



Relational Awareness

Leader's Guide



LEARN HOW TO:

- Improve Relationships – Marriage, Dating, Friends, Family
- Recognize Relationship Red Flags
- Respond to Those Who Are Being Mistreated
- See God's Plan for Relationships
- Recognize Abusive Patterns

Domestic Kindness Equips Your Church to Be Part of the Solution to Domestic Abuse

"CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH... KINDNESS" Colossians 3:12

www.DomesticKindness.org



Relational Awareness ~ Leaders' Instructions

Participants

The number of class participants is not limited.

- Study groups of 12 or more should be divided into smaller groups after the first two questions have been discussed in the large group.
- This study works best when divided into gender-specific groups of about 6.

Length of Study

The recommended length of study is 8 weeks – 2 hours per lesson. You may adjust your time schedule as needed. There is also a 6-week version of the study.

Homework

Because there is a lot of material to cover, class participants should complete the lesson each week before meeting with the study group. This is a request, not a requirement.

Videos

- Each lesson begins with a PowerPoint video introduction to the lesson. Participants may follow along on their PowerPoint Notes page.
- The second video is a 10-minute portion of a testimony series. Participants may wish to take notes.

Leader's Guide

- It is sometimes difficult to finish all the questions in the study. Therefore, please begin by answering the first two priority questions (circled in red) in the large group first. Allow 5 minutes to discuss each question.
- Instructions for leaders are shown in red on the Leader's Guide copy of the lesson.
- Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud during the study.
- Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members.
- Elicit as much discussion as possible, depending on your time restrictions.

Discussion Group Facilitators

- Start with the question numbers circled in red that were not discussed in the large group. Then go back to the beginning of the questions that were not discussed.
- Make sure everyone has a chance to talk, but allow less-verbal participants to remain silent if they wish.
- Keep small group discussions on track. Watch the clock.
- When one person wants to spend a lot of time talking about a personal struggle, ask if you can talk to them after the class time and refer them to someone more experienced if you feel unqualified to help them.
- When someone speaks vulnerably about themselves, thank them for sharing and follow up later with them or pray for them right then.
- If someone misses a session, follow up before the next meeting by asking if they have a prayer request. Then pray for them.



Relational Awareness Weekly Schedule ~ Sample

Here is an example of a 2-hour study time.

- 6:40 Facilitators - Set up and prayer
- 6:55 Attendees join - Chat time
- 7:05 Opening prayer
- 7:10 Announcements/instructions
- 7:15 Video - PowerPoint Introduction to lesson
- 7:25 Video - Testimony
- 7:35 Answer the first 2 circled questions (Leader's Guide) in large group
- 7:45 Breakout groups begin
Remaining questions – circled ones first
(If extra time, discuss testimony)
- 8:35 Return to main meeting
One person from each group shares what was learned in the group
(2 minutes per group)
- 8:40 Closing summary & application reminder
- 8:45 Breakout groups - Prayer & Share
(If extra time, "What is God doing in your life?")
- 9:00 Leave meeting – optional chat time in large group



Relational Awareness ~ Introduction (first week)

Leader's Guide

TIMELINE FOR TODAY'S STUDY (2 Hours):

Minutes

- 5 Opening Prayer
- 5 Announcements
- 10 Intro Video
- 10 Testimony Video

Read the ***Syllabus, Small Group and Prayer Guidelines, Relationship Red Flags, What Does a Healthy Relationship Look Like? and Domestic Violence Statistics***

(Go around the room and ask each person to read a section – allow them to pass if they prefer not to read.)

- 10 Syllabus
- 5 Small Group and Prayer Guidelines
- 10 Relationship Red Flags
- 10 What Does a Healthy Relationship Look Like?
- 5 Domestic Violence Statistics
- Break into groups of about 6 (Keep the same people in the groups each week)
- 15 Get to Know Each Other – name & “What is God Doing in Your Life?”
- 15 Discuss Red Flags and Healthy Relationships
- 5 Discuss the **Application for This Week**: Ask God to reveal a red flag in one of your relationships or in a relationship you've observed.
- 15 Prayer and Share time
- Explain that this Bible study will make sense for those who have experienced new life in Jesus. For those who have not experienced this, explain how to receive this gift and offer to pray with them now or meet with them later. (1 John 1:9)

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 1 ~ Love Defined

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In this lesson we will learn that **God wants every person to be treated with honor and respect**, including in his/her own home. We will learn what it means to love and to be loved. Sadly, domestic abuse is an epidemic in the world. According to the CDC, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men in the USA have experienced severe physical abuse from an intimate partner.¹ (Statistics from hospitals and police departments also confirm the epidemic.)

