Jason and Joy Harris, Part Two

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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 here is Diana.

[00:00:34] **Diana Winkler:** Hello everyone. Welcome back to the Wounds of the Faithful podcast as always. I'm appreciative for you tuning in each week. Last week, we had the first part of my interview with Joy Harris and her son, Jason Harris, who's a pastor in Australia. And [00:01:00] if you weren't here last week, be sure to go back and listen to part one.

[00:01:04] Otherwise you might be a little lost where we pick up with part two today. So as a review, we talked about Joy's background and how she met Larry, who was her abusive husband and Jason growing up with six siblings as a missionaries kid, and the horrible child abuse that the children suffered, as well as Joy suffering from sexual abuse.

[00:01:37] And we're just gonna call it rape cuz that's what it is, and emotional, psychological abuse, spiritual abuse. And if you've been following along Joy's oldest son, Kevin was one of my classmates in college. And then we talk about Larry, the profile of an abuser. [00:02:00] What does an abuser look like? We're gonna continue talking about abuse and the church.

[00:02:08] Why does this keep happening in the church? Why are pastors not trained to deal with abuse? Why they just telling the victims to submit? Why are they discounting the children, bringing forth abuse allegations and being ignored or pushed aside? And we're gonna talk about today the ways that Joy and Jason have healed.

[00:02:35] I mean, we're not going to be healed a hundred percent, this side of eternity. There are some tools, some techniques, some methods, everybody is different, but we're going to hear, how have they coped? Do they still need healing? And they're gonna talk about, if you are relating to some of what they're saying in this interview, what they advise you on how to get help.[00:03:00]

[00:03:00] So I hope that, you continue to listen to their powerful story today, as we wrap up our conversation. And again, this is an episode where we talk about rape, not in graphic detail, but the concept of rape and assault. Without further ado, here's part two of my conversation with Joy Harris and Pastor Jason Harris.

[00:03:28] So he did go to prison for five years? How did that go down?

[00:03:34] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. He was sentenced to two, five year prisons to be served concurrently meaning together. And, but only 20 years time served, sorry, 20 months time served. So he was in prison for one year and eight months. And he's now out.

[00:03:50] I forget what it's called, but basically a like a suspended sentence. If he behaves, he can stay free.

[00:03:59] **Diana Winkler:** You gotta be [00:04:00] kidding. You got out on what? Good behavior?

[00:04:02] **Jason Harris:** No, this was just, it was five years. Whatever they call it, basically they're gonna keep an eye on him for five years, but the actual time sentence was only 20 months.

[00:04:12] So he served the full amount. Yeah. So it's, a token of justice. It's. Justice. But of course the court viewed him as being remorseful, which they don't base on him, his emotion, but on his act of pleading guilty. Even though that act, was done to get less time because he knew he was going to lose, they still view it as remorse.

[00:04:38] So, it, the system is not perfect, but we are among the very lucky ones who got some degree of justice. So few domestic violence situations have prosecuted. We are very lucky.

[00:04:50] **Diana Winkler:** Exactly. Wow. Yeah. The justice system is not always what we want. That's for sure. Especially here in the States.

[00:04:58] Now we'll shift [00:05:00] gears here. Let's talk about Kevin now. My listeners have heard me talk briefly about Kevin, because we went to the same school. I considered him a friend and he was always kind to me. He was very careful about what he would say to me when I would ask him for advice in school. And yeah, I'll tell you one story about having words with Larry.

[00:05:31] A bunch of us singles went to VFBT for a missions conference. We all carpooled together and that's when I found out Kevin's a terrible driver, by the way. But on the way back, there was some miscommunication on the meetup time or place to drive back to school. And Larry was on the phone

[00:05:54] with me, yelling and screaming at me and calling me a liar [00:06:00] because something went wrong with the wires crossed. And he was just yelling and screaming at me and throwing the whole book at me like passive- do you wanna talk about passive aggressive? Everything that I ever did wrong that he never told me about,

[00:06:16] it was like, he just decided to just let me have it, this, and this and this. And I was just bawling my eyes out. I was crying my eyes out. I didn't know, what did I do? I didn't do anything. And so we all got into the car, the kids and Kevin driving, and I'm like crying all the way back to school.

[00:06:37] And then Kevin drops everybody off at their house. And then we're at at the Guy's driveway and he dropped Debbie off. And then it was just me and Kevin in the car, in the dark, by the way. Yeah. Write that down on your calendar. We were in the car by ourself in the dark. I said, well, can I talk to [00:07:00] you?

[00:07:00] And he says, Yeah, sure. I wanna talk about what happened with your dad. And so we talked about it and I said, I didn't, before God, I didn't do anything wrong. This is what Mrs. Hooper told me this was where our our meetup place is. And oh, we started talking about other stuff like, you should never complain and never say anything negative.

[00:07:26] It always has to be, Praise the Lord! God is good! Praise the Lord. He's always like that with me. And he said to me, even if your grandmother died, if somebody comes up to you and asks how you're doing, you'll have to say, I'm doing fantastic! Well, that's stuffing your feelings and wearing a mask.

[00:07:45] And and I asked him, I said, why can't I say, I'm feeling a bit down today because my grandmother died. And he told me, because Jesus died for you on the cross and you're not going to hell. So you're still doing fantastic. [00:08:00] And I was always jealous of people who were raised in Christian homes.

[00:08:05] And I told Kevin that, it's easier to be positive because you were raised in a Christian home. And he said, Well, it was very difficult living with six siblings. I mean, I am now glad that I wasn't raised IFB. I had a normal childhood. I wore pants, I wore shorts. I wore swimsuits. I listened to all kinds of music,

[00:08:29] went to public school, went to the prom. I still had to choose to live for Christ on my own. Kevin has definitely changed. We were all in the same classes and I thought he was super Christian. I really thought he was like the epitome of what a Christian should look like. And I looked up to him, I'm sorry to say.

