

Protecting Your Church from Sexual Predators

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I. Lessons learned from unthinkable Sexual abuse. 2 Sam. 13:1-22

- A. Sexual predators are incredibly deceitful. 2 Sam. 13:1-6 Jude 1:4
 - 1. Sexual predators are self-deceived – they call it “love”. 2 Sam. 13:1,15 1 Co. 13:4-7
 - 2. Sexual offenders abuse trust. 2 Sam. 13:1-6 Jude 1:4
 - 3. Predators invest significant time and effort into manipulating others. 2 Sa. 13:3-5
 - 4. Those in spiritual authority who become sexually involved with people under their care are guilty of abusing their power, even if a crime has not been committed. Ezek. 34:4ff
- B. Potential victims need to be taught to cry out. 2 Sam. 13:7-14 Deut. 22:23-24
 - 1. Because sexual predators are masters of manipulation, boys and girls need to be prepared to know exactly what to do if someone tries to take advantage of them.
 - 2. Tamar, to her credit, did not hide what had happened to her. 13:19
- C. We need to protect and help victims. 2 Sam. 13:15-22
 - 1. One of the saddest parts of Tamar’s tragic story is the failure of others to protect her both before and after she was raped. 13:7,19-21 Prov. 31:8-9 Ps. 82
 - 2. If you suspect that abuse has taken place, ask. 2 Sam. 13:20a
 - 3. The response of the people in whom the victim confides is crucial. 13:20b
 - 4. Those in authority have a duty to punish evil and to protect the innocent. Rom. 13:4 1 Pe. 2:13-14 1 Co. 5:1ff Lev. 20:17 Ex. 22:16
 - 5. Why didn’t David act? 1 Sam. 2:29 1 Ki. 1:6
 - 6. Many victims are pressured to remain silent in order to avoid disrupting the family or the church community.
 - 7. Some people try to blame the victim. Pr. 17:27 .
 - 8. Church leaders are called to protect Jesus’ sheep. 1 Pet. 5:1ff Ezek. 34:4-10
 - 9. Scripture teaches that we are to reflect God's particular care for the weak and the oppressed. Pr. 31:8-9 Psalm 146:7 82:1ff
- D. Sexual predators need to be publicly exposed. Pr. 31:8-9 Ps. 146:7 82:3-4
 - 1. What should David have done about his son Amnon? Deut. 21:18-21 22:25
 - 2. Many situations have been made far worse by cover-ups.
 - 3. Crimes must be reported to the government authorities. Rom. 13:1ff
 - 4. In addition, church leaders who abuse their position of power and influence must be dealt with publicly. 1 Timothy 5:19-20
 - 5. Churches and Christian organizations must have policies in place before a crisis hits.
 - 6. Must every accusation be believed? Deut. 17:6 19:15
 - 7. Others may be protected and helped when sin is dealt with biblically. Mt. 7

- E. Victims need help to deal with the past biblically.
 - 1. A victim may have false guilt or shame. 2 Sam. 12:13,19 Deut. 22:25-27 Ps. 25:1-3
 - 2. While the predator is guilty of the far greater sin, the victim may be guilty of responding sinfully to what has happened to her or him. Deut. 22:23-24 1 Co. 10:13 Gal. 5:16
 - 3. Victims need biblical hope and comfort. 2 Co. 1:3ff 4:7-10 5:17 Rev. 7:17 21:4 Ro. 15:4 Ps. 147:3 Phil. 4:8-9 2 Co. 5:17
 - 4. Victims need a biblical understanding of suffering. Gen. 50:19-20 Job 1-2 Eph. 1:11 1 Pe. 1:6-9 John 9:1-3 Ro. 8:18,28ff Js. 1:2ff
 - 5. Victims need to understand Who God is – His sovereignty, compassion and justice. Rom. 12:19-21 1 Pe. 2:23-24 Heb. 4:15 Gen. 50:19-20 Isa. 30:18 48:22 2 Th. 1:6-10
- F. We must put our ultimate trust in God, not men. Jer. 17:5-8 Rom. 12:19

II. **What should be done to protect our churches from sexual predators? Pr. 27:12** (From *On Guard* by Deepak Reju)

- A. Don't make false assumptions.
 - 1. It will never happen to us.
 - 2. Sexual perpetrators are monsters, not anything like us.
 - 3. We know the people in our church. Jer. 17:9
 - 4. Our church is safe for our kids.
- B. Be aware of the types, techniques and targets of sexual predators.
 - 1. Some use power while others use persuasion.
 - 2. They groom the community and the victims and count on privacy.
 - 3. They target situations which provide lots of access to children (sheep).
- C. Strategies for protecting against abuse.
 - 1. Create and implement a child protection policy (CPP).
 - 2. Create a check-in and checkout process.
 - 3. Church membership.
 - 4. Screening and verification.
 - 5. Building design – boundaries, no isolation, unobstructed visibility.
 - 6. Train staff and volunteers.
 - 7. Prepare church leaders, parents, children and teens before abuse happens.
 - 8. Get to know resources in your community.
- D. Strategies for responding to abuse.
 - 1. Report child abuse.
 - 2. Respond wisely to victims, the congregation and the media – compassion, confession, counseling, change, and conciliation (Sande).
 - 3. Deal wisely with a child abuser.
- E. See the appendices in *On Guard* for further resources.

III. Ways to protect your children from sexual abuse. (From *God Made All of Me*, Holcomb)

- A. Explain to your child that God made their body.
- B. Teach proper names of private body parts.
- C. Invite your child's communication.
- D. Differentiate between good touch and bad touch.
- E. Don't ask your child to maintain your emotions.
- F. Throw out the word "secret."
- G. Clarify rules for playing "doctor."
- H. Identify whom to trust.
- I. Report suspected abuse immediately.

IV. Conclusion: Gospel Hope.

V. Resources.

- A. Holcomb, *God Made All of Me: A Book to Help Children Protect Their Bodies*.
- B. Holcomb, *Rid of My Disgrace*.
- C. Newheiser, *Help! Someone I love has been Abused*.
- D. Kelleman, *Beauty for Ashes*.
- E. Reju, *On Guard, Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse at Church*.
- F. Viars, *Putting Your Past in its Place*.
- G. <http://justinholcomb.com/2015/08/11/9-ways-to-protect-your-children-from-sexual-abuse/>