



Biblical Counselling UK

Talking Church

How personal conversations
grow local congregations

Mon 21 – Wed 23 March 2022



WORKSHOP 2

Conversations
with those who have
experienced
spiritual abuse

Louise MacMillan &
David Armstrong

Feedback

Merciful Legal Using gifts to build up
Prayerful Fruitful vine Jesus-centred
Welcoming, accepting Jesus as head
Comfortable with weakness Sacrificial love
Loving Repentant Honest, transparent
Abiding in Jesus/HS Humility Compassion
Patience Perseverance/bearing with
Encouraging



Definition

“Abuse that occurs when an oppressor establishes control and domination by using Scripture, doctrine, or their “leadership role” as religious practise, or be used to shame or punish” - Darby Strickland

An example:

“Using Bible verses to shame or control people, demanding unconditional obedience from them or using biblical texts or beliefs to minimise or rationalise abusive behaviours”



Spiritual Abuse

Prayer in pairs (5min)



Shifting the focus on to us.

Every conversation matters



Brainstorm: (8min from the floor)

Looking for Biblical words to describe a goodness culture. We don't want to focus on a healthy church culture NOT merely as a reaction to spiritual abuse but as a response to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We don't always want to bemoan the problems but work out where we can be ambassadors of blessing.



Feedback

Some feedback



Shifting the focus on to us. (5min in groups)

Louise's vignette:

1) Think about where Louise is going wrong?

2) What dangers can you see?



Feedback

Differing expectations Assuming the worst
Grumbling / gossip / exclusive group
Judgemental Evaluating 'ladder'
Wrong motivation for service Unloving,
own agenda
Influence as host Bitterness within->barrier
Ostracism Damaging discussion Getting
L's approval paramount for group - Inner ring



Every conversation matters

“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, **be patient with everyone.**” 1 Thessalonians 5:14



Brainstorm: (5 min)

Spiritual abuse can start by us being in a hurry.

- 1) Where are you tempted to be in a hurry with people?
- 2) What kind of people do you want to hurry up?
- 3) How do you hurry people up?



Feedback

1. Where are you tempted?
2. Who do you hurry?
3. How do you hurry?



Brainstorm: (5min)

“God's patience with his children is one of His least acknowledged attributes”. David Powlison

- 1) What examples of God's patience can you think of?
- 2) What makes God's patience different from ours?
- 3) How does Christ free us from pursuing a 'successful ministry', seeing ourselves as victims or self-pity at the unresponsiveness of others?



Feedback

Refining us to see it as God's ministry not ours
2 Cor 4: jars of clay, ministry is a mercy
Stewards of what God has given us



Brainstorm:

What does doing love over a long long time look like in Louise's vignette?



Feedback

Pray; suggest others move towards not talk about her; take her for coffee, get to know her; meditate on God's patience for you; organize to acknowledge needing help; Martha; thankful for her; speak honestly



“God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong”

I Corinthians 1:27



Educate yourself on abuse dynamics.

Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church - Diane Langberg

Church Called Tov, A: Forming a Goodness Culture That Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing - Scott McKnight

When Narcissism Comes to Church: Healing Your Community From Emotional and Spiritual Abuse - Chuck DeGroat

Is it Abuse? - Darby Strickland

CCEF Course: Counseling Abusive Marriages - Darby Strickland

