

## Human Trafficking: The Modern Day Slave Trade

(Two 50 minute lessons)

**Level** – Grades 9-12

**Applicable courses:** Human Geography, Law, Social Studies

### **Lesson 1: A Biblical Perspective on Human Trafficking in Canada**

Human Trafficking is one of the major social justice issues of our time. There are millions of men and women, boys and girls who are victims of this crime today. Despite this, many people aren't aware that it is going on. Many activists say that one of the most important ways to deal with this problem is to educate ourselves about it. So, what exactly is human trafficking?

*What is human trafficking?*

Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is often described as a modern form of slavery. This happens most commonly to women and children, but men also fall victim to these crimes. Men most commonly are forced to work without pay. It is generally women and young girls who are forced into prostitution. However, these are generalizations.

Victims are commonly 'recruited' by traffickers with the promise and hope of reward. Sometimes traffickers spoil young girls with all kinds of gifts, only to trap them by forcing them to pay back their 'debt'. Some victims move to Western countries hoping for a better future, only to come under the control of traffickers. It is hard for victims to leave because they are afraid they or their families will be injured or even killed if they attempt to escape. When victims are trafficked to a country with a different language they feel, and are, even more isolated.

Human trafficking is a big and growing problem. The UN estimates that this industry generates \$32 billion for its perpetrators. What is even more troubling is that the industry is growing. Over the past two decades, the trafficking of women and girls was the fastest growing criminal activity in Western Europe. This trend has direct links to the legalization of prostitution. In the 5 years after prostitution was legalized in the Netherlands, the number of child prostitutes increased by 300%!<sup>1</sup> Women who are victimized in the sex trade are under the complete control of their pimps. They are constantly abused, mistreated, and are forced to live in horrible conditions.

**Questions:** ask these questions to gather a sense of your students' awareness of this issue

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Respectfully Submitted* Policy Report by ARPA (<http://arpacanada.ca/index.php/government-submissions/1388-respectfully-submitted-prostitution-in-canada>)

1. How many of you have heard of human trafficking before today?
2. How would you describe it?
3. Is human trafficking a problem in Canada?

### *Human trafficking in Canada?!*

When people think of human trafficking and the sex trade, they often think of Eastern Europe and South-East Asia. Although issues with human trafficking are deep and serious in these regions, Canada is also a part of this industry. Canada is both a destination and transit country. This means that people are trafficked to and from Canada! Human trafficking occurs most commonly in larger urban areas for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Since the government and RCMP have started gathering information and looking more closely for cases of human trafficking, incidents have been uncovered all over the country. It is easy to find news stories about human trafficking across Canada.

### **Activity**

- Assign students to look at the newspaper articles for examples of human trafficking in Canada
  - o Links to these articles are provided the bottom of this document
  - o The *Canadian Council for Refugees* website gives access to many other news reports from all across Canada if you would like more articles
    - (<http://ccrweb.ca/en/mediatrafficking>)
- If applicable, try to find a case close to where you live. Many cases occur where people do not expect. Hearing about a story close to home could really drive the point home of how “real” this issue is.

### **Video**

- Show the students the video of Timea Nagy telling her story. (10 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wc4XkPFHBPo&list=PL4C0608552CFC7ADB>

In many of these cases, victims were kept in subdivisions and regular homes. It can be hard to tell which people are victims of trafficking because they are forced to act ‘normal’ and can face serious consequences if they even hint that something is wrong. This knowledge is chilling and emphasizes the need for urgent action.

### *Deeper Issues*

Perhaps the biggest issue is the high demand for human slaves. Our culture is driven by self-seeking and self-gratifying behaviour. Greed drives the trade of forced labour. Lust drives the sex trade. It is no surprise that the places with a high demand for prostitutes will be the most lucrative for the traffickers. The desire for money leads some to coerce others into slave labour.

The desire for sex drives men to treat women and children as objects of their pleasure. These desires are so strong that the value of human life is totally disregarded. Some countries have legalized prostitution in hopes that it could serve as a solution to many of these problems, but as we pointed out earlier, this backfired in the case of the “Red Light District” in Amsterdam.

### *Biblical Perspective*

What does the Bible say about all this? We confess in the Heidelberg Catechism that we are inclined to hate God and our neighbour (Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A 5). Humanity is depraved. God gave us His holy law as a guide to our actions. We can confess with David in Psalm 19, that the law of the LORD is perfect. Indulging in pornography and other lustful acts crosses the good and perfect boundaries God has set for us as His creatures. Yet it seems as if these sins are now acceptable, considered normal, and even celebrated in our society. We must not forget the reality that *people’s enslavement to sin and lust causes the enslavement of young women to pimps and traffickers*. To deal with the problem of human trafficking, it will be necessary to control our own desires, greed, and lust. God is the only good master. He knows what is good for us because He created us. Through Christ we are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness (Romans 6).

### **Activity**

Assign the students to look at the following Bible texts:

[Psalm 68:5-6](#)

[Psalm 82:3-4](#)

[Proverbs 31:8-9](#)

[Isaiah 1:16-17](#)

[Isaiah 58:5-8](#)

[Micah 6:6-8](#)

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does God reveal about Himself in these texts?
2. How do these texts relate to human trafficking, if at all?
3. Does God command us to do anything in these texts? If so, how can we carry out these commands?

## ***Lesson 2: Responses to the Problem of Human Trafficking and Prostitution***

Last time we looked at the reality of human trafficking and how it is tied with prostitution. We also discussed how sin is at the root of the problem. We also saw from Scripture that God hates oppression and fights against injustice. We now have a basis to discuss some possible solutions to the problem.

