

How Are You Living Your Faith?

Every Religion Calls For Non-violent Relationships!

- ◉ Is Religion Important In Your Life?
- ◉ Do You Regularly Go To The Mosque Or To Church?
- ◉ Does Faith Play A Central Role In Your Life?

If so, you are not alone. Research recently conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life notes that sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most religious places in the world. Nine out of every ten people in the region say that religion is very important in their lives. Because religion is such an important cornerstone of life in our region, faith-based communities could have a significant influence on how people view violence against women.

Violence against women can happen in the form of emotional, sexual, physical and economic abuse. Despite its grave consequences, this violence occurs at alarming rates in Africa.

This year's 16 Days of Activism theme challenges religious leaders, communities of faith, and individual believers to think critically about how their faith views violence against women, and to act to prevent it. This fact sheet presents Muslim and Christian perspectives that support equality, peace, and respect in relationships. These sentiments are pervasive in the spirit of both faiths - yet are we living our faiths?

A 16 Days of Activism Fact Sheet

How You Treat Your Partner Is A Reflection On You

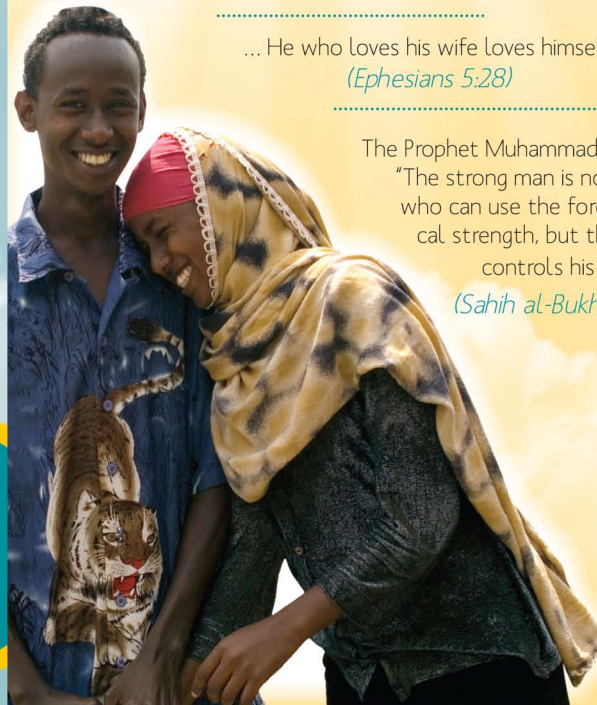


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The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "I recommend that you treat women with goodness. The best of you are those who treat their wives the best."
(Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith)

... He who loves his wife loves himself.
(Ephesians 5:28)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The strong man is not the one who can use the force of physical strength, but the one who controls his anger."
(Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith)



... Live with [women] on a footing of kindness and equity.
(Qur'an 4:19)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.
(Colossians 3:15)

The Importance of Peace and Kindness In Relationships

And among His signs is this: that He created for you mates from among yourselves so that you may dwell in tranquility with them. He has put love and mercy between your hearts; in that are signs for those who reflect.
(Qur'an 30:21)





Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.
(Colossians 3:19)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Treat your women well, and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers."
(Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith)

Man and woman have the same dignity and are of equal value, not only because they are both, in their differences, created in the image of God, but even more profoundly because the dynamic of reciprocity that gives life to the 'we' in the human couple, is an image of God.
(Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, #111)

Relationships are Partnerships

Violence Against Women is a problem for Us All

In Kenya, 43% of 15-49 year old women reported that they have experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime.¹

In rural Ethiopia, 71% of ever-partnered women report experiencing sexual or physical violence or both in their lifetime.²

South African Demographic Health Survey found that the youngest age group (15-19) years were **twice** as likely as the oldest age group (45-49) to report sexual violence.³

90% of women in urban Tanzania reported one or more types of controlling behavior exhibited by their partners.²

33% of girls 15 years and younger in urban Namibia reported their first sexual experience to be forced.²

¹Askew, I & Ndlovu, L. 2006. Developing a multisectoral and comprehensive response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence in East and Southern Africa. SIDA. Population Council.

²Garcia-Moreno, C., Jansen, H., Watts, C., Ellsberg, M., & Heise, L. 2005. WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women. Geneva: WHO.

³Population Council. 2008. Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Africa: A Literature Review. http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/AfricaSGBV_LitReview.pdf

Only you can make the decision to live your faith each day, in each interaction. You can choose respect and non-violence in your own relationship; you can foster peace in your family; you can speak out against violence against women in your community.

Take Action!

Christianity and Islam call on us to prevent violence against women! Use this fact sheet to answer this call:

- **Individuals** can share this fact sheet with loved ones, peers, and religious leaders to discuss how violence against women is viewed in your faith and handled in your community.
- **Communities** of faith can use this fact sheet to find common ground among your own members as well as to create connections between your community and other communities of faith to prevent violence against women.
- **Religious** leaders can use these quotes from religious texts in sermons, counseling, and to send out a strong and clear message that you and your congregation will not tolerate violence against women.

Your faith calls on you to create peaceful and happy families!

