Darrell Bock: Well when we talk about aftercare, we’re talking about a pretty long process because of the deep damage that’s been done. Is that fair to say, Matt?

Matthew Williams: Very fair to say, yes.

Darrell Bock: And so we’re talking years in most cases?

Matthew Williams: Yeah, I would say definitely years. For so many children, I can’t even imagine spending months in these situations and not needing years of care and the post-traumatic stress that’s involved. We have kids that…a lot of the kids are part of our program until they’re out of school but simply because they have nowhere to go.

Darrell Bock: Out of school would be what age in Africa?

Matthew Williams: Well it depends. Many of them have missed out on years of schooling while they were involved in rebel groups. Our most recent group the average age was about 21 so they were able to finish secondary school and actually all of them are now in university, which is awesome, but yeah, years of rehabilitation and I don’t know that recovery is ever truly over. There’s always going to be that remnant of what my experiences were and that part of healing that becomes how do I give back. But yeah, I would say a three to six-month rehabilitation is silly. I think that you could do some things, some great things, in three to six months but it’s a very long-term investment since we are with you and we’re in this for the long haul.

Darrell Bock: And I’m actually working my way to the point, which is because it’s so intensive and so long-term it really does demand a lot of support and human resources to actually pull it off. Now that’s the aftercare part; we’ll come to the prevention part as well. Okay, now I’m ready to make the transition with that in place and that is all right, so someone is listening and they say ‘okay, I can see this is serious and there are real needs.’ Most Christians would go ‘what do I do? Where do I start? Where does it begin? Where does it begin for the average person who has the sensitivity that says yeah there’s something wrong and this is a worthwhile thing to think about contributing to?’ What kind of options exist for a Christian or maybe another way to ask the question is what advice would you give to someone for whom this is a new area and they’re thinking through what it means for them in their walk? You know Barry you said you wanted to talk about this from a spiritual angle. Why don’t we start there?
**Barry Jones:** Yeah, I think one of the things would be to commit to becoming more deeply informed, to just find out more about it. Love 146 has some great educational type resources. Love146.org/slavery has a wonderful kind of walk through of some of the statistics and realities. I know the International Justice website has some great sources in that regard so as you become more aware and informed I think that the next thing would be to allow you to drive that to prayer, to be committed to making this a part of something that you’re integrating into what you’re pleading with God about to respond to, to help lead you to know how best to respond to this reality. And then from there beginning to say now what can I, given my circumstances, given my resources, given where God has placed me in life, what can I proactively do? Can I give financially to some of these organizations that are responding to this issue domestically and internationally? Can I volunteer my time and be a part of some of these holistic prevention measures, be involved in organizations that are working with at-risk kids? For some, I mean I think about where you and I are in an academic institution, for some it is saying ‘how can I pursue an education that is going to prepare me to be able to go and serve the needs, to be a part of these much needed resources?’

**Darrell Bock:** How do we prepare pastors to be able to walk into this area and interact and encourage their people in this regard?

**Barry Jones:** Absolutely. As a pastor, how do I bring this to my congregation, help them be informed, and then know how to respond to it? So yeah, there’s so many angles of this and so many aspects of it but it’s something that we really need to know and understand and move more deeply into it.

**Darrell Bock:** Okay, so first is being aware. Matt, what would you say are other things Christians can do and then I’ll come to Kim next?
Matthew Williams: Compassion is one of my favorite words because it’s not just about an emotion. It’s not just about a feeling. I don’t think compassion even becomes compassion until there’s action so it’s very set. That’s starting on your knees and praying. God has the ability to do so much more than I do as an individual so I’d ask you to be on your knees and praying. But then moving onto awareness, be aware yourself, educate yourself, and then share that with others. I think we’re all here today because we want the broader culture to better understand this topic so as you hear this today then to go out and share this whether it’s in your school, in your class, or at work when you’re at the water fountain, ‘hey, this is a topic I’m learning about. Let me share it with you.’ But then also to volunteer. I mean there are local organizations to volunteer with but then there’s also broader needs internationally where some will be able to volunteer but not all. And financially supporting ministries that are doing something is a huge way that many people can be involved whether it’s small, I mean we have high school kids that are behind us at $7.00 a month. They’re giving up their Sonic run with their friends to make that difference. We call all do something in that regard.

