



Bible Study

Goal

To provide a biblical framework for a Christian response to human trafficking.

Resources

Stop the Traffik Book by Steve Chalke and Cherie Blair (Available on Amazon)
Bible

Week One: Intro

Read

- Wihini and Sunni's story in *Stop the Traffik*, 10.

Discuss

- What comes to mind when you hear the word 'slavery'?
- What about the word 'trafficking'?
- What do you know about human trafficking today?

Read through and discuss:

- Definitions of slavery/trafficking
 - UNODC Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Art. 3, paragraph (a): "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by 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 of 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."
 - TVPA 2000: "recruiting, harboring, transportation, provision or recruiting of a person by means of force, fraud or coercion (except in the case of a minor for commercial sex acts) for the purpose of commercial sex acts, involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery."
- Trafficking stats
 - Trafficking occurs for a number of purposes, including commercial sex (prostitution, stripping, pornography and live-sex shows) and labor exploitation (domestic servitude, sweatshop factories, or migrant agricultural work)
 - US State Dept figures:
 - There are an estimated 27 million people in some form of modern slavery



- Approximately 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year; around 70% are women and girls, and up to half are minors
- An estimated 14,500 to 17,500 people are trafficked into the US from overseas and enslaved every year
- Human trafficking is not the same as people smuggling. People smuggling means that someone is attempting, for a fee, to bring people illegally into another country. Although this is dangerous, it does not lead to slavery. Human trafficking always leads to conditions of slavery.
 - About the same number are murdered in the US every year; but the national success rate for solving murders is about 70% (11,000); in comparison, in 2006, only 111 were charged and only 98 were convicted, which is less than 1% of total trafficking cases in the US

The image of God: Genesis 1:27

- What do you understand the image of God to be?
 - A soul?
 - Reason/rationality?
 - Community?
 - In the ancient world, kings would set up 'images' of themselves, usually statues, to serve as their representatives
- What do you think being like God might look like?
 - Loving?
 - Merciful?
 - Powerful?
 - Gracious?
- Focus on God's justice: standing up for the oppressed and marginalized, alien and poor
 - OT:
 - Deut. 10:17-19; 32:4
 - Ps. 37:28; 103:6; 10:14; 89:14; 146:5-9; 82:3-4
 - Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:8; Is. 58:6-10
 - Jesus: (Col. 2:9)
 - Luke 4:18-19 (cf. Is. 61:8)
 - John 13:34; John 15:12; Matt. 5:43; Matt. 25:31-46
- How might this understanding of ourselves in the image of God impact the way we live?



- What are the challenges that the church faces in putting this understanding in action?
- How might we interpret this in light of the trafficking statistics we have learned about?
 - Remember that every one of the people who makes up the statistics is a person made in the image of God

Pray

- That our hearts would be broken for those caught in trafficking
- That we would be moved to action on their behalf

Optional - ACTION STEP

Contact Oasis USA for awareness raising posters and brochures. Arrange an action day when you go into your local community to hang posters and hand out brochures. Laundromats, liquor stores and budget hotels and motels are good locations to target.

Week Two

Read and Discuss

- Tulse's story in *Stop the Traffik*, 15-16

The man and the mission: John 1:1-14; Luke 4:14-21

Initial observations

- What stands out to you from these passages—words, concepts, themes?

The man:

- What can we learn about Jesus from John 1:1-14?
 - Jesus is clearly no ordinary person, but eternal and eternally one with God (1:1-2)
 - He was involved in creation (1:3-4)
 - “In him was life, and the life was the light of all people” (1:4)
 - He is the true light (1:4-5, 9)
 - The one who can give “power to become children of God” (1:12)
- What do you think it means for the Word to become flesh (1:14)?
 - Becomes human, takes on flesh, moves into the neighborhood—expressing solidarity with humankind
- What does it mean that Jesus became human, i.e. one of us?
 - Affirms human value, restores human dignity, and redeems humanity
 - He, God, cares about humanity



- Evidence of God getting involved in his creation—not afraid to get involved with the gritty, becoming flesh and blood

The mission:

- How did Jesus demonstrate some of these actions?
 - Bringing good news to the poor
 - Proclaiming release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind
 - Letting the oppressed go free
 - Proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor

Implications:

- How might such an appreciation of Jesus and his mission impact upon the issue of human trafficking?
 - Part of Jesus' mission involved getting down into the dirt, mess and nitty-gritty of creation
 - Jesus got involved in creation to save both perpetrators and victims
- How might God's involvement in his creation and Jesus' mission give us hope for facing human trafficking?
 - When something is wrong, we can be assured that God is at work and we are not alone in working against it
 - We are only getting involved in something that our Lord—who conquered death and sin—did when he was on earth; not a bad role model

Pray

- That we would see the ways in which God is already at work
- That we would have the courage to take up the calling and mission of God
- For trafficking victims in the Asia-Pacific region

Action step

Take one day this week to fast (full or half) for the victims of human trafficking. Try and have the group do it together, choosing a day (or specific meals) to fast in solidarity and unison.