[00:08:51] When I saw him on 60 minutes, I didn't recognize him. His eyes were different and that grin on his [00:09:00] face. It nauseated me. I'm sorry, but he just, he looked like a different person. So Jason, yeah. I can't even find the words.

[00:09:08] He wants your mom to repent?

[00:09:11] Repent from what?

[00:09:13] **Joy Harris:** Not being by my man's side.

[00:09:16] **Jason Harris:** Yeah, look, I'm sorry to hear about this situation you just described with my dad. That's just crazy. Very typical. Very typical. People who were on the fringes of, who were kind of in the life, but didn't have the inside story. But every now and again, it would come out, and they would be kind of disturbed and blown away, like what happened?

[00:09:33] And what you described with Kevin that, that toxic positivity perfectly describes his approach. And he learned it from pastor's thought that you forgive and then you forget or choose not to remember. And negative emotions are viewed as bad or bad things. In fact, any emotion is a little bit suspect.

[00:09:56] The only emotion you're really supposed to have is joy. And when they say joy, they don't [00:10:00] mean joy because God is always good in every situation, but joy, because you're just supposed to be happy. Because of, you're not going to hell or whatever. But it's really the positive emotion of joy.

[00:10:13] That's the point, not the God who gives us that joy. So, the notion of joy while you're sad seems odd, but it's not odd. It's that in fact that's a Pauline emotion, always rejoicing. And and how does it say "always"? I can't remember the text, but you know, Paul was saying I've got chronic pain because we live in a sin cursed world and

[00:10:33] chronic joy because God is who he is. So the emotions, it's all, I think all of us had to recover from the way emotions were thought about.

[00:10:45] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah, just being fake. You can't be yourself. You can't be real. You have to wear this mask. That's right.

[00:10:52] **Jason Harris:** And the problem is the biblical term for that is darkness.

[00:10:57] That which hides the truth. That which hides [00:11:00] reality is darkness in scripture. And it's addressed at length. And it's what wicked men love. It's not what good men love. It's what wicked men love. Good people love the light. They come to the light because they're born of light. They have darkness, but they hate it.

[00:11:15] And they hide from it. They run from it and they seek to expose it to the light of the truth. So, yeah, it's a fundamentally un-Christian way to live life, but somehow it's managed to be viewed as Christian in much of church culture. And it's very destructive. Yes. Kevin overtly, explicitly blamed mom for her rape.

[00:11:38] That is pathetic. Just as simple as that words don't describe it.

[00:11:44] **Joy Harris:** If Dad deserves prison, so do I, he said.,

[00:11:49] **Diana Winkler:** What?!

[00:11:49] **Jason Harris:** I mean, yes, she withheld what was rightfully his, so. And you can literally go read the exact words he said on the files.

[00:11:58] **Diana Winkler:** Oh yeah. I have read the [00:12:00] files. Yeah.

[00:12:00] **Jason Harris:** It's just, I think most people who've read that, kind of think must be taken out of context.

[00:12:06] It just has to be, but, if you look there you'll see, you can actually read some of it in context. There's nothing outta context. And we've asked Kevin even recently, we've asked him please tell us anything that we got inaccurate. It is perversion. Perversion is twisting. Christians twist God's Word so that the victim is the bad guy.

[00:12:24] And the perpetrator is the good guy and it's intolerable. It's not Christian. It's not Christian. Christians have got to stop being perverted and perverting morality. It's a very cult-like environment. I think the word cult, we have to be very careful with it. But it is very dangerous.

[00:12:41] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. Everybody recognizes Jehovah's Witnesses as a cult, but what I know about spiritual abuse now, and being in a healthy church now, and the churches that I was a part of, I would agree that there are definitely churches out there that are cult-like. They just [00:13:00] seek to control and have power over you.

[00:13:02] You have no choices at all. And there's one guy in charge and that's it. Yep.

[00:13:11] **Jason Harris:** There is an obsession in much of evangelical Christianity with power. And particularly in the Independent Baptist Movement, but power, you see it, celebrity churches, you see it in single pastor churches where one guy has all the power and holds it very firmly.

[00:13:28] I've had this week, pastors quoting at me as of late. Bible says, Obey your pastors. And the only verse in the Bible about the church and pastors and authority, power is a trust. James tell us tells us be not many masters. Be scared of power. Because if you have the power, with that power comes the responsibility to protect everyone under your authority is your job.

[00:13:54] And it's not good enough to just come in later. You have to foresee it and do everything in your [00:14:00] power to avoid it. You're a shepherd. And if someone gets hurt on your watch, God's gonna be asking you questions. What did you do? How did you take steps to make sure it wouldn't happen in the first place?

[00:14:10] And then what did you do to protect the matter? Your power is from God for the protection of the vulnerable. Pastors just don't think this way. And they have to. God takes his power very seriously. When he sees, he talks in the Old Testament about the prophets. He said, I gave you all this power.

[00:14:28] I made you shepherds and you went out and you're eating the sheep. You're beating the sheep. You're letting the sheep wander. He says, you're wicked shepherds. He is not impressed with people who take his authority and his word and use it to harm his sheep. That's right. And he's not going to put up with it.

[00:14:47] It's it's a scary place to be. Sorry. That's my power rant.

[00:14:51] **Diana Winkler:** It's oh, I love it. I love it. It's great. oh, I was even floored to hear that Kevin was defending [00:15:00] Jack Schaap and these pedophiles. I mean, would Kevin feel that way if one of his precious, one of his daughters was groomed by somebody in his church and violated his daughters?

