

# enditnow Emphasis Day 2014

## Resource Packet

### *“Freedom in Relationships”*

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Dear Sisters,

It is with a heart of thanks to God and to our writers that we send you the packet of materials for the 2014 **enditnow™** (APED) Day, which is held annually on the fourth Sabbath of August in our churches around the world.

The theme of this packet is "Freedom in Relationships." Dr. Willie and Elaine Oliver, Family Ministries co-directors at the General Conference, have written this packet with much prayer and dedication to this urgent issue of abuse and the harm it does within our churches and our communities.

One of the greatest challenges we face in our church, as in society at large, is the violence and abuse taking place within the family. It is a sad fact that many of our sisters, brothers, and children within the church family are suffering from abuse. In the Sabbath sermon, the Olivers look at the challenges Adventist families face, the way some have misused the Word of God to justify their abuse, and the model God has given us to follow, a model given by a loving God who desires that we reflect His love in our families, that we value and respect *every* individual as a person loved and valued by Almighty God.

It is our sincere prayer that as you present this material in your churches the Holy Spirit will work in the lives of the hearers, bringing conviction and change. Let us not be so unwise as to believe "it can't happen here." Let us awaken to the vital importance of this message. And as we study God's model, may we become examples of God's love—in our families and in all of our relationships.

God bless you, my sisters. Let our homes truly be places of hope and healing for our families as well as models for families in our communities.

Joyfully,

  
Heather-Dawn Small, Director

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## About the Authors

Willie and Elaine Oliver are directors of the Department of Family Ministries for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. An ordained minister, Willie Oliver holds a PhD in Family Sociology; an MA in Pastoral Counseling; an MA in Sociology; and a BA in Theology. He is the former Director of Family Ministries for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, the Atlantic Union Conference, and the Greater New York Conference. He also served as a senior pastor and youth pastor in New York City, and is an adjunct professor at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

Elaine Oliver holds an MA in Counseling Psychology; an MA in Higher and Adult Education; and a BA in business management and accounting. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Psychology. Prior to her current position, she served as a university administrator and as a marriage and family consultant for the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Olivers have conducted marriage conferences, retreats, and relationship seminars around the world. They are founders of “From This Day Forward” marriage conferences, and “Journey Toward Intimacy” marriage conferences. They are authors of *Relationship Rx* column in *Message* magazine, as well as many other articles and book chapters. They are editors of the annual *Family Ministries Planbook*, and they host marriage and family strengthening programs on Hope TV and 3ABN. The Olivers produce and host a weekly family program on the Hope Channel called *Real Family Talk with Willie and Elaine Oliver*.

Willie and Elaine Oliver have been married for over 29 years and are the parents of two young adults—Jessica and Julian. In their spare time they enjoy taking long walks, beach vacations, gardening, exotic cuisines, and spending time with family and friends.

**SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE**  
**enditnow Emphasis Day - August 2014**

**Prelude**

**Responsive Reading:** SDA Hymnal- "*Hope and Comfort*" 796

**Invocation**

**Hymn of Praise:** - "*Sound the Battle Cry*" 614

**Scripture Reading:**

Galatians 5:22-26, NASB "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

**Offering**

**Prayer for the offering**

**Children's Story:**

*"Faith and a Box of Cereal"*

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Special Music**

**Sermon:**

*"Freedom in Relationships"*

**Hymn of Response:** "*Happy the Home*"  
(*Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal # 655*)

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

## **Children's Object Lesson** ***Faith and a Box of Cereal***

Note: This object lesson is to help children understand faith. It is difficult for children, especially younger ones, to believe in something they cannot see. The lesson helps them understand that even though they don't see God, He is always present and always loves them no matter what the situation.

*For this object lesson you will need:*

A large cereal box with cereal (choose one that is familiar to the children)  
A large empty cereal box with crayons in it (one small box of crayons will work)  
2 cereal bowls  
A grocery bag

*Before the lesson, place the four items in the grocery bag.*

Slowly, pull out the cereal box containing the crayons from the grocery bag and show it to the children. You can even shake the box a little.

Say to the children: "Raise your hand if you can guess what's in this box."

Allow the children to answer.

