Human Trafficking Prevention: Bible Study/Small Group Guide

Our goal through this curriculum is to give you the tools to stop trafficking before it starts in your own home/community. If every adult (and specifically, parent) was aware of the issues and complexities surrounding labor and sex trafficking, they could take steps so that their children would not be sold and the supply would cease. We hope through this Bible study to equip you to protect your children and to make sure you are not adding to the “supply” of human trafficking. Join us in stopping trafficking one family at a time.

In each lesson you will find:

Leader guide:
This will help the small group or bible study leader prepare for their group time and learn about the Scripture passage being studied. We recommend reading through the entire guide and focusing on Scripture and the trafficking sections. If you need more information than provided, feel free to email faast@faastinternational.org

Group Guide:
This will guide the leader during the study in reading Scripture, application points and discussion questions in a group setting. This section contains a part on how the Scripture relates to human trafficking both in biblical times and now. It also contains a section for parents to learn about preventative measures in guarding their children and community against human trafficking schemes and situations. This section ends with a suggested activity for parents to do at home with their children.

If you find this study helpful we would ask that you donate to help further future FAAST projects so that we can continue to equip God’s people to end human trafficking. Give online at faastinternational.org or by mail. All donations are tax deductible.

FAAST
7 E. Baltimore St.
Baltimore, MD 21202

A special thanks to our authors: Leigh Ann Powers, Jenny Childs and Kara Kelley
Week 1: Joseph

Genesis 37:1-36; 39-45

Story Synopsis:
Joseph’s brothers saw him as a nuisance and sold him into slavery. The traders saw him as a source of profit. Potiphar valued Joseph for his labor; Potiphar’s wife wanted him for his body. Yet God had different plans for Joseph. Even through his slavery and unjust imprisonment God was with Joseph. He rescued Joseph and out of this great evil, God brought a great good and the salvation of many lives. (Gen. 50:19-20) Through the study of Joseph, our goal is to learn that you and your family are precious in God’s sight and that God has a good plan for our lives.

The Story:
The favorite son, the aging father, the jealous brothers, an unfaithful wife, a worried king, and the innocent prisoner: Joseph’s story of betrayal, forgiveness, and restoration is a soap-opera-worthy plot. But it is also a powerful story of God’s ability to bring restoration out of our most desperate circumstances. God was with Joseph in his journey from privilege to prison to power. What the enemy meant for evil, God used for good and the salvation of many lives.

Joseph was the 11th son of Jacob, born in Jacob’s old age to Jacob’s favorite wife, and Jacob’s favorite son. As a sign of his favor, Jacob gave Joseph a multicolored tunic, a “coat of many colors.” While we don’t know exactly what this coat may have looked like, it was unmistakably a sign of Joseph’s favored position. It may have also signaled that Joseph, rather than one of his 10 older brothers, would be Jacob’s heir. No wonder his brothers were so jealous that they “hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms” (Gen. 37:3-4).

To make matters worse, Joseph was a dreamer. Joseph’s dreams revealed both his brothers and his father and mother bowing down before him. Even Jacob rebuked him. His brothers hated Joseph even more on account of his dreams and his words (Gen 37:5, 8).

Matters finally came to a head when Jacob sent Joseph to check on his brothers, who were pasturing their flocks near Shechem. The brothers saw Joseph coming from a long way off and had time to plot against this little brother who they sarcastically called a “master of dreams” (Gen. 37:20). They planned to kill him and throw him into a cistern, then lie to their father and say that he was killed by a “wild beast.” Reuben, the eldest of the brothers,
attempted to save Joseph by encouraging the brothers to simply throw Joseph into a pit. Reuben intended to rescue Joseph later, but the brothers accepted his ruse. They avoided getting their hands dirty by throwing Joseph into a dry well so that exposure would do their work for them. But another plan presented itself: while Reuben was occupied with the flocks, a caravan of slave traders approached. At Judah’s suggestion, the brothers sold Joseph to slave traders for 20 shekels of silver, the average slave price for a healthy male slave. Judah’s words to his brothers as he proposed to sell Joseph rather than kill him ironically testified to the magnitude of their crime: they had sold their own brother, their own flesh and blood (Gen. 37:27).

Though his brothers betrayed Joseph, “the Lord was with Joseph, so he became a successful man” (Genesis 39:2). God had not abandoned Joseph. In time, Joseph rose to favor in the eyes of his master. Potiphar also recognized God’s presence with Joseph and made Joseph overseer over his entire household (Gen. 39:4). It is ironic that this Egyptian recognized what Joseph’s brothers did not: God’s favor was on Joseph. Rather than wallowing in anger and bitterness at his unjust treatment, Joseph remained faithful and worked diligently. God also blessed Potiphar for his treatment of Joseph.

Someone else also valued Joseph, but for very different reasons. Potiphar’s wife saw that Joseph was “handsome in form and appearance” (Genesis 39:7) and she attempted to seduce him. This was not a one-time occurrence, but an ongoing temptation as “day after day” she blatantly urged him to have sex with her. Joseph’s refusal centered around the facts that sleeping with his master’s wife would be a sin against both his master and God. Joseph was a model of integrity under pressure.

Matters escalated when Potiphar’s wife reached out and grasped Joseph’s coat, saying “lie with me!” Joseph fled, leaving both her and the garment behind. Spurned, Potiphar’s wife cried “rape” and used Joseph’s coat to support her false accusation. Joseph was falsely accused and wrongfully imprisoned. The normal punishment for a slave who dared to attack a member of the household would be death. Since Potiphar threw him into prison rather than ordering his execution, it may be that Potiphar did not totally believe his wife’s story. Still, Joseph experienced another reversal of fortune.

Yet, even in prison, “the Lord was with Joseph.” Joseph again rose to favor, this time in the eyes of the chief jailer. In time, Joseph had a chance to interpret dreams for two of Pharaoh’s servants: his cupbearer and baker. Their respective dreams meant that the baker would be executed, but the cupbearer would be restored to his position. Events unfolded just as Joseph had said, but the cupbearer forgot his promise to remember Joseph. Joseph’s hopes were dashed once more.
Proverbs 21:1 says that “the heart of the king is like water in the hand of the Lord.” Pharaoh was no exception. Two years after Joseph interpreted the dreams for Pharaoh’s servants, Pharaoh had his own troubling dreams: a dream of seven starving cows devouring seven healthy cows and a dream of seven withered ears of grain devouring seven healthy ears. None of Pharaoh’s magicians or wise men were able to interpret the dream for him. In God’s timing, the cupbearer finally remembered Joseph and told Pharaoh about him.

Pharaoh quickly sent for Joseph and asked if it was true that he could interpret dreams. Joseph attributed his ability to God rather than himself, and God gave Joseph the meaning of the dream: God would send seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine. The Egyptians must prepare for the time of famine during the time of plenty. Like Potiphar, Pharaoh recognized God’s hand on Joseph and appointed him steward over the preparations. Joseph, former shepherd, former slave, former prisoner, was now placed by God as second only to Pharaoh over the entire land of Egypt.

God was not done yet. Driven by famine, Joseph’s brothers eventually came to Egypt and God orchestrated reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers. Under Joseph’s protection, the entire family—now a large tribe—settled in Egypt, setting the stage for God’s salvation through the Exodus some 400 years later. When Joseph’s brothers begged his forgiveness, Joseph summarized the story this way: “Don’t be afraid, for am I in God’s place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive” (Genesis 50:19, 20; see also Romans 8:28). God never abandoned Joseph. What his brothers intended for evil, God used for good and the fulfillment of his greater purposes.

**Points of Application**

- Joseph made choices. Joseph had many opportunities to indulge in bitterness, self-pity, or to try to find his own way out of his problems. Yet Joseph consistently chose obedience to God, even when that obedience wasn’t rewarded.
- God never abandoned Joseph. Joseph was betrayed by his family, enslaved, falsely accused, and wrongfully imprisoned, but God’s presence was always with him. Though people disappointed him, God never failed Joseph.
- What others meant for evil, God was able to use for good. Sometimes others will try to harm us or use us for their own benefit. Sometimes they succeed. But God is never blind to our pain. God sees. God knows. God cares. God is able to bring both healing and restoration.
Group Guide

Week 1: Joseph

Genesis 37:1-36; 39-45

Opener

Getting to Know Each Other: Have each person use the letters in your name to create a poem. For example, Bill could write

Big
Intelligent
Laughing
Loud

Each person must include words that tell something about yourselves -- for example, something you like to do or a personality or physical trait. This activity is a fun one that enables you to learn about each other.

Study the Scripture

Read through Genesis 37:1-36, 39-45:15 as a group

Less time? Read the synopsis in the leader guide.

