



0:00:00.3 Speaker 1: Are you dissatisfied with your spiritual progress, feeling stuck without knowing why, even after deliverance, prayers or years of therapy? Recover your dignity, find your purpose and discover the thrill of walking with God once again. Explore spiritual consultations with Sonja at biblestudyevangelista.com.

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[music]

0:00:52.1 Sonja Corbitt: Welcome to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Catholic evangelista, and we are in our cherished series, How God Is Using Your Vocation To Heal You. Last week, we looked at how it's not about the other person in the conflicts in our relationships, and of course, we talked about the vocation to marriage, but it can also be the relationships between you and those in your religious community.

0:01:19.4 SC: It can be the relationships between in your priesthood, between you and your parish and the other priests. It can also be for a single, someone with whom you have a relationship or you're dating, it can also be people in your families, but ultimately it is not about them. The conflicts that you experience and the woundedness that you experienced at the hands of another person, particularly in an intimate relationship such as a marriage, there is very little more intimate relationship than that of marriage. It's always about you, it's not about them.

0:02:03.9 SC: I left off last week and I kinda left you hanging, but I ran out of time. So the community over on the Sacred Healing with Catholic Evangelista, the community which you can access on my website, biblestudyevangelista.com, and then click "community", we had a bit of a discussion about this episode, and first of all, someone asked about what I meant by the word "pop-quiz".

0:02:33.5 SC: And then also I was in a one-on-one consultation and someone... Well, she didn't actually ask, she knew, she said, "You know, I did listen to that podcast, but my husband is abusive, so how does the hierarchy and the proper authority structure of marriage apply to me?" So that's what we're gonna talk about today.

0:02:57.1 SC: First of all, I'd like to define the term "pop-quiz" because if you followed me for any amount of time or you've read any of my books, then you know what I mean. I talk about it quite a bit in *Unleashed*, also in *Just Rest*, some in *Fearless*, but in all of my books, I talk about pop-quizzes, and I call them "pop-quizzes" because they are surprises.

0:03:21.6 SC: We are so surprised always when someone that we're in relationship with, particularly someone we love very much, like in a marriage or a parent or a child or a parishioner, it could be any relationship whatsoever, and it could actually be someone that we don't know very well. But someone does something or says something that affects us very strongly, and it causes an emotional eruption that is out of proportion to the actual offense, and we are mired in the emotion of that event.

0:04:05.2 SC: Because it actually comes from what psychologists call "historical emotions", and those are emotions that we have experienced repeatedly as children, and when a circumstance in the present reflects the earlier historical emotion and the circumstances of those events in the past, then we are automatically... We'll just call it "triggered".

0:04:35.7 SC: We're automatically transported in our hearts back to that original... Those original wounds. And so trying to make sense of the event in the present is impossible because the root is actually in the past, and because of these historical emotions, when we encounter some sort of offense in a relationship in the present, we're automatically in our hearts and in our sub-conscience, we're catapulted back to the past.

0:05:04.8 SC: And so that's why we have all of this churning emotion, and it feels like it comes out of left field, which is why I call it a "pop-quiz". Using that term makes people sometimes think that you can pass or fail a pop-quiz, but you really can't. The Holy Spirit is allowing that offense in your life to alert you to something deeper.

0:05:34.0 SC: He's inviting you to a deeper healing, He's inviting you to reflect back on the earlier memories and earlier events that the present event is reflecting or mimicking. Because the common thread there is the emotion and then there's usually a memory attached. But you can't pass or fail, the Holy Spirit is simply showing you how far you've come in your healing and how far you have to go.

0:06:08.5 SC: Now, the enemy always tries to use our wounds against us, he always does, he exploits our wounds. So people ask me, is this pop-quiz an attack of the enemy? Or is it the Holy Spirit? And the answer is both. It's both things. The enemy exploits our woundedness, but the Holy Spirit is using the same exact event to invite us and direct us to look further back for healing.

0:06:33.7 SC: Once we have healed in those original memories, then we stop having the pop-quizzes. We stop having them because they're not necessary anymore. The whole function of a pop-quiz is to help us heal more deeply of things that have happened in our relationships in the past, typically from our parents, the Catechism says. But in any case, that's what a pop-quiz is.