*Pull out a cereal bowl out of the grocery bag; then deliberately and carefully pour the crayons into the bowl.*

Act surprised: "What? It's not cereal?"

Say: "What happened?"

Ask one of the children who can read to say what is on the label on the box.

Ask: "What does it say?" Allow the child to answer.

Say: "It says that it's cereal; it sounds like cereal. Our eyes and our ears told us it was cereal, but it was not cereal."

*Now pull out the other cereal box.*

Say: "I have another box. It looks like it is cereal, it sounds like cereal (shake the box), but let's find out for sure if it really is cereal."

*Pull out the other cereal bowl and ask an older child to assist a younger child in pouring out the cereal into the next bowl. Act relieved.*

Say: "Oh, good, this box really has cereal!"

Say: "Sometimes things aren't really as they appear to be and we can't be sure that our eyes and ears are truly seeing and hearing things the way they are. There is one thing we can always be sure of and that is God's love for each one of you and me."

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 11:1 that faith is to be sure of the things that we have not seen. God is as sure as the box of breakfast cereal that always has breakfast cereal in it. When you have faith in God, you can trust him and believe that He will always take care of you.

*Prayer:* Dear Jesus, we want to have faith in you. Teach us to believe in you and trust you even if we can't see you. Thank you for always loving us.

## **Sermon**

### ***Freedom in Relationships***

#### **Introduction**

People around the world are closely following the media coverage of the Oscar Pistorius trial taking place in Pretoria, South Africa. Oscar Pistorius is a leading South African runner who won attention as an athlete with a disability, competing not only in the Paralympic Games but also in the 2012 Summer Olympics. In February 2013, he was charged with shooting to death his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp. He claims he mistook her for an intruder.

As of the writing of this piece, the judge has not yet made a decision in this case, and we don't know whether Oscar Pistorius was defending himself or had planned to kill his girlfriend. What we do know is that violence has invaded our society and there are many cases that will never make the headlines. Families are being torn apart by senseless violence right in their own homes as many people are choosing violence as the primary means of interacting with each other. The impact of these choices is incredibly far-reaching and very destructive to individuals and families.

While we may not be able to control the violence around us, the good news for Christians is that the power of God is available to all of us in unlimited supply. God's word is filled with counsel on how to build healthy and strong relationships, especially in our families. Today, we will briefly look at the destructive nature of violence and abuse in the family, and we will review God's original intent and perfect plan for our relationships and families.

Our sermon today is titled "Freedom in Relationships".

#### **A Godly Look at Relationships**

In Galatians 5:22-26 (NASB) the Bible says: *"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."*

In writing the letter to the Galatians Paul had three closely related purposes in mind: 1) He was defending his authority as an apostle because some had doubted his authenticity, 2) he was proclaiming the gospel message, and 3) he was showing that the gospel message could be applied to our daily living as Christians and that this was possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this passage, Paul reminds us that after a person becomes a Christian, the need for faith in Christ does not diminish. We are to live our lives daily by faith, through the power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This dependence on God's guidance is for assistance in avoiding the consequences of our behaviors as manifested by our natural sinful selves.<sup>1</sup> Paul is showing that freedom in Christ is a Spirit-guided life-style "within the limits of a 'new law' given by Christ: the law of love."

True freedom in Christ is not about self-indulgence that leads believers to act in destructive ways toward others, but true freedom manifests itself in love towards God and love to others. However, true love doesn't come naturally. In fact, it is against the flesh; hence, it is necessary to be guided by the Holy Spirit in our actions, attitudes, and decisions.

### **Abuse of Scripture and Theology**

While the basic message of the Bible is Love, when we examine the effects of abuse and violence, we see how far removed we are from God's ideal for human relationships. There are many who profess to be Christians—disciples of Christ—but who possess none of the characteristics of Christ.

Unfortunately, in too many situations, abusers have misused scripture and theology to justify their abusive behaviors. In addition, other well-meaning helpers have also misused the Bible to convince victims to accept continued violence in their families. This misuse of scripture can be dangerous and even lethal to the victims involved. The religious community can no longer remain silent. This silence continues the lack of understanding of issues of domestic violence and does not lead to change. The church can help families stop abuse and can help to create healthier environments for children, teenagers and adults.

