

— BEREAN CARE —

Addressing our Hurt

Classes providing education
and tools to process emotions
and promote healing
for our faith family

Session 1: Introduction to Addressing Our Hurt

Pastor Brent Birdsall, Pastoral Care and Senior Adult Ministries

Difficult Experiences - A “One-Two Punch”

Tumultuous loss of a pastor

Social distancing of the coronavirus pandemic

The Importance of Feelings – Lessons from Stephen Ministry

Definition – My internal reactions generate by my own interpretation of people, events and life experiences.

Not dealing with them leads to a “boiling pot.”

Healthy response to feelings

Recognize

Accept

Express

Trust

The Format for Addressing Our Hurt

- Tier One: **Core Issues** – Videos available online
- Tier Two: **Conversation** – This is challenging because of social distancing restrictions.

We will form groups led by therapists. On Berean’s website, select a group that addresses the issue about which you are most concerned.

- Tier Three: **Consult** – Meet with a pastor to determine your next steps

Session 2 // Part 1: Abuse in General

Lynda Koehler, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, M.A., M.B.A.

Agenda

- Healthy Behaviors and Relationships
- Categories of Abuse
- The Power and Control Wheel – Behaviors and Tactics Used and the Impact on Targets and Survivors
- Spiritual Abuse
- Appendix
 - Resources
 - References

Hallmarks of a Healthy Relationship

What are essentials in any thriving relationship?

- *Mutuality* (Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 2 Corinthians 8:13-14)
- *Freedom* (Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4)

“The Christian teaching does not offer a choice between fulfillment and sacrifice, but rather mutual fulfillment through mutual sacrifice. When you are the only one in your relationship caring, repenting, being respectful and honest, sacrificing and working toward being a better partner, you are godly, but you don’t have a healthy or biblical relationship.” – Tim Keller

Biblical Grounding on Relationships

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23 ESV).

“But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man” (Matthew 15:18 ESV).

Destructive Behaviors and Abuse

- Misuse of power and control in a relationship
- Destructive behavior and abuse: a *pattern* of degrading, deceiving, dominating, disrespecting, and dismissing someone’s feelings, harming or hurting another person for personal gain at the expense of the other person

What Is Destructive and Abusive Behavior*?

- Facts: 1 out of 3 Christian women* and 2 out of every 5 men** experience some kind of destructive behavior and abuse in their marriage and/or relationship.
- The *repetitive pattern* as well as lack of awareness, lack of remorse, and lack of significant change when confronted
- *What it is not*: one abusive or destructive “incident” does not equal an abusive pattern.

What’s the Line Between Healthy and Destructive Behaviors?

The Question: What is the purpose, or the motivation of my heart, when I choose the behavior?

- Example: use of silence
- The *intention of the action* determines whether the behavior is destructive.
- Behaviors used intentionally, at the expense of the other person and for the benefit of the person using destructive behaviors, is misuse of power and control.

The motivation of the heart is what separates what’s destructive from what’s healthy.

Categories and Faces of Destructive Behaviors

Destructive Behaviors and Abuse Requires a System That Works Together

1. The person who chooses repeated abusive behaviors of power and control
2. Victim/target
3. Complicit culture/environment

An abusive pattern cannot happen unless all three of these things are present.

What Is Grooming?

1. Involves methodical manipulation to create vulnerability to exploitation
2. A gradual and methodical, systematic, planned process
3. The person choosing to groom and manipulate picks target, builds trust, and the actual destructive behaviors do not come until much later.
4. Once they have trust, they start asking the person for something in return...
5. Grooming can happen in person or online and with one individual, group, family or community.

Examples of Grooming

Physical

- Attention, compliments, “special” glances
- Comments on appearance
- Small touches that are not considered intimate
- Small, intimate touches that become more intimate over time

