



The Incredible  
Journey

# Domestic Violence

There is

# Hope



KEALA THOMPSON



**WATCH OUR PROGRAMS  
ON DEMAND:**

**[youtube.com/TheIncredibleJourney](https://youtube.com/TheIncredibleJourney)  
[www.tij.tv](http://www.tij.tv)**

**Editors: Kylie Smith, Jody Dobson  
and Dorothy Pansare  
Graphic Designer: Delyce Liggett**

**Unless otherwise noted, all Bible texts are  
from the New King James Version**

**Published by The Incredible Journey**

**Copyright © Eternity Media Productions Ltd.  
Printed in Australia | All rights reserved**

# *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: BREAKING THE SILENCE*

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	2
The Issue of Domestic Violence.....	5
Breaking the Cycle.....	16
Healing Abusive Relationships .....	20
How God can Help.....	24
List of References .....	29
Domestic Violence Helplines Australia.....	32
Domestic Violence Helplines New Zealand.....	32

# *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: BREAKING THE SILENCE*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Australian nation was horrified when Hannah Clarke and her three children were incinerated in their family car on February 19, 2020 (Gleeson, 2020). What made this murder-suicide case still more tragic was the fact that the crime was committed by her estranged husband Rowan Baxter. The incident highlighted the prevalence of domestic violence in society, and called forth an outpouring of grief from family, friends, sympathisers, and political leaders.

It also intensified debate on what to do about the increasing prevalence of domestic violence in Australia.

Peace and safety are widely recognised as absolutely essential to human health and well-being. How important, then, that each individual have a safe place to go, to escape from a world that is too often cruel and hostile. Yet home, the place which should be the most inviting and the safest upon earth, is for many one of the most dangerous. Domestic violence is tearing apart the lives of individuals, families, and communities. How do we respond to this alarming threat in the very heart of our society? What is to be done to stop the tide of evil that threatens to sweep away the joy, security and lives of thousands, even millions, of innocent people?

As someone who has personally lived through abusive relationships, I want to

assure you that there is hope for those caught in the trauma of domestic abuse. The insights I will share with you in this booklet have changed my life. As an international speaker, I have also seen many other lives transformed through these principles. If you, or someone you love, is experiencing domestic violence, there is a way out.

In the pages to follow, I will help you identify whether you, or someone you know, may be in an abusive relationship. If you need to leave an abusive situation, I will outline important steps that can help you to do so safely. In some cases, abusive relationships can even be reclaimed, to become happy and successful marriages; and I will explain steps you can take to work at this.

Whatever your situation, you do not need to give in to despair. There are many

difficult things to face in this world. But with God's help, you can find personal peace, healing, and hope for the future.

## **THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Let's find out more about this issue of domestic violence. What is it? How do people become involved in it? Why does it occur?

First, let's look at a few definitions. The terms family violence and domestic violence cover all forms of abuse that occur within the context of domestic or family relationships (DSS, 2016, p. 5). A perpetrator of domestic violence may be a spouse, partner, parent, or sibling. The term violence refers to abuse of varying types; these include physical, emotional, financial, and sexual abuse. Abuse is harm done to another person in order to gain control over that person. A perpetrator

of abuse will use certain techniques to manipulate another person's thoughts. Ultimately, the person experiencing abuse will feel so intimidated by his/her perpetrator, that he/she will yield to the abusers wishes instead of doing what they actually want to do.

Statistics paint a grim picture of the prevalence of this living nightmare in Australia at present. For example, approximately 1 in 4 women in Australia experience violence by an intimate partner from the age of fifteen (ABS, 2017). In women aged 25–44, partner violence is a major health risk factor. Child abuse and neglect is the highest health risk factor for females aged 0–44 years (AIHW, 2019a, p. x; AIHW, 2019b, pp. 59-69). On average, 1 woman is killed every 9 days and 1 man is killed every 29 days by a partner (AIHW, 2019a, p. x). In 2015,



the estimated financial cost of violence against women and their children in Australia was \$21.7 billion (DSS, 2016). Statistics in New Zealand and around the world are equally disturbing (see, for instance, WHO, 2013).

The above statistics not only highlight the shocking frequency of family and domestic violence in society at present, but also indicate that this violence has serious consequences. Domestic violence often exerts negative, persistent effects on a person's wellbeing, education and relationships (AIHW, 2019a). Common results of domestic violence include fear, physical and/or psychological harm, and even death.