0:07:01.4 SC: And I left off talking about what it means to be under the proper authority structure in particularly a marriage, but also in say, a pastor-parishioner kind of relationship. A pastor has a sort of authority over us because he is in persona Christi or he is in the person of Christ, and for a wife, the husband is in a similar position of authority.

0:07:33.7 SC: And so we have to know how to submit properly to God's authority through them, and if we can't learn to do that, first of all, we can't learn humility, but secondly, when we step out from under the protection of that authority of God through a pastor or through a husband, then we have made ourselves and our families vulnerable.

0:08:05.7 SC: Now, for a husband, if the husband advocates the responsibility to protect his wife and love his wife, then he opens the whole family to attack and makes the family vulnerable. And the wife, when she steps out from under the proper authority structure, which is ultimately God, we're not submitting to the husband, wives don't... I mean, we are. We're submitting to the husband, but we're actually submitting to Christ in them, and it's the same with a priest.

0:08:35.9 SC: I actually had a lady come to me in a one-on-one consult, and she was interested in spiritual direction and growing her ministry in spiritual direction, and I began by sort of probing for her gifts and her relationship to her pastor at her church, because something alarmed me.

0:09:00.6 SC: She had said that she wasn't a member of her parish, and that was a little bit alarming. And so as I probed a little bit more deeply what I discovered, she had said, when I asked directly, "Do you have good relationships with your priest?" And she said immediately, "Yes." But after more probing, what I discovered is she not only had a real issue with the current pastor, but she had had several issues with several pastors previously. So she had an authority issue and she was seeking to grow her spiritual direction ministry, but I could not help her with that. I would not help her with that.

0:09:46.6 SC: Although I could have. But I wouldn't, because I could see that she had a major issue with authority. Now, of course that comes from woundedness, and I promise we'll talk about abuse and those kinds of things in just a few moments. But it doesn't... A crappy leader does not excuse you from the requirement to submit to proper authority. It just doesn't. And this is a huge error, it is a major, major error for everybody. Why? Because this was the sin of Satan.

0:10:20.9 SC: This is what split heaven. It was the absolute refusal to submit to proper authority under a human being. The church fathers tell us that at the fall in heaven, the angels were presented the plan of God for humanity in its entirety, and it included, of course, that Jesus would come as a Divine human being.

0:10:56.2 SC: And the fallen angels said, "I will not serve. I will not serve a human being, even if He's God." [chuckle] And so that is the essence of our rebellion when we refuse to submit to the authority, a legitimate authority, say as a pastor or a husband, or for a husband... Well, any legitimate authority, the church. The church, for instance, is a legitimate authority. To refuse to submit to proper authority, oh my goodness, it just...

0:11:34.3 SC: It causes complete havoc. It causes the same havoc that that occurred in heaven with the slit, and it causes the same havoc that occurred in the garden of Eden.

[music]

0:11:52.6 Speaker 3: Your're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. Bible study experience that tastes like cake.

[music]

0:12:02.4 SC: Let's get social. I'm no longer on Facebook, so come and connect with me in the new Catholic Evangelist community. Visit biblestudyevangelista.com and click "community" on the

menu, or scroll down to the radio notes and click the link to our community. We're sharing picks and prayers, Love The Word takeaways, and insights on the daily readings and everything else social. Come share with me.

[music]

0:12:26.7 S1: Sonja created the Love The Word Bible study method just for you, based on Mary's personal practice and formulated for your personality and temperament. Get your Love The Word meditations every Monday morning by signing up at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now here is Sonja.

[music]

0:12:45.0 SC: Thanks be to God, He does not leave us in the complete chaos and mess that we have created by a lack of submission to proper authority in our relationships, both to the church, to God Himself, then to the church, and then in our relationships to pastors and husbands and wives, all of those relationships.

0:13:12.6 SC: Because the Bible begins and ends with marriage, all vocations are married to God. So we talked about... We've been talking about marriage and what that looks like properly, because every vocation is married to God ultimately. And so last week we looked at Genesis before the fall, and how the abdication of Adam allowed the attack of Eve and the fall there.

0:13:40.6 SC: And then after the fall, we saw this struggle for control between the two of them, they can't control themselves as easily as before, and so now they seek to control one another. But God does not leave us in that situation, He brings us what Paul calls the "new Adam", Jesus is the new Adam, that means that He is the head of humanity. In Adam, all men were in potential. In Adam and Eve, all humanity was physically in potential.

