

# OPEN OUR EYES

A FIVE-DAY DEVOTIONAL TO PRAY FOR MODERN  
SLAVERY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Author: Constance Knighton  
Editors: Major Carolyn Simpson, Major Ray Lamont

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# DAY ONE



## THEN

Slavery was practised in the time of Jesus and is reflected in New Testament writings. Paul urges, “Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ” (Ephesians 6:5 *NIV*). The entire New Testament Book of Philemon is a letter encouraging this slave master to accept the return of his runaway slave, Onesimus.

## NOW

Does this mean that slavery ought to be condoned in the 21st century? Absolutely not. Profiting at the expense of another human being’s suffering and subjugation is wrong—unequivocally. This week, we direct our attention and prayers to modern slavery and human trafficking. Daily, we will examine an aspect of this worldwide problem to gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved.

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Greek word for servant and slave are the same: *doulos*. This helps explain the differing interpretations surrounding biblical slavery. But there is a radical difference between the servant who chooses to serve and the slave who has no choice. As servants of Christ, we choose to serve and we choose to follow one who himself became a servant.

Slaves do not have choice. Their will is not their own. They often suffer

from abuse because fear and force are used to keep them compliant. Their abusers profit from their work. For this and many other reasons, slavery is wrong.

## FOCUS

The message of the gospel unfolds and expands in each generation. We can learn. We can grow. We can hope. We can change. The words of Jesus offer a template for liberation. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18 NIV).

### *Prayer*

*Father, we come as servants, of our own free will. Anoint us with your Spirit so that your mission becomes our mission. Teach us what it means in this day for those who live with oppression to experience freedom. We acknowledge that in Canada and Bermuda, many of us are privileged and live with freedom. We pray for those who have no freedom and no choice, here in Canada and Bermuda and around the world.*

AMEN.



# Take Two

BY MARY READ HORTON

She's pretty

She's plain

She's vulnerable

She's feisty

She's a stranger

She's a daughter

She may be the one you think, "Not her"

No matter what ... no matter who

It's always time ... to take two

Two hours to learn

Two seconds to see

Two minutes to weep

Two years to break free

There's a scourge going on

That's hidden from sight

There's more than we see

there's much to make right



Together we can  
Make a difference for those

Whose rights are abused  
Whose lives are on hold

Will you join in the fight?  
Will you see with new eyes?  
Will you hold out your hand  
And say, "Here, take mine?"

Winning poetry submission for the 2024 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness  
Ontario Division Poetry Contest: Spirit of the Contest Category.

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# DAY TWO

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## THEN

Slavery did not end with its abolition in the British Empire in 1834, nor did it end in the United States with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, nor did it disappear at the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

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## NOW

Walk Free Foundation, an international human rights group dedicated to eradicating modern slavery in all its forms, estimates that 49.6 million people live in bondage around the world today. Traffic in human beings is big business and exploiters profit by US\$150 billion or more a year. This is a horrific abuse and use of human beings as commodities!

Slavery has many direct links to different social issues and injustices, one of which is poverty. Sometimes children are sold into slavery to provide a subsistence income for other family members, showing how desperate their situations must be.

The victims of modern slavery are disproportionately women and children. Many are exploited for the sex industry and/or work in poor conditions in hotels, on cruise ships, in stores and as house cleaners or nannies. Some are promised good and legal work that never materializes. Our understanding of and definition of slavery must include those who are forced to work for so little money that they have no chance of improving their lives.

In 2023, the Canadian government passed Bill S-211, which requires that the supply chains for products coming into Canada be free from slavery and child labour. Yet in Canada, temporary foreign workers enter legally and can be easily exploited for their labour. Temporary foreign workers

can be subjected to terrible living and working conditions, and, in their isolation, lack the knowledge of the laws in place to protect them from exploitation. Since work permits are tied to one employer, searching for other employment is virtually impossible when they experience abuse or exploitation. Many will remain in that situation in hopes of supporting their families back home. To save money, many employers send injured workers home and do not offer living accommodations or safety equipment to enhance the health of workers.

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jesus asked the question, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Mark 8:36 NIV).

