

Scriptures That Address Human Trafficking

*So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

— Genesis 1:27

Every child, woman, and man is created in and bears God's image. Every child, woman, and man is equally created in that image. Every child, woman, and man is worthy of dignity because she or he is created in God's image.

Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." — Exodus 3:7-12

God heard the cries of the Israelites who were enslaved and oppressed in Egypt. He promised to bring His people out of slavery.

*Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.
Speak out, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.*

— Proverbs 31:8-9

Scripture issues a call to advocate on behalf of those whose voices are quieted through oppression.

*Rise up, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand;
do not forget the oppressed.
Why do the wicked renounce God,
and say in their hearts, "You will not call us to account"?
But you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief,
that you may take it into your hands;
the helpless commit themselves to you;
you have been the helper of the orphan.
Break the arm of the wicked and evildoers;
seek out their wickedness until you find none.
The Lord is king forever and ever;
the nations shall perish from his land.
O Lord, you will hear the desire of the meek;
you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear
to do justice for the orphan and the oppressed,
so that those from earth may strike terror no more.*

— Psalm 10:12-18



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The prayers and cries of the oppressed and exploited are heartfelt, and God hears them. God cares about those who are oppressed and exploited, and we should, too.

*Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.
May he judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.
May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
May he defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
may he crush the oppressor.*

...
*For he will deliver the needy who cry out,
the afflicted who have no one to help.
He will take pity on the weak and the needy
and save the needy from death.
He will rescue them from oppression and violence,
for precious is their blood in his sight.
— Psalm 72:1-4, 12-14*

The lives of the oppressed are precious to God.

*I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the Lord.
— Psalm 40:1-3*

Take time to pray protection and deliverance for victims of human trafficking. Pray that they would feel and know God's presence.

*This is what the Lord says:
'For three sins of Israel,
even for four, I will not relent.
They sell the innocent for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.
They trample on the heads of the poor
as on the dust of the ground*

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*and deny justice to the oppressed.
Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.*

*...
I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.
Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
— Amos 2:6-7, 5:21-24*

Our attempts to honor God are unacceptable if we attempt to worship in church services and religious events but ignore the plight of the oppressed and God's call for justice in our daily lives.

*“Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.
Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?
Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.*



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*Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
— Isaiah 58:1-10*

We are not really honoring God through our worship and rituals if we ignore the plight of the oppressed.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
— Luke 4:16-19*

When Jesus announced His mission as Messiah, He quoted from Isaiah 61, saying He had come to bring good news, proclaim release and healing, and offer freedom.

*Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering.
— Hebrews 13:3*

Turning our backs and ignoring the injustice in our world is not an option. God calls us to identify with and suffer alongside those who are in bondage. He calls us to show true, active compassion.

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