Darrell Bock: Kim?

Kim Jones: You know I have a lot of young adults in particular that will come to me and ask me this question, “What can I do?” and I think in particular that age group, they’re at such a time in their lives that they’re making decisions, making choices, that put them on certain paths. And the first question that I ask them is ‘how has God gifted you? How are you wired?’ and if this is something that God is really calling you to then you need to orient your life in such a way that begins to put you on this kind of path. There’s a young adult woman that I have discipled for the last five or six years and she’s actually a DTS grad and we’ve talked about trafficking for years of course and she went with me on the trip to Southeast Asia and she came back, and I had no idea that this is what God was stirring in her heart, but she’s now come back to DTS to finish her counseling certification so that she can work with girls that have been trafficked. And so I do think that the question of how has God gifted me, how has God oriented my life, what has He given me in my life really I think feeds into how to deal with this situation. There are a lot of people that feel that there’s nothing tangible that they can do.

Darrell Bock: It’s an intimidating area so much.
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**Kim Jones:** Yeah, it’s so overwhelming. You know you read the stories and you go this is very dark. It is such a dark, dark thing, but I think going back to connecting in your community, finding these organizations, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, I mean those kinds of things, even fostering, those families that are currently fostering, what you’re doing is you’re actually helping in this issue. Foster kids are very, very vulnerable. The older they get the more vulnerable they become because of the runaway issue. And so there are so many ways, kind of easy ways, that you can really, really get involved. And then those that just feel like they don’t have the time or quite frankly the energy to put towards this, really finances are a huge thing to these organizations. To be able to...I mean you heard him talk about the fact that aftercare doesn’t happen in three to six months. This is something that goes on for years and to be able to do an effective job you have to have the financing behind it. You have to be able to...you have to do it long-term. It’s not something that happens overnight. And so there are people I believe that are out there, you know what, God is giving you money, resources to help with this issue. Do that. And those are some of the main issues and again prayer, I think that’s initially where people need to start and must start.

**Darrell Bock:** So we’ve got these sites that are available. Matt, do you have any sites to recommend that people should go to if they want to get informed and find out what’s going on and maybe get oriented more than we’re able to do here?

**Matthew Williams:** Yeah, I think like Barry said Love146 has a great website. I think there’s a learn more tab that opens up a booklet with lots of great statistics. I would go to International Justice Mission; it’s actually just ijm.org. Another great place to start is halftheskymovement.org. They’re supporting many organizations and you can find resources not only on the Half the Sky Movement website but also it will link you to many other places where you can find opportunities to either support or get involved.

**Darrell Bock:** What is Half the Sky? We haven’t talked about them very much. What do they do?

**Matthew Williams:** Nicholas Kristof and his wife wrote a book a few years back about the exploitation of women.

**Darrell Bock:** Now he’s a writer for The New York Times.
Matthew Williams: Yeah, thanks for the context. I’m just used to hearing his name. What was I saying? Nicholas Kristof, so it’s based on the book they wrote about the sexual exploitation of women and it really covers a lot of the topics we’re talking about here today but it was also recently turned into a documentary and they were really smart about how they went about it. They recruited lots of actors and actresses to help get a lot more eyeballs on this. I think it’s doing some great things to make the broader population aware of what’s actually going on around us and around the world.
Darrell Bock:

You know it’s interesting because I think this shows an interesting connection that some people will probably have a pause about and yet it shows the value of this kind of ministry. Nicholas Kristof has done a wide variety of writing in a wide variety of areas for The New York Times but when you get him to write in this area he is very clear and direct about how many Christians are involved in this area and what a terrific help and ministry the presence of Christians has been in this area and so you don’t normally put New York Times and endorsement of Christian activity next to one another so I think it shows something that is revealing part of the point of this and that is here is an area of obviously terrific human need and terrific…as dark as it is in one sense opportunity to portray what redemption is all about in a very concrete and specific kind of way.