Domestic violence is a condition that knows no boundaries (AIHW, 2019a). It occurs across all ages, and across all

socioeconomic and demographic groups. However, it is most often experienced by women and children.

Domestic violence is one outcome of abusive relationships. How do people become involved in such destructive associations? Sadly, many people who experience domestic violence have been prepared for it by previous abusive relationships. Children who grow up in homes in which abuse is used to create fear and gain control have a higher chance of being in an abusive relationship as they mature. Abuse creates a cycle which is very difficult to break.

Almost every person feels a sense of horror and outrage when they see innocent men, women and children suffering. Why, then, does domestic abuse, which can involve physical injuries, and even death, occur? The reason is that these

emotional and physical attacks are not the primary purpose of the perpetrator of abuse. The primary purpose of the perpetrator is to control the other person in the relationship. This may be done by slowly unsettling the other person from his, or more often her, beliefs and convictions until she no longer has any thoughts or opinions of her own. By doing this, the person perpetrating the abuse gains control in the relationship. The perpetrator may not be aware of the manipulative techniques he is using to control the other person. The perpetrator may not even realise his intentions. However, this does not change the fact that he is still acting abusively. Whether intentional or unintentional, abuse is still damaging to those who experience it.

There are two main methods used by a person perpetrating abuse to control another person. The first method is

to be excessively nice. For example, the perpetrator may make flattering comments, as a way of winning another person's trust and affections. When he has done this, he will manipulate this attachment to persuade her to do what he wants her to.

If the perpetrator can gain control over another person by using the “nice” method, then he will continue this type of behaviour. But if she refuses to comply with his requests, the perpetrator will move to the next method, which is to instill fear. The perpetrator may seek to make the other person fear that her wellbeing, safety, or reputation may be compromised if she does not comply with his requests. The perpetrator may threaten to end the relationship, or refuse to supply or return property or money. Examples of techniques used to achieve this might be silence, verbal abuse or physical violence.

The perpetrator may make threats, yell, scream, hit, punch, kick or push the other individual. Or he may refuse to talk to her for an extended period of time. It is easy to imagine how fearful a person would feel with such treatment, and how this would be a strong inducement to comply with the perpetrator's requests.

As I mentioned earlier, I have personally experienced situations of domestic abuse in past relationships. Looking back, I see now that there were many occasions when I acted abusively in romantic relationships; and I see that my girlfriends acted in the same way toward me. It is now clear to me that I used these manipulative techniques because I wanted my partner at the time to see things the way I saw them, and change her behaviour. My experience is a real-life example that illustrates the actual motive behind domestic violence.

What thoughts might run through a person's mind when he, or more often she, is abused? In a situation in which one person screams at another, the person experiencing abuse is probably thinking something like, "I don't want to get him upset like that anymore so I'm not going to do that again." So out of fear, she complies with his demands.

If a person becomes angry and refuses to speak to his wife for a week, what is she likely to be thinking? "I don't want to be emotionally disconnected from my husband ever again! Therefore, I will do what he wants me to do."

Many people reading this booklet may have a friend or family member who was, or is, in an abusive relationship. It may be that you have warned that person about the potential dangers of their relationship. Your friend may even have confided

in you her fears and concerns about the relationship. Yet despite this, she remains in it. Why is this? The most likely reason is, when someone is controlled by another person, she loses her ability to think and act on her own. She becomes afraid to leave because she really believes the threats and misstatements of truth used by the person perpetrating abuse. For instance, a man might say to his wife, “You are so dumb. You are so stupid. You could never make it on your own”; or, “You’re so ugly that no one else would love you.” A person experiencing abuse becomes very scared that she wouldn’t know how to survive in the real world without her partner. Her fear of the unknown is greater than the fear of being emotionally or physically abused. So she remains in the relationship, too scared to leave.

A high-profile figure who remained for many years in an abusive relationship is Jennifer Willoughby, ex-wife of former White House staff secretary Rob Porter (Saunders, 2018). Her reasons for doing so included her then-husband's popular social image, his career status, his sometimes kind and sensitive nature, and his apologies for treating her abusively. The reasons expressed by Willoughby are consistent with those of many other women in abusive relationships. They become conditioned to feel safe in that relationship. A person who has been groomed to be controlled, will then miss being controlled when they are no longer in a domineering relationship.

