

## **When Bible becomes Harmful to Women: an Analysis of Textual Usages in Promoting Intimate Partner Violence among Christian women of Kilifi County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

IPV is global problem that is affecting many couples across the globe today. This article explores how biblical texts are interpreted to promote and justify IPV against Christian women in. This being a descriptive research attempted to describe some of the Bible verses that are used to influence women facing IPV to persevere in their marriages. Data was collected from 52 informants using questioners and in-depth interviews. The study interviewed 30 women facing IPV individually, abused women in focus group discussions and 10 pastors to gather data on how Bible texts are interpreted to promote IPV against Christian women. 12 questionnaires were administered to 6 gender officers, 3 probation officers and 3 social workers and the findings used to supplement data collected from the key informants. This article established that some Bible texts are interpreted and used by wife abusers and pastors offering counseling to the IPV victims to promote and justify IPV. This study recommended that the church should organize to re-read and re-learn these bible texts with a view of interpreting them without being biased on women. The church should also re-examine all patriarchal passages in the Bible with a view of condemning the patriarchal beliefs and practices that promote IPV against woman.

**Keywords:** Christian Woman, Intimate Partner Violence, Bible Texts, Bible Interpretation

## **1. Introduction**

This article is based on a study that sought to investigate the influence of Christian teachings and biblical texts on Intimate Partner Violence on protestant Christian Women in Kilifi County, Kenya. Kilifi County was one of the counties with the highest number of reported cases of Violence on women. Data from the Ministry of Public Service and Gender in Kilifi County reported 800 cases of violence on women in 2015, while Kilifi Recovery Center for Gender Based Violence reported 479 cases the same year. Despite facing IPV from their spouses, most women continue to persevere in these relationships. Although there are studies on violence on women, how Christian teachings and biblical interpretation are used to promote and influence Christian women to persevere in abusive marriages has not received much attention. The article seeks to analyse how biblical texts are interpreted and used in promoting IPV among Christian women in Kilifi County.

The first section of this article presents demographic data of the respondents. It then discusses Bible texts that are used to promote and justify intimate partner violence against women. Findings from this work showed that the most used verses to promote IPV against women were; women should submit to their husbands (Ephesians 5: 21-22), man is the head of family (1Cor 11:3), women should remain silent in the church (1Cor 3:34), God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), Eve was created as a helper to Adam (Genesis 2:18), women are to blame for the fall of man (Genesis 3:6), the husband has the responsibility to discipline his wife (Genesis 3 : 16) and sufferings are God's lesson for His children (James 1: 2). Lastly the article is concluded by a summary of the scriptures that are used to promote IPV against women.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The target population was women in IPV relationships. The sample size was 30 women selected through snow balling sampling method, 10 pastors selected through Random sampling and 12 workers dealing with victims of IPV were selected through purposive sampling. Primary data sources were: oral interviews, focused group discussions and questionnaires while secondary data included: books, magazines, journals and newspapers; they were analyzed considering their usefulness in the study. In-depth interviews with the victims of IPV, pastors and information from government were done. The qualitative data was analyzed from the interview guides and focus group discussion by use of descriptive statistics where patterns or themes were identified and documented as individual voices in speech marks

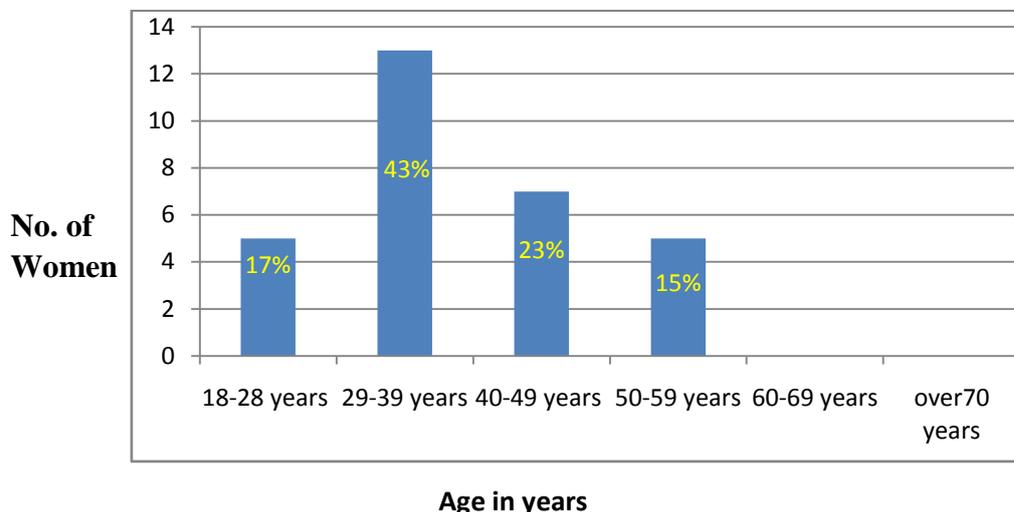
including the date of collection in order to ensure validity and accuracy of the information gathered. These themes were on biblical texts and Christian teachings, interpretations of these bible texts and how they are used to promote IPV against Christian women. Data from the documentary process was captured and documented indicating the source and the date. Data from the questionnaires on the interpretation of Bible texts and how they were used to promote IPV on women was coded according to the research question. The coded data helped in preparing frequency tables and percentages before analysis.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

