

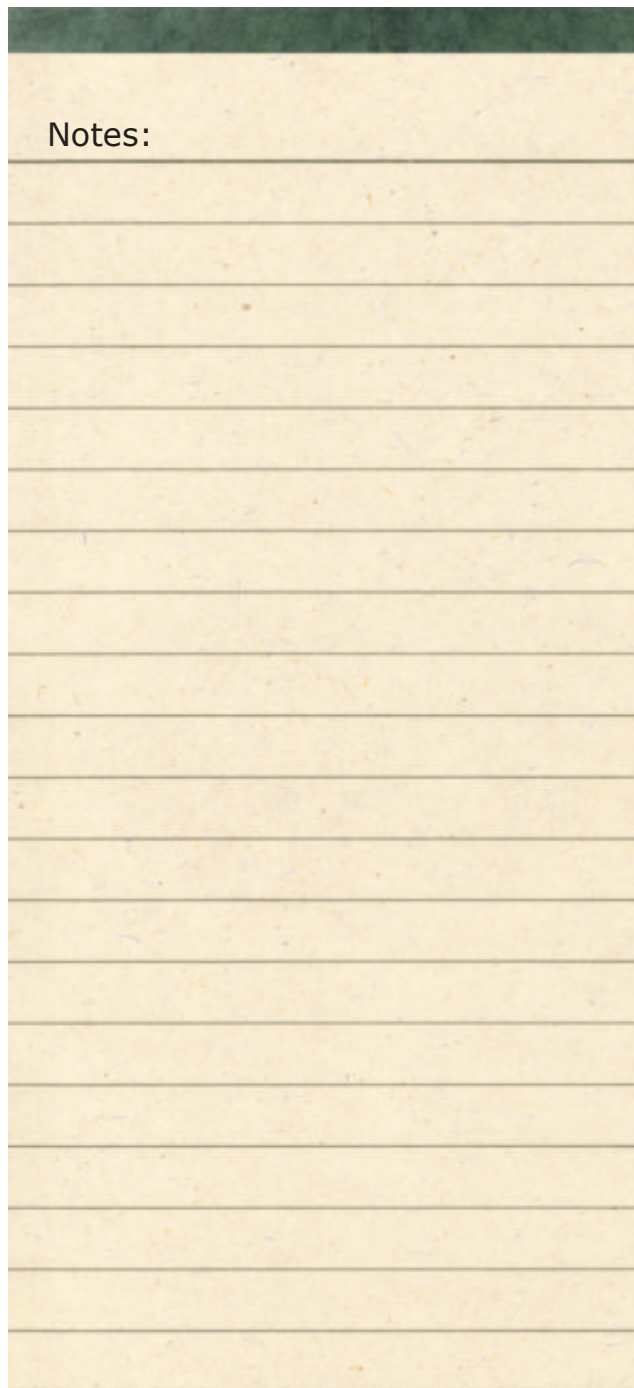


How Can An Abused Woman Begin Seeking Help?

You may be a woman who has to be called a battered wife. Those two words should never go together, but you know they do go together. And they go together really fairly commonly, which is a horrible thing to say, but it's true. So if you're a battered wife, understand that some psychologist/counselor talked about a battered-wife syndrome where there's denial, where there's shame, where there's retreat, where there's promiscuity, where there's drug addiction, where there's all kinds of things to deal with the pain of being a battered wife. If that's something that you're experiencing, if you're a battered wife, number one, understand that's not what God wants you to be. And submission to your husband does not mean that you become his punching bag.

One of the things that you must get hold of is: No matter how much shame you feel, no matter how much you perhaps have failed as a wife in your marriage, you do not deserve the kind of battering you're receiving from your husband. Has my wife failed me in certain ways? Sure she has; every wife has. Have I failed my wife in certain ways? Of course, every husband fails his wife. But if I were to hit my wife, there is no justification for it. Therefore, at least you can say this at an intellectual level, and it will be hard to get up to it emotionally, but there is no shame in the sense that it's your fault. Therefore, what I really would urge you to do with all my heart,

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with all my soul, you need to overcome the power of shame by making known your shameful secret. And when you make known your shameful secret to a battered wives' haven, there are places for battered wives. When you make it known to a counselor, if you have a pastor that you can talk to, a girlfriend that you can talk to meaningfully, when that person responds to you by saying, "I hear you, and I feel so bad for you. Let's do something about it. Let's deal with it in some way." The person's involvement with you when you make known your struggle can dissolve, to at least some beginning degree, the shame, and that you reemerge as the woman that you really are and move forward in life in ways that you were designed by God to move forward in.

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