or that "she is too dirty anyway," instead of the truth that God can make her pure and clean. It allows her to punish herself and act out her feelings of self-hatred.

Immorality can be an attempt to fill the void left by a lack of real love in her childhood. "Most survivors, especially incest survivors, begin to feel the 'emptiness' of the abuse by the time they are in their teens. Instinctively they know that they will not be able to fill the emptiness that they feel without interaction with someone outside of themselves."¹⁰⁶ They see love and sex as synonymous; therefore, they move from one immoral relationship to another, seeking to fill the void that can only be satisfied by God. Psalm 40:12 in the Amplified version describes the hopelessness these women feel: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about; my iniquities have taken such hold on me that I am not able to look up. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart has failed me and forsaken me."

Promiscuity can be a means of control. "Sexual addiction has its very origins in the attempts by survivors to turn the tables and regain the power that sexual abuse has taken from them. When the survivor is the one initiating the sexual overtures and setting the limits of the sexual activity, the survivor feels a sense of control and power. It doesn't

¹⁰⁵ Ainscough, Carolyn Kay Toon *Sex and Sexuality Surviving Childhood Sexual Abuse*. (Cambridge, MA: Fisher Books 2000) 154.

¹⁰⁶ Knauer, Sandra. "Sexual Addiction and Sexual Codependency" *Recovering from Sexual Abuse, Addictions, and Compulsive behaviors*. (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press 2002) 236

take long for the survivor to become addicted to these feelings of control and power.”¹⁰⁷

“Compulsive sexual behavior isn’t just an issue of sex or even of external behavior. It is a by-product of loneliness, pain, and the self-centered demand to be loved and accepted regardless of the consequences.”¹⁰⁸ It is an attempt for a woman to get love when she feels unlovely. The solution – to allow God to fill the emptiness in her heart, to hear from Him that she is accepted, loved and beautiful.¹⁰⁹ “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the LORD, and He will have love, pity, and mercy for him; and to our God, for He will multiply to him His abundant pardon.”¹¹⁰

Sexual Abuse of Others

It is believed that about five percent of abused women go on to abuse children sexually.¹¹¹ Some of these women are mimicking the behavior they learned from their abuser. Their sexual drives have been stirred up since they were children, and they attempt to satisfy those drives by using children. Some of these women abuse little boys, because they feel like they are in control of the situation, and they do not have to fear being taken advantage of. This is often justified with the false ideas that young boys like it, and it is introducing them to their sexuality.

Some women abusers are accomplices with men. They feel powerless to stop their own abuse, so they resign themselves to following their partner’s lead in abusing the child. Many times after a woman’s conscience has been seared in this way, she will begin

¹⁰⁷ Knauer 234.

¹⁰⁸ Schaumburg, Harry W. “Helping A Sexual Offender” *Introduction to Spiritual Warfare Course 1* (Sioux City: International School for Biblical Counseling) 119

¹⁰⁹ Jeremiah 31:3

¹¹⁰ Isaiah 55:7 Amp.

¹¹¹ Sexual

to enjoy the power and control that she feels and will move on to more violent methods of abuse.

Unfortunately, many women abusers vent their hatred, anger, and bitterness on children in the most heinous ways. Unspeakable torture and perversity are meted out on these children in an attempt to satisfy their rage and feelings of worthlessness. It is the convoluted desire to make the child suffer as they did.

In almost every case, these women know that they are very wrong in what they are doing. Such a women need to be brought to the place where they grieve over their sin as David did when Nathan showed him how God viewed his sin.¹¹² They need to follow David's example of repentance in 2 Samuel 12 and in Psalm 51. Then, as hard as it may be, they need to bring their sin to the light in two ways. First by confessing what she they have done, in generalities, not details, to a few people who can keep them accountable. Secondly, they need task those they are accountable to, to pray for them.¹¹³

These women also need to confess to the police what they have done and face any punishment given to them, understanding that it will be far less than what they deserve. Without facing civil responsibility for their crime, they will not be able to clear their consciences and heal. The enemy uses fear and secrecy to keep people in bondage. As abusers, they must come to the place where they allow the Lord to be their protector. If an abuser is not willing to turn herself in, it is the duty of the counselor to turn her in unless she is somehow in a position where she would never be able to abuse again.

Other Abuse

Women who were abused as children are more likely to be physically,

¹¹² 2 Samuel 12:1-14

¹¹³ James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

emotionally, or spiritually abusive to their children than women who have not been abused. They take out upon their children the anger that is seething inside of themselves. These women need to allow the Lord to heal their pain. Once they have embraced their relationship with God, then they will be able to interact with their children in a healthy way.¹¹⁴

There are an endless number of ways for an abused woman to escape from the reality of the pain in her life. The counselor could poke around trying to find each diversion indefinitely, and the counselee can hide some of those diversions indefinitely if they choose. Instead, it is important for the counselor to identify what distracters God is concerned about. The counselor may want to have the victim pray a prayer like this one, “Lord Jesus, what am I doing to medicate my pain, that keeps me from learning to rely wholly on you?” When the Lord is speaking to the counselee about the problems, it eliminates a lot of work for the counselor.

Sexual Dysfunction

Most women who were abused as children experience a level of sexual anxiety. For many women, intimacy in marriage becomes an uncomfortable and sometimes painful duty. They are not able to experience sexual fulfillment because sexual intimacy triggers the memories and feelings of the abuse. Some women experience a psychosomatic pain during intercourse and they become very frustrated when doctors tell them that there is nothing physically wrong. These women need to patiently work through the lies they have believed about their abuse. In time, as they embrace the truth, their discomfort will go away.

¹¹⁴ 1 John 3:2

Fear

I'm afraid I'll lose control. I'm afraid of my father, of God, of what people will think of me. I'm afraid 'it' will catch up with me. I'm afraid my parents will embarrass me. I'm afraid I'll embarrass myself. My heart will stop. I'm afraid I'll throw up in front of everybody, and people will talk about me. I'm afraid I'll jump off the balcony. I'm afraid I'll die. I'm afraid I won't. I'm not good enough for my friends. I'm not good enough for God. I'll be found out. I'm afraid of the shadows on the wall. Someone's right outside my window waiting. I'm afraid of myself. I'm not talented enough. I'm not pretty enough. I'll panic. I'm afraid my parents won't love me anymore. I'm afraid I won't get everything done. I'll choke. I'm inadequate. I'm afraid. I'll go crazy. I'm afraid they'll lock me up and no one will care anymore. They won't like me if they really know me. My heart will be broken. I'm not rich enough. I'm not strong enough. I'm not smart enough. No one [would] ever be able to love me if they really knew me. I'm afraid to be myself. I'm afraid I have no self. I'm afraid I might fail. What if I succeed? What if it doesn't happen? What if it does? Why am I so afraid?¹¹⁵

Fear, the second major root issue that abuse victims deal with, can come in many forms. Some are not easily identified as being related to abuse suffered as a child. The abuse opens a door that allows the enemy to torment in many seemingly unrelated ways. Fear often begins when the abused child feels unprotected. She feels unprotected by the

¹¹⁵ Lucinda Bassett, "Overcome Your Anxiety and Fear" (video), Midwest Center for Stress and Anxiety, Inc., Oak Harbor, Ohio.

one who is abusing, but also she loses her confidence that her protectors are able to shield her, and often she questions, sometimes unconsciously, God's protection. This gives the sense that "it is all up to her." The door is open for the enemy to send all sorts of distortions into her mind to torment her.

Triggers are a common torment to those who have been abused. A trigger is anything that causes the victim distress because it is associated with the abuse. Sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches can all trigger remembrance of the abuse. It may be the smell of the cologne that the abuser was wearing or an object that the victim focused on while the abuse was taking place.

Those triggers bring about flashbacks, the involuntary reexperiencing of part or all of the abuse. Some flashbacks are only momentary feelings but at other times a victim may experience all the sensations that she felt when the abuse was occurring. It will seem to her that the abuse is happening again. One woman explained it this way:

After I was raped, I was surprised to find myself being reminded of the experience constantly. These reminders, which I soon found out were called triggers, were incredibly intrusive. A simple word sometimes can still leave me feeling anxious or sad. When I heard my rapist's very common last name spoken over a loudspeaker, I was brought back into my bedroom, screaming for Bill. Even things were not related to the attack brought on panic attacks. For instance, I woke up late for work one morning and found myself in the midst of a terrifying panic attack. Simply feeling out of control had brought those feelings out in me again.¹¹⁶

Fears, phobias, anxieties, and panic disorders almost always have their origin in

¹¹⁶ Surviving

believing something that is not true. According to Dr. Neil Anderson in his book *Freedom from Fear*, all fears are dependent upon two things: “It (the fear) must be perceived as imminent (present) and potent (powerful).”¹¹⁷ Dr. Anderson uses the example of a snake. Someone who was visiting Arizona for the first time and had a fear of snakes would be terrified if one slithered across her path. To her knowledge it is present and potent. If a herpetologist came across the same snake and immediately recognized that it was a harmless look-alike of the deadly coral snake would not have any fear. The snake is present but not powerful.

If either the immanency or the potency of the feared object is removed, the fear loses its power. When we believe that we are dependent on someone else other than God for a need, we have fear, because there is always the possibility that person may cease to meet the need.¹¹⁸ When the victim develops a Biblical fear of God, along with an understanding of her relationship with Him and His protection for her, the fear loses its power.¹¹⁹

“Phobias are irrational fears that compel us to do irresponsible things or inhibit us from doing what we should.”¹²⁰ They usually have their root in the fear of death, the fear of the enemy, or the victim’s fear of how others will respond to her.¹²¹ There are several phobias the counselor should be alert to in women who have been wounded by sexual abuse. Some of the main fears are fear of being alone, of being vulnerable and unprotected, fear of sex, a fear of men (which can lead to becoming a lesbian), and even

¹¹⁷ Anderson, Neil T. Ritch Miller. *Freedom From Fear*. (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers 1999) 14

¹¹⁸ Anderson, *Freedom* 107.

¹¹⁹ John 14:27; Isaiah 41:9-10; Matthew 6:25-34

¹²⁰ Anderson, *Freedom* 14.

¹²¹ Anderson, *Freedom* 15.

an unhealthy fear of God.

Dr. Neil Anderson in his book *Freedom from Fear*, gives steps to conquer fears. First, the fear must be analyzed by identifying what the victim is afraid of. It also must be determined when she first experienced the fear and the events associated with the fear. Then, the lies behind the fear must be identified. The next step in the healing process is to help the victim identify ways that she has been controlled by fear instead of being controlled by God, how the fear kept her from doing what is right and responsible, constrained her to do what is wrong and irresponsible, and compromised her witness for Christ. She needs to confess these things to God and commit to obey Him.¹²² Finally, she should decide how she will respond the next time fear comes.¹²³ “Fear is like a mirage in the desert. It seems so real until you move toward it, then it disappears into thin air.”¹²⁴

¹²⁵ “Anxiety is different from fear in that it lacks an object or adequate cause.”¹²⁶

¹²⁷ It may be helpful to encourage the victim who struggles with fear or anxiety to make a list of the things that are her responsibility and the things that are God’s responsibility. Then encourage her to ask God’s forgiveness for trying to take responsibilities that belong to Him. It is also a good idea to have her evaluate whether or not what she is fearing will matter for eternity.¹²⁸

Fear generally turns in one of two directions. A woman may develop the more common self-protective, self-sufficient, “I have to take care of and protect myself” mindset and put up walls to protect herself, (a hidden type of fearfulness), or she may

¹²² See the Renouncing of Fear prayer in the appendix.