Questions for Reflection

- What are some main points of this story that stand out to you?
- Why do you think Joseph was Jacob’s favorite son? Why was this wrong? What if you “click” better with one of your children or have a blended family, how can you stop yourself from showing favoritism?
- Consider some of the different ways people in the story—Joseph’s brothers, Potiphar, Potiphar’s wife, Pharaoh—saw Joseph. What was different about the way God saw Joseph?
- In the story of Joseph, we see an example of how God used something that was meant for evil and turned it into something good. How have you seen God do the same thing in your life or in the lives of others?
- Even in the darkest times of his life, God was still with Joseph. How have you experienced God’s presence with you in difficult times?
Joseph and Trafficking

*Joseph was a victim of human trafficking.* Human trafficking is the “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by the means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”¹

Estimates of the number of women, men, and children in forced labor, forced bondage, and prostitution around the world are from 21 to 29 million.² The DOJ also estimates that between 14,500 and 17,500 individuals are brought across US borders for trafficking purposes each year, including men, women, and children.³ Human trafficking victims are either used for the purposes of labor or sexual exploitation.

It is not only children from other countries who are at risk. Each year, as many as 100,000-300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States.⁴ They are commercially sexually exploited in homes, brothels, massage parlors, street corners, and on the internet. The sexual exploitation of children through pornography and prostitution yields billions of dollars in profit each year to their predators and pimps. The average age at which a child is first recruited into prostitution is between the ages of 12 and 14.

*Potiphar’s wife attempted to use seduction to further exploit Joseph’s vulnerability.* As the master’s wife, Potiphar’s wife was in a position of power over Joseph. The Bible doesn’t give many details about how Potiphar’s wife attempted to seduce Joseph other than her sheer persistence. Did she offer him money? Power? Freedom? Did she threaten him? She clearly attempted to take revenge once she understood that his rejection was final. Accusing a slave of rape could have easily been a death sentence.

Today, people are lured into sexual abuse and exploitation through a variety of recruitment techniques. Most often they are lured through false promises on the part of the trafficker. The trafficker may promise the victim a romantic relationship, work, or money to build a false sense of trust with the victim. Once the victim is under the trafficker’s control,

---

⁴ U.S. Department of Justice
threats, violence, fear, and guilt can keep them from leaving. Most of the time the chains that hold a victim are not actual chains, but a mixture of fear and love; making this a complicated issue. Other victims are abducted, forced into prostitution by threats against the victim or his/her family, or sold by a family member. With advances in technology, traffickers recruit their victims online through the use of social networks, in chat rooms, in clubs, on the street, through friends, and in shopping malls. Sometimes they use other children to recruit their friends at school or in after-school programs. They seek out those who are most vulnerable and lacking self-confidence, often targeting girls from single-parent homes who need the validation of a father figure. Children who have already been the target of sexual abuse are at increased risk.

God does not approve of slavery. In the story of Joseph we see that God used something that men meant for evil and instead used it for good. This is not an endorsement of evil, but a testimony to God’s redeeming work. As we look at the biblical picture of slavery, we must acknowledge that the Bible never expressly forbids slavery. That does not mean that it condones it, however. In the Old Testament, God supported commands of social justice with exhortation for the Israelites to “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt” (Deuteronomy 24:17-22). The Old Testament law also includes specific injunctions on the treatment and welfare of slaves, including provisions under which slaves were to be granted their freedom (Exodus 21:26-27, Deut. 15:12-18). Kidnapping a fellow Israelite and treating or selling him as a slave was punishable by death (Deut. 24:7).

The New Testament also does not expressly forbid slavery. Rome greatly feared slave revolts, and if the early church had publicly advocated abolition, it would have bathed the infant religion in blood. Yet what we do see is that while the New Testament never expressly forbids slavery, it creates an environment in which slavery would eventually wither and die. Within the church, master and slave were equal. “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

Group Activity

1. Force, Coercion and Fraud are tactics commonly used in human trafficking.
   - Force = Using violence to control someone
   - Coercion = Using threats to control someone
   - Fraud = Using lies to control someone
   Describe how each of these was used towards Joseph.

2. What if it was you: Have each participant write a short, first person, fictional essay from the point of view of a trafficking victim. Participants should explain in the

Week 1: Intro. to Human Trafficking
7
essay how they were forced, coerced and subject to fraud leading them into trafficking by the trafficker.

Closing Prayer

May God bless you with discomfort
At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships
So that you may live deep within your heart.
May God bless you with anger
At injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
So that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.
May God bless you with tears
To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, starvation and war
So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
And to turn their pain into joy.
And may God bless you with enough foolishness
To believe that you can make a difference in the world,
So that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.

- Franciscan Benediction
Taking it home

It is important to know that any child can be recruited into a false employment scheme or into the commercial sex industry--even yours. We don’t say this to scare you, but to make you aware that you need to protect your child. Consider watching Lacy’s story to hear how people in your own community or even church are being trafficked:

http://vimeo.com/53178554

Joseph’s narrative begins when he is seventeen years old (Genesis 37:2) and his story is a long one filled with heartache and redemption.

Ask God to help you share this story with your children in a way that will show them God’s love and plans for them. If you can, share part of what God has done in your own life to get you through hard times around the dinner table this week. An example where circumstances were out of your control, but you still chose to do the right thing with God’s help (just as Joseph did), can be especially helpful for a child who is struggling.

When you are taking time to share a story about God’s faithfulness through a situation that was really tough, ask your kids to share a Scripture with you that has helped them, and share one of yours. Talk about ways you can give this kind of support to other people you know--especially people who may not have a parent to lean on or Jesus to go to.

Feel free to share these Scriptures for hard times:

- James 1:2-3
- Zephaniah 3:17
- Romans 8:26-28
- Psalms 23, 40
- Proverbs 16:3, 7

Family activities

- Make posters of your favorite verses and hang them around the house.
- If you or your child knows a foster child, make a gift basket for them. Put small toys or books in the basket to let the child know how special he or she is to you and to God.
- Create a poster to build awareness about trafficking. Using a piece of poster board, make some human trafficking awareness signs. Get some ideas from the websites below and include the National Trafficking Hotline number (1-888-373-7888) on the posters.

Check out the Change Agents Action Kit for more ideas: faastinternational.org
Leader Guide

Week 2: Israelites in Egypt

Exodus 5:1-23

Of the estimated 21 million we think are enslaved in the world today, it’s estimated that 78% of those are enslaved in labor trafficking. This isn’t a new issue. It was happening in the Bible too.

Story Synopsis:
Once honored guests in Egypt, the Israelites eventually became slaves. The Israelites suffered under the violence and oppression of the Egyptians. God heard the cries of His people and sent Moses as a deliverer. Yet when Moses approached Pharaoh, Pharaoh responded with threats, intimidation, and blame. It took God’s direct action for the Israelites to be set free. Through this study we are going to look at labor trafficking, God’s heart for the oppressed, and how we can stop the demand for cheap labor.

The Story:
Four hundred years had passed since Joseph’s rise to prominence in Egypt. As the Hebrew people grew in number, Pharaoh and the Egyptians grew increasingly fearful. Eventually, the Egyptians forced the Hebrews into slavery and attempted to control the population by killing infant boys (Exodus 1:8-11, 16). God heard the cries of His people (3:7-8). The Lord sent Moses to deliver His people from bondage. That put Moses into direct conflict with Pharaoh. Who would triumph?

Moses and Aaron’s first approach to Pharaoh was not a subservient request but a divine command. The Word of the Lord was for His people to worship Him in the wilderness. It may have been that the Egyptians would have been offended by the Hebrew sacrifices (8:26), but it may also have been that the Hebrews wanted to worship God at His “home”—the mountain of the Lord. Pharaoh refused the request—not because he was unaware of Yahweh’s identity, but because he did not consider this Hebrew God worthy of his attention.

---


Pharaoh responded to Moses’ repeated request by accusing the people of laziness. Pharaoh refused to allow the people to stop their work for any reason. If the people wanted time off to worship, Pharaoh would work them so hard that they had no time or energy to worship or to dream of bettering their conditions.

After refusing Moses and Aaron, Pharaoh’s next move was to punish the people for their request. He ordered his taskmasters to stop supplying the people with straw to make brick but kept the brick-making quota the same (5:6-7). Straw was an essential component for brick making. The straw tripled the strength of the finished product. One scroll dating from the time of Ramses II lists brick quotas and how many bricks each worker delivered. Out of 35 workers, not one worker met the quota. Penalties were not listed on the scroll.³

Pharaoh shifted the blame from the oppressor to the oppressed by accusing them of being “lazy” (5:8). In this twisted psychology, the people’s complaints are only an indicator of their unwillingness to work. It’s not that they are truly mistreated—they just claim to be so they don’t have to work so hard. They have brought their mistreatment on themselves by their laziness and complaints. By blaming the victims and increasing their workload, Pharaoh expects to have no more trouble from his Hebrew slaves.