1. What do you think is God's answer to the problem of domestic abuse?
For all people to consistently show love and kindness to everyone
2. Read Matthew 22:34-40. What are the two most important commandments?
Love God; love others
3. Read 1 John 4:7-8. Do we really love God if we don't love others? *No*
(How we treat each person in our lives reveals whether we truly love God.)

4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 to see what God's love looks like.

Guess which Greek word is used for the word love:

philia (brotherly) eros (physical passion) **agape (sacrificial)**
 storge (parental) pragma (practical) philautia (self)

What's an example of God's sacrificial love?

Jesus coming to earth; dying for us; taking on the role of a servant

5. What's the point made in verses 1-3?
Love is better than spiritual gifts; doing great things for God is pointless if done without love.
6. Use various Bible translations to describe Paul's definition of agape love and explain ways to put each description into action.

| <u>Word:</u> | <u>Other words:</u> | <u>Ways to practice it:</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| v4) Patient | <i>Long suffering</i> | <i>Relax and take deep breaths</i> |
| v4) Kind | <i>Gentle</i> | <i>Smile at everyone</i> |
| v4) Not jealous | <i>Not envious</i> | <i>Be happy about the good things that others have</i> |
| v4) Not proud | <i>Not boastful</i> | <i>Spend time listening to others</i> |
| v4) Not arrogant | <i>Not puffed up</i> | <i>Admit when you're wrong</i> |
| v5) Doesn't act unbecomingly | <i>Not rude</i> | <i>Be polite</i> |
| v5) Doesn't seek its own | <i>Doesn't demand its own way</i> | <i>Let others decide what to do</i> |

¹ National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. MMWR 2014; 63(SS-8): 1-18

| <u>Word:</u> | <u>Other words:</u> | <u>Ways to practice it:</u> |
|--|---|---|
| v5) Not easily provoked | <i>Not overly sensitive</i> | <i>Don't blame others for my feelings</i> |
| v5) Doesn't count wrongs | <i>Doesn't keep score</i> | <i>Don't bring up old offenses</i> |
| v6) Doesn't delight in unrighteousness | <i>Doesn't enjoy the calamity of others</i> | <i>Seek God's perspective in situations</i> |
| v6) Delights in the truth | <i>Happy about what is true</i> | <i>Speak the truth in love</i> |
| v7) Bears all things | <i>Carries</i> | <i>Be supportive of others</i> |
| v7) Believes all things | <i>Not cynical</i> | <i>Trust that all things work together for good</i> |
| v7) Hopes all things | <i>Always hopeful</i> | <i>Keep a positive attitude</i> |
| v7) Endures all things | <i>Perseveres</i> | <i>Never give up</i> |
| v8) Love never fails | <i>Love never comes to an end</i> | <i>Trust God's love to do miracles</i> |

7. Commit (for at least one week) to praying over one of the concepts listed above (your biggest challenge). Ask God to replace the negative quality: _____ with the positive quality: _____. *Anyone want to share?*
8. Examine all the relationships in your home or in your family. Do they exemplify God's love? Is each person treated with consistent kindness? If not, what can you do?
Anyone want to share?
9. What one thing will you do this week to practice the attributes of love and improve your relationships?

Anyone want to share? Next week I will ask how you did with your assignment.

Verse 13 - Only faith, hope, and love will last - - - and the greatest of these three is: L O V E.

So maybe we should learn most about (and try the hardest to be) LOVE.

Read the following:

Your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team:



- Equips the whole church with Domestic Kindness instruction in Godly living and
- Connects the oppressed and the struggling abusers to expert help.

If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 2 ~ Mutual Submission

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Elicit as much discussion as possible, depending on your time restrictions. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In our last lesson we discussed that love is better than spiritual gifts or great works. So maybe we should learn the most about (and try hardest to be) love. We also learned that the epidemic of domestic abuse or malevolent control affects 1 in 4 families in our community. Last week you were challenged to:

- 1) pray for God to replace a negative quality with a positive one;
- 2) examine the kindness level of the relationships in your home and think of how to improve them;
- 3) do one thing throughout the week to practice the attributes of love.