¹²³ Anderson, *Freedom* 195-196.

¹²⁴ Anderson, *Freedom* 203.

¹²⁵ Proverbs 29:25; Philippians 4:8

¹²⁶ Anderson, *Freedom* 15.

¹²⁷ 1 Peter 5:7

¹²⁸ Anderson, *Freedom* 85.

panic at her own inability to protect herself and go on to some degree to develop some of the disorders we more commonly associate with fear like phobias and panic disorders.

The Tough Girl

The self-sufficient, "I must protect myself" person often develops problems in her life which from a surface glance, would not be seen as a fear problem. Dr. Dan Allener, in his book, *The Wounded Heart*, describes this type of woman's personality:

The Tough Girl is the classic take-charge, task-oriented, no-nonsense ramrod. The hardness is often the result of being controlled by other-centered contempt. She is a woman who lives behind thick, impenetrable walls that keep people from drawing close. Internally, she is above her own feelings, suspicious of others' motives, and arrogant, and angry in her evaluations of others. She views human need as childish and unnecessary. She views her longings as sentimental, sloppy, and weak. She believes emotions are to be conquered and controlled. so that no one can cause her pain again. She is suspicious, critical, arrogant and angry.

Tough Girls can often spot a phony miles away. They are in control. They know how to run their families, invest their money, and run the youth group. The Tough Girl may not "enjoy" fights, but she is willing to go toe to toe in heated combat for the sake of her black-and-white values. The people in a Tough Girl's domain react to her hostile edge, control, and impenetrability by keeping their distance. Often they respect the accomplishments or boldness of her will, but they do not enjoy her presence or essence. She makes a great surgeon, trial lawyer, or prime

minister, but not a desirable friend, spouse, or parent.¹²⁹

In her effort to protect herself, the Tough Girl often becomes controlling. She has the maddening task of controlling everything around her, because she has not learned to allow the Lord to be her protector.¹³⁰ She has not learned that “the peace of God orders our internal world not our external world.”¹³¹ It is important to note that a woman with this mindset will tend to look down on women who show signs of the more obvious fear disorders. She sees this as weakness. Since she despises the weakness in her own life, she reacts to weakness in others. Ironically, in order for her to heal she will need to face the weakness in her own life and allow the Lord to be her protector.

Codependence

One of the problems that can develop as a result of the self-protective mindset is codependency. Codependence is taking care of other people’s problems, so that one does not have time to address her own. “A codependent person is ‘addicted,’ not to a destructive substance, but a destructive pattern of relating to other people, ... Codependency holds a person hostage to other people’s behaviors, moods, or opinions, and the codependent bases his or her worth and action on someone else’s life. It’s a terrible bondage.”¹³²

The following is a selected list of the characteristics of someone who is

¹²⁹ Allender 158.

¹³⁰ For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11

¹³¹ Anderson, Freedom 73.

¹³² Groom, Nancy. *From Bondage to Bonding* The Curse of Codependency (13 September 2003) <<http://www.family.org/married/comm/a0018627.cfm>>.

codependent, from the book, *Codependent No More*:¹³³

- They become excessively worried about, and preoccupied with, a problem or person.
- They may become obsessed with, and controlling of, the people and problems in their environment.
- They may become reactionaries, instead of acting authentically of their own volition.
- They may become emotionally dependent on the people around them.
- They may become caretakers (rescuers, enablers) to the people around them (firmly attaching themselves to other's need for them.)
- They try to control events and people through helplessness, guilt, coercion, threats, advice-giving, manipulation, or domination
- They try to prove they're good enough to be loved

There are two types of codependents. The passive codependent attempts to control by using crying, hurt, and helplessness. The aggressive codependent uses violence, anger, intimidation, and dominance.¹³⁴ Either way the codependent is a manipulator.

The codependent tries to make everything work out right in her own strength. She has believed that if she can just fix everyone else, her problems will go away. Nancy Groom says, "At the heart of codependent living is an arrogant and fear-based refusal to rely solely on God, an unwillingness to rest in His grace, to be satisfied with His provision and to set our hearts on obedience. Codependency is not just unhelpful but dreadfully and crucially wrong."¹³⁵

The codependent needs to face her pain and allow God to control her life. She needs to understand that peace is not a result of people or circumstances, but is the result

¹³³ Beattie, Melody. *Codependent No More*. (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins 1992.) 42-52, 58.

¹³⁴ Beattie 52.

¹³⁵ Groom,

of a trusting relationship with her Heavenly Father. She needs to trust Him to bring healing in the areas that she is afraid to face.¹³⁶

Depression

Depression, a result of feeling like you have lost control, is seen at least temporarily in almost all those who have been wounded by sexual abuse. In a survey done for this paper 65.8% of the abused women who answered the survey felt like they were chronically depressed.¹³⁷ The core of depression is a lack of hope. David gives a good example of what depression feels like in Psalm 13:1-2. "How Long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul? Having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?"

When a person loses hope he stops trying. It is like the elephant at the circus that is only tethered by a thin rope to a small stake in the ground. The elephant lost hope of pulling up that stake when it was a small calf, so it no longer tries. The depressed person sees no hope of improvement, so she resigns herself to despair.

There are many symptoms of depression. Some of the most common are a frequent look of sadness, speaking about themselves and their world in a despairing way, a lack of interest in things that they formerly enjoyed, a loss of appetite or overeating, increased irritability, overreacting, low energy, either trouble sleeping or sleeping too much. Often the symptoms of depression have a synergistic effect. One symptom can lead to another, just as the lack of sleep causes irritability. This can send the depressed person into a downward spiral that is difficult to stop.

¹³⁶ Proverbs 3:5-6

¹³⁷ An anonymous Internet survey of 114 abused women. Participants filled out a questionnaire on a sexual abuse counseling website. The raw data can be found at www.myjourney.homestead.com/surveystats.html

About ten percent of depression has a medical cause. For a woman who has experienced extended trauma, depression can occur from the hormone imbalance that results from large amounts of stress over long periods of time.¹³⁸ ¹³⁹ Depression can also be caused, or exacerbated, by poor nutrition as a result of an eating disorder or the bodies' inability to efficiently handle nutrients as a result of stress.

If there is a nutritional deficiency, just getting the counselee to eat fresh raw vegetables daily may make a significant difference. Carrots, broccoli, and red bell peppers eaten regularly are often helpful in regulating hormone imbalances. Of course, if they are not absorbing the vitamins properly, this will not help much. If the counselee is already health conscious, it is important to see if they have recently gone through any detoxifying or cleansing routine. Sometimes those processes can make the person irritable for a while as they rid themselves of toxins.¹⁴⁰

A feeling of loss or despair also causes depression. In his book, *Finding Hope Again*, Neil Anderson explains the "Crisis Reaction Cycle." After a crisis occurs the first stage in the slope downward is denial. The young woman who was abused tells herself that she must have made it up, that this could never happen in her family. Then she moves to anger. Why me? How could God let this happen to me? As she descends the slope further, she begins to bargain. If God would take the pain away, she would stop committing her pet sin. Finally she hits the bottom, depression. She has the feeling that there is no way out, that things will never get any better. She is stuck in a home with an

¹³⁸ Diamond, Ronald J. M.D., "Psychiatric Presentations of Medical Illness," University of Wisconsin Department of Psychiatry, (2002. 12 December 2003) <www.natcouncilofpsychotherapists.org.uk/article_4_04.htm>.

¹³⁹ Kenneth Copley, Introduction to Spiritual Warfare: Course 1, (Sioux City: International School for Biblical Counseling, 2002) 121.

¹⁴⁰ *Health Start* (2 March 2004) <<http://www.starthealth.homestead.com/3.html>>.

abusive father and will never get out. She gets caught in the trap of self-pity. If she is not careful, she will go into resignation and get comfortable with her depression.¹⁴¹

According to Dr. Ken Copley, the former dean of the International School for Biblical Counseling, "Most people in depression want to stay there. It is comfortable for them. They like the attention they get from being depressed."¹⁴²

If she is to get out of this pit, the victim must accept what happened in her life and forgive all those involved. It may sound harsh, but Dr. Copley is right when he says, "Depression is rebellion against the will of God. It is an affront to the sovereignty of God."¹⁴³ Of course, the counselor should not directly tell that to the counselee. The counselee needs to be brought to a hope in God. This leads to a new identity and new growth in character.

Sin is another cause of depression that must be considered. Sin that is harbored in a person's life opens the door to the enemy. It gives him ground to send out tormentors, one of which is depression. Warren Wiersbe, in his book, *What To Wear to the War*, said:

It is important to distinguish between Satan's accusations and God's convictions. God convicts us in love; Satan accuses us in hatred. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to convince us. Satan uses feelings and memories to accuse us. When God convicts us, it draws us closer to Him; but when Satan accuses us, it pulls us away from the Lord. God's conviction leads to discipline and devotion. Satan's accusations lead to depression and discouragement. When God convicts, it is so we might look ahead and have hope. When Satan accuses, he wants us to look back and to give

¹⁴¹ Anderson, Neil. *Finding Hope Again; Overcoming Depression*. Ventura CA: Regal Books 2000

¹⁴² Notes from lectures in the *Advanced Biblical Counseling Course 2*

¹⁴³ Notes from lectures in the *Advanced Biblical Counseling Course 2*

up.”¹⁴⁴

If sin is involved in the depression, then confessing and forsaking that sin is essential to the counselee's recovery and freedom.

There are a lot of different counseling theories and methods to help those who are depressed. Some focus on changing the counselee's behavior, believing that as the person's actions change, their thoughts and feelings will follow. One example of behavioral approaches is success therapy, which is initiated by giving the counselee simple tasks to accomplish and then gradually works up to more difficult tasks as the person starts to feel good about herself. This is a pattern seen in Scripture in which God calls to obedience, regardless of feelings. It is important to be sure that the root issues are being dealt with at the same time this method is being used.

Another behavioral approach is mastery and pleasure therapy, which helps the counselee recognize the pleasure they receive by doing the things they are supposed to do. Yet another method is activity scheduling in which the counselee follows a schedule to give them a sense of accomplishment. Alternative therapy seeks to help the counselee find new ways to look at their problems.¹⁴⁵

Often, drug therapy is used in an attempt to help the counselee. While there is a place for using medications to help those who cannot think clearly or who are suicidal, secular counselors often advocate their use to dull the emotional pain the counselee is experiencing.¹⁴⁶ Often that pain is really a gift from God to motivate the person to clear

¹⁴⁴ Wiersbe, Warren W., *What To Wear to the War*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back To The Bible 1986 quoted by Kenneth Copley, *Introduction to Spiritual Warfare: Course 1*, International School for Biblical Counseling, 2002) 60.

¹⁴⁵ Norman H. Wright, *Self-Talk, Imagery and Prayer in Counseling*, (Waco: Word Publishing, 1986) 61-62.