The rest of the passage shows the effectiveness of Pharaoh’s oppressive system. The taskmasters place the burden on the Hebrew foremen, who are now caught in the middle between Pharaoh and the people. The foremen are beaten and complain to Pharaoh, who mocks them and accuses them of laziness (5:17). Pharaoh used the same tactics traffickers still use today: work their victims so hard they have no time or energy to dream of a better life; use violence and threats so they fear to challenge the system; and attack their sense of self-worth until they come to believe they deserve to be treated this way.

In this case Pharaoh’s tactics worked. The Hebrew foremen accused their would-be liberators of making conditions worse. Pharaoh shifted the blame to the foremen; they shifted it to Moses, and Moses shifted it back to God (5:21-23). Only God could break Pharaoh’s oppression. The Lord’s response was clear. If Pharaoh refused to acknowledge Yahweh’s superiority, God would force his hand.

Points of Application

- God hears the cries of the oppressed. God sent Moses to lead the Hebrew people to freedom because he had heard the cries of his people. Today, God still seeks justice for the oppressed.

³ Ibid.
Pharaoh’s actions show the classic tactics of oppressors: blame the victims, wear them down, and convince them they deserve their harsh treatment. God judged Pharaoh for his abuse and misuse of power.

Group Guide

Week 2: Israelites in Egypt

Exodus 5:1-23

Opener
Around the World: The leader begins by saying the name of any country, city, river, ocean or mountain that can be found in an atlas. The person next to him must then say another name that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person has a definite time limit (e.g. three seconds) and no names can be repeated. Try to think of places related to the Bible, but any place is fair game. For example - First person: Jerusalem, Second Person: Mount Sinai, Third Person: Israel

Study the Scripture
Read through Exodus 5:1-23 as a group

Less time? Read the synopsis in the leader guide.

Questions for Reflection

- Moses’ first request wasn’t to free the Israelites from slavery, but to give them a chance to worship God. When Pharaoh didn’t comply, God upped the ante. Have you ever seen anything like this play out in your own life? Someone didn’t give a little willingly so they were forced to give a lot?
- Is there a time you tried to stand up for justice, but you just seemed to make things worse (like Moses in 5:6-7)? How did you respond to the accusation that you were causing more trouble then helping?
- God heard the cries of the oppressed and intervened to rescue them. What groups in our world today are victims of oppression and exploitation?
- What is our responsibility in seeking justice for the oppressed?
- How do you define stewardship? We often think of stewardship in terms of managing our money well, but is there more to it than that? Does spending our money on the right products, such as slave-free products, also play a role in good
stewardship? What is our responsibility when our quest for cheaper goods makes it harder for the people that produce those products to earn a living wage?

**Labor Trafficking**

We tend to think that slavery, like the Hebrews faced, doesn't exist anymore. The sad truth is that it does, and the even scarier truth is that you and I are both part of the demand. No matter who you are, you have probably employed a trafficker as a result of your purchases.

Today, there are an estimated 21 million persons in forced labor around the world\(^4\). The majority of these people work in traditionally labor-intensive industries such as agriculture, domestic labor, or construction.

Human trafficking is driven by the *law of supply and demand* or the law of buying and selling. Whenever you purchase a product like a chocolate bar, a magazine, or athletic shoes, you are the buyer and you create the demand.

Every time you go to the store and buy something, you are giving someone a job. Who are you employing? Is the person who sews your shirt or soccer ball an adult being paid a fair wage? Is it possible that by purchasing your product you are actually employing a trafficker? Here are some things you can do to employ adults being paid a fair wage:

- Purchase fair trade or slave free products whenever possible, especially non-essential goods such as chocolate or coffee. Many of our most popular brands are not guaranteed to be slave free. For example, Hershey Chocolate, the largest chocolate producer in the world, has only verified 1% of their chocolate to be slave free. Whenever we eat a Hershey’s Kiss, Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup, Rolo, or Almond Joy, we are employing traffickers.
- Also, some of your favorite coffee shops are probably using coffee picked by slaves. We implore you to learn more so you can help adults be paid a fair wage for their work. By paying adults a fair wage we empower them to send their children to school and help end global poverty.

**Group Activity**

You will need:
- 7 people (a leader and 6 volunteers)
- 24-piece chocolate bar (Divine Chocolate bar or any Fair Trade)
- 6 poster boards

The game demonstrates the way trade works in favor of the rich and how producers in poor countries end up with a very small share of what we pay for a bar of chocolate!

Line up the volunteers and give them each a role, based on the list below. Start by giving the cocoa farmer, who owns a plot of land about the size of a football field, a chocolate bar that represents the money we pay for a normal bar of chocolate. He/she is invited to open the chocolate bar but warned that before tucking in to the fruits of their labor there are some payments to be made.

Each person will represent one of the people who has to be paid. Make signs for them to hold up so that people watching can understand what is going on. As you read off the percentages below, the farmer should hand that number of squares over to the relevant person. You can ask the cocoa farmer how he or she feels as they lose their chocolate. They normally feel that an injustice is being done! Hold a discussion on justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>How much?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-cocoa ingredients</td>
<td>3 squares (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>4 squares (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shops</td>
<td>5 squares (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate Companies</td>
<td>10 squares! (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleman</td>
<td>about half of what remains (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>That leaves the farmer with just 1 square of chocolate (3%) to pay farm workers, pay for inputs into the farm and support his or her family with food, shelter, healthcare, education etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Closing Prayer

God of the impossible,
we pray for justice, peace and reconciliation.
And when the challenges seem too many,
remind us of your resurrection power,
and the miracles of your love that happen
whenever injustice is dismantled and rebuilt with peace.
Help us to hope that the impossible can happen
and live as if it might do so today.

Amen

- from Christian Aid

Taking it home
Do these activities with your children, friends or even by yourself:

- Log on to www.slaveryfootprint.org to see how many slaves you employ! You’ll never shop the same.

- Download one of these apps: Buycott, Free2Work or the Better World Shopping app (iPhone only). Both of these apps can help you make wise choices when shopping

- Let organization’s know. When you aren’t buying a product anymore (Hershey Chocolate) write them a letter and let them know if they offered more slave free products you would buy them. They can’t change if they don’t know.

- Find stores around you that have transparent supply chains such as Starbucks, New Balance, Timberland, Trader Joes, or Whole Foods so that you know where to shop. Let them know you are buying from them because they are slave-free. They even post their supply chain audits online for people to see. That level of transparency gives you confidence that you aren’t employing a trafficker by purchasing their products.

5 http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/prayer/ending-poverty.aspx
Family activities

Talk to your children about how they would feel if their lives looked like the people in this video. Discuss the importance of slave-free goods and brainstorm ways you can do this as a family.

This week as a family, utilize one of the slave free guides above to plan and prepare a slave-free meal. If you can’t do an entire meal, there are tons of ways to get fair trade chocolate! Plan a fair trade dessert! Talk about ways that your family is helping those who grew the crops that made your meal. Think about other things you buy besides food and how you might be able to purchase those items slave-free also, helping those who work hard and need to support their families.
Leader Guide

Week 3: Abram and Sarai in Egypt

Genesis 12:10-20

Story Synopsis:
Abram and Sarai left Caanan for Egypt in a time of famine. Because he was afraid that the Egyptians would kill him to take Sarai, Abram asked Sarai to lie and say that she was his sister rather than his wife. Believing her to be Abram’s sister, Pharoah took Sarai into his harem and gave Abram great wealth. But God rescued Sarai and Pharaoh released her. Through the study of this story, we will learn that though people in our lives can and will disappoint or even betray us, God sees, knows, and cares about our painful/difficult situations. God is both rescuer and redeemer of both men and women.

The Story:
Abram is introduced in chapter 12 as a great man of faith. God told him to leave his country and his father’s house and journey to a land God would show him (Gen. 12:1-3). God promised Abram great blessings for his obedience. Abram obeyed. Yet immediately after his great act of faith, Abram is shown in all his human frailty. During his sojourn in Egypt, Abram’s fear caused him to lie and to betray his wife, Sarai, to protect himself. Despite Abram’s weakness, God revealed himself as rescuer and redeemer.

Abram was driven to Egypt by famine in the land of Canaan. This was not uncommon. The production of food in Canaan was dependent on the scarce amount of rain, while Egypt’s agriculture depended on the Nile’s annual flood cycle. The different ecological systems meant that Egypt was often able to produce food while Canaan was experiencing drought.

As they came near to Egypt, Abram asked Sarai to lie to protect him. Fearing that the Egyptians would kill him to take Sarai because of her beauty, Abram asked Sarai to say that she was his sister rather than his wife. The motivations for Abram’s lie are somewhat murky. It is true that the kings of the Ancient Near East had a reputation for taking whatever woman they chose. Fathers, brothers, or husbands who got in the way could be killed. Abraham may simply have been fearful. Interpreters have tried to save Abram’s reputation in other ways. One suggestion was that adopting a wife as a sister could improve her social status. This is not reflected in the Abram/Sarai story, however. It is clear from the text that Abram was seeking his own self-preservation. A more likely possibility is that if Abram presented himself as Sarai’s brother, any Egyptian seeking to possess her might
first approach Abram for negotiations, allowing time to escape. However, this still presents difficulties since it appears that Abram did indeed sell Sarai to Pharaoh (Gen 12:16).