One of the worst effects of experiencing abuse is the fear that accompanies it. However, the individual who suffers abuse is not the only one who lives in fear. Those who perpetrate abuse often



themselves living in fear. Many times, those who abuse others have also been hurt in the past. It is the unresolved fear stemming from these past hurts that creates the inner urge within a person to control everything and everyone around them. This is one way that a person may become a perpetrator of abuse. They feel that since no one is looking out for them, they need to look out for themselves. Thus, they seek to control everything and everyone in their lives.

Fear only escalates domestic violence. The more fearful the perpetrator of abuse is, the more abusive he or she becomes. Thus the general culture of fear in society today has only increased domestic violence. The coronavirus pandemic that became global in March 2020 only escalated domestic violence in Australia and around the world

(Bamford, 2020; Department of Global Communications, 2020).

When one person controls the mind of another, the person being manipulated loses her individuality; that is, her ability to think and act on her own. When this individuality is lost, a person's identity is also lost. Loss of identity is a widespread issue in society today. One of the main reasons for this loss, is that the individuality of many individuals has been swallowed up in an abusive relationship.

## **BREAKING THE CYCLE**

In reading this booklet, you may have identified that you, or a family member or friend, are experiencing abuse. You may realise that you need to take action to stop the abuse from occurring. You may have tried unsuccessfully to stop the abuse in

the past. Perhaps you wonder, can I really escape? can I be truly free? The answer is, yes, you can. Many people have been able to reclaim their lives, even after abusive relationships. You can, too. Let's consider how you can break the abuse cycle.

When a person who has been abused in the past makes a stand and doesn't allow the perpetrator of abuse to control her anymore, the perpetrator's violence will almost always increase substantially. As the perpetrator realises that he is losing control over the other person, he will do all he can to regain the power that he sees slipping away. For this reason, it is very important to have a plan in place before attempting to break free from a person acting abusively.

In breaking the abuse cycle, the top priority is safety for the person who is being abused. If you are helping

someone else to break free of abuse, this is not the time to step in and try to solve the problems within the relationship. That can come later. The most important thing is the immediate protection of the one who urgently needs your help.

If the situation is extremely serious, the person may need to leave home in order to be safe. Women's shelters are one option. However, a local refuge may not be able to provide true safety. While in training, I was informed of a woman who had left her husband and was staying at a women's shelter. However, her husband found her at the shelter, and actually murdered her there. Yet some good did come out of this terrible tragedy. The incident inspired the woman's sister to start a non-profit organisation to support people experiencing domestic violence. The funds raised by the organisation are now used to fund travel tickets so

that people experiencing abuse can fly to distantly-located shelters. When escaping from abuse, physical distance is significant. I recommend that any person fleeing domestic violence be located as far from the perpetrator of abuse as possible.

If you are involved in an abusive relationship, it is important to take practical steps to prepare for leaving that relationship. One of the most important things is to create a Go Bag. A Go Bag is luggage that is packed and ready with all a person needs to survive in case he or she must leave home suddenly. Often it is not safe for a person experiencing abuse to return home after leaving. The Go Bag can be left in the boot of the car; in a safe, accessible, but hidden place in a person's home; or at a trusted friend's house. To prepare a Go Bag, make a list of all essential items that you know you will need if

you have to leave and never return. This may include driver's licence, important papers, clothing, medications, toiletries, and keepsakes. Then pack your bag, and ensure it is easily accessible at all times.

In dealing with domestic violence, you may need professional help. Contact information for professional domestic violence services in Australia can be found at the back of this booklet.

## **HEALING ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

When you are sure that the person experiencing abuse is in a physical location where he or she is safe, the issues in the relationship can then be dealt with. Here are four basic steps to do this:

1. Do everything possible to help the perpetrator of abuse understand the

controlling behaviours he or she is using, and the motivations for these.

2. Seek outside help for the marriage. This may be help from a friend, a family member, or a professional counsellor.

3. The person experiencing abuse must in time come to the place where she is ready to stand up to the perpetrator of abuse. The person experiencing abuse must be determined to protect her identity, and not allow herself to be controlled by fear any longer.