0:14:17.9 SC: In Jesus, the new Adam, all men are spiritually in potential in the new Adam, in Jesus. Mary, the church fathers say, is the new Eve. So Jesus is the bridegroom and Mary, the new Eve, is the bride. She is the living symbol, the living icon of each soul, but also for the whole church.

0:14:45.8 SC: And so just as Adam and Eve, as soon as they were created, they were in a celibate relationship until they came together and "knew one another", which is, remember that word the Bible uses for sexual intimacy, Jesus then and Mary, also live in a celibate relationship, but in so doing, they bring forth the spiritual life of the whole world. Their cooperation together brings forth spiritual life into the world.

0:15:21.1 SC: Jesus is the new Adam, the bridegroom, and Mary is the new Eve, the bride or the church. And so this is the model for how in the new covenant relationships should work, not necessarily the celibate part, right? Although, if you have a religious vocation, then of course that is what it means. But for those of us who are married, we're looking at what Paul says in Ephesians Chapter 5, about marriage, because it is utterly beautiful.

0:15:52.9 SC: But before we get to that, I wanna just mention that Cana, the wedding at Cana gives us a beautiful picture of how Jesus elevated marriage to a sacrament, meaning it is infused with grace. And it needs to be because marriage is tough, it is a closer relationship than that of a

religious...

0:16:12.5 SC: To his or her community, it is a closer relationship than that of the pastor to his church in some ways, and primarily physically. Right? But at Cana, we see that when Jesus changed that water, that was symbolic of Jewish washings, which were the forerunner of our baptism, the water in those pots was supposed to be used for the cleansing of the vessels that they were gonna use to drink from, and use at that wedding.

0:16:49.1 SC: And so when He changed that water into wine, He changed it into the wine of grace, it was a symbol of the changing of Judaism from something that was simply an empty commandment, to a new covenant that was infused with grace. And part of a covenant, actually, the word "sacrament" means "covenant".

0:17:15.3 SC: It's a covenant, and that's the reason marriage is a sacrament, it's a covenant. It is a sign as well of the new covenant of Jesus with His church, of Jesus with the soul, and so it is infused now with this wine of grace. The grace is what helps us love one another properly. So, what is love? What is authentic love?

0:17:39.3 SC: Because part of our problem in relationships is that we don't... We haven't experienced, and so we don't know what real love is meant to be. Any relationship that claims to be loving, whether it's a marriage or a sibling relationship or parent-child or a friendship, any relationship that claims to be loving is characterized by several marks or ingredients, we'll say, that show the relationship to be authentic. Authentic love.

0:18:13.0 SC: As opposed to something that's abusive or utilitarian or dishonest or funny, or fake or harmful. We sometimes we can call those a "pseudo love" or a "fake love", and that is different than the beginning of a relationship or the immature relationship. So way back when, when I was, I think barely 10, my father used to put me on restriction all the time, and all I had to do for days and weeks and months at a time was read.

0:18:44.4 SC: And my mother... In my bedroom, my mother had... I had the only bookshelf in the whole house, and it was Florida ceiling on one entire wall, so it was full of my mother's books. And most of those books were romance novels, and so I read my eyeballs almost bleeding in romance novels, beginning at age, as early as I could read, which was, it was not so good of a sexual education.

0:19:12.5 SC: But one of the books that was on that shelf was Scott Peck's, *The Road Less Traveled*. Now, I don't know how many of you read that, but it was old then when I picked it up and read it, but it changed my life. I actually read that book several times over the course of my life, and I have a copy now and it's marked all to pieces. It is a great, great book.

0:19:31.8 SC: But one of the things he really wrestled with as a psychotherapist was, what is love? And he also struggled in some later books on, what is evil? Because he wasn't Christian, and so he really wrestled with, what is real love? And his answer came down to, real love always seeks the spiritual and emotional health and well-being of the other person. I thought that was really, really amazing, even at 10.

0:20:02.3 SC: But I continued to return to that definition of love because it is the essence of what

the Bible teaches about love. Love, if you want to see a beautiful definition, which we've looked at several times throughout the series, but 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 is what's called the "love chapter". It says, "Love never fails." Love never fails. But it's got some really important characteristics that help us distinguish between what is real love and what is fake love.