¹⁴⁶ Tim LaHaye, *How To Win Over depression* (Zondervin Grand Rapids: Publishing House, 1974) 64.

up the things that are hindering their relationship with Him.

Sometimes, even if a physical problem is not evident, it is necessary for a counselee to take antidepressants for a time, so that they will be able to think clearly enough to receive counseling. Christians are especially prone to feelings of guilt for having to be on medication. It should be explained to them that the medication is only a tool that the Lord can use while they are coming to freedom.

It is helpful is to explain to the counselee how her self-talk influences her. Daniel Goldman, a New York Times columnist, explains, "One of the main determinants of whether a depressed mood will persist or lift is the degree to which people ruminate."¹⁴⁷ The counselee should be encouraged to either talk out loud to God or else write a letter to Him telling Him what is on her heart and how she feels. As the counselee does this she should draw on the promises of God to encourage herself and give her hope.

David gives many examples of this in the book of Psalms. In Psalm 22 David starts out by saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" By verse 24 he says, "For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard." It is important for those who are depressed to learn to find hope in God and to develop the habit of returning to joy.

The Dissociative Spectrum

The topic of dissociation is one of the most controversial of sexual abuse issues. It stems from the immediate terror caused by the abuse and a need to forget what happened.

¹⁴⁷ Source unknown

In studies of women who have been abused, between 38%¹⁴⁸ and 77%¹⁴⁹ of the women reported times of either partial or complete memory loss.¹⁵⁰ Some women completely forget that the abuse ever happened, while others remember what preceded the abuse, or even remember a part of the abuse, but cannot remember the most traumatic portions.¹⁵¹ A woman may remember her father telling her that he was going to show her how to have sex, but she cannot remember anything after that. While a woman may not have any conscious memory of the abuse, she will still be likely to have symptoms from the abuse.¹⁵²

Initially, it might seem strange that someone cannot remember the most traumatic thing in her life, but these traumas are too much for a little girl to handle. Dissociation can be helpful in keeping the child from consciously experiencing the trauma, but it is also dangerous. Sometimes dissociation is a gift of protection from God to keep little children from going mad in situations where escape is impossible, but there is a reason for pain. It is the impetus for change. If a victim learns to block out the pain, she will not do anything to stop the abuse.¹⁵³

“It takes a bit of effort to dissociate in the beginning, but eventually, it becomes almost automatic. Memories are still stored, but in fragments. Sometimes the brain retains most of the memory but loses the worst or most conflicted part. Many who do not to remember certain parts of their childhood may have used dissociation in the past to

¹⁴⁸ LM. Williams, “Recovered memories of abuse in women with documented child sexual victimization histories.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, (8,4 1995) 649-674.

¹⁴⁹ CM Roe, MK Schwartz, “Characteristics of previously forgotten memories of sexual abuse: A descriptive study.” *Journal of Psychiatry and Law*, (24,2 1996) 189-206.

¹⁵⁰ The Sidran Institute web site gives an overview of over thirty studies done on the frequency of repressed memories. <http://www.sidran.org/refs/ref3.html>

¹⁵¹ Renee Fredrickson, *Repressed Memories* (New York: Fireside/Parkside 1992) 39.

¹⁵² Terr 33.

¹⁵³ Simpson 28.

cope. Unfortunately, children who go into trances to avoid pain discover that they lose their ability to tolerate any strong emotion. They end up being ‘emotionless’ kids.”¹⁵⁴

Often repressed or dissociated memories will begin to surface years later when the victim is better able to handle them. This process of recovery usually begins when a woman is in her mid thirties.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes it is a significant or traumatic event in the woman’s life, such as getting married or becoming a mother, which brings the memories back. Although the woman is older, she is usually very traumatized by the reemergence of the memories.

Those who were abused when they were very young (often before the age of six), children who were threatened not to tell,¹⁵⁶ and those who experienced especially traumatic abuse, are more likely to have repressed the memory of the abuse.¹⁵⁷ Also, the closer the victim’s relationship is to the abuser, the less likely it is that she will remember the abuse.¹⁵⁸

Numerous studies have been done that show the validity of recovered memories. Dr. Freyd, one of the worlds leading experts on repressed memory and dissociation does a good job of explaining this phenomenon.

If you think about the situation in which you temporarily cannot remember where you left your keys, you probably can remember times when you later remembered the location (and later remembered putting those keys in

¹⁵⁴ Simpson 28.

¹⁵⁵ Jeffery Pokone, lecture at the International Center for Biblical Counseling, Course 2. July 2003.

¹⁵⁶ D. M. Elliott, J. Briere, “Posttraumatic stress associated with delayed recall of sexual abuse: A general population study.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, (8, 1995) 629-647.

¹⁵⁷ Leonard Holmes, “Corroboration of Child Abuse Memories” (19 July 2003) <<http://mentalhealth.about.com>>.

¹⁵⁸ L. M Williams, “Recall of childhood trauma: A prospective study of women's memories of child sexual abuse.” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, (62, 1167-1176 1994).

a special place) and you were accurate (a true recovered memory), and other times when you thought you remembered the location, but you were wrong, because the keys were actually somewhere else (a mistaken recovered memory). There were probably other times you thought you remembered your key location all along, but when you checked the place you were sure you left your keys, they were not there (a mistaken continuous memory). Finally, and fortunately, sometimes you thought you remembered the location of your keys all along, and you checked the location and they were there just as you remembered (a true continuous memory). The possibilities of true or mistaken, and recovered and continuous memory, don't seem so remarkable when it comes to memory for keys. But when it comes to memory for abuse, the issues can get confusing. One big difference between memory for key location and abuse is that we can almost always check our memory against reality when it comes to key location, but evidence for prior abuse is much harder to agree about.¹⁵⁹

Often memory recall is not precise. It is common for two witnesses to a hit-and-run accident to differ on basic details, such as the color of the car. For example:

Baseball aficionados may recall that Jack Hamilton, then a pitcher with the California Angels, crushed the outfielder, Tony Conigliaro, in the face with a first-pitch fastball. Although Hamilton thought he remembered this horrible event perfectly, he misremembered it as occurring during a day

¹⁵⁹ J.J. Freyd, (2003). *What about Recovered Memories?*(5 June 2003)
<<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/~jjf/whatabout.html>>.

game, when it was actually at night, and misremembered it in other critical ways.¹⁶⁰

Studies have also found that memories can be influenced. Another study demonstrated the malleability of memory for a serious life-and-death situation.

The subjects had attended an important high school football game at which a player on the field went into cardiac arrest. Paramedics tried to resuscitate the player and apparently failed. The audience reactions ranged from complete silence, to sobbing, to screaming. (Ultimately, fortunately, the player was revived at the hospital.) Six years later, many of these people were interviewed. Errors of recollection were common. Moreover, when exposed to misleading information about this life-and-death event, many individuals absorbed the misinformation into their recollections. For example, more than one fourth of the subjects were persuaded that they had seen blood on the player's jersey after receiving a false suggestion to this effect.¹⁶¹

It is also possible to have memories implanted. Here is one vivid example:

Family torn by false repressed memories settles for \$1 million
SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) - Beth Rutherford never knew she had a tormented childhood until she went to a church therapist for counseling. Under the counselor's guidance, she recalled how her minister father repeatedly raped her, got her pregnant, and then performed a painful coat-hanger abortion. In truth, Beth was still a

¹⁶⁰ Loftus, Reality

¹⁶¹ Loftus, Reality

virgin, and her father had had a vasectomy many years before...¹⁶²

Many people have been deeply hurt because of false memories. The popular book, *The Courage to Heal*, has been implicated in many false memory cases. This book says, "If you are unable to remember any specific instances like the ones mentioned above but still have a feeling that something abusive happened to you, it probably did"¹⁶³ On the next page the book goes on to say,

You may think you don't have memories, but often as you begin to talk about what you do remember, there emerges a constellation of feelings, reactions and recollections that add up to substantial information. To say, "I was abused," you don't need the kind of recall that would stand up in a court of law. Often the knowledge that you were abused starts with a tiny feeling, an intuition... Assume your feelings are valid. So far, no one we've talked to thought she might have been abused, and then later discovered that she hadn't been. The progression always goes the other way, from suspicion to confirmation. If you think you were abused and your life shows the symptoms, then you were.¹⁶⁴

If a counselor suggests to a client that they have the symptoms of sexual abuse, the client may try so hard to remember, that she brings up false memories. The same holds true in questioning victims about the severity of the abuse. In searching her past she may get movies or things she has heard about mixed up with true memories.

When memories begin to return, "the women themselves were very often unsure

¹⁶² Lubbock, Avalanche-Journal (1996, 3 March 2004)
<<http://www.lubbockonline.com/news/111696/family.htm>>.

¹⁶³ E. Bass, L. Davis, *The courage to heal*. (New York: Harper & Row 1988) 21.

¹⁶⁴E. Bass 22.

about their memories and said things such as 'What I remember is mostly a dream.' Or, 'I'm really not too sure about this.'¹⁶⁵ Be careful not to ask leading questions. Instead of asking, “‘Did you get caught cheating?’” ask “‘How was your day?’”¹⁶⁶ It may take a bit longer, but their memories will likely be more accurate.

False memories do occur but not to the extent that the False Memory Syndrome Foundation would like people to believe.¹⁶⁷ Lenore Terr, in her book, *Unchained Memories*, suggests that, “One way to determine whether someone’s memory is false is to look for symptoms or signs that correspond to the remembrance. If a child is exposed to a shocking, frightening, painful, or overexciting event, he or she will exhibit psychological signs of having had the experience.... If, on the other hand, a child is exposed only to a frightening rumor or to the symptoms of another victim of trauma, the child may pick up a symptom or two, and even, perhaps, the whole “story” -- but will not suffer a cluster of symptoms and signs.”¹⁶⁸

Dissociative Identity Disorder

It is believed that about one percent of the general population may have Dissociative Identity Disorder or DID.¹⁶⁹ A survey done for this thesis found that 21.9% of the 114 abused women who responded identified themselves as having Dissociative Identity Disorder.¹⁷⁰ Formerly known as multiple personality disorder, it is the final level on the dissociative spectrum. While some people may block out the worst parts of their

¹⁶⁵ L. M. Williams, Recovered 669-670.

¹⁶⁶ Terr 156.

¹⁶⁷ Mike Stanton, “U-Turn on Memory Lane” *Colombia Journalism Review* (July/August 1997. 3 March 2004) <<http://www.cjr.org/year/97/4/memory.asp>>.

¹⁶⁸ Terr 161

¹⁶⁹ “Dissociative Disorders” *Sidran Institute* (1995. 16 September 2003) <<http://www.sidran.org/didbr.html>>.

¹⁷⁰ An anonymous Internet survey of 114 abused women. Participants filled out a questionnaire on a sexual abuse counseling website. The raw data can be found at www.myjourney.homestead.com/surveystats.html

abuse, and others may have no conscious memory of being abused for twenty or thirty years, those who have Dissociative Identity Disorder have generally been through such horrible, repeated abuse that in order to survive they have unconsciously developed what would seem like completely different people inside the same body, called alters or personalities. “Each identity is unique, and has its own sets of memories, ideas, thoughts, ways of thinking, and purposes. One identity may be the protector, while another may be a child.”¹⁷¹ These alters handle different parts of the abuse and different emotions that result from the abuse. Someone with DID may have as few as two distinct personalities or even a few hundred. These personalities switch back and forth as a result of triggers, things that in some way remind them of the abuse.