I actually had brought with me something I read this weekend not anticipating this combination of things happening. I’m reading a book called The Great Evangelical Recession, it’s by John Dickerson, and he’s looking at the condition of the evangelical church today and I’m thinking about a standard sociological and journalistic analysis. John Dickerson is a pastor in Arizona who also has a background as a journalist and so he writes with both of those combinations. Well in one of the chapters that he’s dealing with, he’s dealing with what he calls revaluing where he’s calling it ‘Become a 21st century evangelical’ and he opens the chapter with a discussion of someone who’s been found out of prostitution, who’s been trafficked, and the testimony that he has is a gal named Steph and this is chapter eight, it’s called ‘Good’ and he says, “Statistically Steph was on course to die by age 30 by drug overdose, STD-related illness, or murder.Prostitutes have the highest murder rate in the United States due to paid rapes gone too far.” Now she’s speaking, “I never saw myself making it past the age of 18,” she says. That’s when she was rescued at age 18.

“Steph says this of the Christian counselor who walked along side her in her recovery from the bondage of sex trafficking,” and now she is quoted again. “She has brought light into the darkest places of my heart by loving me unconditionally. For 7 or 8 months she just loved me and invested in me and never pushed me spiritually. It was through that love that I received from her that I’ve really been a lot more accepting of the church. Even a year ago I was really anti-church. Now I’m not a Christian but I’m a lot more accepting of it and open to it. That’s because she showed me love and was very conscious of my own needs and my own spiritual abuse.” That’s I think a pretty powerful testimony about another combination. We’ve talked about The New York Times reporter and Christians on the one hand but here is the impact of what this ministry does and can do for people as they land and are brought back to recovery and brought back to a more healthy place. I suspect Matt you have stories, Kim you have stories that go along these lines that run down this track. Is that right?
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Matthew Williams: Yeah. You want to hear some?


Matthew Williams: You know one of my favorite guys is one of the four that just started university recently. He was 15 years old when he was initially abducted by a rebel group in ____ Congo. He spent about three years with this rebel group. During that time he was utterly brainwashed. It had become, and this is from him sharing his story with me, it had just become a way of life. It had become a norm to when you’re hungry and you need food you go and you attack people and you take what you need; you take what the group needs. He had a spiritual experience I don’t really know how to put words to except to compare it to a Damascus Road experience where he really felt it was like the wake-up call to what he was doing and Jesus calling him away from it. It wasn’t an immediate change for him but it was something…it was just that light bulb that went off for him. And about two weeks later he saw that opportunity that he never thought he would. It was the perfect opportunity to get away and he knew this was his crossroads. He took that opportunity, he got away, got plugged into our Peace Live Center in Goma DRC, and now about three years later he’s been able to finish his education. He’s one of the most vibrant beautiful men I’ve ever met. Whenever he told me his story and told me the things he had participated in, I can’t see it on him. I don’t know that it was ever possible for him to do those things, these acts of violence as he now mentors his younger peers and they call him The Chief at the Peace Love Center. Even before he was graduating he is the leader, pointing them towards Jesus, towards peace, towards rehabilitation, and now that he has graduated he’s actually been trained along side some of our other counselors so that he can be an even better leader and mentor to them.

Darrell Bock: And he’s a very young guy I take it?

Matthew Williams: Yeah, he’s 21 now, so it was 3 years with the rebel group and about 3 years out now. Actually he might be teetering on 22.

Darrell Bock: Oh wow, an old man.

Matthew Williams: Yeah, exactly. Now he just started university and he is actually studying to be a counselor so that he can pass on that rehabilitation to other children.

