

Voices: Lord, make our world safe for women

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The first question posed in the second presidential debate was, “Do you feel you’re modeling appropriate and positive behavior for today’s youth?”

My 8-year-old daughter joined me on the couch about 10 minutes into the debate. I let her watch, but that didn’t last long. I found myself quickly reaching for the pause button and explaining to her why I didn’t think it would be appropriate for her to watch a presidential debate.

**Texas
Baptist
Voices**

Shielding innocence

There are at least three things I wanted to shield her from during that debate:

No. 1, I didn’t want her to learn it is appropriate to interrupt and talk over people.

This is a common problem she has at 8 years old. We still are in the process of teaching her that allowing people to talk means giving respect and recognizing she is not the center of the universe.



Meredith Stone No. 2, I didn't want her to learn an appropriate way to deal with criticism is to attack those who are criticizing you.

She has a lead role in the third-grade production this week at school. Should her teacher decide to give her a little constructive encouragement about the way she says her lines, I didn't want her to retort, "Well, if you'd given me more lines, then I would be able to say them better."

But more than anything, No. 3, I didn't want her to learn that "locker room talk" and everything it represents is acceptable.

All sinners, but ...

After the presidential debate, Jerry Falwell Jr. reportedly continued his support of Donald Trump. Noting Trump's contrition, Falwell said, ["We're all sinners, every one of us. We've all done things we wish we hadn't."](#)

Falwell is absolutely correct. Whether we are a presidential candidate or whether we vote Republican, Democrat, other or abstain, all of us are sinners. Every human being is a person in need of God's grace, including Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton—and Bill Clinton, for that matter.

But there is a difference between acknowledging our common need for grace and perpetuating a culture that says sexual assault, or even talking/bragging about sexual assault, is permissible in any circumstance.

This summer, I met someone associated with Baylor University. The person said he had told parents of prospective Baylor students if their daughters dressed appropriately and didn't go to places they weren't supposed to go late at night, then their daughters would be safe at Baylor. He said blame should be shared between the victims and the perpetrators.

Name it: A lie

After hearing these kinds of statements—not for the first time, mind you—I want to say to my daughters, my sisters, my friends, my mother, myself and every human being on the planet: This is a lie!

It doesn't matter what the victim or target is wearing, what party she attends, or if she is intoxicated. It doesn't matter where you talk about assaulting and objectifying women. Sexual assault, talking about sexual assault and objectifying people in any fashion is wrong.

Frankly, the fact evangelical leaders finally are speaking out on this matter in response to Trump's comments is both a relief and a frustration that they haven't done so sooner. Silence has dominated for too long. Although Baylor has taken the heat over the past several months, no doubt other campuses, workplaces, homes and churches could have the same stories told about them.

But I hope those stories change. I hope for the sake of every human being on the planet we speak out and work to transform a culture that normalizes assault and objectification. I hope more people [follow the example of Mary Knox](#) in this effort.

May the redeeming God reach the divine hand into this terrible story and transform its trajectory so women—and daughters—everywhere can watch presidential debates, so they can learn and grow and be treated with respect on campuses, in workplaces, in homes, and in churches where the beloved community of God gathers together.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Meredith Stone is director of ministry guidance and instructor of Christian ministry and Scripture at Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology. She is a member of the Baptist Standard board of directors.

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