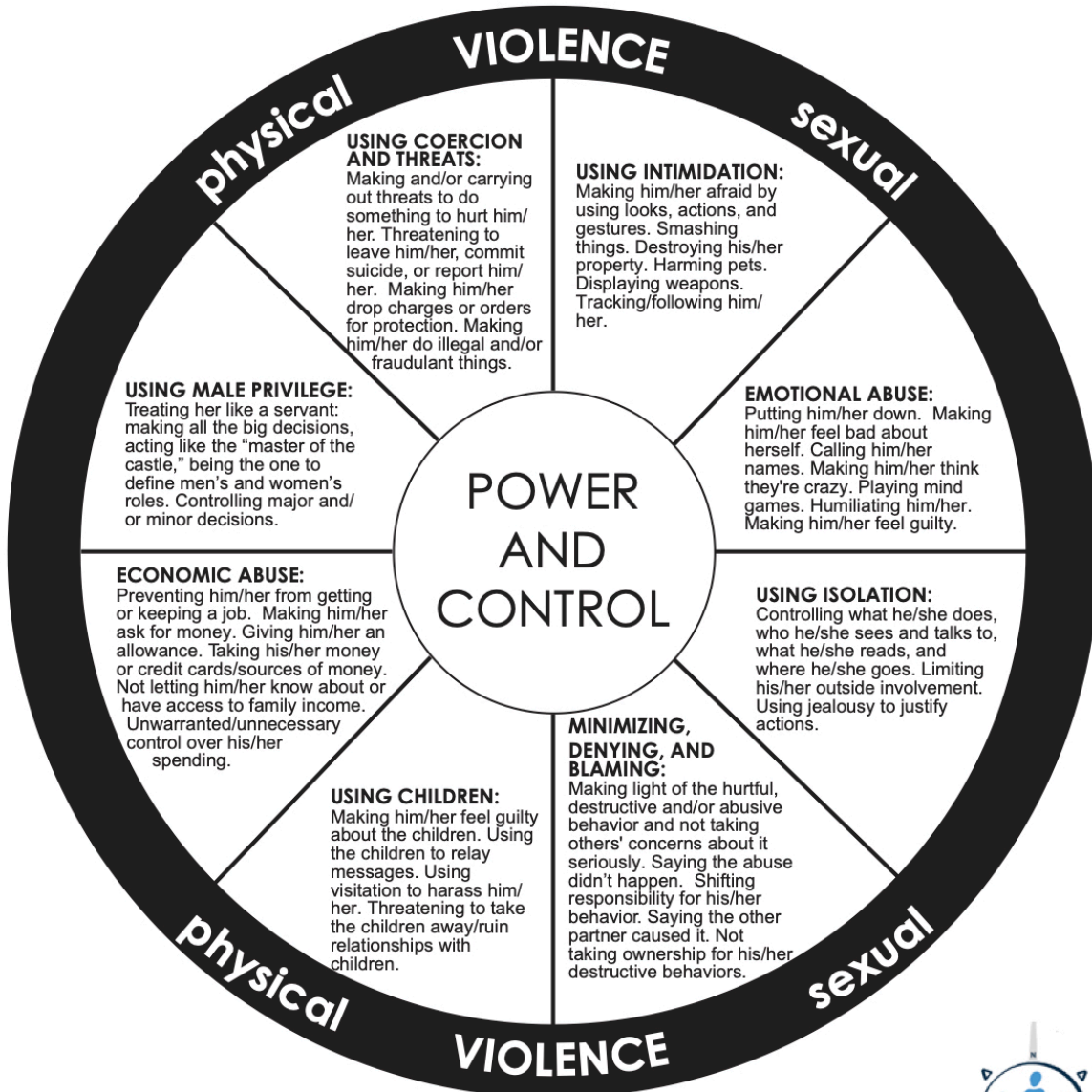
Psychological

- Sending the message that “I am committed to the wellbeing of the target.” “I know what’s best for you/us.”
- Isolation from others “It’s none of their business...”

Grooming

“Grooming behaviors are not impulsive. What happens is that they groom their targets over weeks or even months...they get to know the target and their group, family, congregants, elders or broader community. They’re going to begin to build trust first.”

POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



Developed by and adapted from:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
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The Power and Control Wheel

- Physical and sexual harm are two types of *overt* violence and harm toward a person.
- Power and Control is at the center of the wheel.
- Spokes of the wheel reflect *covert* behaviors systematically used to intentionally control or dominate another person.
- Behaviors are gender neutral.

Destructive Behaviors: Physical — The Rim of the Wheel

- Slapping, punching, hitting, kicking
- Spitting
- Scratching, pinching, biting
- Grabbing, shaking
- Shoving, pushing
- Restraining, twisting
- Throwing, pulling hair
- Choking, burning
- Purposeful overdosing
- Using weapons against the victim

Sexual Abuse and Destructive Sexual Behaviors — The Rim of the Wheel

- Coerced sex by manipulation
- Coerced by threat of physical force
- Violent sex
- A kind of sex the partner does not want
- Sex at a time the partner does not want it
- Drugging the target
- Being coerced or manipulated into watching pornography

Destructive Behaviors + Misuse of Power and Control – The Spokes of the Wheel

- Using intimidation
- Psychological/emotional abuse
- Using isolation
- Minimizing, denying and blame-shifting (includes rationalizing, justifying, spiritualizing)
- Using children
- Economic/financial abuse
- Using male privilege
- Using coercion and threats

What are destructive behaviors?

- A *pattern* of degrading, deceiving, dominating, disrespecting, and dismissing someone's feelings for the purposes of getting the person to do what they want
- Behaviors systematically used to intentionally control or dominate another person for personal gain

The Honor and Respect Wheel – No Misuse of Power and Control

- Non-threatening behavior
- Respect
- Trust and support
- Honesty and accountability
- Responsible parenting
- Shared responsibility
- Economic partnership
- Negotiation and fairness

There *Is* Proper Authority!

- Human authority is derived from God.
- Reflects the character of God
- Always blesses those with less authority
- Held with great humility

Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28 ESV).

Key Scriptures: Philippians 2:3-11, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 23:8, John 7:18a, James 1:5-6

Common Questions About the System

1. The person who chooses to abuse
2. The target
3. The complicit culture/environment

Why Does a Person Choose Abusive Behaviors?

- Destructive behaviors are learned behaviors.
 - They are born out of our sin nature — Manifested by powerlessness, insecurity and shame.
- People who *choose* these behaviors have learned that this is an appropriate and effective way to control others for *personal gain* through:
 - Family experiences
 - Trauma/victimization
 - Various media
 - Societal acceptance
 - Cultural acceptance within a relationship/home/organization

What Does Abuse Do to the Target?

- Abusive tactics are control consisting of a variety of verbal attacks aimed at eroding a person's sense of self.
- Verbal attacks usually focus on a person's vulnerabilities.
- Abusive behaviors are intended to try to control a person's time, activities and contact with others.
- Control over the person is gained through a combination of tactics *over time* that distort truth and reality.
- Isolation breeds confusion and cooperation.

Why Do Targets Stay?

- Feelings and beliefs – altered identity
- Fear
- Isolation
- Lack of resources

How Do Targets Become Targets?

- Victim-based thinking
- Learned helplessness
- Shame-based relationships that deliver shame-based messages inconsistent with God's design

The Target is never to blame.

Complicit Culture/Environment

Cultural – (Environments) enable the abuse

- Group, family, friend-groups, community – as well as churches, elders, congregants
- An individual who builds trust and admiration of groups over time, causing us to disregard warning signs

Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Do *I* use “ungodly power and control” with anyone in my life?
2. Am *I* the target of anyone in my life?
3. Am *I* a bystander in witnessing someone being treated inappropriately?
 - Am *I* using someone as an “object” for myself in some way for personal gain?
 - Am *I* showing Christ in me or a destructive spirit?
 - What is *my* heart reflecting in my behaviors?
 - Am *I* playing a part in system, group or my own family that is unhealthy in some way?