Darrell Bock: Kim?
**Kim Jones:** Oh goodness, there’s a million stories and the first I would say, and I spoke just briefly about this, but when I was in The Roundhouse and actually saw the girls for myself and there were probably about ten girls there and there were a couple of new girls that had come in and what was so fascinating to me was to actually look at their countenance. Never having spoken to any of them but I could immediately identify the girls who were new, the girls who had just gotten there, because the girls who had already been there, there was a joy that literally was oozing from their fingertips. I can’t even explain it. There was a joy in this place that you would never expect. You would never expect these girls who had been so abused, so exploited, that they would be able to find any joy, any light. There was one girl in particular, it was one of the first girls that came to the Love146 house, The Roundhouse, and her name was Suri and Suri came in and it was one of your very typical kind of trafficking stories, very abused situation, and her family knew that she had been trafficked and were looking for her. She was then found and they then put her in The Roundhouse. She was given rehabilitation but one of the things that Suri thought that would never happen was that there would be any sort of redemption to her story, that there would ever be any light to the life that she had been exposed to. And I mean she was to the point where there were days that she wanted to kill herself. I mean there were days…these girls go through so, so much in terms of the psychological damage that has been done to them and just trying to untangle that and kind of figure that out. Well kind of fast forward through the story, Suri thought she would never be loved. No one would ever love me. Well Suri fell in love and she was…this moment of…they did this beautiful wedding for she and her fiancée and it was this moment that she knew that there was this redemption. There was this beautiful restoration and it was a beautiful picture, I believe, of the church. And so there are just so many stories out there and I remember talking to Gundelina, who is the person who runs The Roundhouse while we were there, and just asking her questions, “What is this like for you?” and as she began to tell me her own story, she had been a successful counselor in the university but she recognized that counseling without Jesus was no counseling. Therapy without Jesus is no therapy. And so when you see these girls and you see the difference, the countenance difference, that’s not just man-made; that’s something that’s Christ-made and that’s the light that I see. That’s where the transformation is and it’s really an encouraging thing to someone as an onlooker who says, “Man, God can do great things in our lives.”

**Darrell Bock:** So people can’t go there unless the church is involved and in many ways is what you’re saying.
Kim Jones: Yeah.

Darrell Bock: That any restoration that comes on the other side will be limited without rounding it out with the full perspective of what it is that Christ can bring. Okay, we’ve talked about aftercare. We’re running tight on time but I do want to go to prevention briefly. How can a Christian be involved on the prevention side? I mean we’ve already said okay, well vigilante style go and run and destroy a brothel or something like that, but so what can Christians do on the prevention side to get at the people before they, to use your metaphor, go over the cliff? Matt?

Matthew Williams: Prevention, I think I’ve used this word too many times now but I think it first starts with awareness. I mean I meet people constantly, human trafficking what? Child soldiering, what is that? Sex trafficking? So many people have no idea what’s going on around us so making people aware is something that we can all do but prevention as well. Investing your life, whether that’s through actions, things like actually you time, or whether that’s finances in organizations that are focused on that. There are some great organizations out there focused on prevention, one of which is International Justice Mission. I think they are doing phenomenal work so investing in an organization like that and trusting what they do is a great place to start.

Darrell Bock: Okay and if someone wanted to do more than just invest money what might be the possibilities in that regard? Are there spots for volunteers or things like that that can be done?

Matthew Williams: Yeah, I mean with my organization there is, with other organizations, I’m sure it’s going to be unique to each organization but even beyond volunteering, Kim I think you mentioned earlier about just being aware of what’s going on when you go to a restaurant, even in how you buy chocolate. Do your research. Is the company that you're buying from, are they making sure that their laborers are treated fairly?

Kim Jones: Yeah, what is it slaveryfootprint.org where you can actually go to the website and find out what are the things that you’re purchasing and is it contributing to slavery across the world? You’d be fascinated.

