

What made me so **VULNERABLE?**

Childhood trauma, abuse, marital problems, stress—any one of these could have contributed to your vulnerability. The pastor is someone who took advantage of your weakness and vulnerability instead of helping you, as he knew he should have done.

How do I start **OVER?**

You start by praying and asking God to forgive your sins and to help you to know truth. Ask Him to heal you emotionally, spiritually and physically, and to help you overcome your weaknesses and pain. He will gladly give you all that you ask (in accordance with His will) and more! He is more than willing and able to renew your heart and give you a new start. Pray, read your Bible, if you're married, tell your spouse, report it to the church authorities, or a trusted friend.

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

—Matthew 21:22

He **THREATENS** suicide if I end the “relationship.” What do I do?

No doubt this is a very emotional time for you and you are being controlled by feelings more than logic or reason. This trap, though, is just another form of manipulation. Tell him you are not responsible for his actions—no matter what he may decide to do.

Remember that YOU did not do this to him, he is doing it to you. It's time to know the **TRUTH!**

THE **Hope** of Survivors

A ministry of compassion providing support, hope and encouragement for victims of clergy sexual abuse and misconduct.

Many people mistakenly believe that when a pastor or clergy member becomes physically involved with a member of his congregation that it is an “affair.”

Nothing is farther from the **TRUTH!**

A pastor is not “just a man.” He is appointed by God to stand in Christ's stead to His people.

—2 Corinthians 5:20

“When ministers thus take advantage of the confidence the people place in them and lead souls to ruin, they make themselves as much more guilty than the common sinner as their profession is higher.” —Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5

While it is a violation of the seventh commandment, and some states have laws making it a criminal offense, it's not an affair. If the state can recognize this heinous crime, shouldn't the Church recognize it even more so?

This form of abuse has devastated untold numbers of women. They have lost faith in God. Some have lost their family and friends. Most stop attending church. Many no longer even pray. The losses are devastating. Do we abandon them? No! We help them.

If you need help now, please contact us:

www.TheHopeOfSurvivors.com
Help@TheHopeOfSurvivors.com
P.O. Box 16, Thompsonville, IL 62890
(618) 983-6434 or (866) 260-8958

My pastor says
he **CARES, LOVES**
and can **HELP** me!



Is this **WRONG?**
I'm so **CONFUSED!**

My pastor says he **LOVES** me. How should I respond?

Love comes from God alone, and God would only give someone in a counseling or pastoral situation godly love for each other. Anything other than this is purely emotional. God's love is not based on emotions. It is a decision, a choice, a **PRINCIPLE**.

