

Freedom of Belief is Good for Women's Empowerment

3 Drama

Layla washes dishes in the kitchen and then settles at the table with her schoolbooks to study, but her mother interrupts, handing her a grocery bag and list. On her way to the grocery store, Layla sees Amir and Nate playing basketball, and Mia sitting nearby painting her fingernails. Nate invites Layla to play. To the young men's surprise, she makes a basket! Layla coaxes Mia onto the court, and they play basketball with the boys. Later, we see a photo of Layla in her high school basketball uniform. Layla, now 21 and dressed for work, smiles, grabs her bag and heads out the door. Outside the apartment, she gets into the driver's seat of her car and drives away.

Discussion Questions:

* **Have you or someone you know felt violated or restricted based on religious grounds for being a woman?**

* **How do you see Layla changing over time? How did playing a sport empower her?**

* **What has empowered you or the women in your life? How can society protect women from cultural or religious-based discrimination?**

"There's a common misperception that women's rights to equality and freedom of religion or belief are clashing rights, but actually they're inseparable and interrelated."

-- Jacqueline Isaac

"Research shows that there is a correlation between countries with high levels of religious oppression and extremely high levels of gender inequality...Religious freedom gives women options and allows their voices to be heard."

-- Hussein Aboubakr

"Freedom of religion or belief protects the individual, not religion, and this can be a pathway to women's empowerment."

-- Ed Brown

"Freedom of religion or belief allows for a woman to choose what she believes in and how she can live her life according to those beliefs."

-- Mariya Dostzadah Goodbrake

*** Do you see a correlation between women's rights to equality and freedom of belief and conscience? How can the freedom to practice or not practice a faith help empower women?**

*** What are some common ways that women of faith or no faith experience religious-based discrimination?**

*** How does freedom of belief (Article 18) protect the individual, not a religion or religious institution? Why is this distinction important?**

*** What are some practical ways to support women's freedom of belief, conscience and expression?**



Jacqueline Isaac warns, "Many women don't even know their own rights under their nation's constitutional laws."

✱ **What does your nation's constitution say about freedom of belief, religion or conscience?**

✱ **Many nations have laws that protect individuals' rights to freedom of belief and conscience, but their leaders don't enforce them? Why do they turn a blind eye to religious-based discrimination?**

✱ **What are some practical ways that you can encourage others to support the constitutional rights your nation's laws uphold?**

Reflection Time:

What is one valuable truth or idea you gained from this film?

Brainstorm some ideas to promote freedom of religion and belief in your community or workplace.

How can the intersection of religious freedom and women's empowerment be strengthened in your network or community?

Share your ideas with a friend or colleague this week.

To Explore Further:

Read the Forb Booklet, p. 18-19:

<https://d3lwycy8zkggea.cloudfront.net/1510921391/forb-booklet-2017-english.pdf>

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