

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**Preparing Church Counselors for Obsessive Morbid Jealousy**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity  
in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by

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**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This research addressed the problem of the lack of training in pastoral counselors in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique, Chile, to help wives and their families suffering suspicious jealousy due to childhood traumas. This DMIN action research project trained pastoral counselors to connect childhood trauma to wives suffering suspicious jealousy. There are two stages of this action research; the first is to establish the connection of obsessive morbid jealousy (OMJ) to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The second is to prepare pastors and counselors to recognize the symptoms and causes of obsessive morbid jealousy and to have a clear strategy to create change that will make a difference. This research used two questionnaires each for spouses with obsessive morbid jealousy and a different questionnaire for the pastors and counselors to discover their level of preparation. This research chose nine couples based on the questionnaires and previous counseling of wives with obsessive jealousy. Each participating husband and wife (18 total) took two interviews; the first established the presence of obsessive, jealous traits and the second discovered adverse childhood experiences that may have led to this condition. The results from the questionnaires, the interviews, and the field notes from previous counseling showed a clear connection between the OMJ to ACEs, specifically the adverse role of an unfaithful father. This researcher will use these results to prepare a training program for pastors and counselors of the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique and its satellite missions.

Keywords: obsessive, morbid, jealousy, (OMJ), resilience, compulsive, suspicious

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## Abbreviations

ACE	<i>Adverse Childhood Experiences</i>
ACME	<i>Association of Couples in Marriage Enrichment</i>
BBFI	<i>Bible Baptist Fellowship International</i>
CBT	<i>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
DSM–5-TR	<i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders—Latest Edition</i>
GPS	<i>Global Positioning System</i>
HCD	<i>High-Conflict Divorce</i>
IBBAH	<i>Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Alto Hospicio (Bible Baptist Church of Alto Hospicio)</i>
IBBI	<i>Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique (Bible Baptist Church of Iquique)</i>
IBBG	<i>Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Gracia (Grace Bible Baptist Church)</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
NKJV	<i>New King James Version</i>
OMJ	<i>Obsessive Morbid Jealousy</i>
OCD	<i>Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</i>
PACE	<i>Protective and Compensatory Experiences</i>
PREP	<i>Prevention and Relationship Education Program</i>
PTSD	<i>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</i>
TIME	<i>Training in Marriage Enrichment</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Although this researcher counsels several marriage problems, this action research thesis considers obsessive morbid jealousy in wives. Jealousy is when a romantic partner experiences anxiety based on a real or perceived threat of losing their mate to another.<sup>1</sup> A little jealousy is considered a coping mechanism to maintain fidelity. Still, when this fear of loss becomes an all-consuming obsession, it is called “morbid jealousy.”<sup>2</sup> This type of jealousy displays obsessive measures to try and prove the unfounded suspicions of unfaithfulness.<sup>3</sup> Author Melanie White shows how this condition threatens to destroy the relationship by pushing away the very person they are fearfully trying to keep through false accusations, controlling behavior, and unreasonable demands.<sup>4</sup>

Researchers offer many theories for morbid jealousy’s extreme and unrealistic anxiety, such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), loss of affection from a parent, low self-esteem, prior unfaithfulness of a past partner,<sup>5</sup> and Adult Attachment Theory.<sup>6</sup> This thesis’ action

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Salovey, ed., *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1991), 310, Kindle.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1491.

<sup>3</sup> S. Karunaratne, N. Liyanage, and A. Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships and adverse childhood experiences in morbid jealousy,” *Sri Lanka Journal of Psychiatry* 8, no. 2 (2017): 20.

<sup>4</sup> Melanie White, *Anxiety in Relationships: How to Overcome Anxiety, Jealousy, Negative Thinking, Manage Insecurity and Attachment* (Brentford, UK: For My Family Ltd., 2020), 15-16, Kindle.

<sup>5</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of Negative Experiences in Past Relationships,” 20-23.

<sup>6</sup> Chloe O. Huelsnitz, Allison K. Farrell, and Jeffrey A. Simpson, “Attachment and Jealousy: Understanding the Dynamic Experience of Jealousy Using the Response Escalation Paradigm,” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 44, no. 12 (May 2018): 1664, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1177/0146167218772530>.

research will examine the connection between the past trauma of an absent father through divorce or infidelity. Adverse childhood experiences are usually emotional traumas in the early years of life (0-18 years) that have devastating consequences on a partner's worldview, decision-making, and adult relationships.<sup>7</sup> The past trauma of an abandoned father, parental divorce, or parental infidelity contributes to increased insecurity and creates unrealistic perceptions of their spouse by the obsessively morbid jealous wife.<sup>8</sup> Larry Crabb and Dan B. Allender, in their book *Hope When You're Hurting*, explain this as,

THE DYNAMIC MODEL assumes that our personality structure is formed in the early years of our life by the kind of parenting we receive. The memories of love or neglect construct the core of our self-assessment and self-esteem. If our memories are tainted with violence, sexual abuse, abandonment, absorption, or verbal abuse, they are repressed in the unconscious. But they continue to influence us by being our only map for journeying through life.<sup>9</sup>

As problems do not happen in a vacuum, this chapter lays the foundation for the thesis by giving the ministry context of this counseling challenge.<sup>10</sup> This chapter presents the problem statement in the ministry context and offers the goal of this action research through the purpose statement. This first chapter aids in understanding the problem by sharing the basic assumptions, the definitions of the more important words, and expressing the limitations and delimitations. The chapter ends with the thesis statement showing the final objective of this action research.

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<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Hays-Grudo and Amanda Sheffield Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences, A Developmental Perspective* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2020), 125.

<sup>8</sup> Sheila C. Morrison, Stephen T. Fife, and Katherine M. Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce: A Phenomenological Study," *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* 58, no. 1 (Jan 2017): 53.

<sup>9</sup> Larry Crabb, and Dan B. Allender, *Hope When You're Hurting: Answers to Four Questions Hurting People Ask* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1996), 94, Kindle.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Kibbe, *From Topic to Thesis: A Guide to Theological Research* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 88.

## Ministry Context

The ministry context for this action research thesis takes place in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique (IBBI), a local church this researcher established fifteen years ago in Iquique, Chile. This researcher started this congregation of 150 while working under the auspices of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) and has personally started ten other churches in northern Chile during the forty years on the mission field. The BBFI has a mission philosophy that promotes church planting. Most of those in their ranks work independently to train national workers and plant churches to become independent, indigenous, autonomous, and self-propagating.<sup>11</sup> This researcher has labored these past forty years to train national pastors to lead their perspective churches.

This researcher has since discovered a glaring absence of personal counseling skills in national pastors and other leaders in the IBBI and its missions, a much-needed resource for these communities. Although biblical counselors face counselees with emotional and spiritual problems, many involve marital conflicts. Pastors need to concentrate on the spiritual nature of any personal conflict and seek to encourage the importance of spiritual values for the overall well-being of their congregations. Yet when facing complex marital and emotional issues, these pastors and counselors will seek answers from colleagues, books, or the internet, which provides few trustworthy sources in Spanish. They usually find either a secular psychology source that leaves God out or will offer sermons that lack a deep understanding of the root problem.<sup>12</sup>

The condition of the family will influence the strength of the church. The IBBI has several well-prepared and willing church workers whose marriage problems have disqualified

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<sup>11</sup>The Bible Baptist Fellowship International, About Us, Retrieved May 12, 2022, <https://www.bbfi.org/about-the-bbfi>.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence J. Crabb Jr., *Effective Biblical Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 34.

them from essential ministries based on Paul's requisites for a church leader (1 Tim 3:1-5).<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the condition of marriages and subsequent effects on children have frustrated most Chilean pastors, including this researcher. This researcher sees this as an excellent reason to implement this action research program. This project hopes to train and equip the church body to minister to those hurting from extreme family conflict.

Counselors and counselees seek efficient answers and biblical strategies to strengthen the family and, thus, the community. This action research aims to answer questions about wives with obsessive morbid jealousy, and to heal the OMJ homes in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique. This researcher will transform this knowledge into training sessions for pastors and counselors in this spiritual community. These newly prepared biblical counselors will apply these precepts to their congregations' OMJ wives. This researcher hopes to duplicate this training into an effective counseling program in many Latin American churches.

### General Chilean Culture

When an American tourist or businessman prepares to go to South America for the first time, they have certain preconceived expectations, expecting to find a "third-world country."<sup>14</sup> Yet Chile is probably the most economically advanced country in South America and hardly appears to be a third-world country.<sup>15</sup> Some have compared Chile more to Europe than to other Latin American countries. Chile boasts an extensive middle class, a highly educated population,

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Scazzero, *The Emotional Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2015), 25.

<sup>14</sup> World Population Review. Third World Countries 2022. Retrieved May 12, 2022, from <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/third-world-countries>.

<sup>15</sup> Laura N. Gitlin and Patricio Fuentes, "The Republic of Chile: an upper middle-income country crossroads of economic development and aging," *The Gerontologist* 52, no. 3 (2012): 297-305, Retrieved May 12, 2022, doi:10.1093/geron/gns054, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4047290/>.

a sophisticated government, and a stable economy.<sup>16</sup> The Chilean people usually try to imitate the United States in all that it does. This economic level of culture and desire to imitate makes the country susceptible to the same kinds of problems that people face in the States, especially the condition of the home and marriage.

### Chilean Marriage Culture

The Catholic church has dominated Latin culture since the early days of Spanish conquests.<sup>17</sup> Since the sixties, other religious movements, such as cults and evangelicals, have gained cultural influence, yet the Catholic church still has the government's ear. The Catholic church's influence has shaped the civil laws, which until recently declared all divorces illegal.<sup>18</sup> The law can dictate marriage policy, but not the heart of humanity or a couple's behavior. Thus, this civil law against divorce cannot make couples love each other or stay together. When spouses no longer wish to be married, they leave one partner and begin living together with another.

The Catholic church vehemently condemns divorce but hypocritically winks at adultery, asking for a detailed confession to the priest and a "hail Mary" to cover the unfaithfulness. These cultural mores on marriage have produced disastrous results in Chilean society.<sup>19</sup> In the IBBI, over half of all couples have an irregular partner relationship, with their children paying the

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<sup>16</sup> John J. Johnson, et al., "Chile." Encyclopedia Britannica, Retrieved May 10, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Chile>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Duncan Campbell, "Church Mounts Rearguard Action as Chile Votes to Allow Divorce," *International Family Law*, Retrieved May 12, 2022, <https://www.international-divorce.com/d-chile.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> Karin Alejandra Rosenblatt, "What we can reclaim of the old values of the past: Sexual morality and politics in twentieth-century Chile," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 1 (Jan 2001): 149-180.

highest consequence.<sup>20</sup> Chileans have continued practicing these values at an alarming rate producing a chain reaction covering many generations. The infidelity rate of present and past family members has had a definite impact on spouses, particularly wives, by eroding emotional security and producing much suspicion and jealousy.

### The IBBI's Present Counseling Ministry

This researcher's counseling and teaching ministry on marriage has provided many great victories in rescuing broken homes in the power of Christ. Yet many couples' past experiences have wreaked damage on future generations by causing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in the children's early years.<sup>21</sup> In the 1990s, Dr. Felitti of Kaiser Permanente Hospital system in California conducted a ground-breaking study about the adverse effects of various childhood traumas on adults' emotional and physical health.<sup>22</sup> This study explains why the Iquique church has failed to offer efficient answers despite teaching, preaching, confronting, reasoning, and counseling many couples. This early childhood suffering is stubbornly present when the children enter adult relationships.<sup>23</sup>

This action research thesis seeks to establish a connection between the wives' ACEs of their fathers' indiscretions or separations and obsessive morbid jealousy in their present adult relationships. Testimony from these adults who suffered parental divorce speaks of the devastating consequences on their sense of security, self-esteem, and ability to maintain relationships. The body of ACE's studies agrees with the hypothesis of this thesis showing that

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<sup>20</sup> Paulina Sepúlveda Garrido, "Divorcios alcanzan la cifra más alta de los últimos seis años," 20 Mar 2017, *La Tercera*, Retrieved May 12, 2022. <https://www.latercera.com/noticia/divorcios-alcanzan-la-cifra-mas-alta-los-ultimos-seis-anos/>.

<sup>21</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>22</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

children report parental divorce or separation as the second highest trauma.<sup>24</sup> Outside of the Wallerstein study, researchers have not dedicated much study to adult insecurities in decision-making in romantic relations.<sup>25</sup> This researcher is mainly concerned with the effects of an ACE of “high-conflict divorces,” which can produce childhood PTSD.<sup>26</sup>

### The Preparation of National Leadership

As in Bible times, God calls men and women from all walks of life to follow Him into Christian ministry. In this researcher’s church, God has called some university-educated men and others with no formal education to become fishers of men (Matt 4:19; John 2:43). This researcher aims to carry out Paul’s admonition to Timothy with anyone God has called to serve (2 Tim 2:2).<sup>27</sup> This researcher uses the strategy of small institute classes while personally mentoring each pastoral student. Although this process limits the number of new pastors, it has shown excellent results over many years.<sup>28</sup> Of course, this lack of a formal training center limits the variety of expert training available in different areas.

This researcher has had to act, covering all the bases alone without qualified workers to help lighten the load. This one-person strategy has caused a gap in pastoral preparation and does not follow scriptural principles. As Paul states in 1 Corinthians 12:4-21, many different parts make up the body, each gifted in its area for edifying the entire body. International studies show

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<sup>24</sup> K.L. O’Hara et al., “Coping in Context: The Effects of Long-Term Relations Between Interparental Conflict and Coping on the Development of Child Psychopathology Following Parental Divorce,” *Development and Psychopathology* 31, no. 5 (2019): 1695. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0954579419000981>.

<sup>25</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 45.

<sup>26</sup> Aurelie M. C. Lange et al., “Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children in High-Conflict Divorce Families,” *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma* (Oct 2021): 1, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ramesh Richard, “Training of Pastors: A High Priority for Global Ministry Strategy” in “*Be Focused ... Use Common Sense ... Overcome Excuses and Stupidity ...*,” ed. Reuben van Rensburg et al., (Bonn, Germany: World of Theology Series, the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, 2022), 215.

<sup>28</sup> V. David Garrison, “A New Model for Missions,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 9, no. 2 (Apr 01, 1992): 67-69.



the bleak nature of new churches and the lack of well-trained pastors to guide them.<sup>29</sup> The lack of access to other qualified teachers compounds the situation. This lack of preparation can also determine how much they can prepare other counselors in their respective congregations.<sup>30</sup>

These pastoral counselors face common daily problems in their congregations, such as guilt, anger, depression, and anxiety. Two years of COVID have only compounded personal issues, especially fear.<sup>31</sup> Authors Kanika Aruja and Dhairya Khurana, in their article “Locked-Down Love: a Study of Intimate Relationships Before and After the COVID Lockdown,” state that “in long-term relationships (married, engaged, or dating) from 57 countries found that COVID-19 related stressors, such as social isolation, financial strain, and stress, were associated with greater conflict in relationships.”<sup>32</sup> The church of Jesus Christ cannot escape its responsibility to care for the emotionally distraught.

These Chilean pastors typically confront the counselee’s sin, giving plenty of Scriptures to identify proper behavior, encouraging them to pray more often, and warning them of the consequences of disobedience.<sup>33</sup> Yet their training has not prepared them to watch for the underlying causes nor developed biblical and practical strategies to offer hope.<sup>34</sup> These counselors in the IBBI are high on speaking out against wrong behavior without providing helpful answers for a change. This type of strategy frustrates the counselee as they try to achieve

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<sup>29</sup> Paul Allen Clark, “The Churches Need Healthy, Well-Formed Leaders—How Shall We Now Train?” in *“Be Focused ... Use Common Sense ... Overcome Excuses and Stupidity ...,”* ed. Reuben van Rensburg et al., (Bonn, Germany: World of Theology Series, the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, 2022), 486.

<sup>30</sup> K. H. Kim and F. C. Van Tatehnove, “The Utilizability of the Pastoral Counseling Response Scale (PCRS),” *Journal of Pastoral Care* 35, no. 2 (2016): 85 <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234098103500203>

<sup>31</sup> Kanika K. Ahuja, Dhairya Khurana, “Locked-Down Love: A Study of Intimate Relationships Before and After the COVID Lockdown.” *NCFR, Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Science* 70, no. 5 (Dec. 2021): 1343-1357. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/fare.12582>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 67.

<sup>34</sup> H. Norman Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House Publishers, 2011), 17-23.

God's high standard of acceptance without the means to achieve it.<sup>35</sup> This common condition does not help the counselee; it only produces feelings of failure, guilt, and despair.<sup>36</sup> This action research thesis hopes to promote better counseling preparation for those pastors and counselors of the IBBI and its missions as they treat the OMJ wife.<sup>37</sup>

### **Problem Presented**

Jesus declared to His disciples that He would establish His church during His earthly ministry. As His earthly ministry finished, He gave His disciples the Great Commission to go and make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). This commission alludes to the participation of His disciples in furthering the church. Since the beginning of time, God has called individuals to serve Him in various ministries, one of which is the pastor of a local church (Eph 4:11). As pastors, these servants of God must tend to their sheep's needs, including their emotional challenges.

This calling aims to equip His servants to shepherd a flock by teaching, encouraging, correcting, and making disciples (2 Tim 3:16-17). Pastoral staff requires personal and family counseling tools to fulfill their calling. Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), is the example for pastors (1 Pet 5:1-4). He is even called the Counselor (Isa 9:6). He showed compassion to all (Mark 8:2), met people's needs (John 3), encouraged proper behavior (John 8:11), encouraged accepting responsibility for their actions (Mark 10:51), and provided hope (Mark 10:26-27). In other words, Jesus was the model for counseling.<sup>38</sup> Paul exhorts the church's maturity to help

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<sup>35</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 46.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Darren D. Moore, Charles Williams, Clinton E. Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health and Relational Concerns within Faith-Based Organizations," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 76, no. 2 (2022): 80-88.

<sup>38</sup> Wright, *Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 17-21.

others with their burdens (Gal 6:1, 2, 10). The pastor should lead in helping those in the congregation handle their emotional distress.<sup>39</sup>

Most local churches in Chile have an active membership of less than one hundred. These churches will do their best to provide their pastor with a salary. Still, most local churches in this South American country do not have the resources to pay for other staff positions, especially counselors. Gifted volunteers or the pastor must fulfill this role of the counselor in the congregation due to the lack of resources.<sup>40</sup> Most counselors fulfill this role by default and not by preparation.

In this researcher's forty years of ministry, he has brought valuable background to this research. He has trained new pastors through small institute classes or direct mentorship to duplicate his ministry. In the churches in the capital of Santiago, there is an abundance of missionaries and mature pastors that have cooperated to form formal Bible institutes. But in the outlying regions, such as Iquique, the one-thousand-mile distance is prohibitive, and few like-minded missionaries are present. These problems in geography and resources contribute to a lower degree of preparation for national pastors because of the limited access to many different teachers.

The national pastors will be strong where the missionary is strong but will have weaker areas where the teacher's training is inadequate. No servant of God is an expert in every aspect of ministry. God purposely established the church to need several different gifts or functions for the body to be healthy (1 Cor 12:4-21; Rom 12:3-8).<sup>41</sup> The pastor must be humble to the point

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<sup>39</sup> Scott Floyd, *Crisis Counseling, a Guide for Pastors and Professionals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2008), 18.

<sup>40</sup> Moore, Williams, Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80-81.

<sup>41</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 21.

that he recognizes his limitations and allows others to use their gifts for the church's edification (Eph 4:16). This scriptural principle also helps prevent pastoral burnout.<sup>42</sup>

This researcher has witnessed that a much-needed resource in the local church is preparation for personal and family counseling through training, which is notably absent. Literature shows that this lack of preparation is common in many countries.<sup>43</sup> The church is as strong as its families, and today the family is under attack. Usually, congregants will go to their pastor before seeking counsel from other professional sources. The pastor must have some preparation to offer wise counsel to help restore the home and marriage to godly principles.<sup>44</sup> Studies have shown that infidelity is one of the leading causes of divorce.<sup>45</sup>

The Chilean church faces the prevalent condition of marital unfaithfulness.<sup>46</sup> The often-occurring unfaithfulness in Chilean couples creates insecurity in spouses, manifesting jealousy toward their partners. According to Peter Salovey in his book, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, there are two types of jealousy.<sup>47</sup> When infidelity produces a jealous partner, it is called "fait accompli jealousy." This behavior warrants jealousy. The other is "suspicious" jealousy, where there is no evidence of unfaithfulness. Researchers call this "morbid" jealousy.<sup>48</sup>

In this researcher's experience, these cases multiply and have destroyed many marriages. When the wife has suspicious jealousy, she sees everything through the lens of inevitable

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<sup>42</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 248.

<sup>43</sup> Kim and Van Tatehove, "The Utilizability of the Pastoral Counseling Response Scale (PCRS)." 87.

<sup>44</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 17, 18.

<sup>45</sup> R. A. Marín, A. Christensen, and D. C. Atkins, "Infidelity and behavioral couple therapy: Relationship outcomes over 5 years following therapy," *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice* 3, no. 1 (2014): 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000012>

<sup>46</sup> Rosenblatt, "What we can reclaim of the old values of the past," 149-180.

<sup>47</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 361-363.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

rejection. She believes she is unlovable, and that any other woman is a rival.<sup>49</sup> She now dedicates her energy to proving that the “inevitable” is happening behind her back. It even becomes a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder.<sup>50</sup> Any jealous thought that enters her mind is a sign of her husband’s unfaithfulness, and she performs the ritual of checking his phone, expenses, and clothes for signs of infidelity. She desperately wants to find something to prove she is not crazy.<sup>51</sup>

Many well-trained pastors in the states have difficulty dealing with certain personality disorders; how much more difficult will it be for those with little or no formal training in counseling?<sup>52</sup> This prevalent condition is why this researcher has chosen to conduct this thesis project. Counselors rarely spot the root of problems without proper training. These missionary-prepared pastors in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista focus on behavior with little training in understanding the importance of early traumas that can be the source of insecurity and jealousy.

Studies show that the obsessively morbid jealous wife is highly suspicious, independent of her husband’s behavior.<sup>53</sup> This researcher observes that her suspicion constantly feeds on unwanted, obsessive, and intrusive thoughts. As an unsubstantiated mental image of her husband cheating with another woman bombards her thinking, she becomes controlling and accusative. But non-trained counselors rarely have the insight to work with past traumas in the wife nor offer insights into the root cause of the jealousy with the husband.<sup>54</sup> This typical condition produces

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<sup>49</sup> Robert Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure: Learn to Trust, Overcome Possessiveness, and Save Your Relationship* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 2018), 50, Kindle.

<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Beverly Beyette, *Brain Lock: Free Yourself from Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2016), 64, Kindle.

<sup>51</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, loc 350-369, Kindle.

<sup>52</sup> Wright, *Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 17-21.

<sup>53</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 358.

<sup>54</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 18.

resentful husbands for being falsely accused, controlling women who are never satisfied with their husbands' denials, and producing many ACEs in their children.<sup>55</sup> The problem is the lack of preparation in pastoral counselors in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista to help people suffering suspicious jealousy due to childhood traumas.

### **Purpose Statement**

This DMIN action research project aims to train pastoral counselors to connect childhood trauma to those members suffering suspicious jealousy. When there is little preparation in counseling, pastors and counselors have few tools to apply.<sup>56</sup> They will draw from their own experience, either from their parents' marriage or current relationship. This strategy involves treating the symptoms, ignoring the root cause, and proceeding toward trying harder. They justify their plan to try harder to benefit the kids, the church, or the cause of Christ.

Although these motives are noble, they offer little practical instruction toward victory. These standard practices will generally cause more frustration and guilt while doing little to provide them with a plan for success. This lack of a good strategy leaves little hope for real change, and the couple will drift farther apart. Counselors without the proper tools can do little to prevent another statistic of a broken home, tearing at the fabric of society.<sup>57</sup> Properly prepared counselors can offer many marriage programs today to help healthy marriages and rescue dysfunctional ones like TIME, PREPARE/ENRICH, PREP, and ACME.<sup>58</sup>

This researcher established another goal of training pastors and counselors to work with the families of obsessively morbid jealous wives. This DMIN thesis proposes to attend to the

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<sup>55</sup> Lange et al., "Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children," 1.

<sup>56</sup> Wright, *Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 54-57.

<sup>57</sup> Moore, Williams, Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80.

<sup>58</sup> T. K. Bowling, C. M. Hill, and M. Jencius, "An Overview of Marriage Enrichment," *The Family Journal* 13, no. 1 (2016): 87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480704270229>

difficulties in the families of the IBBI suffering from morbid jealousy and offer some biblical strategies by identifying the causes and a path to freedom from these destructive thoughts. Helping resolve family strife, at least at a church level, starts with proper teaching to the families and includes the appropriate preparation of the counselors.<sup>59</sup> Each pastor or counselor must desire help and have the right tools.<sup>60</sup> This researcher's experience dealing with obsessive morbid jealous wives has repeatedly discovered the presence of ACEs, especially the absence of their fathers due to sexual misconduct or divorce.<sup>61</sup>

These findings agree with most of the research on the subject.<sup>62</sup> Authors Sheila Morrison, Stephen Fife, and Katherine Hertlein found that conflictive divorce emotionally damages their grown children. The survivors "reported that their experience with parental divorce has caused them to have more hesitancy about entering into romantic relationships, less confidence in their ability to maintain a long-term relationship, lack of trust in intimate partners, and emotional and behavioral consequences that have damaged intimate relationships."<sup>63</sup> The Wallerstein Study shows that "divorce is a life-transforming experience. After divorce, childhood is different. Adolescence is different. Adulthood with the decision to marry or not—is different."<sup>64</sup>

This researcher has counseled several cases recently of insecure women suffering from OMJ, showing his personal experience with this population based on his pastoral work with the wives, husbands, families, and pastors who need training. After many interviews with their

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<sup>59</sup> Moore, Williams, Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80-81.

<sup>60</sup> Richard, "Training of Pastors," 215.

<sup>61</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 53.

<sup>62</sup> Shuang Bi et al., "Father Attachment, Father Emotion Expression, and Children's Attachment to Fathers: The Role of Marital Conflict." *Journal of family psychology* 32, no. 4 (2018): 457. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000395>

<sup>63</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 45.

<sup>64</sup> J. S. Wallerstein, J. M. Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: Report of a 25-Year Landmark Study* (New York, NY: Hyperion, 2000), xxxiii.

husbands, each convincingly demonstrated their unswerving faithfulness to their wives. Yet, many expressed frustrations because their wives treated them as guilty of sins they had never committed. The purpose of this action research is to discover the core problem of the OMJ wife, which this researcher hypothesizes is adverse childhood trauma.<sup>65</sup> As biblical counselors identify the root cause of this suspicion, they can offer a better strategy to help tackle this obsessive anxiety.<sup>66</sup>

The Bible teaches many valuable principles for trusting in God and conquering fears (Matt 8:26). The Word offers countless passages that deal with this anxiety problem, like Proverbs 28:1, which connects a person's poor relationship with God to unfounded fear. Paul states that Christians have eternal purpose and unconditional security in Christ, the basis for self-worth (Eph 3:11, 12). The Bible says that God will never leave nor forsake His people (Deut 31:6) and that nothing can come between them (Rom 8:38, 39). The Psalmist declares that God delivers people from their fears (Ps 34:4). Christ says He has overcome the world and offers up His peace (John 14:27). He then admonishes His followers not to fear, as this is a lack of faith in Him (Matt 6:34).

The counselor must know how to apply these truths to the counselee, especially the obsessively morbid jealous wife.<sup>67</sup> This counselor has recently dealt with nine suspiciously jealous wives in the IBBI, trying to seek practical and biblical answers for their emotional anguish. This action research thesis proposes discovering where the research has succeeded in connecting problem conducts with past adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).<sup>68</sup> This thesis

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<sup>65</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>66</sup> Kim and Van Tatehove, "The Utilizability of the Pastoral Counseling Response Scale (PCRS)." 87.

<sup>67</sup> Moore, Williams, Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 81.

<sup>68</sup> Lange et al., "Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children," 7.



seeks to uncover the gaps in the studies and formulate a plan to tie the obsessive insecurity with its actual cause. Jennifer Hays-Grudo and Amanda Sheffield Morris, in their book, *Adverse, and Protective Childhood Experiences, A Developmental Perspective*, show the prevalence of ACEs, with at least two-thirds of well-educated, middle-class adults having at least one ACE.<sup>69</sup>

This action research thesis will discover the appropriate scriptural principles to offer a biblically-based strategy for healing past traumas. This strategy will bring peace to the family. Paul stresses this vital principle in his letter to the Philippians; “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (Phil 3:13, New King James Version). Hays-Grudo and Morris explain the importance of “resilience” to overcome the ACEs of adult children of divorced parents and other harmful traumas and adapt to a healthy relationship.<sup>70</sup> This researcher will focus on the specific identification principle with Christ, as shown in Galatians 2:20.

This researcher will design a training plan to help prepare new counselors in the IBBI to recognize the past source of the suspicious jealousy. This counseling course will further propose the application of the principle of identification with Christ through a series of directed cognitive exercises using biblical meditation with each counselee under the supervision of the pastor or church counselor. Investigators have written much on ACEs and OMJ, but little on biblical freedom strategies.<sup>71</sup> This researcher will follow up on the counselee and monitor the progress of cognitive reassignment through biblical meditation (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:5).

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<sup>69</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 24.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>71</sup> Elizabeth K. Hopper et al., *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect: Component-Based Psychotherapy* (New York, NY: Guilford Publications, 2018). 8-9. ProQuest eBook. <https://ebookcentral-proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=5559927>

### Basic Assumptions

This action research thesis examines obsessive morbid jealousy in the wives in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique and its satellite missions and how it impacts their marriage and families based on obsessive thoughts and behaviors. This researcher hopes to help jealous wives identify the source of their obsessive thoughts of insecurity and establish a focus on the real cause of their suffering; their past and not their husbands.<sup>72</sup> This researcher proposes to use the results to train the pastoral counselors of these three works to offer an efficient strategy for change. Hopefully, this possibility for change will provide hope to the participants in this study. As this paper examines the process from problem to plan, this researcher will make some basic assumptions.

