Joy and Jason Harris, Part One

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[00:00:00] **Brian Winkler:** Welcome to the Wounds of the Faithful podcast brought to you by DSW Ministries. Your host is singer, songwriter, speaker, and domestic violence advocate, Diana Winkler. She is passionate about helping survivors in the church, heal from domestic violence and abuse and trauma. This podcast is not a substitute for professional counseling or qualified medical help.

[00:00:26] Now,

[00:00:26] here is Diana.

[00:00:27] **Diana Winkler:** Hello everybody. How are you doing? I am glad that you're here today. I am so excited about my guests today. I will have my first guests from Australia and it's the first time that I've had two people on the podcast at the same time. If you've been following my story, I have mentioned the Harris family briefly [00:01:00] from pastor Scott's church, where I was baptized and where I married my ex.

[00:01:06] So let me read you their bios. Joy studied elementary education before going on to teach at the primary school level, as well as homeschooling for 26 years. She has ministered in schools, religious education classes, Sunday schools in holiday Bible clubs, as well as through her speaking at various seminars and retreats.

[00:01:35] Joy is also a musician who has collaborated on multiple recording projects, maintained a private teaching studio for over 30 years and has been an accompanist where she lived. Joy currently is retired. Does pet sitting and is a domestic violence advocate, working to educate [00:02:00] Christians especially and support victims.

[00:02:04] Joy has seven children, 21 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. So Joy was a missionary's wife in the Independent Fundamental Baptist church, I believe since 1995 in Nowra, Australia. And yeah, she is a talented pianist. I remember that very much. So she suffered domestic violence, abuse and rape at the hand of her ex-husband, Larry. Her oldest son, Kevin, who I went to Bible college with, has turned against her.

[00:02:46] She has not been able to see her grandchildren. She is here on the show with one of her sons, Jason, who is supporting his mom through everything she and their family has been through. [00:03:00] So a little bit about Jason. Jason is a writer, pastor and academic. He has authored multiple books, articles, and papers, including his book, Theological Meditations on the Gospel.

[00:03:19] Jason has degrees in theology, music, accounting, and research. He is currently working on his PhD from James Cook University, as well as serving as pastor at Crosspoint Church. Jason has lived in beautiful Cairns, Australia since 2007. I have not seen them since Y2K, New Year's Eve service at Pastor Scott's church.

[00:03:52] I saw Kevin last during our college reunion. I think it was 2005. [00:04:00] So this will be part catching up and part interview for me. Now, their story was very public. They were on 60 Minutes Australia and a few other media outlets. So that is why we will be mentioning some real names of those involved today. Joy and Jason have graciously agreed to come and tell you their story.

[00:04:30] Now we will be talking about rape in this conversation. We will not be getting graphic, but it's just a trigger warning. If that is something that you're really sensitive about. Their story is really personal to me because these are people that I care about and they were very influential in my Christian walk.

[00:04:57] So here is my conversation with [00:05:00] Joy and Jason. So please welcome from down under Joy Harris and her son, pastor Jason Harris. Thanks for coming on the podcast. You guys.

[00:05:14] **Joy Harris:** Thanks for having us.

[00:05:15] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. Great to be here.

[00:05:17] **Diana Winkler:** You are my first Aussie guests.

[00:05:22] **Jason Harris:** Excellent.

[00:05:23] **Diana Winkler:** And we finally got the time zones figured out, at least for me.

[00:05:28] So what time is it there?

[00:05:31] **Jason Harris:** What's about 12:39 PM afternoon.

[00:05:35] **Diana Winkler:** So we're recording this and it's 20 till 8 where I'm at, for you listeners. And so that's what, 14 hours apart?

[00:05:45] **Joy Harris:** We're ahead. You can expect tomorrow to be a very sunny, lovely day. yes. Since we're already in tomorrow.

[00:05:54] **Diana Winkler:** So we like to start the conversation with some fun stuff, [00:06:00] because this is a dark topic.

[00:06:02] I deal and dark topics all the time. So since you're the first guests from Australia, I'd like to ask, what do you like best about living in Australia?

[00:06:16] **Joy Harris:** I like the people, the friendliness. The sensible.

[00:06:22] It's beautiful here. We're surrounded by gorgeous mountains and we have eight northern beaches north of the city.

[00:06:30] Wow. Just we're up into tropics up here in far north Queensland. Just

[00:06:35] love it here.

[00:06:37] **Diana Winkler:** How about you, Jason?

[00:06:40] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. What's not to love? It's but no, I do. I do love Australian society as a very relatively equitable society. And that's really come a long way, particularly in terms of domestic violence.

[00:06:53] And I really, I love being part of a society like that. So long way to go. Oh, for sure. But [00:07:00] definitely made really good progress there.

[00:07:02] **Joy Harris:** Australia looks after it's vulnerable people very well. And I appreciate

[00:07:06] that.

[00:07:07] **Diana Winkler:** Wow. I didn't know that. That's awesome. I watched that show, about the zoo.

[00:07:15] We watch it all the time with Crikey! I can't remember their names right now.

[00:07:22] **Jason Harris:** Steve Irwin?

[00:07:23] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. Steve Erwin. We watched the zoo show from Australia and we really like it. What do you think are the biggest misconceptions about life in Australia? I People don't realize Australia's a continent.

[00:07:35] It's huge. What would you say?

