



Relational Awareness

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 Syllabus

LESSON #	TITLE	APPLICATION
	Introduction <i>Goals and Expectations</i> <i>Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships</i> <i>Relationship Red Flags</i>	Ask God to reveal a red flag in one of your relationships or in a relationship you've observed.
1	Love Defined <i>1 Corinthians 13</i> <i>What it Means to Love and To Be Loved</i> <i>How to Practice Love</i>	Do one thing to practice the attributes of love.
2	Mutual Submission <i>Ephesians 5:21-33</i> <i>God's Idea of Submission</i> <i>Sacrifice & Respect</i>	Practice submission in a close relationship.
3	A Godly Unit <i>Ephesians 5:30-31</i> <i>Tendencies - Kindness, Selfishness, or Abuse</i> <i>Evaluating Relational Patterns</i>	Work on an area of concern (relational patterns).
4	Designed Marriage <i>Genesis 1 & 2</i> <i>God's Intention for Marriage</i> <i>Domination Over Others?</i>	Address controlling attitudes in your relationships.
5	Reverse the Curse <i>Genesis 3</i> <i>Relational Curse</i> <i>Building Up or Tearing Down</i>	Work on building up, not tearing down a relationship.
6	Shining the Light <i>Ephesians 5:1-20</i> <i>Contrasting Godly and Ungodly</i> <i>The Evil of Abuse</i>	Practice one area of Godly living.
7	Responding to Abuse <i>1 John 3:14-18</i> <i>Recognizing Abuse</i> <i>Helping the Victim</i>	Think of a way to be part of the solution to domestic abuse.

Class Description: This study will help us learn how to make all our relationships honor God; this includes marriage, dating, friends, and family. We will learn about red flags in relationships and be able to see the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. We will learn what to do when someone we know is being mistreated by someone they love. We will see how the clear reading of God's word debunks the abusers' misuse of scripture to support their controlling demands. We will also be inspired to evaluate our own character and to apply what we learn. We will explore what we can do about the epidemic of domestic abuse.

Expectations:

- 1 Apply what you've learned each week.
- 2 Answer the questions for the upcoming week.



Relational Awareness ~ Introduction

PowerPoint Notes

In This Study You'll 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 is an organization that equips churches to be part of the solution to Domestic Abuse.

What We Do:

- Our primary mission is to educate the Christian community about the epidemic of domestic abuse and to instruct in methods of what we can do to help solve the problem.

What We Don't Do:

- We don't rescue.
- We don't counsel or give advice.

What We Do:

- We connect victims and abusers to expert help.
- We provide teaching about healthy relationships and Godly living.

Domestic Kindness trains a group of church members who become a permanent Domestic Kindness Action Team (DKAT) at their church.

The Domestic Kindness Action Team educates the church through:

WORKSHOPS ~ BIBLE STUDIES ~ SERMON SUGGESTIONS ~ LEADERS' TRAINING

The Domestic Kindness Action Team connects the suffering to:

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Introduction to Phil Meister

(one of the Domestic Kindness instructors)

1. Why is he involved?
2. His history

Why was this Organization created?

1. Domestic Abuse Destroys Many Lives
2. Christians Need to Know How to Deal with This Issue
3. Domestic Abuse is an Epidemic



Domestic Abuse is a PANDEMIC

In the USA, how many cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed?

As of February 2021, the number of confirmed cases is nearly **28 million**.

How many families in the USA are touched by domestic abuse?

The population of the USA is over 320,000,000.

1 in 4 families in the USA have been touched by domestic abuse. That means...

Over **80 million** people in the USA are affected!

Churches Sometimes Give Bad Advice

- Couples Counseling (One of the worst things you can do)
- Pray More
- Love, Sacrifice, & Forgive More (increases abuse)
- Keep the Marriage Together No Matter What (They say "Divorce is worse than abuse")
- Blaming the Victim (assuming the victim has a part in the marital conflict) – They ask:
"What are you doing to make him/her angry?"
"Why are you attracted to abusers?"
- Confronting the Abuser (can be dangerous for the victim)

What was God's plan in creating people?

To live in harmony with Him and with each other.

Why is our nation in the midst of turmoil right now?

Because of hatred and selfishness on the part of so many. This was never God's plan. It makes Him sad to see cruelty and violence perpetrated on the innocent.

What would the world look like if every home was a haven of love and kindness?

In Today's Lesson We Will Discuss:

- The Study Syllabus
- Small Group and Prayer Guidelines
- Relationship Red Flags
- Healthy Relationships
- Domestic Violence Statistics

The application for this week is: Ask God to reveal a red flag in one of your relationships or in a relationship you've observed.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ~ Matthew 5:9



SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES

It is requested that religious backgrounds and other denominations not be discussed during our class sharing.

Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements.
What is shared in the group stays in the group.

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER & SHARE TIME

We believe that sharing prayer requests and praises is a vital part of our time together. Bible Study and Prayer are both very important parts of our lives as believers. Because our weekly time is limited, only a set amount of time is allotted for prayer and share.

- **ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY:** ANY and ALL of what is shared during group time is NOT TO LEAVE THE GROUP UNDER ANY CONDITIONS except when the one sharing requests otherwise.
- **CONCISE AND PRECISE, PLEASE:** Please spend MORE time praying and LESS time describing the request. Work to make sure everyone has an opportunity to share and be prayed for.
- **PERSONAL REQUESTS:** If you have a personal request that you do not feel comfortable sharing with the whole class, you may express a request for an "unspoken need." We encourage you to share this request with your leader or someone you trust so you can pray together privately.
- **LIMIT SPECIFIC DETAILS:** Just give us enough information that we can pray for you.
- **RESPECT THIRD PARTIES:** Stick to YOUR involvement and what YOU NEED to do or change through prayer. INTIMATE DETAILS OF OTHERS' WRONG-DOINGS OR THEIR PERSONAL SITUATIONS MUST NOT BE SHARED.
- **DON'T FEEL COMPELLED:** If you aren't comfortable praying aloud, you don't need to - let your leader know privately that you would rather not be asked to pray aloud.

