

Bringing Christ to Abused Women

Learning to See and Respond

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*I swore never to be silent wherever and whenever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.*¹

—ELIE WIESEL,

1986 Nobel Prize acceptance speech

I grew up the daughter of an Air Force colonel. My father was usually in uniform—or sometimes a flight suit because he was a pilot. However, no matter where we lived and no matter what he was doing, it was clear that he was a colonel in the United States Air Force. Not only did my father’s outward appearance indicate who he was, but because he was a man of integrity, he was a man of his uniform all the way through. His carriage, his manners, his speech, his time use, and his respect toward those over or under him—in uniform or out—always demonstrated who he was.

He taught us the importance of reflecting who we were as well. My brother and I were the colonel’s kids. We, along with our father, represented the government of the United States. We were expected to act accordingly. We responded with “Yes, sir,” and “Yes, ma’am.” We learned how to greet officers who came to the house. We learned how to answer the phone. We learned how to stand at attention when the flag was lowered for the day, no matter where we were on the base. My father went out in the name of the US. Since we went with him, we too went out under that massive name.

I write *this* minibook as a representative of a different name. I do not write as a representative of the US; instead, I write in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—a far more massive and serious responsibility. Although I learned at an early age a little of what it means to come in the name of another, I am now much more cognizant of the enormity of such a calling, and of the name that I bear.

You are, I anticipate, reading this in the name of Jesus—the name in which you live and move and have your being. Living out your life in the name of Jesus means you are bearing *his* character out into this world. One way we are called to bear his character is by ministering to and advocating for women who have experienced abuse. However, we cannot do this well without understanding the broader context of violence against women.

Sadly, this has not been a topic of central interest to the church of Jesus Christ. How that must grieve the One in whose name we live, for to ignore the issues we will consider is, frankly, to ignore the heart of God and to fail to live in his name. So let us look together at this world our God *so loved*, and see the plight of females created in his image and loved by him.

A Global Problem

According to Amnesty International, one in three females worldwide—nearly one billion—are beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in their lifetime.² One in three—think about that statistic the next time you sit in an airport or walk through a