In this brief discourse today, we will get an overview of domestic violence and how it is impacting our society, including the church. We will also explore the elements of healthy, Godly relationships. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to "Ending It Now," to stopping the violence and preventing violence by equipping individuals and families with skills and insights needed to have wholesome relationships.

### **Brief Overview of Violence and Abuse**

We are living in an age of violence. Our senses are bombarded by violence in the news, music, television and other media outlets. Many people are the target of violence, and the victims that touch our hearts the most are the children. Anyone can be a victim of violence; however, statistics tell us that women and children are the primary targets. Men are also victims of abuse and violence, but in smaller numbers (this may be due to lack of reporting). Regardless of who the victim is, domestic or family violence is incompatible with God's Word.

## What is Domestic Violence?

Let's first look at some definitions and general information about domestic violence. Domestic violence includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. To be sure, there is not hierarchy of abuse; each one is equally destructive.

**Physical abuse** may include behaviors such as pushing and kicking and can escalate into more injurious attacks. It can start with minor bruising but could end in murder.

**Sexual abuse** can include inappropriate touching and verbal remarks. Rape, molestation and incest are also included in this category.

**Emotional abuse** includes behaviors that consistently degrade or belittle the individual. It can include verbal threats, episodes of rage, obscene language, demands for perfection, and invalidation of character and person. Extreme possessiveness, isolation, and depriving someone of economic resources are all psychologically and emotionally abusive.

### General Facts about Domestic Violence<sup>ii</sup>:

There is no one profile of abusers or victims. Both may come from all age groups, ethnic groups, socio-economic classes, professions, and religious or non-religious communities. Abuse and violence may take several forms: physical, sexual, or emotional. In the case of the elderly and children it may also include severe neglect. *[The following statistics are primarily for the US. Presenters should research stats from their own territory to be most relevant]*

#### The Victims:

- 1 in 4 women will experience domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, during her lifetime.
- Women are more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner.
- Women between the ages of 20-24 are at the greatest risk of becoming victims of domestic violence.
- Every year, 1 in 3 female homicide victims is murdered by her current or former partner.

#### The Families:

- Every year, more than 3 million children witness domestic violence in their homes.
- Thirty to sixty percent of children who live in homes where there is domestic violence also suffer abuse or neglect.
- A recent study found that children exposed to domestic violence at home are more likely to have health problems, including becoming sick more often, having frequent headaches or stomachaches, and being more tired and lethargic.

- Another study found that children are more likely to intervene when they witness severe violence against a parent. This can place a child at great risk for injury or even death.

#### **The Consequences:**

- Survivors of domestic violence face high rates of depression, sleep disturbances, and other emotional distress.
- Domestic violence contributes to poor health for many survivors.
- Without help, girls who witness domestic violence are more vulnerable to abuse as teens and adults.
- Without help, boys who witness domestic violence are far more likely to become abusers of their partners and/or children as adults, thus continuing the cycle of violence in the next generation.

#### **More Important Facts:**

- Most incidents of domestic violence are NEVER reported.
- Victims rarely lie. Experts agree that children ordinarily cannot describe experiences they have never had. We must listen and respond appropriately.<sup>iii</sup>

### **A Model for Godly Relationships**

These facts are not pleasant and remind us of the brokenness of the world we live in. The wonderful news is that God has not left us alone. Scripture presents the true picture of how human relationships should look. Human beings are created by a relational Triune God—The Trinity, God, being one, yet composed of three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our relational God then created us to be in significant and fulfilling relationships. Hence, our relationships are to reflect the relationality within the Holy Trinity. In essence, God intends for all our relationships to be a reflection of Him!<sup>iv</sup>

We must of course acknowledge that unlike God, we are not perfect and because of these imperfections we will struggle in applying biblical principles to our relationships. We must seek God's guidance for grace and strength to attain true freedom in our relationships.

As we study the Old and New Testaments, we can identify four basic elements that are essential to healthy relationships and will bring true freedom in our relationships. These elements are covenant, grace, empowerment, and intimacy.