Paul reminds us, "For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs" (1 Timothy 6:10 RSV).

Nothing more needs to be said.

## FOCUS

We ought to ask:

*Do the clothes we wear come from factories which exploit child labour or use slave labour?*

*Are we willing to pay more for fair trade coffee and other products such as chocolate?*

*Would we support higher taxes at home to provide families experiencing poverty here with a guaranteed annual income?*

*Do we examine the policies of political parties to see which support the wealthy or the poor?*

We must remember that social programs in Canada were largely developed by people of faith and that as people of faith, we have a voice and can exercise our buying power.



## Prayer

*Father, the poorest of us reading these words is rich by the world's standards. We repent of our greed for more of the things which perish. Help us to be conscious of the ways in which our attaining more may come at the cost of others having less. Give us radical ways of intervening in cycles of poverty and despair around the world and in Canada and Bermuda. May we never turn our eyes away from realities which shock our comfortable sensibilities.*

AMEN.

# *Echoes of Compassion*

BY FAITH JACOB

In shadows deep, where darkness creeps,  
human trafficking, a secret it keeps.

A serious crime, a world betrayed,  
where freedom's stolen, dignity swayed.

A global epidemic, hidden from sight.

Men, women, children, their dreams  
are no longer in sight, forced across borders,  
into horrors they're torn.

In shadows they suffer, a world unaware,  
silent cries echo, burdened by despair.

Lost in the chaos, their voices unheard,  
seeking refuge, in a world so absurd.

Eyes that sparkled, now dimmed by despair,  
trapped in a web, no noise left to spare.

For every victim, is a story untold,  
the money of the trade is a bitter stronghold.



Oh listen world! to the echoes of pain,  
the silent screams in the pouring rain.  
Behind closed doors, where the shadows dance,  
a fight for freedom, is a desperate chance.

Education, outreach, conversations bold,  
myths dispelled, truth to unfold.  
Communities armed with knowledge so vast  
to take action and act fast.

Raise your voice, let compassion ignite,  
against the darkness, let our love unite.  
Break the chains, for awareness to shine bright,  
for every soul lost, let us fiercely fight.

Empowerment begins with knowledge and grace,  
understanding signs, a vital race.  
In empathy's symphony, our melody unfolds.

With strength we rise for lives that were unjustly stole.  
Let justice stand tall in evil's face,  
compassion, love and hope leave its trace.

Winning poetry submission for the 2024  
Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness  
Ontario Division Poetry Contest: Labour Trafficking Category.

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# DAY THREE

## THEN

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Less than a hundred years ago, women were not included in the definition of persons under Canadian law. On October 18, 1929, the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of persons was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal. On May 22, 1968, Bermuda held its first election on the basis of adult universal suffrage.

Slaves throughout history have been viewed and treated as non-persons, without rights in law. This state continues. Slaves have no rights. They are bought, sold and used without their consent. They are used and abused for their services and their bodies. They may leave this world unremarked and unmourned, invisible to most.

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## NOW

The reality of slavery and human trafficking is hideous and hard for us to comprehend. The voices of slavery and human trafficking are sometimes difficult to hear. We are tempted to believe that this only happens in other countries, but it happens in Canada and Bermuda, in big cities and small communities and parishes. It can affect anyone anywhere.

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

We tend to close our eyes and ears to a little-known story in 2 Samuel. It gives us the plaintive voice of Princess Tamar, daughter of King David, who was assaulted by her half-brother, Amnon. Although she was not a

slave, she was powerless to fight against her brother who was stronger than she was. Her voice was not heard. Her right to choice was not respected.

“ ‘No, my brother!’ she said to him. ‘Don’t force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this wicked thing. What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.’ But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her” (2 Samuel 13:12-14 NIV).

If you read the story in its entirety, you will be shocked to discover the complicity of Tamar’s uncle in this assault and the complicity of her father, King David, when he refuses to punish his son, Amnon.

## FOCUS

This is the plight of those trafficked into slavery today. They may feel powerless to fight against their captors. Those who profit from slavery can exhibit immense power and laws often fail to protect those in these situations.

