

SEXUAL ABUSE

If you've experienced sexual abuse, the first thing we want you to know is that God loves you and we care about you.

Many people have been the victims of sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Although something terrible has been done to you, there is still hope and a purpose for your life. Sexual abuse, like other forms of abuse, is wrong. A person who molests, rapes, or assaults another person has committed a sin God hates, and there's no excuse for those actions. God will bring justice to every situation and can heal all wounds. Being a victim is not your identity; belonging to Jesus is. God knows what you've gone through. He knows what was done to you, and He understands the pain and confusion it causes. Jesus knows what it's like to be a victim even though He did nothing to deserve the suffering He endured on the cross (1 Peter 2:22–24).

FORGIVENESS

Jesus cares deeply about rescuing you from the pain and consequences of what was done to you. He also cares about rescuing the person who abused you from his or her evil actions. God calls us to forgive one another because He forgives us, and we're all broken without Him (Colossians 3:13). If we let resentment grow, even against someone as hurtful as an abuser, we won't be able to move forward with God and our lives (Matthew 6:14–15). Forgiveness is not the same as restoration. God calls us to forgive others when they sin against us, but He does not want to put us back into situations where we could be abused again. Forgive the person who harmed you, but do not allow that person to be in your life in the same trusted way he or she was before. As much as possible, avoid people who are abusive and violent (2 Timothy 3:2–5).

MOVING FORWARD

Jesus, through His Spirit in us, can sustain us through any suffering. He doesn't promise it will be easy, but He promises peace: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"* (John 14:27).

Please consider telling a dependable friend and speaking with a Christian counselor about your situation so they can help you. We can't do life alone. Let trusted friends and family support you through this time. If the abuse is currently happening, we want to encourage you to notify authorities so that they may help you get to safety.



If you would like to speak with someone about your situation, we would love to help you and pray with you. Please contact the Urban Life Church office or you can email us at info@urbanlife.org.za.

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