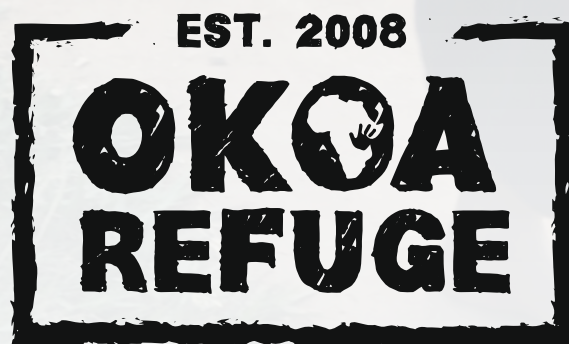




**BIBLE STUDY GUIDE**

**TO BE SET FREE:  
HOW TO RESPOND TO  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**



# TO BE SET FREE: HOW TO RESPOND TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

“Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God...’”

**Exodus 6:6–7**

## VERSE REFLECTION

In the verses we just read, God is speaking directly to Moses and telling him to encourage the Israelites. At this time, the Israelites are still living as slaves to the Egyptians and Pharaoh. Moses, in the previous chapter, asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, and in response, Pharaoh punished the Israelites by no longer providing straw to make bricks but still expecting them to produce the same number of bricks each day.

The Israelites felt discouraged and were angry at Moses for making their work harder. Yet, Exodus 6:6–7 is God’s promise to the Israelites for deliverance. He saw their oppression and struggles and promised justice and freedom to His people.

While this promise was given to the Israelites, our God is still a God of justice and freedom, and unfortunately, there are still people in the shackles of slavery. Human trafficking is known as modern-day slavery and is present across the world. In fact, over 27 million people are enslaved by human trafficking.

But as Psalm 10:17 reminds us, the Lord inclines His ear and hears “the desire of the afflicted” and will “strengthen their heart” in the face of tribulation. Just like He heard the cries of Israelites, He hears the cries of human trafficking victims today.

# WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

*Before going over this section with a group, ensure that everyone is okay with discussing sensitive topics such as sexual exploitation, violence, and sexual crimes involving children. The following information is important to know, but you should create space for people who may not be able to discuss such topics.*

## DEFINITION

### Human Trafficking

A human rights crime where a person is forced or coerced to provide services, which can be either physical labor or sexual acts. Some forms of human trafficking include:

- **Domestic Servitude:** The victim is forced to provide domestic services in a private home or residence. These victims are at high risk due to the privacy afforded by a personal residence.
- **Debt Bondage:** The victim is promised a job to pay off a loan, but the trafficker will strip them of their documents and control their finances until the debt is paid. Often, the “debt” only grows and is never truly worked off.
- **Child Labor:** This form of human trafficking often looks like our traditional view of slavery. A child is sold to a person or group to provide labor at the expense of the child’s well-being and schooling.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** The victim is forced to perform sexual acts against their will. This often looks like prostitution. A subsection of sexual exploitation is child sexual exploitation.
- **Forced Marriage:** The victim, often a young girl but this can occur to anyone, is married to someone without their consent. Fraud and physical force are frequently used to coerce the victim into the marriage.

Sexual human trafficking is the most prevalent form of trafficking and accounts for nearly 80% of all cases. For forced labor human trafficking, men and young children are typically the victims. For sexual human trafficking, women and young girls are overwhelming the victims.



# OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS CHRISTIANS

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;”

**Isaiah 61:1-2**

In Isaiah, we can clearly see our responsibility as Christians. God has put us on this earth to answer the cries of the oppressed and take a stand for justice. We are to free the captives and release prisoners until the day of the Lord. We know in the end, God will bring every trafficker to justice and comfort the hearts of the victims, but until that day, we should find ways to fight against human trafficking and bring justice to their captors in this lifetime.



# WAYS TO RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

*Reassure the group that knowing our responsibility as Christians is just the first step. Remind them that human trafficking is a large, widespread issue, and it's overwhelming if they don't know the specific steps to take to help in the fight. Let them know there are four practical steps they can take to answer God's call.*

## **PRAYER**

*Remind the group of the power of prayer. Let them know that praying is not the least they can do, but rather, prayer is a powerful tool in freeing captives and seeking justice. Walk them through the following sample prayer for human trafficking.*

Dear Father,

We know that you hear the cries of the oppressed and your heart bleeds for those in need. Right now, we want to lift up all the victims of human trafficking to you. We pray for freedom and healing. You are the Prince of Peace, and we pray that the victims of human trafficking will feel your perfect peace right now. Comfort their hearts, Lord, and reveal yourself to them.

God, we thank you that you are a God of justice, and we look forward to the day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Until that day, Lord, we pray that you will bring your justice against traffickers. Burden their hearts with the weight of their sin, and turn them from their wicked ways. If their heart is hardened against you, we pray that you will bring them to justice through the law.

Softener our hearts to hear your call.

In your name, we pray.

Amen.



## **RAISE AWARENESS**

*Tell the group that many people are not aware of the reality or the severity of human trafficking. Raising awareness is a great way to combat human trafficking in a meaningful way. Let the group know that by doing a Bible study on human trafficking, they are already raising awareness. Provide the following ways to continue to raise awareness.*

- Share what we've learned today with friends, family, and other church members.
- Call your local representative's office to ask how they're combating human trafficking in your city or state.
- Wear blue on January 11th for Human Trafficking Awareness Day for DHS's Wear Blue Day initiative.
- Organize community initiatives together to raise awareness and/or money for the cause.
- Share on social media about human trafficking from different organizations like Okoa Refuge, the Tim Tebow Foundation, END IT Movement, and more.

## **KNOW THE SIGNS**

*Explain that human trafficking can often hide in plain sight. Remind the group that the US does have human trafficking as well and that knowing the signs can save someone's life.*

The signs of human trafficking include:

- Someone with the victim speaking for them and controlling the victim's actions—this could be a partner, friend, parent, or other family member
- If the victim is a child, they may not be attending school
- Responds in what sounds like coached or practiced responses
- Bruises or injuries at various degrees of healing
- Unstable or bad living conditions
- Timid or passive behavior
- Unable to provide identification if asked
- Lack of personal possessions
- Some form of branding, such as a tattoo, jewelry, or clothing, that indicates ownership
- Fearful of law enforcement

If you come across someone displaying these signs, call local law enforcement (for immediate danger) or the National Human Trafficking Hotline (potential human trafficking).

## **DONATE OR VOLUNTEER**

Let the group know there are several charities and organizations around the world that are fighting against human trafficking. Some may focus on a specific region while others are international. Let the group know they can research which organizations they are most passionate about and even a small donation can go a long way. Remind them that donating in the form of time (volunteering) is often invaluable for charity organizations.

### **Some organizations on the front lines of human trafficking:**

- Okoa Refuge: Based in Uganda
- Tim Tebow Foundation: International
- Freedom Network USA: Based in the US

## **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Take some time to consider the following questions. Give your group ample time to discuss and answer these questions in relation to the study.

1. What parallels do you see between the Israelites and people who are facing modern slavery today?
2. What are some ways we can bring awareness to human trafficking in our church?

**Okoa refuge exists to glorify christ through stabilizing the family unit and transforming entire communities.**

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