



Equipping the Body of Christ to protect children  
and empower abuse survivors

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# PROTECTING CHILDREN AND ENCOURAGING SURVIVORS

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Bible study based on John 10

1. As was mentioned in the sermon, the ACE study (adverse childhood experiences) found that 20% of the population has been sexually abused. If the numbers are so high, why don't we hear more about it?

Most survivors are too embarrassed and ashamed to discuss this topic. Also, it is such an emotionally difficult topic.

2. Someone who has been abused is much more likely to struggle with obesity, alcohol, drugs, promiscuity, finances, relationships, and other mental health issues. How do these facts change the way we look at those who are struggling in society?

We don't know the demons and emotional trauma that people are struggling with. Instead of condemning them too quickly for their bad behavior, we need to have patience and understanding. Maybe their past is much more complicated than we know.

3. **Read John 10:7-10.** Jesus says that some people are like thieves and robbers who attack the sheep. How might perpetrators fit the description of a thief and robber in Jesus' parable? (See also John 10:1.)

Perpetrators are known to target churches because they usually have weak protection policies, are eager for volunteers, and have access to lots of children. That is why churches need a very rigorous process to volunteer for their children's ministry.

There are some people who are bent on harming the church and stealing from people. We want all people to repent and be saved. But whenever we are working with others, we ought to follow Jesus' advice to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

4. **Read John 10:10.** Jesus promises to offer an abundant life. Life is abundant when we feel safe and secure in the acceptance of God and others. In what ways can you experience that life today in Jesus?

We can experience that when we repent of sin and receive God's love and acceptance. We know that he loves us and will be with us no matter what.

5. **Read John 10:11-13.** Jesus mentions two other groups: the hired hand and the wolf. I believe the wolf is the devil. What is the goal of the devil? Why might the devil specifically target children?

The devil's goal is to drag people to hell to suffer with him. If the devil can tempt someone to hurt a child, that child might struggle with spiritual and emotional issues for the rest of his or her life. Abuse is a sin that seems to be the gateway to many other sins.

6. Look at those verses again. What do you think Jesus is describing when he talks about the hired hand who runs away? Have you seen this kind of attitude in the church? How might we be different?

Sometimes religious leaders or parental authorities don't always stand up for children. They try to minimize the problem. They don't always report abuse, and they sometimes run from difficult situations. We can be different when we are trained and emboldened to put children first. Jesus himself said, "Let the little children come to me for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

7. **Read John 10:14-18.** What makes Jesus different than the thieves and hired hands?

Jesus does not harm or take anything from anyone for his own advantage. He is not interested in preserving himself. He saw sin, death, and hell coming to destroy us, and he stood in their path. He laid down his life to protect the sheep. His cross is the proof that he is good and gives up everything for us.

8. How do you know when you are listening to the voice of Jesus or the voice of the wolf?

The voice of the devil twists Scripture, so that people can be harmed and their faith destroyed.

The voice of Jesus calls all people to repent of their sin, trust in him, and face whatever consequences come. Jesus calls us to his side to be washed by him, forgiven by him, and accepted by him.

9. Jesus talks about his resurrection in verses 17 and 18. Why might the resurrection be so comforting to abuse survivors?

So many survivors feel like damaged goods, prisoners in their own bodies. But when Jesus returns, he will "transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21). In the resurrected new heavens and new earth, we will be free from any pain, suffering, or evil. We will be made completely whole.

10. Although the recent sermon and this study are hard to discuss, what are the reasons that we need to study and act upon this information?

Abuse has touched all of our lives in some way. Either we are survivors, or someone close to us is a survivor of abuse. The devil wants to keep survivors suffering in silence and perpetrators active. We must face these demonic forces with God's help so that children can be protected and survivors can be empowered.