Findings on demographic information of the victims of IPV are discussed as follows:

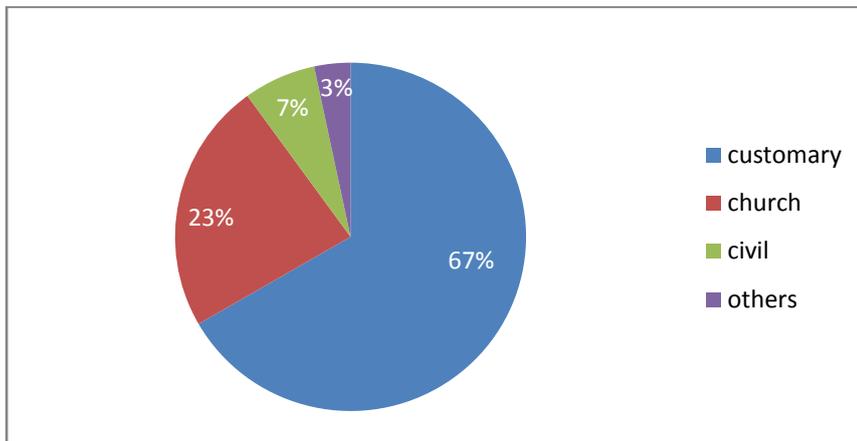
##### 3.1.1 Age of the Participants



**Figure 1.1: Distribution of Age of Respondents**

According to the current study as shown in table 3.1, 43% (13 out of 30) of the interviewed women were aged between 29-39 years, 23% (7 out of 30) were aged between 40-49 years while 17% (5 out of 30) of the respondents were aged between 18-28 years. Another 17% (5 out of 30) respondents were in the age bracket of 50-59 years. There were no respondents aged above 60 years. The results of the respondents in this study showed that young women were likely to face IPV. These findings are in agreement with those of a study done by Le, Trans, Nguyen and Fisher (2013) which found out that younger women are more likely to face IPV compared to older women. The current study shows that 43% (13 out of 30) were in age bracket of 29-39 years. These findings resonate with results of a study done by Colom and Saul (1989) which showed that 82 % of women aged between 27-41 years had faced IPV from their spouses.

### 3.1.2. Types of marriages



**Figure 1.2. Types of marriages.**

The findings of the current study show that 67% (20 out of 30) respondents had been married through customary procedures while 33% (10 out of 30) of the respondents had been married through church weddings, civil marriages and other forms of marriages such as come we stay or cohabiting. These findings agree with those of a study done by Diagle (2012) that shows that women who were married through church and civil weddings experienced less violence compared to those married in customary marriages.