Additional Questions to Journal or Ask Others

1. How am I impacting you?
2. What’s it like for you to live with me?
3. What’s it like for you to be in a relationship with me?
4. Do you see me doing any of this?
5. Am I ignoring or minimizing cries for help that I’ve seen? Or cries for help that have been reported to me or I may know about in some way?
6. What’s the next right thing for me to do?

How Do I Respond? Faith Community and Faith Leaders

You may be the first link to safety.

Session 2 // Part 2: Spiritual Abuse in Particular

Lynda Koehler, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, M.A., M.B.A.

Spiritual Abuse: Short Definition

Spiritual abuse is a pattern of distorting biblical truths and legitimate authority to coerce, control, deceive, hurt, harm or damage another for personal gain.

Key Scriptures: Matthew 23, Luke 17:1-2, Mark 10:42-45, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Titus 1:10-11, Titus 1:7-9, Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:5, 1 Tim 3:1-7

Spiritual Abuse Requires a System That Works Together

1. The person who misuses power, control and proper authority and carries out a harmful, illegal or immoral act of deception
2. Victim/target
3. Complicit culture/environment

An abusive pattern cannot happen unless all three of these things are present.

How the Church Is Groomed

- Physical
- Psychological grooming
- Groups, families, leaders, elders, congregants – The person builds trust and admiration over time, causing a culture to disregard warning signs.

*It can be stopped at **any** point.*

The Church's Internal Dialogue

"He was just such a great and gifted preacher."

"But look at the spiritual fruit – look at the growth!"

"I don't want to rock the boat because we're doing so well..."

"Why can't we just accept him back?"

"It's none of my business."

"I didn't give enough grace to him for his failures."

"We don't want to get involved."

“The leadership of this church must know what they’re doing.”

“God was using him! That should be enough.”

“We all have sins from many years ago – God forgives.”

“I was just really too hard on him.”

“If those people just would have kept quiet – they have an evil motive.”

“We just need to forgive.”

“Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless.
Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Wrapped Up as a Gift and Used Under Assumed Proper Authority

Biblical Grounding on Proper Authority

- Jesus’ use of proper spiritual authority: Matthew 11:28, 23:8; John 7:18a
- Jesus was not “image conscious:” Matthew 23:27
- Jesus was not paranoid. He had nothing to hide about his ministry: John 18 (His ministry was conspicuously open to the public.)
- Jesus was publicly and privately congruent in his behavior and beliefs: 1 Peter 2:22; 2 Cor 5:21; Hebrews 4:15.
- Jesus did not fear to criticize the religious leaders or their faulty doctrines: Matthew 15:1-9; 23:1-39
- Jesus, when confronted with criticism, did not try to control his accusers or demand silence. Rather, he gave answers based in Scripture: Luke 7:36-47; Matthew 19:3-9
- Jesus upheld the high standards of the Law, yet he clearly placed the legitimate needs of people before any rules or regulations: Matthew 12:1-13; Mark 2:23-3:5
- The Pharisees, who did not demonstrate proper authority, shepherding, or role modeling, were quite unbalanced in their perception of what mattered most to God: Matthew 23:23

Biblical Grounding: David Crosses a Line

- As a king, David’s role was to lead and protect his subjects from harm.
- Instead of protecting Bathsheba from harm, King David misuses his power to violate her and murder her husband Uriah.
- He has used his authority not for the good of his country, but for his own selfish interests.
- You can read on in 2 Samuel 12 to see what message Nathan the prophet will bring to David. God will hold David to account for his misuse of power.

Biblical Grounding on Our Identity and Misuse

Some Basic Biblical Truths

- We are totally loved by God.
- We are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- We are given gifts from the Spirit uniquely designed for us.
- We are of value to God.
- We are image bearers of God.
- We are here to glorify God.
- We are redeemed.
- We are saints.
- We are joint heirs.

Truths Misused for Personal Gain

- Our ambitions, appetites and longings for approval can take us to places that our character won't sustain.
- They will take us to places that we don't have the capacity to resist. And in those places...
- Our dreams become our rights.
- Our needs become our necessities.
- Our popularity determines our success.
- Our success and celebrity are interpreted like it's a special anointing.

Four Main Characteristics of Pastoral Abuse

1. Superiority: Power and Control
2. Deny Reality and Deceive
3. Entitlement and Intimidation
4. Lack Empathy and Remorse
 - Live in a "Hero, Victim, Martyr" Context
 - Quickly "Flip the Script" to become the Victim or Martyr

What God Says About Pride

- God tells us not to idolize people (Matthew 4:10, Acts 12:22).
- God hates pride (Psalm 101:5, 1 Peter 5:5, the Book of Esther).
- God will punish the proud (Proverbs 16:18, 2 Chronicles 26: 1-23).

Immorality, Sexual Sin and Grooming

- “I just want to help you. Just trust me. It looks like you’re carrying a lot of pain, but you don’t have to tell me about it right now. We can keep meeting. You’ll get more comfortable over time with telling me more...”
- “We’re just brothers and sisters in Christ. You can trust me.”
- “We don’t have to leave the door open.” “We can meet at a coffee shop this time, or I can come to your house, but let’s be sure no one is home, so we have privacy when we talk.”
- “Physical contact is a good thing. It’s a gift from God.”
- “I think you have intimacy issues. I can help you with that.”
- “It’s okay for you to talk to me about the sexual details of your marriage/relationship.”
- “God will forgive us ... He’s a loving God...”

Other Examples

- *Minimizing* – “I just kissed/touched/stroked your hair/hugged you. It’s not that big of a deal anyway.”
- *Spiritualizing, Manipulating and Blame-Shifting* – “What just happened was wrong. We shouldn’t have done that. But God can forgive us. He can forgive you for tempting me.”
- *Lying and Denial* – “You don’t remember that right. You’re the one who came on to me, and I stopped you. That never happened. It wasn’t like that. What’s wrong with you? Part of what you said is true.”