0:20:35.2 SC: "Love suffers long or is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy, it does not parade itself, is not puffed up. Does not behave rudely. Does not seek its own." Or it seeks the other. "It is not provoked. It thinks no evil. Does not rejoice in iniquity or twistedness, but rejoices in the truth, bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." Love never fails.

0:21:09.4 SC: So there is a concise little definition of love from the Scriptures in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, that's Paul's love chapter, but we can extrapolate on that just a little bit, and we can see that one of the marks of real love is knowledge. The very first step that begins any relationship is learning more about the person.

0:21:31.3 SC: And so as real love reaches fruitfulness, then that knowledge becomes a heart-level knowledge. And then there is a giving and receiving. Love is always a gift. You can't force it. You can't earn it. It is a gift. So to relate means to offer the gift of yourself to the other, and for that other to receive the gift of the other into him or herself. And this is an interdependent kind of love, and it's the beginning of two people becoming one.

0:22:05.3 SC: So first you have the knowledge of each other, and then you have that giving and receiving, that self-donation. Then you have your building faith, trust, hope and love. So faith then says, "I can take a leap and say I believe in you just as you are," and then there's trust, "Because I have faith in you, I find myself deciding to be more and more open, and more and more vulnerable to you. And defenseless, because I'm sure that you're not gonna ever willingly hurt me."

0:22:35.9 SC: Then there's hope, and that actually becomes permanent because I have faith in you and I trust you, I'm certain then that my faith and my trust in you and our relationship is gonna be here tomorrow and the next day, even unto death and beyond. And then finally, given that we have that faith and trust and that hope in the other person, and this deep knowledge that I have of you, then that first level of authentic love develops.

0:23:06.0 SC: So you've got the early knowledge, the giving and receiving, and then the building of faith, trust, hope and love. And then there comes a commitment. In any authentic relationship, the time comes where you decide, and so does the other, that it's going to be permanent. And so it might be legal as in a marriage, or it might just be unspoken like in a friendship.

0:23:30.7 SC: But it is just known, you just know that there's a commitment. You know, and you have already decided in your will that, "If this person hurts me," because you know they will, they can't help it, they're wounded and flawed just like you, "if this person hurts me, I am not going anywhere. I love them, and I value this relationship enough that I want to keep it forever."

[music]

0:23:52.6 Speaker 3: You're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. Bible study experience that tastes like cake.

[music]

0:24:01.4 S1: Did you know you can get Bible Study Evangelista radio notes and podcast delivered to your inbox every Monday morning? Redeem your Mondays, join thousands of your fellow listeners by subscribing at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

0:24:33.2 SC: Once you have commitment then, you can proceed to communion. Everything previous does not actually fully describe a real love relationship, especially when we're trying to talk about the essence of marriage. The fulfillment of a real love brings oneness, there's a communion, there's two people who in some mysterious way have sort of become one.

0:25:00.1 SC: And that image is a love bond, you can imagine it like two glasses of water, one has blue food coloring in it and the other has yellow, and you pour 'em together to create green. And once that's done, you can't go back to yellow and blue. That's communion, that's the blending of two as one.

0:25:19.5 SC: I have a friend... I actually was thinking about a friendship that I have in these terms, where we sort of met and we started to talk and we had things in common, and then she gave to me, and I gave to her, not only out of the depth of my being, who I am and what I know and what I love, not only that, but also we started to build some faith and trust and hope and love, and I truly love her with all my heart.

0:25:53.1 SC: And then there came a time of commitment where she hurt me and I hurt her, and we had to wrestle with, is this something we wanna just chuck out the window or are we gonna remain friends? And of course, that happened, we didn't actually have a conversation about that, but I know that I hurt her and she received me back in forgiveness, which we'll talk about in a moment, and she hurt me and I did the same. And so there's this unspoken commitment and then there is a sort of communion, she can...

0:26:25.5 SC: She will contact me and say things and I will have just about said it myself or I have written a text and I was about to say it, or we're studying the same thing or we're... It is the strangest thing. [chuckle] And that is true also in my marriage, but it's true of every real love relationship.

