

## Freeing the Oppressed: A Call to Christians Concerning Domestic Abuse

Ron Clark

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When Jesus spoke at his local synagogue he boldly proclaimed that he was the one sent to free those who were oppressed. He came to provide hope, peace, and safety to those suffering in the world. When he left this earth, his followers were left with the task of continuing this ministry.

Statistics suggest that in America one in four women has experienced physical violence in an intimate relationship. Dating violence, intimate-partner violence, and child abuse rank as some of our nation's largest problems. Men are also being abused by intimate partners, parents, or care providers at increasing rates. The statistic is even more alarming worldwide. Unfortunately, these statistics represent only reported incidents. The rates of verbal, emotional, and spiritual abuse are even higher. In addition, countless women are encouraged by clergy to return to their abusive spouses. The faith community, while called by God to free the oppressed, has been slow to respond to this sin against humanity. Few seminaries offer quality domestic-violence-prevention training for clergy. However, clergy still continue to be sought for help from the community and as advocates for victims of domestic violence. A partnership between the church and community (locally and abroad) is necessary if we wish to transform humans caught in this form of oppression.

In Setting the Captives Free Ron Clark proposed a theology of addressing domestic violence and its application for clergy. Freeing the Oppressed is a book that seeks to condense Clark's previous work into a readable form for those seeking spiritual answers concerning abuse and batterer intervention, and for helpers of those caught in the cycle of family violence. It is also designed as an outreach for those seeking help from the faith community.



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