Lesson 1
What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is a pattern of misuse of power and control used against a household member or intimate partner. It is coercion, intimidation, and control through emotional, verbal, physical, sexual, financial, religious, stalking and harassment, or other means.

Abuse is not love. It is one person in a relationship having power and control over the other person.

Abuse is not unique to just our day and time. Throughout our time together, we will look at the story of King Saul and David found in **1 Samuel chapters 16-26,** in the Old Testament. The story of Saul and David provides a study of the patterns often seen in domestic violence cases.

Domestic violence is more about power and control than about gender. The domestic violence we see King Saul carry out against David is between two males, yet it shows many of the patterns typically seen in spousal abuse today.

The story of Saul and David helps us to understand the dynamics of domestic violence relationships.

Things we can learn from 1 Samuel:

- Ways to deal safely with a domestic violence relationship

- Understand what may have happened in a past relationship

- Protect yourself in future relationships

- Teach your children to recognize and respond to domestic violence that might occur in their future relationships

Saul exhibits many characteristics often demonstrated by abusers.
1. Blames his abuse on David, the victim
2. Has a history of not taking responsibility for his actions and excuse-making
3. Narcissistic behavior (the world revolves around him and what he wants)
4. Extreme jealousy
5. Controlling, watches his victim's every move
6. Likes to bend or break the rules and defy the "system;" is rebellious
7. May lie or not keep his word
8. Repeatedly abuses, asks for forgiveness, then repeats the abuse (Cycle of Abuse)
9. Becomes obsessive about David and stalks him
10. His religion was mostly an outward "show" to impress others
11. He twists the intents and meanings of others, and sees evil in others' motives
12. Lacks empathy, and a willingness to sacrifice others to get what he wants
13. Is insecure
14. Uses his position or power as a license to abuse
15. Had difficulty loving his son
16. Probable trauma or generational sin in his upbringing (see Judges 20)
17. Can at times seem "possessed" or "out of his mind"

As you read these chapters in the Bible, you will also see that David's experiences match those of many domestic violence victims today.

David, as a victim:

1. Tried to appease his abuser and had to "walked on eggshells" around him
2. Found that all his efforts to appease his abuser and avoid violence didn't work
3. Grew up with abuse in his family of origin: his brothers were abusive to him, and his father treated him as inferior
4. Found that some people were not willing to believe he was being abused
5. Was stalked after fleeing his abuser

The story of Saul and David has much to teach us about dealing with domestic violence. We have a God who provides wisdom from His Word to meet our every need **(2Timothy 3:16)** and who has promised to teach and guide us **(Psalm 25:8, 9; Psalm 23:3)!**

We are going to talk about how God defines us as we work through this study. His definition of us starts with a relationship with him. We make Him, Boss of our life. He died for us on the cross.

Verse of the Week:

Romans 10:9-10
[9] If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. [10] For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

Weekly Thought: There is nothing you can do that causes God to love you more or less.

Question:
An abuser's background may provide clues for predicting future abuse: growing up with abuse, having trouble with authorities or the law, abusing a previous partner. Can you see any of these patterns in an abusive person you have known or do know?