

Love – the Antidote to Abuse

James Mast, Counselor



The question is often asked, “What can I do to make sure that abuse doesn’t happen in my home or church?” This seems to be a natural response from those who have found healing from abuse. It’s a great question that I’ve been pondering for some time. The short answer is *love*.

And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (ESV)

To better understand love, we need to unpack hatred. Hatred is defined as a feeling of dislike so strong that it demands action. This intense dislike may be directed at others (other-centered contempt) or at our own person (self-contempt). “But I’m a Christian,” you might argue. “I don’t hate myself, and I certainly don’t hate others!” Let’s look deeper. Someone has suggested there’s a small starting point to self-contempt and it progresses to an increased level of intensity—going from difficulty with receiving compliments, to comparison, to name-calling, to self-destructive harm. Other-centered contempt begins with finding it hard to give compliments, to feelings of superiority, to abuse, and eventually to destruction of others.

According to this passage, Jesus is implying that it is good and right to love ourselves. Why would Jesus assume it is healthy to love ourselves? Because, as created beings, we bear the image of God Himself. This means we have worth, value, and dignity. We are not animals or plants or trees to be controlled, cut down, or discarded. We have longings and desires. We have a free will.

So back to love, I would suggest if we want our homes to be free from abuse, we need to sit with the questions of “Do I love myself?” and “Do I love others?” I tend to react to the idea of loving myself. How does loving myself coincide with the Scriptures about not thinking highly of yourself, esteeming others above yourself, and dying to self? Let’s look at the words of Jesus in Matthew 22:34-40.

Jesus knew that we must love ourselves so that we can love others. As water and oil do not mix, so love and hatred do not mix. However good the relationship appears between perpetrator and victim, abuse does not come out of love for a person! When there isn’t love at home, it creates a level of disconnect or detachment in relationships. The more detached and disconnected a person is, the more risk there is to abuse a son or daughter, brother or sister.

But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

In conclusion, if you are concerned about the abuse that is so prevalent in our homes, then build godly love in yourself and in your home. Relationship, connection, and a strong bond of love will crowd out the space for abuse. If you are not sure what it means to have this in your life, please reach out to someone who can help you find healing and wholeness.

Oh, the Storms!

Dave Myer, Counselor



Peter encourages us in 1 Peter 4:12: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.” (ESV) But oh, how we hate the storms! I love how Paul David Tripp unpacks the story of the disciples in the storm from Mark 6:45-52—

Jesus has sent his disciples across the Sea of Galilee to Bethsaida. They have encountered an impossible headwind and angry seas. If you look at the time clues in the larger passage, you can see they have been rowing for about eight hours. They are in a situation that seems impossible, exhausting, frustrating, and potentially dangerous. They are far beyond their strength and ability. As you read the passage, you have to ask yourself why Jesus would ever want his disciples in this kind of difficulty. It’s clear that they’re not in this mess because they’ve been disobedient, arrogant, or unwise, but because they have obeyed Jesus.

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Jesus sees that his disciples are in this exhausting and dangerous situation, and he sets out and begins to walk across the sea. Now, the moment he begins to take this walk, you are confronted with two things. The first is the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the Lord God almighty, because no other human being could do what he is doing. But there is a second important thing to observe. If all Jesus wants to do is relieve the difficulty, he wouldn’t have to take the walk. All he would need to do is say a prayer from the shore and wind would cease. He takes the walk because he is not after the difficulty. He is after the men in the middle of the difficulty. Standing next to the boat as the wind still blows and waves still crash, he says: “It is I. Do not be afraid.” He is actually taking one of the names of God. He is saying the “I am” is with them, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the One on whom all the covenant promises rest.

Why did Jesus send his disciples into that storm? He did it for the same reason he sometimes sends you into storms—because he knows that sometimes you need the storm in order to be able to see the glory. For the believer, peace is not to be found in ease of life. Real peace is only ever found in the presence, power, and grace of the Savior, the King, the Lamb, the “I am.” That peace is yours even when the storms of life take you beyond your natural ability, wisdom, and strength. You can live with hope and courage in the middle of what once would have produced discouragement and fear because you know you are never alone. The “I am” inhabits all situations, relationships, and locations by his grace. He is in you. He is with you. He is for you. He is your hope.¹

May the constant presence of the I AM give you the courage to identify with the words of 1 Peter 1:6-7: “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (ESV)

¹Taken from *New Morning Mercies* by Paul David Tripp, Copyright © 2014, pp. February 26. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187.

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He is not after the difficulty.
He is after the men
in the middle of the difficulty."

— Paul David Tripp

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For more information, contact Lorinda at
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- the LCM board as they provide guidance to the ministry
- spiritual and physical protection for staff

Praise God for...

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- September 20-22, 2023

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*Prerequisite Course - Core 1, Lab 1

To register for any of these workshops, please contact the office at 717-871-0540 or office@life-ministries.com.

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