### 3.1.3. Education Attainment Level

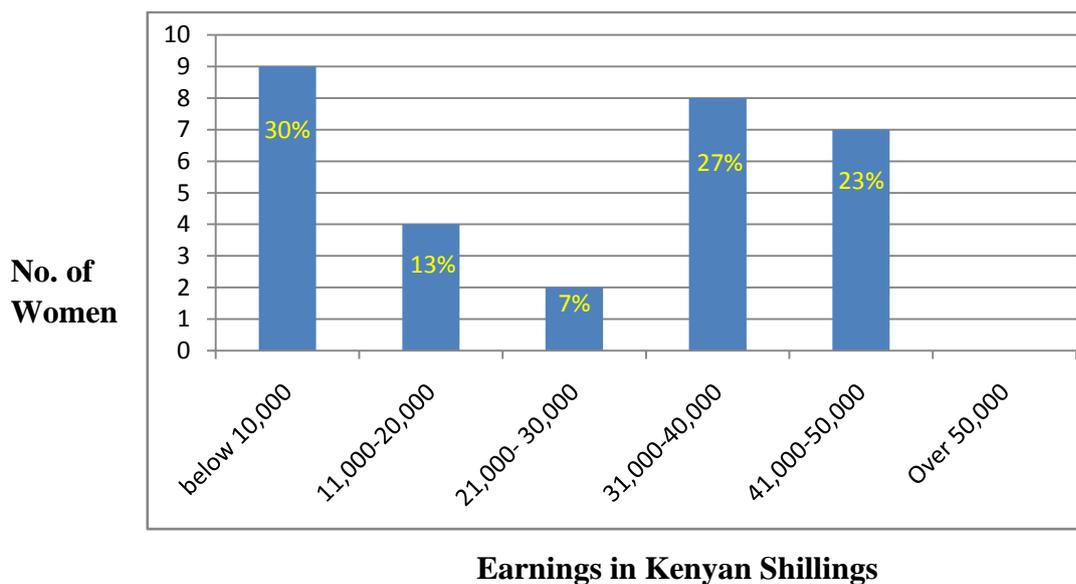
Education level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
KCPE/ CPE	4	13
Vocational Training	5	17
Secondary	1	3
College certificate	12	40
University	8	27
Total	30	100

**Table 1.1: Education Attainment Level of the Respondents**

Data from this current study showed that over 60% (20 out of 30) respondents had acquired a college certificate, Diploma or/and a university degree. 16% (5 out of 30) respondents had primary and secondary schools' certificates. Findings from this study established that the more educated a woman was the higher the chances were

of facing IPV while those with low educational qualifications were less likely to experience IPV. These findings agree with those of a past study done by Shetler, Hashemi, Reley, Akhter (1996) and Vyez and Waatz, (2008) which observed that in marriages where the women had attained equal or more educational qualifications than the husband, there were higher chances of the woman being battered as a result of inferiority complex on the man.

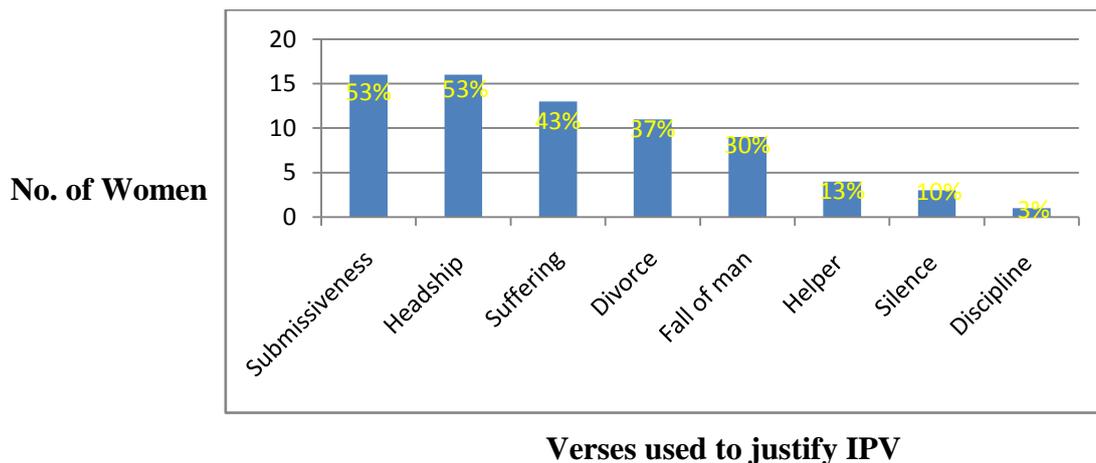
### 3.1.4. Income Level of Women



**Figure 1.3: Income Level of the Respondents**

Findings show that 30% (9 out of 30) of victims of IPV were earning below 10,000, 13% (4 out of 30) were earning between 11,000 - 20,000, 27% (8 out of 30) were earning between 30,000- 40,000, while 23% (7 out of 30) were earnings between 41, 000 -50,000. The findings of the current study differ with those reported by Bureau of Justice Statistics (1994) which showed that disadvantaged women face much higher risks of abuse. Women with annual income below \$10, 000 dollars were 5 times likely to experience violence compared to those earning more than \$30, 000 dollars. Macmillan and Gartner (1999) study in the USA echoes the findings of the current one. It observed that men feel threatened by women who are financially independent and in most cases they turn violent on them. In the current study over 50% (15 out of 30) respondents who were earning relatively high income experienced violence from their spouses.

