The Effects of Sexual Exploitation on a Family

Today Dr. Luke will talk to you about the effect of sexual exploitation on families. All societies and cultures have this problem of the commercial and sexual exploitation of women. Dr. Luke will start by telling you the story of Wang Li.

Wang Li works as a boss at a brothel that is disguised as a foot-massage shop. Wang began working here because he got into a fight with his wife and called his friend who owned a similar shop at the time. His friend invited him to come stay with him and when Wang did, he decided he wanted to open a shop of his own. He felt like the women there respected him and treated him much nicer than his wife did. He moved away from home to the same city his friend lived in and opened up his own shop. Now he has five women working for him, some as young as 19 and some who are in their 30’s. Wang feels like he is doing these women a favor by giving them a job. He did not realize when he started working here how much it would change him and the effects it would have on his marriage, not to mention how it was destroying the relationships of many other people. He is still married to his wife and has a responsibility to send money to his family, but beyond that does not have much of a relationship with them anymore. It has been five years since Wang moved to this city. His friend moved away two years ago.

One day, Wang’s friend comes back into town and invites Wang to have tea with him. Wang is happy to see his old friend and is hoping that they will have a fun time catching up. When he sees his friend, something is different about him. Wang notices that his friend is smiling and so happy. This catches Wang off-guard and makes him uncomfortable. His friend used to be angry and grumpy, never saying a nice thing to or about anyone. His friend then begins to ask him how he and his family are doing. Why do you want to know, Wang asks. I hardly speak to my family. When you lived here before we did not talk about our families. His friend says that he cares about Wang and knows that previously Wang did not talk to his family often. Wang admits that he does not talk to his family often, but does not understand why his friend is making such a big deal out of it.

His friend responds that after moving from this city he moved back to his hometown. There he discovered just how much he had neglected his family and how important his family was to him. He did not want to move back home at first, but his wife was constantly nagging him and saying their family needed more money. She thought perhaps he could find a better job in their hometown, as the pay was higher there. She did not mention until later that she was very suspicious of what he was doing at his job.

Wang Li knows that his wife, too, is suspicious of what he does. He rarely calls home, but when he does his wife often cries and asks him what he is doing and why he does not want to come home. Wang tells his friend that although he enjoys the freedom he has, he feels ashamed when he calls his wife, and even worse when he talks to his 8-year-old son.

His friend begins to tell Wang that at home he learned that owning a brothel affects him and many others much more than he thought. He used to think that owning a brothel just meant that he could make money. He knew he was using these women and their bodies for his own monetary gain, but felt that he was helping them. Without this job, they would not have money to send back to their homes.

Wang responds by asking, “If I am helping them, then why is it wrong? It is their choice, isn’t it? They don’t have to work for me.” His friend tells him that while nobody physically forced them to work there, wouldn’t it be different if that job were not even an option for them? They would have to find work elsewhere. But because it is an option, and people like Wang Li are enticing them into the job, they feel it is the best solution. Wang Li does not have to work, but rather makes money from these women using their bodies.

Wang Li’s friend says that when he moved home, he started reading a Bible that his grandmother gave him. He knew that she was a Christian, but did not really understand what a Christian was. Once he started reading the Bible, he realized many things about himself and about God. “What kind of things,” Wang Li asked? His friend says the first thing he discovered was that the Bible says that God created the world and everything in it, including people. He loved the people he created and had a perfect relationship with them.

Wang Li laughs and says “If God loved people so much and had that kind of perfect relationship, where is God now? I sure do not know him.” His friend continues, telling him that the rest of the story tells us why people have a broken relationship with God. In fact, it is not because God did anything wrong. He gave the people he created commands, but they did not listen. They had everything they needed yet they were tempted and became proud in their thinking. They thought that something outside of God could make them happier.

“That is exactly the same problem we have today. We think that things like money, relationships and success will make us happy. However, I tried them all and they failed me. The people God created found that when they sinned, their lives apart from God were extremely unhappy. Romans 6:23, a verse in the Bible, says that the wages of sin is death. This death means separation from God.”

Wang Li listens to his friend and says that he thinks his life is fine. He is making money and does not think he has done anything to deserve this eternal punishment. After all, he was not the first one to sin. Why should he be punished for it? Wang’s friend tells him that the Bible says all have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. We all have rebellious hearts towards God and by ourselves cannot do anything to be reconciled to Him. But God was merciful and sent Jesus to live a perfect life that we could not live and shed his blood for our sins on the cross.

Wang Li looks at his friend and says, “how do you know that your life is so much better now that you follow Jesus? What were you doing before that was so bad?”