Share how this went.

Today we will look at God's idea of submission. We will see how we are instructed to submit to each other. We will explore what that means for a husband and wife. We will look at the difference between a mutual relationship and an abusive relationship.

1. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. What do you think it means to submit to each other (verse 21)? *Serve each other; give ourselves to each other by communicating; respect the needs and wishes of the other person.*

The Greek root word used here for submit is *Hupotasso*. In non-military use, it was commonly used to mean "a voluntary attitude of cooperating" or "attach."

2. Read verse 25. How are husbands instructed to submit to their wives?
Love her as Christ loved the church by dying for her.
3. When husbands are told to love their wives, the Greek word for love is agape (sacrificial, selfless).
4. Read 1 John 3:16. How do we know what love is?
Jesus laid down His life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for each other.
5. A husband submits to his wife by sacrificing (dying to himself) for her. What are some practical ways for him to do that?
Listen to her without trying to fix her; do things to bless her even though it is an inconvenience for him; ask for her opinions and receive her input as equally valuable as his own.
6. According to verse 33, how are wives instructed to submit to their husbands?
Respect him

7. A wife submits by respecting her husband. She does this by offering herself as a willing partner. She must honor her husband as much as she honors any other person created in the image of God. This type of respect is not earned. Just being a creation of God is reason enough to be respected and valued. In what ways can the wife show respect for her husband?

Choosing to not complain or argue with her husband; giving words of appreciation, affirmation, & sincere compliments; having an attitude of cooperation; not trying to control him

Acts 5:29 instructs us to obey God rather than men. Husbands are not told to demand submission. A person forcing another person to submit is never instructed in the Bible. Paul is not talking about compulsion, but an attitude of submission on both parts.

We will be looking at the Equality Wheel and the Power & Control Wheel. It's important to see the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships because there can be no change without first understanding what is wrong.

8. Read the Equality Wheel. Which area has been the strongest in a relationship you've had?
9. Which area has been the weakest in a relationship you've had?
10. Read the Power & Control Wheel. Is there an area that has caused you concern in a relationship you've had?
11. Based on the Greek definition of submission (cooperation), how can you practice submission to others this week?

Read the following every week:



Your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team:

- Equips the whole church with Domestic Kindness instruction in Godly living and
- Connects the oppressed and the struggling abusers to expert help.

If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 3 ~ A Godly Unit

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In our first lesson we learned that love is better than spiritual gifts or great works and we learned how to practice love. Last week we looked at God's idea of submission and looked at the differences between a relationship with equality and one with power and control. We were challenged to practice submission in a close relationship. Share how this went.

Today we will look at marriage as a godly unit. We will also learn to recognize some of the subtleties of abuse, as well as the symptoms of selfishness that can lead to abuse.

1. Read Ephesians 5:23-32. A husband and wife are referred to as a body. The head of a physical body doesn't make demands – the head makes choices in partnership with the body to do what is best for the body. The head wants the body to be comfortable and safe, never fearful. What does this show us about the dynamics between the husband and the wife?
They need to work together and never hurt each other.
2. Read John 13:14 and Luke 22:27. How does Jesus as head treat His body, the church?
Washing feet – serving ... not acting as a dictator
3. Verse 23 - Jesus saves His church, His people, His body.
Verse 29 – Jesus cares for His church, His people, His body.
In what ways does Jesus save and care for the people who are connected to Him?
He protects us from harm. He cares about what we care about.
4. We must not confuse the head of a body with the head of an organization. Why would it be harmful to think of them in the same way?
Marriage is a relationship. The head of an organization doesn't have the same sense of oneness so he might mistreat those under him.
5. One person controlling another in a relationship causes the one controlled to lose their sense of value. This was never what God intended for relationships. Have you observed this dynamic in any relationship? Explain.
6. How does Ephesians 5:30-31 compare Christ and the church with marriage? How would this understanding cause spouses to treat each other?
Christ is one with His body, as husband and wife are one. This would cause us to want the other person to enjoy life as much as we want to enjoy life.