Professional Ethics: A Pastor’s Sacred Trust

- Pastoral boundary crossings can be very confusing because pastors are trusted spiritual leaders.
- Spiritual leaders carry the highest forms of trust, power and authority over others.

Boundaries

- The Question: Who has the most power and authority in the relationship?
- It is *never* the vulnerable person’s (the person with less power and authority) responsibility to maintain boundaries.

*A leader helping a person in a counseling or any pastoral relationship, who sexualizes or objectifies their target **for their own personal gain** has crossed a **clear** line.*

- ***In every situation, pastors are 100% responsible*** whenever a boundary is crossed (physical, sexual, financial, spiritual, psychological/emotional).
- *Note:* Even if someone is 18, when a boundary is crossed by a pastor, what is happening is not consensual because of the *power and authority differential* between the pastor and the congregant.
- Pastors are not allowed to have sexual contact with congregants. Period.

Proper use of authority is biblical.

Why Manipulation over Ministry?

Reminder: Spiritual Abuse Requires a System That Works Together

1. The person who misuses power, control and proper authority and carries out a harmful, illegal or immoral act of deception
2. Victim/target
3. Complicit culture/environment

An abusive pattern cannot happen unless all three of these things are present.

*And at **any** point, it can be stopped!*

Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Am I a person with abusive or addictive behavior patterns? Am I abusing someone or being abused?
2. Am I misusing proper authority?
3. Is *my* character different at home than at church?
4. Is *my* private life congruent with my public life?
5. What *was/is* my role in the complicit culture? What are the red flags that I may have rationalized, justified, denied or minimized?
6. What about this situation do I need to ask God for wisdom and discernment?
7. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind” (James 1:5-6 ESV).

8. How am *I* moving through forgiveness? Am I letting God work on *my* heart?
9. Have *I* made choices that created an image of someone I held above God? Did I give the place of high worship to a person in place of God?

How Do You Tell?

- Does the behavior pass the “How Would Jesus Behave” test?
- Is the behavior congruent with the Word of God?
- Does what you’re experiencing line up against those descriptions?
- If at all possible, rely on your trusted community to help guide you.

When we are caught up in patterns of deception and manipulation, it can be hard for us to see it.

Healing from Spiritual Abuse

- Healthy recovery begins with acknowledging what happened and how.
- Naming the problem. Talking about it. Knowing you’re not alone is vital.
- Remember basic biblical truth: Forgiveness is one-sided. Reconciliation is two-sided and requires confession and repentance. Trust is earned.
- Share your experiences and what you’ve learned to help with wise counsel in someone else’s need.
- Support each other, sharing the healing love of Christ.
- Use caution. Even legitimate anger, if not properly channeled and dealt with, can degenerate into bitterness and cynicism toward everything spiritual.
- There are many resources about spiritual abuse and recovery at the end of this presentation. Choose and decide what’s right and best for *your* journey.
- Allow a time for full recovery. There is a role for spiritual and professional counseling. Seek those trained in abuse and trauma recovery.
- Journal the questions posed in this presentation for you. Take your time and confront the truth when needed.

Session 3: Journey of Grief

Debbie Scheide, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, M.A.

A Story of Grief

Debbie shares part of her own story.

Grief Defined

Grief is a normal and natural response to loss of any kind. You may have lost someone or something to which a bond or affection was formed.

Loss is the cause of suffering.

Loss can cause deep sadness.

Grief is one of the most powerful of all emotions. It is often neglected and misunderstood.

Grief by Another Name

Affliction

Anguish

Heartache

Heartbreak

Sorrow

Woe

Distress

Suffering

Despair

Downhearted

Remorse

Genesis 3

The Garden was perfect.

The serpent deceived.

Adam and Eve were expelled ... Suffering was born.

In their *suffering* and *grief*, Adam and Eve may have experienced ...

Guilt Disbelief Confusion Fear Anger Hopelessness

References to Grief from Scripture

- Luke 22:62 Peter wept after he denied knowing Jesus for the third time.
- John 11:35 Jesus wept after learning Lazarus had died.
- 1 Peter 1:6 Grief due to various trials
- Colossians 3:13 Forgive whatever grief we have against one another.
- Ephesians 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13 God does not want us to have grief like those who have no hope.
- Psalm 6:7 David's eyes grew weak with grief.
- Psalm 116:3 Overcome by trouble and sorrow
- Isaiah 60:20 Days of sorrow will end.
- Jeremiah 31: 12 No more sorrow
- Revelation 7:17 God will wipe away every tear.
- Luke 7: 37-38 A sinful woman washes Jesus' feet with her tears.
- 2 Corinthians 2:4 Paul had anguish and tears.

Many Expressions of Grief

- *Absent*: no acknowledgement of suffering
- *Masked*: appears in emotional, physical, or behavioral symptoms that are not characteristic. Even the person experiencing this type of grief may not recognize they have changed.
- *Inhibited*: outward signs of grief do not appear; grief is suppressed, kept private, or physical manifestations may appear.
- *Distorted*: may appear with extreme feelings of guilt or anger, or a noticeable change in behavior, hostile towards others, or self-destructive behavior.
- *Disenfranchised*: grief that is dismissed or disregarded by others.

- *Complicated* (traumatic or prolonged): grief that becomes severe due to longevity and prevents life from returning to “normal.” The nature of the relationship, personality, life experiences, etc., dictates if the grief is complicated. Life impact indicates if the grief is complicated.
- *Chronic*: grief that is related to the reality or belief there is no end in sight. Hopelessness, denial, avoidance, depression, substance abuse, addiction, etc.
- *Exaggerated*: consistently worsens as time goes on; may result in destructive behavior towards self or others.