Darrell Bock: So that’s slaveryfootprint.org, okay.
Matthew Williams: We’re such an app culture too. Not For Sale actually has one. I can’t remember what it’s called but if you type in Not For Sale I’m sure it will pop up but they have ratings for multiple different companies right there on the app. I mean everyone from a couple of chocolate companies to Nike to you name it, there’s a lot of them on there and they’re constantly building that directory.

Kim Jones: Yeah. In terms of prevention, one of the areas that I really, and I’m glad that you have actually been talking about sexuality over the last few weeks, one of the areas that I really feel like the church has got to address is on the demand side in terms of the men in the churches. There would be no trafficking if there was no need and so what we have is we’ve got a huge issue with pornography. We’ve got a huge issue with men purchasing sex and it’s happening in our churches and for too long I feel like the church has been silent on the subject of sex and we may not want to believe that it’s happening in our churches but it is. And I think that is one of the main areas that must be addressed is the demands side. I believe it’s like 1 out of 5 pornographic images online is of a child and 55 percent I believe, 55 percent of those image come from the US. And to me there’s a huge, huge issue here and I think it’s an opportunity because we’ve just talked about how the light changes the individual, how Christ coming into someone’s life completely changes them, and so if we believe that Christ can change the victim, why don’t we believe that Christ can change the victimizer? And so for me that is the one area that is not being addressed well and it’s a great opportunity for the church I feel like to really have a great, huge impact in this particular issue. That’s where I would start.

Darrell Bock: Barry, anything you would add from the standpoint of someone who’s in a church that’s trying to bring awareness to this kind of a topic?
**Barry Jones:** Absolutely. So some things that I think of in terms of what we have tried to do and are going to continue to grow in as a church is that awareness piece that all of us have really emphasized. It’s so important just bringing people to understand the reality of what’s happening. And so we have dedicated times, we’ve dedicated as I’ve said services to this issue where we’re really drawing attention to it. I preached out of Isaiah 58 and this vision of restoration that you find there, this vision of justice that’s there in the scriptures as a mandate for us, and so really bringing the church to be aware of it and then we have made just strategic partnership choices, both locally and internationally. So recognizing that this is something that is a domestic issue and so what can we do and where can we send people to volunteer in holistic prevention kinds of efforts?

**Darrell Bock:** It’s a different kind of missions commitment isn’t it from a church?

**Barry Jones:** It really is but it involves us in local public schools, it involves us in afterschool care, it involves us in sending people into the juvenile detention center, things like this, and then to also strategically connect with international organizations.

**Darrell Bock:** So it’s genuine cultural engagement at levels of which life is being lived out in the culture.

**Barry Jones:** Absolutely.
Darrell Bock: Yeah. I think it’s very, very important as we talk about this to make sure that if I can say the biblical and spiritual connections are clear because I think that some people in their minds have said ‘that’s politics or social action,’ and they’ve put it off in a category off to the side that’s detached from the mission and direction of the church but in fact what your’e seeing is a living out of the great commandment where you not only love God with all your heart, mind, and soul, but you love your neighbor as yourself. That’s something the church is called to be. That actually builds the credibility underneath everything that the church proclaims and says and so to be able to live that out and to show that is a powerful means I think that supports not only the truth of the message that we bring but the credibility with which we bring it and I think that’s extremely important in this kind of a conversation because it’s all too easy to say ‘well that’s politics or the social’ and actually the moment you say the word justice you know some people react and I think that what we see is a picture of the very kinds of people Jesus reached out to. He got in trouble because he reached out to tax collectors and to sinners. He forgave the woman caught in adultery, those kinds of situations, and yet here is the opportunity for the church to be able to step in and hopefully put a stop sign on the traffic and in the process do something positive. Matt, I’m going to let you have kind of a final word for us on this. What would you say to those who are listening for whom this may be the first time they’ve ever even thought about this issue in any detail?
Matthew Williams: Before I do that I want to add one quick thing. I didn’t think about it earlier. But the US Government is actually very involved in some of these efforts so contacting your congressmen and your representatives is another huge way that we can all be involved. It just takes a phone call or an email, a letter, but they’re going to respond to the masses and if we all, as a Sunday school class, as a church, say on Saturday or well probably not Saturday, but Tuesday let’s call our representative and he gets 2000 calls, he’s not going to be able to ignore that. So make your voice known and be strategic about it. So bringing it back, wrapping it up, I believe as believers are called to live out the gospel, not just in our words as you just said Darrell, but also in our actions. You started this off pointing to Jesus and he often spoke but then he followed it up with action and then he did something about it. Now until we stand up and do something about it, there are many who are not going to pay attention and there are many who are going to continue suffering because we have not taken that action. So I hope that those who are watching us today will first become aware, will help make other people aware, but then you’ll start to orient your lives in a way that makes a difference. Now going about your life the way that you have for the last couple of years, your whole life, may not change things but you may have the ability to change someone’s life by reorienting your life. Now people become paralyzed, wait, there’s how many people trafficked every year? How could we ever make a dent in that? But for one person if you act and you do something and you change their life, you’ve changed their world. So who are we not to at least step up and do that?