7. Read these healthy and not-so-healthy ways to relate in a marriage. Most of these are also applicable to other relationships. In the chart below, mark any areas that concern you in a close relationship.

| | KIND | SELFISH | ABUSIVE |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| Communication | Two-way Communication Listen & talk; compromise | Some Two-way Transmissions Not a conversation | One-Way Broadcasts Loud and/or insulting words |
| Respect | Respectful Value each other's culture, beliefs, opinions | Inconsiderate Not caring about the other's feelings & opinions | Disrespectful Intentionally disregarding or contrary to the other |
| Trust | Trusting Earned based on demonstrated reliability | Suspicious Actions, sayings, & intentions are questioned | Accusatory Asserts poor & wrong motives to acts & words |
| Honesty | Transparent (Honest) Only good secrets | Selectively Sneaky Some lies & mean secrets | Declines all Accountability Denies events or blames the other |
| Thoughtfulness | Wants best for family Makes decisions together | Wants best for Self Seeks their own way | Takes whatever they want By intimidation, tricks or force |
| Sexuality | Mutual agreement and enjoyment of sex Time & ways agreed by both | Pressures sex types & times Not listening to concerns of the partner | Forces sex types & times What I want, when I want; rape |
| Separateness | Provides for & respects space Me-time OK now & then | Us-time encroaches time with others Smothered or unavailable | Kept away from friends & relatives Controls who & where |

8. Which area above concerns you most? What can you do about it? What **will** you do about it?

Read the following:



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Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 4 ~ Marriage Designed

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In our first lesson we learned how to practice love; then we looked at God's idea of submission; and last week we learned about marriage as a Godly unit. We were challenged to identify and discuss an area of concern in the ways of relating to a spouse. Share how this went.

In today's lesson, we will look at the first marriage in the history of the world. We will see God's intentions for this relationship.

1. Why should we learn about marriage? *It's a model of the intimacy God wants with us; The first relationship God created was marriage; every person will get married or has been married or knows someone who is married.*
2. Read *Genesis chapters 1 and 2*. What stands out to you about God's creation of humans?
Created in God's image; not good to be alone; the two are one flesh; told them to rule the world; God's creation of humans was very good.
3. Read *Genesis 1:26-27*. Who was created in God's image?
Humans - male and female

What does this tell us about who God is?

He is neither male nor female, but has characteristics of both.

4. Why did God give Adam and Eve dominion over the animals, but not over each other? *Marital Relationships were designed to be mutual.*
5. Read the following scriptures and comment on God's idea about people controlling others:
1 Samuel 8:6-7 God's best for Israel was for them to not have a king.
Luke 22:25-26 The greatest must be the least.
1 Peter 5:3 Shepherds are not to rule, but to be examples.

Interesting fact: Domestic abuse is all about one partner dominating the other.

6. Read *Genesis 2:7 & 18*. What did God say was not good?
Being alone; no match/helper – no equal – no peer

7. Read *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*. Why are two better than one? *More reward for labor; help when one falls; keeping warm; overpowering an attacker*

The closest companionship is marriage but all humans need companionship, even if not married.

8. Read *Genesis 2:19-20*. Did Adam find any animal that was a suitable companion to help him? **No**

9. The Hebrew word for helper in this text is 'ezer,' which means rescuer and supporter. It is mostly used to describe God. – Read these scriptures that use the word ezer (help or helper):

Psalms 33:20 & Psalm 70:5. Does the word 'helper' in these passages imply subservience to the person being helped? **No** Do you believe that God intended one gender to be more valuable than the other? **No**

Read and comment on Galatians 3:28.

In Christ, male and female are equal.

10. Read *Genesis 2:21-23*. God created a suitable companion for Adam. Why was it necessary that woman be created from man, rather than from the dust? ***So that they would sense their connection with each other, as a mother feels a bond with a child from her womb***

11. Read *Genesis 2:24*. What does oneness in marriage mean to you? ***Mutual love & commitment; respecting each other's differences***

12. What does it mean to leave your parents when you marry?

The primacy of the couple; spouse before parents

13. God could have created multiples for Adam or Eve. Why didn't He?

God's plan is exclusivity (1 man – 1 woman).

14. Do you have any relationships in which one person dominates the other? If so, what will you do to bring about a change?

Read the following:



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If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 5 ~ Reverse the Curse

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In our first lesson we learned how to practice agape love. Then we looked at God's idea of mutual submission. In week three we saw how marriage operates as a body. Last week we studied God's original intent for marriage. We were asked to identify a relationship in our lives where one person is dominant over another and think of ways to bring about change. Please share how this went.