### 3.1.5. Bible Verses Used by Wife Abusers to Promote IPV

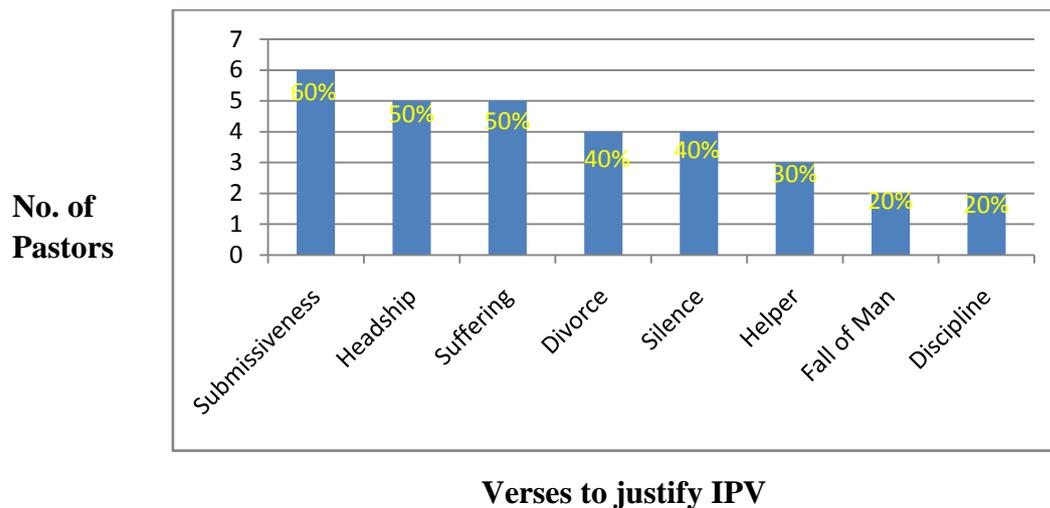


**Figure 1.4: Women Respondents on Most commonly used Biblical verses to Promote IPV**

### 3.1.5. Bible Texts Used to Promote IPV (Women Respondents)

Findings on the Bible verses that are used to justify the promotion of IPV from women respondents showed that 53% (16 out of 30) agreed that the verses in Ephesians 5 :21-22 on women being submissive to their husbands and the one in 1Cor 11:4 that talks of man being the head of the family was used on them. 43% (13 out of 30) women stated that verse in James 1: 2 that portrays God using suffering to teach his children was used on them while 37% (11 out of 30) women reported that the verse in Malachi 2 : 16 that says that God hates divorce was used on them. 30% (9 out of 30) reported that the verse in Genesis 3: 6 that says that Eve was responsible for the fall of man was used by husbands to justify violence while 13%(4 out of 30) women reported that the verse in Genesis 2 :18 that states that women were created as helpers was used by spouses to encourage IPV. 10% (3 out of 30) respondents agreed that the verse in 1 Cor 3 :34 that requires women to remain silent in the church was used by abusers to promote IPV while 3% (1 out of 30) reported that men used the verse in Genesis 3 : 16 that talks of men as the head of the family have been permitted by God to discipline their wives.

### 3.1.6. Bible Verses Used to Promote IPV (Pastor Informants)



**Figure 1.5: Pastors’ Responses on Most Commonly used Verses to Promote IP**

When pastors were asked if wife abusers use Bible verses to justify and promote IPV, they said it was true; wife abusers used Bible scriptures to justify their violent acts. 60% (6 out of 10) pastors agreed that verse on women being submissive to their husbands was used by wife abusers to promote IPV. Other Bible verses that were used to justify and support IPV are that which says that: Man is the head of the family where 50% (5 out of 10) pastors agreed. Another 50% (5 out of 10) pastors reported that the verse that states that God uses suffering to teach His children was used by wife abusers while 40% (4 out of 10) pastors reported that the verse that states that women should remain silent in the church was used by perpetrators of violence. 30% (3 out of 10) pastors reported that the Bible verse that says that Eve was created as a helper to Adam was used by wife abusers while 20% (2 out of 10) pastors agreed that the verse in the book of Genesis that says that Eve was responsible for the fall of humankind was used by perpetrators of violence. Lastly, another 20% (2 out of 10) pastors reported that wife abusers argue that as the head of the family the husband has been permitted by God to discipline his wife including being violent if necessary.