Expressions of Grief:

How Our Church Family May Be Experiencing Grief

- *Collective*: when a community grieves together; experienced due to disaster or community loss.
- *Cumulative*: multiple losses are experienced; often within a short period of time. There is insufficient time to grieve one loss before another one or more occurs.
- *Secondary Losses*: occurs after the first or primary loss and effects multiple areas of life; occurs as a result of the emotional response to the primary loss.
- *Anticipatory*: grief that starts long before the event occurs. It can start with an expectation of loss.
- *Delayed Grief*: reactions and emotions are postponed until later. Additional or other losses can trigger grief about past losses.

Seven Stages of Grief

1. *Shock and denial*: numbed disbelief, denial of reality. Denial helps you avoid the pain that is undeniable.
2. *Pain and guilt*: when disbelief and denial no longer work, suffering and pain follows. Feel guilt or inflict guilt over what you or someone “should” have done.
3. *Anger and bargaining*: question, lash out, blame someone (even God). You may also try to bargain with God or someone for your desired outcome.
4. *Depression, reflection, loneliness*: a period of sad reflection can overtake you. You integrate the reality of what is true. Emptiness or despair may set in.
5. *Upward turn*: the loss is integrated. You feel calmer, organized. Physical, emotional, and spiritual symptoms start to improve.
6. *Reconstruction*: you seek realistic solutions, you reinvest, you start to function again without the person or thing you lost.
7. *Acceptance and hope*: you accept and deal with reality on a deeper level. You may not be happy about the loss, but you believe in possibilities of moving forward. You believe, you plan, you hope. You find another kind of joy.

The House: A Visual for Our Life (several slides)

The Ideal Home – filled with *Love Hope Trust Joy Peace Faith*

The Impact of Grief – Our house is flooded ...

The Healing Process – The flood begins to subside

The Healing Process – My “grief box” in the basement

The Healing Process – the return of ... *Love Hope Trust Joy Peace Faith*

How Do I Know If I Have Grief?

Grief and Loss Timeline (sample)

Mom died 1999	Divorced 2002	Son off to college 2005	Dad cancer 2015	Dog died 2017
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What are some of the major losses you have experienced and where do they fit in your timeline?

Personality – How each person uniquely responds to events in their environment

Symptoms of Grief

Emotional Reactions

sadness	anger
fear	numbness
sorrow	guilt
confused	abandoned
depressed	hopeless
lonely	shock
bitter	distressed
chaotic	embarrassed
mistrust	apathy
flashbacks from past trauma	

Physical Reactions

anxious	fatigue
headaches	insomnia
lethargy	weakness
low energy	crying
hyper-sleep	

Social Reaction

Isolation	withdraw
avoidance	lonely
judgment	criticism
abandon	shame
embarrassed	loss
reputation damaged	
corporate identity	

Spiritual Reaction

doubt	lose faith
anger	unforgiving
guilt	confusion
fear	projection
blame	judgment
mistrust	
spiritual implication	

Whatever You Feel Is Normal

Together We Heal

- Understand healing takes *time* and you are on your own timeline. Healing begins by acknowledging that a loss exists.
- *Ask* God to enter into your healing process. This step acknowledges that you are willing, even choosing, to recover.

- When we *surrender* our hurt, we give God the opportunity to show us how he wants to transform our life through healing. Humility (turning toward God, learning, and growing) or Pride (security in what was known)
- *Decide* if you need to work alone or invite others into your healing work.
- Give yourself and others *grace* that we can only get from God. We need honesty, patience, and mercy for one another.
- Seek to *understand* yourself, what you are feeling, and what do you uniquely need to help you heal. Recognize that others are also unique and have different needs.
- Ask yourself how your words, attitudes, deeds, etc. will *contribute* to how you and the church heals.
- We need to *let go* of blame and efforts to lay responsibility on someone or something.
- Understand that *forgiveness* does not mean *reconciliation* will happen. Forgiveness also does not mean *trust* will be restored. Do not feel the need to hand out *easy grace*.
- Recognize that only God can *restore* what has been lost. There is a reason only he can restore us. *He is the Author of our story* in the first place.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Use these questions to journal and as a starting point for further conversations.

1. In what way(s) have you suffered or experienced grief related to what has happened in the past few months? You may want to include past events that have resurfaced recently.
2. How do you think you are doing with your grief right now? Can you identify the stage of grief you are in and what you need to move toward healing?

3. What emotional, physical, spiritual (personally), or social symptoms have you experienced previously or now?
4. Have you experienced any spiritual symptoms directly related to being part of Berean or the family of God in general?
5. Have you invited others into your grief? Have you entered into the healing process of Berean as a community?
6. Have you developed a daily discipline for helping yourself, or your church community, find healing? (Examples: seeking God thorough silence, prayer, fasting, Scripture, etc.)
7. Has your recent experience with grief produced any self-awareness? Has God used this present grief to reveal anything to you, about you?

Session 4: Above Reproach

The Character of a Trustworthy Leader

Pastor Roger Thompson, Teaching Pastor and Men's Ministries

No Human Leader Is Perfect

You know it – don't fantasize.

He/she knows it – don't pretend.

Two Kinds of Leaders

- Transactional
- Transformational

I Peter 5:1-5

Shepherd

- Compassion – Using the “staff”
- Protection – Using the “rod”

Oversight

- Willingly: not under compulsion
- Eagerly: not for shameful gain
- Example: not domineering

Humility

- Congruence
- Clarity

Appendix

Biblical Grounding: Contrasts Between the Wise and Foolish

The five who were foolish didn't take enough oil for their lamps, but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil (Matthew 25: 3, 4).

The wise can see where they are going, but fools walk in the dark (Ecclesiastes 2:14).

Wise people think before they act; fools don't — and even brag about their foolishness (Proverbs 13:16).

The wise inherit honor, but fools get only shame (Proverbs 3: 35).

Wise is like a person who builds a house on solid rock; foolish is like a person who builds a house on sand (Matthew 7: 24, 26).

The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice (Proverbs 12:15).