4. Recognise that, in abusive situations, a short break from a relationship can bring restoration when all other means have failed. A short break in this case would mean at least six months of physical separation.

In my experience in working with marriages and relationships, I have seen restoration take place in many families when the above steps are followed. Sometimes the only way to convince a perpetrator of abuse to change his behaviour is to physically remove from him a person whom he values. This may be his spouse or a child. I have seen cases in which a woman has left her abusive spouse or partner with a letter explaining her reason for doing so. With further work and God's help, even severely damaged relationships have often been thus restored.

Here is one especially amazing example of this. Diane brought her best friend Sara to a seminar on abuse that I held in Sydney, Australia. Sara applied the points from the seminar to her situation, and her actions transformed her husband's life and saved their marriage.



In relating her experience, Sara emphasised that one of the most important messages she needed to give to her husband, Brett, was that she would no longer tolerate his abuse. Her words and actions had effect. Brett became a kind and trusting person. He began to take Sara on dates, which were as romantic as any they had gone on before they were married. They also began to take trips around the world as a couple. This was something they had never done before; not because they didn't have the money, but because they had never been interested in spending time together to focus on their relationship. Sara now plays an active part in handling marriage finances. Brett also gives her access to his phone, which he was previously very secretive about. The marriage relationship that was once a source of incredible pain has now become one of joy, hope and purpose.

## HOW GOD CAN HELP

Domestic violence is a terrible and distressing reality of life today. But the Bible shows that it is not God's way. Domestic violence typically relies on manipulation or brute force to gain submission. But this is not what God asks us to do. Isaiah 1:18 says, "*Come now, and let us reason together.*" This tells us that God does not want us to manipulate others, or to be manipulated by them. He does not want us to act out of blind fear. Instead, He wants us to make decisions based on careful, rational thought.

God wants our relationship with Him to be based on love and freewill rather than fear and control. God is love, and His plan is that we will respond to His love by loving Him in return (1 John 4:8; 1 John 4:19). And our relationships with people should be governed by the same principles. In

1 John 4:11, we read, “*Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*” Jesus also said, “*Love one another as I have loved you*” (John 15:12; 13:34). We should seek to win the hearts of others so that we inspire actions that are the result of love, not of manipulation, fear, and brute force.

We have seen that a person perpetrating abuse lives in fear of not being in control. But the Bible presents an alternative to this. The Bible reveals that God is guiding world events, and that He can bring good out of evil (Daniel 2:21; Romans 8:28). Psalm 46:1, 2 says, “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.*” If a person perpetrating abuse can surrender himself to God, and trust that God is looking after him, he will be freed from his obsession with controlling others.

People who experience abuse also live in fear. They need to realise in their own lives the truth that “*perfect love casts out fear*” (1 John 4:18). Love and fear cannot co-exist. When we see that God loves us and will protect us and take care of us, we will then become secure in that love and not be controlled by the fears of this world.

Domestic violence is a sensitive and difficult topic. But it is one that must be addressed; and an increased awareness of this problem is needed. We have seen that domestic violence is not God’s way. Domestic violence in fact is the work of an enemy in our world, an enemy that tries to hold us captive to unloving actions and habits (Matthew 13:28). The Bible calls these actions which violate God’s law of love “*sin*” (1 John 3:4).

The Bible compares sin to slavery, a form of abuse (John 8:34; Romans 6:16). But the wonderful news is that God came to set every person on Earth free from sin! Jesus Christ, who is actually the second person of the Godhead, took human nature so that He could experience the same pain we experience (Philippians 2:5-7). On the cross, He suffered the final penalty of sin, that we deserve, so that we could be free. As Jesus Himself said, *“If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36).

Those who experience domestic abuse, and those who perpetrate it, live as slaves to fear. Perhaps you are one of those who is trapped in this way. What Jesus’ sacrifice means for you personally is that you do not need to give in to this fear any longer. By personally claiming Christ’s sacrifice and power in your life, you can stand free of fear: from today, this moment!