[00:15:18] I have a hard time believing that he would sit still for that and say, oh it's my daughter's fault too, because she consented to it. Are you kidding me? Children in IFB, churches are not taught sex education. I'm finding that out really quickly. They're not taught what is good touch or bad touch.

[00:15:40] They're not taught basic anatomy for the body parts. They don't know if they're being groomed as a child. For somebody to say this, child was consenting to it too, is evil. Yes. The adult is the one who initiated the sexual activity after they gain the child's trust.[00:16:00]

[00:16:00] **Jason Harris:** Children aren't just not told that you're allowed to say no.

[00:16:04] They're actually told the opposite. You shouldn't be mean, you shouldn't say no, you shouldn't, you have no rights. These are all things that Christians routinely teach children. So pretty much preparing them, creating the ideal environment for victims of sexual assault. It's yes. And I wish I had the confidence you have, but this is why we went public.

[00:16:25] I've seen too many pastors, Independent Baptist pastors, throw their own kids on the bus, refuse to defend their kids, blame their kids. Kids have to stand up in front of the church and apologize for being sexually involved with the deacon. Horrors, just horrors. And unfortunately at least these they actually stay consistent even when it happens to their own kids.

[00:16:47] And I would like to think that wouldn't happen with Kevin, but there's one thing that I know about him is he's one of the most consistent people, oh yeah, you've ever met. If he believes it, he sticks to it. No matter what, and [00:17:00] that's dangerous. That's scary.

[00:17:02] **Diana Winkler:** The reason why we have grace is because we can't fulfill the law.

[00:17:06] We can't keep all the commandments. It's impossible. So it sounds like he's living by the law and there's no room for any grace or compassion or empathy, whatsoever. Yeah.

[00:17:20] **Jason Harris:** Well, the thing is, he has empathy and compassion that he's not gonna let us stop him from doing right. And this is impossible to even believe.

[00:17:29] But right now in Christianity, particularly conservative evangelicalism, there is actually a debate right now about whether empathy is sin. Like this is a real debate about sinful empathy. That if you're putting yourself in someone's shoes and feeling what they feel, well, if they're wrong, now you are sinning. This is something that Christian pastors are with a straight face discussing right now.

[00:17:52] And it's how far we've come. It's scary. That's ridiculous. Its it's perverted. It's perverted

[00:17:59] **Diana Winkler:** [00:18:00] That doesn't make a lick of sense.

[00:18:03] **Jason Harris:** It's hard to believe it. Really. You just kind double take. This is a real discussion among Christians. It's tearing churches apart.

[00:18:12] **Diana Winkler:** So what happened with the anti antisemitism remarks that he made?

[00:18:17] I mean, what did he actually say? Got in some trouble there.

[00:18:19] **Jason Harris:** He said something along the lines that he was, I think he was interviewing a rabbi and they were talking about, rejecting the Messiah and Jesus being the Messiah. And Kevin made the comment, something along the lines that, if Jewish people reject Jesus as Messiah, that they will experience something far worse than the Holocaust.

[00:18:37] I know what he's saying, but it I don't think it was wise.

[00:18:41] **Diana Winkler:** It's not tactful to say that to a rabbi.

[00:18:44] **Jason Harris:** It's yeah, it's extremely inflammatory in the worst possible way. These people, this is a traumatic thing for Jewish people. For many Jewish people, there's genuine, deep generational trauma there and rightly so.

[00:18:58] And yeah, so [00:19:00] obvious it didn't go, well, the press picked it up.

[00:19:02] **Diana Winkler:** It doesn't build bridges or create relationships with people. You know what I mean? It puts them on the defensive, I don't wanna talk to this man. There's no chance that they're ever gonna ever wanna talk to another Christian. So did the preacher's fellowship in Australia dump him?

[00:19:18] **Jason Harris:** I think that's conflating two stories. The Baptist Union in Australia and New South Wales actually publicly stated that they're not associated with him, but they never were associated with him.

[00:19:27] They were just trying to make it very clear that they're different from the guy who's saying that stuff publicly. Cause obviously they wanted to reflect on themselves. Yeah, so. Now the Baptist Union is a mainstream denomination Australia. The Independent Baptists are very much separate from them and have their own institutions.

[00:19:50] And that is what Kevin is a part of. But Kevin broke with all of his mentors. All of this happened [00:20:00] long before 60 minutes, the breaking of all the relationships from sending pastors and mentors and things like that.

[00:20:07] **Diana Winkler:** So was there, did something happen that made him do that or? Very odd.

[00:20:12] **Jason Harris:** Yeah, it was a pattern of him becoming, I think more hard-nosed and just more situations where he was acting unwisely, they tried to encourage him to go another direction and he didn't. So, so it's not really big things. It's just, when you have really dogmatic views about everything.

[00:20:32] Yeah. Relationships break down,

[00:20:33] **Diana Winkler:** You can't isolate yourself.

[00:20:36] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. And that's, I think, a lack of accountability, lack of transparency, lack of humility. Look, it can happen. My, relationship with Wendal is also not great. But I think it, it is really important to keep accountability. And had Kevin had somebody in his life,

[00:20:50] you could tell him, look, you're wrong. You need to back down on this. It would've been the best thing for him, but those people aren't there. Unfortunately. [00:21:00]

[00:21:00] **Diana Winkler:** So he's his own island. It sounds like.

[00:21:03] **Joy Harris:** Dad did try to talk to him over a period of time.

[00:21:06] Were told that he had the mind of Christ and there's also no agreeing to disagree on anything.

