



ABBA Ministries

501 N. Dale Ave. McHenry, IL 60050 (815)347-3928

Illuminating Life through Scripture

Family Violence

Family Violence is the maltreatment of one family member by another. Whether this maltreatment is physical (slapping, punching, burning, scalding, etc.), sexual (improper touching including, but not limited to, rape or incest), emotional (insults, excessive criticism, threats, etc.) or neglect (inadequate food, medical attention, clothing, shelter, emotional support, etc.), family violence is a serious problem requiring serious solutions.

Any member of the family, young, middle-aged, or old, can be either the victim or perpetrator. People of all ages experience stress and frustration, social isolation, personal insecurity, and poor modeling. But since violence is an inadequate solution to these types of problems, the problems themselves are never solved and the cycle of abuse and violence continues.

Victims perpetuate this cycle through a strict code of silence. They often feel threatened that "daddy will have to leave and then we won't have any money" or "mommy will have to leave and then there won't be anyone to take care of you." The same types of threats are used against spouses or elderly people who depend on the perpetrator. Victims become accustomed to violence and don't realize that they are being treated wrongly. Shame is also used to blame the victim with, "Well, if you wouldn't do that I wouldn't have to be so rough with you."

Perpetrators continue this cycle by allowing personal shame and guilt to add to their overall frustration level. Combined with a fear of the consequences of seeking help and the personal sense of power and control they derive from being abusive, perpetrators often deny that they are doing anything harmful or wrong.

The first step in breaking the cycle of violence is to break the code of secrecy. While calls to hotlines allow for a fairly anonymous expression of your secret, their main value is in finding additional resources which will help you deal with your situation more completely and permanently. A pastor or priest might offer the same services as a hotline and some might even consider offering longer term help. Shelters provide emergency and temporary housing, allowing you the opportunity to decide what your next step will be. Sometimes it is best to involve the police, particularly when the abusive person in your life is unwilling to leave you alone when you desire for him/her to do so. Counseling is also a great option to consider. Through the services of a competent and caring professional, you and your loved one will be able to identify sources and triggers for violent behavior and ways to end the cycle of abuse.

Family violence can be prevented and/or ended. Early treatment minimizes the painful, personality deforming scars which form when family violence goes unchecked.