Below are reported testimonies from victims of IPV and pastors on how Bible verses were used by wife abusers and church leaders to defend and uphold IPV against women:

#### **4.1. Women Should Submit to Their Husbands (Ephesians5:21-22)**

Findings from the current study show that 53% (16 out of 30) women and 60% (6 out of 10) pastors agreed that the verse in Ephesians 5:21-22 that requires women to be submissive to their husbands had been used by wife abusers to validate IPV against them. According to a study done at Oxfarm International Research Centre by Guerrero (2021) says that conservative gender roles always lead to the assumption that women must be submissive to

male family members. These women are therefore expected to obey and act according to the wishes of their husbands. They are not allowed to strive for equal decision-making powers. It was noted that if they transgressed these norms, they may face physical violence from their husbands as punishment or discipline. According to a past study in the Solomon Islands, 49% of the respondents supported the idea that a good wife should always obey her husband even if the man is on the wrong. Men argue that submissiveness preserves the marriage but disobedience destroys it. This is what one respondent woman was told by the husband:

After physically assaulting me the previous night, I woke up and started to pack my belongings ready to leave and go, I didn't know to where. When he woke up and found me ready to go, he told me ...a foolish woman destroys her own house (marriage). I sat down on the sofa set and began thinking, could it be true that I am a foolish woman.... I never left the house as I had planned.

(Nuzla, 11:1:2021)

On matters of submissiveness, women are to a large extent influenced by religious beliefs and the perception of the church on the wife. When cases of IPV against women are reported in the church the woman is expected to forgive and reconcile with the abusive husband as she engages God in prayer to change the man (Giesbriant&Sercik, 2009). It's a no wonder that many abused women end up persevering in abusive relationships. When cases of wife abuse are reported more often the church will advocate for sanity of marriage, obedience and forgiving the abuser (Krickmayer et al, 2003). The problems brought about by the abuse especially to the victim are ignored. Such response by the church on cases of IPV leaves the woman disadvantaged. She is forced to forgive the husband as the church requires but her plight or that of her children is ignored.

One respondent pastor in the current study had this to say about submissiveness and love:

It's true the Bible requires wives to obey their husbands but men who abuse their spouses quote a portion of the scripture. The scripture continues to instruct men to love their wives the way Christ loved the church. Can one beat somebody they love? It's not possible. Pastor Munga continues to say that since after marriage both the husband and wife become one body, he questions whether a person can beat him/herself. Thus, though husbands use this text to justify being violent on their wives it is misquoted or read half-way.

(Pastor Musa, 7:2:2021)

When abused women finally decide to quit their relationships, they not only struggle with guilt where they blame themselves for the separation because of failing to be submissive to their husbands but they also feel that they are acting against God who hates divorce (Malachi 2: 6).

#### **4.2: Man is the Head of the Family (I Cor 11: 3)**

Data from this study shows that 53% (16 out of 30) women and 50% (5 out of 10) pastors respondents were in agreement that the verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 3 had been used on victims of IPV by their partners. Men who abuse their wives argue that as the Head of the family man has total authority and control over the other members. Thus, being violent on the wife is justified since they are exercising God's given headship. One woman respondent had this to say about the husband on headship:

My husband whom I still love very much and we have been married for 29 years never physically abused me. However, I tell you that what I underwent was worse than physical abuse. He used to bring women in our house...in fact sleep with them on our matrimonial bed. I got hurt and decided to go back to my parents. He locked the door and told me that what I was about to do would come to haunt me later. He said remember I am the head of this house and I say you are going nowhere'. I started thinking about those words and abandoned the idea of going away.

(Nyambura, 3:1:2021)

Bible scholars and writers who are opposed to men justifying their violence by quoting 1 Corinthians 11:- 3 argue that headship is not about physical powers but on the contrary calls for men to be respectable, responsible, accountable and a source of provision to his family (Gundry, 1997). Van der Walt (1988) states that when the Bible says that Christ is the head of the church it does not address physical strength, dominance or authority. On the contrary it portrays headship of Jesus as that of self-denial, sacrifice and humility. To Jesus, being the head meant bringing man and woman together as one flesh.

Mol (1981) states that the book of Genesis chapter 3:16 where man is given power over his wife should not be interpreted to mean that he is free to beat his wife in the name of headship. He states that ruling over someone implies the ability to protect and not abuse. Commenting on the power given to man by God in Genesis 3:16 to rule, Cone (1986) states that after creation, God looked and saw that everything he had created was good.

The study found out that women have been socialized to accept IPV from their spouses because men have been appointed as leaders of their families by God himself. This is what a pastor informant in the current study reported about a husband during a counseling session:

Pastor my wife doesn't seem to understand my responsibilities in this marriage. She thinks that God called us the head of the family for nothing! Pastor tell her that as the head of this family I have a God given right not only to provide and offer protection but also to discipline every member of this family. Even the Bible tells us that God discipline those he loves. Pastor make my wife understand that I don't beat because of hate but because of love.