If Abram was hoping that his lie would buy time for negotiation and escape, the ruse failed. Pharaoh had no need to negotiate. Hearing of Sarai’s beauty, Pharaoh took her into his house. Abram was rewarded richly. The list of rewards in verse 16 is a stock phrase used to describe the very wealthy. Abram was no longer a penniless wanderer; Pharaoh greatly compensated Abram for his ‘sister.’

The complications are obvious. Abram had become a possessor of great wealth, but he had lost Sarai. Without a wife, how would he have the promised descendants to inherit the land (12:7)? Abram lied to protect himself, but his deception didn’t only put Sarai at risk – God’s promise was at stake as well.

Sarai does not speak throughout the episode. We can only wonder of her thoughts and feelings. Did she feel betrayed by her husband? Did she feel unvalued, unwanted, or unloved? Abram had saved himself, but he risked Sarai’s virtue, reputation, and the possibility that she might be a member of Pharaoh’s harem for the rest of her life.

We should note that though Abram appeared to profit from his deception, his wealth caused problems for him throughout the rest of his life. Starting in chapter 13, Abram’s increased wealth led to conflict with his nephew Lot and their eventual separation. Then there is the later tension within his household over the Egyptian maid Hagar (16:1-6; 21:9-14). Was Hagar one of the ‘female servants’ Pharaoh gifted to Abram? Interestingly, when Sarai told Abram to have a child with Hagar, she used the same formula for her request that Abram used when he asked her to lie (12:13; 16:2). Perhaps Sarai’s request was a claim on the debt Abram owed her for her silence. Certainly Abram’s lie created separation and animosity between him and his wife. It was not the first time in Genesis that sin caused division between man and woman (3:11-12).

Abram’s lie embroiled him in a situation that required divine action. Only God could rescue Sarai from Pharaoh’s harem. Though God does not always rescue His people from the consequences of their own sin, in this case God did intervene and rescued Sarai. God sent plagues on the house of Pharaoh. The text does not specify the nature of the diseases or how Pharaoh knew they were due to Sarai’s presence within his household. Faced with divine retribution for his unconscious error, Pharaoh immediately summoned Abram and confronted him with three pointed questions. Abram was not given a chance to answer; his silence implied his guilt. Pharaoh returned Sarai and forcibly escorted them from Egypt.

We best understand this story when we consider it within the context of the larger narrative. The story of Abraham and Sarai is the story of God’s plan to bless the nations and eventually bring redemption through this family. Yet God’s plan is worked out through
fallible human beings. In this story, we see that God is gracious enough to rescue and redeem even when we fail. But it also reveals that it is foolish to use deception in order to save ourselves. With God as our rescuer and redeemer, why would we ever need to lie?

**Points of Application:**

- God is a rescuer. Abram’s deception embroiled him and Sarai in a situation from which they could not escape, but God graciously intervened to rescue Sarai. God rescues us from the prison of our own sin.
- There is no need to lie to protect ourselves. God was able to safely rescue Sarai from Pharaoh’s household. Surely God could also have rescued Abram and Sarai both from harm at the hands of the Egyptians. Abram’s lie was an attempt at self-preservation, but it only led to increased danger. Abram’s lie showed his lack of faith; he did not trust that God could protect him from the power of the Egyptians.
- Both men and women are valuable to God. Abram lived in a time in which women were treated as property and could be viewed as disposable. In his actions toward Sarai, Abram did not rise above the culture of his time. Yet throughout Scripture, God reveals that both men and women are valuable to him. Women such as Sarai are also important in God’s plan.
Group Guide

Week 3: Abram and Sarai in Egypt

Genesis 12:10-20

Opener:
Two Truths and a Lie: Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper THREE things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three ‘facts’ about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

Study the Scripture:
Read through Genesis 12 as a group.

Less time? Read the synopsis in the leader guide.

Questions for Reflection:
- Have you ever lied to get yourself out of an uncomfortable situation? What were the results?
- What are some ways in which you are more impacted by your culture rather than by biblical standards? What are some ways in which you see the church today rise above our culture?
- How do you feel about a patriarch of our faith selling his own wife? What does that tell us about God’s redemption, not just for survivors of trafficking, but also for the perpetrators?
- When you face difficulty, is your first response to seek God’s leadership, or is it to look to your own resources? Why?
**Abram, Sarai, and Trafficking**

*Sarai was betrayed by her husband.* While it's hard to believe that parents, grandparents, brothers, or sisters could force a member of their own family into prostitution, trafficking by a family member is one path into prostitution.\(^1\) Additionally, domestic violence is a “push factor” for trafficking. Victims of domestic violence who lack the support needed to leave for a safe environment can become vulnerable to traffickers. Children who have been abused or exploited by a family member need to know that they are not alone.

*We could say that Abram “pimped” Sarai.* Admittedly, this is a modern reading. Neither Abram nor Pharaoh would have seen their actions in this light. Still, Abram unmistakably profited from Sarai’s ‘sale.’ Only divine intervention rescued Sarai before she was brought before Pharaoh. The fact that Abram later repeated his deception (Genesis 20:1-17) also casts a negative light on his actions.

Today, one of the factors driving domestic sex trafficking is the glorification of pimp culture. Artists like Jay-Z, Snoop, and 50 cent—and their corporate sponsors—have helped to make pimping look glamorous and exciting. They help equate masculinity with misogyny and violence. The reality is that pimps seek out the girls and boys who are most vulnerable and insecure, woo them into dependence on the pimp, and then keep them under control through drugs and violence while they force them to work the track. The real victims are the girls and boys whom pimps abuse and control.

*Unfortunately, manipulation works.* Re-read Genesis 20:13. Abram uses the exact line traffickers use to manipulate. “If you really love me you’ll _____”. Often it is something like, “if you love me you’ll help us make money to support ourselves. You’re just so beautiful that other people want to experience you”. Manipulation when tied with “love” is very tricky. We often do unthinkable things because of our human need and desire for love. The bars that hold men and women in sex trafficking are a complicated mixture of love and fear.

*Abram was influenced by a culture which viewed women as property.* We’d like to think we’ve progressed in this regard but we live in a culture in which Charlie Sheen’s antics gain him a seat at the center of a media circus while the women he abused are overlooked or vilified. Stores sell thong underwear and push-up bras marketed for 7-10 year olds, and stars trot out their young daughters in heels, miniskirts, and lipstick.\(^2\) The commercial sex

---


industry is driven in part by a culture that presents even children as sexual beings. Both boys and girls need to know that they are worth more than the sum of their parts.\(^3\)

**Group Activity**

Chose three volunteers to stand up and read these survivor testimonies from the Polaris Project:\(^4\):

**Mari**

My name is Mari. I am a 37-year-old African American woman who had been in a relationship with Darrell for 16 years. During that time we had four children. Over the course of the relationship, Darrell had been verbally, physically and sexually abusive towards me. Additionally, when Darrell wanted extra money, he called friends of his and forced me into commercial sex. I have tried to leave Darrell in the past; however, he either threatened to hurt our children, or convinced me that I had no other options other than staying with him. He controlled all of my money, did not allow me to keep my own bank account, and forbade me from getting her driver's license. I could not see any alternatives for leaving.

One evening, Darrell, me and an 18 year-old, Janice, who Darrell was also forcing into prostitution, were pulled over by a patrol officer for a traffic violation. The officer noticed that when Darrell pulled out his identification he had my and the other girls’ ID in his wallet. The officer was suspicious and asked to speak to them all privately. During his conversation the officer realized both women were being forced and coerced into prostitution. He referred both women to Polaris Project for emergency services. Polaris Project helped find temporary housing and provided food and clothing for both women. Janice immediately left Darrell and found a job in a restaurant. I relocated out of state with my children, but I still struggle daily with my decision to leave Darrell. I understand that it is best for me and my children, and believes that more and more every day.

**Jennifer**

My name is Jennifer. I am a 17-year-old white female who grew up in rural Ohio. I ran away from home a few times because my mom and stepfather drank a lot and did not pay attention to me. A few months ago I was walking to the store alone and a 30-year-old male drove up beside me and told me how pretty I was and asked why I looked so sad. I told him that I was angry with my mom and just needed to take a walk. He asked if he could take me to get my nails done down the street to cheer me

\(^3\) Vicki Courtney, *5 Conversations You Must Have with Your Daughter* (Nashville: B&H, 2008).

\(^4\) http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/client-services/survivor-stories
up, and I agreed. He paid right away while giving compliments and telling me he wanted to meet again the next day.