The first assumption is there must be a cause behind all personality disorders. Some believe they are inherent since birth; others believe that present circumstances produce these disorders. Researchers often debate this tension between nature and nurture.<sup>73</sup> This researcher assumes that many of the current emotional afflictions come from traumas experienced in early life when a person is learning to see this world and cope.<sup>74</sup> According to some studies, the two principal periods of greater vulnerability are the first five years of life and the second in early adolescence, between the ages of twelve and fifteen.<sup>75</sup>

This researcher's hypothesis assumes that the principal cause of this jealousy is programmed into the worldview of a daughter when the father has abandoned her through

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<sup>72</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 22.

<sup>73</sup> W. Brad Johnson and Kelly Murray, *Crazy Love: Dealing with Your Partner's Problem Personality* (Atascadero, CA: Impact Publishers, 2007), 7-8.

<sup>74</sup> Allen Rubin and David W. Springer, eds., *Treatment of Traumatized Adults and Children: Clinician's Guide to Evidence-Based Practice Series* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2009), 32. Kindle Edition.

<sup>75</sup> Joshua Ehrlich, *Divorce and Loss: Helping Adults and Children Mourn When a Marriage Comes Apart* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 41, *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=1694835>.

divorce or unfaithfulness to the mother.<sup>76</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, in their article, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” show this with a woman’s testimony saying, “[My parents’ divorce] shapes the way that I see relationships; it shapes the way that I view the world, it shapes the way, everything.”<sup>77</sup> This assumption will help direct future research into the cause of suspicious jealousy in women. This thesis will prepare pastoral counselors to offer a biblical answer to help these women with unfounded jealousy.

Another assumption is that Christ and the Bible have the answers to all life’s challenges, including obsessive morbid jealousy. Although, in Chilean society, most believe that the Bible is for spiritual problems and psychology is for emotional issues.<sup>78</sup> This researcher has assumed that the Bible has answers for all life’s challenges, and those emotional difficulties always have a spiritual nature.<sup>79</sup> Believing the Bible has the answer, this researcher will study the theological implications for overcoming anxiety and gaining victory over unhealthy and defeating thoughts (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:5).

The final assumption is that although salvation is a gift from God, Christ wants His disciples to take responsibility for their thoughts and actions (John 15:1-7; Matt 15:19, 20). There is a common practice of human nature to blame others for present individual problems and not take responsibility. Many excuse their immature attitudes and behaviors on their circumstances, creating a victim mentality. The Bible declares that disciples of Christ are conquerors and not victims. Therefore, Christians should take responsibility for their actions and thoughts, seeking strategies to live victorious in Christ (Rom 8:28, 31, 37).

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<sup>76</sup> Bi et al., “Father Attachment,” 457.

<sup>77</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 54.

<sup>78</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 33.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 9.

## Definitions

While researching, one tends to become familiar with a term that becomes commonplace in one's vocabulary. Yet, others sometimes are not privy to their meaning in the conversation context. Also, sometimes words can have multiple meanings depending on the context. This section defines some specific terms used in this thesis. These definitions allow all readers to become part of the conversation.<sup>80</sup>

*ACE.* The first term is “ACE,” an acronym social scientists use for adverse childhood experiences. This acronym refers to traumas and crises children and young people have experienced for 18 years.<sup>81</sup> Researchers have gathered information and concluded that the more ACEs a child has growing up, the more physical and emotional consequences they will face. Children develop coping abilities in these early years that accompany them into adult relationships.<sup>82</sup>

*Envy and Jealousy.* Although these two terms can be confused, each is very different. Envy receives a lesser amount of attention in the social sciences than jealousy.<sup>83</sup> Envy is when there is a comparison between two people, and one of them esteems the other superior or has traits they wish to have.<sup>84</sup> “Jealousy is an emotion experienced when the fear of loss threatens an important relationship with another person.”<sup>85</sup> Each of these emotions motivates negatively, but this paper will deal primarily with jealousy.

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<sup>80</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 19.

<sup>81</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

<sup>83</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 183.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, loc 310.

*Fait accompli jealousy.* Jealousy is a natural emotion of protection from losing someone important. All couples probably experience a little of this emotion. But when this jealousy becomes all-consuming, it falls into two categories: *fait accompli* and suspicious. “*Fait accompli*” (accomplished fact) is jealousy based on the evidence.<sup>86</sup> A spouse usually displays this jealousy after an episode of their partner’s unfaithfulness. The circumstances have confirmed unfaithfulness and the threat of losing a partner is real. The jealous reaction can vary but is in some way justified.

*Identification with Christ.* As said before, there is no answer when those suffering do not consider the Lord. To effectively deal with the believer’s spiritual union to Christ, Paul uses Galatians 2:20 to speak of the believer’s lives in union with Christ on the cross. Theologians call this identification where the faithful are now in Christ. His past is now the Christian's past.<sup>87</sup> In this way, there is a spiritual focus whereby the obsessively morbid jealous partner can identify with Christ’s life, death, and resurrection to attain victory over the past traumas that negatively govern the coping measures of an adult relationship.

*National Pastors (National Leadership).* This paper uses the term “national pastor” to refer to a pastor of the country of Chile in contrast with a missionary or pastor from the States (or another country). “National pastor” is the term missionaries in the BBFI have used for the last seventy years. This researcher has spent forty years preparing men and women for the ministry. When speaking of the pastor (bishop, elder) as a person who is a Chilean church administrator, this pastor will use “national pastor” to distinguish them from a foreign missionary.<sup>88</sup> This

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<sup>86</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 361-363.

<sup>87</sup> P. Adam McClendon, *Paul’s Spirituality in Galatians: A Critique of Contemporary Christian Spiritualities* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 482, Kindle.

<sup>88</sup> BBFI World Mission Service Center, “About Us,” Retrieved May 18, 2022, <https://bbfimissions.com/what-we-believe/>.

researcher also uses “national leadership” when including those in leadership positions that are not necessarily pastors.

*Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). The Fourth Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* states that the person with this disorder suffers from constant obsessive thoughts, which produce compulsions. Compulsions are ritualistic behavior trying to compensate for the lack of control.<sup>89</sup> Kozak and Foa, in their book, *Mastery of Obsessive-Compulsive*, clarify the difference between them; “obsessions are mental events, and compulsions are behavioral events.”<sup>90</sup> OCD is like trying to work on a computer while bombarded with unwanted advertisements. Most people can ignore the irritating publicity, but the person with OCD treats each ad as an important warning. So is the person with OCD; they entertain every unwanted impulsive thought as valuable truth.

*PACE.* Researchers use the acronym PACE for protective and compensatory experiences.<sup>91</sup> Social scientists categorize many positive experiences in the lives of children and adolescents that will counter the adverse effects of ACEs. They have included incidents such as having a loving home, a best friend, and opportunities to study in a good school, among many others. A great follow-up study to ACEs shows that these PACEs will help strengthen children's coping when they become adults and help them develop resilience.<sup>92</sup>

*Resilience.* Researchers use the term “resilience” for those adults who, through negative experiences as children, developed the capacity to cope with new adversity.<sup>93</sup> When a child

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<sup>89</sup> *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5-TR* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2022), 418.

<sup>90</sup> Michael J. Kozak and Edna B. Foa, *Mastery of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A Cognitive-Behavioral Approach* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4, Kindle.

<sup>91</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 16.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

experiences several ACEs, the presence of these traumatic experiences will jeopardize his physical and mental health. Studies show that when protective experiences are present, they counter the ACEs and produce adapted behavioral strategies for coping. This ability to adapt to challenging circumstances as an adult is called “resilience.”<sup>94</sup> Often, the same ACEs burdening the child can also help them develop coping skills, making them more resilient in the difficult circumstances of adult relationships.<sup>95</sup>

*Suspicious Jealousy.* In contrast with “fait accompli” jealousy, some spouses demonstrate obsessive jealousy where the facts do not point to unfaithfulness. The jealous partner feels it and even expects it despite the absence of any condemning evidence. Researchers call this “suspicious jealousy” because it builds on uncertainties and suspicion.<sup>96</sup> Researchers use another term for this suspicious jealousy, “morbid” jealousy.<sup>97</sup> Two other words are associated with this kind of jealousy; “pathological jealousy.”<sup>98</sup> and “cellopathy.”<sup>99</sup> This thesis uses these four terms interchangeably, all referring to the same suspicious jealousy. Suspicious partners will manifest this pathology creatively by spying on their spouses.<sup>100</sup> This action research focuses on suspicious jealousy (morbid, pathological, or cellopathy) in women.

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<sup>94</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 69.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>97</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

<sup>98</sup> Sybil L. Hart and Maria Legerstee, eds., *Handbook of Jealousy: Theory, Research, and Multidisciplinary Approaches* (Malden, MD: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2013), 463, Kindle.

<sup>99</sup> Annie Perdomo, “Cellopathy: When the jealousies are sick,” *JoyaLife*, Jul 08, 2020, <https://www.joya.life/en/blog/cellopathy-when-the-jealousies-are-sick/>

<sup>100</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 361-363.

### **Limitations**

This thesis may contain limitations to a comprehensive and objective conclusion with the previous assumptions guiding this action research design.<sup>101</sup> Asking people to expose their private, embarrassing, and painful experiences can produce reluctance to be forthcoming. This study examines adverse childhood experiences as the causes and the possibility of a cheating husband. Men are also not always transparent about promiscuous behavior, and women may not be forthcoming with sensitive information that could bring severe consequences. This study assumes the innocence of the husband of the obsessively morbid jealous wife, which constitutes suspicious jealousy. The researcher needs to address these limitations but hopes to overcome them through the confidence gained over the years as their pastor.

Most people have some ACEs that have occurred in the early stages of their lives.<sup>102</sup> These adverse memories also present some difficulties for those considered in the study. ACEs were usually harrowing events in the lives of these adults when they were children. Some of these ACEs were sexual, which carries a “shame” factor for the person, whether boy or girl. These painful memories also present the difficulty of asking the adult to relive a severe emotional trauma from their lives.<sup>103</sup> This researcher will measure these ACEs and their connection with present attitudes in section two of the questionnaire and with the second interview of wives and husbands (see appendices B and G).

### **Delimitations**

Interviews dealing with sensitive and highly personal experiences can be challenging and hard to share with a stranger, so this thesis proposes interviewing people attending the IBBI and

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<sup>101</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 20.

<sup>102</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

<sup>103</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 166-167.



its two satellite churches.<sup>104</sup> This action will narrow the participants to nine couples, mostly Christians, for better comprehensive data analysis. This research will consider those who already have a source of spiritual freedom in their relationship with Christ. Also, by selecting only wives who have experienced morbid jealousy, the research does not gather a cross-section of all married women, only those already suffering from this obsessive behavior. This sub-group interview limits the results by having only women who had ACEs but did not have morbid jealousy. It will not show the percentage of women with ACEs who did not develop obsessive morbid jealousy.

Jealousy is something that both men and women suffer.<sup>105</sup> In some studies, men are more jealous than women, although the jury is still out on the actual breakdown.<sup>106</sup> This thesis focuses only on obsessively morbid jealous wives, not OMJ husbands. Though most couples will show some jealousy, this action research thesis concentrates exclusively on “suspicious” and not “fait accompli” jealousy.<sup>107</sup> Fait accompli is when jealousy is warranted because of the partner’s infidelity, whereas suspicious jealousy is a pathologic insecurity with no evidence of unfaithfulness. In forty years of counseling in Chile, this researcher has experienced very few cases of obsessively morbid jealous men.

On the one hand, this researcher has counseled several unfaithful men and their wounded and angry wives over the past ten years. Additionally, he had called attention to several wives displaying obsessive morbid jealousy when their husbands were not guilty of infidelity. In each case, the men were coming into counseling seeking answers. So, this thesis only focuses on

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<sup>104</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 36-37.

<sup>105</sup> Amy Muise, Emily Christofides, and Serge Desmarais, “Creeping or Just Information Seeking? Gender Differences in Partner Monitoring in Response to Jealousy on Facebook,” *Personal Relationships* 21, no.1 (2014): 36. <http://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/pere.12014>.

<sup>106</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 1803-1804.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., loc 368.

morbidly jealous wives who have faithful husbands in the church who have experienced ACEs dealing with the broken relationship of their parents.<sup>108</sup> This research draws on known cases in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique and its two satellite churches (IBBG and IBBAH).

Like most Chilean congregations, these three churches have very limited counseling ministries.<sup>109</sup> Typically, only the pastor practices counseling, and usually just spiritual problems. The pastors lack the training to solve many severe marital issues and have minimal experience with serious personality disorders.<sup>110</sup> The plan for this specific action research project is to support pastors and other church counselors with training in biblically-based counseling, to help those families suffering from an obsessively morbid jealous wife.<sup>111</sup> The project aims at a limited group, the two other pastors and some lay counselors in the IBBI. The thesis plans to test this training program on these few before taking it to a national level with other national pastors trained by this researcher.

### **Thesis Statement**

Today, many spouses in the IBBI have insecurity and anxiety issues called morbid obsessive jealousy, which threatens the integrity of the marriage. This researcher's experience has been that obsessive morbid jealousy results from suffering ACEs as a child, specifically the divorce of their parents, the father's abandonment, or the father's evident unfaithfulness.<sup>112</sup> This obsessive morbid jealousy tremendously impacts the spouse and the kids. Many children have

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<sup>108</sup> Bi et al., "Father Attachment," 457.

<sup>109</sup> Kim and Van Tatehove, "The Utilizability of the Pastoral Counseling Response Scale (PCRS)," 85-86.

<sup>110</sup> Jennifer Shepard Payne, "'It's Kind of a Dichotomy': Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities," *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (2017): 1428. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26749131>.

<sup>111</sup> Moore, Williams, Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80.

<sup>112</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 60.

been traumatized by witnessing constant accusations and counterattacks. The children finally notice their world come apart as their parents eventually seek a divorce. This conflictive separation is just one type of ACE (adverse childhood experience) that devastates relational skills when children become adults.<sup>113</sup>

Occasionally, one or both spouses dealing with this conflictive behavior will seek counsel from their church's pastor or counselor. The couple hopes to receive practical solutions yet usually gets only a sermon, an appeal to increase their faith, a prayer, and warnings of pending judgment if they continue down the same path.<sup>114</sup> This researcher knows this because this is all he received in his pastoral preparation, which he practiced in the early years of his Chilean ministry. The Chilean local church offers only "spiritual" answers, so the church members seek "professional" care from psychologists and psychiatrists. Chileans, for years, have divided problems between spiritual and emotional. Spiritual issues like sin and doubts require a pastor, but someone with an emotional crisis needs to seek a secular psychologist.

When the OMJ sufferer goes to a secular professional, they are offered a quick fix through medication for anxiety,<sup>115</sup> but never anything resembling a transformation in Christ.<sup>116</sup> In his book *The Biology of the Mind*, Bruce Lipton offers this insightful observation: "The overuse of prescription drugs provides a vacation from personal responsibility."<sup>117</sup> Some psychologists offer alternative strategies through Eastern religious disciplines like transcendental meditation or

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<sup>113</sup> Lange et al., "Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children," 7.

<sup>114</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 73.

<sup>115</sup> Robert D Smith, *The Christian Counselor's Medical Desk Reference* (Stanley, NC: Timeless Texts, 2000), 63.

<sup>116</sup> Steven N. Gold, ed. *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2017), 433.

<sup>117</sup> Bruce H. Lipton, *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter & Miracles* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2016), 101.

other cognitive therapies.<sup>118</sup> Having the proper remedy without recognizing the disease is almost impossible. Both church and secular psychology continue attacking symptoms rather than the cause.<sup>119</sup> They try to modify behavior without discovering the cause, which is pulling weeds without their roots.

This thesis proposes that if the counselor knows the root cause of the anxiety of the obsessively morbid jealous wife, they can offer a better, more practical strategy for victory. As many studies point to the actual cause of jealousy being past trauma and not the spouse's behavior, that is where the counselor should focus. The spouse is not the problem, so the jealous partner should focus on modifying their thought life, not their circumstances. There is an untapped source of victory in the biblical principle of identification with Christ (Gal 2:20).<sup>120</sup>

This researcher intends to redirect those suffering from adverse childhood experiences by helping them identify with Christ, His past, present, and future (Gal 2:20). The solution sought through this thesis is to train several counselors to recognize the actual source of this behavioral disorder and be able to offer solutions to the counselees from a biblical perspective. Focusing on the actual cause will help focus on the best plan for victory. If the pastoral counselor can identify and connect childhood traumas to those suffering suspicious jealousy, then he can provide new counselors with a better emotional and spiritual healing strategy.

## Conclusion

The BBF churches in Northern Chile have witnessed an explosion of marital distress, especially in obsessively morbid jealous wives—scholarly literature points to adverse childhood

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<sup>118</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 157.

<sup>119</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 132.

<sup>120</sup> McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians*, loc 183.

experiences, specifically concerning the parents' conflictive marital condition as a primary cause. Many Christian spouses suffering from OMJ desperately seek a remedy for this dangerous complication to a healthy marriage. This researcher believes that the Bible has the answers for this and all marital problems but finds the current level of preparation in the Church lacking in understanding the issue and having a practical and biblical strategy. This thesis presents the need and the strategy to help counselors be part of the solution of OMJ in the wives in their congregations.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

God's written revelation begins with these words, "In the beginning," and very quickly comes to the condition of man without a "helper" (Gen 1:1, NKJV). God adds His divine observation that "it is not good that man should be alone..." and He begins the institution of marriage (Gen 2:18, 21-25, NKJV). Solomon puts his divinely inspired stamp of approval on marriage when he declares, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord," as does Jesus by performing His first public miracle at a wedding (Prov 18:22; John 2, NKJV). Why is it such a mess today if marriage is a good thing from God Himself? After forty years in the ministry, this researcher has seen the complexity of problems skyrocket each year, especially since the COVID pandemic.<sup>1</sup> This thesis project aims to offer hope through a biblical strategy.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, in these past few years, this researcher has encountered a specific problem that has defied the usual strategies and continues to destroy homes despite the best efforts to help.<sup>3</sup> The problem is suspicious jealousy that defies the spouse's logic, evidence, and behavior. After years of frustration with no answer, this researcher has decided to do something about it. This thesis project aims to discover the root cause of this type of jealousy to prepare more pastors and

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<sup>1</sup> Tanay Maiti et al., "Marital distress during COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown: a brief narrative," *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8, no. 2 (April-June, 2020), 429.

<sup>2</sup> C. R. Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope: You Can Get There From Here* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1994), 257.

<sup>3</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

biblical counselors in northern Chile who will offer hope for this terrible marital condition.<sup>4</sup> The best start is reviewing what others have researched and written on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

### Literature Review

Jealousy has been around since there were enough people to be jealous. Cain was jealous or envious of his brother Abel (Gen 4).<sup>6</sup> The rest of the Scriptures is about the sinful man and their relationship problem. Solomon states, "For love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame" (Song 8:6, NKJV). Like this quote from Maya Angelou, "Jealousy in romance is like salt in food. A little can enhance the savor, but too much can spoil the pleasure and, under certain circumstances, can be life-threatening."<sup>7</sup> This thesis shows that the obsessively morbid jealous wife has surpassed the level of a healthy relationship because of her extreme insecurity.

Jealousy is a complexity of emotions based upon insecurity and low self-esteem and focuses on the existence of a real or imagined threat.<sup>8</sup> In the book, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, Peter Salovey divides jealousy into two categories; "When the threat is unclear or only suspected, we call the resulting jealousy 'suspicious jealousy,' since the predominant reactions concern fears and uncertainties. When the threat to the relationship is unambiguous and damaging, we may label the resulting jealousy 'fait accompli jealousy.'"<sup>9</sup> Many couples have experienced jealous feelings and have lived to overcome them. But when there is a constant

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<sup>4</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>5</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 248.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Clinton and John Trent, *The Quick Reference Guide to Marriage and Family Counseling: 40 Topics, Spiritual Insights, and Easy-To-Use Action Steps* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 191, Kindle.

<sup>7</sup> Hart, and Legerstee, *Handbook of Jealousy*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 361-363.

obsessive drive to prove to themselves that their suspicions are not “crazy” and that the accusation is proof of guilt, there is a virtual time bomb of destruction for the relationship, producing a devastating chain reaction.<sup>10</sup>

### The Nature and Symptoms of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy

This thesis examines this obsessive, suspicious jealousy, called “obsessive morbid jealousy,” and tries to link it to an earlier trauma in individual lives. Psychological theories have long tried to connect this type of jealousy with past traumas, especially divorces and the unfaithfulness of one of the parents.<sup>11</sup> A person with morbid jealousy will dedicate enormous time and energy to investigating their spouse despite his faithful behavior. “These behaviors include searching the partner’s clothes, mobile phones, and other personal belongings to find evidence of infidelity, surprise visits to the partner's workplace, and stalking.”<sup>12</sup> Melanie White, in her book, *Anxiety in Relationships: How to Overcome Anxiety, Jealousy, Negative Thinking, Manage Insecurity and Attachment*, shows that insecurity and the fear of losing their partner to someone better than them generate this “irrational” jealousy.<sup>13</sup>

With the increased use of social media, jealous spouses have adopted cyberstalking and other technologies to spy on their husbands and wives.<sup>14</sup> White continues drawing on the importance of working on the jealous person’s security rather than trying to change their spouse.<sup>15</sup> The OMJ wife thinks the problem is with her husband rather than their past. Salman

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<sup>10</sup> Huelsnitz, Farrell, and Simpson, “Attachment and Jealousy,” 1679.

<sup>11</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, “Role of Negative Experiences in Past Relationships,” 20.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Melanie White, *Anxiety in Relationships: How to Overcome Anxiety, Jealousy, Negative Thinking, Manage Insecurity and Attachment* (Brentford, UK: For my family Ltd., 2020), 118, Kindle.

<sup>14</sup> Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais, “Creeping or Just Information Seeking?” 41.

<sup>15</sup> White, *Anxiety in Relationships*, 132-133.



Akhtar points out how morbid jealousy displays itself in three distinct areas; “emotional, cognitive, and behavioral.”<sup>16</sup> These areas produce an obsession to prove oneself right, searching telephones and computers and constantly observing or seeking proof of whereabouts.<sup>17</sup>

Obsessively morbid jealous wives also provoke conflicts and seek a fight due to obsessive thoughts and behaviors. In his book *The Jealousy Cure*, Leahy states that the suspicious partner investigates, interviews, checks GPS, interrupts conversations with the opposite sex, pleads, accuses, and vacillates between trying to conquer their spouse’s attention to accusing, provoking angry outbursts, and even violence.<sup>18</sup> The OMJ wife believes her feelings are true despite lacking confessions and evidence. She concentrates all her energy on revealing what she fears is true.

These obsessive wives believe their fantasies about their husbands’ cheating. Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson, in their book, *Mistakes Were Made but not by Me: Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts*, speak of the power of self-justifying in a person’s thinking to the degree of creating fictitious memories. These authors state that they “are not crazy or deceitful, but their memories are false, and false for particular, self-justifying reasons.” They continue that they “can create false memories that nonetheless feel vividly, emotionally real.”<sup>19</sup> Even counselors can play a part in trying to resurrect memories that were only fears and fantasies of the suspicious wife.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Salman Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow: Mistrust, Jealousy, Lovelessness, Shamelessness, Regret, and Hopelessness* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson, *Mistakes Were Made but not by Me: Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2020), 116, Kindle.

<sup>20</sup> Ed Bulkley, *Why Christians Can’t Trust Psychology* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993), 156-157.

Kellet and Stockton agree that “extreme or morbid jealousy presents in either delusional or obsessional subtypes, whereby the sufferer/perpetrator issues repeated accusations that a partner is sexually unfaithful based on insignificant, minimal, or no evidence.”<sup>21</sup> They will confront the supposedly guilty party, usually someone in their spouse’s office, who committed the high crime of conversing with their spouse. Curling et al. classify this morbid jealousy as a personality disorder like Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder “due to the presence of jealous obsessive intrusions creating paranoia/anxiety and associated compulsive safety-seeking behaviors.”<sup>22</sup> They practice obsessive behavior, such as checking their partner’s underwear, interrogating, and investigating all social media on their phones and computers.<sup>23</sup> Jealousy is genuine to the OMJ wife, whether the threat to their self-esteem and relationship is real or imagined.<sup>24</sup> Because of this, this researcher asks, if it is not an evidence-based accusation, what is causing these extremely jealous anxieties?

#### Possible Cause: Adverse Childhood Experiences

A thorough investigator will consider all possibilities when seeking answers to a potential obsessive-compulsive personality disorder.<sup>25</sup> Recent research, such as Dr. Felitti’s groundbreaking study at Kaiser Permanente, which studied the adverse effects of childhood traumas on the emotional and physical health of adults,<sup>26</sup> also shows the enormous impact on adults coping

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<sup>21</sup> Stephen Kellet and Daniel Stockton, “Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy: A Mixed-Methods Quasi-Experimental Case Study,” *British Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, June 2021, 1-9. Doi:10.1080/03069885.2021.1929834.

<sup>22</sup> Loise Curling et al., “Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy: An Adjudicated Hermeneutic Single-Case Efficacy Design Evaluation,” *Psychology & Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice* 91, no. 1 (March 2018): 96.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Huelsnitz, Farrel, and Simpson, “Attachment and Jealousy,” 1673.

<sup>25</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 22.

<sup>26</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

mechanisms. This center tested people who were not following through on a weight loss program, despite experiencing success and developed ten specific types of adverse childhood experiences that were the basis for the questions on their assessment test.<sup>27</sup> This major study in 1980 made the term “ACE” (adverse childhood experiences) famous.<sup>28</sup> Multiple studies have shown that ACEs are common in our country and will assign between 50 percent and 60 percent of all children with at least one ACE, and several will have more than one increasing the future impact on their adult lives.<sup>29</sup>

Researchers then expanded these studies to include more traumas and divided the ACEs into two main categories, child maltreatment and household challenges.<sup>30</sup> Investigators also discovered that the severity of the adverse effects depended on how many ACEs each experienced and whether they were one-time events or long-term suffering.<sup>31</sup> Felitti, in another study in 1998, discovered these four conclusions; “(ACEs) are (a) common, (b) highly interrelated, (c) have a cumulative impact, and (d) account for a large portion of our health and societal problems.”<sup>32</sup> Years of developing these tests and gathering the results have produced disappointing results. The researchers concluded that the results were too broad and lacked a practical means to identify which experience would cause a long-term crisis. They also

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<sup>27</sup> Gordon J.G. Asmundson and Tracie O. Afifi, ed., *Adverse Childhood Experiences: Using Evidence to Advance Research, Practice, Policy, and Prevention* (London, UK: Academic Press, 2020), 5, Kindle.

<sup>28</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Roberta Waite and Ruth Ann Ryan, *Adverse Childhood Experiences: What Students and Health Professionals Need to Know* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 42, eBook.

<sup>30</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 40.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

concluded that the more ACEs a person experienced as a child (from 0 – 18 years), the higher the adverse effects on health and emotional stability.<sup>33</sup>

### Research Past and Future

Although many researchers have studied ACEs' impact on later adult life, they recognize that there is still a need for further research on physical and emotional health.<sup>34</sup> Investigators would like a more standard and consistent set of assessment tools worldwide to form a better cohesive evaluation. Based on this researcher's cross-cultural experiences, each country has different cultural focuses and standards. The researchers would like to know "how well traditional definitions and measures of ACEs translate across settings. This investigation includes the translation of findings across cultures...."<sup>35</sup> Various factors also limit the integrity of the results, like how adults can explain what happened years earlier without distorting the events or reshaping memories.<sup>36</sup> Having learned from previous studies, researchers hope to devise better tools for progress in diagnosis and therapies.<sup>37</sup>

### Specific Trauma That Affects Adult Coping Mechanisms

One area of concern that this researcher observed was the possible impact on the wives' current behavior based on counseling interviews, as they spoke of their father's abandonment, their parents' early divorce, or a pattern of infidelity between their parents.<sup>38</sup> Each counselee also mentioned another factor; their mother (or another female caretaker) constantly speaking

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<sup>33</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 26.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>36</sup> Hopper et al., *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect*, 8-9.

<sup>37</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 262.

<sup>38</sup> O'Hara et al., "Coping in Context," 1695.

negatively about their fathers and men in general, criticizing the lack of faithfulness of men to their partners.<sup>39</sup> Fathers are essential for daughters to have the proper perspective toward men.<sup>40</sup> These girls were programmed to believe that all men “cheat.” This programming would become part of their worldview in life.<sup>41</sup>

One author illustrated this “programming” as seeing a generic scene in a video; depending on the background music type, a person will interpret the video.<sup>42</sup> The obsessively morbid jealous partner has the song of unfaithfulness playing in all life circumstances. This song produces the feelings of being cheated on without any evidence to back it up.<sup>43</sup> White warns that “the fact is, the distance you have created was not caused by the situation itself or circumstances. No, it was triggered by that critical inner voice which might have been wrong. That voice colored your thinking with negativity, distorted your perception, and in the end, led you to self-destruction.”<sup>44</sup>

The obsessively morbid jealous woman manifests insecurities developed while still young by lacking a supportive home environment, where they were often mocked or belittled. They feel that their partner will always prefer someone else over them.<sup>45</sup> Jennifer Hays-Grudo and Amanda Sheffield Morris point out that several studies have identified “adult attachments,” including one *Insecure, preoccupied/anxious* attachment. “Their most important relationships are characterized as high in jealousy and desperation about whether their partner will return their

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<sup>39</sup> Lange et al., “Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children,” 7.

<sup>40</sup> Bi et al., “Father Attachment,” 457.

<sup>41</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 205-206.

<sup>43</sup> Huelsnitz, Farrel, and Simpson, “Attachment and Jealousy,” 1664-1680.

<sup>44</sup> White, *Anxiety in Relationships*, 17.