Week Three

Read and Discuss

- Share fasting experiences, potential revelations or transformations
- Account of child soldiers from Oasis Uganda.

Love your enemies: Matt. 5:43-47

- What is your reaction to Jesus' charge?
- How realistic do you think this is?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says 'love'?
- Why should we love our enemies?
- What is the motivating force behind our love? See 2 Cor. 5:14-21

Read what Archbishop Desmond Tutu wrote:

You have very little control over your feelings. That's why God didn't say, "Like your enemy." It's very difficult to like your enemy. But to love your enemies is different. **Love is an act of the will, where you act lovingly even if you do not always feel loving.** We tend to think love is a feeling, but it is not. **Love is an action; love is something we do for others.** ... Our freedom is based on our ability to rise above our feelings and to act based on our will. (78)

Sometimes the best you can do is to say to God or to yourself, I want to love. Sometimes the best you can do is to say, I want to *want* to love. But when you do, you are much more likely to act in a loving and compassionate way, regardless of what you are feeling. Certainly it is wonderful when our feelings prompt us to act lovingly, but it is not realistic to expect that we will always want to do what we must do. (78-79)

The extraordinary thing is that when you act lovingly you can begin to feel love. ... If you act for long enough in a particular way, you begin to feel the feelings that accompany the actions. We don't always feel like we are all God's children. (79)

When we consider that Desmond Tutu is saying this in the context of South Africa and apartheid, what might we think this love for enemies looks like?

- Seeking their good?
- Might this include justice?
- Restorative justice over retributive justice?



Pray

- That we would come to love our enemies, in spite of the evil they do
- For a compassion towards those directly increasing trafficking: slave owners, buyers, middle men who perpetuate the system.
- For trafficking victims in Africa

Action step

- Watch a movie on Human Trafficking together and discuss

Week Four

Read and Discuss

- Zofia's story in *Stop the Traffik*, 75.

Learning to Lament

Read each of the following psalms out loud. As they are being read, imagine them being the perspective of someone who has been trafficked, whether for labor or sex or as a child soldier.

- Psalm 3
- Psalm 10
- Psalm 12
- Psalm 22
- Psalm 59
- Psalm 70

Take time to respond creatively in lament to the plight of those trapped in modern day slavery: write, paint, respond through music, improvise, etc.

Pray

- That we would remember the plight of trafficking victims
- Against the corruption of police forces and governments who allow trafficking to happen
- For trafficking victims in Europe



Action step

First guess how many, then research the number of languages spoken in the EU.

Count them up (or provide the number in this study so no research needed), then imagine what it would be like to speak none or only one of the many languages.

Simulate this with each participant speaking another language, gibberish, repeated vowel/consonant sounds and the like to better experience understand communication barriers.

Mention the ease of transportation for traffickers to move within the E.U., explaining that international borders act like U.S. state borders, to appreciate the intricate complexity in communication. Reflect on how being able to communicate encourages confidence, freedom, discernment, wisdom, street smarts, navigation, ability to buy something for self, not need an interpreter (especially the trafficked person's controller or thug), etc. Acknowledge the deeper isolation and bondage with lack of knowing the local language, and how that hurts a trafficked victim.

Week Five

Read and Discuss

- Lindita's story and Shadir's story in *Stop the Traffik*, 90-92.

The Children: Luke 18:15-17, Matt. 18:5-6

Initial question

- What value do we place on children?
 - They should be able to enjoy their childhood, free from fear and definitely slavery
 - See as hopeful positive light for the future, with credible voices and influence

After reading the passage:

- What value does Jesus place on children?
- Why should we value and welcome children?
 - Jesus does
 - "It is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs" (Luke 18:16)
- What impact do passages such as these have on our understanding of human trafficking, particularly when it involves children?
 - More vulnerable, less able to defend themselves



Pray

- For children who are trafficked
- For children exposed to or forced into making pornography
- For parents and caretakers
- For trafficking victims in South America

Action point (Optional)

SWEAT SHOP SIMULATION

A good exercise for younger or more experiential people.