**1. Covenant:** The first element that brings freedom in relationships is **covenant**. The first biblical mention of a covenant is found in Genesis 6:18, in which God makes a covenant with Noah. The second biblical reference in which God makes a covenant is found in Genesis 15:18, where a covenant is extended to Abraham, and subsequently amplified in Genesis 17:1-7. God's covenant with Abraham, which God later ratifies with Israel, is an eternal covenant. God demonstrates unequivocally that a true covenant is about loving and being loved.

The word *covenant* comes from the Hebrew *berth*, which means “agreement” or “arrangement”; and from the Greek *diatheke*, which means “last will and testament, decree or agreement” (Horn 1979, p. 243).<sup>v</sup>

In the Bible, *covenant* is the word used to describe marriage, the most serious and compelling agreement known in the Scriptures (Malachi 2:14; Proverbs 2:16, 17). It is God’s intent that the relationship between husband and wife be modeled after His endless covenant with His people.

Covenant relationships can either be a one-way commitment or a two-way commitment. A one-way unconditional relationship is an initial covenant in human relations, and a two-way unconditional relationship is a mature or growing covenant. This is true not only of the marriage relation but of other family relations as well, and of meaningful relationships of any kind. An excellent example of a two-way covenant is the story of Ruth and Boaz. He showed unconditional commitment to her and respect for her in spite of the fact that he wasn't required to be kind to her. Of course, the ultimate covenant relationship is God's unconditional love for us despite our unfaithfulness.

Contrary to popular belief, marriage is not a 50/50 proposition. The covenant relationship in marriage is a 100/100 proposition. It is based on unconditional commitment to an individual based on our decision to love them, and not on that individual’s response to our love. Paul, the apostle, in 1 Corinthians 13:5 states categorically, “Love keeps no record of wrongs.”

When there is abuse in the family, this suggests a one-way and immature covenant, and must move into a two-way mode in order for the relationship to survive. Indeed, when there is abuse between spouses it destroys the covenant God wants us to develop in marriage.

In close friendships, in marriage, and in parenting, God gives us opportunities to better understand His love for us, and the plan of salvation. And it is especially a part of God’s plan for the marriage relationship and the parent/child relationship to develop into unconditional two-way commitments.

**2. Grace:** The second element that brings *freedom in relationships* is **grace**. God wants us to understand that grace is about forgiving and being forgiven--Matthew 6:15.

Family relations as designed by God are meant to be lived out in an atmosphere of grace, not law. Family life based upon contract leads to an atmosphere of law, while family life based upon covenant leads to an atmosphere of grace and forgiveness. In an atmosphere of grace, family members act responsibly out of love and consideration for one another. In a family based on law, perfection will be demanded of each other. This approach to relating, adds guilt to the failure that is inevitable because of our fallen and broken human condition (Romans 3:23-24). Let’s face the reality of life; we are all going to make mistakes in our

relationships. There is no humanly possible way of getting around this fact, though many may be in denial of its existence.

Unfortunately, because of the legalism that often accompanies a fundamentalist approach to faith and religion, despite the grace-filled life of Jesus Christ and the message found in the parables He shared, we often fail to offer grace to one another in relationships.

David Seamands, a Christian counselor, suggests that the two main causes of most emotional problems among Christians are: 1) the failure to understand, receive, and live out God's unconditional grace and forgiveness; and 2) failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people. The good news of the Gospel has not really been understood in our lives so we fail to forgive one another as we fail to forgive ourselves for faults we are bound to make while traveling the road of discipleship. The disciple is not perfect, simply forgiven.<sup>vi</sup>

**Ellen White tells us** in *Gospel Workers*, "Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. It illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire being." (White 1915, p. 123)<sup>vii</sup>

We offer grace and forgiveness to those we have decided to love and have determined to be in relationship with, because tomorrow, we are the ones who will need to be the recipients of that grace.

Because of God's grace, whether or not we are ready to believe this verified truism, there isn't anything we can do to make Him love us more; but more importantly, make no mistake, there isn't anything we can do to make Him love us less. And yet, when we love God, it is His grace that gives us the power to obey Him, and when we obey God, our lives are lived to overflowing. Brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen, it is this grace that will give our relationships the peace and security we each need to find freedom in relationship.