0:26:46.0 SC: If you look at your relationship with God, you start out, you learn about God, you want to know more about Him, you're connecting at the heart level, you're opening your heart a little bit to what you know of God, that little mustard seed. A mustard seed, right?

0:27:03.8 SC: And then there's a giving and receiving as you enter into relationship with Him, you begin to give yourself more fully as you learn to trust Him. You have faith that He is and that He loves you just as you are. Not when you, but just as you are right now, He loves you and you have faith in that. You have faith that He loves you and that He is.

0:27:28.8 SC: Then you begin to trust Him a little more, you become more and more open, more and more vulnerable. Then you have this hope that you can have faith and trust in Him forever. And then when all of that is built, then you have this real authentic love, "I love you, Lord. I know You,

I know You a little enough that I know that I love You, and I know You love me."

0:27:56.8 SC: And then there's commitment. Then you say to yourself, "I'm going all in, I'm going all in, I'm holding nothing back, and I am committed to God over everything else." And then there becomes the opportunity then for that communion, that unity, as you spend more time in that contemplation, which is simply searching the silence and the darkness for God, that's all that is. As you connect to Him in prayer, that commitment gets deeper and deeper, and that communion gets deeper and deeper, and the oneness becomes more full.

0:28:33.7 SC: So that is the essence of what real love is, and if those things are missing, then there are elements of fake love involved. Now, granted, only healthy people can love in healthy ways, and so we come to relationships early on with lots of baggage, and that's what causes the pop-quizzes. The pop-quizzes are to help us work through the baggage.

0:29:05.1 SC: So we choose our husbands and we choose our wives for those two reasons. One, because they give us something that our parents didn't give us, and two, they challenge us in the woundedness that we received from our parents. And it's not just the spouse relationship, it's every single relationship. Every relationship challenges us in our woundedness, and if it's a real true relationship, it also gives us something that we didn't get from our parents.

0:29:30.1 SC: So you can see how then we're talking about marriage as symbolic for all of us, no matter what our actual vocation is, because in every vocation we're all married to God, and that's how we learn how to love properly and purely. So the pop-quizzes then are always about us and they're not about them, so what in the world do we do about relationships that have... That are heavy, heavy. In fake love, or that are abusive?

0:30:04.6 SC: Alright, let's look at what Paul says about marriage. In Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit to your own husband as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, let wives be to their own husbands in everything."

0:30:27.8 SC: "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her. Or handed himself over for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word," that's baptism there, "that he might present her to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

0:30:52.6 SC: Can you imagine if you had a husband that cared enough about your spiritual well-being and health that he could present you and your family to God as an offering? That is a high calling, men, and you have specific gifts and calling to be able to do that. You have specific graces that enable you to do that as men.

0:31:21.3 SC: "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it." There's that word, "cherish". "Just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

0:31:51.3 SC: Here is the prescription for what to do about those in-laws. The in-laws have no

authority in your marriage. If you are an in-law, get out of the middle of your kid's marriage. If you are married, get your in-laws out of the middle of your marriage. That's part of the authority structure gone awry. The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is to the church. And the wife submits to her husband as he loves her.

0:32:36.1 SC: Now, I realize this is an ideal, okay, but I'm just saying, this is an area right here that we can get right to work on. We can get right to work in the area of in-laws. Your responsibility is to your marriage partner, your husband or wife, your spouse. Not to your parents anymore.

0:32:58.2 SC: Now, we have a duty to honor our fathers and mothers, but that does not mean that we let them in the middle of our business in our marriage. And if you're that person, if you're that mother-in-law or that father-in-law, you are making a mess of your kid's marriage. So stop it. In the name of Jesus Christ, stop it.

0:33:19.4 SC: "This is a great mystery," Paul says. It is a mystery. Marriage is a mystery. Why? Because it images the Trinity, it images the new Adam and the new Eve coming together to give birth to the church and to nourish it. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

0:33:50.9 SC: So you can see right there in that one verse, this is the prescription for how to relate to one another, to your spouse in your marriage. "The man is to love his wife as himself." That means unto death, to give your body, to give yourself over to her and your children in full relationship with authentic love, not the fake stuff, not the selfish stuff. The full authentic love.

