

Slavery is Not a Historical Problem

Rise & Shine, January 26th

Exodus 6:6

[The LORD said to Moses,] "Say therefore to the Israelites, 'I am the LORD, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ...'"

Questions:

1. What societal issues do you see indirectly contributing to human trafficking?
 2. What is our role in the problem of human trafficking?
 3. If God sent you to speak to people who are enslaved, what would your message be?
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In the News

Federal Government Highlights January as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

In recognition of the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), the White House declared January 2020 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

Human trafficking a multibillion-dollar industry in which freedom is stolen from millions of people for profit. Modern-day slavers recruit, transport, secure, trap and compel persons to provide labor, services or sex acts against their will, using threats, deception and exploitation of the physical, emotional and psychological needs of vulnerable people.

Human trafficking is estimated to rank among the top three or four most profitable crime industries in the world, along with illegal drugs, illicit arms sales and counterfeiting. Modern slavery is the fastest growing criminal enterprise, with as many as 45 million individuals living in slavery-like conditions globally.

In 2018, 10,949 cases of human trafficking were reported in the United States to the nonprofit Polaris-operated National Human Trafficking Hotline and BeFree Textline, a 25 percent jump in cases from 2017. These cases involved

23,078 individual victims, nearly 6,000 alleged traffickers and 1,905 suspicious trafficking businesses. Human trafficking is notoriously underreported.

The top types of trafficking cases are sex trafficking (such as escort services, prostitution, and pornography); forced labor or involuntary servitude (including but not limited to domestics; restaurant, hotel, factory and farm workers; child and elder care providers); sex and labor trafficking (e.g., the drug trade, illicit massage, bars and strip clubs); and debt bondage (forcing someone to work in order to pay a debt). People are also trafficked for organ harvesting, to act as child soldiers, human shields in military conflicts and suicide bombers, and to produce infants for illicit adoption operations.

Traffickers recruit victims in various ways, by proposing marriage, posing as a benefactor, advertising or offering a job, making false promises or threats, etc. They prey on vulnerable populations, such as migrants; displaced persons; runaways; the poor; the homeless; the physically, sexually and emotionally abused; the addicted; physically disabled and mentally ill persons; ethnic, racial and sexual minorities; and those traumatized by war, natural disaster and personal crises.

Katie Bergman, a staff member for the international anti-trafficking nonprofit Set Free Movement, links trafficking to other societal issues: "If we want to comprehensively address slavery, then we need to acknowledge the compounding issues of poverty, racism, homelessness, abuse, inequality, addiction, gangs and war, to name a few. You can't end slavery without responding to the refugee crisis and providing adequate support to immigrants. You can't 'fix' human trafficking without fixing the broken foster care system and improving global supply chain transparency."

Many unwittingly participate in human trafficking through supporting those that profit from it. Jenni Jessen, a human trafficking survivor and co-founder of Compass 31, a rescue and restoration foster care agency for young women survivors of exploitation, explains "Pornography and trafficking go hand in hand. ... 68 percent of the men in the church and as many as 32 percent of women in the church have what they report as a problematic, regular usage of pornography. But what they don't recognize is that when they're on their computers wandering through a virtual red-light district, seeing what boy or girl they're going to use to satisfy their lust, the majority of those people on-screen are people who've been trafficked, exploited or abused, and so their

involvement in what's supposed to be a victimless crime is actually furthering the exploitation of people both locally and globally."

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of modern slavery is the fact that many see slavery as a historical problem instead of a current one. However, there are more human slaves in the world today than ever before in history.

So, how can we help? Bergman suggests 7 ways:

1. **Educate yourself:** Find out about types of modern slavery identified in the U.S. and report suspicious activities in your area.
2. **Ask for help:** If you or anyone you know is struggling with an addiction to pornography, ask for help.
3. **Make informed purchasing decisions:** Buying fair trade products and supporting ethical companies is one of the best ways you can fight human trafficking. Companies like Camano Island Coffee empower their workers and also donate a percentage of their profits to anti-trafficking work. Use resources and apps such as The Good Trade, Buycott, Better World Shopper, or Good On You to guide you in shopping ethically.
4. **Buy products that support survivors:** Buy survivor-made products such as home goods and fashion items from To The Market, jewelry from NightLight, and body care products from Thistle Farms. These are just a few examples of social enterprises that employ survivors, giving them a viable and sustainable income stream.
5. **Demand corporate accountability:** Nestle, Hershey's, Walmart, and H&M are a few companies notorious for unethical practices, including the use of slave labor. Refuse to buy from companies like these, or even lobby global brands to be more transparent, eliminate exploitation from supply chains, and improve working conditions. Ask local businesses to use or sell fair trade products. Write to your political representative to put corporate social responsibility on their agenda.
6. **Give or fundraise:** The instability or lack of consistent funding is often one of the greatest challenges of non-profits. Donating undesignated funds—especially on a regular basis—gives a non-profit the autonomy to decide how to best support survivors or prevent human trafficking and is one of the most impactful ways you can help.
7. **Invest in people:** Ultimately, intervening in human trafficking is about building up people, especially those living in vulnerable situations. Maybe it's being a mentor to the teen girl at church struggling with self-

esteem, or creating a safe space for the boy down the street whose parents are addicted to drugs. Maybe it's welcoming the new immigrant family in the neighborhood into our home and supporting them in their job search. Maybe it's forming relationships with people living at a local homelessness shelter or becoming a foster parent.

Deuteronomy 15:12-15

If a member of your community, whether a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and works for you six years, in the seventh year you shall set that person free. And when you send a male slave out from you a free person, you shall not send him out empty-handed. Provide liberally out of your flock, your threshing floor, and your wine press, thus giving to him some of the bounty with which the LORD your God has blessed you. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; for this reason I lay this command upon you today.

Exodus 21:16 ESV

Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.

Prayer for the Oppressed (BCP p.826)

Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.