[00:21:13] **Diana Winkler:** Wow. That's really unfortunate. So the whole 60 minutes thing did you guys contact 60 minutes or did they contact you?

[00:21:23] **Jason Harris:** When it became clear to us that Kevin was blaming mom, this was after dad's conviction. Kevin was blaming mom. As we discussed it with him, he brought up Jack Schaap.

[00:21:34] He made a point of bringing up a convicted pedophile and saying, this guy is a victim. Just as much as Larry is. And and we pushed him on. We raised questions like, well, will you call the police? If someone in your church is raped, will you, do you handle it in house?

[00:21:50] These kinds of questions. And his answers came back all dangerously wrong, like dangerous. We investigate first. If the person repents, [00:22:00] then we don't go to police. We handle it in house. We only go to police if they won't repent. And after we've church disciplined them, but just dangerous thinking.

[00:22:08] And of course we have their grandkids in the church. Yeah. And look, I used to be there. I know these people, I love these people and it just got dangerous. Just thought that's, God's dangerous. He's really, this is dangerous. You can't be like this. People are sending their kids to your church.

[00:22:23] And expecting that Christians are gonna be a safe place to send their kids. You should be able to send your kids to Sunday school. But the fact is if one of the children has something happened, it will not be rewarded with the police. He's telling us that. And so we felt we didn't have a choice about talking anymore.

[00:22:40] We had to do something. And so that's when we contacted 60 minutes. And

[00:22:45] **Diana Winkler:** I always wonder about those tell-all shows. I mean, they always talk about that they edit the show to make certain people sound different. Did you feel like, like they were fair? Did you feel [00:23:00] respected and treated well by them?

[00:23:02] What was your experience?

[00:23:04] **Joy Harris:** They came to us beforehand. Things through, go ahead, Jay.

[00:23:08] **Jason Harris:** Yeah, they were very respectful to us telling our story. We intentionally went to 60 minutes because they're. More we felt they were quite a reputable program. But no, I don't look, I don't think they got every detail of the story

[00:23:24] exactly right. And I don't agree with every bias they had in going into it, but, I don't expect to, and I don't need to. I think they did a great job of doing their job as journalists to try to find the truth. They went to great efforts. They gave people a fair hearing and and those who were willing to clarify their position came out quite good.

[00:23:41] I think Scott Wendel was willing to say, it's wrong. Rape is always wrong. Crime will be reported. Like, and he come out looking pretty good. He looked like, I think he came out, it was clear that he had made some mistakes, but he came out a good man. Kevin had the option of at [00:24:00] any point, doing anything to just clarify, Hey, I think rape's always wrong.

[00:24:03] No, I don't hold my mom responsible for being raped and to this day. Never has he. He hasn't because he definitely 100% thinks that it's okay. So, no, look, we had no problem with 60 minutes, we thought they did a great job. I think we both felt very responding.

[00:24:16] **Diana Winkler:** And when they the reporter kind of pushed Kevin a little bit, he walked out of the interview, he felt uncomfortable. It was obvious he was uncomfortable.

[00:24:27] **Jason Harris:** Yes. If you feel that you are being ambushed as a Christian, I think it's a great time to take verse, always ready to give a reason. In those situations, God will tell you what to say. Those passages apply to this sort of a situation.

[00:24:41] And I think if somebody's asking you is rape bad as a Christian, you just need to be ready to say yes, just that simple. Yes. Rape is bad. Always. It's always bad. And the reason Kevin was in trouble in that interview is because he could not and [00:25:00] would not say rape is evil. Men don't do it. God hates it.

[00:25:04] Don't do it. It's evil .Women, if you're raped we'll help you. We'll call the police will support police to help. He doesn't believe that. And that's why he had trouble. He had trouble because they asked him exactly the right question and his answer is evil. Yeah. And that is the issue here. So he was ambushed, well, that's not the point at all.

[00:25:27] He knew there was gonna be an interview and he knew that these were major issues and he just doesn't believe something that's morally good.

[00:25:36] **Diana Winkler:** Right. So let's come back to Larry. I'm just surprised that, okay. He gets remarried to, her name is Jill. Is that right? Gets remarried. That really concerns me that as a woman.

[00:25:54] I mean, I know that my ex-husband is abusing his now wife. [00:26:00] I haven't talked to him in years, but I can nearly guarantee that he's doing the same thing to her that he did to me. Do you have those concerns for Jill?? I mean, do you think that he's abusing her too?

[00:26:13] **Jason Harris:** She met him ironically, when they were both doing prison ministry together and she was there at his sentencing hearing.

[00:26:20] So she heard the charges read out. She heard the victim's statements. She knew what she was getting into. That doesn't mean that I don't feel compassion for her. The truth is I just don't know. I don't know. I don't know what's happening in that marriage and, I can't afford to put too much emotional energy into it.

[00:26:42] Yeah. Had she not known what he was? I certainly would have made sure to tell her.

[00:26:49] **Diana Winkler:** He picking up that phone.

[00:26:51] **Jason Harris:** Yes. And I did do that previous people in his life. Sometimes pastors and sometimes other [00:27:00] people just let them know the person you're dealing with, has a history, but yeah. Unfortunately we just have to sort of let her make her decisions and I hope she doesn't get hurt.

[00:27:13] **Diana Winkler:** So Joy, what, what do the rest of the kids feel about what has happened?

[00:27:20] **Joy Harris:** They all have suffered from it their own experience. They all, at first it was a bit of a shock that mom was leaving dad. But at this point everybody's very supportive.

[00:27:32] For Kevin Sharon tried to be friends, both so she's, that's why she was at the wedding.