Wise words bring approval, but fools are destroyed by their own words (Ecclesiastes 10:12).

The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down (Proverbs 14:1).

A wise person thinks a lot about death, while a fool thinks only about having a good time (Ecclesiastes 7:4).

The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get (Proverbs 21:20).

Biblical Grounding: Foolish People

Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man. He is a fool, just as his name suggests (1 Samuel 25:25).

Then Saul confessed, "I have sinned ... I have been a fool and very, very wrong" (1 Samuel 26:21).

Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God" (Psalm 14:1).

The man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys himself (Proverbs 6:32).

People who worship idols are stupid and foolish. The things they worship are made of wood! (Jeremiah 10:8).

O God, you know how foolish I [David] am; my sins cannot be hidden from you (Psalm 69:5).

I [Asaph] was so foolish and ignorant— I must have seemed like a senseless animal to you (Psalm 73:22).

Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God (Luke 12:21).

But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant! (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Oh, foolish Galatians! ... How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? (Galatians 3: 1, 3).

Grooming

“The target often struggles with profound confusion, self-blame and massive shame are huge obstacles to both disclosure and healing. These inner struggles are reflected and reinforced by the victim-blaming attitudes encountered from friends, relatives, professionals, health professionals, faith communities and boards of inquiry.”

“The road followed is methodical, but generally unperceivable pattern of “grooming.” Most targets only become aware of what happened to them only in hindsight and then blame themselves for not having recognized the red flags as they appeared... The grooming process may take weeks, months, or years, depending on the patient’s vulnerability. At its peak, the victim is isolated, frightened and confused about their emotional health and what is happening.”

Sexual grooming: *“In order for the process of entrapment to take place, the perpetrator must first gain access to the potential victim through various exploitive means...deceptive trust development describes the predator’s ability to build a trusting relationship with the target in order to improve the likelihood of sexual encounter...as perpetrators are grooming their victims and building deceptive trust, they also work to isolate them both physically and emotionally from their support network.”*

In-person or online (Snapchat, instant messaging, “secure” messaging, other social media, gaming systems with “chat” features, etc.)

Why Does Grooming Happen?

In some cases, the person choosing to groom and manipulate is clearly motivated by their own financial or material gain.

Many cases of grooming lead to sexual abuse. Again, in these instances it’s clear to see what the person choosing to groom and manipulate is getting out of the arrangement.

But in some cases of grooming it might be difficult to identify a motive. Unfortunately, some people just enjoy having power over others, for a boost of their ego or their identity because they’re so insecure.

Signs of Grooming

The target becomes withdrawn or they may seem troubled by something but unwilling to talk about it. Alternatively, their emotions might become more volatile.

You notice them using or wearing new things — gifts.

The person choosing to groom and manipulate often aims to isolate their targets from their family or friends. If they seem reluctant to see you, or they refuse a visit, it might be because someone’s manipulating them.

You notice that sums of money have disappeared from the person’s bank account or the person claims they cannot pay for food or bills.

Greater and greater demands for privacy turn into secrecy.

Agitation and depression are common.

The target might be spending more time on the phone, or online, than usual. But they won’t say what sites they’re visiting or who they’re talking to.

They start talking about a new “friend,” “boyfriend,” or “girlfriend,” and it’s not clear who they are or how they met them.

Or, a target starts talking about an issue or a cause that’s never really interested them before.

Grooming a Culture/Environment

The person choosing destructive behaviors very methodically manipulates to build trust with groups, families, communities, churches, elders and congregants over time – building admiration with authority.

Sometimes targets work to convince others that the person is there for a God-given reason or that “all things are working together for good.”

We see that there’s something not right, but we don’t think we can say anything because we trust the person and they are in a position of authority – that’s the belief system.

Someone who very methodically builds trust with groups, families, communities, churches, elders and congregants over time – builds admiration that causes others to disregard red flags, because it is hard to believe that this person they have come to know and admire would do something so harmful.

We think something’s not right, but then we say to ourselves, “Oh, I trust them. I don’t want to rock the boat. They know what they’re doing.” We minimize or dismiss our red flags.

We begin to question our own internal dialogue and reality about what we may be seeing, and we even feel guilt and confusion for talking about it.

Why Do Targets Stay?

- Fear – they’re afraid that the other person will keep escalating. The abuser says things like, “If you _____, then I’ll _____” – harm or hurt to the target, your reputation, your belongings ... something or someone you care about.
- Isolation or lack of resources – they’re afraid they don’t have trusted people to tell who can lend helpful, informed and wise emotional support and not blame them.
- They’re ashamed and feel alone. They’re confused and feel “crazy” about what’s really happening.
- Feelings and beliefs – they think it’s their fault. They believe the person harming them. They minimize the severity of what’s happening.
- They deny, they rationalize and justify why it’s happening and why they deserve it.

The Target’s Internal Dialogue

“This is my fault.”

“If I wouldn’t have _____, then he wouldn’t have _____.”

“I would have said something earlier, but I was worried I was blowing something out of proportion. And I didn’t think people would believe me.”

“I really thought he loved me. I thought the relationship was really going to go somewhere.”

“I thought I was the only one. I thought I was special.”

“I’m going to be blamed. My family will suffer. I’ll suffer.”

“I can’t trust my own memory. Did it really happen that way?”

More on Spiritual Abuse

Jesus contrasts existing Gentile rulers, who “lord” it over those in their charge, with faithful Christian ministers who act as “servants” to those in their care. In Matthew 23, Jesus sharply criticizes religious leaders who unduly “burden” others without supporting them (v. 4); who “shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces” (v. 13), and who hypocritically insist on petty legalistic observances while neglecting to show “justice, mercy and faithfulness” (v. 23).

In Luke 17:1-2 he warns the disciples against those – in this context quite probably fellow disciples or leaders – who cause “little ones” to sin, where the “little ones” are most likely either those young in faith or young in years. Peter expounds on this same theme of servanthood when urging the elders among his correspondents to “shepherd the flock of God...not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3 ESV).