Prayer requests should be given in such a way that if the person who is being prayed for walks in they will be blessed, but not embarrassed.

Relationship Red Flags

Karla Downing

1. Emotional reactivity

Your partner creates drama and turmoil frequently by being upset, sensitive, moody, angry, and reactive over things that aren't really a big deal to you. As a result, you have to put energy into explaining what you really meant, apologizing, and trying to fix your partner's feelings. As a result of this emotional reactivity, you find yourself walking on eggshells and afraid to be yourself.

2. Jealousy, suspiciousness, possessiveness, and accusations

Your partner accuses you of being unfaithful, is suspicious of your relationships, acts like he/she owns you and your time, and shows extreme jealousy. This distrust is unrelated to a history of you being unfaithful or untrustworthy.

3. Excesses that bother you

Anything your partner does to excess that bothers you now has the potential to bother you more later on. These include addictions, relationships, sports, work, and personality traits. This is even worse if the person is defensive about the issue when you bring it up.

4. Lying

If you have caught your partner in lies, you can assume there will be more lies in the future, unless the issue underlying the lies is resolved.

5. Control

Your partner tries to control who you see, what you do, and how you live your life. At first, this may feel caring, but the underlying issues behind control are deep and lead to abuse later on.

6. Emotional/verbal/physical abuse

Your partner uses manipulative and controlling tactics such as put downs, minimizing, ridicule, name calling, discounting, hostile anger, threats, withdrawal, and physical violence. These are all forms of abuse and only get worse the longer you are in the relationship.

7. Problems in your partner's personal life

Whether it is with children, finances, business, family, friends, work, physical health, mental health, or sexual problems, these will become your problem(s), if the relationship continues.

8. Self-doubt

You find yourself questioning yourself and wondering if you are crazy, overreacting, oversensitive, mean, or selfish, because your partner is telling you that you are the problem in the relationship.

9. Partner's family/friends don't like you

Your partner's family or friends (children, parents, siblings, close friends) don't like or accept you. Carefully consider the effect on your life and relationship, especially if your partner doesn't validate your concerns.

10. Partner's past relationship baggage is unresolved

Your partner needs to have worked through past relationships to be ready to have a new relationship. This includes working through the anger and sadness, accepting that the relationship is over, and having a balanced perspective about his/her part. Otherwise, unfinished business will spill onto you.

11. Different values, beliefs, lifestyles and likes

Your partner doesn't have to be your clone, but you need more than physical attraction to build a happy life together.

12. Caretaking

You find yourself taking over your partner's responsibilities, fixing problems, and helping him/her to be a better person.

13. Your family and friends don't like your partner

Unless they have a history of not wanting you to be happy, their objective observations need your attention and consideration. Your family and friends know you and care about you and can see things you may have already desensitized yourself to.

14. Inability to resolve conflict

Your partner is unable to resolve conflict and unwilling to learn how to communicate better. Conflict is healthy, as long as it leads to better understanding and mutual cooperation; the inability to resolve conflict and communicate in a healthy manner leads to dysfunction and pain.

15. Hoping for change

You are already telling yourself that your partner needs to change. This means you see the red flags but are willing to convince yourself that they will go away rather than lose the relationship.

What Does a Healthy Relationship Look Like?

Andrea Bonior Ph.D.

Healthy, functional relationships have these characteristics — which apply especially to committed romantic relationships. When they are missing, it's important to address the problem.

1. Trust

Without trust, you will be left constantly unsure of whether you can count on your partner to come through for you, and whether or not they really mean what they are saying.

2. Communication

Communicating honestly and respectfully, especially about things that are difficult, is something that does not come automatically to everyone. We may have learned to keep uncomfortable things under the surface for the sake of harmony or the appearance of perfection. Also, we may have never learned how to acknowledge difficult feelings to ourselves. Other challenges involve taking things over-personally or lashing out when we feel threatened.

3. Patience

Partners in a healthy, loving relationship extend each other a basic common denominator of patience that allows for peace, flexibility, and support when one person is having a bad day or is not at their best. Being able to adjust to the ebbs and flows of a partner's moods— within reason — can allow a feeling of being unconditionally loved.

4. Empathy

Being willing to take another person's perspective is helpful in so many cases — whether in parenting, being a good neighbor, or even just letting someone merge in front of you on the highway. Can you truly put forth the effort to try to understand their perspective, even when you disagree with it? Does their pain spur you to try to help them feel better? Do you feel happy about their triumphs?

5. Affection and Interest

Both partners are truly interested in each other and fond of each other. Small physical gestures of affection, like hugs, kisses, and a comforting touch can go a long way to keeping each person feeling comforted and secure within their relationship.

6. Flexibility

Relationships take compromise. It's important that both partners show flexibility in day-to-day life and decision making, because if it is just one partner always doing the bending, that imbalance can grow toxic over time. In healthy relationships, both partners are willing to adjust as needed to the changes and growth that may come about during a relationship. And they are able to evaluate on a joint level, especially during conflicts, what matters most to each person within the relationship, and how that should be prioritized.

7. Appreciation

Gratitude makes us feel happier and more secure with our partners, which also improves the relationship's well-being. Even small expressions of gratitude and appreciation can help improve relationship satisfaction. Say "thank you" for something your partner did.

8. Room for Growth

Hopes, fears, goals, and interests constantly evolve, and that is a good thing. A relationship doesn't have to suffer because of this, as long as both people allow each other the space to grow, by not pigeonholing each other, and by trying to take an interest in learning what's important to the other person.

9. Respect

Respect is very important within a close relationship. In healthy relationships, people talk to each other in ways that don't debase, invalidate, or belittle. They value each other's time and opinions like they value their own. They protect each other's privacy and don't use each other as the butt of jokes or as thankless help for menial tasks.