Darrell Bock: Kim?
Kim Jones: Well first I would also want to give the number, the hotline. It’s the number that the US provides that if you find someone that you suspect is being trafficked, I’d love for people to actually put that number into their cell phone. It’s 1-888-373-7888 and if you suspect anything then you call this. It’s not your job to actually do any kind of research is perhaps this is a brothel or whatever or someone that’s your server, but it is your job to respond and this line has been available for some time now and they do a great job with finding out what’s going on in your circumstances. Again I would just reiterate what everyone has said here today about the fact that we have a responsibility as followers of Christ that it’s not about just me, myself, and my God. It is about a community and Christ is asking us to step out of our comfort zones, to reach out, and love people well, to give our lives. When we give our lives to the gospel we are giving our lives to these others, these people that he’s created and it’s a beautiful thing I think once you step into this kind of arena, whether it’s with human trafficking or whatever our big issues of today, when you step into these areas, man and I’m probably going to bring up what Barry’s talking about, it really changes you spiritually. For me, I have had such personal spiritual change in a way that I’m not quite sure if I would have ever thought would happen. The spirit just works in great, great ways. So I would just suggest for people to just pray and just ask God to use them because there are big issues in this world that God desires for us to engage in.

Darrell Bock: Barry?
Barry Jones: You know I’ve come to believe more and more that one of the central integrating motifs throughout the scriptures is captured in this little Hebrew word shalom. It’s translated in the prophets as peace but it really captures so much more than that. It is...I think the word shalom carries the idea of the dream of God for a world set right and that when Christ’s kingdom comes in it’s fullest, the rain of God uninhibited, that’s what we will experience, the world set right. But when we saw Jesus in his embodied ministry on earth, everywhere he went glimpses of shalom showed up and I think for us, if we are going to experience transformation into Christ-likeness, that we need to be dedicated into becoming those kind of people that when we experience the vandalism of shalom, the violation of shalom, things not being the way God wants it to be, that we dedicate ourselves to bringing glimpses of that future that is to come into the kind of world that we’re living in right now and what we have seen consistently in this is that the bright light of Christ shines all the brighter against the backdrop of darkness that we experience. And so we need to become a people who are committed to living according to that kind of vision.

Darrell Bock: Well I want to thank you all for taking the time to do this today to talk about human trafficking. It is a major topic. It’s one that the church tends not to talk about but it is an area that has...where there’s terrific pain and terrific darkness but also opportunities and hopefully we’ve helped people to see that. So thank you for being with us at The Table this week where we consider issues of God and culture and particularly those places where God can step in and take something very dark in the culture and bring it to light. That’s what we’re hoping this helps people do. Thank you.