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10 Things Everyone Should Know About Domestic Abuse

1. **One in three:** If you are a victim of domestic abuse, you are not alone. There are many of us in every walk of life. One in three women will be a victim. *You are not alone.*
2. **Charm:** One of the most deceptive warning signs that a relationship may become abusive is charm. If he seems too good to be true and wants to move quickly into an exclusive relationship, be careful. His goal *may* be ownership, not relationship.
3. **Abuse takes many forms:** physical, financial, spiritual, sexual, verbal, emotional. But all forms of abuse cause emotional damage. Many victims say it's easier to heal from bruises and broken bones than from the emotional pain.
4. **God does not approve** of abuse in any relationship. Abuse is sin and separates the abuser from God. No one is expected or required to submit to abuse. Some Christians and churches have not understood God's heart and have given ineffective advice. The truth of scripture offers freedom for both victims and abusers.
5. **Highs and lows:** An abusive relationship puts a victim on a perpetual emotional rollercoaster. Many women feel anxious, depressed, and worried they may be going crazy. During the good times between abusive episodes, victims often believe the worst is over, and that the relationship is normalizing. But then the ride continues, and another abusive episode happens. There are ways to get off the rollercoaster and regain sane, solid footing that will lead to safety and a fulfilling life.

Some of the Steps to Freedom and Healing

6. **The first thing a victim loses is her voice.** The first step out of abuse is her finding her voice and the courage to say something to someone who can offer help.
7. **Identity:** After you find your voice, find out who you are and want to become. You get to choose your own identity – victim, abuser, or true survivor.
8. **Dynamics:** There are unhealthy dynamics in abusive relationships you need to recognize and address: the Jekyll and Hyde and the passive/aggressive styles of control, codependency, the double bind and the double standard, the deny-minimize-blame strategies, and the shame and blame game. Change these unwritten rules and change your relationships.
9. **Know and Trust God:** Domestic abuse not only damages your human relationships, it damages your relationship with God. It's important for you to know who God really is, what he's really like, so you can trust him to show you the way to healing and strength. He loves you and wants to set you free.
10. **Forgiveness is hard, but not impossible.** It improves your quality of life and frees God to deal with your abuser. The Bible offers practical and proven steps to forgiveness.

Bonus: Children are traumatized by the presence of domestic abuse. But like their parents, they too can be healed and set free to live fruitful, abuse-free lives...lives that will break the generational cycle of abuse.

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