(Pastor Kyalo, 6:2:2021)

Gilbert (2015) argues that the verse on man's headship has been interpreted to justify IPV on women. However, he goes on to show that violence especially the one taking place within the family set up should not be too justified for personal reasons. He states that leadership is about offering guidance, teaching and protecting the family. A study done by Nobel (2015) found out those men in leadership use scripture on man's headship to their own advantage. He goes on to show that men deny women communal worship, offer them limited religious activities in the church and manipulate scriptures to justify violence.

IPV against women enjoys passive support from the fact that most of the world religions such as: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism are patriarchal in set up (Gray, 2013). In Christianity, leadership roles are reserved for male because it was believed that feminine gender took more time to experience the presence of the creator (Ware and Levvit, 2006). A father or the elderly male had absolute authority in the family (Barthowaski, 1997).

### **3.7.6. God Hates Divorce (Malachi 2:16)**

Findings from this study show that 37% (11 out of 30) women and 40% (4 out of 10) pastors stated that wife abusers use the verse in Malachi 2:16 to justify IPV against women. Within the Christian traditions marriage is expected to be permanent. In the book of 1 Corinthians 7 couple is expected to remain together "for better or for worse". Thus, couples are expected to endure any challenges they may face in order to maintain a marriage (Arenga 2017). Most of the churches administer an oath during wedding solemnization where the man and the woman promise to live with one another 'in sickness or health', 'in riches or poverty', 'for better or worse' and 'leaving all others to live with one spouse till death do them part (The Redeemed Christian church of God, 2010; United Missionary Church of Africa, 2013).

The prohibition of divorce by the Catholic Church serves to show the permanency of marriage. It states;

The church believes that it is a lifelong bond. The Catholic Church does not permit divorce for valid sacramental marriages. In fact, a valid sacramental marriage is impossible to dissolve thereby making divorce not possible if the marriage was two becomes one flesh in a union joined by God.....so for a marriage that meets the requirements of being a sacrament; divorce in the Catholic Church is not possible. (Moore, 2017).

On matters of divorce many pastors would encourage abused women to continue submitting to the husbands and trust God in prayer that things will change for better (Grady, 2001). Pastors offering counseling to battered women can never advocate for divorce since according to them they have no right to go against God's word which discourages divorce (Kicherdz, 1990).

It's important to note that most of the churches in Africa are founded on Patriarchal beliefs and practices. Some churches teach women to persevere hardships in their marriages (Biri, 2016). They advise women to remain in their abusive marriages since they are not alone otherwise if they divorce, they will not enter heaven (Essein, 2017). They are reminded that other women could be facing worse abuses than them (Guti, 2006; Biri, 2016). These women leaders describe men as leaders by nature that are created by God to dominate and offer leadership. They advise abused women that, men are to be obeyed all times and their insatiable urge for sex met at all cost.

The perception of a divorce makes abused women persevere in their marriages and avoid seeking divorce. Divorcees are treated as outcasts in some churches, such women can't be allowed to preach, teach Sunday school or be appointed in church committees. They can't be allowed to re-marry in the church if their husbands are alive. These perceptions and assumptions are supported by verses from the Bible (Phiri, 2002).

Basing our argument on Brever, (2003) women facing IPV should feel free to seek separation or divorce.

This is what Bishop Amani had to say about divorce:

“As a church we have made it clear that even if the couple separate temporarily because of violence, they should reconcile because the Bible doesn't give room for divorce.”

(Bishop Amani, 5:2:2021)

This is what one respondent was told by the husband when she suggested temporary separation:

“I want you to hear me and hear me well, if you are a Christian as you claim then the Bible is very clear on issues of separation or divorce. The only thing that can take you away from me is death. Otherwise learn to stay with violence.”

(Sabina, 21:1:2021)

#### **4.3. Women are to Blame for the Fall of Man (Genesis 3:6)**

Statistics from the current study established that 30% (9 out of 30) women and 20% (2 out of 10) pastors agree that the book of Genesis chapter 3:6 was used by men to justify and promote IPV against women. We find Eve being approached by the serpent and after their conversation she ate the forbidden fruit and gave it to her husband causing the fall of mankind. Men abusing their wives argue that there is nothing wrong beating a woman who in the first place caused men to sin. Men justify their violence by stating that in the creation record in Genesis chapter 2, God created Adam first and Eve second as Adam's helper. The perception created in Genesis chapter 2 is that Adam was dominant and Eve was subordinate. God goes on to instruct Adam to name all animals and Eve the woman. Within the Jewish culture any person who named a person or a thing had power and dominion over it. Wife abusers see themselves having authority over their wives including battering them (Quirerfull, 2009).