For the next two months Jack picked me up and took me to eat, to get my nails done and continued to act like a loving boyfriend. We both began calling each other boyfriend and girlfriend. We spent a lot of time together and he asked me to move in with him, but after another month of living together he told her me couldn’t make the rent payment and needed help. He asked me to go on dates with older men and engage in commercial sex. I felt uncomfortable but agreed because I would do anything not to return home, and wanted to make him happy. Jack praised me and told me he didn’t mind that I helped them get money for rent this way. This continued until one night when I was out on the street and was raped by a stranger who initially solicited me for sex. I immediately called the police and was taken to the hospital for an exam.

Once at the hospital, the responding detectives called Polaris Project client services and two staff members reported to the hospital. Polaris Project provided emergency housing and emotional support for me as I considered some of my options. I decided to leave Jack and move into a shelter. During me month at the shelter, Polaris Project found long-term housing for me and helped me secure a part-time job. Within four months, I saved enough money to move into my own apartment. I continue to work part-time and attend classes in the evenings. I hopes to attend college next year and eventually own my own business.

Tyrone
My name is Tyrone and I am a 16-year-old African American originally from Florida. I was raised by my aunt until I was 10 years old and then placed in the foster care system. At the age of 14, I first ran away from my foster family to avoid sexual harassment from one of my foster family uncles.

During that time, I met "Mastur D", a 26-year-old man who offered to help me get back to my biological family. He said he would be able to pay for some of the expenses to get me there, but that I needed to help support financially by engaging in sexual acts. With no money or other options I took him up on his offer. He drove me back to Florida but insisted when we arrived that I had not earned enough money to cover our hotel and gas costs. He physically assaulted me and told me that I would never see anyone else in my family if I did not engage in sex with other men of his choosing. I felt I had no other choice and continued to earn money for Mastur D to pay him back for the money he paid for me to get back to Florida. I was arrested for solicitation in Florida and after serving time in a juvenile detention center was returned to my foster family and was therefore returned to sexual harassment by
my foster family uncle. I ran away again a year later and called Mastur D to help me get back to Florida. He agreed to help again. I was arrested again.

While participating in an outreach group at a detention center, I reached out to a Polaris Project social worker and told her parts of my story. Polaris Project immediately stepped in to provide emotional support and additional social services. The social worker helped me talk to my case manager at the detention center about what happened and helped my probation officer understand other options for support instead of a detention center and returning to my foster family. I now have protection order against Mastur D and was able to leave the detention center and go to an out-of-state residential program for young boys who were victims of sex trafficking. I am doing well in my program and am almost finished with my GED.

Discussion Questions:
1. Discuss the force, coercion and fraud in these stories.
2. How might they have felt similar to Sarai in the Bible?
3. How could your church/family involvement prevent situations like these from arising?

Closing Prayer

John 3:19-21

19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Dear God,

Today we pray for the men that are hurting others and hurting themselves. Pray that God would change their hearts, pierce their consciences, and bring about deep repentance. Pray that the darkness of their hearts and their actions might be brought into the light, that their shameful deeds done in secret might be exposed so that more victims are not harmed.

We pray that you will use us to bring light into this dark place.

Amen
Taking it home

Did You Know?

- Each year, as many as 100,000-300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States.\(^5\)
- The average age a girl enters the commercial sex trade is 12-14 years old. For boys, it’s even younger – just 11-13 years old.\(^6\)

Research has shown that children who have experienced sexual abuse are more likely to be trafficked than children who have not experienced sexual abuse. This abuse could be a stranger, or a family member or friend. Predators often manipulate children like Abram manipulated Sarai and tell them terrible lies about themselves. Creating an environment where children can confess abuse is a parent’s job. We also need to protect our children from becoming victims.

**Family Activity:**
This week start the monthly habit of having a special “date night” with each of your children. In addition to checking on their hearts, use this as an opportunity to talk to them one-on-one about sexual abuse before it happens. It’s also important to model healthy relationships for your children. Take them on parent-child “dates” so they can see what healthy relationships look like.

**Talking to your children about sexual abuse**
Here are some great tips from the U.S. Department of Justice:\(^7\)

- When you empower your children to say “no” to unwanted touch and teach them that they can come to you with questions and concerns, you take critical steps to preventing child sexual abuse.
- Talk to your children about sexuality and sexual abuse in age-appropriate terms. Talking openly and directly about sexuality teaches children that it is okay to talk to you when they have questions.
- Teach children the names of their body parts so that they have the language to ask questions and express concerns about those body parts.
- Teach children that some parts of their bodies are private.
  - Let children know that other people should not be touching or looking at their private parts unless they need to touch them to provide care. If someone does need to touch them in those private areas, a parent or trusted caregiver should be there when it happens.

---

\(^5\) Sources: U.S. Department of Justice, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

\(^6\) ibid

Tell children that if someone tries to touch those private areas or wants to look at them OR if someone tries to show them his or her own private parts, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible.

- Teach your child boundaries and that it’s okay to say “no” to touches that make him or her uncomfortable or scared.
- Teach your child how to say “no” when he or she is uncomfortable or scared and that he or she should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible.
- Respect a child’s boundaries in play, teasing, and affection.
- Assure your child that it is okay to get help, even if someone he or she cares about might be upset or embarrassed.
- Know that telling a trusted adult can lead to a slightly embarrassing situation for you, your child, and those involved.
  - A child who then says he or she does not want to give a relative a hug or kiss can create tension. Do not force the child to give the relative a hug or a kiss, because it is sending the wrong message to the child and teaches the child to ignore his or her confusing or uncomfortable feelings to the point where he or she does it anyway. Work with your child to find ways to greet people that do not involve uncomfortable kinds of touch.
- Talk openly about sexuality and sexual abuse to teach your child that these topics do not need to be “secret.” Abusers will sometimes tell a child that the abuse should be kept a secret. Let your child know that if someone is touching him or her or talking to him or her in ways that make him or her uncomfortable or scared, that it should not stay a secret.
  - Abusers rely on the child’s likelihood of not telling an adult.
  - Assure your child that he or she will not get into trouble if he or she tells you this kind of secret.

But Here’s the Most Important Thing To Do:

These conversations should be ongoing, open, and casual. Do not try to put all this information into one big “talk” about sex.

- Talking about sexuality and sexual abuse should be routine conversations.
- Use everyday issues to begin conversations to help avoid a big “talk” about sex.

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

Physical Signs

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bloody, torn, or stained underclothes
- Bleeding, bruises, or swelling in genital area
- Pain, itching, or burning in genital area
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections

---

But Here’s the Most Important Thing To Do:

These conversations should be ongoing, open, and casual. Do not try to put all this information into one big “talk” about sex.

- Talking about sexuality and sexual abuse should be routine conversations.
- Use everyday issues to begin conversations to help avoid a big “talk” about sex.

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

Physical Signs

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bloody, torn, or stained underclothes
- Bleeding, bruises, or swelling in genital area
- Pain, itching, or burning in genital area
- Frequent urinary or yeast infections

---

- **Sexually Transmitted Infections**, especially if under 14 years old
- Pregnancy, especially if under 14 years old

**Behavioral Signs**
- Reports sexual abuse
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Inappropriate sexual behavior
- Nightmares or bed-wetting
- Large weight changes/major changes in appetite
- Suicide attempts or self-harming, especially in adolescents
- Shrinks away or seems threatened by physical contact
- Runs away
- Overly protective and concerned for siblings, assumes a caretaker role
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder** or Rape Trauma Syndrome symptoms

**Common Reactions**
- Withdrawal
- **Depression**
- Sleeping & eating disorders
- Self-mutilation
- Phobias
- Psychosomatic symptoms (stomachaches, headaches)
- School problems (absences, drops in grades)
- Poor hygiene/excessive bathing
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Regressive behaviors - thumb-sucking, etc.

For more resources, please visit:
- [List of Organizations Serving Survivors of Sexual Violence per State](#)
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](#) at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#)
Leader Guide

Week 4: Daniel and His Friends

Daniel 1:1-12

Story Synopsis:

Daniel was one of many young men taken captive to Babylon and forced into the king’s service. Daniel however, was resolved to remain faithful to God even in Babylon. When offered foods that violated the Jewish law, Daniel remained true to a commitment he had already made and chose not to violate his conscience and sin. God honored Daniel’s stand and granted him and his friends favor in the eyes of the king. Daniel provides a role model for us all. His wise friends and tenacity keep him out of trouble and in right relationship with God. The lesson we learn is that commitments that you make with God, your friends and family can help you resist temptation.

The Story:

For nearly 100 years, Assyria dominated the Ancient Near East. As Assyria began to decline, Egypt and Babylon battled for dominance. Eventually, Babylon emerged as the next world power. Judah attempted to rebel twice against Babylon and was crushed twice. In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked Judah, but decided to leave Judah’s king on the throne and took plunder and captives back with him to Babylon. Daniel was one of these captives.