In today's lesson, we will look at the relational curse in Genesis 3 and we will look at ways that a relationship is built up or torn down.

1. Read *Genesis chapter 3*. Who was the serpent and how did he convince Eve to eat the fruit? (vs 1-5) *Satan – he asked a deceptive question. He contradicted God by stating a half-truth (You will not die – spiritual vs physical). He made it seem like God was withholding something good that they should want.*
2. How did Eve convince Adam to eat the fruit? (vs 6)
She gave some to him. His trust in her was stronger than his loyalty to God.
3. How did the disobedience of Adam and Eve affect their relationship with God? (vs 10 & 23)
They were afraid of Him and they were ashamed of their naked bodies. God distanced Himself from them.
4. In verses 11-13 we see the beginning of dysfunctional relationships. Both the man and the woman chose to not take responsibility for their own actions and instead put the blame on someone else. They did wrong, they got caught, and they didn't repent. How have you seen this type of dysfunction played out in a relationship?
5. What was God's curse on the snake? (vs 14-15)
He would crawl on his belly; lowest of animals; enemy of humans; crushed head vs bruised heel
6. Read *Genesis 2:17 & 3:16-19*. Five curses were given to the humans – 1 for both, 3 for the woman, 1 for the man. What are the 5 curses and which two are relational curses? *1) Death, 2) Pain in childbirth, 3) Desire for husband (relational), 4) Husband to rule over wife (relational), 5) Hard labor to produce food from the ground – thorns & thistles*
7. How have the relational curses affected marital relationships throughout history?
Control & abuse; treating wife like property
8. Can the curses be reversed? *yes* How? Read *1 Corinthians 15:22*. *Jesus defeated sin & death; He restores relationships*

Victims living under the oppression of a controller feel as if they are living in death.

9. When there is abuse in a marriage, children are trained to abuse the next generation. How can marriages model God’s love for children to follow? *Show consistent respect and kindness*
10. Let’s look at some characteristics that can either build a relationship or tear it down. These are applicable to marriage as well as other relationships. In the chart below, mark the characteristics that apply to your closest relationship.

| BUILDING UP | TEARING DOWN |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Honest/Sincere | Dishonest/Deceptive |
| Faithful | Unfaithful/Cheats/Betrays |
| Open | Covert/Conceals information |
| Allows freedom | Subjugates/Dominates/Controls |
| Values the other | Mistreats/Oppresses |
| Listens to ideas, concerns, and beliefs | Dismisses concerns of the other |
| Comforts | Torments/ Harasses |
| Affirms | Criticizes/Judges |
| <i>Accepts the other as they are</i> | <i>Becomes irritated</i> |
| <i>Encourages</i> | <i>Becomes frustrated</i> |
| <i>Patient</i> | <i>Angry</i> |

11. Fill in some other characteristics above that build up or tear down a relationship.
12. Without trying to change the other person, what one thing can you work on this week to improve your relationship?

Read the following:

You can be a part of the solution to domestic abuse by joining your church’s Domestic Kindness Action Team.



The Action Team equips the whole church with Domestic Kindness instruction in Godly living & connects the oppressed and the struggling abusers to expert help.

If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 6 ~ Shining the Light

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In our first lesson we learned how we are to practice agape love. In our second lesson we looked at how we are to submit to each other. Then in our most recent lesson we learned how marriage models God's love. We were challenged to work on a characteristic that would build up a relationship and not tear it down. Please share how this went.

In today's lesson, we will contrast behaviors we are called to practice with behaviors we are told to avoid. And we will shine God's light on the evil of abuse.

1. Read *Ephesians 5:1-20*. Make a list of all the behaviors mentioned here, placing them into the category of either **GODLY LIVING** or **UNGODLY LIVING**.