[00:27:37] She used to visit and all, and that's her choice. And I, for all of them,

[00:27:42] I don't put, I try not to put them in the middle, what's he doing now? What have you heard? Yeah. What did he say?

[00:27:49] I don't care for one thing, but

[00:27:50] It's not fair to them, but I felt very supported especially by my sons and the daughters of course.

[00:27:56] But I mean, Jason took me into his home.

[00:27:58] Yeah. And [00:28:00] Scott took me

[00:28:00] into his home when I first left and just always there, no matter what I need, helping me financially, Jason spent hours setting up a budget for me and helping me with financial advice

[00:28:11] and just, there's no words to express how grateful I am.

[00:28:18] Absolutely. And even just helping me rethink. God is not gonna turn his back on me because I do something wrong. He's gonna look at me and he's gonna see Christ, just whole rethinking of my biology.

[00:28:29] **Diana Winkler:** And it is definitely a mind game. When I left, I had the same mental blocks and have to rethink things.

[00:28:42] I actually thought when I left that, that God was going to punish me. Until one of my friends who was the catalyst for me leaving, she said, Diana, I'm tired of you calling me up and telling me this man's abusing you. You need to get outta there. And I'm like, I can't [00:29:00] .Church won't let me and it's against God's law and all this.

[00:29:03] And she's like, God's not gonna stop loving you because you left your abusive husband. And that it was just like a light bulb went off. You're right. God, isn't gonna stop loving me. He loves me for who I am. And I thought it was gonna feel condemnation when I got out, but I didn't, it was the opposite.

[00:29:25] I felt very loved and mercy and compassion. And I don't have a verse for that, but that's how I felt. I didn't feel fire and brimstone. Oh, well, I'm here to care for you. I'm here to love you. So you're divorced and you're starting a new life. I'll have to say this. When I saw that video, the first thing I noticed was Joy in pants.

[00:29:50] I've never seen you in a pair of pants!

[00:29:54] **Joy Harris:** That's because I never wore them.

[00:29:59] **Diana Winkler:** You and me [00:30:00] both. I never wore pants until I, I got out of the IFB and it's really not that big of a deal, it's like, it's just pants. What kind of methods, what kind of tools did you use to heal from trauma? I know that we're not gonna a hundred percent heal from this, on this side of eternity, but I mean, are there some things that helped you in your healing journey?

[00:30:26] **Joy Harris:** It's a very good question. And it's important. First of all I didn't realize I was in abuse. I just thought I was with the Christian husband who,

[00:30:33] so I got on the internet and I got books and I educated myself. And I remember the first time that the cycle of abuse wheel came up.

[00:30:42] , that is a universal pattern. I sobbed and I sobbed, Aw, number one, I did not feel alone anymore. This I'm not the only one. And this, this is something that people recognize, I named it.

[00:30:55] This thing of me not being allowed to send out an email without him approving [00:31:00] it.

[00:31:00] Jason will tell you when I first moved in with him, every other word was, I'm sorry, like, and he would say, stop apologizing for existing!

[00:31:09] And then the second thing I did under Jason's direction, largely was get to know who God really is, and there's verses like Isaiah, you are precious to me. And I honor you, God says he honors me, and I love you. And when you're afraid, just hold my right hand, and walk with you.

[00:31:27] And I learned to establish boundaries. Didn't even understand that. And I'm

[00:31:33] still really working in that. Yeah.

[00:31:36] And to not always be trying to control things and manage my environment so that I can be safe, like, and not cover, like I was always covering for Larry.

[00:31:45] We were always late and I would have the kids with their clothes, all dressed breakfast in the car, waiting Larry's clothes would be laid down on the bed.

[00:31:54] I would be standing by for anything he might say he needed, and we'd still be 20 minutes late, [00:32:00] just, I didn't have to control things. So, and then say what I mean. Not say what I'm really thinking, not be afraid of what other people are gonna say or change what I say, because they might not like me, kind of thing.

[00:32:13]

[00:32:13] And another big help was to find a trauma trained therapist. I have complex PTSD, because it went over a long period of time and it affects the paths in your brain that need to be changed. They've right now been working really hard in the past to just protect me and keep me from killing myself, and to realize that if I need something, say it just express it. It's not it's okay. It might even get met, like, and people are glad to help me, instead of, they're not going to tell me I don't matter, or my perceptions are wrong or. And then another thing is to get healthy friends who aren't toxic and who are normal.

[00:32:56] **Diana Winkler:** Oh yeah.

[00:32:57] **Joy Harris:** And we'll listen to you, cuz you have [00:33:00] DV victims, need someone to just talk and talk and talk. Poor Jason is with me. And like Diane Langer, I don't know if you are familiar with her. She's a Christian psychologist in Philadelphia. She's written books and I follow her on Twitter. And she just, she states how important it is just to be there and let them talk.

[00:33:25] And then just to find something in life that you enjoy,

[00:33:27] That you always wanted to do and couldn't,

[00:33:30] Or weren't allowed

[00:33:31] **Diana Winkler:** and yeah, weren't allowed underline that

[00:33:36] **Joy Harris:** and learn who you are, which I'm working on that. I was so demeaned and

[00:33:40] overshadowed and it's like, I don't even know who I am or didn't, it's been since 2011 that I left, but and I'm not sure I like what I'm learning, but,

[00:33:51] Just to find something in the world that I can be to contribute. Like, there's DV court in Cairns on Thursday [00:34:00] mornings and these women have to come and sit across from their perpetrator for hours while they're waiting for their case to come up.

[00:34:08] So there's a safe room, where these women can be pulled out and put in. No men allowed in there and we listen to them. We hand them tissues, we give 'em coffee, tea. And just something like that,

[00:34:20] that I'm familiar with where I can be an encouragement or work through church, something ministry at church or just something where my life can count for God, for eternity.