<sup>45</sup> Katherine Chambers, *Jealousy: A Psychologist’s Guide to Overcome Envy, Codependency & Possessiveness in Any Relationship-Trust, Love, and Be Happy* (UK: British Basics Trading, 2019), 32.

affection.”<sup>46</sup> The problem continues independently of advice, biblical instruction, and even prayer. If this issue is not addressed, it becomes a multi-generational problem as the kids will be traumatized and take that trauma into their adult relationships.<sup>47</sup>

### The Cognitive and Emotional Roots of Jealousy

Research has dedicated much attention to connecting personality disorders to past ACEs.<sup>48</sup> This thesis attempts to join a specific personality disorder, morbid jealousy, to specific ACEs, such as the father’s abandonment or the parents’ divorce.<sup>49</sup> Jealousy is common in almost all relationships when a partner perceives a threat. Yet obsessive jealousy is sometimes called “cellopathy” or “cellotype.”<sup>50</sup> Chileans commonly use the term “celópata” to refer to this obsessive jealousy. Researchers assign these terms to pathological jealousy, irrational thoughts about unjustified fears of unsubstantiated unfaithfulness of their partner.<sup>51</sup>

This jealousy takes control of various emotions, feelings, cognitive processes, and the mind’s alert system, which is part of the obsessive thinking patterns impacting behavior. Leahy states this jealousy has a mind of its own and uses the term “hijacked” for the inability of the person to concentrate on anything else.<sup>52</sup> Peter Salovey further describes this mental meltdown as an inability to focus on anything else.<sup>53</sup> They display obsessive worrying, fantasizing about their partner’s relationship with the supposed rival, an oversensitivity to clues of distancing, and

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<sup>46</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 124-125.

<sup>47</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 44.

<sup>48</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

<sup>49</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 53.

<sup>50</sup> Perdomo, “Cellopathy.”

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 49.

rumination.<sup>54</sup> In her book, *The Communication of Jealousy*, Jennifer Bevan explains that “rumination” (like a cow chewing the cud) is the mind repeatedly chewing on unwanted and intrusive thoughts, producing heightened anxiety and insecurity.<sup>55</sup>

What is at the heart of morbid jealousy? In his book *The Jealousy Cure*, Leahy says that “envy is about comparisons. Jealousy is about the threat to a relationship.”<sup>56</sup> Salovey says it is “the fear of a threat from a rival actual and present or past and always involves a triangle.”<sup>57</sup> He breaks down five areas that point to this level of suspicious jealousy where the level of anxiety far surpasses its logical justification, 1) extreme anxiety, 2) obsessive mistrust, 3) exaggerated surveillance, 4) extreme levels of insecurity, and 5) high levels of unjustified confrontation.<sup>58</sup>

In their book, *The Handbook of Jealousy*, Sybil Hart and Maria Legerstee give five typical emotional responses of the suspicious partner substantiating this researcher’s personal experience with the Chilean population. First, there is an attempt to win their partner’s attention with added incentives. If that is not effective, they show hostility toward their partner. These steps might overlap or vacillate alternately. Then they show hostility towards the perceived rival. This stage can develop into sabotaging the rival and their illicit relationship. Finally, there is victimization, seeking sympathy, and entering a depression.<sup>59</sup> Depression is a form of anger that the person directs inward.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 367.

<sup>55</sup> Jennifer L. Bevan, *The Communication of Jealousy* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2013), 107, Kindle.

<sup>56</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 310.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., loc 1445-1449.

<sup>59</sup> Hart and Legerstee, eds., *Handbook of Jealousy*, 319.

<sup>60</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 349.

Although anger is always present, uncertainty is the primary catalyst of suspicious jealousy. Salovey says that “jealousy feeds on suspicion, turning into fury.”<sup>61</sup> Leahy points out that “uncertainty is the main issue in jealousy... uncertainty, and the need to know.”<sup>62</sup> The jealous partner says, “I don’t know, and I need to find out.”<sup>63</sup> He continues that jealous people are looking for confirmation, not facts. Despite the lack of evidence, their uncertainty drives their suspicious jealousy.

When OMJ wives are anxious, sad, or angry, they treat their feelings as facts.<sup>64</sup> This need to know sparks the prevalent form of expression in obsessive surveillance.<sup>65</sup> This condition is why their husband’s constant reassurance and submission to her control are never sufficient to calm her anxiety. No matter what is said and done by the innocent husband, it will never be enough to satisfy his obsessively morbidly jealous partner.<sup>66</sup> The husband is not the problem, so he is not the answer. The biblical counselor must help the OMJ wife see that her present problem is from her past to focus on the best strategy for victory.

Leahy says that within the suspiciously jealous person are core beliefs.<sup>67</sup> A person develops these core beliefs early in life, resulting from potential childhood trauma concerning their parents. An example of a core belief is, “I am unlovable; it is a matter of time before he finds someone else.”<sup>68</sup> Salovey explains that clinical psychology and experience show that excessive jealousy in adults comes from roots established by their childhood relationships with

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<sup>61</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 367.

<sup>62</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 43.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>65</sup> Jennifer L. Bevan, *The Communication of Jealousy*, 65.

<sup>66</sup> Katherine Chambers, *Jealousy: A Psychologist’s Guide*, 31-32.

<sup>67</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 50.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.



parents and siblings.<sup>69</sup> In his book *Divorce and Loss*, Joshua Ehrlich speaks of the common practice of mothers denigrating their husbands (the father of their daughters) after a conflictive divorce. The mother fills the daughter's thinking with the concept of the father (and men in general) as unloving, unfaithful, cheating, and unreliable.<sup>70</sup>

Additionally, the mother criticizes the daughter when she does not take her side, saying she is unlovable. The daughter grows up believing she is unlovable, and men are unfaithful. The mom has now planted the seeds of morbid jealousy in her daughter.<sup>71</sup> Most peer-reviewed sources agree that personality disorders start through past emotional traumas and are only triggered by present circumstances.<sup>72</sup> Many scholarly resources concur with the diagnosis, but no consensus exists on the remedy.<sup>73</sup> Where can hope be found for those suffering from extreme jealousy?

### What Hope Is Available

The research that pointed out the devastating influence of ACEs also discovered the healing power of protective and compensatory experiences (PACEs).<sup>74</sup> Research shows a significant reversal of the adverse effects of ACEs if the sufferer had several PACEs. Investigators divided these positive experiences into two categories, *Relationships and Resources*.<sup>75</sup> Studies identify "relationship" factors as (a) unconditional love from a parent, (b) having a best friend, (c) volunteering in the community, (d) being part of a social group, and (e)

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<sup>69</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 1722.

<sup>70</sup> Ehrlich, *Divorce and Loss*, 62.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 22.

<sup>73</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44-63.

<sup>74</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 16.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 51.

having the support of an adult outside of the family. Studies identify “resource” factors as (a) living in a clean and safe home with enough food, (b) having opportunities to learn, (c) hobbies, (d) sports and physical activity, and (e) a family with fair, consistent rules.<sup>76</sup> Studies have also shown that the presence of PACEs would minimize the adverse effect on coping mechanisms in adults, especially when feeling loved and loving in return.<sup>77</sup>

Researchers also use “resilience” to show that a healing process occurred.<sup>78</sup> Masiran Ruziana and Nik Shaliza Hussin, in their article “Morbid Jealousy Reactivated by Mood Episodes,” state that resilience is an acquisition of coping mechanisms that can produce positive adjustments in adverse events.<sup>79</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris added that resilience is the ability to “bounce back” from adversity by developing coping mechanisms established in response to early adversity.<sup>80</sup> “Freud believed that children usually develop typical harmful defense mechanisms like denial, minimization, rationalization, and displacement.”<sup>81</sup> Chris Cortman and Joseph Walden write, “Trauma is maintained by avoiding feeling.”<sup>82</sup>

In the book, *The Soulful Journey of Recovery*, Tian Dayton explains that “the nature of psychic trauma is that we do not feel it when it is happening. We block shocking pain, terrifying moments, or what hurts too much. It’s self-protective... trauma shuts down, blocks feelings.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 51.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>79</sup> Masiran Ruziana and Nik Shaliza Hussin, “Morbid Jealousy Reactivated by Mood Episodes,” *BMJ Case Reports* 2018, (January 2018): 64. Doi:10.1136/bcr-2017-223430.

<sup>80</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 70.

<sup>81</sup> Chris Cortman and Joseph Walden, *Keep Pain in the Past: Getting Over Trauma, Grief, and the Worst That’s Ever Happened to You* (Coral Gables, FL: Mango Publishing Group, 2018), 23, Kindle.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>83</sup> Tian Dayton, *The Soulful Journey of Recovery: A Guide to Healing from Past ACAs, Codependents, or Those with Adverse Childhood Experiences* (Boca Raton, FL: Health Communications Inc., 2019), 46, Kindle.

Scholarly literature link PACEs to resilience, which is the ability to “bounce back.” This link explains why some traumatized children can have more successful adult relationships than others.<sup>84</sup> Scholarly literature on the subject proposes that the ideal goal is to have as many PACEs to counter the many ACEs to show resilience, the coping ability to govern life’s many difficulties and relationships as an adult.<sup>85</sup> But how is this resilience developed?

Most sources dedicate time and energy to addressing the root problem, virtually plugging the hole in the bridge.<sup>86</sup> This strategy does not help adults already suffering from obsessive unsubstantiated jealous feelings. Many authors have tackled the situation and put forth several therapies, yet there is no consensus on a viable rescue plan. These resources offer diverse self-help methods (the idea that the body can heal itself) and therapies like letter writing, storytelling, and Eastern meditation.<sup>87</sup> Elizabeth Hopper et al., in their book, *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect*, use these two strategies, “mindfulness” and “self-compassion.”<sup>88</sup> Cortman and Walden offer the “five components of Fritz: Remember, Feel, Express, Release (Let go), and Reframe.”<sup>89</sup>

In his book, *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself: How to Lose Your Mind and Create a New One*, Joe Dispenza promotes the idea that you can be self-healed “[by] perceiving the events of our lives more positively, our inner world can become more peaceful.”<sup>90</sup> He likens relief to the healing from the “placebo effect” where a doctor does not give medicine, only the hope that they

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<sup>84</sup> Ruziana and Hussin, “Morbid Jealousy Reactivated by Mood Episodes,” 64.

<sup>85</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 252.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>88</sup> Hopper et al., *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect*, xi-xii.

<sup>89</sup> Cortman and Walden, *Keep Pain in the Past*, 58.

<sup>90</sup> Dayton, *The Soulful Journey of Recovery*, 174.

will get better.”<sup>91</sup> The bottom line is that counselors must discover how to disconnect the present suspicious spouse from their previously programmed worldview and change the “music” playing in their minds.<sup>92</sup> Those suffering spouses seek answers, and this thesis aims to discover the best way to prepare pastors and counselors to offer them biblical solutions. This counselor finds that the goal is more manageable than the means.

### The Role of the Church in the Healing Process

The Sovereign, All-Sufficient God, has the answers to every problem humanity faces (Gen 18:14; Jer 32:17). Where does the church come in guiding the morbid jealous spouse to victory, saving the marriage, the home, and future generations? Notably, many secular sources either neglect the importance of a personal relationship with God or blame God and the church for worsening the problem. Gold, in this excerpt from the *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, reflects what many secular sources believe about the part religion plays: “When individuals view the experience of traumatic events as a sign of God’s punishment or abandonment, accompanied by feelings of anger, they undermine resilience...”<sup>93</sup>

There is a case for saying that the church is not well equipped to handle specific issues of personality disorders.<sup>94</sup> The church’s primary focus should be to promote a personal relationship with Christ and make disciples.<sup>95</sup> The church offers salvation and an intimate walk with the

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<sup>91</sup> Joe Dispenza, *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself: How to Lose Your Mind and Create a New One* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2012), 199.

<sup>92</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 205-206.

<sup>93</sup> Steven N. Gold, ed., *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2017), Chapter 22.

<sup>94</sup> Darren D. Moore, Charles Williams, and Clinton E. Cooper, “Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health and Relational Concerns within Faith-Based Organizations,” *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 76, no. 2 (2022): 80-81.

<sup>95</sup> P. Adam McClendon and Jared E. Lockhart, *Timeless Church: Five Lessons from Acts*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2020), 99.

Lord, essential to recovering a morbidly jealous spouse. But is complete transformation automatic, or does the church need to encourage spiritual growth?<sup>96</sup> Pastors and counselors need to offer those with personality disorders more than just a sermon, a prayer, a Bible reading, and the exhortation to try harder. In his book, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Dr. Larry Crabb states that most problems in conduct come from wrong patterns of thinking as people pursue irresponsible ways to strengthen their worth of significance and security (Prov 23:7).<sup>97</sup>

This researcher believes that the Scriptures answer all problems and daily needs, even the complex issue of obsessive morbid jealousy. If past trauma is the source of present distress and lack of coping, then this is where the counselor needs to focus. In his book, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, Norman Wright explains that trauma comes from a Greek word meaning “wound.” Not all wounds heal. “It is a normal reaction to abnormal events that overwhelm a person’s ability to adapt to life where you feel powerless.”<sup>98</sup>

This thesis will examine these concepts to offer a biblically-based strategy for overcoming the danger of obsessive morbid jealousy. Wright states, “Our task is to assist the counselees in their journey and encourage them in their faith. Overcoming trauma is a process-a journey. No one travels the journey alone; the Lord is with all of us.”<sup>99</sup> Wright understands the complexity of this journey, saying to be sure to use Scriptures at the appropriate time and be sensitive to the needs of the counselee and the leading of the Holy Spirit.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2015), 14.

<sup>97</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 66.

<sup>98</sup> H. Norman Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House Publishers, 2014), 189.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

This researcher will seek to connect some essential biblical principles to help on this journey. One important truth is the believer's identification with Christ, understanding that His past is now the believer's past (Gal 2:20). Adam McClendon writes that the cross is the center of spiritual life and victory.<sup>101</sup> Paul taught other essential precepts in this battle for the mind, like the importance of forgiveness to gain liberty from the chains of past offenses (Eph 4:32). He also urged the Christian disciple to let go of the past and concentrate on the future (Phil 3:13).

Paul's teaching showed freedom by taking control of one's thought life (2 Cor 10:3-5; Rom 12:1, 2; and Eph 4:17-24). The disciple must daily go to battle, and his battlefield is the mind (John 8:31, 32; Eph 6:14). Biblical meditation is one discipline that contributes to this goal of freedom from obsessive thoughts (Ps 1:1-3).<sup>102</sup> In his book *Crisis Counseling*, Scott Floyd agrees that "part of effective coping involves developing or returning to a more accurate understanding of who God is and what He is like."<sup>103</sup>

This researcher sees a definite gap in the literature and research on obsessive morbid jealousy where there is a strong emphasis on diagnosis yet a notorious absence of answers, especially biblical answers.<sup>104</sup> He will continue the study and come to an informed conclusion to prepare future pastors and biblical counselors in the Iglesias Bíblicas Bautistas of northern Chile. Editors Gordon Asmundson and Tracie Afifi, in their book *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, agree that professionals lack preparation.<sup>105</sup> This researcher would add that there is a lack of

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<sup>101</sup> McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians*, loc 399.

<sup>102</sup> Ian Osborn, *Can Christianity Cure Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: A Psychiatrist Explores the Role of Faith in Treatment* (Grand Rapids, MI: BrazosPress, 2008), loc 2385-2400, Kindle.

<sup>103</sup> Scott Floyd, *Crisis Counseling, a Guide for Pastors and Professionals* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic and Professional, 2008), 105.

<sup>104</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 237.

<sup>105</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 12.

knowledgeable experience with pastors and biblical counselors in the Baptist churches of northern Chile.

### **Theological Foundations**

Since the beginning of time, God designed and presented to humanity the institution of marriage, the foundation of society (Gen 2:18, 23-25). This union of a man and woman pictures Christ's special relationship with the church (Eph 5:22-33). After the disobedience of Adam and Eve, God placed a curse on this world that produced tension between men and women and created difficulties for the home (Gen 3:16-19). Although several marriage problems exist, this DMIN action research thesis considers morbid jealousy in wives as a personality disorder based on a "perceived" threat of losing their mate to another. This obsessive morbid jealousy threatens to destroy the relationship by pushing away the person they are obsessively and fearfully trying to keep.<sup>106</sup> This action research examines the connection between the past trauma of an absent father through divorce or infidelity, aiming to train biblical counselors to connect childhood trauma to those wives suffering suspicious jealousy.<sup>107</sup>

### **The Sacred State of Matrimony**

God is the author of marriage, and everything that God designs is good (Prov 18:22). When God created man, He declared, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen 2:18, NKJV). God blessed this union between a man and a woman and considered it sacred. One reason He values this is that marriage represents His union

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<sup>106</sup> "Morbid jealousy is a relatively common and disabling mental health entity. Psychological theories suggest experiences of being cheated on in previous relationships and childhood experience of parents having or being accused of having extramarital relationships as aetiological factors of morbid jealousy." Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships and adverse childhood experiences in morbid jealousy," 20.

<sup>107</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44-45, 53.

(as the husband) with His people (as the wife), and He always demands faithfulness (Ezek 16:8-21; Jer 3:6-8; Hos 2:2-7). The Lord rebuked Israel for its departure from God's Law on marriage and declared hatred of divorce (Mal 2:14, 16). When the Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce, He raised the bar even higher than the conservative rabbis of His day (Matt 19).<sup>108</sup> The author of Hebrews summarizes God's attitude toward marriage showing the sacredness of physical oneness and judgment for the sexually unfaithful (Heb 13:4).

Today, the world has abandoned these concepts, and divorce and unfaithfulness are rampant.<sup>109</sup> In Chile's ministry context, finding a faithful marriage seems complicated. Many are already in second and third relationships when couples come to the church.<sup>110</sup> With the abundance of cases of unfaithfulness, jealousy is on the minds of many wives. This researcher has seen how unfounded jealousy devastates faithful husbands and the marriage. The church needs to prepare workers to help stop the bleeding.<sup>111</sup>

### The Generational Consequences of Poor Choices (ACEs)

The Bible records the poor choices that Adam's offspring has committed over ancient history. This researcher often defines wisdom as making the right choices that bring the best results. Warren Wiersbe says wisdom "gives discernment in making decisions."<sup>112</sup> The opposite of wisdom is foolishness which produces adverse effects (Prov 1:20-33). Poor choices bring

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<sup>108</sup> Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew 2022 Edition*, Constable's Expository (Bible Study) Notes, Web-based, May 27, 2022, 478-479. <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/matthew.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> Kristi Kanel, *A Guide to Crisis Intervention*, Fifth Edition (Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2012), 143.

<sup>110</sup> Linda J. Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially* (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2000), 174.

<sup>111</sup> Jennifer Shephard Payne, "It's Kind of a Dichotomy: Thoughts Related to Calling and Purpose from Pastors Working and Counseling in Urban Resource-Poor Communities," *Journal of Religion and Health* 56, no. 4 (August 2017), 1419.

<sup>112</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Wisdom and Poetry* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2003), 388.



negative consequences for the fool but also affect others around them. The Law spoke of a generational evil, where the results would negatively affect the third and fourth generations (Deut 5:9). Although God repealed this “generational curse,” the fathers’ sins still affect future generations (Ezek 18:20).

Crabb thinks that parents teach the wrong value system to their children, causing them to repeat many of the same mistakes.<sup>113</sup> Abraham, the father of faith, trusted God, the foundation for righteousness (Gen 15:6), but lied about his wife twice to save himself from a supposed danger (Gen 12:13, 20:2).<sup>114</sup> Once he did it in Egypt and later repeated it in Gerar of Philistia. In his book, *Abraham the Friend of God*, Swindoll calls this repetition “disobedience déjà vu.”<sup>115</sup> This sin resurfaces when his son Isaac follows his father’s footsteps and travels to Gerar (Gen 26:7). Arthur Pink concludes that following the parents’ weaknesses is more manageable than learning their strengths.<sup>116</sup> Another Abimelech experiences deceit putting the nation of Philistia in danger of God’s wrath.<sup>117</sup>

Abraham displays another example when he chooses Isaac over Ismael (Gen 21). Isaac must have felt favoritism as he repeats it with Esau (Gen 25:28). Jacob grows up feeling his father’s rejection of Esau but repeats the attitude with Joseph.<sup>118</sup> Although Joseph suffered what today’s researchers call adverse childhood experiences, he continued with resilience based on the

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<sup>113</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 109.

<sup>114</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Pentateuch* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), 117.

<sup>115</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Abraham the Friend of God: Bible Study Guide* (Fullerton, CA: Insight for Living, 1988), 95.

<sup>116</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1950), 231.

<sup>117</sup> Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 430-431.

<sup>118</sup> Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Pentateuch*, 141.

presence of the Lord in all his early experiences.<sup>119</sup> Others do not seem to fare as well as they continue making poor choices from their pasts, and the chain reaction continues. What made the difference in the life of Joseph to overcome his childhood adversities, and how can the church make a difference in the lives of suffering children?<sup>120</sup>

### Counseling in the Context of the Church

Does God want the church to counsel emotional problems, or does He only command the church to make disciples?<sup>121</sup> Some say that the church only counsels at the preaching service Sunday morning.<sup>122</sup> Other churches seek to refer their emotionally disturbed members to professional counselors. What do the Scriptures say about counseling? Webster's dictionary gives a short and precise definition of counseling to advise or inform.<sup>123</sup> In the context of this thesis, a counselor provides biblical guidance for those seeking to overcome a problem.<sup>124</sup>

The Bible calls God the Father of counseling in 2 Corinthians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort" (NKJV). The word "comfort" in Greek is "paraklēses," which means one that comes alongside another to give whatever aid is needed.<sup>125</sup> God demonstrates the characteristics of a counselor; first, because He cares about those suffering (Isa 25:8). Second, because He shows the right path to follow for

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<sup>119</sup> Hays-Grudo, Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 18.

<sup>120</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 333-349.

<sup>121</sup> Moore, Williams, and Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 81.

<sup>122</sup> Gary R Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 1988), 15.

<sup>123</sup> David B. Guralnik, ed., *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1968), 110.

<sup>124</sup> Moore, Williams, and Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80.

<sup>125</sup> W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., Ed., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 110.

victory (Rom 12:1, 2). And third, He gives practical steps to follow and requires each person to take personal responsibility for their actions (1 Cor 4:2; Gal 6:7-9).

God also motivates His disciples to counsel through hardships as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1:4, “Who *comforts* us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to *comfort* those in any trouble, with the *comfort* with which we are *comforted* by God” (NKJV, *emphasis* by this researcher). God creates the schoolroom atmosphere of counseling through personal problems and His solutions.<sup>126</sup> Paul uses the Greek word “dynasthai” in this verse to speak of the power by which God forms His counseling agents in the body of Christ.<sup>127</sup> The counselor must be a channel through which God comforts those needy sheep.

Isaiah 9:6 gives “counselor” as a title for the Messiah (NKJV).<sup>128</sup> In his book, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, Wright describes Jesus as the model counselor. Jesus showed compassion and felt people’s pain (Mark 6:34, 36); He saw their actual needs (John 3:1-21), gave people worth, used the right words, emphasized proper behavior, encouraged people to take responsibility, provided hope, encouraged, emphasized peace of mind, and helped refashion people’s thinking (Luke 5:22-25; 12:22-27).<sup>129</sup> Wright continues that Jesus used the presence of the Holy Spirit and the power of prayer to help guide His work which every counselor should imitate.<sup>130</sup> Christ used this same term, “Counselor,” to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He also used the word “allon” (another of the same kind), meaning He and the Holy Spirit are the same counselors.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 115.

<sup>127</sup> Vine, Unger, and White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, 2.

<sup>128</sup> Homer A. Kent Jr., *The Pastor and His Work* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1963), 287.

<sup>129</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 19.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-27.

<sup>131</sup> Vine, Unger, and William, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, 29.

John uses the same term, “paraklēton,” for Jesus in 1 John 2:1.<sup>132</sup> The New Testament shows all three members of the Trinity involved in this ministry of “paraklesis.” So, it is no surprise that Paul gives this idea of “paraklesis” as an active ministry in the church. Paul states this in Romans 12:8, “he who exhorts, in the exhortation” – paraklesis (NKJV). Dr. Larry Crabb explains the importance of this verb as a model for church counseling.

Other counseling programs emphasize the importance of confrontation with sin as the sole basis for counseling.<sup>133</sup> But Crabb shows that the New Testament uses the verb “nouthetic” for verbal confrontation only thirteen times, while it uses “paraklesis” 113 times.<sup>134</sup> This concept of counseling is better at adapting to various emotional and spiritual difficulties. Here the counselor comes alongside someone hurting and, after gaining confidence, offers a plan, a strategy for victory.<sup>135</sup> Wright calls for counselors to follow the example of Christ in being empathetic (Gal 6:2).<sup>136</sup>

Wright also urges a counselor to listen well, a key to effective counseling (Prov 18:13, 15).<sup>137</sup> Paul Pettit speaks of God’s resources for those suffering within the Christian community, the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the church.<sup>138</sup> As God uses these three together, the Holy Spirit (Divine Counselor) prepares the counselor through the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. He then places them within the body to help the body be victorious. The local church should always consider counseling as an essential ministry.

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<sup>132</sup> Vine, Unger, and William, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, 111.

<sup>133</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 41.

<sup>134</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 138-139.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 43.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 29-42.

<sup>138</sup> Paul Pettit, ed., *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2008), 45.

## Trauma and Crisis

Trauma and crisis are at the top of the local church's list of problems to be solved. The congregation always seeks the best way to get comfort during or after a traumatic experience. Christ used the word trauma in His parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.<sup>139</sup> The word trauma means a wound.<sup>140</sup> Wounds can be physical and emotional; Scott Floyd classifies them into two types. Type one trauma is a single event, like an automobile accident or natural disaster. He classifies type two as a multiple-blow trauma that continues over some time, like child abuse or a soldier for an extended period at war.<sup>141</sup>

The Bible gives many examples of traumas, such as Job's trials or David's persecution, recorded in Psalms.<sup>142</sup> Wright points out that man has dealt with various traumas, wars, natural disasters, disease, crime, the death of loved ones, and recent terror attacks.<sup>143</sup> He continues to describe the feelings of trauma where the world no longer seems to be a place of refuge.<sup>144</sup> Floyd speaks of the effects of trauma, which creates difficulty in thinking and concentrating, flashbacks, a changed worldview, anger, guilt, and sadness.<sup>145</sup> Those in the church will inevitably pass through many traumatic events and need qualified counselors to minister to their needs (1 Pet 4:12).

When Job was in the middle of his trauma, he desperately needed the comforting counsel of friends. The story shows they offered no sympathy. Like many churches today, his friends wanted to give sermons instead of moral support. Their counsel did not impress Job or God (Job

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<sup>139</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 45.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>142</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 187.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>145</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 50-53.

26:3, 4; 42:7). Christ teaches in Luke 10:33, 34 that it is essential to bind both physical and emotional wounds, "...he had compassion. So, he went to him and bandaged his wounds (gr. trauma)."<sup>146</sup>

Many books define a crisis in several ways, but in this context, a crisis is someone facing a solid event that forces a decision. "The Chinese character for the word 'crisis' is a combination of the characters for 'danger' and 'opportunity'"<sup>147</sup> The Greek word "kreinen" means to decide.<sup>148</sup> Although the word does not appear in the Scriptures, the idea is there. Some biblical terms are trial, tribulation, test, persecution, and affliction (John 16:33; Rom 5:3; James 1:2; and 1 Pet 2:21).<sup>149</sup> With the increase in natural disasters and terrorism, the world has stepped up its game to help those in crisis. Floyd believes that God has called the church to be at the forefront of preparing workers to deal with those suffering crises, especially since the church has the tools to help the person, body, soul, and spirit.<sup>150</sup>

This thesis focuses on the cause of the OMJ wife, which studies point to the wife's ACEs like parental divorce or abandonment.<sup>151</sup> This traumatic programming of children's worldviews continues in their adult lives and relationship decisions. The effects of trauma on children (like Joseph in Genesis) can affect the ability to cope, and according to Wright, the long-term effects are more devastating than the short-term.<sup>152</sup> Parents' divorce sends a message to the child that the

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<sup>146</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 189.

<sup>147</sup> Diana Sullivan Everstine and Louis Everstine, *Strategic Interventions for People in Crisis, Trauma, and Disaster: Revised Edition* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 4.

<sup>148</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 25.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 127.

<sup>150</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 17.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 220-222.

<sup>152</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 338-339.

world is no longer a safe place, nor is it kind, trustworthy, or predictable.<sup>153</sup> Crabb points out the importance of children's emotional well-being, linked to their parent's attitudes and behaviors (Col 3:21).<sup>154</sup>

### The Need for Cognitive Reprogramming

The Bible highlights the importance of correct thinking for a victorious life in Christ (Prov 23:7). Paul states in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (NKJV). The unregenerate man cannot spiritually reason, so the biblical counselor must first introduce him to Christ.<sup>155</sup> Paul continues in 2 Corinthians 3:16, stating that conversion is necessary to comprehend the Scriptures.<sup>156</sup> Therefore the biblical counselor must always determine the spiritual condition of the counselee before attempting to guide them to a cognitive strategy.

Yet a true transformation does not automatically straighten out a person's programmed thinking for years. In Ephesians 4:17-24, Paul encourages the believers to put away the old form of thinking and put on the new. Seamands points out,

we preachers have often given people the mistaken idea that the new birth and being "filled with the Spirit" will automatically take care of these emotional hang-ups. But this just is not true. A great crisis experience of Jesus Christ, as important and eternally valuable as this is, is not a shortcut to emotional health. It is not a quickie cure for personality problems.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 338-339.

<sup>154</sup> Lawrence J. Crabb Jr., *Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling: Meeting Counseling Needs Through the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 54.

<sup>155</sup> H. A. Ironside, *Addresses on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1938), 107-109.

<sup>156</sup> H. A. Ironside, *Addresses on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1938), 90-91.

<sup>157</sup> Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, 14.