Look. See. Hear. Respond.

### *Prayer*

*Father, help us to hear and understand the story of Tamar. Help us to face the unpleasant truth of her voice echoing today in those who have been trafficked and abused. Help us to stand with and amplify the voices of those who feel weak and those who suffer at the hands of oppressors. Help us to refuse to collude with the powerful.*

AMEN.

# Unapologize

BY CHRISTINA BULGIN

Sister

The time has come  
to unapologize  
disentangle from shame  
long gripped, intertwined  
speak boldly in the whole voice that is you  
occupy your full space  
throw off encumberments  
imposed by self and others  
and in freedom to shine brightly  
the light that you have learned to dim  
except in moments  
implanted by the Light of the World

Cup that spark with tender hands  
and breathe it to flame  
Wild and wonderful you  
break out from the endless circle of motion  
ebbs and flows of truth and perception

Raise your voice fearlessly  
to Jehovah Rapha  
Restorer of Souls  
He releases shackles of expectation  
and decorum



The courage of the Lion of the tribe of Judah  
courses in your veins  
declaring you are the daughter of the King

Dance freely, a radiance of colour, purest joy of your Creator  
long hidden in limiting closets  
in cavernous recesses  
emerge as rays of sunlight  
breaching forest ceiling  
tendrils of warmth reaching down  
to deepest roots  
firm in their Life-Giving Foundation

Created for such a time as this  
you are glorious  
you are unbound  
you are beautiful

Go ahead and unapologize

Winning poetry submission for the 2024 Modern Slavery and  
Human Trafficking Awareness Ontario Division Poetry  
Contest: Empowering Women Category.

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of ethical storytelling.*

# DAY FOUR

## THEN

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For most of human history, slavery has been normalized. Traditionally, it has been connected to war. If your side lost the war, you became a slave. If you were captured in enemy territory, you became a slave. A slave might secure freedom through escape, through extraordinary service, through being redeemed for a price or traded in an exchange of prisoners. One was very fortunate indeed to escape slavery; many died before they could be freed and, for most, the thought of redemption was beyond imagination.

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## NOW

The Global Slavery Index estimates that there are about 17,000 persons living in slavery in Canada, though they're largely invisible. In Canada, 93 percent of those involved in sex trafficking were born here in Canada.

Over 50 percent are Indigenous women and girls, despite making up just 4.3 percent of the population. Let that sink in. Although the scope of modern slavery and human trafficking in Bermuda is difficult to estimate, we know that no country is exempt.

In Canada and Bermuda, there are legal means of escape if those who are invisible can become visible. Slavery has been illegal in Canada and Bermuda since August 1, 1834. But, while we may not see slaves for sale in either country, slavery still exists. Trafficking may appear to be confined to urban centres where it garners more media attention. But it happens across Canada and Bermuda, to people of all ages, genders and economic status, in communities and parishes both large and small.

## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

“And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace’ ” (Luke 8:47-48 *ESV*).

Jesus makes invisible suffering visible. Like Tamar, the woman in this story was not a slave, but she was an outcast (considered ritually unclean) and filled with shame because of her condition. Her futile search for healing over many years aligns her with people experiencing exploitation today, who are seemingly invisible in our world. Yet the woman’s inner strength prompted her to reach out to Jesus and, in a sea of many, Jesus stopped and truly saw her. Her last hope was her best hope.

## FOCUS

Today, let us remember:

*Missing Indigenous women.*

*Temporary foreign workers.*

*The au pair whose passport is kept by her employer.*

*Women imprisoned in the sex industry.*

*Young people building relationships with the wrong people online.*

Let us keep our eyes open for signs of modern slavery and human trafficking in our schools, stores, businesses and streets. In Canada, let us be ready to call the **Human Trafficking Hotline, to advocate for those who may be silenced: 1-833-900-1010**. In Canada and in Bermuda, let us be ready to connect with The Salvation Army and others who understand modern slavery and human trafficking and are committed to ending it.