10. Reciprocity

In healthy relationships, you both just generally do for each other when needed. In an ideal situation, the give-and-take roughly works out to equal over time, and neither partner feels resentful. Of course, in many relationships, the give-and-take won't ever become equal. And that can be okay, as long as both partners feel comfortable overall with the level of give-and-take as it exists, and they each find a way to give *something* to the relationship and their partners — especially in the form of emotional support — when they can.

11. Healthy Conflict Resolution

Healthy couples express their emotions and work to resolve them as they come up, even when it causes conflict. They refrain from stonewalling and escalating into personal attacks when there is a difference of opinion or a problem. They are able to talk it through with respect, empathy, and understanding.

12. Individuality and Boundaries

In a healthy relationship, similarities create a foundation to connect with each other, while individual differences are respected and valued. It's important that each partner is given the freedom to live their own life, especially in terms of friendships, professional goals, and hobbies. Each person has aspects of their lives that are theirs alone, and that boundary must be respected by both parties.

13. Openness and Honesty

There are different levels of openness within relationships — some share the most intimate of physical details with each other. Some are open about hopes, dreams, and even the details of one's workday. But no matter where you fall on the spectrum, it's important that honesty underlies whatever disclosures you make. Partners who mask their true selves, hide their emotional realities or actively deceive their partners about their habits and behaviors are jeopardizing the fundamental foundation of trust that every relationship needs.



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 1 ~ Love Defined

PowerPoint Notes

Let's Review Our Goals for This Study

- Identify Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships
- Help Others
- Be the Solution

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ~ Matthew 5:9

Last week we learned about Domestic Kindness

We:

- Educate Christians about domestic abuse.
- Provide teaching about healthy relationships and Godly living.
- Connect victims and abusers to expert help.

Domestic Kindness equips churches to be part of the solution to domestic abuse.

We train a group of church members who become a permanent Domestic Kindness Action Team (DKAT) at their church.

WE LOOKED AT:

- Healthy Relationships
- Relationship Red Flags

HERE ARE SOME OTHER RED FLAGS:

- You don't feel comfortable with something ***you are doing for someone.***
- You don't feel comfortable with something ***someone is doing to you.***

We learned that domestic abuse is a PANDEMIC.

We looked at the validity of the domestic abuse statistics.

As Christians, this is an issue we must take SERIOUSLY.

Today's Lesson ~ Love Defined

1 Corinthians 13 ~ God's Definition of Love

What it Means to Love and To Be Loved

Why Study About Love?

God's love is how relationships are transformed.

We need to know what love really is.

Sin in the World:

- Causes a distorted view of love.
- Prevents us from recognizing when something is wrong in a relationship.

Love is not a feeling. Love is an attitude. It is a command.

Love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19:18

Loving God's way requires that we:

- Recognize what God's love looks like.
- Receive God's love – *We love because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19*

Glass Filled to the Brim

Whatever is inside spills out when shaken.

Daily ask God to fill you with His love.

When we truly receive God's love, then it flows freely from us to others.

TRY THIS as you read 1 Corinthians 13:

- Ask God how He loves you in each of the characteristics.
- Ask how you can love others that way.

For example:

Love is patient. - How is God patient with me? - How can I be patient with others?

Love & Value Are Intrinsically Connected

Until you know that you are **highly valued** by your heavenly Father, your love for others will be less effective than it could be.

LOVE is about **VALUING** a person.

A **loving** person treats others as if they have great **importance**.

ABUSE is about **DEVALUING** a person.

An **abusive** person treats others as if they are **worthless**.

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

- To recognize real love according to God's word
- To pass on God's love to others as you experience it from Him
- To improve your current relationships
- To examine yourself and see where you can improve
- To avoid forming unhealthy relationships
- NOT to make you feel guilty or to discourage you

Love is kind. ~ 1 Corinthians 13:4

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 1 ~ Love Defined

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?
2. Read Matthew 22:34-40. What are the two most important commandments?
3. Read 1 John 4:7-8. Do we really love God if we don't love others?
(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?

5. What's the point made in verses 1-3?
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		
v4) Kind		
v4) Not jealous		
v4) Not proud		
v4) Not arrogant		
v5) Doesn't act unbecomingly		
v5) Doesn't seek its own		

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

Word:

Other words:

Ways to practice it:

v5) Not easily provoked		
v5) Doesn't count wrongs		
v6) Doesn't delight in unrighteousness		
v6) Delights in the truth		
v7) Bears all things		
v7) Believes all things		
v7) Hopes all things		
v7) Endures all things		
v8) Love never fails		

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: _____.
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?
9. What one thing will you do this week to practice the attributes of love and improve your relationships?

Verse 13 - Only faith, hope, and love will last... and the greatest of these three is: _ _ _ _ .
So maybe we should learn most about (*and try the hardest to be*) LOVE.



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

PowerPoint Notes

REVIEW

Let's Review Our Goals for This Study

1. Improve all of our relationships
2. Be able to offer help to others

In our first week:

We learned about Domestic Kindness.

Domestic Kindness equips churches to be part of the solution to domestic abuse.

As Christians, domestic abuse is an issue we must take **SERIOUSLY**.

Last week we learned about God's definition of love.

1 Corinthians 13 ~ What it Means to Love and to Be Loved

We learned that love is better than spiritual gifts or great works.

Note: We are commanded to love and yet we cannot fully love if we are not being continuously filled with God's love.

We learned how to evaluate our relationships based on 1 Corinthians 13.

Do we love others this way?

Do others love us this way?

For example: Love is patient.

Am I patient with the other person?

Is the **other person** patient with me?

RELATIONSHIPS MUST BE MUTUAL

Today's Lesson ~ Mutual Submission

Ephesians 5 ~ God's Idea of Submission

Why Study About Submission?

God's design for relationships is mutual submission.

Why Study About Marriage?