0:34:23.5 SC: Faith, hope, love, and trust. Commitment, communion, sharing, vulnerability. That's what your wife wants. And she keeps bugging you about it, because that's what she needs. You need it too. You need that communion with her. You have to build that, of course, and we bring our own baggage, but that's what we're working toward, this mystery.

0:34:46.5 SC: It's a mystery. And it is imaged in the sexual relationship, this mystery of communion is imaged in the sexual relationship, procreation. It's interesting that the Catechism does not say "sexual reproduction", it uses the word "procreation", because there's a great mystery there.

0:35:08.3 SC: It's not like out in the world where everybody's just grinding and humping. It is a mystery, it is a sacrament. It is a sacred act of communion, physical bonding and communion. It is an image of the intimacy and the knowing and the vulnerability and the self-donation of God to us individually, but also Christ to His church.

[music]

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[music]

0:36:02.3 S1: If you love having Bible study in your pocket, you can become a friend of the show. Click on the yellow "friend of the show" button on biblestudyevangelista.com and become a

supporter of any amount and any frequency. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

0:36:19.8 SC: I have a lot more to offer on this passage, but I can't do it this week because I don't want to leave all of you who are worried about living with an abuser and what to do about that, and what your responsibility is toward that person in charity and towards yourself in charity and toward God in charity, I don't wanna leave you hanging.

0:36:36.8 SC: So I'm gonna switch gears just a little bit and we're gonna start talking about boundaries. The reason that we have to address boundaries is because this is the only way that you can help someone grow out of their baggage. They have to... We all have to have boundaries. We have to learn what is acceptable and what is not, as we relate to one another. And each of us is gonna have somewhat different boundaries.

0:37:09.0 SC: One of my boundaries that I had to learn was the silent treatment with my husband. I learned that from my father, and I began using it right away in my marriage, and my husband, he started using it on me. He learned it from me. And I thought, "Oh no, I'm not living a life of 30, 40, 50 years with the silent treatment, I am not doing that."

0:37:33.9 SC: I knew that I had taught it to him, so I stopped it. I stopped it in two ways. One, I told him, "I realize that I am the one who taught you this, but it's unacceptable. It's unacceptable for you, and it's unacceptable for me, and we're not doing this anymore. We are gonna talk about it." And that was a boundary. It was a boundary that was necessary because it was harmful.

0:38:02.1 SC: So we teach each other how to erect boundaries and how to respect boundaries, and if you are in a truly authentic love relationship, then there will be that give and take, and you will learn how to relate to that person in ways that feel safe and honorable and virtuous, and even sacred toward that other person. You teach each other how to do that in a true love relationship.

0:38:37.6 SC: But when the other person, when you're in a relationship with someone that is not actually a truly loving relationship, all of it begins to break down. When they won't respect you as a person, when they won't respect a boundary of any sort, that kind of person is impossible to have a real loving relationship with, and sometimes those people are unsafe. Sometimes they are abusive.

0:39:10.9 SC: I have that kind of background with my father. My father does not know what love is, he has been so wounded in his life. I'll just give you this little fact. His father was married 13 times. Now, that tells you what kind of woundedness my father has endured and survived, and he has my utmost respect for that.

0:39:33.3 SC: But I am not in a relationship with him that is very close or vulnerable at all, or intimate. Because he is incapable of that, and it would be irrational and stupid and sinful for me to continue to enter into a relationship with someone who's gonna sin against me. And not just me, but my husband and my marriage and my children, and I have a duty to protect them and myself.

0:40:03.1 SC: Jesus said, He gave us the law of love, He said, "Love the Lord God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." You are your closest neighbor. You must behave charitable with the other person in a way that is charitable

for both you and them.

0:40:28.9 SC: That means there needs to be proper boundaries, respectful boundaries for both of you, and when there aren't, you need the separation. Jesus showed us in Matthew Chapter 18, that if a person cannot respect boundaries, this is the section on fraternal correction. He says, "If another person, if you go to a person and you tell them their offense and they don't hear, then take another person, a witness. If they don't hear, take it to the church. If they don't hear the church, put them away from you."

0:41:09.3 SC: That is exactly what a marriage tribunal does in the church about a marriage, and whether or not there was an actual marriage to begin with. You bring it to the church, perhaps your priest, whatever. And if that person will not hear, if they cannot and will not. This is a will not. But also it comes from woundedness, then there is no actual authentic love relationship.