[00:34:32] And and then to be there, my kids, just be their friends and get to know my grandkids that I was being withheld from for so many years. Be with my daughters when they have their baby and help so that mom and dad can go out on a date and I can stay and watch. Just so many things in life that are positive.

[00:34:53] And for a while, I wanted to learn all I could about DV. I would follow every abuse advocate, [00:35:00] every website, I'd read stories. I got book after book, and other people's stories. After about five years, it was getting me down too much.

[00:35:07] **Diana Winkler:** You have to not binge those sort of things.

[00:35:09] It's not good for your mental health. Yeah. You have to give yourself a break.

[00:35:15] **Joy Harris:** It's good at first to recognize what you went through, but then You can't focus

[00:35:18] on it all the time.

[00:35:19] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. Yeah. I learned that the hard way. Yeah, I was the same way I had to find my own identity, cuz it was the same thing with me.

[00:35:28] My identity was my husband and that was it. And when I got out was like, oh I can choose my own furniture? Oh, I can wear what I want? Oh, you mean I can go to France visit my sister? Wow. Oh, I can get LASIK surgery for my eyes? I, wore bottle caps most of my life. It's just mind boggling.

[00:35:50] So how about you, Jason? What what have you used to heal in your life? Obviously got your church. How is your church? How is it different than, [00:36:00] what we're used to?

[00:36:00] **Jason Harris:** Well, I'll start with the healing and the answer for healing is a lot of therapy. I think, people need to get the help they need.

[00:36:08] And so, for me there's mental health difficulties as a result of things. And yeah, I get a therapy really good. It's really good. For me, really helpful. Helps me work through things helps me grow, helps me make sense of, whatever's going on. And I would say, to anyone with mental illness or with domestic violence history, but go get some therapy.

[00:36:29] It's really great to talk to someone and just learn about yourself. And it's a process. It's a very long process, but it's healthy. It's really wholesome. Our church. Yeah. So. Crosspoint's doing really well. We started six years ago now. We were caught up with the independent Baptists until a very long time later than we should have been. And just, not involved with them anymore and really glad about that.

[00:36:57] We're at another church in Cairns that was just a [00:37:00] really lovely place and a place that got used to turn a lot of healing for us, but there were a group of people there who the church had different convictions than us send some key denominational, distinctives. It just wasn't ideal for us.

[00:37:15] It was good. It just wasn't ideal. And so, we left to start another church on the other side of town. We went with that church's support, it was really great to have them behind us, encouraging us. And basically we've built a church. That is what we are in conviction, and it's just a really healthy place for us to be. I like going to church again.

[00:37:38] It's not a battlefield, it's not minefield. Yeah. We get together and we worship God. We do it in prayer. We do it reading the Bible. We do it singing together and we do it in hearing the word of God carefully explained. So it's really simple. Try to keep things as simple as possible. [00:38:00] As far as differences,

[00:38:03] I think one of the key differences, I mean, we're deliberate, we're very deliberate. Everything we do we ask, why do we do that? Why do we call it that? Why do we, why do we have an offering? Why do we, yeah, why do we sing? Why do we preach? Why do why? And just take it back as close as we can to the core thing that's supposed to be going on.

[00:38:24] So that's, something that I love and I'm very passionate about, but as far as domestic violence, that's kind of been, we're not a domestic violence church. I don't think most of the people that go there don't even know it's a big deal to many of us.

[00:38:37] We are a safe church, I think. And that is our passion and our goal. That doesn't mean we won't ever have bad things happen. We probably will and I'm braced for it, but it does mean that I spend a lot of time thinking about what could happen and doing everything I possibly can to make sure it's not going to happen.

[00:38:57] It means when I preach a text or [00:39:00] anyone else preach a text in our assembly that we pay attention to the context that we live in. And the fact that, abuse in the church is endemic. That trauma is a real thing, that it's medical, that it's not just,

[00:39:13] A bad attitude or something. We'll kind of ban the word bitterness. We don't think bitterness is sin. We think bitterness is what happens when evil things happen and nothing's done about it?

[00:39:23] **Diana Winkler:** Well they also say, depression, sin, and anxiety's a sin.

[00:39:27] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. Which, yeah.

[00:39:28] Is just look, obviously, there is such a thing it's not trusting God, not letting the sovereignty of God, work its way into our thinking, our living. Yeah. Look there real medical issues here. And the church ought to be a safe place where you get encouraged. And yeah, look I tell people outright, I've told people in the last couple of weeks, Hey, have you checked with a doctor, go see a doctor about that, get some help.

[00:39:53] I'm also happy to make you talk about it if there's a spiritual side, but go to a doctor. So, yeah, look, I think just being in a [00:40:00] place that isn't being abusive, is something that we can do. And honestly, I would say to anyone, who's listening to this. If you want to be a safe church, it is incredibly simple.

[00:40:11] Be good. When I say good, I mean, ethical goodness, like don't be bad, be good. It's almost exactly that simple. So you're running along and you see a news story and a church had somebody get sexually abused, you think? That could happen in our church. What could we do to prevent that?

[00:40:28] That's what a good person would do. So write a child protection policy. Go around your church building and look for where would this happen? Talk to somebody who was abused or who works with abuse, get someone in and have them go through your church. And audit it okay? So if there's a pedophile in our church, where are they going to abuse children? In the building.

[00:40:52] Cause I know of so many independent Baptist churches where in the church building children have been abused, sexually abused. Put a mirror up, turn on a [00:41:00] light, put up a recording device. You do that? And doesn't mean it can happen, but it's 90% less likely to happen. So just be good.

[00:41:09] Just recognize that. That pedophiles show up in churches that abusers show up in churches more often than elsewhere. Cause churches are an ideal hunting location. You get naive trusting people who are thinking in terms of this is safe. This is family and family is where abuse happens. Most abuse happens in the family.

[00:41:33] So, when a woman comes to you and says she doesn't feel safe, it's really simple. Your first concern has to be for her safety. , it's just that simple as a pastor. You're concerned about her marriage. Okay. You're concerned about relation about the reputation of the church. Okay. If you're first concern isn't, Is she okay?

[00:41:53] You're not being good. It's just that simple. So be good.

[00:41:59] **Diana Winkler:** [00:42:00] Believe that person.

[00:42:01] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. You put the person over the institution, whether that institution is marriage or that institution is the church, you put the person over the institution. And if people hear horrible things about your church who cares !Close down your church, start another one, whatever.

[00:42:17] Doesn't matter. What matters is people. And if people aren't safe, your church shouldn't be there.

[00:42:21] **Diana Winkler:** Exactly.

[00:42:23] **Jason Harris:** When you consistently just be good, most of your problems will solve themselves. If there's a crime committed called the police, be good.

[00:42:31] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. Get educated on abuse. Yeah.

[00:42:34] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. And don't be defensive, when somebody accuses the church of being filled with abuse. Don't get defensive. Ask them what one book should I read to understand this issue better? And then read the book. Do it. Read that book and read two others. And they could be totally wrong on some things, but learn, educate yourself so that you're at least knowledgeable about your views.[00:43:00]

[00:43:00] And that goodness in itself would solve huge problems. Yeah. And of course, evil people hate goodness. They hate it. Abusive people hate goodness. They hate it with a fiery passion. And if you're just good and you just don't have any time for perversion of truth, those people will hate you. Right now, those people come and settle down because it's safe for them in our churches.

[00:43:28] Many of our churches it's safe for abusers. We will coddle their perversion and their evil, and we have to start preaching against their perversion and their evil.

[00:43:39] **Diana Winkler:** Yeah. My listeners know lots of different books and sources for education. Jimmy Hinton, the foremost authority on pedophiles in the church and how to spot them. Incredible.

[00:43:52] He was on the podcast and it took a long time for me to find a good church. I had my pastor on, and and he lists [00:44:00] all those things, how to find a good church. And he's very transparent about himself and his sin. And he does not tolerate abuse. He does not tolerate evil people in his church. And everybody knows that I'm involved with Mending the Soul, an incredible organization that helps people to heal from abuse and it's biblically and psychologically sound.

[00:44:27] I definitely recommend it for you guys to find a group. Mending the Soul is all over the world. So, but I wanted to ask you, Jason has all of this that you've gone through, has it changed your view on marriage? Has it made you hesitate in getting married or what are your thoughts on that?

[00:44:46] **Jason Harris:** No, look, obviously I received a very twisted view of marriage.

[00:44:52] But I did not accept twisted view of marriage and that started very young and continued right [00:45:00] through to now. I just I always ask what is true here? What's really going on? And my conclusion is, this is not marriage. Abuse is in itself a violation of the vow. He doesn't have to commit adultery to break the marriage.

[00:45:16] Marriage is a commitment to love. And abuse is literally a commitment to destroy. Yeah. And in no possible world, is that anything close to what marriage is? Abuse is a violation of the marriage vow and is in itself a destruction of the marriage. So yeah, I don't have very clear views of what marriage are. Strong views about domestic violence. But no I think I like marriage.

[00:45:44] It's a great thing. I also like singleness and I encourage people to be single if you can, as Paul says, it's a good thing. And I think the church, as Paul argues, you can do a whole lot of things as a single that you can't do as a married person. Vice versa is also [00:46:00] true. And so the bottom line, even according to scriptures, is just be content where you're at.

[00:46:05] Devote your life to serving God. So I'm quite content where I'm at right now, but yeah, I think marriage is a great thing. If that's something that God opens up the door for.

[00:46:14] **Diana Winkler:** Well, I'm glad that you're not like afraid to get married or, thinking that every marriage is like that.

[00:46:20] Cuz I found out that it's not. Marriage can be very wonderful and glorious. You guys are helping so many people just by coming on the podcast here and listening to your story. So to the folks that are listening today and they're hearing your story and they're like, I can relate to what Jason and Joy are saying.

[00:46:47] That's me. I went through that too. What would you advise them to do?

[00:46:53] **Jason Harris:** I mean, my simplest advice is run. Get out. God does not require [00:47:00] you to stay in danger. So I'm kind of assuming a Christian here, somebody who's staying because they feel that they have to. And I just say, no, you don't have to, I don't care

[00:47:11] what your pastor says. I don't care, which verses they shove into your face. The marriage has been horribly disfigured beyond recognition. It's not even close to marriage. This is a systematic destructive process that a person is willingly engaging in. And obviously look, give them time. I've never meet these people who haven't already given it time.

[00:47:39] They want their marriage to. They've talked to their husband. They've tried, they've asked for help. They've gone to counseling. Obviously, don't walk out after the first week of things not being perfect, but draw boundaries and it, once you come to the conclusion that he's not trying to change.

[00:47:56] He says he is, but he's not. You're free to leave. [00:48:00] You're free to leave and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. To give you an example, after example of people in scripture, running for protection, running for safety, , there's just no excuse for telling the woman to stay and take it. As far as how to handle that, because I understand leading to be dangerous.

[00:48:13] It's really difficult financially. You've got custody issues. There are kids involved. It's just really messy. And I think probably my first advice would be. if you can safely do it, draw boundaries and stick to them. Pick something small, very small. I'm I am going to watch my favorite TV show.

