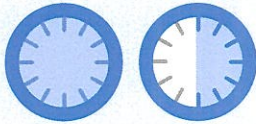


2.2

A Theology of the Value of Women

TIME



90 MINUTES

SUPPLIES



BIBLE FOR EACH GROUP



FLIP CHART/
NEWSPRINT



MARKERS



PAPER



PENS

NOTES TO THE FACILITATOR

A key cultural and religious perspective provides invisible soil in which the evil of sex trafficking of women and children can readily thrive. It is the basic value—or lack of it—attached to girls and women.

While women are valued as equals to men in some societies, in much of the world they are viewed as having lesser value, as property of male members of the family and even children of a lesser god. While the birth of a male child is cause for great celebration, the birth of a girl child is frequently met with sadness and weeping. In some societies, girl children are seen as a burden to their families. In extreme cases, where poverty reigns, families will sell their daughters as domestics, or even knowingly into sex slavery, in order to relieve their financial plight.

But how does God view the birth of girls and what value does He attach to women? Cultural views are distorted, as they are the product of humankind. They can result in distorted responses to trafficking survivors. It is important that Christians know God's perspective and value women and girls in the way their Heavenly Father does.

A caring, Christian response to survivors of sex slavery requires a truly biblical perspective on women and girls.

This is the second of four sessions on A Biblical Framework for a Christian Response to Human Trafficking.

During this learning session, participants will...

- understand how God values women, men, boys and girls as communicated through His Word, the Bible.
- know where God's view and their own culture's view differ on the value of women and girls.

STARTER

15 MINUTES



ACTIVITY:
TELL A STORY

Fatmata was 11 years old when her aunt came to her village in Makeni, Sierra Leone. The aunt promised Fatmata's parents that she would take Fatmata to Freetown where Fatmata could live in her aunt's house, have plenty of food to eat, and attend school everyday. Fatmata's parents were happy that their daughter would be able to live comfortably and receive an education, so they agreed to let Fatmata's aunt take her away.

However, when Fatmata arrived in Freetown, instead of living comfortably and being able to attend school, Fatmata's aunt made her peddle goods on the street for many hours at a time. When Fatmata would come home without enough money, her aunt would beat her. Fatmata was also made to do many household chores. Fatmata's two cousins were allowed to attend school, but Fatmata never did get to go to school. When Fatmata's parents came to visit her many months later, her aunt told Fatmata that if she told the truth about her living conditions that she would secretly kill Fatmata's little sister.

DISCUSS

1. What was Fatmata's value to her parents?
2. What was Fatmata's value to her aunt?
3. What is Fatmata's value to God?

EXPLAIN

All women and girls have value, but it is defined very differently from culture to culture in the world. Cultural and religious world views shape how women's value is defined.

Even in the same culture and city, women are valued in many different ways.

- In the red-light district of the city, little girls are being sold to paedophiles for sex. Their value is defined by their age and virginity and counted in cash.
- In the movie district of the same city, young up-and-coming movie stars provide another definition of the value of women. Based on beauty and blatant sexuality, they are 21st century goddesses on gaudy city billboards. Their value is determined by movie tickets sold, and fame.

In both cases, women's value is distorted, destructive, and sadly different than God intended.

MAIN DIALOGUE

60 MINUTES



ACTIVITY

In large group, have someone draw a man and a woman on the flip chart. Take 10 minutes and discuss together what they do on a typical day. Discuss and list cultural expectations of each of them.

Divide into four small groups with at least one Bible and paper for each groups' recorder to record their findings. Give each group the list of verses and question(s).

After 30 minutes, bring all the groups back into one group. Have them share what they discovered from Scripture and put their responses on the flip chart/newsprint.

Group 1

How does God view the birth of a girl child? How does He view her life?

- *Verses: Genesis 1:27; Mark 10:6, 1 Corinthians 11:13, Genesis 1:26, Genesis 5:1, Genesis 2:18, Genesis 5:2, and Genesis 1:28-30.*

EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING IF THE GROUP DOES NOT PRESENT THIS WHEN THEY SHARE THEIR FINDINGS WITH THE LARGER GROUP:

According to God's Word, the following truths help us understand how God views and values girls and women:

- Woman was a creation of God (Genesis 1:27; Mark 10:6, I Corinthians 11:13)
- She was lovingly made in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26, 5:1)
- Woman was created as an equal partner and helper for man to serve God with him (Genesis 2:18).
- God blessed the woman He created (Genesis 5:2).
- God gave her authority with man over other life forms (Genesis 1:28-30).