- Marriage is a tangible way to see what God's unconditional, selfless, and never-ending love is all about.
- God's relationship with His people is often compared to a husband and wife.
- Everyone can benefit from studying about marriage. Everyone knows someone who is married.
- Many principles for a good marital relationship apply to all close relationships.

Submission

The word “submit” in the Bible is often wrongly interpreted as “yield to someone's control.”

It is sometimes used for the ill-intentioned purposes of an abuser to control a spouse.

Whenever Bible scripture is used as a weapon to control another person, that is **Spiritual Abuse**.

How should we interpret God's Word?

According to God's heart, as seen **throughout the Bible**

God's **love** is the foundation and motivation for all He does and says. Therefore, we must always interpret what He says **through the lens of His love**.

Greek word for submit - Hupotasso:

- Military – arrange under the command of a leader
- Non-military – willingly cooperate or attach

The Bible does **NOT** refer to marriage as a **military unit**, **NOR** as an **organization**.

The Bible refers to marriage as a **relationship** that operates as a physical body, **cooperating – working together, attached to each other**.

Ephesians 5:21 says: “*Submit to one another.*”

Submit = Cooperate = Work Together

Husband and Wife Submit to Each Other in Different Ways

HUSBAND submits (works together) by **SACRIFICING** (dying to himself)

WIFE submits (works together) by **RESPECTING** (he is an image bearer of God)

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

- To understand the meaning of submission according to God's word
- To see what submission looks like in a marriage

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:21

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 2 ~ Mutual Submission

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; and
- 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)?

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?
3. When husbands are told to love their wives, the Greek word for love is _____ (sacrificial, selfless).
4. Read 1 John 3:16. How do we know what love is?
5. A husband submits to his wife by sacrificing (dying to himself) for her. What are some practical ways for him to do that?
6. According to verse 33, how are wives instructed to submit to their husbands?

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?

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 these 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?

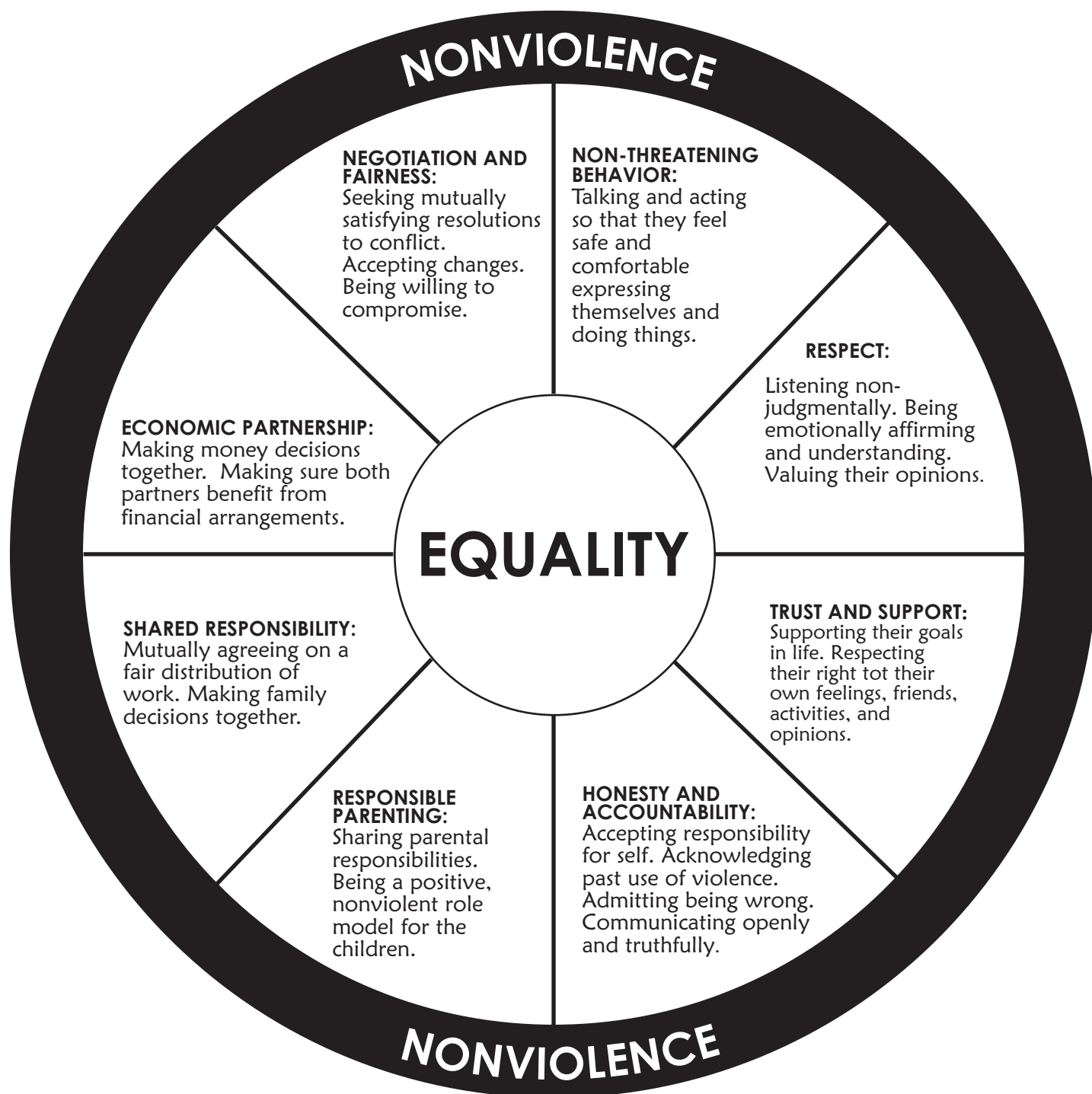


Your church's Domestic Kindness Action Team:

- 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

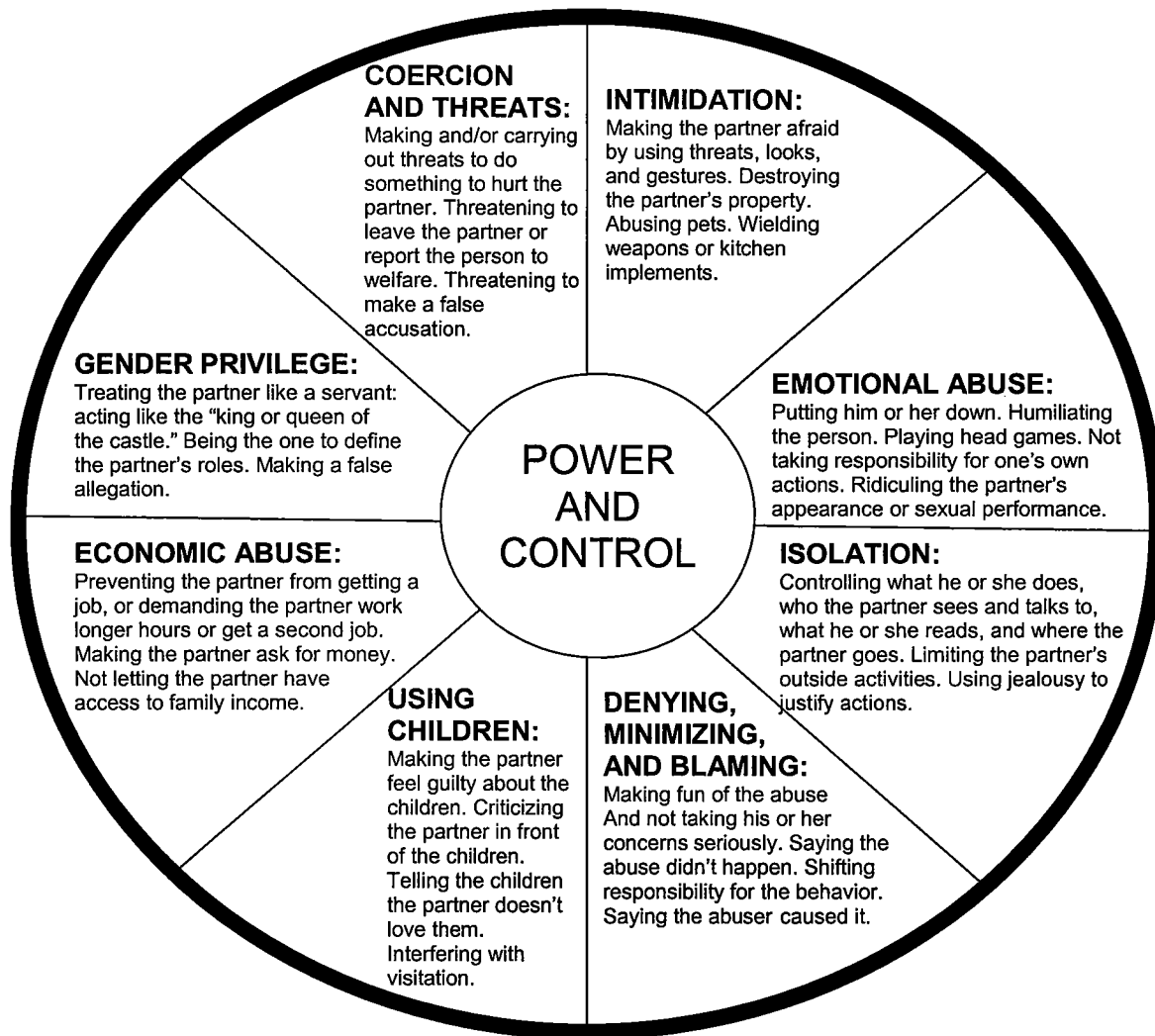
EQUALITY WHEEL



GENDER-INCLUSIVE

POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are often linked to other abusive behaviors. Although physical assaults may occur only occasionally, they can instill the fear of future violence, allowing the abuser to take control of the partner's life. The Gender-Inclusive Power and Control Wheel is a helpful tool to understand the overall pattern of abusive and violent behavior.



Original Power and Control Wheel developed by:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802

Adapted by:
SAVE: Stop Abusive and Violent Environments
Technical assistance - Training - Education
P.O. Box 1221
Rockville, MD 20849

6/24/09



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 3 ~ A Godly Unit

PowerPoint Notes

REVIEW

So Far, We Have Learned About:

- Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships
- How to Evaluate the Love We Are Giving and Receiving
- God's Idea of Submission

God's Idea is Mutual Submission

Greek word for submit - Hupotasso:

- Military – Arrange under the command of a leader
- Non-military – Willingly cooperate or attach

Ephesians 5:21 says: “Submit to one another.”

Submit = Cooperate = Work Together

HUSBAND submits by **SACRIFICING** (dying to himself)

WIFE submits by **RESPECTING** him (He is an image bearer of God.)

NOTE: The husband is instructed to love his wife.

There can be no love without RESPECT.

Showing honor and respect includes **recognition**. Studies show that ignoring people can be just as harmful as mistreating them.

Equality Wheel

What an intimate partner relationship should look like

Power & Control Wheel

What you should **not** see in a healthy relationship

When one person tries to control another, God's love cannot be part of the relationship.

Today's Lesson ~ A Godly Unit

Ephesians 5:23-32

How do a head and body operate together?

Mutually dependent

The head exists to serve the body.

The body exists to serve the head.

Ephesians 5:32 says:

“This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.”

- We don't lose our identity when we are united with **Christ**.
- We don't lose our identity when we are united with our **spouse**.
- We work in partnership with **Christ**.
- We work in partnership with our **spouse**.

In this lesson, we will also learn to recognize some of the subtleties of abuse, and some selfish behaviors that can lead to abuse.

