

Spiritual Abuse

modified from the Duluth Model

Using Coercion & Threats

- Threatening to damage her reputation in the eyes of the church:
 - *"I'm going to tell the pastor about you"*
- Threatening to divorce her
- Forbidding her to talk to church leadership
- Limiting her social involvement

Using Intimidation

- Attributing problems to her faults, her bad influence
 - *"You bring curses to this family"*
- Accusing her of being possessed by evil, of acting against God
 - *"You are listening to Satan, not God"*

Using Emotional Abuse

- Questioning her commitment to God
- Telling her the problem is that she has to get right with God
- Attacking her as a mother
- Accusing her of being unfaithful

Using Economic Abuse

- Restricting outside employment
 - *"the man is the provider and a mother should be home with the children"*
- Withholding information or access to household finances because *"the man is the head of the house" and a woman should submit to her husband"*

Using Male Privilege

- Proclaiming that wives must submit to their husbands in all matters
- Seeing husband as conduit for God's Word
 - *"I prayed about this and God told me..."*
- Making decisions about her appearance, clothing, hairstyle, use of makeup - *"The wife hath no power over her own body..."*
- Diminishing her relationship with God
 - *"If you knew your place in God's order..."*

Using Isolation

- Enlisting the pastor, church elders, or others in the church to chastise/pressure her to be more supportive or to concede to his authority
- Forbidding her to attend church or to attend a church of her choice
- Invoking prohibitions against divorce
- Insisting she restrict her work life to the home and homeschooling
- Defining her role as his helpmate to the exclusion of others
 - *"A woman's place is with her husband"*

Using Children

- Making her responsible for the children's behavior
- Making her feel guilty about the children's problems
- Telling the children that their mother is a whore, unfaithful, a sinner, unloving, unforgiving or that she's not being a good Christian/won't go to heaven
- Threatening to take the children if she considers leaving
- Invoking scripture to keep her and the children from leaving

Minimizing, Denying & Blaming

- Invoking Scripture to avoid being accountable for his abusive behavior
- Invoking Jesus, *"Jesus forgave"* so she needs to forgive no matter what has happened
- Casting them both as sinners
- Telling her she needs to pray about the problem
- Insisting that he has repented, therefore she must forgive him
- Shifting the responsibility for the abuse to her
 - *"if you only acknowledged I was the priest of this family, this wouldn't have happened"*
- Blaming Satan
- Blaming her
 - *"It's her fault, because of how she acts"*