



Caring Well

SUNDAY

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

MICAH 6:8, ESV



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5 Ways The Gospel Shapes Our Approach to Sexual Abuse

BY PHILLIP BETHANCOURT

The national statistics on sexual abuse are overwhelming. One in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18 years old. One in 5 women and 1 in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives. One in 3 women and 1 in 6 men experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetime.¹

The most common places sexual predators search for victims is in youth activities such as school, sports, and church. Churches need to understand why this issue matters in light of the gospel and how it should be addressed.

1. Churches must care for survivors.

Sexuality was created by God for our good. When it is practiced within the boundaries of marriage, it leads to true human flourishing. Understanding this should lead us to understand the devastating effects of sexual abuse on victims.

2. Churches must confront sin.

We must call sexual abuse sin. It would be sad if the world were more willing than the Church to name and address the atrocity and brokenness of sexual abuse.

3. Churches must seek justice.

Abuse is not just sin. It is also a crime. Churches need to be more concerned about dealing with sexual abuse in a way that demonstrates justice and care for victims than with lawsuits or the damage that scandal might produce.

4. Churches must protect the vulnerable.

Churches can protect the vulnerable by requiring sexual abuse awareness training, screening church staff and volunteers, and by improving strategies and ministry for future incidents, among other things.

5. Churches must equip the saints.

We need to train the people in the pews who will likely have the first conversation with a victim. They need to know how to care well for each survivor.

Addressing sexual abuse gives us the opportunity to proclaim we are great sinners in need of a great Savior and demonstrates the character of our God to a watching world that is taking the brokenness of sexual abuse seriously.

¹ <https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>

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