[00:07:38] **Joy Harris:** It's as big as America actually. People think that everywhere you go, there's gonna be a snake around the corner or a spider to bite you. And it's not. There are crocodiles up here, but you just learn where they live and be smart. And in if you want to swim, you swim in the nets, they have big nets out so that the crocs and the stingers don't get you.

[00:07:57] And it's just beautiful. And we can look [00:08:00] out at any point at night in our front yard, there'll be five to 10 kangaroos. It's awesome.

[00:08:07] **Diana Winkler:** Wow. Do you know the movie Dot and the Kangaroo? No? Must be Americanized. It was from the eighties. It's a cartoon. And everything that I knew about Australia was from that cartoon.

[00:08:23] It was on HBO, I think. But what do you think Jason, about misconceptions?

[00:08:30] **Jason Harris:** Sorry, I got nothing.

[00:08:32] **Diana Winkler:** Was there anything that surprised you when you went, when you moved to Australia?

[00:08:40] **Jason Harris:** I'm not sure I'd remembered if there

[00:08:41] was.

[00:08:42] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah, you were pretty young.

[00:08:43] **Jason Harris:** I was pretty young. Turned 13.

[00:08:49] **Diana Winkler:** I appreciate you guys coming on the show and talking about difficult topic. Your story, your early days as a missionary and the [00:09:00] abuse that you endured over the years. So let's start at the beginning. So, Joy. How did you meet Larry? And how were the early years of your marriage?

[00:09:16] **Joy Harris:** We met at a mutual friend's home.

[00:09:18] We were all gonna carpool down from Pennsylvania to Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, about a 12 hour drive. And so the mutual friends, family had our two families over and the Harrises and my mom and my brother and I. And that first night we hit it off. I was playing piano and he was singing.

[00:09:37] And then, we rode down together and got to know his siblings and then we started dating pretty well straight off. And at Bob Jones, if you don't have money to go to the snack shop, you go to this big, huge, giant warehouse, looks like, just full of couches. And you sit and talk and you have monitors walking around, making sure you're not touching, holding hands [00:10:00] and stuff.

[00:10:01] So you talk and you get to know each other that way, which is a good thing. So he, I don't know right away, he started assuming marriage and never did ask me to marry him. And so he said let's learn what the wife's supposed to be like in the marriage. So first Peter two and, Ephesians five, all the submit things and husband's ahead of the house and stuff.

[00:10:24] And,

[00:10:24] I had never heard that before

[00:10:27] anyway,

[00:10:27] If we had a disagreement about something, he'd say, You should start practicing submitting because you're gonna have to do that if we're married. And so that was the backdrop. The first Christmas home on holidays, driving back to Pennsylvania, and backseat of the car, he took all kinds of liberties.

[00:10:43] I try to stop him. He wouldn't. So for the whole 12 hours, it was a struggle. And then during the holidays, he'd come over and visit and always trying to,

[00:10:53] kiss and stuff. And but to my [00:11:00] mind it was proof he loved me and cuz I was lacking in that from my broken home.

[00:11:07] And I didn't think much of it particularly like they, especially not to stop it because I always felt like no one would want to be my boyfriend anyway.

[00:11:18] And so I was like thrilled to have anybody. Anyway, but there was the control right from the start.

[00:11:26] Wow. And had our first child, 11 months after marriage. And right away the inconvenience of a crying baby, and the idea that he was going to make this child obey and grow up to serve God made him very unloving, and controlling, and his anger would come out.

[00:11:46] He would shake the baby and one month old baby hard. And I remember one time grabbing baby out of his hands and I just ran outside. I'm like, I'm not gonna let him hurt my child. And I stood out in the [00:12:00] middle of the road. It was dark. We had a car, but he kept the keys in his pocket. I didn't know where the police station was.

[00:12:06] I had no money. I had no phone.

[00:12:09] I'm like, I have no choice.

[00:12:12] So after crying out there by myself for a while, I had to come back in.

[00:12:17] **Diana Winkler:** And so this was Kevin that you had?

[00:12:20] **Joy Harris:** Yeah. Yep. Wow. And 12 months later, the next one was born and so it's, it was from the beginning, from our dating days. The control.

[00:12:30] **Diana Winkler:** So you weren't raised in a Christian home?

[00:12:32] **Joy Harris:** I suppose I was. Oh, you were? Yeah,

[00:12:36] my parents were leaders in a church of 1500.

[00:12:39] But yeah, there was issues there too. And

[00:12:42] my dad left, I was raised by a single mom

[00:12:46] with my brother.

[00:12:47] **Diana Winkler:** Wow. I didn't know that. I think that you shared with me when we would chat when I was over your house a few times, that you guys got married justice of the peace?[00:13:00]

[00:13:00] **Joy Harris:** Yeah. What happened was in the middle of our junior year, he got expelled for multiple demerits,

[00:13:08] Not being on time and not turning in assignments things. So he had to leave campus and he said you need to come with me. And well, elope.

[00:13:18] And I had just been elected president of my society.

[00:13:21] I was doing very well in, in grades. We, it was just like one more week. I just had to take my exams and I would've got all the credits for all that study, but he didn't care. It just, you need to come with me now. And of course I have to submit. So we left, we snuck out of campus off campus and went and lived with his brother for a week and then went and eloped.

[00:13:47] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah, I think you showed me the picture and him sweeping you off your feet. And you looked happy, at least in the picture. But yeah I had no idea. Now [00:14:00] I met your family at, pastor Scott's church and

[00:14:06] your family was very well respected in the church. There was this outward conformity that you kept and your family took up a whole row of chairs in church. And you sang like Von Trappe family, which I really loved.