**3. Empowerment:** The third element that brings freedom in relationships is the notion of **empowerment**. God wants us to know, definitively, that life is about service. That is, serving one another.

*Empowerment* is a biblical concept for the use of power, which, without exception, is contrary to the common use of power in our families and our society. It is the active, intentional process of enabling another person to acquire power. The person who is empowered has gained power because of the encouraging behavior of the other (1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

Empowerment is the process of helping another person recognize their strengths and potential, as well as encouraging and guiding the development of these qualities. When we empower people, we in turn are empowered, and our relationship is enhanced.

Empowerment is love in action. This is the characteristic of Jesus Christ that our family members must emulate most. If we are able to practice empowerment in our families, it will revolutionize the view of authority in Christian homes. Coercion and manipulation are the opposite of empowerment. They are a distortion of what true power is. Empowerment is about mutuality and unity.

**4. Intimacy:** The fourth and final element that brings *freedom in relationships* is *intimacy*. Intimacy means knowing someone and being known by that person in a covenant relationship.

Human beings have the capacity, given them by God, to know each other intimately. The intimacy that Adam and Eve felt was the ability to be themselves without any pretense. They had no need to play deceptive games with one another because they had respect for one another and didn't abuse one another (Genesis 2:25).

Shame is born out of fear of being known intimately. Where shame is present, family members put on masks and begin to play deceptive roles for each other. By contrast, as we examine how Genesis describes the nature of the prefall human family, we find an emphasis on intimacy, on the knowing of the other.

Many people are afraid to enter into relationships for the fear of being rejected by another. Intimacy eludes them because they never truly allow themselves to be known by the person they claim to be in a relationship with. Because they never share their true feelings, there is no basis for a real relationship, and they grope in relationship darkness--hampered, handicapped, and hindered, by their own lack of self-disclosure.

For family members to be able to communicate feelings freely and openly with each other, there must be trust and commitment. The Bible tells us in 1 John 4:18, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear."

Members of a family that is based on covenant love, and who live in an atmosphere of grace and empowering one another, will be able to so communicate and express themselves that they intimately know and are known by one another.

The unconditional love modeled by Jesus gives us a picture of the type of communicative intimacy desirable in family relationships and any other significant relationships. Forgiving and being forgiven will be an important part of renewal. There will be a need to confess as well as to receive confession. This is a two-way street that can clear out the unfinished issues between family members. In intimacy, there is no need to be ashamed to admit failure and ask for forgiveness and reconciliation. In fact, it is only when we take the steps to understand what Jesus did for us and continues to do for us each day that we can get to the point of being able to achieve intimacy with another individual and find satisfaction in relationships.

## **Conclusion**

Many today find themselves outside of this model of healthy family relationships. In homes where abuse has not infiltrated, we encourage you starting today to strive towards this model through the power of the Holy Spirit as promised to each and every one of us. In homes where abuse has already made its ugly and destructive visit, we implore you to recognize the abuse, and to seek counsel and professional help as soon as possible and begin the healing.

To have freedom in relationships, we need to have a covenant relationship; we need to have relationships filled with grace (forgiveness), with empowerment and intimacy. Only with Jesus Christ is this possible. We invite you to accept Him anew into your hearts today.

## **Seminar “Becoming Powerful by Empowering”**

**Theme:** In the Old and New Testaments there are four elements that characterize healthy, Godlike relationships: Covenant, Grace, Empowerment and Intimacy. All of these traits come together to form a true covenant relationship that represents the kind of relationship God intends for His people.

**Objective:** In this seminar we will focus primarily on empowerment. The primary objective is to identify a model of power that comes through empowerment for healthier relationships.

**Format:** This workshop can be presented as one workshop with two parts or two separate workshops.

Part One: Power and Control in Relationships

Part Two: Empowering One Another

### **Part One: Power and Control**

The will to dominate is one of the strongest human tendencies—to not only be in control of ourselves but also to control others. Power is a dimension found in all human relationships. (Balswick & Balswick, 2007)

In domestic violence there is always a power imbalance or misuse of power. Domestic violence is characterized by fear, control, and harm. One person in the relationship uses coercion or force to control the other person or other family members. The abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional. (Fortune, 2002)

There are several reasons why abusers or batterers may choose to abuse their power:

- 1) He thinks it is his right, that is, part of his role.
- 2) He feels entitled to use force.
- 3) He has learned this behavior in his past.
- 4) This behavior works.

