



## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR SOMETHING ELSE**

Rick Thomas points out that when he was in school, his teachers showed him pictures of a small monkey. The pictures showed this short monkey gradually growing taller and taking on different physical characteristics like less hair. Finally, at the end of the stack of pictures there was a man. They called this evolution. However, the Bible teaches creationism.

How we come to our conclusions is important. This is especially true with the series of pictures shown to us by Psychology. Emotional abuse is one such label. Another label for the same thing is sin.

### **Signs you are in an abusive relationship**

Do you:

Feel afraid of your partner much of the time?  
Avoid certain topics so as not to anger your partner?

Fell that you can't do anything right?

believe that you deserve to be mistreated  
feel helpless

Does your partner:

Humiliate you or yell at you?  
Criticize you and put you down

Treat you so badly you don't want  
your family or friends to see  
blame you for their abusive behavior  
ignore you or put you down

Have an unpredictable temper?  
Try to control where you go or  
what you do?

Limit your access to the phone, the

Money or the car?

Constantly check up on you

(The more "yes" answers indicate abuse)

### **The Tactics of the Abuser**

Dominance- they want to be in charge

Humiliation – If you are led to believe that you are worthless, you will be less likely to leave.

Isolation – Controlling who you see, where you go, and what you do is designed to increase your dependence on him/her

Threats - Threats are designed to keep you quiet (drop the charges, etc)

Intimidation – The message here is that if you don't comply with their wishes, you will pay

Denial and blame – Making excuses for the inexcusable. Abusers minimize incidents or even deny they occurred.

### **Can Abusers Help Themselves?**

They pick and choose who and when to abuse, which shows that they can control their behavior.

Abusers are able to stop their abusive behavior when it benefits them

### **The Cycle of Abuse**

Abuse – Guilt (a person feels guilt after they abuse someone, but not over what he/she has done. It is more over being caught) – Excuses (Instead of taking responsibility, they rationalize what they have done) – Normal behavior (may act as if nothing has happened or turn on the charm) – Fantasy (plans by watching what you do “wrong” and how he/she is going to make you pay) – Set-up (creates a situation where he/she can “justify” abuse).

### **Back to the Monkeys**

The big question here is “what is the answer? There are more than two opinions, but psychology sells us the concept of Abusers and Victims. What does Scripture say?

### **Order of Progression**

A sinner approaches someone he/she wants to hurt.

The sinner says some unkind word, uses the silent treatment or some other relational sin

The person sinned against thinks about what has transpired and continues to think/process through the situation

The sinner may continue with his/her sinning

The person sinned against emotes one way or another

The sinner is persistent in his/her sin

Person sinned against will be challenged to maintain God-centered hope

**Several important factors when a person is sinned against**

The person's relationship with God

The person's understanding and application of God in his/her life

The active work of the Holy Spirit

The person's affection for and gratitude to Christ

How the person processes the event in prayer to God

Person's understanding and application of Scripture

Person's Christian maturity

Where/how the person gets help

The understanding that emotions are obedient to our thinking and actions

([www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org) has some useful information. 1-800-799-7233 is the National Domestic Violence Helpline)