Earlier in history, Assyria’s goal was annihilation of conquered people groups, but now, Babylon’s goal was assimilation. Daniel and the other captives were the sons of Judah’s ruling class. They were held as hostages with the intent of “reprogramming” the ruling class of Judah with traditions of Babylon. Babylonian rulers intended to put Daniel and the other captives’ abilities to work serving Nebuchadnezzar rather than Babylon’s enemies or fostering rebellion back home. To that end, Daniel and his friends were trained in the “literature and language of the Chaldeans” (vs. 4). Much of this “literature” would have been religious in nature. The three-year process of training them as scribes would indoctrinate these youths in Babylonian religious culture and work toward the process of assimilation.

As a part of the assimilation process Daniel and his friends were given new names. This was one way the conqueror expressed his authority. Where the name, “Daniel” means “God
is my judge,” his new Babylonian name means “Bel guard his life” or “Belet guard the king” (Bel and Belet were Babylonian gods).

As a part of the king’s household, Daniel and his friends were served with rations from the king’s table. Those receiving such rations were expected to give the king their loyalty in return. Daniel, however, “resolved not to defile himself with the king’s food and wine” (1:8). The use of the word “defile” indicates that Daniel’s resolve had a religious motivation. It is possible that the food Daniel was offered had been previously offered to an idol, though this privilege was normally reserved for the king and his highest officials. It is also possible that the food was not prepared according to the laws of Moses that dictated which animals could be eaten and how they were to be killed, since Daniel requested vegetables and water instead. It is also possible that by refusing the king’s “choice food,” Daniel was refusing to be assimilated and pledge his loyalty to the king rather than to God. Regardless, it was a question of personal integrity for Daniel and God rewarded him for his faithfulness under pressure.

Daniel’s “resolve” is key. It is clear throughout the book of Daniel that Daniel was absolutely committed to obeying the Lord and the Lord alone. Whether confronting a drunk and frightened king, a tyrannical ruler, or a den full of lions, Daniel obeyed God above all else. Over and over again, the Lord also proved Himself faithful to Daniel.

The issues kids face as young people blow up and become big issues as adults. It seems like overnight it goes from “my girlfriend was flirting with another guy” to “my wife has been having an affair.” Good habits started early stop sin before it grows and gives birth to death (James 1:15).

This week we specifically want to talk about internet safety, how pornography is inexplicably linked to human trafficking and how pornography can work its way into the lives of children and adults if we are not careful. Today, both adults and young people face pressure from many sources. The world screams at them “Assimilate! Be like us!” Many temptations are out there. Those who resolve from a young age to honor the Lord with their choices are much less likely to become trafficking victims.

**Points of Application:**

- Daniel had committed to follow the Lord before he ever went to Babylon. Daniel’s choice not to defile himself with the king’s food was born out of a habit of obedience. This obedience safe-guarded him from future harm.
- We all face different pressures to assimilate. Perhaps, Daniel’s choice was clear because he was placed in the middle of a foreign culture, but we also face our won
culture’s pressure to assimilate. Materialism, sensuality, over-commitment, entertainment at any price—we also have to choose to follow God rather than bow to our culture’s false gods.

- Daniel was helped by friends who shared his commitment. When we have safe friends it becomes easier to make wise choices and resist temptation.
Group Guide

Week 4: Daniel and His Friends

Daniel 1:1-12

Opener:

Peer pressure activity: Either as people are arriving for your group, or in a message prior to arriving, tell everyone except one group member that you are going to have a “peer pressure” opener. Ask all of your participants, except the “subject,” to come in, as usual, but to sit on the floor or on a table/desk when ready to start instead of sitting in chairs. Observe what your “subject” does – do they follow the nonverbal peer pressure and sit on the floor, or do they sit in a chair? Then start discussion.

Suggestions:
- Go about opening like it is normal – welcome, make small talk, etc.
- Don’t stare or giggle at the individual when they are deciding where to sit.
- If the individual asks any questions just shrug your shoulders.
- Choose your one individual wisely, someone who won’t be easily embarrassed or ashamed.

Questions to ask the individual if they sat on the floor
- Why did you sit on the floor?
- Do you always do what everyone else does?

Questions to ask the individual if they sat in their chair
- Why did you sit in a chair when everyone else is sitting on the floor?
- Why wouldn’t you do what everyone else is doing?

This is a simple and silly example of peer pressure, but that will be our topic for today.

Study the Scripture:

Read through Daniel 1 as a group, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (especially v.18).

Less time? Read the synopsis in the leader guide.
Questions for Reflection:

- What are some of the cultural pressures you are most vulnerable to? What God-honoring commitments have you made in those areas?
- Who in your life encourages you in your Christian life? How do your friends impact how you follow God?
- What are areas that you have difficulty? Are there friends or other people that draw you away from God in these areas?
- What habits are you cultivating in your life now that may help you resist pressure tomorrow?
- How do you safe-guard yourself against sexual temptation?

Daniel and Trafficking

Sex traffickers specialize in exploiting vulnerable children: Children who have already been the victims of abuse or neglect. This may also include: youths who are struggling with learning disabilities or mental health issues, girls who crave the attention of a father figure, boys who are struggling with their sexuality and young people who see their status (or popularity) as coming from things they want, but cannot afford and whose loyalty can be bought with a gift. Children are made vulnerable by thepornification of our culture and the demands of a market where men and women are willing to pay money for sex or sexual experiences (porn, erotic dancing, sex).

Children can’t help some of these risk factors but there are some things that are in their control. By committing to honor God with their choices and resolving to value such things as purity, honesty, and virtue, children can make themselves less vulnerable. Sex traffickers look for victims that are easily swayed.

How is this related to pornography? People who look at pornography develop unhealthy sexual desires. Pornography dehumanizes women and men. It teaches our children (and us) that people are a commodity to be purchased instead of sons and daughters, princes and princesses of the Most High God.

A common misconception about porn is that it is a “victimless crime”. There are many reasons that is not true, but here are just a few:

- Did you know the average age a person in the U.S. starts “working in the porn industry” is around 14 years old?
- This sadly true statistic exists for many reasons: abuse, homelessness, problems in the foster care system, the breakdown of the family, and manipulation.
- Porn teaches unhealthy relationships and that effect everyone around the user. It changes the user’s worldview and this affects our community as a whole.
- The truth of the matter is that when we support the commercial sex industry through activities such as porn, stripping, or prostitution, we are exploiting someone. We are most likely adding another painful experience to a person who has experienced a lifetime of exploitation. Look at the person behind the porn. That person is a prince or princess of the Most High God. That person is someone’s son and daughter.

Daniel was caught in a situation where much was beyond his control. He had not asked for his nation to be taken over by an invading army. He and his friends did not volunteer to be taken captive to Babylon, forced into the king’s service, possibly made into eunuchs, and expected to assimilate into a pagan culture. Yet Daniel resolved to be obedient to God above all else, no matter what was at stake. Again and again, God honored his choices. Today, we need to teach our children to be like Daniel: resolved to honor God even under pressure.

**Group Activity**

Let’s take a careful look at the language, TV shows and music that we let into our lives. “Pimp” has become a cool word these days – e.g., “pimp my ride” – but, in reality, pimps traffick people. They sell women, men and children for a profit.

Think about the TV shows that are popular and music that you hear on Top 40s stations. Do they degrade women? Do they praise abuse? Looking at the table below, think of some currently popular TV shows and music that use the “Bad Language” to glorify the sex industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Language</th>
<th>Bad Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploited woman/child, victim, survivor</td>
<td>Slut, dirty, promiscuous, whore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostituted women/men, trafficked, exploited</td>
<td>Sex work, sex workers, child prostitutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
<td>Stupid, weak, poor, white trash, ghetto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchaser, commercial sex buyer, exploiter, criminal</td>
<td>John, customer, client, “boys will be boys”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trafficker, criminal, exploiter</td>
<td>Pimp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Sex Trafficking, Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking</td>
<td>Child prostitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial sex act</td>
<td>Prostitution, exotic dancing, stripping, pornography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploited, transgender, gay</td>
<td>Transvestite, cross-dresser, sexually confused, fag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion Questions:

1. Share some examples of TV shows, music, and expressions that glorify the sex industry or the degradation of women.
2. Share some examples of TV shows, music, and expressions that show a healthy view of male and female relationships.
3. How does popular culture play in the “normalization” of sexual exploitation?
4. How can you, as a parent or leader, influence the use of “Good” versus “Bad” examples in language, culture and behavior?
5. We are inundated with the portrayal of unhealthy sexual habits and relationships. What can we do to protect ourselves from this perversion?

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, We pray to you today with the words of Romans 12:1-2,

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-- this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is-- his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Amen

Taking it home

Statically a child is first introduced to porn at 11 years of age. If you aren’t talking to your children about pornography and healthy sexual habits, then someone else will.