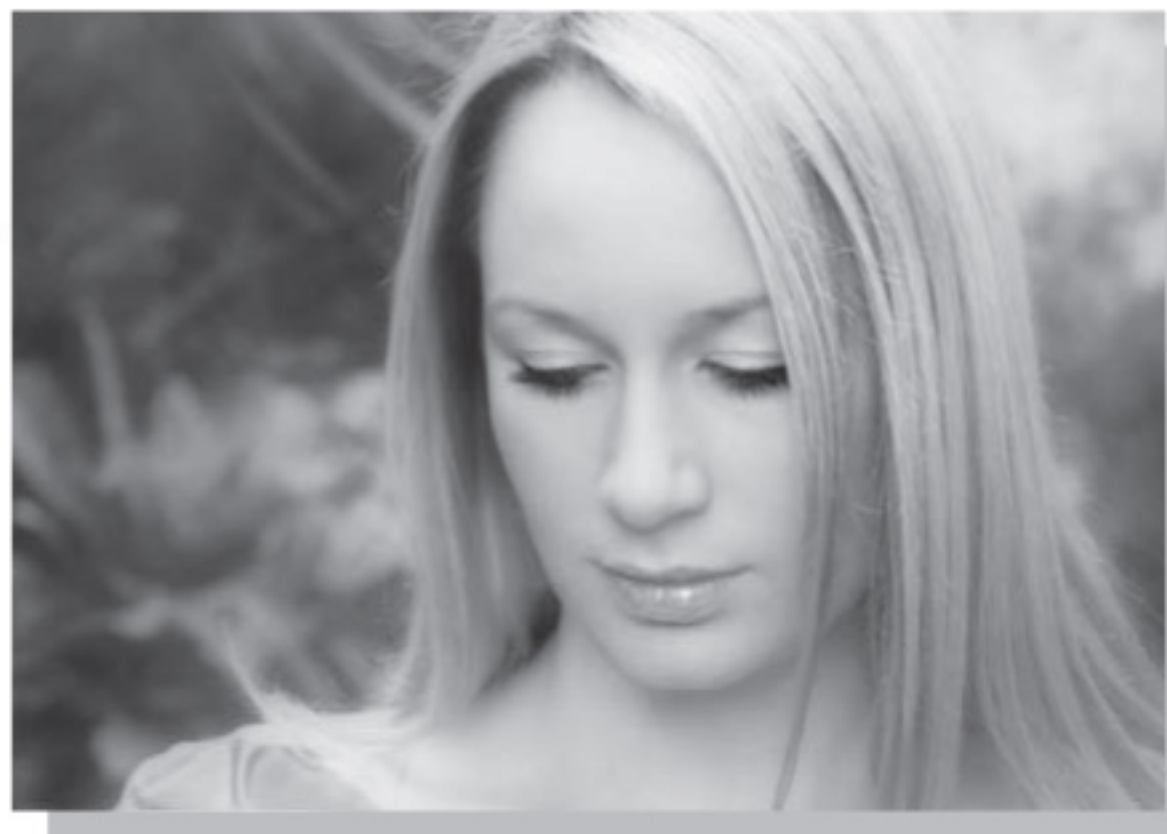
Don't fool yourself—if he truly wants to help you, he'll **NEVER** want a physical relationship. He does know better.

He says he **KNOWS** me better than I know myself. How can he?

It may appear that he knows you better than anyone else, but this is not because he is so in tune to you, rather it is because vulnerable women share a common set of behaviors and he can recognize them.

We have so much in common. Isn't this a **GOOD** thing?

The pastor in this situation can make it appear as though he has things in common with you in order to get you to open up and share your deepest thoughts and feelings with him. He can then use this information to manipulate and control you. He can also be imagining that he has shared interests in common with you. He may act one way around you and act differently with others.



Just because you may think you have things in common does not make it God's will.

God called David a “man after His own **HEART**” and forgave him after his sin with Bathsheba. Won't God forgive this, too?

Yes, God will forgive all of our confessed sins, but when a pastor tries to make a correlation between his actions and David's sin, he is making a grave mistake. The pastor who is willfully sinning, under the guise of being a man of God, is perverting truth. David deeply repented of his sin with Bathsheba. He

knew it was wrong and he pleaded with God for forgiveness. (See Psalm 51.)

“I've never **FELT** loved like this before.” “I can't live without you.” “I need you.”

These are things the pastor says to play on your emotions in order to control and manipulate you. It also makes you feel guilty for saying no to his advances. Even though you may long to hear those words, coming from him, those words can **NEVER** be right. Don't fall for these lies!

In addition to your own problems, you now bear the weight of his problems, too. This is part of what makes pastoral abuse so damaging.

The pastor said it's God's will for us to be **TOGETHER**. Should I believe him?

NO! It is **NEVER** God's will that you should break any of His commandments. You cannot, and should not, trust a pastor who is violating God's Word. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” —1 John 2:4

Doesn't society **APPROVE** of this type of relationship?

Even if some of those in society do approve, this does not make it right. No true love relationship is ever founded on lies, deceit and adultery.

Why is this **ABUSE**?

Due to the nature of the relationship (most often a counseling setting), and the fact that he is a representative of Christ, this can be nothing short of abuse.

Remember, you counseled with him because **YOU** had problems and thought he could help. You did not go to him for a “relationship.”

Because of this imbalance of power, there can **NEVER** be mutual consent of any kind.

When a woman seeks spiritual advice from her pastor, and he distorts the truth in order to emotionally and physically take advantage of her instead, how can this be anything but abuse?!

He **LOVES** you, he **LOVES** you **NOT!**