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

1. To see how a marriage operates as a body
2. To distinguish behaviors in a relationship that are kind, selfish, or abusive
3. To work on relating in healthier ways

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 3 ~ A Godly Unit

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?
2. Read John 13:14 and Luke 22:27. How does Jesus as head treat His body, the church?
3. Verse 23 - Jesus _____ His church, His people, His body.
Verse 29 – Jesus _____ for His church, His people, His body.
In what ways does Jesus save and care for the people who are connected to Him?
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?
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?

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?



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If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 4 ~ Marriage Designed

PowerPoint Notes

REVIEW

So Far, We Have Learned About:

- Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships
- How to Practice Love
- God's Idea of Submission

As God takes the lead in loving and **sacrificing** for us, so the **husband** takes the lead in loving and **sacrificing** for his wife.

Both husband and wife must **respect** each other, because **without respect there can be no love**.

An attitude of **criticism** is destructive in a relationship, but that does not mean that we should not **confront**.

In a healthy relationship, **both parties lovingly confront behavior** that tears down the relationship.

- Marriage as a Godly Unit

How Marriage Operates as a Body

Head & body are mutually dependent. ~ For example:

Finger touches hot, communicates to head,
head communicates back to protect finger

We Evaluated Relational Patterns and Tendencies:

Kindness

Selfishness

Abuse

Today's Lesson ~ Marriage Designed

- There is no greater love than what God has shown the world through creation and His great sacrifice. Marriage is a tangible way to see what His love is all about.
- Satan continually tries to destroy the most beautiful thing God created - marriage. There are many evil distortions of marriage. They do not even come close to representing God's great love for the world.
- Male and female were made in God's image. One is not better than the other. God's creation of woman was **not** an afterthought. **God is neither male nor female.**
- Interestingly, God sometimes refers to himself as a mother.¹

¹ Deuteronomy 32:18, Isaiah 66:13, Matthew 23:37

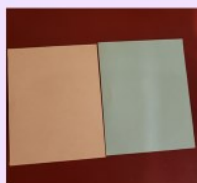
- God told Adam and Eve to take dominion over the earth, **not over each other**.
- Every person God created has **equal value**. God's will is **not** for either party in the marriage to feel less valued.
- God's plan was **never** for one person to **dominate** another or for one person to **mistreat** another.
- **Domestic abuse** is all about **one partner dominating the other**.
- **When one person tries to control another, God's love cannot be part of the relationship.**
- God is an **unselfish God** and His plan is **for all humans to be unselfish**, like Him.

The **fruit of the Spirit** (Galatians 5) needs to be embodied in the **marriage** relationship... **more than anywhere else on earth**.

- God's design for relationships was **not dominance over weakness**, rather **protection and caring for the weak**.
- **Oneness in marriage is based on both partners giving and serving.**

- We don't lose our identity when we are united with **Christ**.
- We don't lose our identity when we are united with our **spouse**.

To illustrate a man and a woman becoming one:



Both pieces of paper are complete on their own.



The two become one, yet maintain their own identities.



The pink and blue don't merge and turn to purple.

They are stronger together, united in purpose.

domestic
KINDNESS

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

1. **To understand God's intention for marriage**
2. **To see the dynamics of oneness in marriage**
3. **To understand that God doesn't favor one gender over another**

***A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife,
and the two are united into one.***

Genesis 2:24

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 4 ~ Marriage Designed

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?
2. Read *Genesis chapters 1 and 2*. What stands out to you about God's creation of humans?
3. Read *Genesis 1:26-27*. Who was created in God's image?

What does this tell us about who God is?

4. Why did God give Adam and Eve dominion over the animals, but not over each other?
5. Read the following scriptures and comment on God's idea about people controlling others:

1 Samuel 8:6-7

Luke 22:25-26

1 Peter 5:3

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?
7. Read *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*. Why are two better than one?

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?
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?

Do you believe that God intended one gender to be more valuable than the other?

Read and comment on Galatians 3:28.

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?
11. Read *Genesis 2:24*. What does oneness in marriage mean to you?
12. What does it mean to leave your parents when you marry?
13. God could have created multiples for Adam or Eve. Why didn't He?
14. Do you have any relationships in which one person dominates the other? If so, what will you do to bring about a change?



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If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 5 ~ Reverse the Curse

PowerPoint Notes

REVIEW

SO FAR, WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT:

1. Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships
2. Agape Love – **Love Defined**
3. God's Idea of Submission – **Mutual Submission**
4. Marriage as **A Godly Unit**

How Marriage Operates as a Body

Head and body are dependent on each other. One part never tries to take advantage of the other or cause the other pain.

The Bible does **not** describe marriage as a corporation where the head has authority over others, where there is a hierarchy.

The Bible describes marriage as a **physical body**. All parts of the body are **equally important**.

Jesus is God and yet His role as head is that of a servant.

Biblical Headship = Servanthood

5. God's Intention for Marriage - **Marriage Designed**

Male and female were made in God's image. One is not better than the other.

God told Adam and Eve to take dominion over the earth, **not over each other**. God's plan was **never** for one person to dominate another.

Domestic Abuse is about one partner **dominating** the other.

Oneness in marriage does not mean we lose our separate identities.

Today's Lesson ~ Reverse the Curse

Genesis 3

The Beginning of Dysfunctional Relationships

The Blame Game – Adam blames Eve, Eve blames the serpent

In dysfunctional relationships, there is at least one person who blames others or circumstances for their own wrong-doing.

When humans disobeyed God... humankind was punished with 5 curses:

1. **Death** – Adam & Eve (If you eat of the fruit you will die, physically and spiritually.)
2. **Pain** – Eve (You will have greater pain in childbirth.)
3. **Desire** – Eve (You will desire your husband.)
4. **Domination** – Eve (Your husband will rule over you.)
5. **Hard Labor** – Adam (The ground will have thorns and thistles.)

The Relational Curses on Women

You will desire your husband - and he will rule over you.

Why do women stay in abusive relationships?

There are many reasons... but... perhaps one reason is because the curse of male domination is accompanied by the curse of desiring her husband in spite of mistreatment.

