



B REVEALING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

Protecting those vulnerable to sexual violence



Why use this Bible study?

Individuals may suffer from different kinds of violence or abuse – physical, emotional or spiritual. This study looks at sexual abuse or violence within the family. Many people assume sexual violence takes place outside the family but it is most common within families.



Read Judges 19:16-29

Exploitation and violence in our communities often goes unchallenged, particularly when it occurs within families. Too often, no one is willing to speak up about this issue. There are several examples in the Bible where individuals, often women, are treated unfairly. However, Jesus teaches that all people, both men and women, are created in the image of God and must be valued and treated fairly. As a church, we need to re-examine how Jesus would have us treat other people, particularly those who are more vulnerable than us and are facing abuse, whether they are women, girls, men, boys, elderly or young. The church needs to address existing inequalities, particularly around gender. Men must be encouraged to develop a positive masculinity which shows strength through protecting vulnerable people, demonstrating servant leadership and respecting others, including women.



Key points

- The church has a responsibility to protect the vulnerable, to speak up against injustice and provide care and support for those who have been abused (Micah 6:8).
- An individual who has been beaten, raped or experienced sexual violence or emotional abuse may need different types of support and care, such as HIV testing, counselling, prayer support, acceptance, emotional support, reassurance and time to talk confidentially with an understanding person.
- Women and girls are not expendable objects and deserve equal respect and honour (Ephesians 5:25).



Questions for discussion

- What did the men at the old man's door want? How does the Bible refer to these men?
- Why do you think the old man was willing to volunteer the women in his house?
- What do you feel are the attitudes of the Levite and the old man towards women?
- How does Jesus' attitude to women compare with that of the men in this passage? Can you think of examples? (John 8:1-11; John 4:7-9)

Awareness-raising

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Climate & environment

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Health & HIV

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Migration & trafficking

Water, sanitation & hygiene

B PROTECTING THOSE VULNERABLE TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Think of your community. Are there ways in which women are valued less than men? Think about the opportunities given to boys and girls, and about what is expected of women and men. How does this contrast to Christ’s care and respect for women?
- How should the church protect those most vulnerable from being abused or treated unfairly?
- How can we work together as a community to prevent abuse or violence, and hold those responsible to account?



Reflection

Pray that God will reveal situations of violence, discrimination and abuse in our communities, and help us to speak out openly against all forms of violence. Pray that the church will take responsibility in addressing issues of sexual violence, and will love and support survivors of such violence.

Related tools

- A1 – Revealing violence against women and girls: information for facilitators [A1: Gender & sexual violence-1]
- A2 – Understanding vulnerability and disability [A2: Discrimination & inclusion-1]
- A2 – Why address violence against women and girls [A2: Gender & sexual violence-3]
- A2 – What are the root causes of violence against women and girls? [A2: Gender & sexual violence-4]
- A2 – Exploring gender roles and power [A2: Gender & sexual violence-5]
- A2 – Men and women: listening to one another [A2: Gender & sexual violence-6]
- A2 – Self-discovery tool (Violence against women and girls) [A2: Gender & sexual violence-7]
- B – Loving the outcast (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-2]
- B – Men, women and God (Bible study) [B: Gender & sexual violence-5]

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