In most reported cases of abuse the abuser is male; hence, throughout this workshop the abuser will be referred to primarily as male. However, keep in mind that abusers can also be female. It doesn't matter who is doing the abusing, there is no acceptance of abuse in healthy, Godly relationships.

Abusers assume they have the right to control all members of their family. This willingness to use violence to accomplish this control is from things that he has learned. From various sources, the abuser has learned that is appropriate for the person who is bigger and stronger (usually a male) to hit others “for their own good” or because he “loves them.”

### Agree-Disagree Exercise:

To start the group thinking about power and control in relationships, invite them to respond to the following agree/disagree statements. Do not discuss the statements now or offer your opinion. (They are designed to be somewhat ambiguous and controversial, and to get people to start thinking about their own behaviors and where they learned them. Tell the participants to put their thumbs up if they agree, and down if they disagree.

Agree/Disagree	Spare the rod and spoil the child.
Agree/Disagree	Power in the family must reside with the father.
Agree/Disagree	Parents must show their teenagers who is boss.
Agree/Disagree	Husbands must give their wives a little push sometimes to maintain authority.
Agree/Disagree	The Bible teaches that wives must submit to their husbands no

### What are possible sources of learned behavior of abusers?

- 1) Observing parents
- 2) Peers
- 3) Misinterpretation of biblical teachings
- 4) Media – jokes, cartoons, soap operas, movies that portray control and abuse in an intimate relationship as normative.

### Participant Exercise

All abusers have learned to use force through experience. When abusers first used force to control a family member, there were no negative consequences—no one objected, no one stopped them; no one questioned their behavior.

Can you think of any situation where this could happen either unconsciously or on purpose? (Give participants a few seconds to respond. Discourage participants from sharing personal experiences.)

Since there were no negative consequences, the abuser learned that violence worked; it got him what he wanted—either the submission or compliance of their spouse or other family member. Paradoxically, they learned that home and family was a safe place in which to exercise violent behavior. On a very cognitive level, they know that this behavior would have very negative and serious consequences if used in the workplace. If they hit their boss when they were angry, they would most likely be fired or arrested. Hence, abusers are rarely violent at work.

## Facts about Abuser's Need for Power

- 1) Battering is not the result of an abuser (or batterer) being out of control; it is the attempt of the batterer to stay in control. He gets to choose his behavior.
- 2) The abuser's need to control family members appears to increase with stress in his life.
  - a. Stress may be internal (inability to communicate with spouse, child is not doing well in school, parent died, dinner is late). He may feel disappointment with his family but mostly with himself.
  - b. Stress may be external (gets laid off from work or doesn't get a promotion, community football team lost season championship).
  - c. All these events may lead to emotions that may not be considered "masculine" (disappointment, anxiety, grief, etc.).
  - d. He uses anger to express or cover real emotions, seeking to regain control of his life.

Note: This cycle of anger could be experienced by anyone, not just males. Often individuals use anger to express their true feelings and emotions. It is important that one learn to identify true feelings such as hurt, disappointment, discouragement, insecurity, grief, etc.

## Misconceptions About Abuse:

- 1) ***Abuse is not caused by alcohol or drugs.*** While there might be some correlation, abuse is not *caused* by the use of drugs or alcohol. It is important to remember that alcohol or drug treatment will not (in most cases) stop violence. This treatment may be a first step, but the abuser still needs to treat the specific problem of using violence as a form of power and control.
- 2) ***Abuse is not caused by the relationship.*** While there may be some aspects of the marriage or other familial relationship that may be stressful to the abuser, (i.e. lack of communication, financial problems, sexual dysfunction, parenting problems), this does not cause violence in the relationship. There are other relationships that have the same problems, yet violence is not a part of their solution. Abusers must learn that violence is not the way to solve problems. Abusers must treat their violence issues, and then, if it is safe, work on the marriage and family relationship.
- 3) ***The victim does not cause abuse.*** The behavior of the victim does not cause the abuser's violence. Helping a victim to change their behavior such as wearing prettier clothes, cooking nicer meals, losing weight, will not stop the violence. It is the abuser,

not the victim, who is in control of the violence.