## Prayer

*Father, give us eyes to see those who are invisible in our society. Broaden our understanding of slavery. Make us aware of those who suffer just outside the edge of our personal experience. May we never blame the victim. Cure us of our ignorance as privileged people in beautiful and relatively safe countries. Guide us to ask difficult questions of our politicians and to demand care for the most vulnerable in our midst. Help us to see what you see. May we discern the meaning of our mission as Christ followers "to set the oppressed free" (Luke 4:18 NIV).*

AMEN.

# To Walk Intentional

BY MELANIE DOUGLAS

To walk intentional upon this sea, I must let go of myself, let go of me.  
The pain is a gift, and the gift is the pain,  
Sorrow speaks of what ghosts remain.

As I rustled here and there, I sometimes saw her, and I cared.  
I cared? I paused to ponder,  
On my way to work, then home again, I'd wonder.  
Seen her around, eyes to the sky, not down, or level, almost childlike, asking why.  
Got the vibe that she was nervous,  
Nervous yet trying to act impervious.  
There was something about her, something was off,  
Should I have embraced this feeling or not? I sensed a danger and a plot.

Then one day, she was just gone.  
Kept waiting to see her, by store windows and manicured lawns.  
Seasons changed, but her absence remained.  
What happened to her? Cold and ill dressed for the rain.  
Did I fail her? Did I not see? Or did I see too plainly, then say, no not me?

To walk intentional upon this sea, I must let go of myself, let go of me.  
The pain is a gift, and the gift is the pain,  
Sorrow speaks of what ghosts remain.

Winning poetry submission for the 2024  
Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking  
Awareness Ontario Division Poetry Contest:  
General Awareness Category.

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# DAY FIVE



## THEN

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Most of us are aware of the horrific traffic in slaves from West Africa to the Americas. An estimated 12.5 million Africans were shipped to the New World. An estimated 10.7 million survived the crossing in the holds of slave ships. They disembarked in North America, the Caribbean and South America to be sold and forever parted from family members.

This trade was often perpetrated by people who called themselves Christians.

It took a long time before the ruling race felt sufficient shame and disgust at this trade to form abolition movements. In Britain, free people of colour, such as Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince, were active in the movements, along with such individuals as William Wilberforce and

Josiah Wedgwood. The abolition of slavery finally came about in Britain by parliamentary process, propelled by female activism and other civilian movements. In the United States, a civil war was fought over the issue; the legacy of the slave trade endures in North

American racial conflict to this day.

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## NOW

The Salvation Army is focused on those who experience vulnerabilities and who feel powerless. Ministry units across our territory work to educate people, provide services for people of all ages and genders and advocate with our government for legislation that works to eliminate modern slavery and human trafficking. Divisional advocates are available to support local ministry units when people come to them for help.



## BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"  
(Galatians 5:1 NIV).

Paul, as he often did, uses slavery metaphorically to describe the human condition prior to redemption. Freedom for Paul was freedom from the bondage of the law and the bondage of sin. Let us examine our lives so that we are not burdened by:

*Ill-conceived ideas, such as the false belief that those who are trafficked or exploited either deserve or choose such ways of life.*

*Narrow ideas of our mission as Christians.*

*The notion that we deserve or have somehow earned the freedoms and privileges we inherited.*

## FOCUS

Pray for those who work for freedom and justice for all. Take time to learn about local ministries which are focused on modern slavery and human trafficking. Realize that any work which promotes resilience in women and children or that empowers women is modern slavery and human trafficking response work and prevention. Take time to learn about the realities in Canada and Bermuda through our Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Training Certificate Course, and Deep and Wide Training, available through Booth University College. Take and use the resources available on [salvationist.ca/trafficking](http://salvationist.ca/trafficking).

### Prayer

*Father, we acknowledge our own prejudices and our own helplessness. May the gospel of freedom grow in our hearts and minds. Help us to do our little part so that you may do much to combat modern slavery and human trafficking in Canada, Bermuda and around the world. We pray for those actively engaged in these tasks everywhere.*

AMEN.

If you suspect a person may be a victim of modern slavery and human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at:  
**1-833-900-1010**

SA JUSTICE MSHTR Canada and Bermuda website:  
**[salvationist.ca/trafficking](https://salvationist.ca/trafficking)**