Paul also encourages Timothy and all disciples to strive to be approved workers of the Lord, with knowledge of the Word (2 Tim 2:15). In the same epistle, Paul stresses the importance of the Bible as an all-sufficient source for human problems (2 Tim 3:16, 17). The Bible must be the principal resource for reprogramming one's warped thinking process (Col 3:16).<sup>158</sup>

Paul sums up his strategy of cognitive reprogramming with Romans 12:2; "and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what that good and acceptable and perfect will of God is" (NKJV). Constable notes a change in this section of this epistle. Chapters one through eleven show God's action towards man, and chapters twelve through sixteen give man's response to God's actions.<sup>159</sup> Kent Hughs translates this verse as "Don't be conformed to the scheme of this passing age."<sup>160</sup> The Greek word "syschēmatizesthe" is where the English get the term "scheme."<sup>161</sup>

The positive side to this verse speaks of a transformation (Greek "Metamorphosis"), which translates to renewing the mind "nous."<sup>162</sup> Crabb describes the "nous" as the conscious mind that makes evaluations and moral judgments.<sup>163</sup> Paul is not suggesting this change but is strongly encouraging, "I beseech you, therefore" (Rom 12:1, NKJV), a fantastic word from the Holy Spirit to Paul.<sup>164</sup> Newell connects this to Paul's metaphor of putting off and putting on, as with an old garment (Eph 4:17-24; Col 3:9, 10).<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 38-39.

<sup>159</sup> Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans 2022 Edition*, Constable's Expository (Bible Study) Notes, Web-based, May 27, 2022, 243. <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/romans/romans.htm>

<sup>160</sup> R. Kent Hughs, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 214-215.

<sup>161</sup> William R. Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1938), 453.

<sup>162</sup> Hughs, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*, 219, 221.

<sup>163</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 86-87.

<sup>164</sup> Newell, *Romans Verse by Verse*, 447.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 545.



The biblical counselor must help the traumatized adult remove the erroneous worldview and renew the mind. It is not an easy task reprogramming years of trauma and crisis. Crabb distinguishes between two levels of thinking, the “nous” and the “phronema.” The phronema stores the purpose of acting upon the new behavior based on the Scriptures to overcome the old.<sup>166</sup> Paul shows that this also requires discipline as one must bring into captivity every thought to Christ (2 Cor 10:3-5).

Paul speaks of putting off the old man (a reference to man’s nature and conduct before being saved) and putting on the new (a Greek infinitive verb tense for an action already past), which should reflect the actions of the new nature in Christ.<sup>167</sup> Ephesians 4:31, 32 states, “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (NKJV). Cognitive reprogramming by memorizing the Scriptures is one means of putting off and putting on. Psalm 1:2 states the benefits of meditation on God’s Word, “But his delight *is* in the Law of the Lord, and His law, he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper” (NKJV). Paul gives a New Testament version of this in Philippians 4:8-9 “meditate on these things” (NKJV).

### The Believer’s Union and Identification with Christ

Although changed thinking is crucial for victory, another biblical element is key: the believer’s identity in Christ.<sup>168</sup> Crabb believes that the significant problems of anxiety,

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<sup>166</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 21-22.

<sup>167</sup> Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Ephesians 2022 Edition*, Constable’s Expository (Bible Study) Notes, Web-based, May 27, 2022, 101. <https://www.planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/html/nt/ephesians/ephesians.htm>

<sup>168</sup> McClendon, *Paul’s Spirituality in Galatians*, 34.

resentment, and guilt come from the search for value in their self-image in the wrong things.

Crabb asserts that Adam and Eve had a true worth before the Fall, but since then, humanity has found their worth in the wrong things (Jer 2:13).<sup>169</sup> The Samaritan woman at the well sought her value in having a husband (John 4). Christ offered personal worth through His Spirit, the living water (John 4:14). Crabb explains that eternal purpose and security (unconditional love) give a man his true worth (Eph 3:11, 12).<sup>170</sup>

Anthony A. Hoekema, in his book, *Created in God's Image*, shows that God created humanity to relate to Himself, others, and creation. But he adds that these three relations imply a relationship with one's self. He does not like the terms "self-esteem" or "self-love" but accepts the term "self-image."<sup>171</sup> He continues expressing the two distinct outcomes of self-image without Christ, too high or too low. But he answers that one can have a renewed self-image in Christ that brings a proper relationship with God, others, and creation (Rom 12:3).<sup>172</sup>

Wright ties this problem with trauma to a damaged self-image because the person questions who they are.<sup>173</sup> Pettit connects the proper self-image with human identity, specifically with Christ.<sup>174</sup> In his book on the importance of Galatians 2:20, McClendon focuses on the vital question, "Who am I?"<sup>175</sup> The book skillfully builds on the premise that Christians are crucified with Christ when they become disciples of Christ. His life becomes the Christian's life, His past

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<sup>169</sup> McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians*, 110.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

<sup>171</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986), 102-104.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 157.

<sup>174</sup> Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*, 187.

<sup>175</sup> McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians*, 35.

the Christian's past, and the Christian's identity is now with Christ.<sup>176</sup> If the past is the primary source of OMJ, identification with Christ offers a remedy for rewriting one's past.

As the disciple applies this co-crucifixion to their identity, there are permanent ongoing effects (John 12:24; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 1:3). The biblical counselor needs to sharpen his counseling skills to show the OMJ wife that her past, including all the trauma, is swallowed up in His past. The disciple dies to their former self and has a new identity in Christ (Rom 6:3-8, 11; Gal 2:20).<sup>177</sup> What one believes will shape how one behaves. Thus, knowing the truth marks a redefined identity that allows a break from the former chains of past ACEs.<sup>178</sup>

### Conclusion

God established marriage to benefit His creation, to be the foundation of society, and to picture His relationship with His people. After the Fall, humanity has perverted God's ways, and the institution of marriage is in dire straits. The lack of men keeping their marriage vows has created obsessive insecurity in some wives, which usually reflects unfaithfulness from past generations.<sup>179</sup> Christ has given the church a great responsibility to help these women have a victorious life and home, which calls for the church to prepare counselors.<sup>180</sup> These counselors must enable these women to reprogram their thinking to trust God and not man and seek their self-image and identity in Christ as the counselors gain victories in restoring homes and fortifying the church and spare further generations of an ongoing chain of defeats.

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<sup>176</sup> McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians*, 46.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 50, 54.

<sup>179</sup> Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling*, 335.

<sup>180</sup> Moore, Williams, and Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 81.

### Theoretical Foundations

This action research thesis aims to train pastoral counselors to connect childhood trauma to those congregants suffering suspicious jealousy.<sup>181</sup> This project has three main factors: morbid jealousy, childhood trauma of divorce and infidelity, and how to have an effective strategy for positive change. Researchers have investigated each of these areas, not leaving much territory uncharted.<sup>182</sup> Yet this thesis focuses on some of the gaps in the research. This researcher noticed the most significant gap in practical, faith-based strategies for the emotional health of the OMJ wife.

Researchers have spent little or no energy investigating strategies to overcome the obsessive-compulsive behavior of the obsessively morbid jealous wife.<sup>183</sup> Available research has also ignored the importance of spiritual disciplines to overcome this extremely anxious behavior. Gold, in the *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, states that some attribute religious belief to the problem.<sup>184</sup> Seamands, in his book, *Healings for Damaged Emotions*, laments the lack of faith-based ministries prepared to offer help beyond sermons.<sup>185</sup> This thesis wishes to actively engage the problem, from proper diagnosis to a biblical strategy offering hope to the OMJ wife and family.

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<sup>181</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>182</sup> O'Hara et al., "Coping in Context," 1695.

<sup>183</sup> Sally M. Winston and Martin N. Seif, *Overcoming Unwanted Intrusive Thoughts: A CBT-Based Guide to Getting Over Frightening, Obsessive, or Disturbing Thoughts* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications Inc, 2017), 91. Kindle.

<sup>184</sup> Gold, *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, 433.

<sup>185</sup> Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, 7, 8.

## Obsessive Morbid Jealousy

Many studies have mapped out the cause and effect of obsessive morbid jealousy (OMJ). Most OMJ studies point to a spouse's previous indiscretions or childhood traumas of detachment from fathers.<sup>186</sup> Fathers who have been unfaithful to their mothers or have had conflictive divorces leave an indelible impact that produces unhealthy insecurity in children and adolescents.<sup>187</sup> These children will carry these insecurities into their adult lives, negatively impacting adult romantic relationships.<sup>188</sup> David Richo writes in his book *When the Past is Present: Healing the Emotional Wounds that Sabotage Our Relationships*, that

The scared child still desperately seeks reassurance and gets rattled when someone refuses to return his calls. Even though that may not matter to the adult part of us, it does matter enormously to the child part of us, where feelings happen so powerfully, where any form of abandonment is terrifying because it picks up on past traumas or collective ones.<sup>189</sup>

These early traumas will cause an expectation of rejection and form a worldview that they are unlovable.<sup>190</sup> Because of this, the morbid wife will begin her search for confirmation of this worldview.<sup>191</sup> Studies show that an obsessively morbid jealous wife often realizes her thinking is unfounded and irrational but cannot rid herself of the fears or obsessive behavior.<sup>192</sup> Their feelings become accusations, and their charges are considered evidence. If they feel it, it must be true because they are unlovable.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> White, *Anxiety in Relationships*, 117.

<sup>187</sup> Bi et al., "Father Attachment," 456.

<sup>188</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44.

<sup>189</sup> David Richo, *When the Past is Present: Healing the Emotional Wounds that Sabotage Our Relationships* (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2008), 105, Kindle.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>191</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 26.

<sup>192</sup> Curling et al., "Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy," 96.

<sup>193</sup> Kellet and Stockton, "Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy," 1-9.

Several studies, such as those by Cobb (1979) and Shepherd (1961), clinically separate morbid jealousy into delusional or obsessive subtypes.<sup>194</sup> Other studies by Kingham and Gordon (2004), Mullen (1991), and Ortigue and Bianchi-Demicheli (2011) link Obsessive-Morbid Jealousy to obsessive-compulsive disorder due to “the presence of jealous obsessive intrusions creating paranoia/anxiety and associated compulsive safety-seeking behaviors.”<sup>195</sup> This researcher sums up these obsessive traits with the word “snooping.” The OMJ spouse (man or woman) becomes consumed with spousal spying.<sup>196</sup> The OMJ partner often checks their spouses’ phones, email accounts, Facebook accounts, GPS, and underwear for signs of unfaithfulness.<sup>197</sup> They erratically institute personal strategies to draw them closer while falsely accusing them of indiscretions.<sup>198</sup>

Robert L. Leahy, in his book, *The Jealousy Cure*, gives questions to be used in a jealousy survey (see Appendix B, Section 1). There are twenty-six personal observations in this part of the questionnaire. If a spouse’s score exceeds twelve out of a possible twenty-six, they are experiencing significant distress through suspicious jealousy.<sup>199</sup> The drawbacks of this type of study come from basing the results on a subjective evaluation of the participants. When violence or embarrassing indiscretions are involved, the participants can avoid being honest or lose their objectivity.<sup>200</sup> Still, these studies overwhelmingly connect morbid jealous traits with childhood

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<sup>194</sup> Kellet and Stockton, “Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy,” 1-9.

<sup>195</sup> Curling et al., “Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy,” 96.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 26.

<sup>198</sup> Chambers, *Jealousy*, 31-32.

<sup>199</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 22-25.

<sup>200</sup> Hopper et al., *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect*, ” 8, 9.

traumas.<sup>201</sup> Various authors conclude that there is still a need to investigate further as the nature of the association between spousal attachment and marital conflict is still unclear.<sup>202</sup>

### Childhood trauma

During an anomaly of a study about weight loss in the hospital system of Kaiser Permanente in California, the researchers discovered an essential clue as to why patients were not motivated by successful weight loss. This discovery led to a study that today is the dawn of recognizing adverse childhood experiences.<sup>203</sup> Dr. Felitti of Kaiser Permanente Health Center in San Diego, California, conducted a ground-breaking study in the 1990s identifying these ACEs as a significant contribution to direct and indirect health risks.<sup>204</sup> The study identified ten conditions broken down into “childhood experiences” and “home environment” and concluded that ACEs were common, interrelated, and had a cumulative impact.<sup>205</sup>

The more ACEs a child experiences, the higher chances for health and behavior problems.<sup>206</sup> The negative behavior of the home environment influences succeeding generations forming patterns that, as adults, are passed on to their children. “Eight ACEs were assessed at age 5, and behavior problems were assessed at age 9. Results revealed that three-quarters of the children (77%) had at least one ACE by age 5.”<sup>207</sup>

Asmundson and Afifi, in their book *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, explain the challenges in gathering valid results. The authors describe the risks to those suffering from ACEs

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<sup>201</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

<sup>202</sup> Bi et al., “Father Attachment, 457.

<sup>203</sup> Dayton, *The Soulful Journey of Recovery*, 46.

<sup>204</sup> Waite, and Ryan, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 42.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>206</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 16.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 40.

in interviews and questionnaires can provoke a crisis in past painful memories and might also adversely label those affected in a negative light.<sup>208</sup> As this action research attempts to interview participants that have suffered tremendous pain in their childhood, this researcher needs to use immense care to avoid causing further pain. The participants have voluntarily offered this researcher (their pastor) personal testimony of their past pain as they trust his discretion and pastoral interest in their well-being. The research will motivate those participants to take ownership of the study for their future victory over these obsessive thoughts and behaviors by fulfilling God's sovereign plan for their lives (2 Cor 1:3, 4).<sup>209</sup>

Several resources point to parental divorce as one of the most prominent ACEs behind the existence of obsessive morbid jealousy. "Parental divorce or separation is the second most prevalent adverse childhood event (Sacks, Murphy, & Moore, 2014), and it affects 30–40% of children before the time they reach the age of 15 (Anderson, 2002; Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008)."<sup>210</sup> These sources often refer to the ground-breaking quantitative study on the effects of divorce by Judith Wallerstein in 2004:

The study of 131 children 3-18 years old when their parents divorced in the early 1970s marks the culmination of 25 years of research. Extensive clinical interviews allowed in-depth exploration of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as they negotiated childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood. At the 25-year follow-up, they added a comparison group of peers from the same community.<sup>211</sup>

Studies document that interparental conflict in divorce is one of the highest factors that put children at risk of problems later in life with adult relationships.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 147, 154.

<sup>209</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research* (Curtin University, AU: Sage Publications Inc., 2013), 77.

<sup>210</sup> Waite, and Ryan, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 42.

<sup>211</sup> J. S. Wallerstein and J. M. Lewis, "The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: Report of a 25-Year Study." *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 21 no. 3, (2004). 353–370. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0736-9735.21.3.353>

<sup>212</sup> O'Hara et al., "Coping in Context," 1695-1713.



Research points to a particular level of conflict in a high-conflict divorce (HCD), and these divorces create a highly hostile emotional environment.<sup>213</sup> HCDs consistently predict adverse outcomes in grown children and even show a connection with childhood PTSD.<sup>214</sup> One study shows the prevalence of children experiencing an ACE, almost 36 percent, and the highly probable relationship with future obsessive morbid jealousy.<sup>215</sup> Again, this researcher sees the link and the need for further research, especially in finding effective strategies. Asmundson and Afifi focus on attacking the problem's root, decreasing the number of children experiencing ACEs, but offering little to those already suffering. This glaring need is where this action research will try to be different by involving the participants in a home-based project.<sup>216</sup>

### Strategy for Change

After reviewing several sources, this researcher observed two basic strategies that address the problem. Hays-Grudo and Morris use an analogy of a hole in a bridge to represent children perishing by falling in. Their goal is to work with all different professions (from teachers, parents, health care, psychologists, etc.) to plug the hole.<sup>217</sup> Researchers try to put safeguards in society to keep as many as possible from falling through the hole. As valid as trying to eliminate the source for ACEs is, the Bible and personal experience show that humanity will never stop foolish and sinful behavior apart from Christ (Rom 3:10, 23).

The Word shows that in this world, sin will continue, and lives will progress down the wrong path until Christ returns to establish His kingdom (Matt 7:13, 14). So to hope that humans

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<sup>213</sup> Lange et al., "Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children," 2.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 1, 7.

<sup>215</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 22.

<sup>216</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 10.

<sup>217</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 8.

can eliminate the “hole in the bridge” (the presence of ACEs) is not a feasible solution.<sup>218</sup>

Researchers offer remedial strategies in cognitive reprogramming using anything from guided imagery to Fritz’s five steps: “Remember, Feel, Express, Release, Reframe.”<sup>219</sup> Dr. Bruce Lipton also promotes the idea that you can be self-healed, similar to using a placebo.<sup>220</sup> The available sources try to adapt a path for healing, even accepting the use of esoteric disciplines and Eastern mysticism.<sup>221</sup>

There is still a long way to go in understanding the cause and effect of obsessive morbid jealousy, as there are no internationally-based standard tests. It is also challenging to obtain accurate, objective feedback from emotionally charged events years ago.<sup>222</sup> Hopper raises a fundamental question about this body of research and the effectiveness of those treatments with real-life people. “This concern has led prominent trauma theorists and clinical researchers to challenge the adequacy of one-size-fits-all approaches to trauma treatment (Cloitre, 2015; Stein, Wilmot, & Solomon, 2016; Sykes, 2004).”<sup>223</sup> This researcher sees the need to further study the possible strategies available, especially in a faith-based context.

This action research links ACEs to OMJ and shows how PACEs can counter the effect of ACEs. This researcher notes a glaring absence in scholarly literature in adapting faith-based Christian principles to those already suffering OMJ. Some sources even blame the church for the problem.<sup>224</sup> Yet Gold makes this wise observation; “The loss of meaning and faith contributes to self-identity changes. The experience of an ongoing spiritual struggle and the accompanying

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<sup>218</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 261.

<sup>219</sup> Cortman and Walden, *Keep Pain in the Past*, 33, 67.

<sup>220</sup> Lipton, *The Biology of Belief*, 135-136.

<sup>221</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 157.

<sup>222</sup> Cortman and Walden, *Keep Pain in the Past*, 43.

<sup>223</sup> Hopper et al., *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect*, 8-9.

<sup>224</sup> Gold, *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, 433.

failure to use one's faith as a means of coping contributes to the severity and duration of PTSD."<sup>225</sup> So the counselor must help those Christians suffering from ACEs to understand the biblical truth of their past trauma in seeking spiritual maturity (John 8:32; Phil 3:13, 14). The church must enter the battle and have biblical answers for every spiritual problem for those seeking.<sup>226</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Bible begins with God stating the importance of marriage for His divine plan for humanity. The Scriptures immediately after show the moral failure of God's creation when man disobeyed. This disobedience severely cursed humanity and marriage (Gen 3:16-19). This researcher has received many marriage problems over the past forty years, but one of these problems, jealousy, stands out as a paradox. He has witnessed many wives suffer from obsessive, jealous thoughts even when their husbands have shown themselves faithful. Studies have called this excessive insecurity thought process obsessive morbid jealousy.<sup>227</sup>

God has placed Christians into the body of Christ with varying gifts and roles for the edification of His church.<sup>228</sup> Some servants can meet the needs of the congregation with intuitive skills. This researcher believes the church needs to train others for the different conditions present in its members, such as obsessive morbid jealousy.<sup>229</sup> The purpose of this action research is to discover the core problem of the OMJ wife, which this researcher hypothesizes is adverse

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<sup>225</sup> Gold, *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, 433.

<sup>226</sup> Moore, Williams, and Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80-81.

<sup>227</sup> Curling et al., "Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy," 96.

<sup>228</sup> Floyd, *Crisis Counseling*, 21.

<sup>229</sup> Moore, Williams, and Cooper, "Pastoral Leaders Perceptions of Mental Health," 80-81.

childhood trauma.<sup>230</sup> After investigation, this researcher will synthesize the results into a training session for pastors and counselors of the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique and its two satellite missions.

Desperate obsessive morbid jealous wives and their husbands have commented to this researcher that “people don’t change.” After forty years of ministry, this researcher believes in the power of Christ and His Word to transform lives (2 Cor 5:17). The Scriptures promote the importance of renewing the mind and applying human identification with Christ to daily living (Rom 12:2; Gal 2:20).<sup>231</sup> This researcher proposes to discover the obsessive morbid jealousy’s root and to prepare church leaders to offer a strategy and hope to gain victory over this marital plaque in the churches in Chile. This action research project seeks to make a difference in the counseling programs in the local churches in Iquique.

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<sup>230</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

<sup>231</sup> McClendon, *Paul’s Spirituality in Galatians*, loc 620.

### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In Chapter One, this researcher presented the problem that biblical counselors face in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique ministry and its two satellite churches. The specific problem these counselors face is obsessive morbid jealousy which they lack the training to help. This investigative project proposes to discover the underlying cause of obsessive morbid jealousy and devise a training program to prepare counselors to provide an effective biblical strategy and hopefully prevent another broken home.<sup>1</sup> This action research thesis proposes to make a difference in the counseling program in the local churches in northern Chile.

Chapter Two gave the biblical basis for the importance of the church in guiding its members toward a victorious Christian life. It presents adverse childhood experiences' strong influence on adult relationships' decision-making patterns. Chapter Two also shows that knowledgeable biblical counseling can help disarm these couples' unhealthy choices. This chapter will answer the question, "How is this problem being addressed?"<sup>2</sup> Researchers debate whether quantitative or qualitative research is better suited for investigations.<sup>3</sup> This researcher believes that qualitative research is the best choice to bring answers to couples suffering from this obsessive behavior.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Payne, "It's Kind of a Dichotomy," 1428.

<sup>2</sup> *Doctor of Ministry Program and Candidacy Handbook*, Liberty University, Revised and Updated April 2022, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 59.

## Intervention Design

All churches, including the church in Iquique, face many complex problems present in society today. The Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique has disciplined many couples looking for answers to their difficult circumstances over the years. This researcher receives many couples seeking a solution to their present unhappiness. But few marital problems equal the obsessively morbid jealous wife for complexity and devastating consequences. This thesis hopes to do something substantial to help those with OMJ.

The obsessively morbid jealous wife provokes her husband to resentment with her many false accusations and controlling behavior.<sup>5</sup> The children in these homes seek to escape the constant combative and hostile atmosphere losing the feeling of their home being a safe refuge from the world.<sup>6</sup> This obsessive disorder claims families and even church leaders. In one case, a national pastor's obsessively morbid jealous wife would not allow her husband to minister to women who comprised over half of the congregation. This action research seeks to show how women with obsessively morbid jealous behaviors impact their marriages and families. The results will produce the data to offer training to the national pastors and counselors.

The researcher attempts to establish the link between the wife's obsessive morbid jealousy and her adverse childhood experiences and how this impacts the marital and family relationship. This thesis focuses on discovering what created the extreme insecurity of the wife and, consequentially, the suspicions of their husbands. Most pastors and counselors in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique and its satellites lack knowledge of the cause of this problem. Without knowing the cause, their counseling misses the point of how to resolve this adverse behavior. This researcher will expound on the methodology designed for this intervention in the

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<sup>5</sup> Kellet and Stockton, "Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy," 3.

<sup>6</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 45.

remainder of this chapter. Every investigation requires a certain number of resources.<sup>7</sup> This researcher has access to essential items that he will need to implement the research (see Appendix A).

## Participants

### Participants Targeted

This researcher has experience counseling obsessively morbid jealous wives, as it is a common problem in his ministry in Iquique. This researcher will target those wives with OMJ willing to participate and evaluate them through a questionnaire. If selected, they will take part in two separate interviews. This research is looking for adult couples 18 or older who are in a marriage or permanent relationship and suffer from obsessive morbid jealousy. The study proposes to use up to ten OMJ wives and their husbands.

This project focuses on the obsessively morbid jealous wife, and the researcher will use the data for the ongoing training of pastors and biblical counselors. Time and space limit the extent of influence one counselor can handle, so this thesis hopes to prepare additional competent counselors.<sup>8</sup> Christ encouraged His followers to prepare new disciples and leaders in the church (2 Tim 2:2). This researcher has dedicated the past forty years to preparing new pastoral leadership for the churches in northern Chile. This action research plans to prepare existing counselors better and enlist new counselors to operate within the local church context.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 82.

<sup>8</sup> Scazzero, *The Emotional Healthy Leader*, 39.

<sup>9</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 15.

This researcher has already sought and received approval from the Institutional Review Board for this project.<sup>10</sup> Having received IRB approval, this researcher will seek consent from the two national pastors to meet with a select group of leaders that each pastor considers part of their counseling team. This researcher will require pre-approval from the pastor of each new counseling candidate, who must be a seasoned, mature Christian, active in their congregation, and involved in a ministry that requires working with adult couples. This researcher has set a goal to have six active participants for the counseling session, two from each congregation. In the future, each church can add to its counseling team through the training this researcher plans to accomplish through this thesis.

## **Recruitment**

This researcher cannot assume that every OMJ wife in the congregation will want to participate in this action research project.<sup>11</sup> Yet, as their pastor and counselor, this researcher has already established a bridge of trust and confidentiality with these participants. Apart from the informal contact (before and after services), this researcher will also send a formal email to each prospective participant (see Appendix C). This invitation will present the purpose, the personal benefits, the benefits for others, the risks, and the time required. He will also assure the participants of the confidentiality of their participation and express their need to sign the consent form (see Appendix D).<sup>12</sup>

The researcher will allow some time to receive acceptance from each potential participant without pressure or coercion. This researcher is not offering any remuneration for participation and will let these future participants ask questions if they have any misgivings. Although not

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<sup>10</sup> *Doctor of Ministry Program and Candidacy Handbook*, 32.

<sup>11</sup> Hopper et al., *Treating Adult Survivors of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect*, viii.

<sup>12</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 36.



ideal, one of the spouses can participate without the other if the non-participating spouse does not oppose their participation. Those participating must be free to respond with honesty without any sense of recrimination for their participation. This researcher has forty years of experience counseling and feels he has the tools necessary to interview these participants compassionately.

Once the potential participants accept the invitation to participate in this investigation, they will start by signing the consent form (see Appendix D) and handing this to the researcher. He will place these consent forms in a secure folder that he will keep for each participant. He again will stress that this participation is voluntary, and at any time, if they wish to withdraw, they may do so without any repercussions from this pastor or the church.<sup>13</sup> These participants are all familiar with the office of this pastor, and he will explain that all the interviews will take place in the pastor's office when the church has not programmed services or other activities. This researcher will inform the potential participants that each interview will take approximately one hour and one week apart.

#### Intervention Plan

This researcher will continue this action research by seeking approval from the national pastors of the two satellite churches (see Appendix E). He will seek the pastor's permission before approaching members of their churches with the initial questionnaire. This researcher will start with a pre-interview when the participants turn in their signed consent forms. This pre-interview will set the parameters for the two interviews (see Appendix F). The researcher will also program the first week's interview on a calendar. He will also give them his contact data in case one of the participants needs to contact him during the week.

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<sup>13</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 235.

## First Interview

After receiving the IRB approval, this researcher will begin the first interview with the husbands and wives. He believes this qualitative research is better suited for this type of problem than quantitative research.<sup>14</sup> Because of this marital difficulty, the researcher will have one set of questions for husbands and another for wives (see Appendix G). This researcher has selected participants for the two interviews based on previous counseling and the questionnaire. This researcher hopes to confirm the level of obsessive jealousy in the home through the first interview.<sup>15</sup>

Although obsessive morbid jealousy exists in both husbands and wives, this project focuses on the presence of OMJ in wives, which is the predominant tendency in the IBBI.<sup>16</sup> The first interview confirms the existence of obsessively morbid jealous wives. In the second interview, the researcher attempts to establish the connection between obsessively morbid jealous wives with adverse childhood experiences, such as the abandonment of their fathers through the breakdown of the parent's relationship.<sup>17</sup> When men show OMJ, their obsessive behavior will demonstrate a completely different cause that this researcher will not address in this action research paper. This researcher hopes to further his knowledge of OMJ husbands in future studies.

This researcher believes that the data gathered from questions on both interviews will strengthen the thesis' hypothesis. The open-ended and semi-structured questions allow the interviewee to develop ideas based on their experiences rather than the interviewer's

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<sup>14</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 36.

<sup>15</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 105.

<sup>16</sup> Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais, "Creeping or Just Information Seeking," 36.

<sup>17</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44.

expectations. Although some of the questions are open-ended, the interviewer will also ask many short-answer questions for specific information he will need to advance his thesis.<sup>18</sup> Through his counseling experience, the researcher believes he can navigate through this number of questions in the one-hour time allotted for each interview. After the participant finishes each questionnaire, the researcher will ask them if they have any other relevant comments to add. He will also share the answers with the interviewee to obtain their approval of the contents.

During this session, the researcher will take extensive written notes and convert them into digital form on a computer for storage. He will also tape each session to ensure he does not miss anything. He will keep the written notes until after the end of the thesis project, when he will eliminate them. He will also erase all recorded interviews upon finishing the thesis. He proposes to make confidentiality a high priority for the sake of the participants.<sup>19</sup>

Before concluding each session, the researcher will briefly summarize the conversation with the participant and ask if they agree with the notes. He then will ask if they wish to add anything pertinent to the summary.<sup>20</sup> He will thank them for their participation and try to schedule the follow-up interview for the following week. The written notes and the audio recording will be stored in a secure filing system until they can be transposed to a laptop computer. Later in this section, the process for evaluating and synthesizing the data is reviewed. In conclusion, the researcher proposes to confirm the level of obsessive morbid jealousy in the wives of these couples in this first interview.

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<sup>18</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 86.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 108.

## Second Interview

The participants openly shared their marital difficulties as the researcher developed trust and rapport before delving into this topic. Now that the first interview established the level of obsessive morbid jealousy in the marriage, the researcher will follow up with an interview seeking the cause. The researcher aims to discover adverse childhood experiences in each participant through this second interview.<sup>21</sup> He will specifically look at the wife's relationship as a young daughter with her father. The hypothesis proposes that the abandonment of the wife's father through divorce, infidelity, or absence has a more significant influence on her insecurity than any present indiscretion of her husband.<sup>22</sup> This insecurity leads to the obsessively morbid jealous wife.