Group 2

What were some roles that God gave women? What do these reveal about how He views them?

- *Verses: Exodus 15:21, Judges 4, Ruth 4:18-22, Matthew 1:1,5, and Esther 4:14.*

EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING IF NOT PRESENTED BY THE GROUP.

The Bible provides stories of God's female creation and the roles He ordained them to play. God chose women to help Him accomplish eternal purposes at important moments in the history of His people:

- Miriam, Moses' sister, was called by God to be a prophetess and leader during the Exodus (Exodus 15:21).
- Deborah, a prophetess and wife, was chosen by God to lead His people into battle (Judges 4).

- Ruth, a Moabite woman, established herself in God's history by becoming an ancestress of King David (Ruth 4: 18-22) and Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1,5).
- The Jewess Esther was chosen by God to become queen of Persia in order to deliver the Jews from destruction (Esther 4:14).

Group 3

In the life of Jesus Christ on earth, the New Testament reveals ways women were used as instruments of God. What were some of those ways?

- *Verses: Luke 1:30-31, Luke 2:36-38, Matthew 27:55, 56, Luke 23:55, 56, 24:1-6.*

EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING IF NOT PRESENTED BY THE GROUP.

- God favoured a young girl Mary by choosing her to give birth to and raise His son, Jesus (Luke 1:30-31).
- The prophetess Anna attended the infant Jesus' presentation at the temple. She announced the importance of His birth and life to all there (Luke 2:36-38).
- Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee faithfully stayed at the cross with the dying Jesus (Matthew 27:55, 56).
- After Jesus' death, women disciples went to the place where His body was taken and discovered that He had risen from the dead (Luke 23:55, 56, 24:1-6).
- Women disciples first announced the resurrection of Jesus to the world!

Group 4

How do the following scriptures show how Jesus treated and valued women?

- *Verses: John 4:26, John 11, John 12:1-7, Luke 13:10-17, Luke 8:47-48, John 8:1-11.*

EXPLAIN THE FOLLOWING IF NOT PRESENTED BY THE GROUP.

The way one values people is revealed by the way he or she treats them. The way Jesus treated women during His life on earth reveals the way He viewed and valued them.

- Jesus demonstrated how He valued the Samaritan woman of poor reputation by talking to her publicly and revealing His identity as the Messiah (John 4:26).
- Jesus showed His friendship with Mary and Martha by His concern for them at their brother's death (John 11).
- Jesus publicly defended to the disciples Mary's extravagant worship of Him (John 12:1-7).
- Jesus evidenced His awareness and concern for a crippled woman in the crowd. He laid hands on her and healed her to the indignation of those around Him (Luke 13:10-17).

- An older woman with a 12-year history of bleeding was healed by Jesus in the crowd and commended for her faith (Luke 8:47-48).
- Jesus did not add to the humiliation of a woman caught in the act of adultery and about to be stoned. Instead, He addressed her directly with compassion, and offered her a new life of freedom (John 8:1-11).

EMPHASISE

The evidence of God's Word and the actions of His Son, Jesus, show a compassion for women and respect for them as His daughters with dignity.

Further, Christ's message of transforming love and power is especially relevant and desperately needed by women whom society has treated unjustly. As Jesus cared for and changed women's lives as He walked the earth, He has the love, power, and purpose to do so today through His church.

WRAP UP

15 MINUTES



DISCUSS

Ask the group how their society views and treats women and girls. Then ask how their church views the value of women and girls.

Is this the same perspective that God holds? In what ways is it the same?

PRAY

Lead in a closing prayer:

- For open hearts and minds to see how God views His female creation
- For repentance of wrongful views and treatment of girls and women that is not like Jesus or pleasing to God
- For the gifts of compassion and concern for women as individuals. For women, God's creation, who need His love and healing

TAKE THE CHALLENGE

- Develop a Bible study to present to those in the aftercare programme that addresses the value of women and girls.