Put group in a different location or adapt the location to be more like a crowded industrial job: lower lighting to strain eyes, turn off heating/AC, cram all of them together in a small place, and remove comfortable seating (pillows, nice chairs) to replace with sitting on floor. Give “job”- something easy to create with flexibility per situation, with an assembly-line set up. For example: sewing (real or fake), hammering nothing repeatedly, making paper mache something, taping paper slips into bracelets, etc. While doing the timed-simulation, create deadlines and quotas that are nearly impossible to achieve in the allotted time. Don’t allow talking, have someone act as “boss” and chastise slower or confused workers. Create fake or real punishments or rewards. Best if done in several rounds, like 3 five minute “work” days. While doing the segments, discuss more specific and real working expectations and wages particular to South America.

Week Six

Read and Discuss

- Read Marta’s story in *Stop the Traffik*, 88.

Remembering the Focus: Psalm 145

This week we will not only summarize the lessons of the last few weeks, but also return to the central focus of our faith and therefore our action ... God:

- Who is the God we serve?
- What is he like?
- What does he care about?
- What does he want us to do?
- What might these things look like?



Share insights that you have learned from the last few weeks, or action steps of your own that you might want to implement.

- Think practically as well as theoretically—things need to get done!

Pray

- That the activity of God in eliminating human trafficking would continue
- That people would be eager to get partner with God
- For trafficking victims in North America

Action step

Talk about implementing Traffik Free Communities groups in your community. Information on this can we found at www.oasisusa.org

Further action

These six bible studies provide only a glimpse into the enormity of the human trafficking problem and into the vastness of God’s heart for justice.

More passages to reflect on:

- Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well; John 4:1-30
- The concubine; Judges 19
- Prov. 31:8-9
- Jesus’ genealogy; Matt. 1
- Woman anointing Jesus’ feet; Luke 7:36-50
- “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord ...”; Is. 61, Lk. 4
- Man of sorrows and suffering; Is. 53
- Moneychangers; Mark 11:15-17
- What kind of fast? Is. 58
- You are the light of the world; Matt. 5:14-16
- Psalm of betrayal; Ps. 3
- Sacrifice for our freedom and so that we would follow; 1 Pet. 2:21-25
- Matt. 25
- “learn to do good”; Is. 1:17
- “Do unto others ...” Matt. 7:7-12
- “Do not resist an evil person.” Matt. 5:38-42
- “Love your enemies.” Matt. 5:43-47
- David and those under his authority—Bathsheba, Uriah and Joab; 2 Samuel 11:2-17
- “Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy ...” Ps. 12



- Physical and spiritual battle against trafficking; 2 Cor. 10:3-7
- “For the eyes of the Lord range ...”; 2 Chr. 16:9
- “Why have you forsaken me?” Ps. 22
- “How long will the wicked prosper?”; Ps.10
- “God of justice”; Ps. 94
- “How long, O Lord?”; Ps. 13
- Good Shepherd; John 10:14-15
- Justice and mercy
- Hope for the future: Matt. 25:31; Ps. 8:2
- The children; Matt. 18:5-6, Luke 18:15-17
- “They have greatly oppressed me”; Ps. 129
- Breaking from previous oppression/oppressive habits; Galatians
- Reconciliation and ambassadors; 2 Cor. 5:17-21
- Fearfully and wonderfully made; Ps. 139:14
- “Hasten, O God, to save me”; Ps. 70
- “Give ear to my words”; Ps. 5
- Warning to the rich; James 5
- The compassion of Christ: Matt. 5:3-10; 7:1-5; 9:1-2; 9:35-38; 14:13-21
- “Rescue me, O Lord”; Ps. 140
- “Deliver me from my enemies ... I have done no wrong”; Ps. 59
- Esther’s story
- Daniel’s story
- Other stories of ordinary people doing extraordinary things: Moses, David, Joshua, Peter, Paul; MLK, Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela
- “Be still ...”; Ps. 46:9-11
- “Do not be weary in doing right”; 2 Thess. 3:13
- “A time for everything”; Ecc. 3:1-8
- Finding the lost sheep; Matt. 18:10-14
- Looking for righteousness; Ez. 22:27-31
- What does the Lord require? Mic. 6:8
- “I will search for the lost ...” Ez. 34:16
- “justice and righteousness”; Amos 5:21-24

Other resources

- www.stophetraffik.org
- *Not For Sale’s* Bible Study Companion, including daily devotionals over an 8-week period
- Human Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
- *Disposable People*



- *Not for Sale*
- *Good News About Injustice*
- www.slaverymap.org