

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/>