| GODLY LIVING | UNGODLY LIVING |
|---|--|
| V1) <i>Imitate God</i> | V3) <i>Sexual immorality</i> |
| <i>Walk in the way of love</i> | <i>Impurity</i> |
| V4) <i>Thanksgiving</i> | <i>Greed</i> |
| V8) <i>Live as people of light</i> | V4) <i>Obscenity</i> |
| V9) <i>Goodness</i> | <i>Foolish talk</i> |
| <i>Righteousness</i> | <i>Coarse joking</i> |
| <i>Truth</i> | V6) <i>Deception</i> |
| V10) <i>Find what pleases the Lord</i> | <i>Disobedient to God</i> |
| V11) <i>Avoid deeds of darkness</i> | V7) <i>Partnering with the disobedient</i> |
| <i>Expose evil deeds</i> | V8) <i>Full of darkness</i> |
| V15) <i>Be careful to live wisely</i> | V12) <i>Talk about ungodly deeds</i> |
| V16) <i>Make the most of every opportunity</i> | V15) <i>Unwise</i> |
| V17) <i>Understand God's will</i> | V17) <i>Foolish</i> |
| V18) <i>Be filled with the Holy Spirit</i> | V18) <i>Drunkenness</i> |
| V19) <i>Sing spiritual songs Make music to the Lord</i> | <i>Debauchery</i> |
| V20) <i>Always thank God for everything</i> | |

2. Notice that verse 11 says to 'expose evil deeds.' Read *Proverbs 8:13*. We are to hate what God hates. What does he hate? *Evil; pride; arrogance; evil behavior; perverse speech*
3. Let's talk about the evil of abuse. Domestic Abuse is a pattern of hurtful behavior in a relationship that is used by one person to gain or maintain power and control over another person (usually an intimate partner). Can you name six common types of abuse? *Verbal; emotional; sexual; spiritual; financial; physical*
4. Today we will focus on the evil of physical abuse. Here are a few types of physical abuse: **Slapping; shoving; spitting; pushing; pinning down; poking; pulling hair**
What are some others? *Strangling; scratching; throwing or attacking with anything; brandishing, discharging, or using a deadly weapon; burning; binding; beating; punching; biting*

(This graphic interview could be triggering to some.)

5. Read the interview (see supplement). In this horrifying account, how old were the victim and abuser? **Teenagers** (approximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls is a victim of interpersonal violence¹)
6. This was the first time he hurt her. What does that tell us? **He has hurt her since then.**
7. They were at a party when he pounded her head into the cement. What did the bystanders do? **Nothing**
8. He locked Beti up in his room at his parents' home afterwards. He knew he'd behaved wrongly. Why didn't he take her to the hospital? **He cared about himself, not about her.**

What Can We Do?

9. What would you have done if you had witnessed this incident?
Call 911; restrain him if you are strong enough.
10. If you ever suspect physical abuse, be a friend, promise confidentiality, and believe the victim's story. (The making of false allegations of spousal abuse is much less common than the problem of genuine victims who fail to report abuse.²) What are some words you could use to address your concern? **"Is everything okay?" "You seem a bit down." "I'm concerned about you." "I'm here if you'd like to talk."**

Don't tell them what to do – they've already had too much controlling!

Ask if they'd like Domestic Kindness to help. If they say yes, offer to arrange a contact with your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team, using a safe phone and in a safe place.

When a rescue is needed, your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team will:

- Contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline **800.799.7233** on a safe phone to confirm the "level of crisis."
- Help the victim find an opening at a local shelter ministry and receive coaching from the shelter on how to help the escape. (Then the victim talks to the shelter.)

Some resources for help: **Victim:** *(insert name of local shelter)*

Struggling Abuser: *(insert name of batterers program)*

Action Team Representative: *(insert name and number)*

11. Using the Godly Living list from our lesson, how can you practice Godly living this week?

Read the following:

The epidemic of domestic abuse affects 1 in 4 families in our community. Would you like to be a part of the solution by joining the Domestic Kindness Action Team?

Ask for a show of hands – Have the DKAT contact them within a week



The Action Team equips the whole church with Domestic Kindness instruction in Godly living & connects the oppressed and the struggling abusers to expert help.

If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). Physical dating violence among high school students-United States, 2003. MMWR Weekly. May 19, 2006. 55(19); 532-535.

²CUSTODY DISPUTES INVOLVING ALLEGATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, Peter G. Jaffe, Janet R. Johnston, Claire V. Crooks, Nicholas Bala

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 7 ~ Responding to Abuse

Read all parts of the lesson (in black print) aloud in the group. Don't read answers in red unless there are no other appropriate answers given by group members. Start with question numbers circled in red.

In our first lesson we learned how to practice agape love... Next, how husbands and wives submit to each other. Then we looked at God's intentions for marriage. In our last lesson, we contrasted godly living with ungodly living, shining the light on the evil of domestic violence. We were asked to practice one of the characteristics of godly living. Please share how this went.