[00:14:25] **Joy Harris:** And the children obeyed outwardly. They were obedient, good kids, but nobody knew why. The terror at home.

[00:14:33] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah, you guys were the most well behaved children I have ever met. And my siblings were terrors and were nothing like you guys. You let me hang out at your house and we had fun and I had good memories there. It just floors me. I didn't see any, I didn't see any abuse. It was so well hidden.

[00:14:56] I think Larry used to complain that I [00:15:00] would come over and eat all of your food. And that I would never bring anything.

[00:15:05] **Joy Harris:** We were glad to have you.

[00:15:07] **Diana Winkler:** I know that you were. Larry and I had a few words. And I don't know if you remember this, Jason, but I wouldn't eat my vegetables when I ate over at your house.

[00:15:17] And your dad used to say, Now, Jason, eat your vegetables and be a good example to Diana.

[00:15:25] So I would shove those vegetables in my mouth because all your kids were watching me not eat my vegetables.

[00:15:30] Oh, my!

[00:15:33] But my brothers would eat everything in the house. There was never any food in the house because they would just like eat everything. And my my mother didn't like that

[00:15:43] I was a Christian. I don't know if you remember that.

[00:15:46] **Joy Harris:** Definitely.

[00:15:47] **Diana Winkler:** I liked hanging at your house cuz you were a good Christian family. And I bought you guys Christmas presents . I just wanted to thank them for all the, the things that they've done for me. [00:16:00] I don't know if you remember. I was working at Taco Bell and you guys used to come and visit me at work.

[00:16:09] **Joy Harris:** Yeah. You had it hard. I was admiring you for your bravery and standing up as a Christian and following Christ even though your family was

[00:16:18] against that.

[00:16:18] **Diana Winkler:** I think you even adopted another family to come live with you. That was renting a room.

[00:16:26] And so it was a pretty full house.

[00:16:28] Jason, what was it like growing up with six siblings and being a missionary's kid?

[00:16:34] **Jason Harris:** Yeah, it was good. Six kids, big family was nice. Never had any concerns. I think some kids probably do being an MK. Yeah. It had its ups and its downs, it had its benefits.

[00:16:48] I don't think that was good for me, the benefits. But, you're looked up to and all of that in the churches. Which I don't think was good for me. I think was something unhealthy in that, but [00:17:00] Yeah, look, I had a huge number of experiences, visited a huge number of churches and were treated very well in that.

[00:17:06] Yeah, look, it was a lot of beneficial experiences for me.

[00:17:11] **Diana Winkler:** I remember Larry or you guys came to FBT and I think it was during a missions conference. And I remember Larry, this was such a vivid memory, but Larry preaching about how he spanked you kids. I He was very specific in telling the whole audience.

[00:17:31] Now my dad and my mom spanked me, but I can only count on one hand with change left over how many times that was. And it was for major infringement. Like we, my sister and I stole from our neighbors, or we almost started a fire in the forest, or we were trespassing in somebody's house an empty house.

[00:17:53] I think that kind of kept me on the straight and narrow. But what do you think about [00:18:00] corporal punishment and how you were raised?

[00:18:03] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. Look, I think one of the single worst parts of the abuse. We went through, and it just to clarify, all of the Harris children grew up in an abusive home.

[00:18:14] All of the Harris children were abused. That's not something that's necessarily always clear when we talk about our story. But probably the very worst things that dad would go to churches and preach on the family. That was his strong point. In fact the reason we got into most of the churches we did was because some key leaders in the movement loved the family and loved him preaching on the family and told all their friends, Get these guys in.

[00:18:39] They're really good. So dad was viewed as a guru on the family, and, a leader in that. And if only other people would be like him. And so we would see things happen in the car on the way to church and literally 10 minutes later, be up singing about the family and then him preaching. [00:19:00] And that the hypocrisy of that, and worse than that, it was, this is God, this is how God wants families to be.

[00:19:11] That was incredibly destructive just beyond.

[00:19:13] **Joy Harris:** When you think,

[00:19:15] when you say spanking, these were beatings, like sometimes over a hundred strokes. Sometimes with a two by four that was broken.

[00:19:23] **Jason Harris:** So yeah. So when it comes to corporal punishment, honestly, I'm not against it per se. I think there are people who practice it. I do not believe that the Bible requires corporal punishment.

[00:19:37] **Diana Winkler:** No w there's some people that, " daddy's mad at me", that's all it takes. And then you got others that, they need a little firmer hand.

[00:19:45] **Jason Harris:** Yeah, exactly. So I think there's some room for parental discretion and it is arguably a biblical option, but there was a big difference between what dad did. Dad sometimes spanked,

[00:19:57] but much of the time it was not spanking. It [00:20:00] was not corporal punishment. It was beatings, it was violent, it was harm. It was led to injury. It was not, we're not talking about a belt, we're talking about baseball bat or two by four. So yeah, we're not, this is not spanking. This is violence.

[00:20:14] This is just violence, but in the name of God. He would quote Bible verses while he did it. There are Bible verses I still can't look at or read without having trauma response. Which, as a pastor that's pretty bad, to be traumatized by part parts of scripture.

[00:20:31] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah, my sister and I got the strap. But again, I, there weren't very many times, but it was always, "Okay, this is why you're getting the strap".

[00:20:42] And then afterwards, he came in and told us, he loved us and you can't do those things. Those are wrong. And my parents raised us Catholic, but we had morals, we had standards, but my sister and I got older. We stayed out of trouble. I don't know if you remember, Matt, my [00:21:00] younger brother, used to come over and play with you two boys.

