

# Physical, Emotional, & Sexual Abuse

## The Problem & Solution for Women

### The Problem

*A history of abuse is a common background while the goal is to enter into or maintain recovery. Recovery is a two-fold process. The first step is healing from the traumas done to us in our past; and second step is healing from the influence these past experiences continue to have in our present lives.*

#### **(Most) Survivors of Physical / Sexual / Emotional Abuse . . .**

- Are hesitant to identify themselves as victims of abuse.
- Feel isolated, depressed, worthless, and helpless to change.
- Are struggling with feelings about God in relation to their life experiences of being abused.
- Condemn themselves, denying that the past abuses affects their present circumstances.
- Feel out of control and defeated in areas of compulsive behavior.
- Feel angry, bitter, rebellious; have trouble with authority figures.
- Feel a lack of self-worth.
- Are preoccupied with thoughts of what it means to have a “normal” relationship with others; mates, friends, family.
- Question their own sexual identity and may experience confusion regarding their own sexuality.
- Desire to regain their sexuality and feel safe in intimate relationships.
- Question self-reality; “Who am I?”
- Question whether life has a purpose.
- Feel “at home” in crisis situations.
- Struggle with perfectionism or “all or nothing thinking.”
- Desire to have victory through Christ over the life experience of abuse.

### The Solution

**Survivors of Physical / Sexual / Emotional Abuse can experience recovery when . . .**

- We recognize that we are powerless to heal the damaged emotions resulting from our abuse. We look to God for the power to make us whole.
  - We acknowledge that God’s plan for our lives includes victory over the experience of abuse.
  - We understand that the persons who abused us are responsible for the abusive acts committed against us. We will not accept the guilt and shame resulting from those abusive acts.
  - We look to God and His Word to find our identity as worthwhile and loved human beings.
  - We are honestly sharing our feelings with God and at least one other person to help us identify the areas that need cleansing and healing.
  - We accept the responsibility for our responses to abuse.
  - We are willing to accept God’s help in the decision and the process of forgiving ourselves and those who have perpetrated against us.
  - We are willing to mature in our relationships with God and others.
  - We are willing to be used by God as an instrument of healing and restoration in the lives of others.
- “The Solution” is partially based upon the book *Helping the Victims of Sexual Abuse* by Lynn Heitritter and Jeanette Vought