

## Tough Questions

# How Should Christians Respond to Abuse?

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Mar 24, 2019

*Abuse is the inappropriate use of power  
to get what you want.*

### I. Christians should know that hope & help for both the offender and the abused starts with a cry.

**Deut. 22:23,24** - <sup>23</sup> “If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, <sup>24</sup> then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, **the young woman because she did not cry for help** though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor’s wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

### 3 Reasons God Wants Victims to Cry Out

1. Crying out gives victims the opportunity to not live as “desolate” people.

**2 Sam. 13:20** - <sup>20</sup> And her brother Absalom said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this to heart.” So Tamar lived, **a desolate woman**, in her brother Absalom’s house.

2. Crying out protects other potential victims.
3. Crying out is the kindest thing a victim can do for their offender.

**2 Sam. 12:7** - <sup>7</sup> Nathan said to David, “You are the man!”

### II. Christians should foster an environment where cries are welcomed, believed and answered.

**Deut. 22:25-27** - <sup>25</sup> “But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. <sup>26</sup> **But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death.** For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, <sup>27</sup> because he met her in the open country, and **though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.**

In this instance, the only person to bear witness to what took place was the victim herself. Her testimony alone explains what happened.

Despite God's strict guidelines for convicting someone of a crime (Deut. 17:2-7), God's law also created an environment in which a survivor of assault already knew that she would be safe and protected by the community.

### **III. Christians know the freedom that comes with standing in the light.**

**1 John 1:5-9** - <sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup>If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**John 1:4,5** - <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Abuse thrives in silence and darkness. Abuse escalates in silence and darkness. The effects of abuse spread like cancer in silence and darkness. Every single person can find what they need - forgiveness, healing, hope, help, comfort, peace - by standing in the light.

#### **Questions for Community Group and/or Personal Application:**

- (1) Think of the "bay leaf" illustration. What parts of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, do you find difficult to understand because you're unfamiliar with the context?
- (2) Pastor Peter said "Crying out is the kindest thing to do for the offender." Do you believe that to be true? Why or why not?
- (3) Review the "3 Reasons God Wants Victims to Cry Out." Are any of them new to you? Did any one of them specifically resonate with you for any reason?
- (4) Pastor Peter said "The God of the Bible is more 'pro-woman' than any modern law, activist, or movement." What do you think of that?
- (5) Why do we sometimes believe that darkness is safer than light?
- (6) Think of the beach illustration. In what area(s) of your life do you need to be reminded that Christ is "bigger" than the long shadow that is cast by you standing in the light?