In Genesis chapter 3 we find the story about the fall of man. Eve is easily influenced by the serpent to sin and also leads her husband to commit the same sin. Those who support IPV on women argue that Eve should not only be punished but she should accept the subordinate role. Being violent to such a person is justified according to wife abusers (Broken daughter, 2011). In the current study a pastor narrated how one man justified IPV on his wife. This is what he had to say:

Reverend, remember even in the book of Genesis a woman was responsible for the fall of man. She is the one who was approached by the serpent and given the fruit to eat ...these women Reverend, you don't know them well.

(Rev. Mwangi, 2:2:2021)

Based on the creation story women are advised to resist the urge to disobey, the urge to take charge and live with their husbands knowing she is more of a 'servant' who must always be led (Broken Daughters, 2011). Bible scholars and women theologians who are against IPV

argue that Eve should not be blamed for the fall of man. They argue that God did not give Eve instructions on how they were to live in the garden of Eden but rather talked to Adam who failed to instruct his wife on how she was to behave by giving her the ‘does’ and ‘don’ts’. If Adam was innocent, why did he accept to eat the forbidden fruit against the instructions given by God? One of the pastor respondents Rev Njila had this to say about the fall of man:

The fact that Eve was approached by the serpent and lied shows the weakness of men. It was Adam who was given the instructions of how they were to behave in the Garden of Eden. Adam failed to offer guidance to his wife on the instructions God had given him on how they were to live in the Garden of Eden. The fact that the serpents succeeded in making the woman eat the forbidden fruit serves to show how the man failed in instructing the woman. Thus, the person to blame for the fall of man is Adam who failed to offer guidance and protection to his wife.

(Rev. Mwangi, 2:2:2021)

This is what one woman was told by the husband when she asked why he was beating her:

“The Bible answers you well. Read the book of Genesis either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter and you will understand women are a cursed gender. They even caused the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden.”

(Mokeira, 12:1:2021)

Women have experienced violence because of use of contraceptives. Quirefull is a movement of conservative Protestants that fight the practice of using contraceptives to control the number of children one gives birth to (Broken Daughters, 2011). According to Quirefull movement, each child is an arrow in the hands of the warrior. The more sons (Arrows) one has the easier it is to fight. Quirefull families accept children as a blessing from God (Broken Daughters, 2011). Women opposed to giving birth to many children not only experience violence from their husbands but also from the church. They are seen as rebellious people going against the will of God who is the giver of children (Libby A, 2011).

#### **4.5. Sufferings are God’s Lesson to His Children (James1:2)**

Data from this study showed that 43% (13 out of 30) and 40% (4 out of 10) pastors agree that sometimes God uses experiences of anguish as lessons to his children. Many battered women who experience suffering match their tribulations with the creation story where Eve is blamed for the fall of man in the book of Genesis (Tkacz, 2006). Women who believe that God sends

mankind suffering as a way of testing and building their faith will be ready to persevere in abusive marital relationships. On the other hand, men who batter their wives quote scriptures like Matthew 6:9-15 which calls upon Christians to forgive one another (Tkacz, 2006).

Findings from the current study showed that the church encourages battered women to persevere in their marriages. One respondent Bishop had this to say:

Though as a church we don't allow violence on women. We encourage our women to see beyond the suffering or the violence. Many times, God will take his children through difficult times including domestic violence on the side of the wife. It's important for women who are being abused to pray and ask God to open their spiritual eyes so that they can see the lessons the violence is expected to teach those experiencing it. Even our Lord and savior Jesus Christ endured suffering till death and as a result mankind received internal salvation. We encourage wives to endure suffering at the same time allowing God to build their inner person through these difficult experiences.

(Bishop Amani, 5:2:2021)

One woman informed this study the following about the abuse she was facing from the husband:

“Let me tell you something, the Bible tells me to rejoice when I suffer. I am sure that these sufferings I am facing in this marriage are meant to teach me perseverance so that God promote me. Wait and see me.”

(Kwamboka, 20:1:2021)

Many women continue to suffer in their marriages in Africa as expressed by African feminist theologians. When asked about women suffering, Mercy AmbaOduyoye (2001) a theologian from Ghana stated that for a long time African women sacrifice a lot for their marriages through their daily activities. She states that from morning when they wake up, they walk long distances to fetch water and firewood, prepare food in the kitchen, go to the market centers and bring up children amidst an environment of poverty and oppression. We need a Christian approach that recognizes the circumstances under which women live since many women experience societal IPV ordinarily as they interact with the community (Therese Souga, 1988).