For a time these personalities allow the child to function as if the abuse never happened. Almost everyone who has Dissociative Identity Disorder begins to develop it by the time they are six years old. Those who acquire Dissociative Identity Disorder are usually very creative and often have a higher than average IQ. Usually the person with Dissociative Identity Disorder is not aware that they have alter personalities, or even that they have been abused, until they are in their twenties or thirties.¹⁷² Eventually this system of alternate personalities begins to break down. The person may find herself someplace she does not remember going. She may find clothing in her closet that she does not remember purchasing and people she does not recognize that seem to know her. She may experience severe headaches, seizures, mood swings, flashbacks, time loss, and

¹⁷¹”Dissociative Identity Disorder” Mental Health Matters & mental-health-matters.com (4 March 2004) <http://www.mental-health-matters.com/disorders/dis_details.php?disID=39>.

¹⁷², James G. Friesen *Uncovering the Mystery of MPD*. (San Bernardino, California: Here’s Life Publishers, Inc., 1991) 62.

sleep problems.¹⁷³ This is a very frustrating and confusing time for her. Many women who have Dissociative Identity Disorder think they are going crazy.

About twenty-five percent of those with Dissociative Identity Disorder have it as a result of Satanic Ritual Abuse.¹⁷⁴ These children are taught to dissociate by their abusers. That way the secrets of the atrocities stay safe. Those who are victims of Satanic Ritual Abuse generally have the most complex cases of Dissociative Identity Disorder. Some have even been programmed to self-injure or commit suicide if they discover that they have Dissociative Identity Disorder. Some also have a personality that has been programmed to call their abusers after a counseling session and report what happened. Sometimes occult members will beat or abuse their victims further, or even try to kill them for revealing their secrets to a counselor.

Counseling for someone with Dissociative Identity Disorder is often complicated and difficult. In addition to a counselor, the victim with Dissociative Identity Disorder needs someone to listen and support her without rejecting her, regardless of how strangely she is behaving. She will tend to have a hard time trusting others.¹⁷⁵

The actual Dissociative Identity Disorder counseling should be done by a Christian who has a good understanding of Dissociative Identity Disorder and how to restore the fractured parts of the woman. Generally, once the counselee is comfortable with the counselor, the counselor will help the core person acknowledge and process through the pain that her alter personalities have been carrying. The other personalities will have believed lies that need to be identified, brought to the light, and replaced with

¹⁷³ Symptoms of 'dissociative identity disorder' *Sasian* (16 July 2003. 24 September 2003) <<http://www.sasian.org/papers/did.htm>>.

¹⁷⁴ Friesen 209.

¹⁷⁵ *Characteristics of a Person with DID*. Introduction to Spiritual Warfare Course 2 International School for Biblical Counseling Hand out.

the truth.¹⁷⁶ They have believed false ideas like, “I have to be the protector,” and “all men are evil.” The goal is to lead each alter personality to the truth. In time the alternate personalities will usually be able to integrate or join with the core personality.

The victim’s Dissociative Identity Disorder developed as a result of fear but the bondage of Dissociative Identity Disorder is because of the lies that the victim believes. She needs to understand that God wants to be her protector. She needs to learn to let the Lord carry her pain.¹⁷⁷

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is the counterpart to Dissociative Identity Disorder. It often develops in children who are too old at the onset of the abuse to develop Dissociative Identity Disorder or to those young children who did not exhibit the creativity that is essential in the development of Dissociative Identity Disorder. Around eight percent of the general population has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;¹⁷⁸ but about eighty percent of those who have been sexually abused during their childhood experience at least some of the symptoms.¹⁷⁹ One study found that thirty-two percent of those who had been abused as children met all the qualifications for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.¹⁸⁰ Some victims can even have both Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is characterized in two seemingly divergent manners. First of all it is characterized by continued reliving of the

¹⁷⁶ Psalm 139:23-24

¹⁷⁷ 1 Peter 5:7

¹⁷⁸ Bremner 19.

¹⁷⁹ Briere

¹⁸⁰ Heather L. Craig-Oldsen, “Underestimated Incidence, Underestimated Consequences and Practice Implications of Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse Treatment for Sexually Abused Children and Adolescents” *American Psychologist*. (Sep. Vol. 55, No. 9, 2000. 3 September 2003) <<http://www.gocwi.org/pdf/making2002augustheather.pdf>>. 1040-1049.

traumatic experiences through nightmares and flashbacks.¹⁸¹ The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders states:

The traumatic event can be reexperienced in a variety of ways. Commonly the individual has recurrent painful, intrusive recollections of the event or recurrent dreams or nightmares during which the event is reexperienced. In rare instances there are dissociativelike states, lasting from a few minutes to several hours or even days, during which components of the event are relived and individual behaves as though experiencing the event at that moment.¹⁸²

Various things like the smell of aftershave that the abuser was wearing or being touched in a particular way may trigger the involuntary reliving of the abuse. These victims also often experience hyper alertness, exaggerated startle response, and problems sleeping.¹⁸³

The second common attribute of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is persistent avoidance. This may be an avoidance of anything that is related to the abuse, but more often it is withdrawing from life. The victim may go about her normal routine but feel like nothing is real. Often part of this numbness is seen in a lack of interest in other people and the world around her.¹⁸⁴ One woman explained that she felt like she was a detached observer sitting on the couch, watching her life like a soap opera on television. She could freely talk about her abuse, because she was disconnected from it, but she was also disconnected from the rest of her life. She did not have the normal highs and lows of

¹⁸¹ What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder? A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet 30 September 2003 <http://www.ncptsd.org/facts/general/fs_what_is_ptsd.html>.

¹⁸² *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, (3rd ed. Washington, D.C. American Psychiatric Association, 1985) 236.

¹⁸³ Hicks 39.

¹⁸⁴ Aphrodite Mataskis, *I Can't Get Over It*. (New Harbinger Publications Oakland, CA 1996) 16

life, only a constant melancholy.

Those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder need to face their fears with the Lord's help. They need to come to see Him as not only their protector but also as the One who lovingly allows everything that comes into their lives. They need to ask the Lord to replace their fear and self-protection with a deep heart peace.

Borderline Personality Disorder

It is estimated that about six million people in the United States have Borderline Personality Disorder.¹⁸⁵ About half of those with borderline personality disorder were either physically or sexually abused as children.¹⁸⁶ The American Psychiatric Association didn't formally recognize BPD in its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual until 1980.¹⁸⁷

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV Borderline Personality Disorder is characterized by:

A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

(1) frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment. Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.

(2) a pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.

(3) identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self

¹⁸⁵ BPD Central (5 March 2004) <<http://www.bpdcentral.com/faqs.shtml>>.

¹⁸⁶ Mayo Clinic.com (12 June 2002. 5 March 2004) <<http://www.mayoclinic.com/invoke.cfm?objectid=1F6A3571-D626-4D96-A02A881BCCBB3E02&dsection=3>>.

¹⁸⁷ Randi Kreger, Paul Masson, *Stop Walking on Eggshells* (5 March 2004) <<http://www.newharbinger.com/WalkEgg.htm>>.

(4) impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating). Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.

(5) recurrent suicidal behaviors, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior

(6) affective instability = due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days)

(7) chronic feelings of emptiness

(8) inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights)

(9) transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms.¹⁸⁸

Those with Borderline Personality Disorder are characterized by extremes in just about every area of life. They have the same feelings and thoughts as others have but they just have them more intensely. They have drastic mood swings and perception problems. They switch back and forth from seeing someone as flawless to feeling that they are wicked and have no redeeming value. They have a low self-image and tend to be very insecure.

They tend to be very sensitive to changes in their environment and have a lower than normal threshold for external stimuli like extraneous noise.¹⁸⁹ When something does not go the way they planned they often will burst into a sustained rage. They are often possessive and jealous. They are very dependant on how they feel others view

¹⁸⁸ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV* (5 March 2004)
<<http://www.bpd411.org/dsmannotated.html>>.

¹⁸⁹ Larry J. Siever, "The Biology of Borderline Personality Disorder." BPD Sanctuary (5 March 2004)
<<http://www.mhsanctuary.com/borderline/siever.htm>>.

them but because of their paranoia they usually incorrectly perceive other's opinions of them as negative. They also tend to have black and white thinking.

They have an emptiness that they try to fill, often with self-destructive behaviors. They also have a significant problem with rage. Some hold it inside but most express their rage verbally and or physically. Stress is most likely to bring on borderline behavior. These anti-social behaviors are generally an attempt to cope with internal anguish.

They don't tend to be able to maintain long-term relationships because of their behaviors. They usually feel that their problems are all someone else's fault. Most of their borderline behaviors are directed at those in close relationships like spousal, and parental relationships.

Asking the client how a particular relationship ended and how they handle betrayal may be helpful in identifying the disorder.¹⁹⁰ There are several things a counselor can look for to identify if someone has Borderline Personality disorder or some of the traits of the disorder. Does the client push for quick involvement in relationships. Does she tend to make and lose friends quickly. Is she excessively possessive? Does she frequently exhibit controlling behaviors? Does she have unrealistic expectations for those around her, especially for her family and close friends?

Does she seem to try to isolate his family and friends from others in a possessive manner? Does she have a habit of blaming others for his problems? Does she try to blame other people for her own actions, behaviors, and feelings? Is she hypersensitive, easily insulted, and perhaps even paranoid? Is she unnecessarily excessive in his use of

¹⁹⁰ Who's Sick Here? 5 March 2004 <<http://www.bpd411.org/whosick.html>>.

power and authority? Is she verbally or physically abusive? Does she have sudden mood swings?¹⁹¹

A client who displays a few of these behaviors may not necessarily have Borderline Personality Disorder but someone who displays several of them is likely to have the disorder or a similar one. It is important to note that someone can merely have borderline tendencies without having full-blown borderline personality disorder.

It is essential for the counselor and anyone else who has sustained interaction with someone who has Borderline Personality Disorder to establish boundaries in their relationship. Borderline's can be very persuasive and very persistent. For the counselor it is often a matter of making it clear that they must stay in their chair on the other side of the desk, they are not to display any type of seductive or manipulating behavior and if they do and the counselor will make them aware of it and they must stop immediately. It is limiting the number of times they can call and how long they can talk. The counselor may also need to make it clear that they are in a professional relationship not a friendship.

If a client with Borderline Personality Disorder is going to get better he or she must acknowledge that there is a problem. The client must be taught new thought patterns. When she is inclined to feel rejected he needs to learn to ask himself why he feels that way and analyze the facts. She needs to learn to recognize when she is being controlling or manipulative and put his focus back on the Lord's care for him. These new thought patterns must be repeated over and over again until they become habit.

Spiritual warfare

¹⁹¹ Abuse within the BPD/ NonBPD Dynamic. (5 March 2004)
<<http://www.bpd411.org/abusebpdnon.html>>.