The researcher will follow similar steps outlined in the first interview. These questions can be harrowing as they deal with early traumas experienced by the participants. This researcher has already established confidence with these participants; many have shared their painful childhood experiences with him. He will be sensitive to their pain and allow them to refrain from questions or withdraw entirely from the interview if they become uncomfortable.<sup>23</sup> These questions seek to establish the cause and ACEs of the OMJ wife so that the researcher can establish a training program for the pastors and counselors of the IBBI and its satellite churches.

Because the researcher already knows the participants and because he is choosing to interview as the primary method for gathering data, this research will follow security guidelines for confidentiality instead of anonymity.<sup>24</sup> The researcher will tape and take extensive notes of

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<sup>21</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>22</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 45.

<sup>23</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 235.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 36.

each interview and give a summary to the participants. He will also ask if they agree with the summary and would like to change anything or add a comment. Upon their acceptance of the outline, he will reassure them of the confidentiality and private storage of the written notes on a secure personal laptop with a strong password that no one else knows.<sup>25</sup> Later he will transpose the hand-written notes to the laptop computer for more accessible analysis.

As the participants finish the two interviews, the researcher will express his gratitude for their participation and offer his availability if these interviews have stirred up some painful memories. Independent of this research, as a pastor, this researcher will provide follow-up counseling sessions to continue applying the answers produced through this research.<sup>26</sup> These sessions will help each couple with their past ACEs and their present distress because of obsessive morbid jealousy. This researcher has informed these couples that this action research proposes to give answers to their many questions about OMJ.

### **Questionnaire (IBBI, IBBG, and IBBAH)**

The couples taking the questionnaire will place their names on the last page, not easily visible to others, at the end to identify additional prospective participants for the interview process. All questionnaires will be placed in a sealed envelope to prevent anyone other than the researcher from seeing the results. This researcher found Leahy's book, *The Jealousy Cure*, a good source for the questions on the questionnaire and the first interview. He added a few other questions for the purpose of this thesis (see Appendix B).<sup>27</sup> Leahy's twenty-six questions focus

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<sup>25</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 108.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>27</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 22-23.

on a woman's suspicious or insecure attitudes in a permanent adult relationship. A score of twelve or higher indicates obsessive morbid jealousy in the relationship.<sup>28</sup>

When the couples finish taking the questionnaire in the three churches, the researcher will take the completed research and discreetly place it in a large sealable envelope for confidentiality. This researcher will then review the questionnaires to identify additional prospects for this action research. When a husband or wife scores high (twelve or more out of twenty-six) on the questionnaire, this researcher will seek to enlist the couple in the project. This researcher hopes to reach the goal of nine or ten couples from present counseling and these questionnaires. Leahy states that if the couple scores twelve or more, they are candidates of suspicious jealousy and will become prospective participants (see Appendix B).<sup>29</sup>

### **Questionnaire/Interview (Pastors and Counselors)**

The problem facing the IBBI and its two satellites is the lack of pastoral counselors training to help couples suffering obsessive morbid jealousy due to adverse childhood experiences.<sup>30</sup> This DMIN action research project plans to use the findings of this thesis to train pastoral counselors to connect childhood trauma to those members suffering suspicious jealousy. Approaching the last intervention group (prospective counselors), the intervention design reduces the sample size of participants. The first group started with all couples in these three congregations and has now lowered the focus to the church's key players for this intervention plan.

As the researcher gathers the data from those suffering from OMJ in their relationships, he can now focus on the pastors and counselors. He has already trained the two pastors of the

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<sup>28</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 22-23.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Kim and Van Tatehnove, "Pastoral Counseling Response Scale (PCRS)," 85-86.

satellite churches in biblical doctrine. He has also gained a level of trust through previous training exercises. He will now turn his attention to their counseling skills. Chilean church leadership does not always possess a higher level of seminary preparation.<sup>31</sup> This researcher seeks to remedy the situation with a series of conferences and workshops to strengthen this level of pastoral practice.

This researcher hypothesizes that the typical counseling session of the IBBI, IBBG, and IBBAH church leaders starts with listening to the complaints. The counselor then will offer Bible passages on being holy, ask for more prayer and dedication, encourage them to forgive one another, and promote getting busy serving God (see Figure 3.1).<sup>32</sup> Each of these appeals to Christian discipline is essential, yet none have treated the cause, which is the wife's insecurity based on past ACEs.<sup>33</sup> This researcher will administer a simple questionnaire to the candidates, such as pastors, counselors, and ministry leaders (see Appendix J). This researcher will interview each counselor using this questionnaire to confirm their understanding of counseling, their philosophy of counseling, and their familiarity with obsessive morbid jealousy and adverse childhood experiences.



Figure 3.1. Typical Steps in Marital Counseling in IBBI Church

<sup>31</sup> Richard, "Training of Pastors," 212.

<sup>32</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 73.

<sup>33</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 53.

Once the candidates take the questionnaire, the researcher will use their answers to probe their understanding of the thesis hypothesis. He will also try to ascertain each participant's counseling philosophy and preparation level. Through this data collection, the researcher hopes he can prepare a training video or workshop to equip a new team of counselors to focus on many current emotional problems. He will focus primarily on the issues of ACEs, OMJ, and OCD within the congregations.<sup>34</sup> When he finishes, his goal is for each counselor to recognize the characteristics of OMJ, identify the most common cause (ACEs), and offer a strategy for victory.

### **Data gathered and processed.**

To help triangulate, this researcher will conduct interviews with OMJ wives, their husbands, and counselors. This action research seeks to explore all three points of view. In one sense, gathering information from three players with three different perspectives gives a type of triangulation.<sup>35</sup> Then this researcher will invite those with high tendencies of obsessive morbid jealousy to participate in the two interviews. The two interviews will offer the most personal and complete information toward validating the hypothesis.

This researcher will take very detailed notes of all methods used to validate the hypothesis posited.<sup>36</sup> After the results have been gathered and analyzed, the researcher plans to bring in the pastors and leaders of the three works to administer a questionnaire and a follow-up interview with each. This action research will summarize all the data gathered and present the findings to the churches' body of counselors. After the conclusion of the thesis, the researcher

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<sup>34</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 45.

<sup>35</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 71.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 111.



plans to offer a workshop or a training video. These tools should help establish patterns for counseling on a broader scale throughout churches in Chile.<sup>37</sup>

Stringer writes that “all analysis is an act of interpretation.”<sup>38</sup> The researcher now needs to interpret the data gathered through these different research methods to help each player, husband, wife, and counselor analyze the perspective through objective eyes. A person sees with two eyes rather than one to have a greater depth of vision. Triangulation helps each player to have a complete picture free from personal biases. “Interpretation builds on description through conceptual frameworks—definitions and meaning—that enable participants to sense their experiences better.”<sup>39</sup> Stringer also writes that there are ways to decipher the data using principles like placing items in categories or unpacking essential experiences.<sup>40</sup>

This researcher seeks to establish the cause of the OMJ wife to equip pastors and leaders better to counsel this problem. He will use the ATLAS.ti Qualitative Research Development APP to find patterns and themes from the two interviews and questionnaires.<sup>41</sup> The first interview will focus on present obsessive morbid jealous symptoms and feelings. The second interview will place memories of ACEs and PACEs that each spouse experienced in their childhood or teenage years. The researcher will use the data from these patterns and themes to confirm the hypothesis and establish a practical training program for pastors and counselors. This researcher will look for divorces, infidelities, and parental abandonment as keys that created an insecure wife.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 232.

<sup>38</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 139.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>41</sup> ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin, Germany: version 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 44.

The other part of this action research hopes to show the church's weakness in giving strategies and, with the data gathered, show how to support pastoral care for the population in Chile, offering hope to those suffering from obsessive morbid jealousy.<sup>43</sup> In this case, the data from the questionnaire and interview will help expose the need, so prospective counselors will see the need to seek training for this emotional affliction. When all the data is in, this researcher will have a clearer picture of the reality within the context of the local church and start to design an intervention model to prepare three separate counseling teams to treat this ever-increasing problem attacking marriages in Chile today.

### **Intervention Conclusion and Training of Counselors**

In the previous strategy of counseling married couples, pastors and counselors listened to them complain about each other for an hour. The pastor or counselor would then use several Bible passages to help encourage obedience to God's precepts, such as Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19, 1 Peter 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:4, Genesis 2:23-25, and Matthew 19:1-12. This pastor's typical counseling session would concentrate on the wives submitting to their husbands and the husbands loving their wives. This biblical counselor in years past would encourage them to forgive, be faithful to one another, and increase their love for one another. He would concentrate on their spiritual relationship with God, prayer time, church attendance, and devotional time in the Word. He might even channel them into a church ministry to occupy their idle time serving the Lord together (see Figure 3.1 above).

These disciplines are good and biblical, but none hit the core problem. The problem is more profound than quoting Bible passages directed at submission. In this standard way of counseling, counselors would never consider the cause of the obsessively morbid jealous wife

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<sup>43</sup> Kim and Van Tatehove, "The Utilizability of the Pastoral Counseling Response Scale," 85.

being their past traumas. In the everyday context of marriage with an obsessively morbid jealous wife, the men would avoid having legitimate contact with women and be resentful for the many false accusations and extreme control.<sup>44</sup> All their efforts to follow the pastor's advice would be of no avail because he did not address the root cause.<sup>45</sup>

This action research attempts to give counseling tools to IBBI, IBBG, and IBBAH so their counselors can better understand the problem of the OMJ wife. This researcher will analyze the data and use it to devise a program for pastors and counselors on how to spot OMJ and what strategies to use to overcome their obsessive thoughts. Providing the correct remedy when treating the wrong disease or when the diagnosis is incomplete is futile. Stringer states that "these new ways of interpreting the situation are not intended as merely intellectualized, rational explanations; rather, they are real-life constructs-in-use that assist people in reshaping actions and behaviors that affect their lives."<sup>46</sup>

The counselor needs to see that it starts with understanding the cause of all situations involving everyone because the husbands' reactions are part of the systematic problem with the wives' OMJ, which impacts the marital and family relationships. The counselor is responsible for knowing and offering the truth, as Christ said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32, NKJV). Biblical counselors need to know how to take Bible truths and apply them in a practical and accountable way. The counselors must understand that the couple seeking answers did not enter the problem in one day, nor will they recover in one day. This thesis aims to prepare pastors and counselors of the IBBI and satellite churches to

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<sup>44</sup> Chambers, *Jealousy*, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Payne, "It's Kind of a Dichotomy," 1428.

<sup>46</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 164.

administer cognitive reprogramming of the mind according to the Word (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:5; Eph 4:17-24).<sup>47</sup>

Specifically, this researcher offers an approach to recognize the source of the suspicions of the obsessively morbid jealous wife, their past ACEs. Two truths are essential here, the past is the key to the present, and the mind is more important than the circumstances. The husband must remember the cause of her suspicions and have compassion and patience with his wife rather than resentment. The obsessively morbid jealous wife needs to know this to understand that she is not crazy and can stop obsessively focusing on her husband. The counselor must know this to help direct biblical therapy toward the couple.

This intervention design will try to change the present cycle of ACEs in this multi-generational problem of the churches of IBBI, IBBG, and IBBAH (see Figure 3.2). This cycle displays the strong influence that ACEs have on adult relationships.<sup>48</sup> When there have been protective and compensatory experiences (PACEs) in childhood, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) lose their power over them as adults.<sup>49</sup> When the church helps resolve the OMJ wife's conflictive behavior, the marriage will follow a more harmonious and peaceful atmosphere. This new behavior can help eliminate at least one ACE from the children of that marriage (see Figure 3.3).

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<sup>47</sup> Payne, "It's Kind of a Dichotomy," 1428.

<sup>48</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44.

<sup>49</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 72.

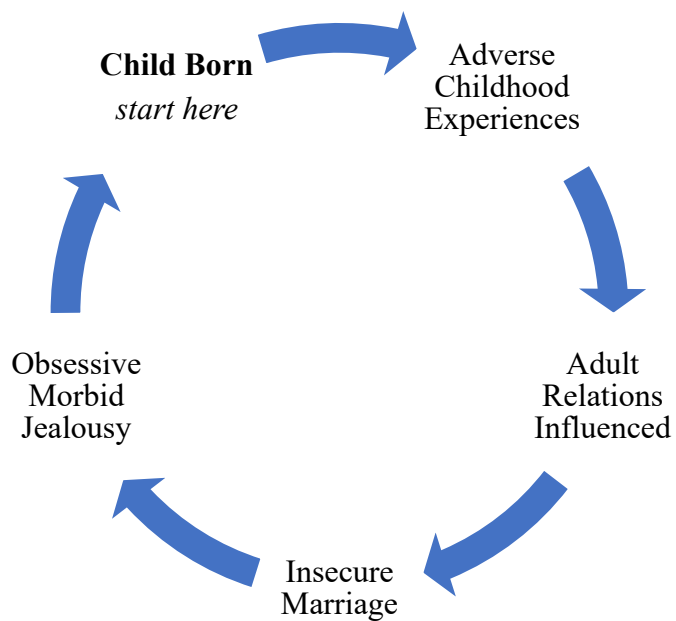


Figure 3.2. Typical ACE Generational Cycle: OMJ

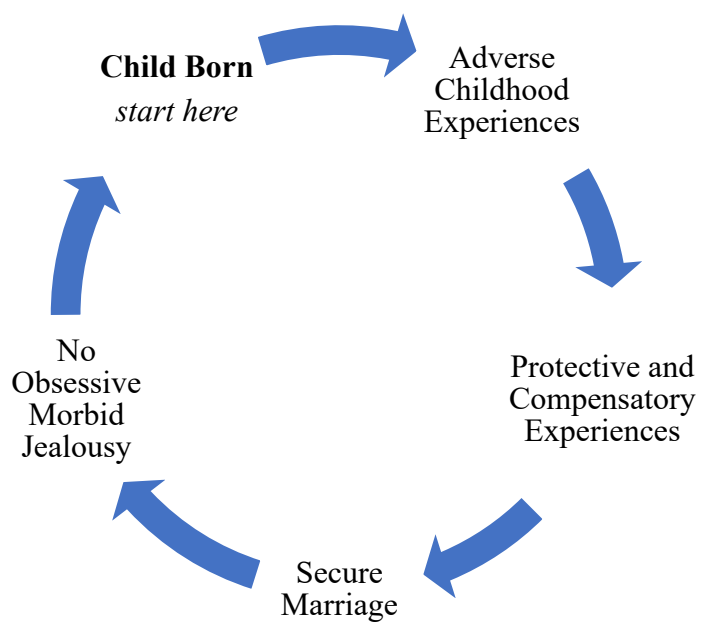


Figure 3.3. PACE Generational Cycle: No OMJ

Most literature expresses the strategy to add PACEs to the everyday living experience of the next generation.<sup>50</sup> Although this long-term strategy requires the cooperation of many aspects of society, it holds no hope for those already suffering OMJ and other personality disorders from exposure to ACEs in the early years.<sup>51</sup> This reality shows the essential nature of this action research; the design is to do remedial help when prevention is no longer an option.<sup>52</sup> The good news is that by offering remedial support to the OMJ spouse, the church is advancing PACEs as a protective factor in the marriage helping their children avoid ACEs related to parental divorce and conflict.<sup>53</sup> This researcher proposes to help prevent ACEs in future generations by offering training to church counselors to break the cyclical pattern of OMJ (see Figure 3.4).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 170.

<sup>51</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 254.

<sup>52</sup> Cortman and Walden, *Keep Pain in the Past*, 31.

<sup>53</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 122.

<sup>54</sup> Dayton, *The Soulful Journey of Recovery*, 112.

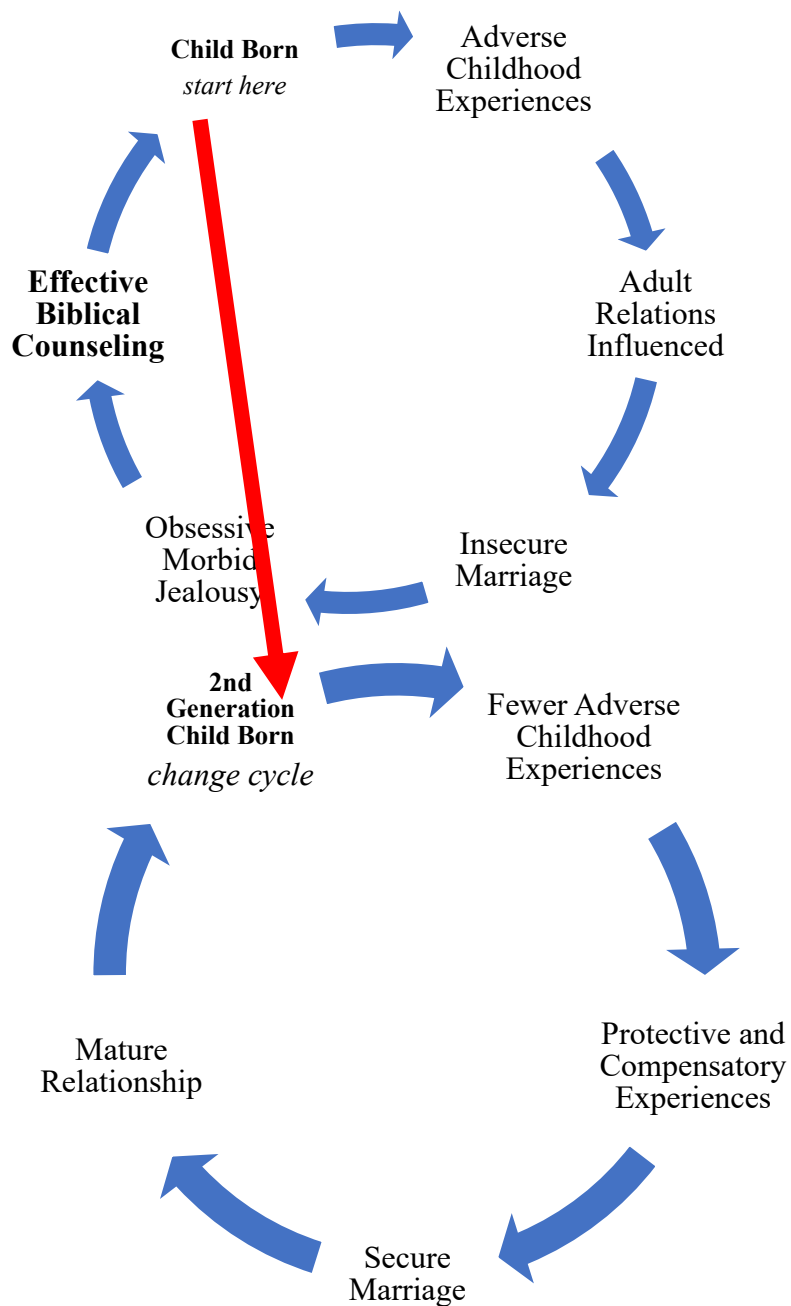


Figure 3.4. ACE Generational Cycle to PACE Generational Cycle through Counseling

Proper biblical counseling of the OMJ wife can help her children have more PACEs and thus move into the healthy circle. These PACEs contribute to developing more beneficial relationships as adults. This counseling allows the next generation to break the generational cycle

and continue healthy adult relationships.<sup>55</sup> This design will help strengthen the family, the foundation for a more vital church that will testify to God’s power to the world and bring glory to God. This action research can produce a new form for counselors to treat obsessive morbid jealousy in the church (see Figure 3.5).

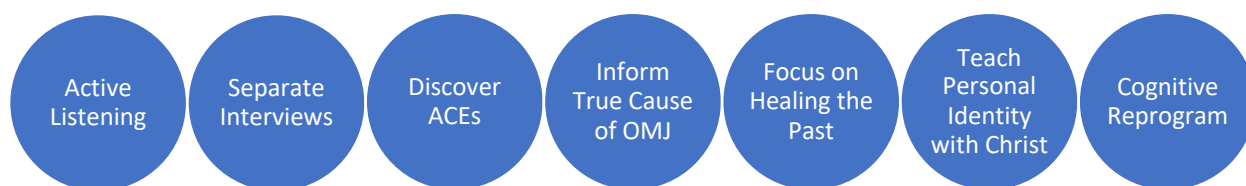


Figure 3.5. New Counseling Procedures

This researcher proposes to find out why some wives are obsessively jealous even when their husbands have not been unfaithful. Through years of counseling, he believes that past traumas influence the present state of insecurity of the wives. This researcher will know if this research is successful if most of the obsessively morbid jealous wives connect the presence of ACEs in their childhood, especially the absence of their fathers.<sup>56</sup> If the findings do not show this as a predominant experience, this researcher will conclude that his hypothesis is inconclusive. This action research will also offer a level of success if this pastor can adopt a new approach to counseling and provide practical training to the chosen candidates in these three congregations (IBBI, IBBG, and IBBAH).

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<sup>55</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 60.

<sup>56</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 125.



### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

Great things are never done by only thinking and planning. The church must implement the plan and later evaluate it.<sup>57</sup> The Apostle Paul encourages the church of Corinth to “put their money where their mouth is” as he states, “but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have” (2 Cor 8:1, NKJV). The IRB approval started the proverbial ball rolling for this Doctor of Ministry action research thesis.<sup>58</sup> This researcher begins with the permissions from the other pastors and the announcement in the church to start the selection process of qualified candidates for the research (see Appendix E).

In the context of ministry in a Spanish-speaking country, this researcher has translated the questionnaire and interview questions into Spanish. He then printed and sent copies to the two other congregations and made the questionnaires available for the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique congregation. The researcher explained the purpose of this doctoral action research to the church, the process for advancing, the invitation to participate voluntarily, and the instructions for taking the questionnaire. He also explained the next step in selecting a group of qualifying couples to participate in two separate interviews. Thirty couples took the questionnaire in the IBBI and ten in each of the two missions, IBBG and IBBAH.

As mentioned, this researcher used two methods to select a qualifying couple. The first method was considering those couples already being counseled for an OMJ wife. The other method was to invite those who scored high on the questionnaire (at least twelve or higher positive responses out of twenty-six questions on the obsessive jealousy questionnaire by the

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<sup>57</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, loc 193.

<sup>58</sup> *Doctor of Ministry Program and Candidacy Handbook*, 32.

wife, see Appendix B).<sup>59</sup> The scores reflect the obsessively morbid jealous characteristics displayed by the wife. To expedite this thesis, the researcher chose only nine couples to participate in the next stage of taking the two separate interviews.

After this researcher completes the thirty-six interviews (two each for nine husbands and nine wives), he will begin processing the data. He then begins unpacking the three different sources, the questionnaires, the interviews, and the field notes he took during the previous counseling of these couples and the interviews themselves.<sup>60</sup> Using three separate sources, he implements triangulation to get a more three-dimensional synopsis of the problem of a couple with an obsessively jealous wife. He also will use three different perspectives, that of the wife, that of the husband, and that of the counselor. He seeks a “thick description” of the causes and effects of morbid jealousy, trying to avoid his own implied or inferred interpretations.<sup>61</sup>

Upon analyzing the three sources of information, this researcher will organize and categorize the participants’ quotes into codes to connect the OMJ wife to her ACEs. Then he will group these codes into specific categories and later establish themes from ACEs to PACEs.<sup>62</sup> The researcher deems the themes of cause and effect, the influence of ACEs, and PACEs essential in creating and disarming obsessive morbid jealousy. These themes should offer answers to confirm the hypothesis of this thesis. The findings from the gathered data will help promote future training for biblical counselors in the local church.

As the researcher pours through the data, he will try to avoid skewing the observations and conclusions to his point of view.<sup>63</sup> To do this, he must seek an outside opinion from a

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<sup>59</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 22-23.

<sup>60</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 139.

<sup>61</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 195.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 196.

scholarly source.<sup>64</sup> The head of the psychology department at a nearby university in Iquique, who speaks fluent English, has offered to review and comment on this project. This researcher will also pay attention to slippages and silences relating to the thesis in the data collected.<sup>65</sup> Finally, he will use the filter of scholarly journals and books on the condition of the obsessively morbid jealous wife available to help form a conceptually congruent perception of this marital challenge.<sup>66</sup>

When one studies the Scriptures or examines written data, one helpful tool a theologian or researcher will use is the repetition of keywords and phrases.<sup>67</sup> This researcher will search quotes in the interviews of keywords like ACEs and PACEs, divorce, separation, trust, fighting, unfaithfulness, toxic, “crazy,” and insecurity, among others, to help define the issue. Keywords can give a great insight into nuances of the problem if they are universally defined and used. The coding of quotes from the interview will incorporate the use of these high-power trigger words as both men and women employ them. This researcher will use the ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development program to help organize, analyze, code data, and discover keywords, phrases, patterns, and themes.<sup>68</sup>

All but one of the nine couples are presently or recently been participating in biblical counseling with this researcher. He has gathered information from their daily struggles with an obsessively jealous wife. This researcher has counseled four more couples that would qualify for this study but has since moved from this city and church. But this researcher considers invaluable

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<sup>64</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 197.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 200-201.

<sup>66</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Educations in Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 1998), 183-184.

<sup>67</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 203.

<sup>68</sup> ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin, Germany: version 2023.

the information gleaned from their experiences as well. To obtain triangulation, this researcher hopes to add these field notes to the other data collected from questionnaires and interviews. He will further define this in chapters four and five.<sup>69</sup>

As this thesis deals with a susceptible area in the lives of couples in the context of the local church, it is paramount that this researcher practices an impeccable level of confidentiality.<sup>70</sup> He will keep all notes in a safe binder in a locked drawer in an exclusive and closed office. He will also maintain all recordings of the thirty-six interviews on only one device, a laptop computer with a highly complex password that only he knows. He also has scheduled all interviews in his private office, which he will conduct at off times from any other church activity not to call attention to its purpose. On many occasions, this researcher counsels many church members in his office, so the presence of one of the candidates will not call any undue attention to the participation in this action research project.

Now that this researcher has gathered all the data for input into this thesis, he will analyze and interpret the different quotes, codes, themes, patterns, and conclusions.<sup>71</sup> He will do this as he turns his attention to documenting the results in chapter four.<sup>72</sup> When analyzing the data, he will carefully include rival interpretations and keep an open mind.<sup>73</sup> In their book *Quality Research Papers*, Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson state, “Objectivity requires me to consider negative evidence, analyze foreign or different ideas, and look at

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<sup>69</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 185.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 199.

arguments that might upset my position. Being objective requires courage and humility.”<sup>74</sup> This researcher proposes to find answers and not just seek to justify his thesis. This researcher hopes to see patterns and clear findings to develop a comprehensive and biblical strategy to present to pastors and counselors of the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista and its two satellite churches.<sup>75</sup>

### **Conclusion**

After presenting the problem of obsessive morbid jealousy in a ministry context, Chapter One further examined the current research. Chapter Two showed the theological and theoretical foundations of OMJ. In this chapter, this researcher presented his methodology to gather data with many couples in the IBBI and its two satellite missions. The researcher showed how to triangulate information to devise a strategy for effective biblical counselors in these three congregations facing rising obsessive morbid jealousy.<sup>76</sup> In the following chapter, the researcher will show the results of these different investigations to connect the OMJ with past ACEs and hopefully present a much-needed training program for these three congregations.

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<sup>74</sup> Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson. *Quality Research Papers* (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan Academic. 2020) 128, Kindle Edition.

<sup>75</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 200.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

In Chapter Four, the research findings will validate this thesis' undertaking. Researchers ask such questions as, "What did we find out?" and "Will this help address the problem?"<sup>1</sup> These answers can help researchers design and devise strategies to help those suffering because of the problem that this action research addresses. This researcher hopes to objectively discover the cause of the obsessively morbid jealous wife. He plans to use the results to train future pastors and counselors of the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista and its satellites. Hopefully, the data will help address this important problem and train qualified counselors to make a difference.

### **Intervention Implemented**

This researcher completed thirty-six interviews, two for each husband and wife. For the remainder of this paper, this researcher will identify the nine participating wives by Wife 1 through Wife 9. He will also determine the nine husbands by Husband 1 through Husband 9. He will use this system when quoting these participants or identifying their responses in tables and graphs when necessary. This researcher has built trust with the eighteen participants as their pastor, already having counseled them concerning personal matters. He has shown confidentiality over the years concerning any private information shared. He will do everything possible not to violate this trust.<sup>2</sup>

For the sake of triangulation, this researcher has used data from various sources. He tallied the results from two questionnaires, one for the couples in OMJ and one for the team of

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<sup>1</sup> *Doctor of Ministry Program and Candidacy Handbook*, 50.

<sup>2</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 36.

future counselors. He added his field notes from the interviews and the hours of counseling many couples with OMJ. As this study focuses on wives with obsessive morbid jealousy, this thesis seeks to establish their ACEs as the primary factor for its presence in their lives through triangulation. The researcher hopes that through the different perspectives of the players (wives, husbands, and counselors), he will avoid skewing the findings to agree with his hypothesis.<sup>3</sup>

### Surprises

As one objectively seeks answers to the problem of an obsessively morbid jealous wife, the researcher will prepare himself for multiple surprises because things do not always follow the established narrative.<sup>4</sup> The researcher hypothesized that the OMJ wife, while still very young, had a poor relationship with her irresponsible dad, who had abandoned his marriage vows. Many OMJ wives, while counseling with this researcher, alluded to this poor relationship. He also assumed that children sought mates that reminded them of their parents. Although there were some surprises, they were relatively few, and none that would cast doubt on the hypothesis of this research project.

One of two areas that surprised this researcher was the lack of similarity between spouses and the corresponding parent. This researcher expected to find that men marry women like their moms, and women marry men like their dads. The results of this study did not confirm this. The data showed another surprise, the positive relationship that some wives had with their fathers, despite their unfaithfulness to their moms. Eight wives reported the presence of infidelity in their dads, yet four wives had excellent relationships with their fathers. The data did not confirm that

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<sup>3</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>4</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 224.

the obsessively morbid jealous wife was traumatized by her father's conduct and consequently had negative feelings for him.

### Triangulation

This research project includes two triangulations to objectively strengthen the hypothesis, starting with three types of information gathering; questionnaires, interviews, and field notes.<sup>5</sup> He also triangulated the three perspectives of the problem: the wife's, the husband's, and the counselor's perspectives.<sup>6</sup> This researcher often sees three versions of marital distress: the wife's complaint, the husband's defense, and the actual condition. It is not that men and women intentionally fabricate their stories; each gives their perspective without considering their lack of objectivity. The reason is that each sees the circumstances only through their suffering.