**4) *The Abuser is not an ogre.*** He may be a good provider, a good father, an upstanding member of the church and community. He may be very charming and outgoing. His wife may love him and be emotionally dependent on him. Sadly, this does not mean that he is not abusing members of his family. It is sometimes difficult to believe a woman who tells how violent and abusive her husband is at home when at church he behaves like the nicest, kindest, and most reliable member. Her story contradicts what everyone in the public arena has witnessed; hence the tendency is to trust one's own experience and to disbelieve the horrible story. However, it is important to understand that in most cases, women and children do not lie about their abuse. Remember, most cases of abuse go unreported.

#### **Why does a victim stay in an unbearable situation?**

- Emotional dependency
- Economic dependency
- Need for a father (or other parent) for the children
- Urging by other family members to stay
- Religious values
- Having no place to go
- FEAR—the primary reason why most women stay or go back

*The real question is how does a victim of abuse get her life together and leave. The most important resource needed by victims and survivors is a means to break the silence and isolation and to find support.*

### **Group Exercise**

If the group is large, divide participants into groups of 4-5 and have participants discuss in small groups. Give groups 10-15 minutes to discuss the following questions, then share ideas as an entire group.

1) One of the possible traits of a victim of domestic violence is their distorted view of God and spiritual issues. What might some of these inaccurate ways of thinking be, and where might they have begun in their story of domestic violence. What or who might have influenced them to think in these inappropriate ways, and how might they affect the life of the victim?

***Note to Presenter: Skip part 2 of this group exercise if you are continuing on to the second part of the workshop. If you are only doing the "Power and Control" segment, then continue to part 2 of this group exercise.***

2) Consider the following passages: Psalm 27:14; Psalm 29:10, 11; Exodus 3:11; Exodus 4:1-4; 2 Chronicles 14:11; John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Nehemiah 8:10; Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 1:17-19. What conclusions can you draw about empowerment from a biblical

### **Part Two: Empowering One Another**

Since the beginning of history there have been power struggles between family members. There was Adam and Eve against God. The first act of aggression in the Bible was Cain killing his brother Abel out of jealousy. These power struggles remind us of the distortion that has occurred in human relationships since the fall. Everything that God created perfect has been corrupted and distorted by the evil one. (Balswick & Balswick, 2007)

However, the message of restoration and renewal is seen throughout the Old and New Testaments. God has provided a way for us to lead lives of empowerment and service through His resurrection and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. We are called to build each other up; this is the privilege and opportunity of the empowering process.

#### Types of Power

##### Authority vs. Dominance

- Legitimate power is authority
- Illegitimate power is dominance

Legitimate power is usually sanctioned by society and thus possesses authority. For example, parental power is considered legitimate power. Most societies grant parents authority over

their children until the children reach a legal age of maturity. This age differs from culture to culture.

Dominance is power that is taken without being sanctioned by society; therefore it is considered illegitimate. For instance, some parents may go beyond their boundaries of legitimate power or may neglect their responsibilities and will have their legitimate power taken away from them by society, e.g., child abuse or child neglect.

Power that is gained through dominance or intimidation is the opposite of the empowering model that is represented in the scriptures.

Ask group: What is Empowerment?

Webster's Dictionary defines "empower" as "to give power to; authorize; to enable."

Balswick and Balswick say this about empowerment:

Empowerment is born out of God's covenant love and the incredible grace we find in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God empowers us to empower others. And when mutual empowerment occurs among family members, each will be stretched in the extraordinary ways of servant love and humility. Family members will grow in the stature of Christ as they mature into the character of Christ in their daily interactions...It has nothing to do with having power over others but rather involves taking great delight in building up one another to become all God wants us to be. (Balswick and Balswick, 2014, p. 29)

1 Corinthians 8:1b (ESV) expresses it thus: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."

### **Group Exercise**

Consider the following passages: Psalm 27:14; Psalm 29:10, 11; Exodus 3:11; Exodus 4:1-4; 2 Chronicles 14:11; John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Nehemiah 8:10; Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 1:17-19. What conclusions can you draw about empowerment from a biblical perspective?