Soul wounds do not heal if they are ignored. They continue to shape and govern one's emotions, self-image and way of interacting in relationships, long beyond the childhood in which the wounds were received.¹⁹² The spiritual aspect of healing from sexual abuse is by far the most important. Satan's goal is to steal a person's relationship with God any way he can. "If you can get a person angry with God, you can get that person to commit any sin."¹⁹³ For the abuse victim, one of Satan's favorite tactics is to have the person begin to question and doubt God.

Why God Let It Happen

One question almost everyone who has been abused asks is, "Why did God allow this to happen?" The answer a person settles upon will determine her course of recovery. Will she allow God to take her through the healing process, or will she become bitter toward God and try to heal through her own self-determination?

It is important for the victim to understand that when God created man, His desire was for man to live in perfect fellowship with Him and complete obedience to Him. When Adam sinned, the consequences of his sin were far greater than he could have imagined. Not only did he and Eve suffer, every one of Adam's descendants has felt the terrible consequences of their sin. Sin always affects to a greater degree than people expect.

Sin takes you farther than you want to go.

Keeps you longer than you want to stay,

And costs you more than you want to pay.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Groom

¹⁹³ Wheeler

¹⁹⁴ Unknown

Sin always affects others who are not responsible for the sin. The great deceiver has so twisted things, that people feel like God should protect them from the consequences of sin. They blame God, but He is not the problem. Sin is the problem; God is the solution. It is actually part of God's mercy that sin hurts; otherwise, wickedness would abound even more.

Joe Beam, in his book, *Seeing the Unseen*, explains that the enemy seeks to use pain and hurt in the believer's life to make him angry with God. He weakens the believer's faith and clouds the believer's vision so that the Christian blames God instead of the enemy. This hinders the believer's looking to God for help in those trials. When the believer needs God the most he turns from God, feeling that God does not love him.¹⁹⁵

My pastor told about how when he was a little boy he would go to his grandfather's horse farm on the weekends. It was his job to give grain to the horses. As he went down the row of stalls carrying a bucket of grain and a coffee can to scoop out the grain, he always ran out of grain at the same stall. The horse in that stall threw a fit every time.

What if he tried to explain to the horse that everything was ok. He just needed to go back for some more grain and he would be right back. Would that horse ever understand what the boy was trying to get across to him? No, the horse did not have the mental capacity to understand such a concept. Now what if we gave the horse an intelligence rating of 1 and the boy had a rating of 10. How would we rate God's intelligence? Would it be a million, or a billion, or a trillion?

¹⁹⁵ Joe Beam, *Seeing the Unseen* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Pub Co. 1994) 177.

If something with an intelligence rating of one can't understand the simple concept of , "I'll be right back." Who are we to demand of God that He explain Himself to us? He has told us many times in His Word that He is good and that He loves us. Our part is to trust Him and His Word. That is real faith. Corrie ten Boom's little statement, "In acceptance lieth peace," helps put the principle in perspective.

Part of the answer to why God let it happen is found in I Peter 5:10, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while (felt the pain of sin), make you perfect (restored, complete), establish (to turn resolutely in a certain direction), strengthen (in spiritual knowledge and power), settle you (lay the foundation)."

For a lot of women the real question is, "Where was God when this abuse was happening to me"? A lady who was abused as a little girl recounted that sometimes her father would hold the covers over her so she could hardly breathe as she was being abused. When she asked the Lord where He was when she was suffering, He spoke to her heart and said, "I was there with you. I was the one that made the little space between the covers so you could get air."¹⁹⁶

Another lady asked the God where He was. His reply was:

- I was there all the time.
- When you cried I cried.
- I cannot explain to you in this lifetime to your satisfaction, why I let it happen.
- I offer to you my unconditional love and healing.¹⁹⁷

Psalm 56:8 reminds us that God keeps a record of suffering. Every tear is precious

¹⁹⁶ Regier

¹⁹⁷ Copley

to Him. "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?"¹⁹⁸ In Israel the people have an old tradition. When someone is grieving, a loved one will collect their tears in a little bottle and wear it around their neck. It is a way of showing how much they care about the other person's suffering. God never causes one more tear than is absolutely necessary. Every tear one of His children cries is precious to Him.

Sometimes God chooses to intervene, but sometimes He allows His children to suffer. There were two Godly missionaries who suffered horrible things during World War II. The first, Darlene Deibler Rose, spent four years as a prisoner of war in a Japanese prison camp. In her book, *Evidence Not Seen*, she tells about a time when she was in solitary confinement. She said that the guards were coming cell by cell collecting women for the Japanese officers to rape. She could hear the guard coming. He put the key in the door, but then stopped and walked away. God protected her from being raped.¹⁹⁹

But there is another story; this one is of Helen Roseveare, a missionary in the Congo during the war. In her book, *Doctor Among Congo Rebels*, she tells about the cruelty suffered at the hands of Communist rebels. They searched her house and then took her upstairs and raped her. Like Darlene, she asked God to protect her. While He protected her life, He allowed her to go through that atrocity.²⁰⁰ Did God love Darlene more than He loved Helen? No! His love for both of these women was complete, but His plan for them was different. "In acceptance lieth peace."²⁰¹

Sue is a woman whose life demonstrates the peace that comes from resting in

¹⁹⁸ Psalm 56:8

¹⁹⁹ Darlene Deibler Rose *Evidence Not Seen: A Woman's Miraculous Faith in the Jungles of World War II* San Francisco: Harper 1990.

²⁰⁰ *Doctor Among Congo Rebels*

²⁰¹ Corrie ten Boom

Christ, regardless of what happens in life.

From the time when she was a tender three years old, right through to her mid-teens, Sue's father shamefully treated her sexually. Where was the God of love, as year after year this innocent suffered unspeakable agonies? Yet as great a reason as that might seem for Sue's hating God, her reasons had hardly begun.

While attending a Catholic school, Sue gradually came to believe that God and the Bible are real. Then at age 16 that faith was tested, a priest molested her.

After about eight years, she traveled half way around the world on a short-term mission trip to tell strangers about the God she thought was the answer to her every need. One day, while the rest of the team went out, Sue selflessly volunteered to stay back at the church and pray for their efforts. As she prayed, two men entered, held a gun to her head and threatened to rape her unless she renounced Christ. She bravely refused. They carried out their threat, all the while taunting her that 'her' God was powerless to stop them despite her cries and prayers.

Several weeks later, Sue e-mailed me. As you would expect, she was tormented by waves of anger towards the God who had failed to protect her even though she was so devotedly serving him 'I guess I assumed that since I had committed my life to Christ, and sought to grow in my faith, and spread the gospel, things like rape wouldn't happen to me,' she wrote. Then came an astounding statement from this woman

whose suffering seemed to know no end: "Obviously, I still need to grow in my faith, since the Bible is clear that Christians will be persecuted."

Sue's abusers stabbed God's heart. As a mother looking at her hurting baby often feels more pain than her darling, God's heart broke, His pain was immense and His fury at her abusers' cruelty was so intense that no one but the Almighty himself could restrain such emotion. Whatever reason God had for restraining Himself, it was a good one, so good that when all is revealed Sue will spend the rest of eternity praising God for it.

God is resolutely and unselfishly devoted to our long term good, but this must not be confused with short term ease that ultimately turns us soft and robs us of eternal glory."²⁰²

Gene Edwards in his book, *Crucified by Christians*, gets to the heart of the matter.

You like your God when He lets you have a nice home, a good car, and good circumstances, do you not? When He lets you sell your house and buy another one? When you get that scholarship, procure that job? But what is your attitude toward Him when that same Lord gives consent to nails tearing through your flesh, ripping your feet, and shredding your soul? Do you still like Him? As Much?

God did not hide the truth from us. John 16:33 says, 'In the world you will have tribulation.' We can expect horrible things to happen to us in a sin filled and wickedness driven world. It is the end of the verse that

²⁰² Grantly Morris, "If anyone has reason to hate God, it's Sue" (3 October 2003) <<http://net-burst.net/hope/hate.htm>>.

gives us hope, 'be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.'²⁰³

It is helpful for the victim to realize that the soul is their most important part, then the spirit, and finally the body. God allowed man to damage the least important part, the body. The little girl will never get her virginity back. The spirit is also damaged by the abuse. But the spirit can heal. She can actually have a stronger spirit as a result of healing from the abuse. No one can harm her soul, though. God protected the most important part of her completely.²⁰⁴

In *Crucified by Christians*, Gene Edwards went on to say:

In light of the pain we experience at the hands of others, our confidence and hope lies in the truth that God is able to bring healing and that He even uses the pain to build strength of character--a Christ like character--in us. We cannot guarantee that you will escape evil in this sick and fallen world (see John 16:33), but we can reassure you that you don't have to be a perpetual victim of your past. In Christ, God has provided us with a way to overcome our past, and we have to assume our responsibility to choose that path of freedom.²⁰⁵

The Father Block

Many abuse victims are blocked in their relationships with God the Father, because they superimpose the attributes of their abusive earthly fathers onto God. As one young woman was reading Psalm 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up," she was amazed by the realization that God literally wanted to be the Father she never had. He wanted to be her comforter and protector.

²⁰³ Gene Edwards, *Crucified by Christians*, (Sargent, Georgia: The Seed Sowers 1994) 34.

²⁰⁴ Romans 8:35-39

²⁰⁵ Edwards

As she was going to sleep that night she pictured herself sitting on her Heavenly Father's lap, snuggling close to Him. Then a panic hit her, she instinctively thought that if she stayed close to Him she would be, "leading Him on" and that would cause Him to abuse her like her earthly father did. Then her panic turned to horror when she realized that she had assumed that because God was male, He would abuse her.

This led her to reevaluate the way she perceived God. Even though it seemed foolish, she asked God if she could trust Him. He assured her in her spirit that He truly loved her with a pure love, and that he would never hurt her the way her earthly father had. He would be the Father that she had always dreamed of.²⁰⁶

The victim may also have a fear of Jesus, because she perceives him as a man. In many victims' minds, no man can be trusted. A woman may even be repulsed by the thought of Jesus' being a man, which obviously hinders her relationship and fellowship with Him. She needs to learn to see God and Jesus the way they truly are. She needs to look forward to heaven when God will wipe away all the tears from her eyes.²⁰⁷

The appendix of this paper has several resources that are helpful in changing the way the counselee views God, and her relationship to Him. As she thinks about the truth of her relationship with God each day, these truths will begin to work their way from her head to her heart. Perhaps one of the easiest and quickest ways to remove this barrier is through the use of Theophostic counseling.

Theophostic counseling is based on the premise that the continued pain that a person feels from abuse is because of the lies of the enemy that they have believed. It is the process of directly asking either Jesus or God the Father about questions she is

²⁰⁶ A good resource for developing a right understanding of God the Father is the book, *A Dad Who Loves You: Experience the Joy of a Perfect Father* by Bill Ritchie.

²⁰⁷ Revelation 7:9, 15-17

struggling with.²⁰⁸ An example would be the counselee saying, “Jesus will you hurt me like my father did?” Almost always the Lord will put an assurance in the victim’s heart and give her peace. Often, it is with a picture in her mind, a loving word, or a feeling of safety.