### Slippages

The data collected showed some slippage, where the findings do not validate the hypothesis.<sup>7</sup> There was one area of slippage, although not enough to question the integrity of the positive results that coincide with the thesis statement. The data showed that although there were no confessions of indiscretions, some husbands were guilty of questionable behavior with other women. Some husbands displayed inappropriate communication with women, which could provoke jealousy in their wives. An independent analysis of this conduct could interpret this behavior as promoting a jealous wife.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 71.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>8</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 112-117.



### Silences

This researcher had twenty-six questions for the wives and twenty-eight for the men, hoping to cover all relevant aspects of obsessive morbid jealousy in wives (see Appendix G). This researcher wishes he had added questions about the presence of an obsessive-compulsive disorder to the questionnaires and interviews.<sup>9</sup> When the researcher began, he did not anticipate this comorbidity. Yet most of the wives in this action research project displayed its presence in their thinking process.<sup>10</sup> The researcher plans to include OCD cognitive reprogramming as part of the strategies to train the counselors attending the obsessively morbid jealous wife. This researcher will contemplate this area in further studies in Chapter Five.

### Agreement and Disagreement of Couples

The research data clearly showed two very different perspectives of the spouses. This researcher has heard conflicting testimony from husbands and wives in his forty years of marital counseling. Although this thesis focuses only on OMJ wives, this researcher's experience motivated him to seek the active participation of both husband and wife rather than just the wives. Having husbands and wives allows the researcher to study a more objective assessment.<sup>11</sup> The interviews should offer considerable agreement by both husbands and wives, strengthening the hypothesis of the wife's jealousy.

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<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey M. Schwartz, *Brain Lock* (New York, NY: HarperCollins 2016), 64, Kindle.

<sup>10</sup> Curling et al., "Treatment of obsessive morbid jealousy with cognitive analytic therapy," 98.

<sup>11</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 72.

## Data Processed

### First Interview

This first interview delved into the life of a family with an obsessively morbid jealous wife. The discussion included open-ended questions such as, “Describe a typical day in your home.”<sup>12</sup> Yet these interviews also included precise-answer questions like how long you have been together, how much spying takes place, who starts the fights, and how long they usually last (see Appendix G). This researcher compared the wives’ answers with similar responses to questions asked of their husbands. In many areas, the husband’s answers confirmed the wives’ reactions. This first interview showed the presence of the typical characteristics of OMJ in all nine wives, such as spying, controlling behavior, and false accusations without any evidence.

Obsessive morbid jealousy symptoms are: 1) The wife will ruminate on obsessive thoughts about infidelity without evidence. They will fantasize about their husband’s supposed affair in detail and later believe it took place.<sup>13</sup> 2) The wife will practice excessive vigilance of the activities and whereabouts of her husband.<sup>14</sup> These wives compulsively check phones, wallets, checking accounts, and social media, and use GPS. 3) They will call their husbands numerous times via “video chat,” follow them to supposed appointments, and appear at their workplace unannounced to confirm their suspicions of infidelity.<sup>15</sup> 4) They will convert any conversation into entrapment for a confession, and when this does not occur, they will provoke a fight that can last a week or more.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 79.

<sup>13</sup> Debora Kissen, Micah Ioffe, and Emily Lambert, *Break Free from Intrusive Thoughts: An Evidence-based Guide for Managing Fear and Finding Peace* (Emeryville, CA: Rockridge Press, 2021), 18, Kindle.

<sup>14</sup> Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais, “Creeping or Just Information Seeking,” 37.

<sup>15</sup> Curling et al., “Treatment of obsessive morbid jealousy with cognitive analytic therapy,” 96.

<sup>16</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

This study focused primarily on Christian OMJ wives, seeking to establish a link between their OMJ and ACEs. These Christian wives saw little benefit from their faith to alleviate their extreme insecurity. When describing their marriage to a Christian husband, the nine wives used words like “unstable,” “distant,” “conflictive,” “toxic,” and “unbearable” (see Appendix H). The OMJ wife produces collateral damage in their husbands, who describe their marriage as “bittersweet,” “cold,” “distant,” “conflictive,” “tense,” “toxic,” and “desperate” (see Appendix H). One husband summed it up for all; “Our marriage is like living in hell,”<sup>17</sup> and their only hope for relief was divorce or separation.<sup>18</sup>

The data from the interviews, questionnaires, and previous field notes all pointed to the classic characteristics of the obsessively jealous wife. For example, they all lacked trust in their Christian husbands, some of whom were congregation leaders. Most wives declared 0 percent trust in their husbands. All the wives practiced spying, controlling behavior, and provoking unjustified arguments. The data records that none of the husbands confessed to unfaithfulness, nor have any wives discovered any evidence of infidelity despite the most rigorous examination of their phones, social media, and other personal items.<sup>19</sup>

The data revealed a shocking level of “spying” as these wives took extreme measures to catch their husbands in an indiscretion.<sup>20</sup> All nine wives secretly and openly checked their husbands’ items. The modern life of global society today revolves around cellular phones, which act as a minicomputer displaying the diversity in daily activities. To have access to their phones, the wives have access to almost everything the man does. These wives confessed that they would

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<sup>17</sup> Husband 3, First Interview, Question 6, “How often do you fight with your spouse?”

<sup>18</sup> Clinton and Trent, *The Quick Reference Guide to Marriage and Family Counseling*, 91, Kindle.

<sup>19</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 43.

<sup>20</sup> Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais, “Creeping or Just Information Seeking,” 35.

wait till their husbands were in the shower or asleep to go through all their transactions. These wives displayed the classic characteristics of obsessive morbid jealousy.

The collected interview data agrees with scholarly literature that when wives provoke arguments, this displays another classic characteristic of obsessively morbid jealousy.<sup>21</sup> Leahy includes this phrase in his OMJ questionnaire; “I try to provoke my partner to get into an argument when I am jealous.”<sup>22</sup> Six wives admitted starting the fights in the interviews; the other three said they both did. These fights usually began as straightforward conversations until the wife sought a confession or brought up something from the past. The husbands defended themselves or counter-attacked, escalating the conversation into all-out war.<sup>23</sup> The following figure displays the vicious cycle of the morbid jealous wife and her insecurity.

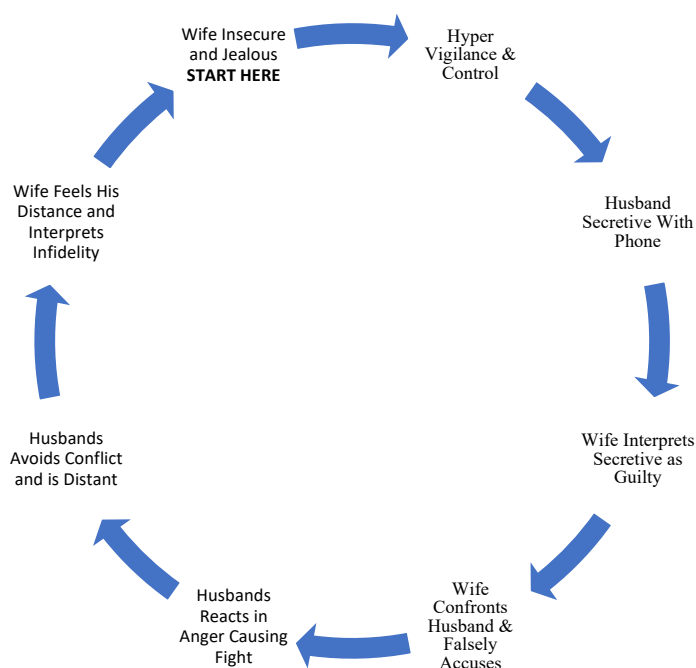


Figure 4.1. Husband and Wife’s Fighting Cycle

<sup>21</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais, “Creeping or Just Information Seeking,” 36.

The word “divorce” has much power in a relationship, but never for good.<sup>24</sup> When spouses talk about divorce regularly, each spouse will pull back their emotional investments from the relationship.<sup>25</sup> In the first interview, every wife brought up divorce, and many of their husbands did. Each wife expressed no hope of the relationship getting any better and felt they should divorce so their husbands could be with someone they love. Others explained that they knew their husbands could not love someone like them, and it was just a matter of time before he would leave her for someone better. The men spoke of divorce as a stress reliever for the controlling behavior, the false accusations, and the constant fighting. Both wives and husbands described these conditions as “toxic” or a “living hell.”<sup>26</sup>

The first interview contains this question for the wife; “do you believe that your jealousy is justified?” (see Appendix G). The wives’ answers justify their obsessive morbid jealousy (see Appendix H). Seven wives felt that their jealousy was warranted, and they based this justification on their husband’s suspicious conduct. Counseling helped Wife 1 realize that her jealousy was not justified as her jealousy preceded her present relationship with two previous partners. She came to blame her dad and began to appreciate her husband for not abandoning her as he did her mom. She stated, “My mom poisoned my concept of men with her constant portrayal that all men are liars, cheaters, and useless.”<sup>27</sup>

The data showed that seven wives justified their jealousy despite the lack of any evidence of unfaithfulness. These wives did not see the pattern of established jealousy, although they were

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<sup>24</sup> John M. Gottman and Nan Silver, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country’s Foremost Relationship Expert* (New York, NY: Harmony Books, 2015), 21.

<sup>25</sup> Willard F. Harley Jr., *Love Busters: Protect Your Marriage by Replacing Love-Busting Patterns with Love-Building Habits* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2016), 17, Kindle.

<sup>26</sup> Husband 5, First Interview, Question #6, “How often do you fight with your spouse?”

<sup>27</sup> Wife 1, Second Interview, Question #7, “What do you remember about what your mom told you about men?”

jealous in previous relationships. None of the husbands felt their wives' jealousy was justified based on the facts. Most husbands attributed their wife's jealousy to their past, whether because of their father's indiscretions or their previous partner's unfaithfulness.<sup>28</sup> All nine husbands reported their wives falsely accused them, and their jealousy was unjustified (see Appendix H).

### Second Interview

The second interview focuses on the participants' past rather than their present conflictive relationship. This researcher called this interview "ACEs and PACEs," which are the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and protective and compensatory experiences (PACEs). The data demonstrates that obsessive morbid jealousy starts with ACEs related to the marital condition of the wife's parents.<sup>29</sup> The data also shows the husband's PACEs as the most critical factor in keeping the relationship alive. This researcher designed twelve questions for both the wives and the husbands. The reader can see these questions in Appendix G.

The first question of the second interview asks the participants for their first or earliest memory, "What is your earliest recollection? How old were you?"<sup>30</sup> In his book, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Larry Crabb proposes that a person's most vivid and earliest memory holds the key to that person's search for his worth.<sup>31</sup> So the data from this interview can give insights into the cause of their morbid jealousy by seeing their most persistent memories. Many participants report that the first memory dealt with the importance of family, whether positive or negative.

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<sup>28</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, "Role of negative experiences in past relationships," 20.

<sup>30</sup> The Second Interview, Question #1, "What is your earliest recollection? How old were you?"

<sup>31</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 143.

The next question focused on the wives' adverse childhood experiences, as studies have shown the connection between ACEs and their present adult attitudes toward problem resolution. Scholarly literature points out that the higher the number of ACEs, the higher level of relational issues as adults.<sup>32</sup> The question asks, "What were your worst childhood experiences?" (See Appendix G). Three wives reported sexual abuse; five said parental abandonment; two spoke of constant fighting in the home, and two spoke of their father's unfaithfulness (see Appendix H). Each ACE can contribute to a poor self-image, insecurity, and jealousy in the future because of the lack of trust.<sup>33</sup> The wife experiences the same insecurity she had as a child, becoming a "prisoner" of her past.<sup>34</sup>

This second interview focuses on the couples' positive experiences (PACES), as studies show that PACES can counteract the ACEs.<sup>35</sup> The data showed that despite the constant fighting and "living hell," these couples had stayed together for an extended period. The data suggests that the reason for the longevity of a marriage with an obsessively morbid jealous wife is the protective and compensatory experiences of the husband. PACES help the child develop resilience, which motivates the husband to persevere despite the constant hostile atmosphere. The wife's ACEs have programmed insecurity and jealousy, but the husband's PACES of positive experiences as a family strengthen his resolve and patience with the wife (see Appendix I).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>34</sup> Gold, *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, 432.

<sup>35</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 51.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 73.



Figure 4.2. Husband and Wife's Fighting Cycle with Husband's PACEs

The data shows that only three wives had married parents, and those homes with married parents showed much hostility.<sup>37</sup> In contrast with the wives, eight husbands lived in homes with married parents. Although some husbands reported fighting in their parents' marriage, there was a positive influence on their attitude toward the sacredness of the marriage vow (see Appendix H).<sup>38</sup> Although this data cannot conclusively attribute the parents' staying together as the factor for the husband's patience with his jealous wife, studies show that PACEs substantially impact building resilience in adults. Citing many different studies, Hays-Grudo and Morris state, "We argue that protective and compensatory experiences during childhood lead to greater resilience

<sup>37</sup> Lange et al., "Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children," 2.

<sup>38</sup> Linda J. Waite, and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage* (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2000), 23.



and emotion regulation, whereas adverse childhood experiences lead to greater risk for social and mental health difficulties.”<sup>39</sup>

The data from the two interviews gave valuable information demonstrating a possible factor for the survival of these marriages. Studies show that multiple ACEs can devastate adult relationships, and these OMJ wives experienced many ACEs. The data collected agrees with scholarly literature that ACEs are the main factor for programmed insecurity and jealousy. Studies also show that PACEs are the best remedy for resilience, and the data from the second interview revealed that the husbands enjoyed many positive family PACEs they attributed to their marital survival.<sup>40</sup> The first interview established the presence of an OMJ wife’s classic behaviors, and the second interview helped to understand the roots of the obsessive wife and why her past strongly programmed her jealousy.

#### Questionnaire Counselors

This thesis proposes to discover the cause of the OMJ wife and then prepare church counselors to help those wives in their congregations. The researcher believes that most churches and pastors in Chile do not clearly understand how to help the OMJ wife.<sup>41</sup> To confirm this, he devised a simple questionnaire to administer in the three churches to reveal the condition of their counseling programs (see Appendix J). The data gathered from this questionnaire confirmed that these churches are not well equipped to handle severe problems like obsessive morbid jealousy.<sup>42</sup> All who answered this questionnaire stated they would be interested in a counseling workshop to help address the lack of preparation in counseling.

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<sup>39</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 50.

<sup>40</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 53.

<sup>41</sup> Richard, “Training of Pastors,” 215.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

### Field Notes

Having a complete picture of years of someone's life through only two hours of conversation is challenging. To help with this limitation, this researcher had prior counseling sessions with the participants involved. He has taken notes of previous counseling sessions, which he will add to the field notes from each interview. Written notes allow the interviewer to note non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and strong emotions.<sup>43</sup> This researcher will add these notes to the other data gathered to triangulate a complete picture of the OMJ wives in the study.<sup>44</sup>

### Data Analyzed

The combination of previous counseling sessions, two questionnaires, and two interviews produced much data to sift through. As important as the data is, it does little if not appropriately analyzed and transformed into usable knowledge. After gathering the data, this researcher placed all the quotes into the ATLAS.ti Qualitative Research App for more accessible analysis.<sup>45</sup> He then used this program to assign codes to each quote, divide these codes into groups, and establish themes and networks. This analyzed data will give the direction needed to apply this action research to the local churches.

### Quotes

This researcher conducted the interviews and questionnaires in Spanish, the native language of those participating. This researcher studied the Spanish language and has counseled fluently for forty years. He could conduct the interviews personally and later translate them into

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<sup>43</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 106.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>45</sup> ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin, Germany: version 2023.

English through this language aptitude. After translating the content, this researcher uploaded the documents to ATLAS.ti. This project contains thirty-six documents, with five hundred quotes, divided into fifty codes. He then divided the codes into five groups to establish themes and networks.

The researcher uploaded the interview data into the ATLAS.ti program establishing the negative tone of the couples participating with a ratio of three to one (3:1) negative to positive sentiment. The quotes capture the emotional feeling of the participants. For example, Wife 1 justified her anger with this sharp rebuke of her husband: “He knows he has a jealous wife and does stupid things that provoke arguments; he’s a fool.”<sup>46</sup> Husband 2 stated in the context of his wife’s obsessive thinking, “She thinks for me... thinks she knows what I am thinking and how I feel, and judges my motives.”<sup>47</sup> These quotes exemplify the emotional tones the participants displayed in the first interview. This researcher then tagged each of these five hundred quotes with a code.

### Codes

The ATLAS.ti program helped process the interviews and the quotes, assigning codes. Some quotes fell into multiple codes, which drove their numbers up as each time a quote was tagged, it counted that quote separately. This researcher chose these code groups to establish networks, themes, and a conclusion from the findings. Complex emotions usually point to a person’s search for identity and self-worth.<sup>48</sup> The causes and effects of OMJ and their impact on their marriages are the nuts and bolts of this thesis. This thesis’ hypothesis is to show that the

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<sup>46</sup> Wife 1, First Interview, Question #6, “How often do you fight with your spouse?”

<sup>47</sup> Husband 2, First Interview, Opening Question, “Describe a typical day in your life (marriage, home, etc.).”

<sup>48</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 140.

past ACEs of the OMJ wife produce her suspicious jealousy greater than the present conduct of her partner. The ACEs are the cause, and OMJ is the effect.

### Networks

These code groups help to establish the following networks and themes, which in turn help to strengthen or weaken the thesis hypothesis. The study joins code groups that are logically progressing to form the networks. Through the ATLAS.ti program, the data analyzed showed causal relationships for all four networks. The first network places the most natural pairing when studying events, the “cause-effect” of obsessive morbid jealousy. The first cause and effect are the past programming of the wife to her obsessive morbid jealousy, the most obvious pattern to evaluate in this thesis.<sup>49</sup>

The other networks, like the first, also portray a cause-effect relationship. The second network relates “her actions-his reaction.” In this network, the wife’s obsessive actions become the cause, and the husband’s reactions become the effect. The third network joins his past protective and compensatory experiences with their impact on his decision to stay or leave the relationship. This researcher calls this network “PACEs-Longevity” (see Figure 4.3). Finally, the last network also portrays a cause-effect relationship called “sowing and reaping.” The Bible illustrates this principle in Galatians 6:7, showing the cause-effect of one generation producing obsessively jealous daughters because of the parents’ selfish attitudes.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 246.

<sup>50</sup> Lange et al., “Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children,” 1.

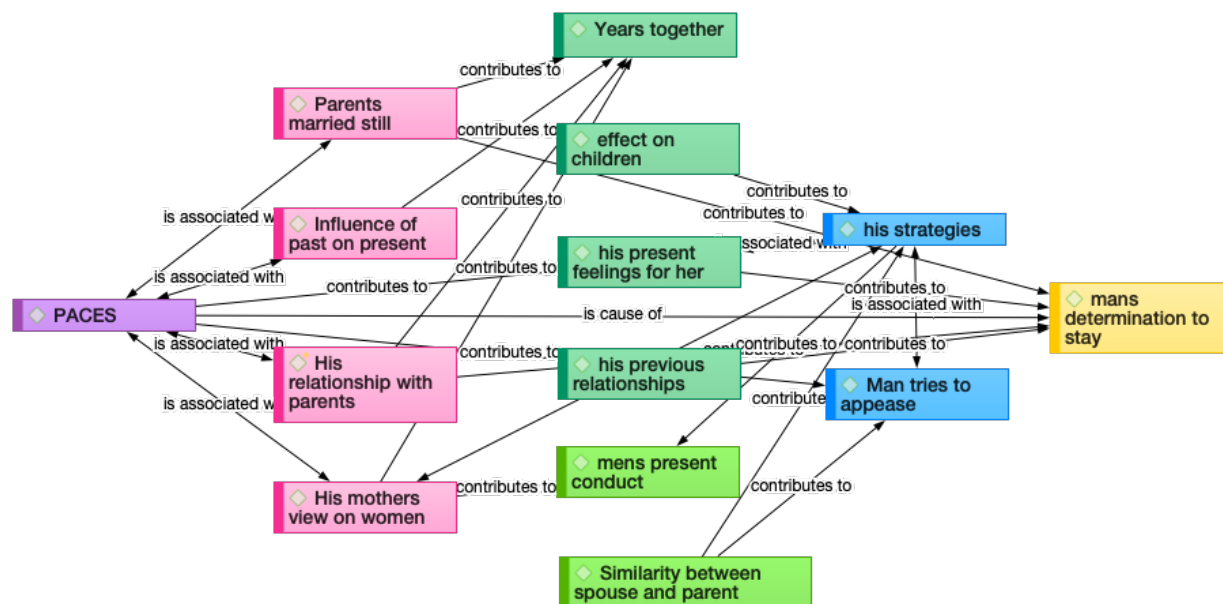


Figure 4.3. Network from Husband's PACEs to Effect on His Determination to Stay<sup>51</sup>

Themes

### Cause of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy

Eight of the wives involved reported an irregular marital relationship between their parents (see Appendix H).<sup>52</sup> Despite this, they all reluctantly sought to have a marriage and home.<sup>53</sup> The data displayed a secondary factor that also points to a predisposition of the wives to jealousy. Seven wives had mothers who portrayed men as “lying, useless cheaters” (see Appendix H). Wife 1 stated that her mom “poisoned” her about all men.<sup>54</sup> So between the pattern established by their dads and the programming by their moms, these women seemed destined to question the faithfulness of their partners.

<sup>51</sup> ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin, Germany: version 2023.

<sup>52</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 22.

<sup>53</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 53.

<sup>54</sup> Wife 1, Second Interview, Question #7, “What do you remember about what your mom told you about men?”

This thesis' hypothesis believes that OMJ wives are more influenced by their ACEs, especially from the divorce or unfaithfulness of their fathers. This negative influence of the parents did appear in eight of the wives involved in the study. This researcher, through past counseling experience, assumed that all the wives would have resentment toward their fathers. The data did not confirm this assumption; five wives had negative feelings, and four had positive feelings about their dads. Although the findings did not confirm this assumption, they do not weaken the case for the ACEs as the primary factor for OMJ because of the prevalence of negativity from the mom towards men, because the wife learned to feel unlovable, and because the marriage bond was not strong enough to avoid cheating.

### **Effect of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy**

The first interview established the effects of the obsessively morbid jealous wife, showing that all nine couples live in emotionally distant, tense, and conflictive surroundings in their homes. The triangulated data revealed how OMJ tears apart marriages through the supposedly unfounded insecurities of the obsessive wife.<sup>55</sup> Her constant controlling behavior, false accusations, and looking for a fight keep the most patient husband vacillating between anger and anxiety. Because most participating couples have maintained their marriages for several years, none could see any improvement or hope for future change. They live in a cycle of crisis, another chance, another crisis. Amazingly, these wives confirmed what their husbands had complained about them of their insecurities and unfounded accusations.

The questionnaires and interviews displayed the typical attitude and conduct of the obsessively jealous wife in all the participants. They live in constant fear of unfaithfulness by

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<sup>55</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 75.

their spouses, believing that their partners could not love someone like themselves.<sup>56</sup> Their ACE programming from childhood conditioned them to believe they were unlovable and that their partner was lying when he said he loved her. They constantly watch and wait desperately to find evidence of unfaithfulness to prove they are not crazy.<sup>57</sup> The data shows the wife's constant spying by checking their phones, computers, clothes, wallets, bank accounts, and GPS to confirm her feelings.<sup>58</sup>

### **Reactions of the Husband of an Obsessively Morbid Jealous Wife**

The data shows that the obsessive nature of the OMJ wife will substantially affect their husbands emotionally. Every husband in this study showed significant signs of resentment, anxiety, and desperation (see Appendix H). The husbands were resentful because of the false accusations and the controlling behavior.<sup>59</sup> After years of trying to logically resolve the problem with their explanations, they accommodate their suspicious wives by avoiding circumstances she might wrongfully interpret as cheating. They diminish social activities, especially where women are present. They cut off conversations with the opposite sex to avoid having a major fight with their wives.

By this researcher's observations over the years, when the husbands of OMJ wives show no signs of unfaithfulness, neither by actions, evidence, or confessions, yet his wife remains suspicious, he will begin to be secretive about his communication devices. He knows his wife will interpret any legitimate contact with a female as an affair. So, he will change his pin, hide his phone, and use his phone only when she is not near. He thinks this will help when it only

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<sup>56</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 50-51.

<sup>57</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 350-369.

<sup>58</sup> Curling et al., "Treatment of Obsessive Morbid Jealousy with Cognitive Analytic Therapy," 96.

<sup>59</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 185.

intensifies her suspicions. The wife sees this suspicious behavior as a sign of guilt and becomes more determined to spy. The other response of the husband is to avoid contact with the wife through work, hobbies, sports, or other activities.<sup>60</sup> The wife also interprets his avoidance as a sign that he is unfaithful, intensifying her suspicions.

If the husband cannot escape, he stays silent and distant in the home, with little desire to be intimate with her. Which then becomes cyclical, where the wife may become even more entrenched in OMJ. She interprets this distancing and lack of intimacy as a sign that he must have some other romantic interest in his life. She continues to feel like the victim of another unfaithful husband.<sup>61</sup> After all, she always heard from her mom that all men are liars and cheaters. The cycle continues yearly with no hope (see Figure 4.1). The truth is that the husband is not the problem, so he is not the solution.

### **This Multigenerational Problem**

The data points to another vital theme based on the biblical principle of sowing and reaping; the patterns of the parents influence their children. The data given by these nine couples involves three and sometimes four generations. For example, the father of Wife 1 abandoned the home as his daughter was born, producing resentment and insecurity. Her mother was also resentful of this rejection, poisoning her with constant bitterness towards men. There was infidelity by her grandfather towards the grandmother, who was actively raising her. Now her three boys have all demonstrated solid insecurities and rejection of future marriage.

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<sup>60</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 185.

<sup>61</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 28.



The generational cycle worsens as more broken homes produce ACEs for the next generation.<sup>62</sup> This researcher has for forty years counseled many types of marriage problems, including obsessive morbid jealousy. In these forty years, he has seen children grow to be adults, marry, and become parents, some even grandparents. He has witnessed how more people are coming to church from broken homes. As divorce and infidelity produce ACEs, fertile ground for OMJ, he watches as OMJ cases have skyrocketed in the last ten years. This trend will increase exponentially in children with more ACEs, and the cycle continues.

### **Husband's and Wife's Emotions**

In his book *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Larry Crabb shows a seven-step counseling model that starts with identifying problem emotions. This step leads to the following two stages of identifying problem behavior and problem thinking.<sup>63</sup> The biblical counselor will identify the problem thinking to discover their goal for personal worth. The counselor needs to identify the root problem to help the OMJ wife establish a cognitive reprogramming strategy. The lack of a healthy self-image of an obsessively morbid jealous wife produces powerful emotions in the OMJ wife and her husband.

The OMJ wife lives with intense jealousy and insecurity based on anxiety.<sup>64</sup> Fear is a large part of the OMJ wife's daily living, as is anger, as she cannot control her husband. The findings from the interviews show the OMJ wife projecting her unhappiness on her partner. She thinks he is the problem and blames him for her insecurity and for not doing his part to make her happy. As she confronts him on these issues, she begins to have a guilty conscience for having

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<sup>62</sup> Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotion*, 37.

<sup>63</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 151.

<sup>64</sup> Chambers, *Jealousy*, 3.

unwarranted threats and accusations. She experiences anxiety, anger, and guilt.<sup>65</sup> After years of this vicious cycle, she loses hope and feels desperation concerning her future.

On the other hand, the husband suffers anxiety because his wife is constantly angry. In the interviews, the husbands shared their fears that their wives might find something on their phones, start a fight, or come to work and create a scandal. They reported living in constant fear of things growing out of control.<sup>66</sup> After she falsely accuses him several times, he begins to resent her and will counter-attack her accusations. Both tempers will soar, and he or both will bring up divorce. After many years of this vicious cycle, the husband will feel desperation as he sees no way out.

### **Conclusion**

As this chapter began, this researcher asked, “What did we find out?” and “Will this help address the problem?” The data showed that eight wives’ dads were unfaithful, abandoned the home, or divorced their wives, yet no wife had any evidence of an unfaithful husband (see Appendix H). The findings support the thesis that past experiences have a more significant influence on producing an insecure wife than the present circumstances.<sup>67</sup> Despite some girls having a positive relationship with their fathers, the findings still show insecurity developed by the father’s unfaithfulness to their moms. These girls’ moms exacerbated the insecurity of their daughters with their constant portrayal of all men as liars and cheaters, creating the anxiety of a small girl contemplating the possibility of a life without the most important man of her life.

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<sup>65</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 127.

<sup>66</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 171.

<sup>67</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 28.

The early years of a child's life are the most important for forming attitudes, values, and relational behavior.<sup>68</sup> The data has given much support to this thesis that postulates that the insecurity of an OMJ wife comes predominantly from the parents of each child. If the problem's diagnosis is correct, more couples and counselors can seek a biblical and practical strategy to bring victory to the home, the church, and society. This information can be prepared and taught to the counselors of the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique and its satellite churches and later to many other counselors of other congregations. Much work still needs to be done, but this thesis has started this vital process.

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<sup>68</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 18.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

After years of attending couples displaying high levels of conflict due to the obsessive jealousy of one of the partners, this researcher decided to do something about it. Through this action research thesis, this researcher attempted to discover the cause of the obsessively morbid jealous wife. He concluded that adverse childhood experiences led to obsessive morbid jealousy, especially by the unfaithful conduct of their dads towards their moms when they were very young. The church faces new cases of OMJ on a steady basis.

