

What Abortion, Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking All Have in Common

It's true that some men experience domestic violence and men are trafficked. Men are also certainly impacted by abortion. Yet, by and large, these are experiences that women face. Abortion, domestic violence and sex trafficking are violent acts most often against women, who are forced into forms of slavery.

Based on what culture tells us about abortion, it may be hard for some to wrap their minds around it being called violence against women or slavery—but what else would you call an industry that makes money off of the use of women's bodies?

Abortion is said to be just a choice that women make. But is it really a choice ... or is it forced?

One personal experience after another shows us that this "choice" is forced by circumstances; forced by a society that says abortion is the easy way out; or forced by partners, family, friends, employers and churches who aren't supportive. It seems that abortion is really no choice at all.

The same is true for domestic violence and sex trafficking. The question is often asked, "Why doesn't she just leave the abusive relationship?" The answer to this question is too complex for many to understand. But the reality is that threats, manipulation, lack of resources, abuse and many other tactics are used to keep women enslaved.

Sometimes the woman herself does not even fully grasp her own situation. A fearless hero of the Underground Railroad before and during the Civil War, Harriet Tubman once said, "I freed a thousand slaves. I could have freed a thousand more, if only

they had known they were slaves.”

Women, let’s stand up against all forms of violence women are forced into and raise awareness about the enslavement of our sisters, our moms, our nieces, our aunts, our friends and our precious daughters. It’s vital for all of us to recognize the signs of human trafficking and know how to respond.

Men too need to stand up to oppose violence against women! You have a lot of power here: the power to stop buying, stop abusing, stop impregnating—and stop encouraging women to stop the beating heart of your child. A recent in-depth study by CareNet found that 61 percent of abortion-minded women discuss their life-or-death decision with the father of the developing baby.

The millennial generation has seen positive trends regarding the decrease in risky teen sexual behavior. In the event of a crisis pregnancy, know that resources like OptionLine are available to help support the little life growing in the womb.

Churches have a critical role as well; we must not turn a blind eye. We must do more to help women in all of these circumstances—whether abusive homes, barbaric “occupations” or unplanned pregnancies.

Keep in mind what statistics show on domestic violence: 60 percent of the time, the victim knows the attacker. Regarding this issue, church leaders should keep the National Domestic Violence Hotline handy and know what help is available.

We can and should end violence against women—all forms of violence. But first, we have to call it what it is and recognize the slavery that is happening all around us. {eoa}

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