[00:21:04] He and my other brother, they found out from their friends that they could call CPS child protection if dad spanked them. And they were bad. They did all kinds of horrible things. And so my dad never was able to spank them cuz he was afraid that somebody would call child protection on him.

[00:21:26] Anyway. Yeah. There's definitely discipline, loving discipline and beatings that you guys survived. And that just breaks my heart. You said it wasn't really a huge adjustment going from. United States to Australia probably cuz you were so young, Jason?

[00:21:46] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. Oh look, it was a huge thing.

[00:21:48] That was probably the biggest thing that, happened in my life. But it wasn't hard. It was, this was home, our parents' attitude. This is our experience now where this is home. And that's how we thought from day one. And yeah,[00:22:00] I'm glad, from that point on, I felt myself to be Australian and we became citizens. Yeah, so this just became home for us and that it's probably harder to leave it than to be here.

[00:22:11] **Diana Winkler:** Absolutely. I can understand that. In my Mending the Soul healing groups that I lead, we talk a lot about what does an abuser look like. And I'm finding out in my advocacy work that abusers don't look like the stereotype, the wife beater's shirt and sitting on the couch with a beer and watching TV. That can be an abusive person.

[00:22:38] But a lot of times the profile of an abuser is charming, funny, good looking, well respected by the community, a likable person. But behind closed doors, they're a different person. And I would say [00:23:00] that about Larry, is that I never would've guessed he was an abusive person.

[00:23:05] **Joy Harris:** I'll pass it to Jason in a minute. But when we started the church in Australia here, I had women in the church come to me and say, I'd like to talk to you about a problem I'm having in my marriage, but you wouldn't understand. Your husband is so wise and gentle and you just wouldn't understand my problems.

[00:23:25] **Diana Winkler:** So little did they know?

[00:23:29] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. My dad was a classic example of an abuser. Domestic violence is usually far more sinister. You take the scenario of the guy who actually gets drunk and gets violent. And that's probably the lowest grade of domestic violence is still very serious. But probably the lowest grade, the least damaging is for dad to get drunk and hit the kids.

[00:23:54] It's when dad isn't drunk and he's got an ideological reason. It's [00:24:00] psychological torture. It's in the mind. And it's 10 times worse when you add Christianity. So this is God, God told me to do this. And the more Christian and the better it looks, I think, in many ways the more destructive.

[00:24:11] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah, Fundamental Baptists are really good on outward conformity, that the more perfect you look on the outside and the more holy you seem to be. And I think that Larry is probably a classic narcissist. I'm now telling my story in public, on my podcast. Now it's time. Although I've told it many times in my small groups, it's the first time telling my story in full. And, my ex-husband, nobody believed me when I said that he was abusing me because he was, a church planter and he was respected and, hardworking and good looking.

[00:24:54] And he's funny and personable at church. But once we got home, it was the same [00:25:00] story. My ex didn't hit me, but he did every other kind of abuse. More on the neglect side of abuse. Jason, a lot of people in the church don't think that rape is even possible in a marriage because they claim that when you get married, That's a lifetime of consent.

[00:25:24] **Jason Harris:** So there's a, yeah, there's a view in Christianity that rape is impossible in marriage. And unfortunately even some jurisdictions hold that position that, we don't really recognize rape if it's in marriage. And thankfully that is changing around the world in jurisdictions. And society needs to change with it and the church should be leading this.

[00:25:46] Unfortunately, the church is dragging heals. So what this Bible say about it? Would say a lifetime of consent is literally the opposite of consent. It's not consent. The best comparison to that would be slavery. When you became a slave, [00:26:00] you lost all rights. Okay.

[00:26:02] But if marriage is best compared to slavery, you're not reading your Bible. That's just horrifying. So I would just say, look, a person in a marriage is still a person. Yeah. And if you ever come up with any policy that erases personhood that treats the marriage, they are in as more important than the they, who is in the marriage.

[00:26:31] You're gonna have a destructive dynamic there. And it's evil. It's not God. It's evil. It's demonic. It's satanic. Is from hell. It is not from God. It is not scriptural. Yes, Scripture has clear teaching that sex should not be weaponized in order to win arguments with the husband over long periods of time.

[00:26:53] With no willingness to address the issues. That's obviously going to be a problem. And Scripture saying, look, [00:27:00] address the issues, sort, these things out and become friends again. And that's what Scripture's saying. It is not saying, you therefore can never say no, which is just dangerous. Incredibly dangerous.

[00:27:13] **Diana Winkler:** And sometimes it's physically violent and sometimes it's spiritual manipulation. God told me that this is how it is. This is God's command for husbands and wives, but that is totally false. My ex was the opposite. He used sex as a tool to manipulate me. He would deny me love and intimacy.

[00:27:39] Which is just as bad. He's weaponizing it. So you go through a marriage without any affection at all. And yeah, it really distorts your perception of marriage.

[00:27:51] Joy, when you were on deputation going to Australia. Do you remember staying at my house in Springfield?[00:28:00]

[00:28:00] **Joy Harris:** Vaguely. Sorry.

[00:28:02] **Diana Winkler:** That's okay. It was a long time ago, but you guys stayed in my place and went to Mike Yalestock's church, cuz that's where we were going at the time . And I remember when we were going to church, I thought we were all gonna go together and you said not to wait for you. And I didn't know what that meant, but I.

[00:28:24] Me and my ex went to church. Now, looking back, I would, I'm wondering was there abuse happening there in my house? Very, probably like I say, I have some very vivid memories about certain things, but not everybody else remembers the same things that I do. Did anybody know about the abuse?

[00:28:51] **Joy Harris:** No. The Jack Hyles crowd teaches women that they are to be their husband's cheerleader and[00:29:00]

[00:29:01] not to air dirty laundry and if, and to be loyal even to evil and to cover up. And so it would've been considered very ungodly to ever tell anybody what was going on. It would also have been considered unspiritual because I'm not trusting God to take care of it.

[00:29:19] And nobody would've believed me because of who they perceived Larry to be.

[00:29:27] And if somebody would've believed me or he knew, I was telling he would've done the traditional pattern of eaten away at my credibility by, they often use, she has mental issues. Yeah. Plus if I told anybody the consequences would be so bad, it would not be worth it in the end.

[00:29:47] There's a lot of fear there.

[00:29:49] So the first time I told anybody would've been subtle remarks to pastor Wendell about Larry didn't let me come. Even though I promised I'd be here, that kind of thing. Or no, he's [00:30:00] got angry at the kids, so we're gonna be late or something, but nobody picked up on it really.

[00:30:06] Jason may remember better, but several people went to Pastor Wendal about it and told them, the lady that was living with us.

[00:30:15] Different ones of the kids.

[00:30:17] **Jason Harris:** I was just gonna say, you really have two battling dynamics on one side, you have, you are taught that this is normal. So there's really nothing to tell and of course you have self doubts because systematically your confidence is worn down. So it's always your fault.

[00:30:38] You always cause this. If you were to tell somebody, you're just really telling on yourself, cuz really you are the problem here. So that side and then the other side is, did he hit you? Like I don't see any bruises and it literally comes down to if he didn't get violent, look, you have to just kind of submit because not everyone's perfect, and really he's just being mean and we all make [00:31:00] mistakes. And Scott Wendell's big thing was all right.

[00:31:06] Look, he has an anger problem. We'll recognize that. He can work on that. My dad did not have an anger problem. He did not have an anger problem. He didn't do these things cuz he lost control in anger. He did these things because he believed he had a right to do these things and that women were inferior and children were to be broken.

[00:31:26] That's why he did these things. Not because he lost control in a

[00:31:29] **Joy Harris:** fit of rage. Oh he used to gain

[00:31:31] control.

[00:31:32] **Diana Winkler:** Oh yeah, absolutely. I had very similar experience as you did, it was, I dragged my ex to three different marriage counselors and they all said, the reason why you have marriage problems is because you're not submitting.

[00:31:48] That is so common. It is so stinking common. I'm so sick of hearing it. It's " You're not gonna address any of the other issues in the marriage?" It's all about me submitting. [00:32:00] And I remember getting, when I got married to my ex. I remember calling up pastor and saying, yeah, he's got an anger problem as a red blooded Italian.

[00:32:15] And he says you have to take the good with the bad you married him. You have to deal with it. And my ex tried to commit suicide, once in front of me. And I had nobody to tell. And I called the pastor and I said, What do I do? We were pastoring a youth group in New Jersey and he said I think you guys should step down from the ministry.

[00:32:40] It's I don't think he's going to do that. I had the same fears telling anybody, because I would lose everything. We'd lose our ministry and nobody would believe me just. That's the way the Fundamental Baptists work.

[00:32:56] **Joy Harris:** Yeah, I was told that black spot mentality. Don't focus on the [00:33:00] black spot, but on the big white page or forgiveness. You have to forgive, which means you don't bring it up to him again, or to God, or to yourself or anybody else.

[00:33:09] And if you tell anybody, the other thing they say is, you're gossiping. Yeah. And you're throwing gas on the fire instead of water on the fire, throw water on the fire,

[00:33:20] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. The whole forgiveness thing. Forgiveness requires repentance in the Bible. My abuser never repented of him abusing me.

[00:33:29] And yeah

[00:33:30] all of these things are perversions of God's Word to oppress the vulnerable instead of siding with the weak and saying, God gave me the power I have as a pastor or counselor to help protect somebody who's coming to me or help. I'm gonna use my power to support the system.

[00:33:50] That's oppressing someone else. You become part of the evil instead of part of the solution. And that is the furthest thing from Christianity and it is possible to [00:34:00] be,

[00:34:01] and that's, that is typical. All the people that we've talked to since 60 minutes and before and after every one of 'em has this problem with their pastor, their church.

[00:34:12] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. It's not just the IFB in my groups and my advocacy, every denomination known to man does the same thing. Maybe not as extreme as far as KJV or something, but yeah, there's abuse in every Christian denomination, which I've discovered.

[00:34:36] Now when did the abuse get the worst Joy?

[00:34:39] When was it so bad?

[00:34:42] **Joy Harris:** I don't know of a time when it wasn't bad. After the first child is when I noticed it, because it wasn't just me that was suffering. Not that I didn't notice it before, but that really made me start thinking, what am I doing?

[00:34:54] How wrong this was. And then each time he would beat the child.

[00:34:58] Many times I would break [00:35:00] into the room, even though he said he's going to correct them. And I would try to pull it, stop him. And I would just get flung against the wall or, and then really cop it for the rest of the month. I noticed around 2000 to 2002 things were really stepping up a level.