[00:48:36] I am going to whatever. It's that's your choice and your right to make it your boundaries and do it. And don't put up with it saying otherwise. And what that will do is inflame the situation he will. And of course I say, if you can do it safely, but the point is assert it. And if he can't deal with that, say, listen, I'm drawing a simple boundary and you [00:49:00] can't handle it.

[00:49:01] So we are in trouble. And if he isn't repentent and he doesn't initiate counseling and he won't cooperate with getting help, then you don't have to.

[00:49:12] **Diana Winkler:** It doesn't always have to be hitting or it doesn't have to be rape. I mean, mine was verbal and emotional abuse, financial abuse, neglect.

[00:49:22] People think it has to be violent. And if it isn't violent, then it's not real abuse.

[00:49:28] **Jason Harris:** Yes. And in christian abuse, it's rarely violent. Yeah. In many of the situations I work with there may be one or two incidents that cross the line, but most of the abuse didn't cross the line into physical.

[00:49:45] There doesn't need to be any physical, but usually there's, one or two times when he lost control and did something. But again, broaden our minds, our categories of abuse. What mom described earlier in the podcast about driving dangerously that is physical abuse. [00:50:00] That is putting her in mortal fear.

[00:50:03] He's saying I'm willing to risk your life to make you do what I want. That is physical abuse. It doesn't have to be a fist to the jaw. Right. Even slamming a table, slamming a door can be a form of physical abuse. You're saying I haven't, and I don't want to, but if I have to, I will. And when you put that into an environment of coercion and manipulation, that can be a form of direct physical prep.

[00:50:37] So we need to be, in your heart that you don't feel physically safe, listen to it. Like you're right. What you're sensing in this, that this is just horribly wrong. You're 99% chance that you're just totally right. Back yourself. And here's the huge thing is people think it's all or nothing and it's not all or nothing.

[00:50:58] What you can do is you can [00:51:00] say, listen, two things. Number one, kick him out. If you can kick him out, make him go live at his friend's house. I know that's very hard to do, but if you can do it get a protection order. So he has to leave, change the locks. You have every right to do it. You have every right to do it, especially if you have kids, Hey, they need a place to sleep.

[00:51:17] They need a house. I need a house. You're out. So you're out, just you're out. You can always let him back in later, but kick him out. You, what you're doing is you're saying, I mean, business about these boundaries. And then the second thing is to realize separation is not divorce. So a lot of times you'll have a pastor or parents or friends saying, oh, don't separate.

[00:51:38] Don't separate. Well, separation is incredibly low stakes. If you leave for a week, that's not the end of the marriage, right. If he's a good man and you leave for a week, okay, he's gonna have a massive wake up call. He's going to think, whoa, what is happening? My marriage could be over right now. He's going to repent.

[00:51:57] He's gonna begin to take serious action to get [00:52:00] help for himself, and for the marriage. You, are gonna see not just tears and words, you're going to see some real things happen. Yep. And if they don't, well, then, you're actually not dealing with a good-willed person. Who just wasn't paying attention.

[00:52:16] Cause that can happen. Somebody just doesn't get it. They just don't understand how they're affecting the other person. Guys are pretty stupid. Guys are thick sometimes. Sometimes they're not abusers, they have good will, they're just too clueless to get it. And that's how you wake 'em up.

[00:52:30] But if they don't, if they just start attacking you and lying about you and stalking you, well, you, no, this is real abuse and you stay away. So separation is low stakes. It really is. It's not a big deal. If you leave for a week, everything gets sorted out. And then after, you say at the end of the week, you say, look I'm really encouraged by what I'm seeing.

[00:52:50] I'm gonna take two more weeks and just. If you're serious about it. And he says, okay, yeah, you're right. I just want you to feel safe. In fact, you take the house and I'm about a [00:53:00] good man is gonna do those things and great low stakes. Your marriage is gonna be great. Like you're on track. Such low stakes, but if he's an evil man, then you're gonna know it and you're gonna be out.

[00:53:11] And that's a good step. So I say, don't be slow to just walk away, just get out so that you are safe and he can decide whether or not he wants the marriage.

[00:53:22] **Diana Winkler:** Absolutely. Very wise words. Joy. What words of encouragement would you have for those that, Hey, that's me for those that are still in abuse situations?

[00:53:34] **Joy Harris:** Yeah. I can't think of anything else to add to what Jason, it was excellent.

[00:53:39] **Diana Winkler:** He said it all. He did. He did a great job, but you are proof that there is life after abuse. There is life on the other side. It's not easy to come on a podcast and tell your innermost personal secrets. And I so appreciate you coming [00:54:00] and sharing your story with the listeners.

[00:54:03] And it was so awesome to see you guys after so many years.

[00:54:08] **Joy Harris:** It's great to see you too.

[00:54:10] **Jason Harris:** Yeah. Thanks for the opportunity to come on.

[00:54:12] **Diana Winkler:** Miss you guys.

[00:54:13] And you guys have to keep in touch and not be a stranger. I have listeners in Australia. I've seen it on my stats. You're in Australia? Contact Joy, and Jason. I'll have all the information in the show notes and they will help you.

[00:54:32] **Jason Harris:** Absolutely. Yeah, we'd love to hear from people. Absolutely.

[00:54:36] **Diana Winkler:** God bless you guys.

[00:54:37] **Joy Harris:** You too.

[00:54:38] **Jason Harris:** Thank you, good talk.

[00:54:41] **Brian Winkler:** Thank you for listening to 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 [00:55:00] YouTube channel links.

[00:55:01] Hope to see you next week.