This data collected coincides with the scholarly literature on the subject. Authors Bi et al. have connected the expression of paternal emotion toward the daughter with her attachment to her spouse, the father of her children.<sup>1</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein state that parental divorce during the early years shapes the wife's adult relationships, specifically in their ability to trust.<sup>2</sup> They give the testimony of someone whose parents divorced when very young, "...I know that I do not trust people as much as I would like to believe that I do...specifically men. I don't trust men...at all...I don't trust that people will not abandon me eventually."<sup>3</sup>

These are just a few sources that conclude that the past is a much greater cause of obsessive morbid jealousy than the present partner. Ahktar observes, "The capacity to have confidence in oneself and to trust others develops during infancy and early childhood. However, experiences during later childhood and adolescence also modulate and refine these attributes."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bi et al., "Father Attachment," 457.

<sup>2</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, "Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce," 44.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>4</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 18.

He continues, “One afflicted with jealousy is fighting a battle that is not contemporary but from his or her past.”<sup>5</sup> Ayala Malakh-Pines, in her book, *Romantic Jealousy Causes, Symptoms, Cures*, states that jealousy “...is influenced by our family background: a man whose mother was unfaithful to his father or whose parents had violent outbursts of jealousy is likely to have a far greater predisposition to jealousy than a man whose father and mother felt secure in each other’s love.”<sup>6</sup>

The data also displayed the presence of obsessive-compulsive disorder as part of the problem with the obsessively morbid jealous wife. In their book *Break Free from Intrusive Thoughts*, Kissen, Ioffe, and Lambert write: “Freedom comes from being liberated from the losing battle against oneself and one’s life experience. You cannot fight against yourself and win.”<sup>7</sup> The data gathered in this research project agrees with these authors, that point out that the typical strategy of avoiding these obsessive thoughts “only leads to increased thought frequency, and this cycle is only strengthened with repetition.”<sup>8</sup> Schwartz states that people with OCD “engage in bizarre and self-destructive behaviors to avert some imagined catastrophe. But there is no real connection between the behaviors and the catastrophes they fear.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Future Research**

This researcher chose to investigate the cause of obsessive morbid jealousy in wives as he has encountered several complex cases. This researcher examined many studies, looking for the connection between obsessive morbid jealousy with past emotional traumas. The Wallerstein

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<sup>5</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 44, 45.

<sup>6</sup> Ayala Malakh-Pines, *Romantic Jealousy Causes, Symptoms, Cures* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Debra Kissen, Micah Ioffe, and Emily Lambert, *Break Free from Intrusive Thoughts: An Evidence-Based Guide for Managing Fear and Finding Peace* (Emeryville, CA: Rockridge Press, 2021), 56-57, Kindle Edition.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Schwartz, *Brain Lock*, xxvii.

study set the tone with a twenty-five-year follow-up on children whose parents divorced.<sup>10</sup> This study patiently examined the devastating emotional effects on grown children entering adult relationships. Wallerstein says that life after divorce for children is very “different” in a negative way.<sup>11</sup>

Authors Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo conducted a retrospective case-control study over fourteen months from 2014 to 2015. They state that of “2,708 patients, 131 (4.8%) were identified to have morbid jealousy... There was a statistically significant association between morbid jealousy and past experiences of being cheated on or childhood experiences of parents having or being accused of having extra-marital relationships.”<sup>12</sup> They report that “childhood experience of parents having or being accused of having extra-marital relationships was recorded in 35.9% (n=47/131) of cases and 15.5% (n=399/2577) of controls.”<sup>13</sup> This study agrees with the hypothesis of this thesis.

Peter Salovey reports on various studies that distinguish between men and women with obsessive morbid jealousy. He continues that men are motivated to anger for reasons different than women, although the pain comes from not satisfying their spouse. Men reacted with rage when intimacy was the motive of their unfaithfulness, and women responded with anger when the other woman’s physical attractiveness was the motive for cheating.<sup>14</sup>

Karunaratne, Liyanage, and Rodrigo conclude that “individuals with morbid jealousy have either experienced or are more likely to recall incidents of past experiences of being cheated-on

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<sup>10</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 45.

<sup>11</sup> Wallerstein, Lewis, and Blakeslee, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce*,” xxxiii.

<sup>12</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 20.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 681-683.

or childhood experience of parents having or being accused of having extra-marital relationships.”<sup>15</sup> They continue, “This area has rarely been studied before.”<sup>16</sup>

The data collected has highlighted the lack of present preparation of biblical counselors in the local churches involved in this study (see Appendix J). This researcher does not believe the questionnaire was sufficient to understand the entire picture, so he has determined to further this investigation. He will do this using another ACEs/PACEs questionnaire and a personal interview with each participant. Later he will present material from this thesis in a seminar to help pastors and counselors of these three congregations prepare for couples experiencing this marital nightmare.

This action research sought to add to the knowledge of obsessive morbid jealousy, hoping to contribute to a biblical and practical strategy to offer to suffering families. This project proposes to put in the hands of biblical counselors the OMJ questionnaire as a possible tool to use (see Appendix B). This thesis plans to help them understand and observe typical behaviors and discover the critical factors from the past. By assisting counselors in diagnosing the cause of OMJ, they can focus on cognitive therapies to help transform the thinking of the obsessive spouse.<sup>17</sup> The researcher hopes that preparing counselors in the local church will make a difference, justifying this qualitative action research.

The data collected in this thesis has also opened another area of interest which would be a good study that this researcher contemplates for the future, resilience’s coping power. Through literature and interviews, the data showed the importance of the couples’ resilience to overcome this marital attack. As mentioned in Chapter Two, some children who have suffered many

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<sup>15</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 681-683.

<sup>16</sup> Karunaratne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Frank M. Dattilio, and Arthur Freeman, eds., *Cognitive Behavioral Strategies in Crisis Intervention*, Third Edition (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2007), 300, Kindle.

adverse childhood adversities develop the capacity to cope with new adversity as adults, called “resilience.”<sup>18</sup> They overcame their hardships and transformed this ability into becoming responsible adults with mature attitudes in their relationships. The data agrees with scholarly literature attributing this resilience to the husbands' protective and compensatory experiences (PACEs).

The researcher also needs to study the “how to” application of biblical principles like identification with Christ (Gal 2:20). The researcher can further investigate the possibility of referrals to qualified medical doctors for any physical screening to discard any medical condition contributing to the current OMJ. Most scholarly literature leans heavily on diagnosing OMJ but does not offer many practical remedies or anything concerning faith-based perspectives. After forty years of experience in northern Chile, this researcher has yet to find any faith-based mental health professionals for collaboration, and secular professionals rely heavily on drugs to help. This researcher sees the need to combine biblical principles with practical strategies so the church can be part of the solution. As this researcher believes that Christ has the answers to all humanity's problems, he believes that more study and investigation will eventually lead to a faith-based remedy to this marital need.

### **Thesis' Findings in Relation to Scholarly Literature Reviewed**

The data collected coincided with many scholarly studies and literature on morbid jealousy, although not all sources agree on the premise of ACEs.<sup>19</sup> Starting with the typical actions of an obsessively jealous wife, most of the studies include “spying,”<sup>20</sup> the unfounded

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<sup>18</sup> Ruziana and Hussin, “Morbid Jealousy Reactivated by Mood Episodes,” 64.

<sup>19</sup> Bi, et al., “Father Attachment,” 456-457.

<sup>20</sup> Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais, “Creeping or Just Information Seeking,” 41.



suspicious,<sup>21</sup> and the false accusations.<sup>22</sup> Scholarly literature also agrees with the spouse's desire to find any evidence to show they are not “crazy.”<sup>23</sup> The data gathered also coincided with the literature showing constant controlling behavior.<sup>24</sup> and obsessive interrogation.<sup>25</sup> Each wife in the study felt cheated on despite the lack of evidence or confessions (see Appendix H). In the investigation of OMJ, the data also confirmed the presence of unwanted intrusive thoughts, which can lead to obsessive-compulsive disorder.<sup>26</sup>

Many scholarly sources pointed to the past as a key to the present.<sup>27</sup> The nine wives in this research study had significant adverse childhood experiences, especially the absence of a faithful and present father. The data gathered agreed with the many scholarly resources on the subject.<sup>28</sup> Also, most of these wives’ moms constantly berated their fathers and all men as unworthy of their trust. They would typically say things like, “All men are useless liars and cheaters.”<sup>29</sup> When they were little, these obsessive wives needed healthy love and respect for their dads to establish trust in men, but they only got poison.

In her book, *Jealousy*, Katherine Chambers states, “If you do not believe you are worthy of being loved in return, you may believe that your partner will always want to be with someone else....”<sup>30</sup> The husband may say he loves her, but deep down inside, she believes he is mocking her. Many of these wives grew up in an environment wherein people often tried to mock or

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<sup>21</sup> Salovey, *The Psychology of Jealousy and Envy*, loc 358.

<sup>22</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 26.

<sup>23</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 70.

<sup>24</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Schwartz, *Brain Lock*, loc 460-467, Kindle.

<sup>27</sup> Hays-Grudo and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 124.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>29</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 53.

<sup>30</sup> Chamber, *Jealousy*, 8.

belittle them. The first wife of this study tearfully related how her grandparents called her names like dumb, ugly, and dark-skinned. She carried these adjectives all her life as her identity. The wives developed core beliefs such as “I am unlovable,” which is her basic operating system in her future life as an adult.<sup>31</sup>

Salman Akhtar, in his book, *A Web of Sorrow: Mistrust, Jealousy, Lovelessness, Shamelessness, Regret, and Hopelessness*, points out that “morbid jealousy displays itself in three distinct areas; emotional, cognitive, and behavioral.”<sup>32</sup> The interviews confirmed this declaration because all wives displayed obsessive jealousy in these three ways. This researcher has already shown the behavioral aspect of this obsessive jealousy, such as the controlling behavior, the snooping, the accusing, and the fighting in the first interview. Appendix I is a diagram showing the two interviews’ breakdown; the red column shows the emotional aspect, anxiety, anger, desperation, and dependence. The yellow column displays the cognitive element of feeling cheated on, chaotic thoughts (feeling crazy), intrusive thoughts, and fantasies of his unfaithfulness. Finally, the orange column shows the various behavioral traits of the OMJ wife.

### **Lessons Learned in Thesis**

A qualitative action research project aims to learn and apply “calls for intervention and change.”<sup>33</sup> This thesis taught three valuable lessons and alluded to a particular need. Forty years of counseling showed this researcher the typical behavior of an obsessively morbid jealous wife, but not the cause. The data collected in this research project, confirmed by the scholarly literature, taught the predominant cause of the OMJ wife. Based on the ACEs, the data show the

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<sup>31</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 50.

<sup>32</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 26.

<sup>33</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 15.

past as the most important factor. It also demonstrated the importance of PACEs that help the couple develop the coping power of resilience.<sup>34</sup>

The data from this research project opened the door to a great understanding of how OCD works and the need for a biblical cognitive program to free the OMJ wife of these tormenting intrusive thoughts. Kimberly Morrow and Elizabeth DuPont Spencer, in their book, *CBT for Anxiety: A Step-By-Step Training Manual for the Treatment of Fear, Panic, Worry, and OCD*, states, “Cognitive therapy is a broad category of therapeutic strategies aimed at changing the way clients think about thinking.”<sup>35</sup> The more these women tried to avoid thinking about his “cheating,” the more the OCD thoughts overwhelmed them. “These bad thoughts—when severe, they are called obsessions—may cost people the most important things in their lives...the symptoms paralyze them so they cannot perform simple everyday activities.”<sup>36</sup> These intrusive obsessive thoughts compound the jealous wife’s anxiety, and her compulsion increases her controlling behavior.<sup>37</sup>

The data from the questionnaire confirmed the researcher’s suspicions that the church’s present condition is ill-prepared to deal effectively with the alarming number of OMJ spouses. This need motivates this action research and the researcher to discover the cause and apply the findings to a future teaching platform to prepare future counselors. Qualitative research not only learns and adds to knowledge but also uses the data practically and efficiently to better the church and society’s situation. Qualitative research is a great way to explore true-to-life

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<sup>34</sup> Hays-Grudo, *Adverse, and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 51.

<sup>35</sup> Kimberly Morrow and Elizabeth DuPont Spencer, *CBT for Anxiety: A Step-By-Step Training Manual for the Treatment of Fear, Panic, Worry and OCD* (Eau, WI: PESI Publishing & Media, 2018), 63, Kindle.

<sup>36</sup> Lee Baer, *The Imp of the Mind: Exploring the Silent Epidemic of Obsessive Bad Thoughts* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2002), 24, Kindle.

<sup>37</sup> Winston and Seif, *Overcoming Unwanted Intrusive Thoughts*, 13-14.

experiences. This thesis now burdens the researcher and the church to discover the best form of a cognitive strategy, perhaps a biblical CBT, that will offer hope to these tormented families.<sup>38</sup>

## **Findings in Relation to Theological and Theoretical Framework**

### **Theological Framework**

God established marriage at the beginning of Creation (Gen 2:21-25). The Bible confirms its importance with such statements as Malachi 2:16, “For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce,” and Proverbs 18:22, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord” (NKJV). Today, a good marriage is an exception, not the norm, and they are ending alarmingly quickly.<sup>39</sup> The data gathered shows that the OMJ spouse does not experience the blessings of marriage and threatens to break their sacred vows. This thesis addresses the source of this marital conflict and offers biblical and practical strategies to restore a Christ-centered home for the couple and their children.

The Bible speaks of wisdom as the ability to make the right choices. The book of Proverbs warns the fool of the severe consequences of his poor decisions (Prov 1:20-33). These consequences affect the person and create negative experiences for those loved ones around them.<sup>40</sup> The Bible relates many stories of children repeating the same poor choices as their parents like Abraham and Isaac (Gen 12:13; 20:2; 26:7). In Bible characters like Jacob and his son Joseph (Gen 37), ACEs are observable. This thesis presents this problem and seeks to break

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<sup>38</sup> Marianna de Abreu Costa and Alexander Moreira-Almeida, “Religion-Adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: A Review and Description of Techniques,” *Journal of Religion and Health*, 61, no.1 (2021):444 DOI:10.1007/s10943-021-01345-z

<sup>39</sup> Sepúlveda Garrido, “Divorcios alcanzan la cifra más alta de los últimos seis años.”

<sup>40</sup> Tavis and Aronson, *Mistakes Were Made*, 116.

the chain of this generational affliction by restoring peace to the couple and creating PACEs and not ACEs for their children.

The data confirmed the generational influence in developing a person's attitude to confront adversity in a relationship as an adult. Les Parrot and Leslie Parrot explain in aviation terms the meaning of attitude. They explain that "attitude" is the nose's position as the plane comes in for a landing.<sup>41</sup> This attitude has everything to do with a safe landing in turbulent conditions. Crabb shows that a person's sense of personal value will dictate their attitude in facing adversity.<sup>42</sup> The OMJ wife seeks to control her partner, hoping to fill this void in her self-worth, but her control is counterproductive. Instead of drawing her partner closer, she pushes him farther away.<sup>43</sup>

The Apostle Paul warns the believer that the warfare Christians face occurs in the mind, not circumstances (2 Cor 10:3-5). This thesis points out that the OMJ wife's struggle is a battle for her mind, not her events (Rom 12:1, 2). The data persuades the participants that the husband is not the problem or the solution. The obsessively morbid jealous wife constantly receives obsessively intrusive thoughts (OCD) and continually ruminates through them.<sup>44</sup> The wives display this through their false accusations without any evidence or confessions. This researcher must consider this fictional orientation as he prepares a biblical strategy for relational healing.<sup>45</sup>

Paul offers the recipe for victory by identifying personally with Christ in His life, death, and resurrection. He sums up this principle in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ;

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<sup>41</sup> Les Parrot and Leslie Parrot, *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 67.

<sup>42</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 112.

<sup>43</sup> Chambers, *Jealousy*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Schwartz, *Brain Lock*, loc 2504.

<sup>45</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 88.

it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (NKJV).<sup>46</sup> Paul recognized the impossible task ahead of trying to do the right thing in his flesh when he states in Romans 7:15, “For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do” (NKJV). Paul states that the power to accomplish this is through the presence of the Holy Spirit of God working on the believer’s behalf by God’s grace (Phil 1:6; Rom 8:26; Gal 5:22-23).

This thesis shows that the OMJ wife’s past can rob her of abundant living (John 10:10) through her ACEs. The data shows that PACEs can produce resilience and help restore her relationships.<sup>47</sup> A believer’s identification with Christ overwrites her past with Christ’s past. The mission of the church with OMJ wives should be remedial and preventative. As biblical counselors work to heal marriages of OMJ wives, they are creating more PACEs, instead of ACEs, for their children. This strategy will offer hope and a difference for future generations in the church.

Most Chileans trust modern psychology with their emotional lives. Even many pastors will refer their members to a professional psychologist when they have an emotional problem unrelated to “spiritual things.”<sup>48</sup> Seamands states with much insight that “salvation does not give instant emotional health.”<sup>49</sup> The New Testament defines the purpose of the church and encourages its leaders to take care of the sheep entrusted to them (Acts 20:28). This action

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<sup>46</sup> McClendon, *Paul’s Spirituality in Galatians*, loc 46.

<sup>47</sup> Hays-Grudo, *Adverse, and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 70.

<sup>48</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 118.

<sup>49</sup> Seamands, *Healing for damaged Emotions*, 14.

research hopes to equip the saints with the necessary tools to care for these suffering sheep (Eph 4:12-15).

### Theoretical Framework

This action research thesis focused on three main factors, obsessive morbid jealousy in wives, adverse childhood experience such as the divorce and infidelity of the wife's parents, and how to have an effective strategy in the local church for positive change. The researcher chose personal interviews as a good source for data collection. This process presents a difficulty for the participants as they must relive some challenging past experiences. This thesis project also demonstrates the problem of receiving honest answers from couples reporting on embarrassing behaviors such as violence and humiliating experiences.<sup>50</sup> Because of past counseling sessions, this researcher believes that he built a bridge of trust with these nine couples and thus received honest responses to the interview questions.

Since the Fellitti study in 1998, most researchers now agree that many emotional problems in adults, including obsessive morbid jealousy, can be traced back to their adverse childhood experiences.<sup>51</sup> Researchers agree on the cause but differ in the various remedies, many of which are self-help therapies such as storytelling.<sup>52</sup> The body of scholarly sources on ACEs and OMJ showed no interest in faith-based remedies, even blaming the church and religious belief as part of the problem.<sup>53</sup> Typical remedies these sources offered were preventing other ACEs in the next generation, a lofty but unobtainable goal. They also provided a cognitive distraction for the OMJ spouse through Eastern meditative practices and different strategies that

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<sup>50</sup> Asmundson and Afifi, *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, 166-167.

<sup>51</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Gold, *APA Handbook of Trauma Psychology*, 436.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 433.

work as a “placebo” effect.<sup>54</sup> If God is not in the answer, there will be no transformation for those suffering from OMJ.

Apart from the couple’s suffering, this marital tragedy damages the children’s present and future.<sup>55</sup> The interview data showed that all these couples’ children had manifested insecure traits, rebellion, and isolation. Many boys declared they would never get married and have children (see Appendix H). The couples’ marital conflict will become their children’s ACEs, continuing the generational chain. Studies show that most of these married couples’ children will have problems coping with stressful events and maintaining healthy relationships as adults.<sup>56</sup>

### **Possible Applications**

Paul exhorts the Corinthian church to follow through on their commitment promised to the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:11). Some investigations only offer additional knowledge concerning a real problem. The importance of an action research project is that it emphasizes “action.”<sup>57</sup> The findings of this thesis confirmed both the body of scholarly literature and the hypothesis of this investigation. Adverse childhood experiences play an instrumental role in the development of an obsessively morbid jealous wife, even more than the suspicious conduct of the husband.<sup>58</sup> How can this researcher apply the findings to produce a change in families, the local church, and society in Chile?

This researcher sees a good launchpad because of this action research for training pastoral counselors. He hopes to prepare them for the epidemic of problem marriages with

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<sup>54</sup> Dayton, *The Soulful Journey of Recovery*, 174.

<sup>55</sup> Lange et al., “Parental Conflicts and Posttraumatic Stress of Children,” 1, 7.

<sup>56</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 44.

<sup>57</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Karunarathne, Liyanage, Rodrigo, “Role of negative experiences in past relationships,” 22.



obsessively morbid jealous wives. Although this thesis focuses on only three congregations, this researcher has already tested the waters for possible conferences with many Chilean pastors on pastoral counseling. Pastors have already shown interest in future counseling workshops to present the cause and remedy of OMJ, ACEs, and OCD. This action research has started developing biblical and practical strategies to help.

This researcher realizes he needs to continue studying these problems to gain a better perspective and strategies for change. He needs to develop biblical strategies further using cognitive reprogramming (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:17-24), biblical meditation (Ps 1:1-3), and personal identification with Christ (Gal 2:20).<sup>59</sup> Marianna de Abreu Costa and Alexander Moreira-Almeida, in their paper “Religion-Adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: A Review and Description of Techniques,” encourage the counselor to include faith-based principles in the CBT strategies for implementing coping resources and developing resilience in the person suffering from OCD.<sup>60</sup> This researcher wishes to develop an organized faith-based therapy for help that he can transfer to other local churches and biblical counselors. Because of this action research, the researcher is optimistic that change is coming for couples of obsessively morbid jealous wives and their families.

## **Recommendations**

### **Pastors and Counselors**

In his book, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Larry Crab shows different attitudes toward counseling in the local church context.<sup>61</sup> Some churches attack the problem from the standpoint

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<sup>59</sup> McClendon, *Paul's Spirituality in Galatians*, loc 4899.

<sup>60</sup> Abreu Costa and Moreira-Almeida, “Religion-Adapted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy” 444.

<sup>61</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 31.

of confronting sin in a nouthetic way.<sup>62</sup> Others combine Psychology with the Bible or refer complicated cases to psychologists.<sup>63</sup> This thesis project presents a different plan to familiarize the counselor with material written about obsessive jealousy but to have a biblical understanding of the problem and a biblical understanding of the best plan for victory. This researcher recommends that these prospective pastors and counselors attend future seminars and conferences that this researcher will present on causes and strategies for the obsessive morbid jealous spouse.

### Wives

Although there are husbands with OMJ, this thesis has focused exclusively on the OMJ wife. This researcher recommends that wives with this affliction seek help from a qualified biblical counselor who knows the source of their jealousy. This researcher (or a qualified counselor) needs to point out the following steps: He must first convince the obsessively jealous wife that the cause of her insecurity is her past traumas in her home and not the suspicious nature of her husband. The obsessively jealous wife must realize that “adulthood is an extension of our childhood, not a replacement of it.”<sup>64</sup> Her husband is not the problem, so controlling her husband will not solve her jealousy.<sup>65</sup> The biblical counselor must also inform her how obsessive-intrusive thoughts function.

Once she understands the cause of her OMJ, the counselor must guide her into applying biblical truths. He must show her that her mind is a fertile ground for jealous thoughts and that

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<sup>62</sup> Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling*, 31.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

<sup>64</sup> Richo, *When the Past is Present*, 105.

<sup>65</sup> Ruziana and Hussin, “Morbid Jealousy Reactivated by Mood Episodes.”

she must enter the battle for her mind actively and not passively (2 Cor 10:3-5).<sup>66</sup> She needs to learn the importance of filling her mind with biblical truth related to her confidence in the Lord and accept the Lord as the source of her value (Eph 3:11, 12). Finally, she must understand and apply the Bible principle for every disciple, the focus of being identified with Christ in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension (Gal 2:20; Eph 1:3).

### Husbands

Although the husband is not the problem nor the source of the wife's jealousy, he can be part of the solution. This researcher has observed that the man's frustration with his wife has provoked his resentment toward her. This resentment produces fighting, avoidance, and efforts to hide his items from her snooping.<sup>67</sup> Through these reactions, the husband sends the wrong message; he distances himself from her and might leave or find someone else. Each of these actions only exacerbates the insecurity of the wives leading the conflict to the next level.<sup>68</sup> In his book, *The Peace Maker*, Ken Sande suggests three responses to the wife's accusations: avoidance, attack, or making peace.<sup>69</sup>

This researcher recommends that the husband does the opposite of what his nature wants to do (avoid, attack, or accommodate). He should draw closer to her, express his love towards her, and be patient with her, which is an excellent way to respond and not react to the wife's behavior. This forgiving attitude is tough to do when being verbally attacked as a "useless, lying cheat." But he must realize that her poisoning was programmed long before their relationship

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<sup>66</sup> Jennie Allen, *Get Out of Your Head: Stopping the Spiral of Toxic Thoughts* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2020), 65.

<sup>67</sup> Akhtar, *A Web of Sorrow*, 28.

<sup>68</sup> Chambers, *Jealousy*, 27.

<sup>69</sup> Ken Sande, *The Peace Maker, A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 22.

started, and it, in a way, is directed back at her father. Yet he should not accommodate her obsessive demands as this will not solve her jealousy; it will only empower her obsessions. In their book, *Boundaries*, Henry Cloud and John Townsend state: “Favors and sacrifices are part of the Christian life. Enabling is not.”<sup>70</sup> Biblical counselors must train the husbands to act and not react to her obsessive jealousy.

### Children

This thesis unmask the deep hurt that morbid jealousy produces in many homes and shows the emotional scars that time has etched on the children’s subconscious.<sup>71</sup> Depending on the age of the children and the duration of these conflicts, the children will face many uphill battles as they try to make sense of this insecure worldview programmed in them. The age of the children will dictate part of the recommendations this researcher will offer. Some of the cases involve newborns and very young children. They may escape most of the adverse effects. Unfortunately, many of these girls will become the OMJ wives of the future.<sup>72</sup>

School-aged children with strong ACEs will carry these negative images for the rest of their lives. It is difficult for this researcher to offer them much more than understanding and compassion. This researcher’s recommendations to their children would try to foster resilience indirectly by showing the parents the importance of creating many PACEs. This strategy can motivate parents to actively strive for a steady home where love and Christian values abound. He

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<sup>70</sup> Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 197.

<sup>71</sup> Morrison, Fife, and Hertlein, “Mechanisms behind Prolonged Effects of Parental Divorce,” 44.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

recommends that parents look past their comfort and well-being and create a loving Christian home for their children's futures.<sup>73</sup>

### **Final Thoughts**

As this action research ends, this researcher has reasonable satisfaction with the results. It started with a hypothesis of the cause of the obsessively morbid jealous wife. The data confirmed that each wife actively and obsessively spied on their husband, hoping to find tangible evidence of their infidelity (see Appendix H). Each wife admitted they felt unlovable because of the programming received in their homes as young girls. Despite any evidence or confession, they also confessed to the presence of unwanted intrusive thoughts projecting their husband's unfaithfulness.<sup>74</sup> Each wife also spoke of the many times they had mentioned and contemplated divorce as the only solution and that their controlling behavior pushed their husband farther away.

Because of the 1998 groundbreaking study by Dr. Vincent Fellitti of the Kaiser Permanente Hospital group, this researcher discovered adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and how they influence the attitudes and behaviors of adults. The body of scholarly literature, confirmed by this study, clearly connects this morbid jealousy with their past and not their spouse's behavior. When the father of a young girl is unfaithful, divorced, or abandons the home, it creates an insecurity later in life that dominates the wife's thinking. When the mom constantly portrays all men as liars and cheaters or always tells her daughter she is overweight, dumb, or unattractive, she reinforces a personal identity as unlovable.<sup>75</sup> She will reason as an adult that it

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<sup>73</sup> Hays-Grudo, and Morris, *Adverse and Protective Childhood Experiences*, 17.

<sup>74</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 51-52.

<sup>75</sup> Ehrlich, *Divorce and Loss*, 62.

is only a question of time until her husband finds someone better than her and subsequently abandons her.<sup>76</sup>

These couples are now populating local churches in northern Chile, hoping for an answer from the church. This researcher describes the feelings of these couples as “desperation.” The Bible is all-sufficient for humanity’s problems, and this researcher aims to offer hope and a strategy for change through practical and biblical answers. This researcher is moderately satisfied with the findings but will not be completely satisfied until he has developed and implemented a counseling program to prepare pastors and counselors in the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique. This thesis can offer hope to other pastors throughout Chile and Latin America, which can then make a significant difference.

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<sup>76</sup> Leahy, *The Jealousy Cure*, 50-51.

## APPENDIX A

### RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS ACTION RESEARCH

- Office (desk and chairs) for interviews
- A supply of printed questionnaires for future participants approx. 100
- A supply of printed questionnaires for pastors and future counselors approx. 60
- A laptop computer exclusive to the Interviewer
- A calendar for noting the interviews scheduled for each group
- A secure place for keeping confidential questionnaires and interview notes
- Video camera for counselor training video
- 3 Large envelopes (1 for each church) with sufficient size to put all the completed questionnaires taken from each church

## APPENDIX B

## QUESTIONNAIRE SUSPICIOUS JEALOUSY

(ADAPTED FROM LEAHY'S BOOK, *THE JEALOUSY CURE*)

**DIAGNÓSTICO PARA LA INVESTIGACIÓN DE FORMAS****EFFECTIVAS DE LIDIAR CON LOS PENSAMIENTOS DE****CELOS OBSESIVOS**

Este cuestionario nos ayudará como iglesia examinar las tendencias del(de la) cónyuge celoso(a) obsesivo(a) y descubrir la conexión con las experiencias adversas de la primera infancia. El objetivo de este estudio es descubrir cuáles son los factores que contribuyeron a los pensamientos y comportamientos obsesivos.

**Instrucciones:** Lea atentamente cada ítem y seleccione con honestidad, la alternativa que usted considera sea su verdad.



