

## Why Does She Stay?

Society, family and friends often ask the question, "If it's that bad, why doesn't she just leave?" By asking that question, we put the blame on the victim instead of the abuser. There are many reasons why a woman stays.

### Faith

- She believes in the sanctity of her marriage. She believes in her marriage vows.
- She thinks that if she prays harder or just learns how to be a better wife, that he will stop abusing her.
- Her church has spoken about the scripture in Malachi that says, "God hates divorce". She does not know that the same scripture says that God hates violence.
- She may have spoken to the women at her church. They may have responded by shaming her for "gossiping" about her husband. They did not realize that the sin of abuse has to be exposed in order to bring about the possibility of accountability and help.

### Fear

- She fears his retaliation if she leaves. She remembers his threats, "If I can't have you, nobody can".
- She fears losing custody of her children.
- She fears being judged by others, her friends, her family and her church community.
- She fears making it on her own. His constant verbal and emotional attacks have left her with no self-esteem. She feels unable to make a decision and unable to make it on her own.
- She fears offending God by leaving.

### Confusion

- One day he loves her and the next day, he abuses her. She thinks that she is the reason he abuses. She tries to be a good wife and keep her children quiet. Things seem good for a while, but then the abuse starts up again. This leaves her in the constant state of confusion never knowing what to expect next.

### Economics

- She has no job or job skills.
- She doesn't know how she can afford housing and daycare.
- She has no place to go where she can be safe.

### Denial

- He convinces her that the violence isn't that bad.
- She denies the reality that the man she loves is capable of seriously harming her.

### Other Feelings

- She feels shame because her marriage is not working. She feels responsible for the failure of the marriage.
- She feels helpless. The abuser's drive for control may result in her being conditioned into a state of helplessness. She may feel unable to make decisions about the future or even to take care of herself.
- She feels depressed, hopeless and alone. No one is supporting her.

### She may not be aware

- She may not be aware that separation may be the wake-up call needed for her abuser to seek help, and be accountable. Separation could lead to the possibility of reconciliation to a healthy, abuse free, loving relationship.

**Instead of asking why does she stay, we should be asking why does he batter and what can we do to stop the abuse?**

**Abigail Ministries**