0:41:36.2 SC: And so that person has to learn, and Jesus says even further up, in Chapter 18 of Matthew, He says, "If your eye offends you, pluck it out. If your hand offends you, cut it off." He's talking about people who continue in sin against us, and people that cause us to continually sin.

0:42:03.6 SC: And my father was one of those people for me. He caused me to sin out of my woundedness because he re-wounded me over and over and over again, and I finally realized I have to get away from him. I have to get away from him literally and physically. So I moved the whole state away, just to get some space in order to be able to heal and to see clearly.

0:42:24.7 SC: I have to get that plank out of my eye. I couldn't see. I was so wounded. I didn't know what the right thing to do was where he was concerned, because he's my father. How do I honor my father and guard my heart? Guard myself, my family. How do I do that? That was a long process for me.

0:42:45.9 SC: But the first thing is, we have to know forgiveness, we have to know what it is and what it's not. It's not a feeling. We can forgive an abuser, but that does not mean that we feel happy toward them or that we feel loving toward them. We can still forgive them, and perhaps a boundary is necessary, perhaps a no-contact boundary, perhaps a separation is necessary for safety, both emotional and spiritual and physical safety, all of those are important. Your heart, soul, mind and strength, Jesus said. All of that is important. Not just your physical safety, all of it.

0:43:28.5 SC: So if you're with an abuser, then there has to be boundaries. But that doesn't mean you don't forgive 'em, you do. You release them from the debt that they owe you, Matthew 18 says. Jesus gives us what forgiveness is. It's the release of a debt. It's not an emotion. It's saying that it's okay what they did. It's not forgetting it. It's not just getting over it, because you don't just get over abuse, you have to heal from it.

0:43:54.3 SC: It's not refusing to be angry or pretending that you're not angry, because that would be unjust. And it's not allowing them to sin against you, because that makes you complicit in their sin. So forgiveness then is the release of a debt, but it's not necessarily reconciliation. Because reconciliation requires repentance, and in a relationship of authentic love, a person who has wounded you will say, "I am sorry," and mean it, and they will try their best to do differently next time.

0:44:25.3 SC: If you are in an authentic love relationship, when someone comes to you and says, "That hurt me," you must say, "I am sorry," and stop. That is the essence of an authentic love relationship. Even with God, there is no reconciliation without repentance. You are forgiven, but there is no reconciliation until there is repentance. And there certainly is no relationship until there is repentance and reconciliation.

0:45:00.3 SC: So forgiveness is not reconciliation necessarily. It's also not necessarily a relationship, because repentance is required first. God has forgiven us of our sin, and the door is wide open for that reconciliation, but until there is repentance, there is no reconciliation, and until there is repentance, there's no relationship.

0:45:24.4 SC: Because a relationship involves faith, hope, love, and trust. It is irrational and stupid and uncharitable to trust someone who is not trustworthy, or to hope in someone who you know is not gonna be there. And I mean like literally. It is irrational to put faith in someone who is faithless, it's uncharitable.

0:45:51.7 SC: You are your closest neighbor, and the church does not say that you cannot separate from an abuser. In fact, you have a duty to. Especially if it really is a situation of abuse for either you or your children. You have a duty in Christ to separate from that abuser and give him time and space. Or her. Time and space to repent.

0:46:27.4 SC: That is why the church says that if a separation is required, that is fully licit in the church, that is allowable. And you can actually even literally divorce, but you cannot remarry, because in the eyes of God, you are still married to that person. If it's an actual marriage, which the church helps you determine through the tribunal and the process of annulment.

0:46:55.5 SC: But the church does not say that you cannot separate, and in fact, the Bible is very clear, Jesus is very clear that charity demands that we do that. "If your eye offends you, pluck it out." So you are not required to remain in a relationship with an abuser. That is one of those areas in which we cannot submit to an authority that is illegitimate, and abuse makes their authority illegitimate. But that also means that you have to endure the consequences of placing boundaries and maintaining those.

[music]

0:47:36.4 SC: I'm gonna let you stew on this for the written next week, and we'll be back next week to finish our thoughts on this topic of submission to authority and proper authentic love.

[music]

0:47:51.4 Speaker 4: Thank you for listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com.