*What is our government doing?*

In 2012, the Canadian government launched the “National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking”. This action plan created a law enforcement team with a mandate to specifically target human trafficking. It aims at training law enforcement officials, raising awareness in communities, and providing more support for victims. This action plan also aimed at improving coordination between Canadian and international agencies to better deal with human trafficking. Two amendments to Canada’s Criminal Code have been enacted: Bill C-268 (2010) created a new offence for child trafficking with a five-year mandatory penalty, and Bill C-310 (2012) allows the Canadian government to prosecute Canadian citizens and permanent residents who engage in trafficking outside of Canada and also enhances the definition of exploitation in the trafficking of persons offence. Activists welcome these positive changes but more can be done to free and protect all men, women, and children from human trafficking.

*Should Prostitution be legalized?*

There are many who are pushing the government to go further. Some have suggested that prostitution be legalized. They argue that if it is regulated by the government instead of pimps, sex workers would have more protection. It would give them more power in choosing their clients and working conditions. If prostitution is illegal, prostitutes are afraid to go to the police and report abuse since their livelihood will be taken away from them. However, there are also many who oppose this view.

### **Activity**

- Have the students read through the following article and summarize the arguments on a chart. (<http://newint.org/features/2013/04/01/should-prostitution-be-legalized-argument/>)
- Show the following documentary made by *Hope for the Sold* to the students (Start at 31 minute mark; 15 minutes long). <http://hopeforthesold.com/resources/>

**Discussion Questions:** So, should we legalize prostitution?

1. Write up a response to the article, imagining you had the final word in the debate.
2. Which argument do you agree with? Would you add anything to her argument that you think she missed?

3. In the documentary, the activists suggest the adoption of the Swedish model. Do you think this is a wise suggestion? Doesn't the Bible say prostitution is illegal? How can we then decriminalize the selling of sex?
  - a. See ARPA's policy suggestion on this issue:  
(<http://arpacanada.ca/index.php/government-submissions/1388-respectfully-submitted-prostitution-in-canada>)

### **What can we do?**

So what can we as everyday Canadians do? One of the most helpful tools to this cause is awareness. It is important to educate yourself and others about the reality of human trafficking in Canada and the world today. Increased awareness will also help in applying pressure on the government to review and introduce laws and policies which will protect men, women, and children from being bought and sold as slaves. Although this is a global issue, we, as citizens, have power to persuade our law makers.

As Christians we can bring this matter to God in prayer. Pray for the governments and law enforcement officials to do their work effectively. Pray for those who are stuck inside slavery today. Pray for past victims of trafficking who still suffer emotion and psychological pain from the abuse they endured. Pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. If the root cause of this horrible industry is sin, then we should pray that God will change hearts and minds. We should strive to show the love and grace of Christ in our communities in the way we view women, treat other people, and glorify God. Since we live in a society with people who are not Christian, how can we communicate fight against the lust and greed of our society?

Also as Christians, especially male Christians, when we talk about the women around us, are we respecting them as image bearers of God? Do we show honour and respect for them in this regard? Do we recognize them as the weaker sex, deserving of our protection instead of our lustful desires? Are we willing to protect our female classmates in the same way you would your little sister? And when speaking with friends who might not be Christians, if the subject of pornography arises, recognize that as an opportunity to speak truth and gospel. Ask your friend if he or she knows that many females in pornography are there against their will. Ask them if they understand the link between pornography consumption and the kidnapping and forced sexual bondage of girls as young as six years old in places like Cambodia. We have a duty as Christians to speak up for those staggering towards the slaughter.

As the anti-slavery hero William Wilberforce said, "*Having heard all of this you may choose to look the other way...but you may never again say that you did not know.*" Compare this statement to what's outlined in [Proverbs 24:10-12](#). How are the statements similar in their sentiment? How does this text and the thoughts of Mr. Wilberforce apply to human trafficking and prostitution

## Resources

### Cases of human trafficking (newspaper articles)

- Canadian Council for Refugees
  - o <http://ccrweb.ca/en/mediatrafficking>
- Hamilton:
  - o [http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/04/04/human\\_trafficking\\_kingpin\\_gets\\_record\\_9year\\_sentence.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2012/04/04/human_trafficking_kingpin_gets_record_9year_sentence.html)
  - o <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2235869-human-trafficking-kingpin-pleads-guilty/>
  - o <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2137390-the-gypsy-kings-part-1-of-2/>
  - o <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/2084305-part-2-hamilton-s-human-trafficking-connection/>
- Vancouver:
  - o <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-man-charged-with-human-trafficking-of-girls-as-young-as-14/article2217576/>
- Edmonton:
  - o <http://www.edmontonsun.com/news/edmonton/2009/09/10/10822296.html>
- Winnipeg
  - o <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/story/2010/09/23/manitoba-human-trafficking-charge-winnipeg.html>

### Additional Resources:

#### *Respectfully Submitted* Policy Report: Prostitution in Canada

- <http://arpaCanada.ca/index.php/government-submissions/1388-respectfully-submitted-prostitution-in-canada>

#### Government's *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*

- <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/le/cmbt-trffkng-eng.aspx>

#### Article by Joy Smith (March 13, 2013)

- <http://www.calgaryherald.com/opinion/columnists/Smith+flesh+trade+Canada+dirty+little+secret/8100150/story.html>

### Book:

- *Invisible Chains: Canada's Underground World of Human Trafficking* (Benjamin Perrin)