

Combating Spiritual Abuse: Lies of the Enemy

Victims of domestic violence face assault on every side, the worst of which may be spiritual abuse. The enemy will stop at nothing to keep his targets in a unique kind of bondage, often twisting Scripture itself to foist mental and emotional anguish on his victims, rendering them to a state of confusion.

Mark this carefully: where there's confusion, there is an enemy attack going on.

*Any message of fear, torment, obligation, isolation, shame, or any other soul-crushing feeling comes from the enemy.

*Messages of comfort, hope, love, belonging, peace, and freedom have but one source: the Holy Spirit.

The enemy is deceitful, the father of lies. He uses anyone who will cooperate to perpetuate falsehood and confusion. In addition to an abuser, willing tools of the enemy include “flying monkeys”--those who enable the abuse by siding with the abuser; those who spout religious-sounding epithets or even de-contextualized Scripture in order to maintain control (keep the victim in bondage).

To break free from the slavery of a pattern of sin against us, we must be wise as serpents yet harmless as doves ([Matt. 10:16](#)). Below are some helpful tools to help break the bondage.

Lie/Accusation	Truth/Response
“You are just as sinful as [the abuser]! Look at all the wrong you’ve done! You’re lucky [the abuser] will even put up with you!”	“There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:1)
“[The abuser] is just a normal person—he/she is not as you make	“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their

him/her out to be.”	own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Tim. 5:8)
“If you didn’t make [your abuser] so angry, [your abuser] would be a lot easier to live with.”	“Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.” (Prov. 22:24-25)
“You made a vow, and you are sinning if you leave.”	“I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don’t even eat with such people.” (1 Cor. 5:11)
Victim blaming using Prov. 14:1 (message: “If you leave, you’re tearing your family apart”)	“Stay away from fools, for you won’t find knowledge on their lips. The prudent understand where they are going, but fools deceive themselves.” (Prov. 14:7-8)
“Just stay and suffer for Jesus” (Jesus never endorsed oppression, inside or outside of the home)	“Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” (Prov. 13:20); “Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.” (Prov. 14:7)
“You have to obey God by staying in your situation”	“Redeem me from man's oppression, that I may keep your precepts.” (Ps. 119:134); “The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.” (Prov. 22:3)
“God won’t bless you if you leave.”	“[The Lord]. . . who executes justice

	<p>for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the prisoners free” (Ps. 146:7);</p> <p>“The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.” (Ps. 9:9)</p>
<p>“You have to submit to/obey your husband.”</p>	<p>“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29);</p> <p>mutual, not one-sided submission:</p> <p>“submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Eph. 5:21)</p>
<p>“It’s your Christian duty to stay.”</p>	<p>“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14)</p>
<p>“But he’s a Christian/pastor.”</p>	<p>“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.” (Heb. 3:12);</p> <p>“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’” (Matt. 7:21-23)</p>

“You should stay quiet or God’s testimony will be ruined.”

“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible” ([Eph. 5:11-13](#))

Additional resources:

[Run From Abusers](#)

[God’s Protection of Women](#)

[Untwisting Scriptures \(Rebecca Davis\)](#)

[Leslie Vernick \(Relationships Coach\)](#)

[Wilderness to Wild \(Women coming out of trauma\)](#)

[Psalm 82 Initiative](#)

[Patrick Weaver Ministries](#)

[Georgia Shaffer \(Coach; Women Growing Stronger\)](#)

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