In today's lesson, we will discuss the signs of domestic abuse and how to respond.

1. Read *1 John 3:14-18 (CEV)*. Our love for others shows whether we are spiritually alive. How do we demonstrate our love for others?
Give our lives for each other; have pity on those in need; truly helping, not just in words
2. Read *Proverbs 24:11-12 (CEV)*. What does this tell us about getting involved in situations we would rather ignore? *If we see someone being destroyed, we are responsible to do what we can to help.*
3. The two main types of domestic abuse are **physical** and **emotional**. In our last lesson, we discussed what **physical** abuse looks like. What do you think **emotional** abuse looks like? *Spouse is critical, controlling, condescending, blaming, accusing, ignoring, sarcastic, deceptive*
4. Read these ways we can help a victim of abuse:

| DO | DON'T |
|---|---|
| Talk to the victim alone. | DON'T confront the abuser. (There are exceptions) |
| Ask if something is wrong. | DON'T wait for the victim to come to you. |
| Express your concern. ("Wow, was that harsh!") | DON'T judge or blame. (either party) |
| Listen and validate. ("I believe you." "That is tough.") | DON'T pressure the victim to act. |
| Offer help. ("What are some things we can do?") | DON'T give advice. (The victim has been told what to do, too often!) |
| Be patient. (Some victims return to abuse 7 times or more.) | DON'T force a choice. (The victim needs to take the 1 st step.) |
| Support their decisions. | DON'T place conditions on your support. |
| Talk through several options. | DON'T tell an abused wife that she must stay with or be submissive to an abusive husband. |

Adapted from the NY State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Do you have any suggestions of other ways to help a victim?

Don't give expert advice if you're not sure about comments or questions. Say you'll get back to them. Ask someone from Domestic Kindness to give you the appropriate information.

In many abuse cases, the victim may need to consider separation from a spouse in order to be truly safe physically and emotionally.

Read Malachi 2:13-16. The Hebrew word that is translated 'divorce' in Malachi 2:16 literally means 'send away.' The meaning here is not that God hates divorce but that He hates the treacherous act of sending away the loyal wife, often leaving her destitute. This was considered to be violence toward her.

5. Read Ezra 10:10-11 and Mark 2:27. Is God more concerned about the institution of marriage or about the well-being of the individuals? **Well-being of people** Why do you believe that? **God created rules for people, not people for rules.**
God hates violence more than he hates divorce.
6. If the abuser has not shown a permanent change, is the victim safe to be with that person? **no** What will happen if the victim returns to the abusive spouse?
The abuse will escalate; the victim may attempt suicide, feeling that there is no other way out.
7. If there are **minor children** in the home who have witnessed physical abuse, social services must be notified by mandated reporters. These children are considered victims of abuse if they have witnessed it, even if they themselves have not been physically harmed. You can be better prepared by keeping the phone number of your local social welfare office in your contact list. Write that number here:
8. Do you know who the mandated reporters of child abuse are in your state?
Look up the information for your state (possibly members of the clergy, medical personnel, mental health providers, social workers, childcare providers, school employees, and law enforcement).
9. Read the **DK Role Play #1. (2 women if possible)** If you encounter a situation that seems to involve abuse, and you're not sure what to do, contact the **Domestic Kindness Action Team**. What is the name and number of your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team representative? **Have the name and number ready.**
10. Read **How to Help a Friend or Family Member**. In the chart below, list some things you might see or hear that could be cause for concern and what you might do or say in response.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

MY RESPONSE

| | |
|---|---|
| A black eye or bruises | "Are you okay?" |
| Weak excuses | Suggest meeting together. |
| Financial restrictions | "Do you feel financially free in your marriage?" |
| Unexpected absences | "I'm concerned about you." |
| Self-dismissive (low self-worth) | "You have great value and God would never want anyone to devalue you." |
| Haughty put downs by spouse | Confidentially offer domestic violence information. |
| Unable to express feelings | "I'm here if you want to talk." |

11. What will you do to be part of the solution to the epidemic of domestic abuse?
Read the following:
Would you like more information about joining the Domestic Kindness Action Team?
Ask for a show of hands. Have the Domestic Kindness Action Team contact them within a week.



Your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team works:

- To equip the whole church with instruction in Godly living
- To connect the oppressed and the struggling abusers to expert help

If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind