

Counseling Controlling Husbands

Chris Moles

Introduction:

Control, abuse, and domestic violence

One of the most frequent questions I receive is for a definition of abuse. Because pride lies at the heart of abuse control is the most common motive for abusive or violent behavior.

Defining domestic violence:

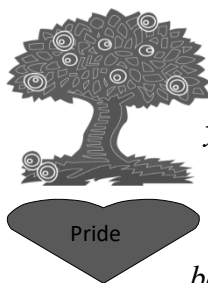
“An abuse of power, manifested through selfishly motivated patterns of behavior intended to exercise or maintain control over one’s partner.”

Review:

Pride is at the heart of violence:

“An abusive man is often so preoccupied with himself that he sees himself as misunderstood, not wrong.”¹
-Brenda Branson and Paula Silva

“No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” Luke 6:43-45



Pride

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” James 4:1-6

¹ Branson Brenda and Paula Silva, Violence Among Us: Ministry to Families in Crisis. Valley Forge, PA. Judson Press, 2007

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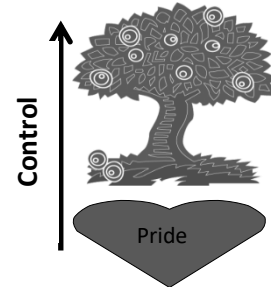
“There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.”
Proverbs 6:16-19

Control is the goal

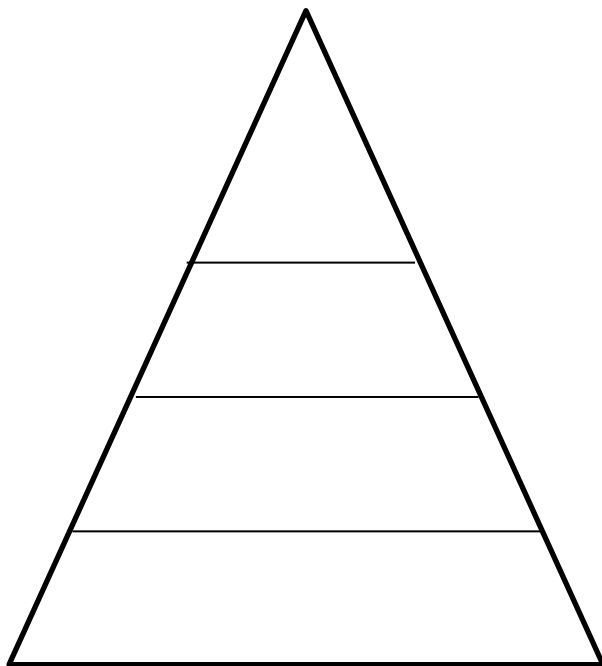
“Intimate partner violence is at its core an attempt to dominate and control by whatever means necessary”² -Lundy Bancroft

Controlling others may include physical violence.

Intimidation	Manipulation	Threats
Verbal Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Economic Abuse
Using the Children	Spiritual Concerns	Isolation
Blame-shifting	Accusations	Destruction of Property
Animal Abuse	Suicide/Homicide	Shaming



Pyramid of hurtful/destructive behavior:



1. Violence: Physically violating acts involving a desire to create pain, or fear. Physical or sexual assault.
2. Abuse: Direct or indirect actions which produce pain or fear in one's partner. Emotional abuse, verbal abuse, Economic abuse.
3. Control: Behavior which seeks a desired response such as doing what I want or keeping others from doing what I do not want. Bossy, overbearing, or overprotective.
4. Alienating/Irritating Behavior: Actions or inaction which can contribute to distance in the relationship. Laziness, habits, eccentricity.

² Bancroft Lundy, The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the impact of domestic violence on family dynamics

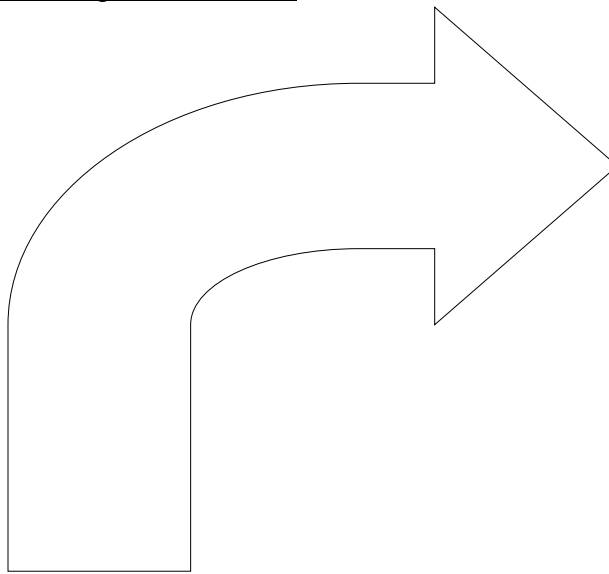
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Escalation Exercise

A common question that will come up in some of my group meetings include, “what if I am trying to do these healthy things, but she is doing all these things to hurt me and make the relationship unhealthy?” This is a challenge and one of the ways I address it is with the following exercise.

Fill in the arrow as I walk through the exercise:



Note – If a destructive individual has decided to make a change, initially a victim may assume that the change is a trick or another kind of control. We should not assume that the resistance will end immediately. So, it is important to reinforce the need to...

1. End abusive and destructive behavior immediately.
2. Express remorse for actual wrongdoing and motives rather than guilt for being found out.
3. Consistently make the necessary changes
4. Acknowledge that his partner/spouse may not accept the changes, and continue to resist against them.
5. Focus exclusively on his thoughts and behaviors and not blame his victim for his responsibilities.

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Biblical response to controlling behavior

Even if you believe the behavior is not abusive this “heart” of control must still be addressed.

“Do not answer the foolish arguments of fools, or you will become as foolish as they are. Be sure to answer the foolish arguments of fools, or they will become wise in their own estimation.” Proverbs 26:4-5

Explain Biblical change and hold them accountable

Motivated by the Good News → Expressed in Christ-like Love → In Prayerful Dependence
(2Corinthians 5:14-15) (Galatians 2:20) (Philippians 2:12-13)

Application of Grace:

“God’s law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God’s wonderful grace became more abundant.” Romans 5:20

*Acknowledgment of specific behavior.

*Identification of sinful motives.

What did you do?

- Checked her cell phone/fb
- Took her car keys
- Left the cabinet doors open
- Rearranged the furniture
- Etc.

James 4

What did you want?

- To confirm she’s cheating
- To teach her a lesson
- To annoy her
- To keep her uneasy/frustrated
- Etc.

*Promote repentance.

“It’s horrible to sin but wonderful to be forgiven.”

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*Put off.

What needs to change?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Etc.

Ephesians 4

*Put on.

What needs to happen instead?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Etc.

Thankfully, only God has absolute control.

My prayer is that men in our churches will live in light of this truth.

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. For he laid the earth’s foundation on the sea and built it on the ocean depths.” Psalm 24:1-2