

Review: Healing the Wounds of Sexual Abuse

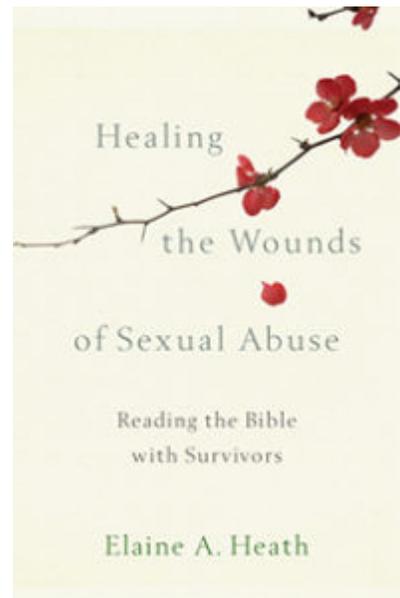
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Healing the Wounds of Sexual Abuse: Reading the Bible with Survivors

By Elaine A. Heath (Brazos Press)

Healing the Wounds of Sexual Abuse can be a helpful resource for some readers.

The value of the book is found in the particular biblical narratives Heath considers and how she examines these stories from the perspective of victims of abuse and exploitation. In this respect, the book is a helpful resource for pastors and teachers who want to address violence and to advocate for the vulnerable.



The biblical narratives Heath examines include the Levite's concubine (Judges 19), Jabez's suffering mother (1 Chronicles 4), the experience of eunuchs and their promised redemption (such as in Isaiah 56), and Judas' demeaning of Mary (John 12), among others.

The subtitle—*Reading the Bible with Survivors*—may be more important for the intended reader than the main title. This book has a hard edge—such as unvarnished lists of the physical effects of sexual abuse—that could be difficult for survivors to read. Therefore, those working alongside survivors are the intended audience.

Throughout the book, Heath addresses social injustices like racism, sexism and oppression with a firm hand. She also takes on such things as substitutionary atonement and the practice of communion in ways some readers may find challenging and others may find objectionable.

Each chapter concludes with reflection questions and recommended activities. Here, also, readers should proceed with caution, understanding that many of the books and movies Heath recommends contain graphic depictions of violence and frank discussions of sex.

If you can only read one book on helping victims of sexual abuse, a better choice is [*Understanding Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Ministry Leaders and Survivors*](#) by Tim Hein.

Eric Black, executive director, publisher and editor

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