[00:35:21] I'm not sure by that point we ran the annual Australian sweetheart retreat for pastors and their wives. How ironic is that? Yeah. And he would speak around the country and I think just more power. He got

[00:35:36] the worse, his abuse. And

[00:35:38] then after we came back, pastor Wendell pulled us, made him resign, pulled us back for six years of counseling, intense counseling.

[00:35:47] At first, usually they meet with someone every week and he would be in there 2, 3 times

[00:35:51] a week.

[00:35:51] And he was held accountable. I was given a safety plan where I was allowed to get up and leave the room. If he started in, on his [00:36:00] rants, I was allowed to spend the night one of the pastor's homes for safety.

[00:36:04] If I didn't feel safe, things like that.

[00:36:07] And then when we returned to Australia, I expected that he would still be held accountable and things would go at the level they had were when we left, but they declined very quickly. And I, the abuse got very bad then to the point where he wasn't just trying to hide from

[00:36:23] other people and not even caring.

[00:36:26] So the kids were the house at that time, or

[00:36:29] Scott had moved to back to Australia with us. He was living in one of the bedrooms and then we had another girl living with us. We were helping out of her situation.

[00:36:40] Didn't stop him. But the rest of the kids were gone. Yeah.

[00:36:44] **Diana Winkler:** Pastor stated that an angry man disqualifies a man for ministry. I agree with that. There's a lot of angry men in leadership positions all over churches. I'm just wondering why [00:37:00] he was allowed to continue to be angry. And Jason, did pastor believe that your mom was being raped?

[00:37:07] Did he actually believe, you break the law, you should go to jail? How do you think, pastor handled the situation? Do you think it was appropriate?

[00:37:16] **Jason Harris:** I believe that he thought at each point that he was doing the right thing. I do believe that. And this is just the big picture here.

[00:37:28] Most of the pastors who empower abuse, think they're doing the right thing. And the truth is most of the people who are abusing think they're doing the right thing most of the time. It's not enough, to think you're doing the right thing. You have to be doing the right thing. So no, I don't think he handled it appropriately.

[00:37:45] But I don't think he understood abuse. I don't think he understood the dynamics of it. I don't I don't think anyone was talking about it and he certainly wasn't listening. His, I guess so far as to say obsession was in [00:38:00] protecting and preserving marriages. Yeah. And I get that. I get a pastor saying, in a society where relationships are breaking down systematically, Christians ought to be helping marriages survive. Which when the problems in the marriage are poor communication or not living out the gospel , that's, that's really good.

[00:38:18] That's true. Christianity should lead to stronger relationships and stronger marriages. But when you get to the point where you forget that the people in the marriage are more important than the marriage, marriage has become an idol, yes. And it becomes sinful to, to continue to try to preserve it, at the expense of people.

[00:38:36] And grant you, as mom mentioned earlier, most of the other kids had gone pastor over the years and each time he had taken some minor action usually it was just, a talk, a discussion a warning. Usually the kids were told, Look, you're bitter. And so what they said was mostly discounting.

[00:38:56] And, there, there was obviously bitterness, or as [00:39:00] I put, anger. And you should be angry. It is righteous to be angry when you see abuse, when you see evil. But these kids were kind of, dismissed as well. You're bitter. So you can't be taken too seriously which erased their voice, silenced them, did it in the name of God.

[00:39:15] And it said, he's violent to his wife of kids, but you are being upset about it is the real problem here. That's right. Which, you just, it's such a twisted way of thinking and a child hears that and says, look, this isn't worth having. So when I went to Scott Wendell, this was, in what year was that?

[00:39:36] Would've been 2002 ish, three, 2003. I went to Scott Wendal and I was the last in a long line of kids that went to him with these things. And he finally listened to me, finally pulled them off the mission field. And I am convinced to this day that the only reason he actually did something was because he could not see me as [00:40:00] bitter.

[00:40:01] I was the good kid. I was the kid who, was a model, what he wanted his kids to be. And so he finally couldn't dismiss it as my bitterness, which makes me very upset.

[00:40:16] **Diana Winkler:** What did you say to him to make him listen?

[00:40:19] **Jason Harris:** I raised a number of issues. Which I won't go into full detail, but I raised a number of issues, but it wasn't until I finally literally said to him, if something isn't done, this will end up on the front page of the news at that point. When he understood that it, someone was probably going to be injured or die is when he finally immediately took decisive action. And, I'm incredibly grateful to him for doing that. That was the turning of the tide. It took another 10 odd years before the marriage ended, but that was the point at which things started heading in the right direction.

[00:40:56] Even though the worst abuse was ahead still, it was [00:41:00] decisive. And so I do appreciate that very much. And I think he knows that. But it's just not enough for it to have to get that far.

[00:41:08] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. You shouldn't have had to even had to say that to him. Yeah.

[00:41:12] **Jason Harris:** And if I had been bitter, I don't think you would've listened to me.

[00:41:16] **Diana Winkler:** I really don't think that these pastors, many pastors are not trained whatsoever in abuse.

[00:41:24] You're not trained at all to recognize it. They have blinders over their eyes or they're in their own little bubble that you don't get any training in this to, to recognize this is not a normal, healthy marriage. This is a, like you say the relationship or the situation is going to escalate.

[00:41:46] It always does. That is a fact I got out of my marriage before it got physical, because I knew that. It eventually was going to escalate [00:42:00] to get worse. Now were the church people supportive of you Joy? Or did you think they were more supportive of Larry?

[00:42:10] **Joy Harris:** They didn't know. They didn't know.