Reclaiming damaged relationships is not an easy task. The Bible does not promise that those who follow God will have an easy life in this world. But God does offer personal forgiveness and peace, no matter how difficult life may be at times. Today, Jesus says to you, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”* (John 14:27). And beyond the heartache and sorrows of this world, Jesus offers to all those who trust in Him, the hope of eternal life in a world made new. Revelation 21:4 says, *“God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”*

If you would like to have the assurance of a new life with God, here is a short prayer you could say now:

Dear Heavenly Father, this world is sad and troubled. You know my situation, and the situation of my family. We need your help, your guidance and your healing. Father, give us Your peace, and bring us freedom and happiness through Jesus. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

## **LIST OF REFERENCES**

ABS. 2017. Personal safety, Australia, 2016. ABS cat. no. 4906.0. Canberra: ABS.

AIHW. (2019a.) Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019. Cat. no. FDV 3. Canberra: AIHW. Retrieved from [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

AIHW. (2019b). Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia, 2015.

Canberra: AIHW. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au>

Bamford, M. (2020, 6 June). 'Tsunami' warning for domestic violence networks as victims try to escape coronavirus lockdown. ABC News. Retrieved 22 July, 2020, from <https://www.abc.net.au>

Department of Global Communications. (2020). UN supporting 'trapped' domestic violence victims during COVID-19 pandemic. United Nations. Retrieved 22 July, 2020, from <https://www.un.org>

DSS. (2016.) The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia. KPMG Australia. Retrieved 19 July, 2020, from [kpmg.com.au](https://www.kpmg.com.au)

Glesson, H. (2020, March 10.) Hannah Clarke did 'everything' she could to protect herself and her children. Experts



explain why it wasn't enough. ABC News. Retrieved July 19, 2020, from <https://www.abc.net.au>

Saunders, D. G. (2018, March 28). Abusive relationships: Why it's so hard for women to 'just leave'. The Conversation. Retrieved 21 July, 2020, from <https://theconversation.com>

WHO. (2013). Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINES AUSTRALIA**

- **RESPECT national helpline**  
1800 737 732
- **Women's Crisis Line** 1800 811 811
- **Men's Referral Service** 1300 766 491
- **Lifeline (24-hour crisis line)** 131 114
- **Relationships Australia** 1300 364 277

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINES NEW ZEALAND**

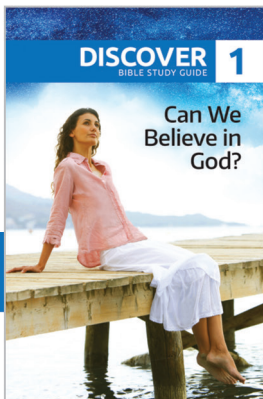
- **Women's Refuge 24-hour crisis line**  
0800 733 843
- **Shine Helpline** 0508 744 633
- **It's Not OK info line** 0800 456 450

# BIBLE STUDIES

THAT COULD  
CHANGE YOUR LIFE

# FOREVER!

- God: What is He like?
- If God is good—why is there evil?
- God's dietary plan
- How to Pray
- Steps to Heaven
- Personal Peace
- Heaven
- Discouragement



---

**To request these Bible Studies:**

Website: [www.tij.tv](http://www.tij.tv)

[Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry](https://www.facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry)

---

**Australia**

0481 315 101

[info@tij.tv](mailto:info@tij.tv)

The Incredible Journey

GPO Box 274

Sydney NSW 2001

**New Zealand**

020 422 2042

[infonz@tij.tv](mailto:infonz@tij.tv)

The Incredible Journey

PO Box 76673

Manukau, Auckland 2241

Home, the place which should be the most inviting and the safest upon earth, is for many one of the most dangerous. Domestic violence is tearing apart the lives of individuals, families, and communities. In this booklet, international speaker and relationship specialist Keala Thompson shares his insights on how to respond to this alarming threat within the heart of our society.



Keala Thompson is an international speaker on relationships, love and marriage. He is the founder of Healing Rain, a 10-day school on emotional healing located in Hawaii, USA, and in Queensland, Australia. He has a passion for helping others find physical, emotional and spiritual healing that he has received himself.

**The Incredible Journey**

**Facebook.com/TheIncredibleJourneyMinistry**

**Website: [www.tij.tv](http://www.tij.tv)**

**Australia**  
0481 315 101  
[info@tij.tv](mailto:info@tij.tv)

**New Zealand**  
020 422 2042  
[infonz@tij.tv](mailto:infonz@tij.tv)



**The Incredible  
Journey**