Notice: The **physical** curses continue until the end of time while the **spiritual and relational curses** are broken by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

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

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

1. To see that the curses on humans were never God's perfect plan
2. To recognize which curses have caused relational problems in marriage
3. To see how these curses can be broken

***As everyone dies because of Adam,
so also, everyone will be made alive because of Christ.
1 Corinthians 15:22***

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 5 ~ Reverse the Curse

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 curses in Genesis 3 and we will look at ways in which 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)
2. How did Eve convince Adam to eat the fruit? (vs 6)
3. How did the disobedience of Adam and Eve affect their relationship with God? (vs 10 & 23)
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)
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?
7. How have the relational curses affected marital relationships throughout history?
8. Can the curses be reversed? How? Read *1 Corinthians 15:22*.

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?
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

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?

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If You Can Be Anything, Choose to Be Kind



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 6 ~ Shining the Light

PowerPoint Notes

REVIEW

SO FAR, WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT:

1. *Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships*
2. *Love Defined*
3. *Mutual Submission*

Mutual Submission: Ephesians 5 - cooperate (work together)

Husbands submit by **sacrificing** –

Picture a husband dying to himself for his wife every day in every way.

Wives submit by **respecting** –

Picture a wife honoring the intrinsic value God has placed on her husband in creating him. This respect is not earned. It is value given by God.

4. *Marriage as a Body*

Head & Body

Christ is the head (savior) of His body (the church). **The head saves the body from pain, suffering, and death.** The head loves its own body.

As Christ loves the church, so the husband loves his wife.

5. **GOD'S INTENTION FOR MARRIAGE** – Genesis 1 & 2

God instructed Adam and Eve to work as **partners** in ruling over the animals and the earth, but **not** to rule over each other.

God's plan was never for one person to dominate another.

We learned that the role of helper (ezer) is not a subservient role. **God Himself is our helper.**

Oneness in marriage does not mean we lose our separate identities.

6. **THE CURSES** – Genesis 3

On Women - You will desire your husband - and he will rule over you.

On Men & Women - Relational and spiritual curses are broken through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Today's Lesson ~ Shining the Light

Ephesians 5:1-20

~ Contrasting Godly and Ungodly ~

In this lesson, we will shine the light on the issue of domestic abuse

- **Domestic abuse is a worldwide epidemic.**
- **Domestic abuse is evil.**
- **Domestic abuse is the worst kind of betrayal.** It is when the person who says they love you more than anyone in the world treats you like their worst enemy
- **Domestic violence causes trauma for spouses and children that can take a lifetime to heal.**

For far too long, the Christian community has been silent on the issue of domestic abuse.

Why?

- Do we think divorce is worse than abuse?
- Do we think the Bible advises a victim to stay with a spouse in order to bring about salvation for the spouse?
- Are we afraid that if we get involved, it could get messy, and we might even be risking our lives?
- Do we believe that what happens in the home stays in the home?

Secular domestic violence organizations do not like churches or Christians... for good reason.

We have traditionally been part of the problem, rather than part of the solution (because of teachings about marriage & giving wrong advice in abuse situations).

- **It's time** to make a change in the Christian community.
- **It's time** to stop ignoring domestic abuse and pretending it doesn't exist.
- **It's time** to take a risk for the sake of the many who are suffering at the hands of someone they have trusted.

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

1. To see how we are to live vs how not to live
2. To hate what God hates
3. To expose evil deeds
4. To recognize the evil of domestic abuse
5. To learn what we can do when we become aware of physical domestic abuse

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. Ephesians 5:11

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 6 ~ Shining the Light

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)	V3)
V2)	
V4)	
V8)	V4)
V9)	
	V6)
V10)	
V11)	V7)
	V8)
V15)	V12)
V16)	V15)
V17)	V17)
V18)	V18)
V19)	
V20)	

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?
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?
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?

5. Read the interview (see supplement). In this horrifying account, how old were the victim and abuser? (Approximately 1 in 3 adolescent girls is a victim of interpersonal violence.¹)
6. This was the first time he hurt her. What does that tell us?
7. They were at a party when he pounded her head into the cement. What did the bystanders do?
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?

What Can We Do?

9. What would you have done if you had witnessed this incident?
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?

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:** Local shelter

Struggling Abuser: Batterers program

Action Team Representative:

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

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?



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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
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Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 6 ~ Shining the Light

Supplement

Interview with a Teen Victim

This is an excerpt from an interview that was conducted by The Sheepfold, a shelter that works with victims of domestic violence.

A young lady (we'll call her "Beti") explains:

". . . I live with my boyfriend and his family, it's nice here. I have a family . . ."

Tell me about the first time he hurt you.

"Yeah, that was pretty bad . . . He thought I was flirting with a guy, but no way was I doing that."

What happened?

"It was pretty bad. I don't know exactly how I ended up on the ground but there I was face down on the cement, and he was on top of me pounding my head into the ground.

I remember crying out for him to stop. But he wouldn't.

I tried to raise my head-up to look for someone to help – we were at a party, but all I could see was feet – they were afraid of him too.

I remember feeling warm liquid on my hands, and I opened my eyes to see what it was and it was a puddle of my blood and he still wouldn't stop.

Finally, I remember waking up but not seeing anything. My face was swollen beyond recognition. He kept me in his bedroom for days, because he said that if anyone would have seen me, he would go to jail, and I knew that too. He wouldn't even take me to the hospital."



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 7 ~ Responding to Abuse

PowerPoint Notes

REVIEW

Let's Review Our Goals for This Study

- Identify what is a healthy relationship vs an unhealthy relationship.
- Improve all your relationships.
- Be able to offer help when someone is distressed about mistreatment by someone they love.
- Become a part of the solution in the battle against domestic abuse.

So Far, We Have Learned About:

- **Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships**
- **God's Definition of Love** – How everyone should be treated
- **Mutual Submission** – Willingly cooperate (work together)
Submission does not mean following commands of another person.
- **God's Intention for Marriage**
 - Male and female are created in God's image.
 - Together they were to rule over the animals, **but not to rule over each other.**
 - The wife's role of helper (ezer) is compared to God as our helper.
- **The Curse on Women**
The husband will rule over the wife.
Spiritual and relational curses are broken by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Last week we looked at...

- **Shining the Light on Evil**

We learned how to live and how not to live.

We were instructed to expose evil deeds.

Domestic abuse is evil. – It's the worst kind of betrayal

Domestic abuse is an epidemic. - *In the USA – 1 in 4 women & 1 in 7 men have been abused by an intimate partner.*

What is Domestic 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).

Signs of Domestic Abuse – One person **dominates** the other.
One partner feels **unsafe** with the other.

Physical abuse can kill the body.
Emotional abuse can crush the soul.

Today's Lesson ~ Responding to Abuse

Recognizing Abuse & Helping the Victim

In this lesson, we will learn how we can be part of the solution to domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is all around us.
What can we do?

- We can learn to detect the signs.
- When you see something, say something.
- Know what to say and what not to say to the victim.
Don't give advice... Give options.
- **LUV** the victim – **L**isten, **U**nderstand, **V**alidate
- Learn about the tactics of the abuser so you don't get fooled into believing the abuser over the victim.
- Know who to contact in different situations.
- Know which resources to recommend.
- Pray regularly for God to raise up warriors to fight in the battle against domestic abuse.
- Get involved in educating the Christian community about domestic abuse.
- Join the Domestic Kindness Action Team at your church.

GOALS FOR THIS LESSON

1. Recognize the signs of domestic abuse.
2. Learn how to respond to domestic abuse.
3. Become part of the solution to domestic abuse.

Don't fail to rescue those who are doomed to die.
Proverbs 24:11

Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 7 ~ Responding to Abuse

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?
2. Read *Proverbs 24:11-12 (CEV)*. What does this tell us about getting involved in situations we would rather ignore?
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?
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?

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? Why do you believe that?

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? What will happen if the victim returns to the abusive spouse?
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?
9. Read the **Domestic Kindness Role Play #1**. 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?
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

11. What will you do to be part of the solution to the epidemic of domestic abuse?

Would you like more information about joining the Domestic Kindness Action Team?



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



Relational Awareness ~ Lesson 7 ~ Responding to Abuse

Here is a possible scenario that could play out when someone approaches you about a situation that may involve domestic abuse.

Domestic Kindness Role Play #1

(preferably 2 women readers)

(Phone rings)

Confidant: Hello?

Victim: Hi, Susan? Can I talk to you really quick?

Confidant: Sure. What's going on?

Victim: Something happened last night and I don't really know what to do about it. I was hoping I could talk to you.

Confidant: Of course you can talk to me. What's wrong?

Victim: I got into an argument with my boyfriend yesterday. We've been dating for a few months, and he is a really nice guy, but he was... not himself yesterday. It really scared me and I don't know what to do or where to go.

Confidant: Are you okay?

Victim: Yes, yes, I'm fine. I just need to be away from him... let him cool off for a few days, you know? I just want someone else to know what's going on in case of, I don't know, just someone else to know.

Confidant: That relationship sounds really scary and I'm scared for you. It sounds like you need help. I know that my church has a program to help people in your situation. Do you mind if I give that information to you now?

Victim: Sure. Thanks.

Confidant: Here's the phone number of someone on the Domestic Kindness Action Team. I will call you in a few days to see how you're doing.

(Confidant will follow up with the victim to see if she has contacted someone for help.)

How to Help a Friend or Family Member

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Are you concerned that someone you care about is experiencing abuse? Maybe you've noticed some warning signs, including:

- Their partner puts them down in front of other people
- They are constantly worried about making their partner angry
- They make excuses for their partner's behavior
- Their partner is extremely jealous or possessive
- They have unexplained marks or injuries
- They've stopped spending time with friends and family
- They are depressed or anxious, or you notice changes in their personality

If someone you love is being abused, it can be so difficult to know what to do. Your instinct may be to "save" them from the relationship, but it's not that easy. After all, there are many reasons why people stay in abusive relationships, and leaving can be a very dangerous time for a victim. Abuse is about power and control, so one of the most important ways you can help a person in an abusive relationship is to consider how you might empower them to make their own decisions. Additionally, you can offer support in various ways.

Acknowledge that they are in a very difficult and scary situation, be supportive and listen

Let them know that the abuse is not their fault. Reassure them that they are not alone and that there is help and support out there. It may be difficult for them to talk about the abuse. Let them know that you are available to help whenever they may need it. What they need most is someone who will believe and listen.

Be non-judgmental

Respect your friend or family member's decisions. There are many reasons why victims stay in abusive relationships. They may leave and return to the relationship many times. Do not criticize their decisions or try to guilt them. They will need your support even more during those times.

If they end that relationship, continue to be supportive of them

Even though the relationship was abusive, your friend or family member may still feel sad and lonely once it is over. They will need time to mourn the loss of the relationship and will especially need your support at that time.

Encourage them to participate in activities outside of the relationship with friends and family

Support is critical and the more they feel supported by people who care for them, the easier it will be for them to take the steps necessary to get and stay safe away from their abusive partner.

Remember that you can call the hotline to find local support groups and information on staying safe.

Help them develop a safety plan

Check out our information on creating a safety plan for wherever they are in their relationship — whether they're choosing to stay, preparing to leave, or have already left.

Encourage them to talk to people who can provide help and guidance

Find a local domestic violence agency that provides counseling or support groups. Call us at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) to get a referral to one of these programs near you. Offer to go with them. If they have to go to the police, court or lawyer's office, offer to go along for moral support.

Remember that you cannot 'rescue' them

Although it is difficult to see someone you care about get hurt, ultimately they are the one who has to make the decisions about what they want to do. It's important for you to support them no matter what they decide, and help them find a way to safety and peace.