



“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.”

Maya Angelou

The “Me Too” Movement is not about taking down powerful men or about targeting people, but giving people access to a healing journey.”

Tarana Burke

“The Me Too movement is an international movement against sexual harassment and assault. #MeToo spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag used on social media to help demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace. It followed soon after with public revelations of sexual misconduct allegations...”<sup>9</sup> These allegations were waged against prominent public figures in Hollywood, Washington, the Church and the like.

The “Me Too” campaign was created in 2007 long before hashtags even existed. “Me Too” campaign founder Tarana Burke began this grass-roots movement to reach sexual assault survivors in underprivileged communities. Following a number of sexual assault and harassment cases of some very prominent public figures in 2017, #MeToo exploded on Facebook as women of sexual assault were no longer willing to stand in the shadows. This has become a watershed moment for victims to tell their stories.

The mission of the #MeToo movement is two-fold:

**Empathy** – to give women victims of sexual assault the opportunity to find support by being heard, seen, and believed.

**Awareness** – that this sin is pervasive – 54% of American women report receiving “unwanted and inappropriate” sexual advances – and that there needs to be a place where victims go to and can be accompanied as they walk through the healing process.

## Empowerment through Empathy

Simply put, empathy is a “fellow feeling”, to understand or feel what another person is experiencing through their frame of reference. There is something to be said when two women can look eyeball to eyeball to say “me too,” and sense that volumes have been expressed and understood. That is the beginning of the healing process.

If you can, look at the following scripture through the eyes of someone who has been sexually assaulted. This may not take any imagination for some – in fact, there may be hesitancy due to the wounds that have been so carefully buried. Give yourself time to absorb the message of the scripture and apply it to the tender memories that are evoked. For others who have not experienced sexual abuse, but want to understand the plight of their sisters, there is a need to go deep within memories to find a time when there may have been victimization in some fashion; preying on a weakness of yours. This could be an abuse of any kind – physical, mental, emotional or verbal. This is not to fabricate pain and suffering, but to come to the realization that we all have been abused in some form or another.

## Scripture to Ponder

“So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.”

Hebrews 4:14–16 NLT

<sup>9</sup> “Me Too Movement.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Sept. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Me\_Too\_movement#2017\_(Alyssa\_Milano).

*Looking at this scripture through the lens of any injustice that you may have experienced, what word or phrase stands out to you from the words above? If nothing catches your attention after the first reading, you are encouraged to read it a few times until something stands out. Take your time.*

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*Does this chosen word or phrase resonate with anything from a past memory of abuse, harassment or injustice? Be specific.*

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*These verses speak of Jesus' empathy with your past circumstances, especially because of the harassment and assault He endured during His life here on earth. How does that make you feel?*

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*Imagine Jesus standing before you, patiently and mercifully listening to your incident of assault, and after a long silence, hearing him say, "I understand. Me too." What emotion comes to the surface?*

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The first step in any healing is acknowledging that you have experienced an injustice, bringing it out into the open in Christ's presence with a flesh and blood kindred spirit. Once light is shed on this dark place, healing begins.

*"Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the Lord will protect you from behind."*

Isaiah 58:8 NLT

*What word or phrase in this verse brings a sense of light and healing for you?*

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## Healing through Awareness

The other aspect of the #MeToo Movement is awareness. The best place to start the awareness campaign is in the church, especially since #ChurchToo has been started to address and stop the sexual abuse that has happened within the church. Omitting opportunities for discussion about sexual harassment and assault in our society and not addressing it, whether from the pulpit, in Sunday School, small groups or youth groups, can be damaging for the Body of Christ.

It must be looked at through the lens of the Bible and therefore some of the hard portions of scripture need to be publically addressed. *"This includes the Genesis 34 account of the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah, the gang rape of a Levite's concubine in Judges 19–21, and the rape of King David's daughter Tamar by her half-brother Amnon in 2 Samuel 13. I would also include the story of King David himself and Bathsheba, found in 2 Samuel 11; the Hebrew in which the account was written strongly supports, in my view, the interpretation that King David took advantage of her sexually."*

We must say no to a conspiracy of silence. Every man, woman, boy, and girl deserves to live free from the fear of sexual assault, and if that's to ever become a reality, our churches must be a major part of the effort. We can begin by significantly changing our approach to sexual abuse. Open and honest communication, and a passionate campaign, will make the church a safe place for the victim to land and to begin the dialogue that brings healing.

<sup>10</sup> Hung, Eugene. "4 Ways Churches Can Respond to the #MeToo Movement." *Sojourners, Sojourners Magazine*, 1 Nov. 2017, [sojo.net/articles/4-ways-churches-can-respond-metoo-movement](http://sojo.net/articles/4-ways-churches-can-respond-metoo-movement).