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**PARTE I: RELACIÓN DE LA PAREJA**


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<b>1.-</b> ¿Esta es su primera relación de pareja/matrimonio?	<div>Si</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>No</div> <input type="radio"/>
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<b>2.-</b> ¿Cuántos años están juntos?	_____ Años
--	------------

<b>3.-</b> ¿Pregunto a mi pareja con quien hablaba o con quien estuvo en las actividades sociales donde no estuve presente?	<div>Siempre</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>A veces</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>Nunca</div> <input type="radio"/>
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<b>4.-</b> Cuando mi pareja conversa con personas del sexo opuesto, trato de interrumpir	<div>Siempre</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>A veces</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>Nunca</div> <input type="radio"/>
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<b>5.-</b> Reviso los correos electrónicos, WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook de mi pareja buscando señales de infidelidad.	<div>Siempre</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>A veces</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>Nunca</div> <input type="radio"/>
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<b>6.-</b> Reviso el teléfono de mi pareja para verificar llamados o mensajes de personas del sexo opuesto	<div>Siempre</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>A veces</div> <input type="radio"/>	<div>Nunca</div> <input type="radio"/>
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<b>7.-</b> Reviso el GPS de mi pareja para verificar los lugares que ha frecuentado.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>8.-</b> Solicito a mi pareja enviar fotos de donde se encuentra para verificar donde está y con quien está	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>9.-</b> Pido constantemente a mi pareja que me asegure que puedo confiar en él/ella.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
---	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>10.-</b> Me alejo de mi pareja cuando tengo sospechas.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>11.-</b> Acuso a mi pareja de estar interesado(a) en otra persona.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>12.-</b> Exijo a mi pareja que no coquetea con otros(as).	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>13.-</b> Digo expresiones negativas sobre personas que pienso puedan interesar a mi pareja.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
--	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>14.-</b> Trato de que mi pareja se sienta culpable por mi inseguridad.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
<b>15.-</b> Cuando estoy celoso(a), provoco peleas con mi pareja.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
<b>16.-</b> Cuando tengo celos, trato de seducir a mi pareja para sentirme mejor.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
<b>17.-</b> Sigo a mi pareja para saber si me está engañando.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
<b>18.-</b> Amenazo a mi pareja con dejarlo(a) (separación o divorcio).	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
<b>19.-</b> Amenazo a mi pareja con violencia cuando me siento inseguro(a).	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
<b>20.-</b> Soy violento(a) cuando tengo celos.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>

<b>21.-</b> Trato de evitar que mi pareja salga solo(a) sin mí.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
---	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>22.-</b> Hay circunstancias cuando contemplo tener otra mejor pareja.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
--	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>23.-</b> Me menoscabo ante mi pareja.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
--	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>24.-</b> Coqueteo con otras personas para poner celoso(a) a mi pareja.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>25.-</b> Confío en mi pareja	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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<b>26.-</b> Me preocupa que mi pareja me sea infiel.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
--	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>27.-</b> Me molesta que mi pareja tenga colegas o amigos(as) del sexo opuesto que puedan resultarle atractivos(as).	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
--	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>28.-</b> Me molesta que mi pareja toque o bese a personas del sexo opuesto cuando las saluda.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
--	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>29.-</b> Me molesta si alguien del sexo opuesto muestra interés en mi pareja.	Siempre <input type="radio"/>	A veces <input type="radio"/>	Nunca <input type="radio"/>
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**PARTE II: ANTECEDENTES FAMILIARES**


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<b>30.-</b> ¿Actualmente sus padres están vivos?	Padre		Madre	
	Si	No	Si	No
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>31.-</b> ¿Actualmente sus padres siguen juntos como matrimonio/pareja?	Si	No
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>32.-</b> ¿Se han divorciado sus padres? ¿hace cuánto tiempo se divorciaron?	Sí	No	Años
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	_____

<b>33.-</b> ¿Conoce usted si hubo infidelidad entre sus padres?	Sí	No	No lo sé
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>34.-</b> ¿Sus padres tenían buen concepto general sobre matrimonio?	Padre		Madre	
	Si	No	Si	No
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

---

**REGISTRO DE PARTICIPACIÓN**

---

Fecha: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Nombre \_\_\_\_\_ Iglesia: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexo: Femenino \_\_\_\_ Masculino \_\_\_\_ Edad Actual: \_\_\_\_ Nacionalidad \_\_\_\_\_

¿Le interesaría participar en dos entrevistas para la investigación de formas efectivas  
de lidiar con los pensamientos de celos obsesivos?      Sí \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

WhatsApp (igual que el teléfono): \_\_\_\_\_

Correo electrónico: \_\_\_\_\_

Firma: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

## RECRUITMENT LETTER EMAIL/WHATSAPP

Dear Brother (Sister) in Christ:

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to investigate the core cause to obsessive jealousy in wives in the Iglesia Biblica Bautista, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older, be in a relationship, and have one of the spouses displaying obsessive jealousy. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in two hour-long interviews. It should take approximately one hour for each interview, separated by one week, and another hour-long focus group at a later date. Participation will be completely confidential and no one other than this pastor will see the personal information. All identifying information will be kept secure and not used in any publication.

To participate, please contact me at WhatsApp [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED]

A consent document will be given to you at the time of the first interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the first interview.

Sincerely,

David M. Reinhardt  
Pastor Iglesia Bíblica Bautista  
[REDACTED]



APPENDIX D  
CONSENT FORM

**Title of the Project:** Study of the OMJ (Obsessive Morbid Jealousy)

**Principal Investigator:** David M. Reinhardt

**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be an adult over 18 years of age and have been in a marriage or partnership where one of the spouses displayed strong jealous tendencies. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

**What is the study about and why is it being done?**

The purpose of the study is to examine the tendencies of the Obsessively Morbid Jealous spouse and discover the connection with early childhood adverse experiences. This study is trying to discover what are the factors that contributed to the obsessive thoughts and behaviors

**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a first interview titled “a day in the life of an Obsessively Morbid Jealous spouse.” This interview will last about one hour. This interview will be recorded and extensive notes of the actual interview will be taken.

2. Participate in a second interview that will look at Adverse Childhood Experiences that you might have experienced that might give insight to the cause of the Obsessively Morbid Jealous spouse. This second interview will take about an hour and will be conducted the week following the first interview. This interview will also be recorded and extensive notes of the actual interview will be taken.

#### **How could you or others benefit from this study?**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are better understanding the core problem of the Obsessively Morbid Jealous spouse, to receive better strategies for overcoming the obsessive thoughts and to help future couples facing the same problems by helping to establish an effective training program for church counselors.

Benefits to society include contributing to a prepared counseling staff at the churches of the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista, and helping to diminish marital conflicts that are compounded in the negative experiences of the children of these homes.

#### **What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The risks involved in this study include the revisitation of painful experiences in the present or the past. As a participant you can feel free to withdraw at any time you feel uncomfortable recounting painful experiences.

#### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Any information that will be included in the publication of this thesis will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and Pastor David Reinhardt will be the only researcher who will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential using pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in the Pastor David Reinhardt's office where others will not overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Extensive notes from the interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

### Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Iquique (Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Gracia, o Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Alto Hospicio) If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact Pastor David Reinhardt at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

### Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Pastor David Reinhardt. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at WhatsApp [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED] You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor.

<b>Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?</b>
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If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

<b>Your Consent</b>
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By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. Pastor David Reinhardt will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

---

Printed Subject Name

---

Signature

## APPENDIX E

## PASTORAL PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER

January 23, 2023

[REDACTED]  
Pastor  
Iglesia Bíblica Bautista de Gracia  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Pastor [REDACTED]

As a graduate student in the Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree in Pastoral counseling. The title of my research project is Preparing the Church for Morbid Jealousy, and the purpose of my research aims to train pastoral counselors to connect childhood trauma to those members suffering suspicious jealousy.

I am writing to request your permission to utilize your membership list to recruit participants for my research. Participants will be asked to take a questionnaire on the existence of morbid jealousy in couples. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to Pastor David Reinhardt ([REDACTED] or WhatsApp [REDACTED]).

Sincerely,

David M. Reinhardt  
Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX F

## PRE-INTERVIEW EXAMPLE

- “Good morning” (afternoon, evening)
- “Let us start with a moment of prayer.” Prayer
- “Thank you for cooperating in this action research about suspicious jealousy and Adverse Childhood Experiences.” “This research is being conducted for my doctoral thesis.”
- “The goal of this research is to discover the real cause of these obsessive, jealous thoughts and behavior and design an effective strategy to train church counselors to help others suffering the same obsessive thoughts.”
- “I hope for your honest participation in the two interviews and possibly one of two focus groups.” “No one else will hear what you are going to say, just me.” “I will not record our interview with audio/visual, but will keep extensive notes.” These notes will be kept confidential in a place where only I will have access.” So please, if this research will impact your marriage and others, I need you to be honest with the questions I will be asking.”
- “Some of the questions I will ask might bring up some painful memories.” “Some childhood memories might provoke anger, fear, guilt, or embarrassment.” Some memories of conflicts or indiscretions from you or your partner might bring up some harrowing memories.” “I want you to feel free to stop the questions at any time, and if you should decide that you no longer want to continue, just say so, and that will be ok. This research is not about bringing up old painful experiences but helping us find the root of your present marital problems.”
- “I would like you to bring your journal to the two interviews for a quick review.”
- “If any of the information you is published in this thesis, there will be no names nor personal information.”
- “I would like you to give me your preferred times and days of the week most convenient for the two interviews. We will be starting next week.”
- “Thanks again for your willingness to participate in this action research.”

## APPENDIX G

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**FIRST INTERVIEW WOMEN “A DAY IN THE LIFE”**

Describe a typical day in your life (marriage, home, etc.)

- #1 How long have you been in a relationship with \_\_\_\_\_?
- #2 How would you describe your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_?
- #3 How much do you trust \_\_\_\_\_?
- #4 Do you ever check his personal items for signs of unfaithfulness? If so, how?
- #5 Has \_\_\_\_\_ ever confessed to an indiscretion with another?
- #6 How often do you fight with \_\_\_\_\_?
- #7 What are most of your fights like? Duration? Who provokes the fight? What do you usually fight about?
- #8 Have you ever had a previous relationship with another? If so, how long did it last?
- #9 (If necessary) Why did your previous relationship end?
- #10 Do you believe that your jealousy is justified?
- #11 What do you believe is the cause of your jealousy?
- #12 Do you ever talk about divorce?
- #13 What effect has this had on your children?

### FIRST INTERVIEW MEN “A DAY IN THE LIFE”

Describe a typical day in your life (marriage, home, etc.)

- #1     How long have you been in a relationship with \_\_\_\_\_?
- #2     How would you describe your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_?
- #3     Does \_\_\_\_\_ trust you when you are not with her?
- #4     Does \_\_\_\_\_ check your personal items (phone, Facebook, computer, etc.) for signs of unfaithfulness?
- #5     Have you ever been unfaithful in this relationship, or a previous relationship?
- #6     How often do you fight with \_\_\_\_\_?
- #7     What patterns do you see when you fight? How long do the fights last? What do you fight about?
- #8     Does \_\_\_\_\_ ever falsely accuse you of unfaithfulness?
- #9     What is your present strategy to overcome your wife's jealousy?
- #10    What feelings do you have for \_\_\_\_\_. (anger, resentment, anxiety, guilt, desperation, happiness, peace, understanding?)
- #11    What do you think is the cause of \_\_\_\_\_. Obsessive jealousy?
- #12    Do you ever talk about divorce?
- #13    What effect has this had on your children?
- #14    Have you ever had a previous relationship with another? If so, how long did it last?
- #15    (If necessary) Why did your previous relationship end?



**SECOND INTERVIEW WOMEN “ACES AND PACES”**

- #1 What is your earliest recollection? How old were you?
- #2 What were your worst childhood experiences? (ACEs)
- #3 What was your best childhood experiences? (PACEs)
- #4 Are your parents still alive today?
- #5 Are they still married? If not, how old were they when they got divorced?
- #6 What was your relationship to your father when young? And now?
- #7 What do you remember about what your mom told you about men?
- #8 Describe your home at 5 years old? At 12 years old?
- #9 Who were your prime caretakers? How did they take care of you?
- #10 At what age did you leave your home?
- #11 In what ways is your husband or partner like your father?
- #12 What influence do you think that your past has on your present?

**SECOND INTERVIEW MEN “ACES AND PACES”**

- #1 What is your earliest recollection? How old were you?
- #2 What were your worst childhood experiences? (ACEs)
- #3 What was your best childhood experiences? (PACEs)
- #4 Are your parents still alive today?
- #5 Are they still married? If not, how old were they when they got divorced?
- #6 What was your relationship to your father and mother when young? And now?
- #7 What do you remember about what your mom told you about women?
- #8 Describe your home at 5 years old? At 12 years old?
- #9 Who were your prime caretakers? How did they take care of you?
- #10 At what age did you leave your home?
- #11 In what ways is your wife or partner like your mother?
- #12 What influence do you think that your past has on your present?

## APPENDIX H

### INTERVIEW ANSWERS

#### Wives' Selective Responses First Interview Part 1

Participant	Years Together	Description of Relation	Level of Trust	Revision Personal Items	Husband's Confession	Who Starts Fights	Threatens Divorce
Wife 1		Unstable	Little	Yes	No	She	Both
Wife 2		Distant/Conflictive	Some	Yes	No	Both	Both
Wife 3		Conflictive	None	Yes	No	She	She
Wife 4		Distant	None	Yes	No	She	Both
Wife 5		Tense	0%	Yes	No	She	Both
Wife 6		Distant/Conflictive	Little	Yes	No	She	Both
Wife 7		So-so	80%	Yes	No	Both	He
Wife 8		Toxic	0%	Yes	No	Both	He
Wife 9		Unbearable	None	Yes	No	She	Both

#### Wives' Selective Responses First Interview Part 2

Participant	Is Jealousy Justified	What Was the Cause	Previous Relationship?	Was There Infidelity in Earlier Relationships?	Was There Jealousy in Earlier Relationships?
Wife 1	No	Past	Yes	Doesn't know	Yes
Wife 2	Yes	Husband's Conduct	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wife 3	Yes	Husband's Conduct	Yes	Doesn't know	Yes
Wife 4	Yes	Husband's Conduct	No	—	—
Wife 5	No	Husband's Conduct	Yes	Doesn't know	No
Wife 6	Yes	Husband's Conduct	Yes	No	No
Wife 7	Yes	Husband's Conduct & Past	Yes	No	Yes
Wife 8	Yes	Husband's Conduct & Past	Yes	Yes	No
Wife 9	Yes	Husband's Conduct	Yes	No	No

### Husbands' Selective Responses First Interview

Participant	Description of Relation	Falsely Accused	Strategy for Change	Present Feelings for Her	Her Cause of Jealousy	Effect on Kids
Husband 1	Bittersweet	Yes	Accommodate	Anger	Past	Insecurity; No desire to marry
Husband 2	Conflictive	Yes	Accommodate	Anxiety	Past	Anxious and Insecure
Husband 3	Living Hell	Yes	Accommodate	Anxiety	Past	Anxious
Husband 4	Toxic	Yes	Accommodate	Anger	Past/ cheating atmosphere	Insecurity and Rebellion
Husband 5	Toxic	Yes	Accommodate	Pity	Insecurity	Tries to Intervene
Husband 6	Cold/Distant	Yes	Avoidance	Desperation/ Anger	A dream of unfaithfulness	Obsessively Jealous
Husband 7	Unstable	Yes	Accommodate	Love	Past	Insecurity Anxiety
Husband 8	Desperate	Yes	Accommodate	Pity	Past	No desire to Marry
Husband 9	Empty	Yes	Accommodate	Pity	Insecurity	No desire to Marry

### Husbands' and Their Wives' Selected Responses About Fights First Interview

Husbands	How Often	How Long	Wife	How Often	How Long
Husband 1	60% time	A week	Wife 1	Every two weeks	A week
Husband 2	Six times a day	More than week	Wife 2	Every week	Didn't specify
Husband 3	2-3 times a week	Didn't specify	Wife 3	Time to time	More than week
Husband 4	One time a month	Didn't specify	Wife 4	Not much	Didn't specify
Husband 5	One time a week	1-2 days	Wife 5	Every day	Didn't specify
Husband 6	Many times a day	More than a week	Wife 6	80%	1-2 Weeks
Husband 7	99% time	Didn't specify	Wife 7	Once a month	4-5 days
Husband 8	All the time	Didn't specify	Wife 8	All the time	Didn't specify
Husband 9	Five times a day	Didn't specify	Wife 9	Every day	Didn't specify

### Wives' Selected Responses in the Second Interview

Participant	ACEs	PACEs	Parents Together	Relation With Father	Mom's Words on Men	Husband Like Dad	Past Influence
<b>Wife 1</b>	Dad abandoned her early	None	Never were	No relationship	Men are liars and cheaters	Not at all	Low self-esteem & jealousy
<b>Wife 2</b>	Sexually abused	Good friends	Never were	No relationship	Only negative	Both were angry	Insecurity & desire to die
<b>Wife 3</b>	Separated from Dad & mom's critical	Being with her dad	Dad left when she was 4	Very special despite the separation	Men are bad	Opposites, both with noble hearts	Insecure, love not real
<b>Wife 4</b>	Dad was a womanizer; Dad left home	Going to church	Separated since age 7	Relationship till age 8, She was favorite	All men are rotten cheaters	Husband changed same as a dad now	It makes her strong, but she has no emotions
<b>Wife 5</b>	Mom argued a lot, always negative	Traveling with the family	Parents conflictive, together	Very special relationship with dad	All men are liars, bad	Nothing alike	She has become her mom
<b>Wife 6</b>	Mother left her at one month and raised by others	Grandfather bringing her things	Never were	No relationship	No relation with mom	Nothing alike	The need for a father figure
<b>Wife 7</b>	Dad was a womanizer; she was sexually abused	Good friends; vacations	Parents still fight but are together	A good relationship with dad	All men are useless;	Both were in the Navy	She has become her mom
<b>Wife 8</b>	Sexual abuse and low morality in home	Sailing other activities; meeting her father	Parents divorced when 4	No relationship	she spoke little about men	Dad was a womanizer; husband also until saved	Everything in her life was affected by past
<b>Wife 9</b>	Physically abused by sister	Dad was proud of her	Parents together til death	A good relationship with dad	Men are worthless liars	Not much, workaholics	She is like her mother

### Husbands' Selected Responses in the Second Interview

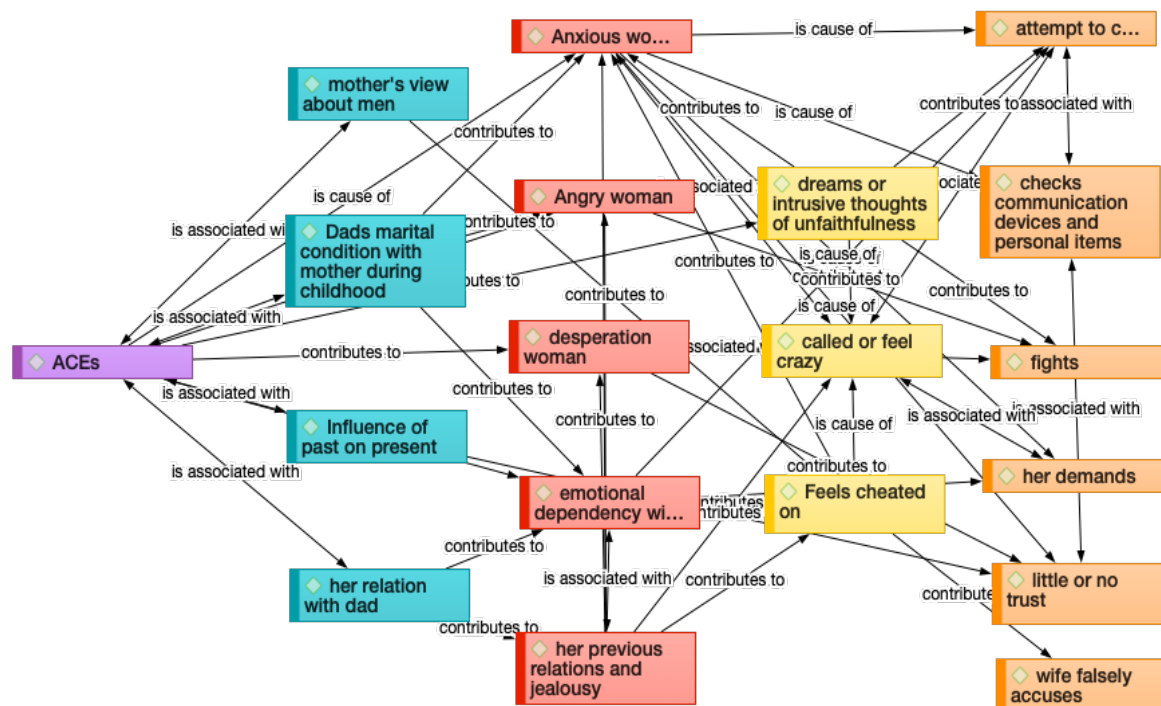
Participant	ACEs	PACEs	Parents Together	Relation with Dad & Mom	Warning Words Parents
Husband 1	Mom hitting him	Christmas in the family. Being at church	Yes, mom controller	Good with dad; mom controller	Nothing bad
Husband 2	Dad money problems; parents fighting	Vacations with grandparents; popular in school	Yes	Much trust	Warned about women
Husband 3	Mom's psychological problems	Good family and friends, trips to the beach	Yes, Dad is still hurtful	A good relationship with his mom, not with Dad	Know your spouse before marrying
Husband 4	Very poor. Dad left home	Friends and family activities	His parents divorced age of 5	No relationship with Dad; Great with mom	Mom's valuable advice for women,
Husband 5	Angry dad; Parents argued a lot	Family; travel	Yes, Good marriage	Good with both	Be careful
Husband 6	Seeing sister hit by a car	Harmonious family	Married until death	Good with both	Get to know many
Husband 7	Cruel father. Sexually abused	Seeing his mom happy	Married until death	He hated his father; he was good with his mother	Nothing in particular
Husband 8	Dad died at age 10. Bad stepfather	Memories with dad	Married until death	Excellent with both	Nothing bad
Husband 9	Defending sister from sexual abuse	Christmas with family	Good marriage until death	A good relationship between dad and Mom aggressive	Nothing bad

### Comparison of the Marriage of Parents of Each Spouse, Second Interview, Question 5

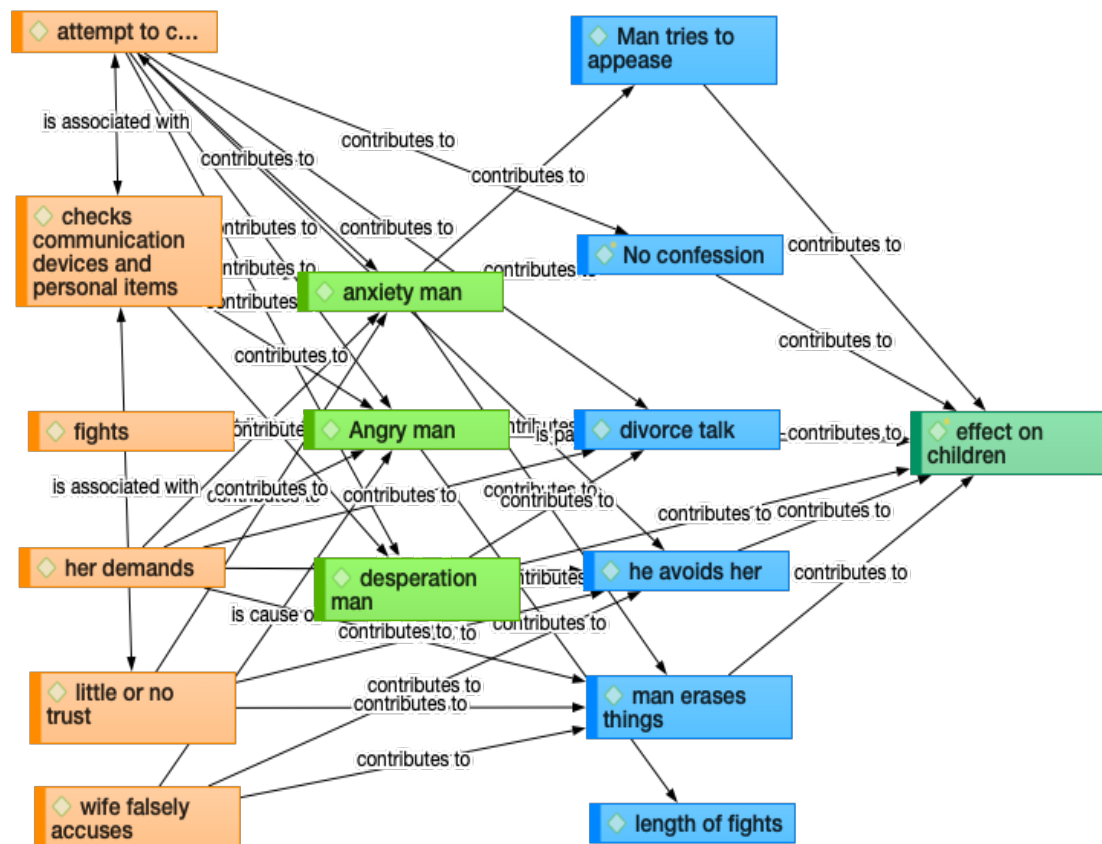
Couples 1-9	Wife's Parents Together	Husband's Parents Together
Couple 1	Parents never together	Parents still married
Couple 2	Parents never together	Parents still married
Couple 3	Dad left before the age of four	Parents still married
Couple 4	Separated when seven	Parents divorced when four
Couple 5	Conflictive parents still together	Parents still married (good)
Couple 6	Never were	Married till death
Couple 7	Conflictive parents still together	Married till death
Couple 8	Parents divorced when four	Married until death
Couple 9	Parents together until death	Good marriage until death

## APPENDIX I

## ATLAS.TI NETWORK WIFE'S ACEs TO OMJ BEHAVIOR



## NETWORK WIFE'S OMJ BEHAVIOR EFFECT ON HUSBANDS AND CHILDREN



## APPENDIX J

**QUESTIONNAIRE PROSPECTIVE BIBLICAL COUNSELORS****NEED FOR BIBLE COUNSELORS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH****QUESTIONNAIRE****IGLESIA BÍBLICA BAUTISTA DE IQUIQUE**

This questionnaire will allow the church to assess the present state of qualification and need for biblical counselors in the local church.

**Instrucciones:** Lea atentamente cada ítem y seleccione con honestidad, la alternativa que usted considera sea su verdad. Si el espacio es blanco, escriba la respuesta en sus palabras.

**Personal Information**

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Female \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Years as a Christian: \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Education: \_\_\_\_\_



<b>1.-</b> Do you consider yourself a born-again Christian, have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, have been baptized, and are a member of a local church?	Yes  <input type="radio"/>	No  <input type="radio"/>
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<b>2.-</b> Do you have a ministry that directly or indirectly gives counsel to those with personal and emotional problems?	Yes  <input type="radio"/>	No  <input type="radio"/>
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<b>3.-</b> Have you had any formal or informal training in how to diagnose problems and offer practical and Biblical advice?	Much Training  <input type="radio"/>	Some Training  <input type="radio"/>	No Training  <input type="radio"/>
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<b>4.-</b> Do you believe that counseling is a Biblical discipline that should be administered in the local church?	Yes  <input type="radio"/>	Only by the Pastor  <input type="radio"/>	No  <input type="radio"/>
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5.- Do you believe that churches today are equipped to handle the multitude of emotional problems in their members and visitors?	Most	Some	None
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6.- Do you believe that your church, pastor, lay workers are prepared to help the many emotional problems facing its church members and future congregants?	Yes	No
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7.- How often do you counsel people with marriage problems in or outside the church?	Always	When Needed	From Time to Time	Very Little	Never
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8.- How often do you counsel people with depression, rage, guilt, panic attacks, OCD, and or other personality disorders?	Always	When Needed	From Time to Time	Very Little	Never
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>9.-</b> What is your basis for counseling? The Bible, Psychology, or a combination of them both?	The Bible <input type="radio"/>	Psychology <input type="radio"/>	Combined Psychology and Bible <input type="radio"/>
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<b>10.-</b> Do you believe that the Bible has the answer for all human emotional and spiritual problems?	Always <input type="radio"/>	Most of the time <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
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<b>11.-</b> Do you believe that drugs can sometimes solve man's emotional problems?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	Sometimes <input type="radio"/>	Never <input type="radio"/>
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<b>12.-</b> Have you dealt with suspiciously obsessive jealousy in wives or husbands?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
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<b>13.-</b> What would be your advice to the husband of an obsessively jealous wife?	
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<b>14.-</b> What do you believe is the cause of obsessively jealous wives?	
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<b>15.-</b> What strategy would you offer to an obsessively jealous wife?	
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<b>16.-</b> Do you have any understanding of OCD (Obsessive Compulsion Disorder)?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="570 932 618 963">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="948 932 1013 963">Little</td> <td data-bbox="1308 932 1382 963">None</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="570 1037 618 1089"><input type="radio"/></td> <td data-bbox="948 1037 1013 1089"><input type="radio"/></td> <td data-bbox="1308 1037 1382 1089"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Little	None	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	Little	None					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

<b>17.-</b> Do you understand the causes of depression?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="570 1232 618 1264">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="948 1232 1013 1264">Little</td> <td data-bbox="1308 1232 1382 1264">None</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="570 1337 618 1390"><input type="radio"/></td> <td data-bbox="948 1337 1013 1390"><input type="radio"/></td> <td data-bbox="1308 1337 1382 1390"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Little	None	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	Little	None					
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

<b>18.-</b> Have you ever had to deal with someone that was suicidal, or relatives of someone who has committed suicide?	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="756 1535 805 1566">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="1151 1535 1192 1566">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="756 1640 805 1692"><input type="radio"/></td> <td data-bbox="1151 1640 1192 1692"><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yes	No				
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				

<b>19.-</b> Where would you go to get answers to help people struggling with Jealousy, OCD, Depression, suicidal thoughts?	Internet  <input type="radio"/>	Psychology Books  <input type="radio"/>	Christian Books  <input type="radio"/>	Bible  <input type="radio"/>	Don't Know  <input type="radio"/>
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<b>20.-</b> Would you be interested in a series of workshops to help prepare Biblical Counselors in your local church?	Yes  <input type="radio"/>	Not at the Moment  <input type="radio"/>
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## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

September 19, 2022

David Reinhardt

Teresa Duez

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22-23-296 Preparing Church Counselors for Obsessive Morbid Jealousy

Dear David Reinhardt and Teresa Duez,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds that your study does not meet the definition of human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research because your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application. Any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

**Research Ethics Office**