His friend tells him that, like he said before, he did not realize the way that sin, or disobeying God affected him and other people in his life. Not only was he sinning against the girls who worked for him, but also against his family. He was lying to his wife and son, telling them he had another job. If what he was doing was not so bad, why did he need to hide it? Wang Li admits that this is true. He sometimes gets sick of making up stories so that his wife will not suspect what he is doing. However, his wife suspects what he does, and they have even argued about it. Anyways, his wife does not trust him.

His friend asks Wang if he knows what marriage and family is supposed to look like according to the Bible. “No, I do not know. I did not really know the Bible talked about marriage and families. I assumed it was just a lot of rules and things to do and not to do,” said Wang. His friend says that because God created us and loves and cares about us, he also designed and cares about marriage and family. After all, he created that too. He created a woman so that the man would not be alone!

I did not know that, Wang replies. If God cares so much about marriage, why do so many people have unhappy marriages? My wife nags me all the time. I often feel I made a mistake marrying her. If this God cares so much about family, why are so many families poor?

His friend tells him that these are all very good questions. “As I shared with you before, the problems that we see in the world are not God’s mistakes, but rather are the cause of man’s sin. God created a perfect world and created a man and woman who decided to sin rather than obey God. In Genesis chapter 4 we find out the consequences of their sin:

“To the woman God said, ‘I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain your shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ To Adam (the man) He said, ‘Because you…have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘you shall not eat of it,’ Cursed is the ground for your sake; In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread til you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.’’

Wang Li considers what his friend has told him. “This sounds a lot like the world we live in today. We work hard and often do not see much fruit from our labor. Our relationships are not how we would like them to be. My wife wants me to do things for her, but I do not want to. I want her to do things for me, but she does not want to.”

His friend says that is how all human relationships are, even in marriage. The Bible says that we are only able to love by first knowing Christ’s love. If do not have a relationship with Jesus, we do not know what love for others is supposed to look like. Even Christians have a hard time loving their spouse sometimes, but the Bible helps them understand what loving others looks like.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, a follower of Jesus named Paul wrote a letter to a church in a place named Ephesus. This letter is recorded in the Bible. In the fifth chapter Paul talks about how husbands and wives are supposed to treat and love one another. It says that wives are supposed to submit to their husbands, just as the church submits to Christ. Husbands are to love their wives, just as Christ loved the church and sacrificed Himself for the church. Marriage is supposed to be a beautiful picture of the relationship between Christ and the church.

Wang says that his marriage does not look like that at all. He does not treat his wife like he loves her. Because he is always gone and does not love her, she definitely does not want to submit to him or listen to anything he says. She does not trust him. Wang tells his friend that it is so hard for him to believe that someone would give their life for someone else, especially someone bad. It is hard for him to understand this marriage relationship when he does not understand the relationship between Jesus and the church. Why did Jesus do this? Why did he die for sinful people?

His friend says that the Bible says that God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God willingly gave His only Son to die for the sinful people of the world because He loved us and wanted us to be made right with Him.

Wang says that God must have been so devastated to see His Son die and just sit by and do nothing about it. “Did God not love his son? I can’t imagine letting my son die. I would want to rescue him!”

That is such a good point, his friend tells him. Can you imagine how much God must love us if He allowed his son to die for our sins? More importantly, God allowed Jesus to die so that He (God) could be glorified. God was glorified by Jesus’ death on the cross and His resurrection. God is glorified when sinners repent and turn to Him for forgiveness of sins. God loved Jesus, but because He loved us He allowed Jesus to die for us. Nothing else can satisfy our souls like the love that we are offered have through Christ.

As Wang listens, he thinks about all the things he has looked to for satisfaction, specifically women and money. He says to his friend, “for a long time I have tried to forget about the fact that I am ruining my life and my marriage. I thought if I just pretended everything was ok, it would somehow go away. I know that is not true.” He also tells his friend that now he realizes this: there is a God who loves him and would give His son to die for and pay for all of his sins. “Do you know how much I have sinned?” he asks friend.

His friend tells him that all people are in equal standing of sin in God’s eyes. God promises that when we call on Him He will remove our sins as far as the east is from the west.

Wang says he wants to be forgiven. He wants to believe in this God. How do I do it?

His friend says that all he has to do is pray to God, acknowledge his sin, believe that Jesus died for his sins, and ask for forgiveness. The Bible says, “whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Wang begins to pray: God, I don’t know you, but I want to know you. I admit that I have sinned and done many wrong things. I have hurt people in my life and hurt you. I want you to forgive me of my sins and make me a new person. I want to have a relationship with you. I believe that Jesus died for me on the cross and rose from the dead. Please forgive me.

As he finishes praying, Wang tells his friend that he feels a burden lifted off of him. He wants to tell his family about this change in his heart! “I need to go ask my wife and son for forgiveness. I also need to ask the women who work for me for forgiveness. Will you please pray for me? I don’t know what to say, but I want God to help me.”