

Biblical Foundations for Responding to Intimate Partner Violence and Abuse

This resource organizes key biblical passages that can help pastors and church leaders develop a biblical framework for addressing abuse, protecting the vulnerable, pursuing justice, providing care, and promoting accountability. Scripture references are provided along with brief ministry applications.

God's Heart for the Vulnerable and Oppressed

Psalms 103:6: God is portrayed as a defender of those who are oppressed and treated unjustly.

Psalms 9:9: The Lord serves as a refuge for those experiencing harm and trouble.

Psalms 146:7-9: God's concern for the vulnerable is a recurring biblical theme.

Isaiah 1:17: God calls His people to seek justice and confront oppression.

Micah 6:8: Justice, mercy, and humility form the foundation of faithful ministry.

Justice and Protection

Psalms 82:3-4: Believers are called to defend and protect vulnerable individuals.

Proverbs 31:8-9: God's people should speak on behalf of those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Zechariah 7:9-10: True justice includes mercy and compassion.

Jeremiah 22:3: Delivering people from oppression reflects God's heart.

Violence and Harm Are Condemned

Psalms 11:5: God does not approve of violence or those who delight in it.

Malachi 2:16: Violence within relationships is inconsistent with God's design.

Proverbs 3:31: Believers should reject the ways of oppressors.

Proverbs 13:2: Violence is presented as a destructive path.

Accountability for Sin and Abuse

Ephesians 5:11: Darkness and harmful behavior should be exposed, not ignored.

Luke 17:3: Repentance and accountability are essential components of restoration.

Matthew 18:15-17: The church has a responsibility to address ongoing sin.

Galatians 6:1: Restoration should occur with humility and wisdom.

Romans 13:1-4: Civil authorities have a legitimate role in addressing wrongdoing.

The Role of Church Leaders

1 Peter 5:2-3: Pastors are called to shepherd God's people faithfully.

Acts 20:28: Leaders are entrusted with protecting and caring for the flock.

Ezekiel 34:2-4: God rebukes leaders who fail to care for vulnerable people.

James 3:1: Spiritual leadership carries significant responsibility.

Care for the Wounded

Galatians 6:2: Believers are called to bear one another's burdens.

Romans 12:15: Empathy and compassion are essential ministry practices.

Isaiah 61:1: God's mission includes healing the brokenhearted.

Matthew 11:28: Christ invites the weary and burdened to find rest in Him.

Psalms 34:18: God is near to those who are hurting.

Healthy Marriage and Relationships

Ephesians 5:25: Biblical leadership is sacrificial, loving, and Christ-centered.

Colossians 3:19: Bitterness and harshness have no place in marriage.

1 Peter 3:7: Husbands are called to honor and understand their wives.

Philippians 2:3-4: Humility and selflessness should characterize relationships.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7: Biblical love is patient, kind, and protective.

Misused Passages Requiring Careful Interpretation

Ephesians 5:22-24: Submission must be understood within the broader context of Christlike love.

Colossians 3:18: This passage should never be used to excuse abuse or coercion.

1 Peter 3:1-6: Pastoral care should avoid using these verses to pressure victims into unsafe situations.

Separation, Safety, and Wisdom

Proverbs 22:3: Wise people recognize danger and take protective action.

Proverbs 27:12: Scripture affirms prudence in the face of harm.

Matthew 10:16: Believers are called to be both wise and innocent.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: Healthy support systems are important during difficult seasons.

Top 10 Foundational Passages for Church Leaders

- Psalm 82:3-4
- Micah 6:8
- Isaiah 1:17
- Proverbs 31:8-9
- Psalm 103:6
- Ephesians 5:11
- Ezekiel 34:2-4
- Galatians 6:2
- Ephesians 5:25
- Proverbs 22:3