Christian women facing IPV should be ready to persevere in their marriages and hope by faith their husbands will change for the better. Jesus goes on to tell Peter, “Get behind me Satan” (Didache, 1980). In the book of Mathew when Peter tried to rebuke Jesus about his death,

Jesus follows those words by stating that whoever wants to follow him must be ready to take up their own cross and follow. Jesus goes on to state that whoever will try to save his own life by escaping suffering will lose it but whoever will be ready to loss his life he will gain it (Fiorenza, 1980).

From the above Jesus's words, women facing IPV are encouraged to endure in their marriages because suffering is part of salvation as demonstrated by Jesus. In the book of Hebrew, we find the writer stating that suffering was necessary for Jesus and it creates humility and obedience to God (Tetlow, 1980). Thus, women experiencing IPV should not always see it as a bad thing but realize that God does create character and behavior through suffering.

### **5: Conclusion**

Christianity which has its root in the Jewish culture which was based on patriarchal beliefs and practices embraced patriarchy. Women continue to suffer and experience oppression in the church supported by Bible verses that are interpreted by men who have been influenced by patriarchal beliefs and have accepted inferiority position of women in the family, church and in society in general.

Patriarchy is structured in hierarchical order where men hold positions of power over women and the church approves of such arrangements. The church cements this system of male supremacy by reading and interpreting Bible verses that encourage male dominance in the church and in the society where women try to challenge male control, resulting to intimidation, coercion and violence (Modlale Routledge,2009).

This study has established that Bible verses have been used to promote and justify IPV against women. However the Bible as one of the important sources of Christian faith is interpreted in varied ways by different people. Some use it to portray women as second class creations in God's plan for humanity, as destructor and harmful to men and that they were not made in the image of God (Hedebe, 2007).

As Christianity spread to Africa, it was influenced by the Africans culture which was patriarchal in set up where women were seen as inferior to men. Gender roles are acquired through socialization and are passed on through systems such as education, politics, economy, tradition and religion (Omoyibo&Ajaji, 2011). Women in African churches find themselves exposed to oppressive and discriminative practices such as restrictions on dressing code, restricted in private and public movement and as such denied the right to hold certain positions in the church (Jeffreys, 2002).

Since most of the interpretations of biblical verses that treat women as inferior were done by men, there is need of the church establishing a neutral committee to re-read and come up with interpretations that are not biased. For this to be achieved women must be included in these committees. The way one interprets a Bible verse will have a lot of influence on the listener or the reader.

This study established that some of the Bible texts were/are used by husbands to promote and justify IPV against Christian women. According to the key informants, women are expected to obey their husbands even when they are on the wrong. Despite the many different forms of IPV that women face from their husbands, the church encourages them to forgive while engaging in prayer and trusting God to change them for the better. The verse on man's headship has been used and interpreted to give men right not only to make final decision in the family but also where need be beat the wife in the name of discipline. Women have been socialized to see IPV as normal.

This article established that the church do deny women opportunity to preach and participate in leadership roles in the family, church and the society because the Bible expects them to remain silent as written by Apostle Paul to church in Corinth. Christian widows face harmful practices such as wife inheritance, wife cleansing and some are denied the right to inherit their husband's property if they don't accept to undergo the traditional and cultural rites of the community.

In view of the findings of this study that showed that Bible verses were used to promote IPV on women, there is need for the church to organize for the re-reading and re-learning of those scriptures used to promote IPV with a view of giving them an interpretation that takes care of the rights of women. One of the Bible teachings that have been used to trap victims of IPV in violent relationships is the verse that states that God hates divorce. Such a verse should be re-read a fresh by the church with an objective of identifying circumstances under which the church can allow a couple to separate or divorce.

Women are expected to endure all forms of violence since the Bible prohibits divorce. Unfortunately some ends up losing their lives in the hands of their husbands as they persevere in those abusive marriages. The study observed that women are created as helpers and as such they are subordinate to their husbands. They have also been blamed for the fall of man because the serpent approached Eve first who in turn influenced her husband to disobey and sin against God. Since Christ suffered to the point of death the chapter found out that pastors encourage women facing IPV to persevere since suffering is one way God uses to teach and

build the faith of his children. Thus the article established that Bible texts have been used by wife abusers and pastors to promote IPV against Christian women in protestant churches.

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