COERCIVE CONTROL



THE INVISIBLE CHAINS THAT BIND

Coercive control is one of the most devastating—yet often overlooked—forms of domestic abuse. Unlike physical violence, coercive control operates through a pattern of domination, intimidation, and manipulation that slowly strips a woman of her freedom, confidence, and identity. It is the quiet tightening of restrictions, the constant monitoring, the subtle threats, and the emotional pressure that make her feel she has no safe choices left.

Women experiencing coercive control often describe feeling "trapped," "confused," or "like I'm losing myself." Many do not recognize the abuse at first because the tactics are subtle and disguised as concern, protection, or "just wanting what's best."

At FOCUS Ministries, we walk alongside women who are living under these invisible chains. We help them name what is happening, understand the dynamics of abuse, and begin reclaiming their God-given dignity and autonomy.

WITHIN THE POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL, COERCIVE CONTROL SHOWS UP IN MANY WAYS:



- *Dictating where she can go and who she can speak to*
- *Monitoring her phone, social media, or daily movements*
- *Controlling finances, transportation, or access to basic needs*
- *Using guilt, fear, or Scripture to justify dominance*
- *Undermining her sense of reality through gaslighting*
- *Creating an environment where she feels responsible for his anger*

FOCUS MINISTRIES

A STORY OF STRENGTH: "LENA'S" FIGHT TO BREAK FREE.

When Lena reached out to FOCUS Ministries, she whispered into the phone, afraid her husband might overhear. She explained that he rarely yelled and never hit her, but she felt suffocated. Every decision—from what she wore to how she spent her time—had to be approved. He tracked her location, demanded access to her passwords, and insisted she quit her job because "a godly wife should be home."

If she questioned him, he accused her of being disrespectful, ungrateful, or rebellious. He used Scripture to justify his control, telling her that God expected her to submit. Over time, Lena stopped seeing friends, stopped attending church, and stopped trusting her own judgment. She felt isolated, anxious, and deeply ashamed.

One afternoon, after he confiscated her phone for "talking too long to her sister," Lena borrowed a neighbor's phone and searched for resources to help her. She found FOCUS Ministries website.

Our team responded with compassion and clarity. We helped her understand that what she was experiencing was coercive control, a serious form of abuse. Through weekly counseling, safety planning, and participation in a FOCUS support group, Lena began to rebuild her confidence. She learned that God does not call His daughters to live under fear or domination. She discovered her voice again.

Today, Lena is taking courageous steps toward independence. She is reconnecting with her family, rebuilding her faith community, and learning to make decisions without fear. Her journey is ongoing—but she is no longer walking alone.

Evelyn Colon
Victim Advocate for FOCUS Ministries, Inc.
September 2026

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS WOMEN LIKE LENA:

Your generosity allows FOCUS Ministries to be a lifeline for women experiencing coercive control. Because of your support, we are able to:

- *Provide free counseling and crisis support for women and families*
- *Offer educational workshops that teach churches and communities how to recognize abuse*
- *Maintain safe spaces and support groups where survivors find understanding and hope*
- *Equip women with resources for safety planning and emotional recovery*
- *Share faith-based materials that remind survivors of their worth and God's love*

Every donation—whether $50, $75 or $100—directly impacts a woman who is trying to break free from coercive control. Your giving becomes part of her story of courage, healing, and restoration.

Thank you for standing with FOCUS Ministries as we continue to shine Christ's light into places of deep hurt and walk with women toward hope and freedom.

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