Strongholds

Picture a large plot of land that represents the soul. Sin, fear, and passivity in a person’s life give a part of that ground to Satan. Because of the sin, he has a right to be there. On that ground he begins to build a stronghold. "A stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable something that we know is contrary to the will of God."²⁰⁹ It is from this stronghold that the enemy begins to send out tormenters into a person’s life. Things like anger, fear, lust, bitterness, self-rejection, and most of the problems that have already been discussed in this paper are tormenters that the enemy sends out from his stronghold. All tormentors are a result of lies. For example, anger is a result of believing that something that the angry person is entitled to has been denied. A woman may get easily angered at her children because of their bad behavior. She has believed the lie that she deserves peace and quiet. The truth is that she does not deserve any of the mercy and peace God has given her.

Lies of the Enemy

Dr. Copley says that, "The pain does not come from the actual incident. It comes

²⁰⁸ What is Theophostic Ministry? 5 March 2004 <<http://www.theophostic.com/faq.html#1>>.

²⁰⁹ Ed Silvano, *Biblical Principles For Taking Our Cities For God*, (quoted by Copley, Kenneth, Introduction to Spiritual Warfare: Course 1, International School for Biblical Counseling, 2002) 86.

from the lies that the enemy brings with the wound."²¹⁰ The lies say that the counselee is worthless, weak, powerless, dirty, defiled, unusable, etc. They usually relate to the character of God and to self-acceptance.²¹¹

In his book, *Finding Hope Again*, Neil Anderson reveals other lies that are uncovered by victims: "I'm worthless and would be better off dead." "I have no value and no meaningful purpose for being here." "I'll never amount to anything." "No one loves or cares for me." "My situation is hopeless. I see no way out but to die." "I'm stupid, I'm dumb, I'm ugly." "I'm a mistake." "God doesn't love me and He won't help me." "life is the pits." "My future is hopeless." "Nobody can help me."²¹²

He goes on to say, "To see yourself as rejected, unwanted, and useless is to be deceived. To see the circumstances of life as hopeless is to take your eyes off Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. To think you are unloved, unappreciated, and unworthy is to believe a lie, because you are a child of the King who has rescued you from the domain of darkness, and transferred you to the kingdom of his beloved Son."²¹³

Often a victim has heard the lies for so long that she is not even aware of them. One woman was constantly bombarded with accusations in her mind. She had believed the lie that she had to earn God's acceptance and that to do this she had to do things right. She felt like God was always frowning at her, like she was a black sheep that He tolerated but was disappointed in. Even when she did something admirable, the enemy was quick to call her motives into question. For years she had never thought that this

²¹⁰ Copley, Introduction 121.

²¹¹ The appendix has a list of more lies the enemy tries to get abuse victims to believe.

²¹² Anderson, *Finding* 87.

²¹³ Anderson, *Finding* 87.

continual criticism could be coming from the enemy. Instead she had been receiving it as truth. When she did see its source and began to understand God's unconditional love and acceptance, it was life changing.

Recognizing the lies of the enemy is the first step to freedom from these lies. The key is to expose the lies, reject them, repent for having believed them, and replace the lies with God's truth. Often the counselee will need to ask God if the things she believes are true. Sometimes she must hear it from God before she is able to reject the lie. Even then the habit pattern may take a while to break. According to Dr. Copley, "How quickly [they] recover will depend on how [they] view God, how [they] view [themselves,] and how [they] view [their] surroundings."

Wrong Thinking

There are many other faulty thinking patterns which the enemy likes to use to his advantage:

- Blame shifting – “It’s my abuser’s fault that I am depressed.”
- Overgeneralizations – “All men are abusers.”
- The “What If” game – “If my boss finds out I have DID he will get rid of me.”
- Superstitions – “I was abused in a black car and had an accident in a black car. Something bad happens when I ride in a black car.”
- Emotional reasoning – “If I feel it is true, then it must be true.”
- Black and white/all or nothing – “If he doesn’t want me, then what good am I?”
- Mind reading – “She should have known that I was being abused.”
- Catastrophizing – “If my husband finds out that I was abused, he will divorce me, and I will be out on the streets.”

- Personalization – “Mother is upset, I must have done something wrong.”²¹⁴

These must be recognized, brought to the light of the God’s truth, and rejected.

Demonic Influence

The enemy seeks to steal, kill, and destroy.²¹⁵ Primarily, he uses the demonic realm to attack those who have been abused. He does this through tormentors like fear and depression. Most of the previous topics in this thesis are a result of his tormentors.²¹⁶

Demonization is one of the more prominent weapons in his arsenal. There is a lot of disagreement about how much influence a demon can have on a Christian and whether or not a Christian can be demonized. Some believe that because a Christian belongs to God and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, it is not possible for the Christian to be controlled by a demon. 1 Corinthians 6:15-16 indicates that the issue is not one of “possession” but control. “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.” While the Christian is possessed by Christ, he can be controlled or oppressed by a demon.²¹⁷ Many veteran counselors can attest that demons can control a Christian when the enemy has ground in his or her life.

A sexual abuse victim can be demonized for many different reasons, but sin is at the root of all of them. It does not necessarily need to be her sin though. Children can even be born demonized usually because of sins their ancestors were involved in. If the

²¹⁴ “Get Out of the Distorted Thinking Trap” *Survivors & Friends*, 27 November 2003 <www.abuserecovery.org/articles/ThinkTrap.asp>.

²¹⁵ John 10:10

²¹⁶ Ephesians 6:12

²¹⁷ “Satan, Demons, & the Occult” *Introduction to Spiritual Warfare Course 1* (Sioux City: Institute for Biblical Counseling 2002) 23.

abuser was demonized the sexual abuse can be the means of passing demons on to the child. If Satanic Ritual Abuse or any cult or occult abuse took place, then the victim will likely be demonized to some extent.

Spirit Guides

Some women who were abused have or have had a spirit guide. A spirit guide is a demon who, appears to be a help and comfort. They usually come to children who are lonely or distressed and offer companionship. They are usually perceived as being an imaginary friend to everyone but the child. To her, this friend is very real. An abused child is often very receptive to a spirit guide. The demon presents himself as kind, loving, and nurturing. A spirit guide becomes a companion for the hurting child, who usually has a great fear of loneliness. They play with the child in the child's imagination, listen, and comfort the child. The child develops a deep bond with the spirit guide and becomes dependent upon this demon instead of God. The spirit guide's goal is to gently steer the child away from God.²¹⁸

Whether or not the spirit guide is still a part of the victim's life, it is important for her to renounce the involvement she had with the spirit guide. If she does not recognize him for the demon he is it might be helpful to suggest that she drop his hand just for a moment and take Jesus' hand. Often she will object because she knows the demon will not like that. When she does let go of his hand and take Jesus' hand, the demon will usually show himself for what he is. He may get very angry and try to scare her back. The counselor can ask the victim if she wants that sort of a friend.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ "Satan, Demons, & the Occult" *Introduction to Spiritual Warfare Course 1* (Sioux City: Institute for Biblical Counseling 2002) 36.

²¹⁹ Fred Dickason, "Testing The Spirits in Spiritual Warfare Counseling." Lecture Institute for Biblical Counseling. July 2003.

Nightmares & Night Terrors

The enemy uses nightmares to torment almost all who have been sexually abused. They can be a result of fears and focusing on the abuse, of the mind's trying to process the trauma, of dissociative barriers that are starting to break down, they can be a result of demonic tormentors, or a combination of any of these reasons. The counselor is dependent on the Holy Spirit's leading for discernment of what is behind the nightmares.

The counselee needs to understand that in some cases nightmares are a part of the healing process.²²⁰ As she goes to bed at night a victim of abuse should choose a verse of Scripture to meditate on and ask God to protect her mind as she sleeps. She should ask God to put a hedge of protection around her and bind the enemy, that her dreams would only be what God allows.²²¹

Intrusive Thoughts and Voices

Thoughts can originate from three sources; God, ourselves, or the enemy. This is illustrated in Matthew 16. Peter correctly identified Jesus as the Son of God and Jesus said that this information was revealed to Peter by God. Just a few verses later Peter began to rebuke Jesus and Jesus made it clear that Peter's comments were coming from Satan.²²²

Almost all abused women struggle with their thoughts. Usually those thoughts are lies from the enemy about God's nature and character and about their worth. The enemy wants these women to believe that God is harsh, critical, and demanding so that they will

²²⁰ Patricia Garfield "Guidelines for Coping with Nightmares After Trauma" (5 March 2004) <http://www.patriciagarfield.com/idx_library_nightmare_guidelines.htm>.

²²¹ Job 1:10; Matthew 12:29; Matthew 18:18

²²² Matthew 16:17-23

not develop a deep relationship with Him. The enemy also whispers lies to these abused women about being worthless and unloved.

Sometimes the enemy also tries to torment these women with evil thoughts. Many have reported having thoughts of killing their children, or turning into on coming traffic pop into their heads. If these women do not understand where these thoughts are coming from, these women will often begin to condemn themselves. In his book, *The Great Deceiver*, Dr. Copley tells about a woman who was given up as hopeless by her psychologist. She had read every book she knew of about biblical counseling yet she was plagued with terrible thoughts about killing others and killing herself.

He told about a breakthrough that happened in one of their sessions. Dr. Copley told the woman to go punch the prayer partner who was sitting in on the counseling session in the mouth with all her might. She glared at him and said, "I won't do that!" "Do what?" Dr. Copley asked. "I won't punch him in the mouth." She replied.

Dr. Copley then asked, "Have you been thinking about punching him in the mouth? Where did that come from? What an awful, horrible person you must be to think such a thing!" Dr. Copley got up to leave in indignation. She yelled, "Just a minute! You put the thought in my mind, and now you are accusing me of thinking it! Then it clicked; she understood that those murderous hateful thoughts were not hers. The enemy was planting them in her mind and then pointing out to her how wicked she was for having them there."²²³

If there is uncertainty about the origin of a thought, the client should ask herself if the thought is edifies or upsets her. If the thought is discouraging, it is most likely not

²²³ Kenneth Copley, *The Great Deceiver*, (Chicago: Moody Press 2001) 43.

from God or from herself.²²⁴ If the thought is from the enemy, the saying, “You can’t keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair,”²²⁵ may be helpful. The thoughts may come but it is her responsibility to reject them and choose the truth.²²⁶

Hearing voices is often just an intensification of having thoughts from the enemy. According to Dave Park, the author of several books that address spiritual warfare in teens, “Seventy percent of Christian teens hear voices that attack their identity.”²²⁷ There are three general reasons for hearing voices. They can be a result of schizophrenia. These voices will usually be perceived as coming from outside the person. For example, they might think they heard a voice coming from their refrigerator. The second cause is Dissociative Identity Disorder. In this case, the voices they are hearing are usually coming from alternate personalities. Demonic influences are the third cause.²²⁸

If the counselor is not aware that the child abuse victim has Dissociative Identity Disorder and mistakes the voices from alternate personalities as being demons it can cause a great deal of harm. If the personality feels like you are trying to get rid of him or her, the abuse victim’s altars may not feel safe in making their presence known.

