

A Spirit-Filled Response to #MeToo

Gretchen Carlson. Alyssa Milano. Angelina Jolie. Katie Couric. Lady Gaga. Beth Moore. Kay Warren. Thousands of women from every walk of life have responded #MeToo, identifying their sad and painful history of sexual harassment, sexual trauma, sexual violation. The use and abuse of women is not a new problem, and being a Christian is no protection. #MeToo is more than a hashtag; it's about real people.

Women have in many ways borne more than their fair share of trauma and violation ever since Eve listened to the serpent. Perhaps that's because the enemy knew then, and knows now, that it was through a woman that the Savior would come. And it is through women today that God is bringing and nurturing new life in every corner of God's world. We're not talking about simply babies, but life in every sense of the word. Life in the Spirit. Fully Alive.

The current groundswell of #MeToo raises questions about healthy marriage or any healthy relationships between men and women. Are there any? Are men just raw brutes, and women's only recourse is to get nasty? Can godly marriages function where so much trauma, violation and depravity thrive? Are the millions of #MeToo women ever to be free from the wounds caused by such violation?

Yes, it is possible. But only by the grace of God.

Jesus offers redemption to all—to the woman wounded and violated and feeling unprotected, to the man immobilized by fear as a result of #MeToo culture, to the woman locked inside a hard shell of violent feminism as a response, to the man broken and ashamed after being a vehicle of intimidation or violation.

Here are a few things to understand and ways to respond as Christians who believe in redemption and marriage even in a #MeToo culture.

1. Godly women can be strong.

Raw feminism is not the answer to the violation of women. But the alternative is not mousy unattractive weak women who lie down and take anything that comes their way. A woman who gets her courage and identity from who she is in Christ does not need to manipulate and control. Her strength, whether public or private, is not diminished by the behavior of those around her.

Does this mean those affected by #MeToo were asking for it? Or should have prevented it? No. Bad behavior on someone else's part is never your fault. But it does mean that through the transforming power of God women can stand in their rightful place, nurturing life wherever God sends them. You can become one of those women. You can rise to the full stature of who God created you to be as a woman without stepping on men or other women, and lift others up in the process.

2. God needs men to be strong.

The answer to men behaving badly is not their emasculation. If you're a man, God needs you to be virile, strong, active. He made you with testosterone and sexual drives. It's not your strength that's at issue; it's what you do with your strength as a follower of Jesus. He needs you to step up and "play the man." A man truly following Jesus is anything but weak or feminine. Too often culture and/or the church has responded to bad behavior by telling men to be "nice."

God didn't make you "nice!" (And by the way, a woman doesn't really want a "nice guy.") When a man is submitted to the Lordship of Jesus and is cooperating with the Holy Spirit, his strength becomes profoundly important, absolutely necessary for the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Yes, SEAL Team 6

style. (And a real woman hungers for a man like that to step up and be her hero, as long as she is safe with him.)

3. Violation and injustice must not remain hidden.

Jesus came to be *God with us*, to become our Savior and Lord, to seek and save that which was lost. That's the central theme of the gospel. But that doesn't mean we are to be blind to anywhere people are in pain. The excesses of the social gospel don't negate the truths it sprang from.

You cannot read either the Old or New Testament without seeing over and over again that God cares deeply about those who are marginalized, exploited, hurt. He deals severely with those who exploit others or harm "one of these little ones". The widow, the orphan, the poor, the sick, the weak have a special place in His heart. As Lance Corporal Dawson tells Private Downey at the end of *A Few Good Men*, "We were supposed to fight for people who couldn't fight for themselves. We were supposed to fight for Willy."

Whose pain do you feel? When you see something, say something—and then do something. It doesn't matter who the "perpetrator" may be. Rank or position (in or out of the church) is no excuse.

4. You don't need to remain a victim.

If #MeToo has happened to you, it need not define the rest of your life. You can heal from your wounds, focus on the future and even experience healthy, godly relationships with godly men. Perhaps that will include a godly marriage; it did for me. Those experiences will always be a part of you. But God has a miraculous way of taking what the enemy meant for harm and turning it into something whereby others are fed.

Choose healing. Vengeance only uses up energy; let God handle that. But you—you keep moving forward. Healing is a choice. It's something you actively seek. It doesn't really matter how

long it takes; it only matters that you keep moving forward.

That's what many other women have experienced. And you can also.

And oh yes, #MeToo.

Your Turn: *How has the #MeToo culture affected you personally? What are you going to do about it now? Leave a comment below.*
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