



Wonderfully made (FGM/C)



Why use this Bible study?

This study can help a group to start discussing female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) and how it harms the sanctity of God's creation.

Please read **Tool A1 – Revealing female genital mutilation/cutting** before using this Bible study.



Psalm 139:13-15

This Psalm is about God knowing and caring about every detail of our lives, including our physical bodies. Our bodies are wonderfully made; they were created to show his glory. We should not spoil or interfere with this. If God has created us, is it right for us to damage that which he has given us? These verses challenge practices such as FGM/C where a girl experiences mutilation in order to be found acceptable in the eyes of her future husband, or to be seen to become 'fully woman'. Here are some passages which help us understand more on this topic:

Genesis 1:26 – 27: made in the image of God. It can be difficult to understand what it means to be made in the image of God. But it is clear that in creating us, God gave us physical bodies and designed these bodies to work in the world he created. We are physically made, and made to live physically. Every aspect of our bodies has a purpose - even though we might not understand it. Damaging each other's bodies says that we think we know better than God.

Job 10:8-12: God's creation of Job. Job talks about his creation as a physical being, and that God knew and made every detail of him. Because of this, he doesn't understand why God has let destruction happen. He believes that his body was made just-so for a reason.

Job 38-40: God tells Job that he cannot possibly understand everything in God's creation. In the immediate context this means that Job cannot expect to fully understand what has happened to him. In the wider context it means that we should not assume that just because we cannot see the point of a thing in creation it doesn't mean that God doesn't have a purpose for it. The reader of Job knows from the outset that it is not God, but the enemy who has destroyed Job's body, and not for good purposes (although God allows good to come to Job in the end, both in his relationship with God and his physical healing and blessing).

Awareness-raising

Children & youth

Climate & environment

Conflict & peace-building

Corruption & governance

Disaster risk management

Discrimination & inclusion

Food & livelihoods

Gender & sexual violence

Health & HIV

Influencing decision-makers

Migration & trafficking

Water, sanitation & hygiene

1 Cor. 6:15-19: our physical bodies are part of the body of Christ.

The laws of the holiness code are no longer essential for marking us as 'pure' and therefore allowing us to approach God, because grace has prevailed. However, our physical bodies are still important! They are part of the body of Christ, and the 'temple of the holy spirit'. It is important that we continue to treat them as part of God's good creation.

**Key points**

- God has created us. Our physical bodies are important because we are physical beings. Our bodies were wonderfully designed and should bring glory to God.
- Adopting cultural practices, such as FGM/C, suggests that we value membership of that culture more than we do our membership of God's kingdom.
- God rejoices in his creation. Our daughters and sisters are beautiful just as he has made them. The practice of FGM/C contradicts what God has created.

**Questions for discussion**

- What does it mean that our bodies are part of the body of Christ? What impact does it have on how we view our bodies and how we treat them?
- What aspects of your body do you not like? How might you think differently about them if you remembered that they are made by God and have a purpose?
- What do you think FGM/C is for? Why do you think these bible passages speak against this practice?

**Reflection**

Ask God to help you to remember that our bodies are part of his good creation.

Related tools

- A1 – Revealing female genital mutilation: information for facilitators [A1: Gender & sexual violence-2]
- A2 – Why address violence against women and girls [A2: Gender & sexual violence-3]
- A2 – What are the root causes of violence against women and girls? [A2: Gender & sexual violence-4]
- A2 – Exploring gender roles and power [A2: Gender & sexual violence-5]
- A2 – Men and women: listening to one another [A2: Gender & sexual violence-6]
- A2 – Self-discovery tool (Violence against women and girls) [A2: Gender & sexual violence-7]
- B – Loving the outcast (Bible study) [B: Discrimination & inclusion-2]
- B – Protecting those vulnerable to sexual violence (Bible study) [B: Gender & sexual violence-7]
- B – Sexual violence in the Bible: the story of Tamar (Bible study) [B: Gender & sexual violence-8]