Paul, likewise, rebukes religious “empty talkers and deceivers” who “upset whole families” and “teach things they should not teach” (Titus 1:10-11). By contrast, authentic spiritual overseers are distinguished by the fact that they are neither “arrogant” nor “quick tempered,” by their being neither “violent,” not “greedy for gain,” and by their characteristic hospitality, goodness, prudence, uprightness, devoutness and self-control (Titus 1:7-9).

Even when in certain contexts both Jesus and Paul also commend the exercise of church discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:5), they still do so with these fundamental qualities of humility, compassion, grace and pastoral concern very much in mind. The Bible is very clear that authority does not imply entitlement to one’s own way. God’s Word gives specific instructions to those in authority on how to handle that responsibility.

Throughout the Old Testament God often rebuked the leaders of Israel for their self-centered, deceitful, and abusive shepherding of God’s flock. (See, for example, Deuteronomy 13; Jeremiah 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:2-4.)

Likewise, those in spiritual positions of authority can violate our trust. It’s possible to become so determined to defend a spiritual place of authority, a doctrine or way of doing things that you wound and abuse anyone who questions, disagrees, or doesn’t “behave” spiritually the way you would want them to.

When your words and actions tear down or take advantage of another, attack or weaken a person’s standing as a Christian – to gratify *you*, *your* position or *your* beliefs, while at the same time weakening or harming another, that is spiritual abuse.

Leaders’ attempts to find fulfillment through the religious performance of the very people whom they are to serve and build is an inversion in the body of Christ. This is also spiritual abuse.

Proper Authority

Jesus gave a balanced perspective on positional authority when he said, “But be not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all are brethren...” (Matthew 23:8).

Jesus gave another key to discernment when he taught, “He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory” (John 7:18a).

In Philippians 2:3, Paul says that Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

We are all under God’s authority; we are to be servants.

Sometimes, Ministry Is Chosen Intentionally

- Provides a convenient infrastructure from which a person can prey on others for personal gain or otherwise exploit others (sexually, emotionally, spiritually, physically, financially) ... *while also giving legitimacy to their actions.*
- Easy to make alliances, which can give a person the upper hand in gaining access to sensitive information about potential targets (often vulnerable in some way).
- Access to information (processes, procedures in organizations and personal in others) about exploitable weaknesses – individuals or organizational.
- An organization or system that is overly focused on results and growth sets up a toxic but profitable symbiotic relationship for the person who abuses.
- A knowledge that within organizations there is a preference to get things “handled inside” to avoid bad publicity.
- Knowledge that the person who abuses always has the power and control to leave on their own terms.

Ten Characteristics of a Narcissistic Pastor: When Narcissism Comes to Church

1. All decision-making centers on them.
2. Impatience or a lack of ability to listen to others
3. Delegating without giving proper authority or with too many limits
4. Feelings of entitlement
5. Feeling threatened or intimidated by other talented staff
6. Needing to be the best and brightest in the room
7. Inconsistency and impulsiveness
8. Praising and withdrawing
9. Intimidation of others
10. Fauxnerability (Faux vulnerability)

Resources

Books: Toxic, Destructive and Abusive Relationships

1. *The Wounded Heart* by Dan Allender
2. *Bold Love – The Courageous Practice of Life Ultimate Influence* by Dan Allender
3. *Why Does He Do That?* by Lundy Bancroft
4. *Betrayal Bonds: Breaking Free of Exploitive Relationships* by Patrick Carnes
5. *Necessary Endings* by Dr. Henry Cloud
6. *Safe People* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend
7. *Emotional Abuse Breakthrough* by Barry Davenport
8. *Emotional Abuse Breakthrough Scripts* by Barry Davenport
9. *The Gift of Fear and Other Survival Signals That Can Protect Us from Violence* by Gavin DeBecker
10. *The Emotionally Abusive Relationship: How to Stop Being Abused and How to Stop Abusing* by Beverly Engel
11. *Verbal Abuse, Survivors Speak Out on Relationships and Recovery* by Patricia Evans
12. *The Verbally Abusive Relationship* by Patricia Evans
13. *Victory Over Verbal Abuse: A Healing Guide to Renewing Your Spirit and Reclaiming Your Life* by Patricia Evans
14. *When Loving Him is Hurting You* by Dr. David Hawkins
15. *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse* by Paul Hegstrom
16. *Free Yourself from an Abusive Relationship – 7 Steps to Taking Back Your Life* by Andrea Loissette and Richard Lraus
17. *Love is a Choice* by Dr. Robert Hemfelt, Dr. Frank Minirth, and Dr. Paul Meier
18. *Getting Your Anger Under Control* by Neil T. Anderson and Rich Miller
19. *Managing Your Anger* by Neil T. Anderson and Rich Miller
20. *Anger is a Choice* by Dr. Tim LaHaye and Bob Phillips
21. *Foolproofing Your Life: How to Deal Effectively with Impossible People in Your Life* by Jan Silvious
22. *In Sheep's Clothing: Understanding and Dealing with Manipulative People* by George Simon
23. *The Gaslight Effect: How to Spot and Survive the Hidden Manipulation Others Use to Control Your Life* by Dr. Robin Stern
24. *When to Walk Away* by Gary Thomas
25. *Healing from Hidden Abuse* by Shannon Thomas
26. *The Emotionally Destructive Relationship: Seeing It, Stopping It, Surviving It* by Leslie Vernick
27. *The Emotionally Destructive Marriage: How to Find Your Voice and Reclaim Your Hope* by Leslie Vernick
28. *How to Act Right When Your Spouse Acts Wrong* by Leslie Vernick