Generally, if someone is hearing voices and those voices are demonic, the enemy has ground in his or her life. This may be from sin they have committed but often for those who have been abused it is either because they are believing the enemy’s lies or they are involved with rebellion. Sometimes, especially in the case of satanic ritual abuse,

²²⁴ Introduction 56-57.

²²⁵ Unknown

²²⁶ Neil Anderson, *Bondage* 146.

²²⁷ Dave Park, “How to Help Defeated Teens” (One Passion Ministries, lecture Indianapolis Training Center, Indianapolis 2003).

²²⁸ *Advanced Biblical Counseling Course 2*. (Lecture Indianapolis Training Center, Indianapolis, July 2003).

it is because the victim's parent or some other authority committed them to the enemy.²²⁹ If this is the case, that ground must be taken back and any commitments to the enemy must be renounced.

Curses

Most in our culture chuckle at the idea of curses. They are thought to be for superstitious jungle natives but not for modern America. That is just what the enemy would like us to believe but the Bible frequently speaks about curses. The American Heritage Dictionary defines a curse as "An appeal or prayer for evil or misfortune to befall someone or something; The evil or misfortune that comes in or as if in response to such an appeal."²³⁰ They can be a result of generational sins, sins the victim's ancestors committed that have been passed on down to her as weaknesses and vulnerabilities to sin. Sins tend to be passed down family lines unless those curses have been broken.²³¹ If the abuse victim's parent or grandparent was the abuser, she may have an increased struggle with morality due in part to their sins being passed on down to her in addition to being raised in an immoral atmosphere.

It is a good idea for the abuse victim to ask God's forgiveness for the sins of her forefathers and reject those sins and curses verbally.²³² The following is a sample declaration from Neil Anderson's book *The Bondage Breaker*.

I here and now reject and disown all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into

²²⁹ Victory at the Cross *Introduction to Spiritual Warfare Course 1* (Sioux City: Institute for Biblical Counseling 2002) 67

²³⁰ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. 13 December 2003 <www.bartleby.com/61/>.

²³¹ Exodus 20:5; Isaiah 65:6-7

²³² Leviticus 26:40

the kingdom of God's dear Son, I cancel out all demonic working that may have been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified and raised with Jesus Christ and who sits with Him in heavenly places, I renounce all satanic assignments that are directed toward me and my ministry, and I cancel every curse that Satan and his workers have put on me. I announce to Satan and all his forces that Christ became a curse for me (Galatians 3:13) when He died for my sins on the cross. I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased me with His own blood. I reject all other blood sacrifices whereby Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. By the authority that I have in Jesus Christ, I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus Christ to leave my presence. I commit myself to my heavenly Father to do His will from this day forward.²³³

Soul Ties

A soul tie is a strong bond between two people. There are good, healthy soul ties: the bond between a parent and child, the bond between a husband and wife, and the bond between friends.²³⁴ These bonds are based on love, on what is Godly, and on what is eternal.²³⁵

The type of soul ties that are concern here though are unhealthy soul ties. It is a bond that was developed based on lust. 1 Corinthians 6:16 warns, "What? know ye not

²³³ Anderson, *Bondage* 207-208.

²³⁴ Ephesians 5:20; Genesis 40:20, 30; 1 Samuel 18:1

²³⁵ *Introduction* 175.

that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.” A soul tie can and often does develop in the abuse victim because of the abuser’s lust.

Indications that a soul tie is present are:

- Having dreams, nightmares or waking up in the middle of the night thinking about that person.
- When the mind continually focuses on that person.
- Continuing emotional reaction to another individual when you meet him or her unexpectedly, hear that person’s voice, or hear that individual’s name mentioned.
- Being emotionally afraid of a particular person.
- Having someone else’s face come to mind while being intimate with a spouse.
- Hearing a particular person’s voice in your head and / or talking with them.²³⁶

Most women who have been sexually abused as children will find that they have an unhealthy soul tie to their abuser. This bond can be broken by asking God to take back the ground that the enemy has in their lives as a result of these sexual sins. Here is a sample prayer for the renouncing of unhealthy soul ties.

I renounce my sexual union with _____ as a sin against God and my own body. I ask the cleansing blood of my Lord Jesus Christ to free me from the guilt and ground I’ve given by my sexual union with _____. I renounce the bonding oneness with _____ that took place in the sexual act, and I ask that I be freed from the consequences of all such bonding. I renounce all wicked spirits that have transfer claim against me because of that sexual sin. In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ I break and renounce all such transfer claim. I ask the

²³⁶ *Introduction 177.*

Lord Jesus Christ to send any and all transferred powers of darkness to where He wants them to go.²³⁷

Suicide

Women who were sexually abused are six times more likely to attempt to commit suicide.²³⁸ One survey found that 47.4% of women who had been abused as children struggled with suicidal thoughts.²³⁹ While some of these instances are pleas for attention, a significant number are not. Most people who attempt suicide do not really want to die, they just want to stop the pain. If a client is having thoughts about suicide the enemy is influencing her thoughts. It is important to bind the enemy and help the abuse victim see that she does have hope.

Bitterness

Virtually every childhood sexual abuse victim will become bitter toward her abuser, others she feels should have protected, and often toward God. It is impossible for her to progress very far in the healing process until she has faced the abuse, accepted the consequences of the abuse and forgiven her abuser and anyone else she is bitter toward.

“Soul wounds do not heal if they are ignored. They continue to shape and govern our emotions, our self-images and our ways of interacting in relationships, long beyond the childhood in which they were received.”²⁴⁰ If bitterness is pushed under the surface and ignored it will cause many other surface problems: anger, promiscuity, health problems, harshness, the inability to trust, and numerous other possibilities can pop up as

²³⁷ Mark I. Bubeck, *Spiritual Warfare Basics* (Sioux City: International Center for Biblical Counseling) 18.

²³⁸ “Sexual Assault Associated With Increased Rate of Attempted Suicide” (Dukemed, 12 June 1996. 5 March 2004) <<http://dukemednews.duke.edu/news/article.php?id=782>>.

²³⁹ An anonymous Internet survey of 114 abused women. Participants filled out a questionnaire on a sexual abuse counseling website. The raw data can be found at www.myjourney.homestead.com/surveystats.html

²⁴⁰ Groom

a result of unresolved bitterness.

Most abuse victims resist the idea of forgiveness. There is a God-given desire to see justice done. The victim who refuses to forgive does not have a good understanding of God's honor, that He loves her, and will be faithful to punish the one who has wronged her. She needs to see Him as her protector but she also needs to be confident that He will bring justice. Bitterness is an attempt on the victims part to be sure that sin is punished. She needs to have a peace in her heart that God will do what is right.²⁴¹ Only then will she be able to take the abuser off her hook.

The Bible contains many promises to avenge those who have been wronged. Matthew 18:6 says, "But whoso 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." God promises that "...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Galatians 6:7b-8. Romans 12:19 says, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Facing the abuse does not mean digging to find every horrible, grotesque memory so she can dwell on them and have a pity party for herself. It is being willing to face up to those horrible things instead of stuffing them down. It is asking God how He felt about the abuse and allowing Him to heal the pain.²⁴² It is dealing with the memories that God brings to the surface. It is important in this step to ask God to bind the enemy so the enemy cannot bring tormenting thoughts.

²⁴¹ Romans 12:19; Galatians 6:7b-8

²⁴² Matthew 18:6-11; Jeremiah 17:14

The abuse victim needs to understand that there is a difference between forgiveness and pardon. Forgiveness is releasing an offender emotionally, taking him off one's hook, and accepting the consequences of what he has done. Pardon is releasing him from the consequences of what he has done. God requires forgiveness, but pardon for sexual abuse is not the victim's to give.²⁴³ It is a judicial matter; God is the judge. He has already pronounced sentence on anyone who hurts one of His little children.²⁴⁴

One woman recounted her battle with bitterness this way:

“I am now learning that vengeance is not sweet like I thought it would be. As I am writing this, my stepfather is lying in a bed in the same room, gasping for breath, dying. His suffering has not brought the satisfaction that I once thought it would. My heart has changed, but God's justice has not.

I struggled with a deep hatred for my stepfather for ten years. When I was young, I used to think of ways to kill him, but over time God did a work in my heart. I did not want to forgive my stepfather, but I did want to be obedient to God. Over the years my bitterness subsided a bit, but it never really left, until I learned about releasing my stepfather.

I had to stop seeking revenge and desiring to see him punished. I made a conscious choice to accept the consequences of his sin in my life. I had to accept the loss of my childhood and innocence, the betrayal, and the venereal disease. When I accepted all those things without looking for someone to blame, my bitterness fell away in a moment. It was as if chains

²⁴³ Romans 12:19

²⁴⁴ Matthew 18:6

fell off my heart. I had a new freedom!

About two years later, my stepfather was having a very hard time breathing in the middle of the night. As my mother took him to the emergency room, I knelt by the couch and asked God to help him. (God had restored my pity for a suffering sinner.) As I prayed, the Lord clearly let me know that I had taken my stepfather off my hook, and now he was on God's hook. He has spent the past several years in a great deal of suffering. He has a continual struggle to breathe and asks to die every day.”²⁴⁵

Paul warns in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that Satan uses unforgiveness as a weapon against believers, “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” Unforgiveness can cause significant mental, emotional, and physical damage.

A victim may not be able to emotionally forgive right away. Often, God has to work these truths into her heart over time. When the victim chooses to forgive out of obedience to God, then in the spiritual realm, it is a completed work. However, she may not feel like she has forgiven, because she still feels the pain of emotional wounds that have not healed yet. There is a process to go through to be able to feel this forgiveness deep within one's self. The victim should literally invite God into this healing by telling Him all about how she feels and what hurt her, to ask God to show her how He wants her to regard the abuse and to show her how to handle it. David gives us many examples of this in his imprecatory Psalms. He cries out to God in his distress, even asking God to

²⁴⁵ Anonymous.

curse his enemies because they have broken God's Laws.²⁴⁶

Physical Aspects

In the survey done for this thesis, 65.9% of the women said that they had chronic depression, 35.1% said that they had either chronic fatigue or fibromialgia, and 40.4% said they had back problems.²⁴⁷ While there are many possible causes for these physical problems, some of the most likely causes are the stress of being in a long-term crisis and the stress caused by fear, insecurity, and especially by bitterness.²⁴⁸

There are also some possible physical consequences of the abuse that must be worked through and accepted. Some of these possible issues are the loss of virginity, sexually transmitted diseases, chronic urinary track infections, and an inability to conceive a child. Occasionally an adolescent will become pregnant as a result of sexual abuse. Many of these girls are forced to have abortions. As a result they will likely experience an intensified level of post abortion syndrome.

Healing

The best place to start in the healing of childhood sexual abuse is helping the client develop a solid relationship with God. Jeremiah 17:14 says, "Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise." The key is to help the abuse victim recognize the enemy's lies about God's nature and character, and the lies she believes about herself.