There are excellent resources to keep your children safe online and help you protect them from pornography and sexual predators. Every computer, tablet, and smart phone in your house is a portal that can be used for exploitation. Keep your children safe by going with them to netsmartz.com to teach them about internet safety. They have age appropriate games to teach children about online safety.

Talk to your children about what to do when tempted. For example— what do you do if you’re at your friend’s house and your friend wants to show you a pornographic video or magazine? How do you handle it if your friends are posting inappropriate pictures on FB, Instagram, or Snap Chat?
Also, visit xxxchurch.com to find out about software for your computers that will keep pornography out of your house and to find some tips for talking with your children about these issues:


Talk to your children about porn before someone else does.

**Family Night:**

Following closely on last week’s suggestions, plan a weekly “family night.” Use some of these nights to play some netsmartz games with your younger kids. Use these nights to plan events with your child in which you get to know their friends (ie. movie night, bowling, baseball game, ice skating). Talk to your child about their friends. Talk about which friends are “safe” and how we can know that. If you are feeling crafty, write thank you notes together to your safe friends, thanking them for helping you make wise choices (think about using fun colors, glitter pens, or different craft supplies).

Pastor Judah Smith from the City Church in Seattle has an amazing series on sex and the relationships between prostitution and trafficking that would be appropriate for teenagers to adults. Check these out yourself, and if you feel it would be appropriate, recommend them to your teenager or young adult.

- Part 1: [http://thecity.org/message/jesus_is Bringing_Sexy_Back](http://thecity.org/message/jesus_is Bringing_Sexy_Back)
- Part 2: [http://thecity.org/message/jesus_is Bringing_Sexy_Back1](http://thecity.org/message/jesus_is Bringing_Sexy_Back1)
- Part 3: [https://vimeo.com/37497562](https://vimeo.com/37497562)
- Part 4: [https://vimeo.com/38337966](https://vimeo.com/38337966)
- Part 5: [https://vimeo.com/38752937](https://vimeo.com/38752937)
- Part 6: [https://vimeo.com/39608238](https://vimeo.com/39608238)
- Part 7: [https://vimeo.com/39983500](https://vimeo.com/39983500)
- Part 8: [https://vimeo.com/40838103](https://vimeo.com/40838103)

If you would like something shorter to watch together with your teenagers, check out these great format informational videos about pornography (PG13).

This one is particularly good for teenagers:

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NH8NJZ8bOWc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NH8NJZ8bOWc)
This one is a great overview for parents:

- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaNQTlgr250&list=PLiOhapMbL19UjcBfjM_rALEOow3XbwVLf](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XaNQTlgr250&list=PLiOhapMbL19UjcBfjM_rALEOow3XbwVLf)

This one talks about demand for commercial sex:

- [http://vimeo.com/70635973](http://vimeo.com/70635973)

This article and associated video talk about the effects of pornography on the brain:


**Learn the basics of internet safety**

Children use a variety of online services, and each of these services can have different safety concerns. However, there are some basic tips which you can employ no matter how your children use the internet.

- Keep the computer in a high-traffic area of your home.
- Establish limits for which online sites children may visit and for how long.
- Remember that internet technology can be mobile, so make sure to monitor cell phones, gaming devices, and laptops.
- Surf the internet with your children and let them show you what they like to do online.
- Know who is connecting with your children online and set rules for social networking, instant messaging, e-mailing, online gaming, and using webcams.
- Continually dialogue with your children about online safety.
Leader Guide

Week 5: Woman at the Well

John 4: 1-45

Story Synopsis:

While journeying through Samaria, Jesus encountered a woman at the well. Jesus broke the socio-cultural norms of this day by conversing with this woman. Not only was it unheard of for a man to speak to a woman in public, but there was also racial hatred between Jews and Samaritans. This woman, who had five husbands and was now living with a man who was not her husband, was most likely also known in the community as a ‘promiscuous’ woman (much the same way we refer to women in the commercial sex industry). Yet Jesus not only spoke to her, but discussed a deep theological truth with her. In her encounter with Jesus, the woman found acceptance, forgiveness, grace, and a new beginning. Through our study of this passage, we will discover that our past mistakes don’t have to determine our futures: God always offers us forgiveness and the chance for new beginnings.

The Story:

Jesus often had the habit of being in the right place at the right time to meet the ‘wrong’ people—at least the sort of people that the religious elite didn’t think a holy man should associate with: tax collectors, Roman soldiers, prostitutes, and lepers. What they all had in common was a spiritual hunger Jesus alone could satisfy. In John chapter 4, Jesus does it again—breaking societal and cultural norms to seek out someone lost in sin.

John tells us that Jesus “had” to go through Samaria (vs.4). The road from Judea in the south to Galilee in the north led most directly through Samaria. This presented a problem for Jewish travelers. There was a deep-seated ethnic conflict between Jews and Samaritans. Jewish tradition dated the roots of the conflict back to the return from the Babylonian exile, when the returning Jewish refugees found their land already occupied by a group of people claiming to be the true descendants of Abraham. Though the Samaritans professed to follow the Torah, Jews regarded them as unclean. Many Jews would go around Samaria to travel between Judea and Galilee, preferring the longer route to coming in contact with Samaritans. Jews’ hatred for these “half-breeds” was so intense they would walk days out of their way to avoid contact.

As Jesus and the disciples passed through Samaria, Jesus sat down at a well to rest. It was about noon when Jesus came to the well, the hottest part of the day. At that time Jesus and
his disciples would most likely have been traveling about four hours. Jesus stayed at the well to rest while his followers went into the nearby town of Sychar to buy food (4:5-6).

John notes that the well was “Jacob’s well” (4:6). Part of the background John’s first readers would have known was that the Old Testament patriarchs had a habit of meeting their wives at wells. Rebekah, wife of Isaac, Rachel, wife of Jacob, and Zipporah, wife of Moses, all made their entrances at wells. Jesus would also meet a woman at this well—not to find a wife, but to find a woman who would become the spiritual mother of a new family of faith. When we meet her, though, we find that she is not the woman we might expect.

As Jesus sat resting by the well, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus asked her for a drink (4:7). A first-century Jewish reader would have noticed that there are a few things wrong with this picture. First of all, as the woman herself noted (4:9), Jesus was a man and she was a Samaritan woman. Jewish men—especially teachers or holy men—did not speak to women in public. Additionally, Jews did not normally speak to Samaritans, or accept food or drink from them. Finally, it is odd that the woman came to draw water at noon. Most women would have come to draw water from the well in the cool of the day, early in the morning or later in the evening. That the woman came alone in the heat of the noon sun suggests that she was not accepted in town, most likely because of her reputation (4:17-18).

In asking her for a drink, Jesus violated several religious and cultural norms. He violated one more by engaging in a theological discussion with her (4:10). As he so often did with people, Jesus began speaking with the woman on a spiritual level that she did not immediately grasp. “Living water” commonly referred to running, spring-fed water—and this was what the woman plainly understood. But Jesus was speaking on a spiritual level of the abundant life with God only Jesus can offer—the kind of water that quenches a thirsty soul.

The woman didn’t fully understand but she was intrigued enough to want a taste (4:15). What she didn’t realize is that to fully take in Jesus’ living water, you have to first get rid of whatever sludge you’ve been drinking. As theologians believe, in the woman’s case it was her sexual past. Jesus told her to go get her husband and come back. The woman’s reply “I have no husband” (4:17) managed to be both technically truthful and partially misleading. True, she was not married to the man she was currently with, but her statement could also have meant that she was unattached and available—something that was not fully true. Jesus’ next words removed all ambiguity: “You have had five husbands and the man you now have is not your husband” (4:18). Divorce was not an excepted practice so having had five husbands (even if some left her widowed) would have been very unacceptable. Since the Greek word used here could mean “man” or “husband,” it is possible the woman had lived with five men but not been married to all (or any) of them. Since the “your” in “your
husband” is in the emphatic position in Greek, it is also possible that her current man was not her husband, but that he was somebody else’s.¹

Confronted with this kind of specific knowledge about her life from a total stranger, the woman concluded that Jesus must be a prophet (4:19). As people often do when confronted with their sin, she cast about for a distraction. She tried to divert Jesus from the subject of morality to the more comfortable subject of religion (4:20). The issue she picked had the advantage of being both a religious question and one rooted in the Jewish/Samaritan ethnic conflict. The Samaritans worshipped God on Mt. Gerazim, but the Jews viewed Jerusalem as the central location for worship. But Jesus refused to be drawn into the discussion. Instead, he responded prophetically (4:21-24). There would come a day—and come soon—when worship would not be focused around a physical location, but around the person of the resurrected Christ.