Books: Spiritual Abuse

1. *When Narcissism Comes to Church* by Chuck DeGroat
2. *Faith That Hurts, Faith That Heals* by Stephen Arterburn & Jack Felton
3. *Breaking Free* by David R. Miller
4. *Wisdom Hunter* by Randall Arthur
5. *Churches That Abuse* by Ronald Enroth
6. *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse* by David Johnson and John Vonderen
7. *The Drift into Deception* by Agnes & John Lawless
8. *Boundaries: When to Say Yes and How to Say No* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend
9. *Boundaries in Marriage* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend
10. *Boundaries in Dating* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend
11. *Boundaries with Kids* by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

*Note: *Boundaries* books also have workbooks

Articles

Abuse <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/topics/a/abuse/> Christianity Today, Various Authors

Pastoral Abuse <https://wicc.org/restore/understanding-violence/pastoral-abuse/> Women's Interchurch Council of Canada

Boundaries for Leaders (includes Church Leaders), Dr. Henry Cloud

http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.com/uploads/5/8/1/6/58163279/boundaries_for_leaders.pdf

The Simple Scoop on Boundaries <https://www.cloudtownsend.com/scoop-on-boundaries/> Cloud & Townsend

What Are Safe People? Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend <https://www.cloudtownsend.com/what-are-safe-people/>

How Do You Find Safe People? <https://www.domesticshelters.org/articles/relationships/how-do-you-find-safe-people>

Infidelity: Distinguishing the Difference Between Forgiveness and Reconciliation

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/family-qa/infidelity-distinguishing-the-difference-between-forgiveness-and-reconciliation/> Focus on the Family

Blogs

<https://leslievernick.com/blog/page/3/> Leslie Vernick, Blogs on various topics related to destructive relationships, marriages and abuse

<https://shannonthomas.com/blog/> Shannon Thomas, Blogs and videos on abuse and narcissistic abuse

<https://www.boundaries.me/> Dr. Henry Cloud - Boundaries, subscription-based podcasts, video teachings, blogs (< \$10/month) videos and learning tools for developing healthy boundaries

<http://www.garythomas.com/blog/> Gary Thomas Blogs (various topics, search for toxic relationships topics and those relevant for you)

<https://theallendercenter.org/resources/> Dan Allender – Blogs and podcasts on trauma and abuse

<https://www.patriciaevans.com/> Patricia Evans – Blogs and resources for abuse

<https://puredesire.org/blogs/podcast> Pure Desire – Podcast and resources for Sexual Addiction

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-on-comparative-suffering-the-50-50-myth-and-settling-the-ball/> Dr. Brené Brown – Secular podcast and blog with topics on courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy

TED Talks and YouTube Videos

<https://julieroys.com/podcast/the-problem-of-narcissist-pastors/> The Problem of Narcissist Pastors *and*

<https://julieroys.com/podcast/how-to-identify-recover-from-spiritual-abuse/> How to Recover from Spiritual Abuse, Julie Roys (interviews of authors)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdLQBPLbK2E> Necessary Endings, Dr. Henry Cloud

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mzldv3TvdIY> Boundaries: When to Say Yes and How to Say No, Dr. Henry Cloud

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDYlIpG4Rjg> Helping Churches Respond to Abusive Spouses, Chris Moles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nY-rQQsgvs> The Emotionally Destructive Marriage, Chris Moles and Leslie Vernick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJXUNjCOCxs> *and*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvk2HQ7zoEY> Narcissism, Gaslighting and Healing From Hidden Abuse, Shannon Thomas

<https://www.btr.org/recovery-podcast> Betrayal Trauma Recovery for Abuse and Sexual Betrayal

https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime?language=en How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris

https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability?language=en

The Power of Vulnerability, Dr. Brené Brown

Who Can I Talk To?

Berean Care Ministry can help connect you to the appropriate helping person/ministry/counselor or licensed professional.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org/help/> 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Minnesota Domestic Abuse and Harassment, Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline 1-866-223-1111

<http://www.mncourts.gov/Help-Topics/Domestic-Abuse-and-Harassment.aspx>

Emergency Shelter: Day One: 1-866-223-1111 (shelter information in MN); email: safety2dayoneservices.org

Dakota County Crisis 24/7: 952-891-7171

Homes

United Way 2-1-1: dial 211 (in MN) or 1-800-543-7709

The Dwelling Place – Fridley, MN – Domestic Violence Shelter, 651-776-4805

The Lewis House - Eagan, MN – Domestic and Sexual Violence Safe Shelter, 952-985-5300

Teen Dating Violence – 1-877-923-0700

Whispers of Hope – Northfield, MN - Temporary Shelter, free counseling for women, 507-334-2466

Together for Good – Crisis Response and Safety for Mothers and Children, <https://tfgood.org/> (651) 440-4058

The Ultimate Journey: A Nine-Month Journey to Re-Wire Your Identity to Christ
<https://www.theultimatejourney.org/> (Program in Maplewood, MN, with roots in MN Teen Challenge)

References

The Power and Control Wheel, Duluth Abuse Intervention Project

Psychological Effects of Abuse: Soul Stealing, Power Relations in Pastoral Sexual Abuse by Rev. Pamela Cooper White; https://www.snapnetwork.org/psych_effects/soul_stealing_1.htm

Churches That Abuse by Ronald Enroth

Charismatic Captivation by Steven Lambert

Spiritual Abuse by David Henke; Watchman Fellowship Profile

Put Your Hands in the Air & Step Away from the Guilt Tripping:
<https://peacefulsinglegirl.wordpress.com/2012/11/04/put-your-hands-in-the-air-and-step-away-from-the-guilt-tripping/>

Why Predators are Attracted to Careers in Clergy
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/spycatcher/201404/why-predators-are-attracted-careers-in-the-clergy> Joe Navarro

Reviewing the Discourse of Spiritual Abuse <https://www.eauk.org/assets/files/downloads/Reviewing-the-discourse-of-Spiritual-Abuse.pdf> A report by the Evangelical Alliance Theology Advisory Group