

## Healing Well and Living Free: A Guide for Overcomers

I want you to have a quick reference you can flip to whenever you need a reminder of where you were and how far you've come. Below are two lists. One describes a victim's mind-set and responses to intimate partner violence, and the other describes an overcomer's new way of thinking and responding. Remember, healing well is a process that will not be accomplished overnight. Remind yourself that you're moving forward because you are intentionally choosing what overcomers do in order to heal well and live free. As you continue your journey, you will see how each of the descriptors below comes to fruition in your life. Stay the course. Remember my words: "You're worth it!"

### VICTIM

#### *Instead of . . .*

- staying silent
- remaining in isolation
- having poor boundaries
- minimizing abuse

### OVERCOMER

#### *You're now committed to . . .*

- no longer hiding, seeking wise counsel, and sharing your story
- connecting with a healthy community
- setting healthy boundaries that are consistently enforced
- seeing abuse for what it is

**VICTIM**

*Instead of . . .*

- rationalizing abuse
- lowering the bar by permitting yourself to be treated with disrespect, disregard, and disdain
- tolerating abuse
- trying to fix your abuser
- minimizing or ignoring red flags
- being unaware of the cycle of abuse
- losing contact with family and friends
- believing abuse is a couple's issue, a communication problem, or an inability to resolve conflict
- praying more, believing more, and trying harder with the faulty belief that your abuser will change as a result
- defending your abuser and making excuses for him
- ignoring the effects abuse has had on you

**OVERCOMER**

*You're now committed to . . .*

- calling abuse what it is
- setting a new bar that encompasses being treated consistently with healthy love, respect, and value
- separating yourself from your abuser
- redirecting your energy toward working on yourself
- recognizing and responding to red flags and believing them when you see them
- recognizing the cyclical pattern, knowing it will continue to repeat itself and get worse over time, and extracting yourself from this pattern
- reestablishing connections with emotionally healthy family members and friends
- placing the responsibility for abusive behavior solely on your abuser, knowing you didn't cause it and can't cure it, and realizing that healthy conflict never results in abuse
- praying for your personal healing and growth, trusting that good will result from the pain you've experienced, and accepting that you cannot love someone into wellness
- admitting the truth about your abuser's abusive behavior and no longer covering up for him
- seeking professional help for PTSD, depression, anxiety, or any other conditions resulting from trauma

**VICTIM**

*Instead of . . .*

- living with faulty perceptions of God
- feeling shame
- harboring unforgiveness toward your abuser, those who have not believed your story or have minimized your pain, and yourself
- ignoring your gut
- wearing masks—pretending
- ignoring your grief
- displacing or stuffing your anger
- placing higher value on the marriage than on your safety and well-being
- adhering to faulty biblical interpretations surrounding domestic violence, marital covenant, and divorce
- using substances (drugs, alcohol, food) to numb yourself
- diminishing self-care

**OVERCOMER**

*You're now committed to . . .*

- getting honest with God, opening your heart to discovering His true nature, and accepting that God loves you unconditionally
- differentiating between what you do and who you are
- remaining open to learning the true meaning of healthy forgiveness, making the decision to apply it by faith, and understanding that forgiveness does not require reconciliation
- trusting your gut
- striving for congruency between your public self and your private self
- permitting yourself to grieve by feeling and expressing your emotions
- identifying and expressing your anger in a healthy way
- possessing an accurate understanding regarding the value of marriage versus the value of human life and giving your safety and well-being precedence over maintaining the marriage
- obtaining an accurate understanding of what the Bible teaches regarding how domestic violence severs the marriage covenant
- finding freedom from addiction
- intentionally valuing yourself by taking quality care of yourself physically, emotionally, etc.

VICTIM

*Instead of . . .*

- downplaying symptoms such as headaches, digestive complaints, autoimmune responses, and night terrors
- trusting people too soon
- self-sabotaging by having an unhealthy love toward yourself
- trying to appear perfect
- masking insecurities
- allowing fear to control and manipulate you
- ignoring concerns expressed by friends and family members
- being codependent, over-responsible, or over-functioning
- being confused and doubting yourself
- losing sight of personal dreams and goals and forgetting what makes you feel alive
- withering away on the inside and perhaps even on the outside
- fearing that you will never intimately love again

OVERCOMER

*You're now committed to . . .*

- understanding that your body is sending you signals that you are no longer willing to ignore
- extending trust only to those who have earned it and have demonstrated they are trustworthy
- growing in your understanding of healthy love and applying it to yourself
- being who you really are and no longer a people pleaser
- accepting who you are and no longer comparing yourself to others
- no longer being governed by fear or allowing people to manipulate you, instead being led by peace and trusting God
- listening to and valuing concerns expressed by friends and family members
- allowing others to do for themselves what they're capable of doing and no longer making excuses for irresponsible behavior
- adhering to your convictions and no longer struggling with self-doubt
- intentionally pursuing your dreams and goals, being future-focused, and pursuing your destiny
- choosing to live, *really* live again
- embracing the option to love, *really* love again