All this talk of spirit and truth was too much for the woman, and she tried another tactic. “When Messiah comes . . . He will explain all things.” In other words, “When Messiah comes he will explain all this to us—and I’m fine with waiting until then.” But Jesus stopped her with a simple reply: “That’s me” (4:26).²

At this, the disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. The woman swiftly returned to the town, leaving her water jar behind her. Her original task paled in comparison with the urgency of telling the people about Jesus. She urged the townspeople to “come meet this man who told me everything I ever did” (4:29). The townspeople did, and soon believed—not only on account of the woman’s testimony, but because they themselves had encountered the Savior of the world (4:39-42)

Points of Application:

- Jesus did not judge the woman, but neither did he excuse her sin. Jesus lovingly confronted the woman’s past and offered her a chance for a new beginning.
- Jesus broke social codes to reach the woman. If Jesus had stayed within the bounds of what society considered acceptable, he would not have spoken to her—or possibly even gone through Samaria in the first place. Likewise, we also have to be willing to reach outside our comfort zones.
- Jesus took the initiative in his relationship with the woman. God always takes the initiative in his relationship with us. It is not that we first loved him, but that God first loved us. None of us come to God without God first drawing us to Him. God is always one who seeks after the lost.

Group Guide

Week 5: Woman at the Well

John 4: 1-45

Opener:

Create a mask that represents a hidden emotion. Think about emotions that trafficking victims might experience. After you spend a few minutes making the masks, have each person describe what they have made.

Or

Ask members to act out different emotions and have the group try and guess which it is – like emotional charades. Then discuss why they chose those emotions and how that emotion might cloud their view of God.

Study the Scripture:

As a group read John chapter 4, 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Revelations 21:1-6.

Less time? Read the synopsis in the leader guide.

Questions for Reflection:

- Where were you when God first found you? How did God take the initiative in his relationship with you?
- Think of the lost people in your community. What social rules might you have to break to reach them?
- How can you reach out to those caught in sexual sin? How can you do that while still protecting yourself against temptation?
- People may judge you for reaching out to those openly struggling in sexual sin. Does that bother you? If so, how will you handle it?
- How has God offered you chances for a new beginning? What was it like to begin again?
- Think of instances in your own life when you experienced grace – when you shouldn’t have succeeded, but you did. Understanding that you have received grace, how can you apply that in your dealings with other people?
The story and trafficking:

**Jesus valued the woman enough to go find her.** This was a woman so looked down on by her community that she preferred to face the noonday sun over the other women at the well. Yet Jesus cared enough to go find her. Let us not assume that it was a coincidence Jesus showed up at that particular well at that particular time. Jesus knew the woman would be coming, and he went there to meet her. Today, trafficking victims also face prejudice and social stigmas. They need to know that God values them and searches for them even before they knew to look for him.

**Jesus helped the woman come to a better understanding of who God is.** The woman’s conversation reveals a few clues to her beliefs about God. She thought of God as confined to a place—this mountain or in Jerusalem. She thought of the Messiah as someone that might perhaps show up one day—not someone that could impact her present reality. Perhaps, given her background, she thought of God as being for other people—not for someone like her. Jesus reveals truth to her: that God cares more about the hearts of his worshippers than the place they worship; that salvation was immediately available; that God cared enough about her to sit down on a dusty well in the heat of the day and have a conversation. It changed her life. Today, trafficking victims may also need to understand truths about God. That he is trustworthy. That he is a rescuer. That he seeks after the lost. That no one is beyond the reach of his love. That no sin is too big for the cross. Like the woman, trafficking victims today need to find spiritual healing made possible only in Jesus Christ.

**Jesus gave her a chance for a new beginning.** Jesus’ disciples went into the town to buy food and returned to Jesus apparently without mentioning him to the townspeople. Yet the woman abandoned her original purpose of drawing water, left the jar at the well, and ran into town to tell all the people about this man who just might be the Messiah. Before meeting Jesus, her past condemned her. She had few options but to go from one man to another in a bid to survive. In Jesus she found a way to begin again. Today, trafficking victims need that same opportunity to begin again.

**Going beyond prevention.** Prevention is so important. We hope you’ve taken strides in safe guarding the children around you these last 5 weeks. Still, prevention is only half the battle. Survivors of trafficking need healing and help. Jesus offers them grace and hope.

There is much we don’t know about the woman’s story. Where did she sleep that night? What new skills did she need to learn to survive? What physical or emotional scars did she carry? How did her past affect her relationships and her ability to trust? Did she stay in that village or find a new place where her past was not so well known? Likewise, for trafficking victims today escaping “the life” is only the beginning. They need treatment for
physical or mental disorders. They need to learn new job or social skills. They need to learn how—and who—to trust. But the woman's story gives us hope that it is possible. Now, as then, God is still in the restoration business.

**Group Activity**

Watch these videos as a group, and discuss how you – as a person, a group and a church – can be a conduit for grace to people like this:


**Closing Prayer: “Litany of Prayer for the City at Night”**

**Leader:** We pray for all the men and women who will put makeup and lipstick on to please different men tonight, needing to look colorful and pretty on the outside, needing to dull themselves to not feel ugliness on the inside.

**All:** In Your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer.

**Leader:** We pray for all the men and women whose hearts are hurt, broken, angry and confused today, because the men in their lives who say “I love you” have sold, bought, pimped and used them.

**Leader:** We pray for all the fathers and mothers who are naïve and ignorant—or desperate, uninvolved and uncaring—who allow or encourage their sons and daughters to leave home for the streets and bars.

**Leader:** We pray for the children who will be left by their mothers tonight, alone or with others—children who will grow up being whispered about in school and community, who are now too young to understand but later will be ashamed and confused, who will be tempted to explain away their mother’s stolen beauty and dignity, as well as their own lost childhood, with reasons and euphemisms.

**Leader:** We pray for the girls who, because they are vulnerable and unprotected, have had to become hard and tough, and deny their hurt and disappointment.

**Leader:** We pray for the women who are getting older and tired, and realize that the hardness of the work they have been doing is sapping them of life—the women who know that they will soon be replaced by girls younger and fresher, the women who don’t even know where to begin.
**Leader:** We pray for the women who attempt to abort babies that they can’t take care of, the women who have become addicted to meth and marijuana and sniffing glue, the women who are too scared to report and get checked up after being brutalized, the women who are at a high risk for infection with STDs and HIV/AIDS.

**Leader:** We pray for the women whose boyfriends, brothers, husbands, fathers and sons sneak out of the house to be with other women who are being cheated on, lied to and betrayed, for those who know it and for those who don’t.

**Leader:** We pray for the individuals and groups who have a burden and concern for the women—for those who want to help the women and those who want to change the women, for those who want to love the women and those who want to heal the women and those who want to reform the women. We pray that You would raise more of this kind of men and women in our Church and society.

**Leader:** We likewise pray for our fellowships and churches, whose apathy, fear and complacency have deprived many of these women the opportunity to understand the love of Jesus in concrete ways. We are sorry because we are often neighbors to bars, clubs and discos, but we haven’t loved our neighbors well—and we aren’t sure how to. We are sorry because we are usually safe, warm and secure inside our churches on Sundays, not really interested in sharing our safety, warmth and security in the dark parts of the city at night.

**Leader:** We pray for us who are gathered together now, that we might have hearts that honestly seek to understand and know how we can respond in faith to the challenge of following Jesus’ example in loving and caring for the modern-day Samaritan women in our midst. We rededicate ourselves to the path of friendship, compassion, witness and transformation in our city at night.

**All:** In Your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer, and mold our hearts, and grant us wisdom, power, love and courage to walk alongside our sisters who work to sell their bodies in order to live. Amen.

“Litany of Prayer for the City at Night.” Jonathan Nambu, executive director of Samaritana Transformation Ministries

**Taking it home**

No one is too broken, too abuse or too anything for Christ. Behold, He is making all things new! Christ is the redeemer of all things. What in your children’s lives needs redeeming? Often when we feel Christ’s love and forgiveness we are more willing to give that forgiveness to others.

---

3 Revelations 21:5
Now that this Bible study is drawing to an end: what next? How can you be a part of preventing human trafficking and restoring survivors? Ask your children about ordering the Change Agents Action Kit. They get a cool T-shirt and book of 10 things they can do to stop human trafficking (faastinternational.org). Also, think about volunteering with vulnerable populations in your community, get trained to be a foster family, or commit yourselves to supporting others. Everyone has a part in Christ’s redeeming work.

**Family Night Activity**

Ask your children what God loves about them. Are those things based on what you do or who you are—a beloved child of God? Make a list of what you and God love about them. God’s love is unconditional. No matter what you do or what has been done to you God still loves you.

Watch these music videos together, and talk about how they describe God’s love:

- One Thing Remains – Passion - [http://youtu.be/NTv2B_0VkJ8](http://youtu.be/NTv2B_0VkJ8)
- Beautiful Things – Gungor - [http://youtu.be/oyPBtEx4W0](http://youtu.be/oyPBtEx4W0)

These are inspirational videos. Watch them and talk about how you and your family will move to impact this world for Christ.