[00:42:12] They knew that we came back from the mission field and pastor had him read a letter upfront stating marriage issues and things he needed to work on.

[00:42:22] And so we were going to be back in America for a while for counseling. So they had no idea marriage issues could have meant I'm the trouble. And I was specifically told, do not talk to anybody about this. I will give you one pastor's wife who you can go to,

[00:42:41] but

[00:42:41] I don't wanna hear of any gossip. And so I have to say people, there were very kind,

[00:42:48] And loving to us,

[00:42:50] but it was, they still called him pastor.

[00:42:54] And it was just a few months. I'm not exactly sure how long, but he was up [00:43:00] teaching a adult Sunday school, class of three to 400 people, even though the next day in counseling session, he would be shouting at the counseling pastor, denying what the pastor was trying to show him was happening.

[00:43:15] Yeah. And they thought the solution for me was to keep me busy. So I was put to work teaching K four and teaching music lessons,

[00:43:23] And always busy, like in a music program. And like when Sharon, my youngest was sick

[00:43:29] for, I don't know,

[00:43:31] she missed about four weeks of school. I wasn't there for her at such a crucial time.

[00:43:37] Her losing all her friends, her culture, not having any friends here. It damaged our relationship.

[00:43:44] I will say

[00:43:46] pastor the pastors for once somebody believed me and The things say I was allowed to keep a log of what happened to help Larry understand what was happening, whereas before [00:44:00] that was considered a sinful thing.

[00:44:01] But it was used in the counseling sessions and it was like, they, a fly was on the wall in our home because the counseling pastor would say, and this happened when he did that. And I'm like, yes. So,

[00:44:13] pastor knew a good bit of what he was talking about. But they never put two and two together.

[00:44:18] Like they seemed surprised when 60 minutes presented it as being, he was going to be arrested for rape charges. But when there's such control for 40 years, of course there's gonna be rape, things like this. If they were more clued in and more educated on the dynamics, they would've caught.

[00:44:39] And they wouldn't have had me keep living with him. They would've had to separate for my sake, just a number of things like that, but they did do their best to help. They just

[00:44:49] didn't catch everything.

[00:44:51] **Jason Harris:** And I think the really telling moment, the 60 minutes interview is when Liam Bartlet asked pastor Wende, [00:45:00] are you surprised?

[00:45:02] And of course, he thought about it for a long time and said, no. And of course he couldn't be, you couldn't possibly be knowing what he knew, but the point there is, he just never thought about that. He was thinking about protecting the marriage, keeping someone in ministry, et cetera. He was not thinking issues safe.

[00:45:24] At that level. And

[00:45:25] **Joy Harris:** yeah. And in a, in an email from him, he goes, you never told us you were being raped. I shouldn't have had to.

[00:45:31] **Diana Winkler:** You didn't ask either.

[00:45:33] **Jason Harris:** Didn't ask. And also the teaching is very clear in those churches. Christians generally don't think you can be raped in marriage.

[00:45:43] They'd have whole sermons addressing that topic and never want to say, now, listen, this does not mean that you can't say no, you can't preach on that passage without saying to women, Hey, you still have a choice. You're a person. And you have a right to decide whether or not you will have [00:46:00] sex. That was never said.

[00:46:01] And that's just staggering. That's horrible. Any pastor who's listening, you must say these things. Paul was talking to you in a very particular context, but when you're explaining it and applying it to our day, you must explain to people that submit does not mean you're a slave. That this teaching about sex does not mean you can rape people.

[00:46:22] Like it shouldn't need to be said, but it does. Unfortunately.

[00:46:25] **Diana Winkler:** Whatever happened to, You're supposed to love your wife as Christ love the church? Jesus would never force himself on you. Even Jesus gives us free will to choose whether to follow him or not. He doesn't make us follow. He doesn't make us obey.

[00:46:45] He lovingly, asks us to obey, but he doesn't force himself on us. So how is treating your wife like that? Like a Christian. Women are not [00:47:00] receptacles. We're not body parts. We are people. Yeah.

[00:47:04] **Jason Harris:** It's wrapped up in a mistake in theology of marriage. When scripture teaches two shall become one flesh, it means a number of things.

[00:47:15] But what it does not mean is that people lose their individuality and cease to be people individually, that they lose their rights their, humanity. And yet that is the one point that you usually hear preached from that statement and scripture that you are no longer your own. You should both have the same Facebook account.

[00:47:38] You should cease to act as two separate individuals. You have an obligation to act like a unit. That's the one thing it doesn't mean.

[00:47:48] **Diana Winkler:** I don't see that in scripture at all, that, all those things that you described, it just doesn't sound like Jesus to me. I remember when [00:48:00] I left my ex I just left.

[00:48:03] I moved out, took all my things when he was out of town. And my ex went to every church and every pastor that we had ever been involved with and mud slammed me and he came, with this false humility and, oh, my wife left me, and she won't come back, and she won't go to counseling anymore. And yeah, he wasn't telling the whole story.

[00:48:29] And then he went to pastor Wendell and I thought, oh great. And he, he told me this story. He said Yeah, I visited pastor Wendell and told him I was sorry for anything that I'd done wrong, I heard that pastor Wendell had said, You need to let her go. You cannot make her love you.