## Models of Family Power\*

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Basic Assumptions	
Traditional Patriarchal	God has determined that ultimate power resides in the role of the husband
Democratic Exchange	Power does not reside in any one individual, but rather in the family as a whole, operating as a democracy.
Hedonistic Self-Interest	Each family member watches out for self.
Empowerment	Family members use their gifts and resources for one another.

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*\*Balswick and Balswick (2014)*

### Basic Models of Family Power

#### Patriarchal Model

The patriarchal model still exists in most societies today. In many Christian homes, the belief is that where the Bible speaks of the man as head of the home, it means the man should be the “boss” and that submission means the wife has no authority in the home. However, it’s important to note that that scripture also speaks about mutual submission and the suffering servant role modeled by Christ (Ephesians 5: 21; Philippians 2:5-8).

Note: Please do not allow participants to begin a discussion on headship and submission. Keep them focused on the theme of empowerment.

#### Ellen White Speaks of Individuality in Marriage

*God requires that the wife shall keep the fear and glory of God ever before her. Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased her as His own child by the infinite price of His life. God has given her a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged into that of her husband, for she is the purchase of Christ. It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing, injury would be worked for her body and her spirit, which have been ransomed from the slavery of Satan. There is One who stands higher than the husband to the wife; it is her Redeemer, and her submission to her husband is to be rendered as God has directed--"as it is fit in the Lord."*

Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home*, p. 116

## Democratic Exchange Model

The democratic exchange model is based on the assumption that power resides in the family unit as a whole. Family policy is determined by negotiation and bargaining. The exercise of power allows a voice to all family members, but since parents have more resources, they have more bargaining and negotiating power. Hence, parents have the final say in the decision making process.(Balswick & Balswick, 2007)

## The Self-Interest Model

Society today is filled individualistic materialism and self-interested hedonism. “What’s in it for me?” is the major concern of many. In this model “I” is number one, and personal interests and needs come before the interests of the larger system. In this model, everyone vies for a place of authority. This leads to a very chaotic system. Family members are disengaged and find very little support.

## Empowerment

The empowerment model assumes that the task of the more powerful family members is to build up or lift up the less powerful family members. The concept of empowerment as a family model may not be found in the scholarly literature; however, it is exemplified in the best of Christian family life.

### Group Exercise

***How can we empower one another?***

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Divide participants into groups of 3-4 people. Have them list ways in which Paul wants us to empower one another in our relationships.

*“Thee lift me and I’ll lift thee and we’ll ascend together.”* —Quaker Proverb

In empowered families, family members are living out the principle of love as expressed in 1 Corinthians 13. It is love in action. It is about paying attention to the little things because the little things really are the big things. We empower one another and lift each other up when we show kindness to one another, rather than dominance and control. Empowered families look for opportunities to lift one another up.

## Group Exercise

### Empowering Words

Ask participants to close their eyes and think of a time when someone said something kind or nice to them. How did that make you feel? (*Give participants time to reflect*). Ask a few participants to share their memories.

Then have participants think of a time when they said something kind or nice to their husband, child, or other family member. Push them to remember how that family member responded. (*Give participants time to reflect*). Ask a few participants to share their memories.

When we empower one another in the family, we build high trust in the relationship. When we misuse power by dominance and coercion, we tear down trust. Trust is the key in the empowering process. (Covey, 1997)

Parents who empower their children and prepare them for responsible interdependence will provide their children with the skills necessary to live as healthy adults and build and maintain healthy relationships. When parents use unhealthy forms of power and control with children, the children will grow up detached from their family and learn negative ways of using power and relating to others.

God's covenant love and the incredible grace we find in Jesus Christ empower us to empower others. When mutual empowerment occurs among family members, each will grow exponentially in humility and servant love. Indeed, family members will begin to grow more into the likeness of Christ. His power is promised to us as we seek to become Christlike in all our relationships.

"I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13 NIV

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