Edward Smith in his book, *Healing Life's Deepest Hurts*, says that the pain these abused women experience is not because of the actual abuse but it is a result of the

²⁴⁶ Psalm 28; 35; 55; 58; 69; 109; 129; 137;140

²⁴⁷ An anonymous Internet survey of 114 abused women. Participants filled out a questionnaire on a sexual abuse counseling website. The raw data can be found at www.myjourney.homestead.com/surveystats.html

²⁴⁸ Proverbs 17:22

lies these women have believed because of the abuse.²⁴⁹ Lies like, “I’m all alone,” “God can’t take care of me,” or “I’m used and dirty,” are what cause the pain.²⁵⁰ It is when the lies are replaced with God’s truth that healing occurs in the abuse victim’s life.

Conclusion

“... Healing is a process of undesignated time duration. Some may heal quicker than others; some may heal relatively completely, and some never. But this does not mean the end of the world...A person who has not been completely healed is not a sick individual. He or she still has normal reactions to abnormal events. For what they have been through, they are behaving normally, even though they are not totally restored to pre-trauma functioning.”²⁵¹

The enemy seeks to keep Christians out of balance. He often attempts to keep the abuse victim at an extreme. The wounded will tend to either have a victim mentality or be controlling, instead of allowing God to be her protector. She either dissociates from her pain or dwells on it and lets bitterness consume her, instead of allowing God to help them in their pain. In order to heal she must allow God to replace the enemy’s lies about the abuse with the truth.

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Peter 5:10

²⁴⁹ Edward Smith, *Healing Life’s Deepest Hurts*, (Ventura: Regal Books 2002) 48.

²⁵⁰ See the appendix for a longer list of lies.

²⁵¹ Hicks 163.

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Appendix

God's Relationship With Me

God wants to have an intimate relationship with me.

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31:3

God knows everything about me and He still loves me.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. Psalm 139:1-2, 9-10

God's love for me is not influenced by anything I ever did or ever will do.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. I John 4:10

The creator of the universe loves me.

Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love. For He foreordained us (destined us, planned in love for us) to be adopted (revealed) as His own children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the purpose of His will [because it pleased Him and was kind intent] Ephesians 1:4-5 Amp.

God is in control of everything in my life.

But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job 23:10

God never makes a mistake.

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. Psalm 18:30

God understands fully even when no one else does.

And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: Genesis 16:13

God has a plan for the crooked places.

But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring it to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Genesis 50:20

I am important to God.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with

thee. Psalm 139:17-18

God wants to help me today.

Fear not [there is nothing to fear], for I am with you; do not look around you in terror and be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen and harden you to difficulties, yes, I will help you; yes, I will hold you up and retain you with My [victorious] right hand of righteousness and justice. Isaiah 41:10 Amp.

I am not alone.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. Psalm 139:9-10

God is on my side.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? Psalm 118:6

God is always fair.

For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous but the way of the ungodly shall perish. Psalm 1:6

God always makes the right decisions.

Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 Amp.

God is a good and righteous judge.

But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

God hates sin.

But whoso 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

God spares me from His wrath because of what Christ did on the cross for me.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

God has realistic expectations of me today.

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30

God accepts me.

Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Psalm 139:16

God forgives me when I sin.

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed. Isaiah 44:22

God knows when I am trying to follow Him and He is pleased.

A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. Isaiah 42:3

God really loves me.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. I John 4:9

God suffers with me in my struggles.

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. II Corinthians 1:4

God hides me in the shadow of His wings.

He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: Psalm 91:4a

God has good things planned for my life.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

God is concerned with meeting my physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

God knows all the "what ifs" of my life.

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Psalm 119:165

God knows when I am overwhelmed.

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. Psalm 27:14

God collects my tears. He weeps with me.

Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? Psalm 56:8

God enjoys me.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. Zephaniah 3:3

God thinks that I am precious.

You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His

own]. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body. I Corinthians 6:20 Amp.

God has adopted me as His child.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Psalm 27:10

God loves me with an everlasting love.

Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. Jeremiah 31:3b

God feels compassion towards me.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Isaiah 40:11

God wants to bless me.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord endureth forever: Psalm 138:8a

God sees everything and hears when I pray.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

God knows all about me, even my secret thoughts.

Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite. Psalm 147:5

God calls me His beloved.

Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Colossians 3:12

God chose me and brought me close to Himself.

Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by right hand. Psalm 73:23

God protects me.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. Psalm 121:7

From the book *Taking Every Thought Captive* by Alaine Pakkala

Father's Love Letter

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1

I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2

I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31

For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27

In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28

For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28

I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5

I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12

You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16

I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26

You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13

And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6

I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44

I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1

Simply because you are my child and I am your father. 1 John 3:1

I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11

For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17

For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33

My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18

And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40

For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5

I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41

And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3

If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29

Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13

I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine, Ephesians 3:20

For I am your greatest encourager. 2Thessalonians 2:16-17

I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18

As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11

One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4

And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4

I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23

For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26

He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3

He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31

And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10
 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32
 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23
 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39
 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7
 I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15
 My question is, Will you be my child? John 1:12-13
 I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32
 Love, Your Dad. Almighty God

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My dearly loved Child,

I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with living kindness. You are the apple of My eye. I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands. No longer will they call you deserted for I will rejoice over you. I will take great delight in you; I will quiet you with My love, and I will rejoice over you with singing. I will gather you into my arms and carry you close to my heart.

I do not willingly bring affliction or grief to the children of men. I thought you would call me "Father" and not turn away from following Me. For I know the thoughts and the plans I have for you plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Come unto Me and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. My presence will go with you and I will give you rest. I am with you when you are with me. If you seek Me, I will be found by you. I go before you and will be with you; I will never, no never, no, never leave you or forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Look! I have been standing at the door and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears Me calling him and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with Me.

For I, the Lord your God, am a sun and shield; I bestow favor and honor. No good thing do I withhold from those who walk uprightly. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you will honor Me. I am the helper of the fatherless. I will deal with all who oppressed you I am close to the brokenhearted and save those who are crushed in spirit. Before you call I will answer; while you are yet speaking, I will hear. Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unreachable things you do not know. Though you are surrounded by troubles, I will bring you safely through them. I will clench My fist against your angry enemies.

Let me have all your worries and cares, for I am always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed; I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand. Now you don't need to be afraid, for I have ransomed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. Now you don't need to be afraid of the dark anymore, nor fear the dangers of the day; nor dread the plagues of darkness, nor disasters in the morning. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, your Savior, the holy One of Israel. The mountains may depart and the hills disappear, but My kindness shall not leave you. My promise of peace for you will never be broken.

If your father and your mother should forsake you, I, the Lord, will take you up. I will not leave you as an orphan; I will come to you. Can a mother forget her little child and not have love for her own son? Yet even if that should be, I will not forget you. I am the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. No mere man has ever seen, heard or even imagined what wonderful things I have ready for those who love Me.

Now you are no longer a stranger to Me and a foreigner to heaven, but you are a member of My very own family, a citizen of My country, and you belong in My household with every other Christian. And so you should not be like a cringing, fearful slave, but you should behave like My very own child, adopted into the bosom of My family and calling to Me, "Abba, Father." For My Holy Spirit speaks to you deep in your heart and tells you that you really are My child. And since you are My child, you will share My treasures for all I give to My Son, Jesus, is now yours too. He who overcomes will inherit all of this and I will be his God, and he will be My son.

With My unfailing love,
Your Father

~ Glenda Revell
With Love from a Mother's Heart
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Who I Am In Christ

I am God's child. John 1:12
 As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ. John 15:15
 I have been justified. Romans 5:1
 I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit. I Corinthians 6:17
 I have been bought with a price and I belong to God. I Corinthians 6:19-20
 I am a member of Christ's body. I Corinthians 12:27
 I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child. Ephesians 1:3-8
 I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. Colossians 1:13-14
 I am complete in Christ. Colossians 2:9-10
 I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:14-16

I am secure...
 I am free from condemnation. Romans 8:1-2
 I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances. Romans 8:28
 I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God. Romans 8:31-39
 I have been established, anointed and sealed by God. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
 I am hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1-4
 I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me. Philippians 1:6
 I am a citizen of heaven. Philippians 3:20
 I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7
 I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me. 1 John 5:18

I am significant ...
 I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life. John 15:5
 I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. John 15:16
 I am God's temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16
 I am a minister of reconciliation for God. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
 I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm. Ephesians 2:6
 I am God's workmanship. Ephesians 2:10
 I may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12
 I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13
 From *Victory Over the Darkness*, by Dr. Neil Anderson
 Who I Am In Christ <http://www.ficm.org/whoiam.htm>

Lies of the Enemy

I am a victim and helpless.
I will never change – it's hopeless.
I'm different and so is my problem, so it won't work for me.
I deserve to be punished and condemned.
I cannot face the awful truth about myself.
I am a product of my past.
God helps those who help themselves.
I am unworthy to be loved and accepted.
I need someone to validate me as a person.
I need something or someone to be secure.
I am not good.
I am unloved.
I am all alone.
I am ugly.
I am inadequate.
I am a failure.
I am cheap.
I will never amount to anything worthwhile.
I am hopeless.
I will never be any different.
I don't care.
I am worthless.
I am an idiot.
I am not worth anything.
It's all my fault, it's always my fault.
It's better to not do or say anything than to be wrong.
I don't know how to do anything right
I should be able to make everything OK.
Something is wrong with me.
I'll never get it right.
I have nothing to offer.
I don't deserve anything anyway.
Nobody understands me.
Nobody wants me around.
Nobody cares what I think or how I feel.
Everyone else is more important than me.
No one believes me.
If only I were better, others would like me.
Everybody hates me.
I'll never be appreciated or accepted.
I don't measure up.
I know something bad is going to happen.
God can't love me, there is nothing to love.
God has no reason to want me.

I can't trust God, He's not trustworthy.
 God won't hear my prayer if there is sin in my heart, so why bother to pray?
 God cares about everybody else but me.
 God is never there when I need Him.
 God always responds to me in anger.
 God doesn't love me.
 God is harsh and unloving.
 God will send me to hell.
 I can never trust Jesus.
 Life is too hard and painful.
 There's no point in trying.
 They'd all be better off without me.
 I give up.
 No one could see this and love me.
 From Biblical Concepts Counseling Workbook p. 116
 Advanced Biblical Counseling Course 2 p. 154

Renouncing of Fear Prayer

In the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bind all lying spirits causing fear and anxiety in me. I resist Satan and all his evil workers in the name of Jesus, and by His authority I command them to leave my presence. I declare that Satan is already defeated by Jesus at the cross. God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind. I therefore reject all fear and choose to walk by faith in the Holy Spirit's power, live in the light of God's love, and think with the sound mind of Christ.

Taken from Anderson, Neil T. Ritch Miller Freedom From Fear. Harvest House Publishers Eugene, Oregon 1999 p.204

In an anonymous website survey of women who had been sexually abused out of 114 respondents, the following statistics were reported:

Dissociative Identity Disorder	25 people	21.9%
Chronic Depression	75 people	65.8%
Bulimia	18 people	15.8%
Anorexia	14 people	12.3%
Over Eating	49 people	43%
Self Mutilation	43 people	37.7%
Chronic Fatigue or Fibromyalgia	40 people	35.1%
Back Problems	46 people	40.4%
Schizophrenia	3 people	2.6%
Bipolar Disorder	8 people	7%
Suicidal Thoughts	54 people	47.4%
Hearing Voices	16 people	14%