[00:48:51] So I was surprised at that. I thought that pastor Wendell was gonna come and try and make me go back with my ex-husband. [00:49:00] The pastor that we were serving under, tried to get us to go to a counseling session after I moved out. But I told the pastor we were serving with, I said, no I'm done. Short of a parting the Red Sea miracle,

[00:49:14] I am not moving back in. I'm not staying married to this man. And of course he was sitting there with his crocodile tears, I'm really sorry. And I won't do it again. And I don't believe you. And I left and I said, I'm going through with this divorce. So it ends today. But yeah, I was really surprised that the pastor actually defended me instead of defending my ex.

[00:49:42] But that's great to hear. Yeah. I never really had any other interactions with him anyway, whatever for whatever it's worth. I'm glad that he he defended me and wouldn't let my ex manipulate me again. So [00:50:00] back to your story, Joy, when did you decide enough is enough? I cannot stay here any longer.

[00:50:10] I need to get out of here. When did that day come for you?

[00:50:13] **Joy Harris:** When did I decide to leave? After we came back to Australia and I saw how he was hurting other people too. And we were running a ministry ironically again for people who had been abused, abused victims, similar to Reformers Unanimous.

[00:50:31] We were trying to do that in Australia. And I saw him hurting these people who were so vulnerable and, hurting. He's hurting them. And we

[00:50:43] had one guy living on a camp with us and, yeah, so I just said that's okay. For me, the straw was going to a funeral at church and him

[00:50:58] ranting and yelling at [00:51:00] me for something that wasn't true. And I didn't say anything, but he kept saying, if you say another word, I'm gonna turn right around and we won't go. And I still didn't say anything the whole trip. I never said a word and he kept saying, if you say anything anyway, so finally he said, all right, that's it.

[00:51:19] And he turned around in the middle of a, there was three lanes going, one direction, a median strip, and three others. He flipped around and started driving in the opposite direction of cars coming at us and swerving and honking. And it's not the first time. So anyway, I, Scott was living, not with us at that point, but somewhere else in a city with his own flat, his own apartment.

[00:51:40] And I said, can I come stay with you?

[00:51:43] And so I just took the things I wanted. And he picked

[00:51:46] me up and that was it.

[00:51:52] **Diana Winkler:** Sounds really scary.

[00:51:55] **Joy Harris:** Jason gave me the the backbone and the [00:52:00] knowledge, the biblical that it's okay with God. If I do this, otherwise I just kept saying, oh God, doesn't let me do that.

[00:52:06] have to stay. And Jason just changed my thinking to understand what God really is

[00:52:12] And what he really says about

[00:52:15] a piece. So I'm grateful.

[00:52:17] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. Thank God for Jason.

[00:52:19] **Joy Harris:** Oh, my word. You have no idea.

[00:52:24] **Diana Winkler:** Now, Jason, so do you think that Larry doesn't think that what he did was wrong?

[00:52:32] **Jason Harris:** He admitted to the rapes. He pled guilty and took a deal for a lower sentence. It turned out because I wrote him in prison quite regularly. And it turned out that I think you've kind of viewed that as his penance. If he did this, everyone would forget about everything and move on as if nothing had happened.

[00:52:54] No, I don't think he thinks he did anything wrong with the rapes. It's kind of, he knows he made [00:53:00] mistakes. He knows he wasn't the perfect dad. He knows he wasn't a perfect husband. And that's about the extent of it. It's ironic that you talk about a miracle of the parting of the Red Sea, the irony, and the silliness of it all.

[00:53:13] Is that the only miracle that would be necessary in these kind of cases, this repentance. Not, I'm not talking about remorse and tears and I won't do it again. Real repentance that says you're right. I did it. And I destroyed the marriage and I violated it and I am going to spend the rest of my life, trying to make it right.

[00:53:29] And I'm gonna take the penalty. I'm gonna go to the police and admit everything I've done, and I'm going to walk away and let you rebuild your life. These are the kind of things that true repentance would do. But that's not something in dad. And in most of these Christian abusers, it's not that it can't happen.

[00:53:45] It just usually doesn't. It usually doesn't. Cause the gospel is not what's running member penance is literally just right at the beginning of Christianity. But if you don't repent, you're not a Christian. And yet it seems impossible for [00:54:00] these people. So you know, and that's where you have to really.

[00:54:03] **Diana Winkler:** Okay, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to have a part two of this interview with Joy and Jason. They have a lot more to say, and even if you are not married or consent and marriage isn't really something that you are concerned with, there are a lot of other topics that we're talking about in this interview that are really important, especially if you're an abuse survivor or, somebody that's going through abuse.

[00:54:39] Jason has a lot of valuable insight as a pastor that has gone through abuse. And as you've already heard Joy and Jason, they have struggled with a lot of trauma, some things that they're still working through. They still [00:55:00] worship the Lord. They still have their faith intact. Not that they don't have questions, not that

[00:55:07] they're perfect, but they are trusting in the true God of Christianity. And you may be uncomfortable listening to some of this content. It's uncomfortable for me. It's very difficult for me to listen to people that I care about, people that I know going through something that painful, but the Lord can use our trauma and suffering to help other people.

[00:55:35] And that's why they agreed to come on the show is because they want to help you listeners, those of you that have these same questions, these same struggles. So I hope that you join us for part two of my interview with Joy and Jason Harris. We will see you next week. God bless you. Have a good day.

[00:55:58] **Brian Winkler:** Thank you for listening to [00:56:00] the Wounds of the Faithful podcast. If this episode has been helpful to you, please hit the subscribe button and tell a friend. You could connect with us at DSW Ministries dot org, where you'll find our blog along with our Facebook, Twitter, and our YouTube channel links. Hope to

[00:56:18] see you next week.