

DECONSTRUCTION

part2

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This book is meant to help you get the most out of our look at God's point of view on some of today's most controversial, emotionally charged, and polarizing issues.

CONTEXT

This series is built on the foundation of two previous series we've done in the recent past here at Connections. Both of these series were designed to help us make sense of the deconstruction phenomenon.

In Christian circles, deconstruction refers to the process of questioning, examining, and then abandoning the Christian faith.

The first series, conducted during the fall of 2022, was simply entitled "Deconstruction." In that series we took a look into the unprecedented environment in which deconstruction is happening. Specifically, we looked at three faith-eroding pressures we all face every day, and at four weaknesses that have developed inside the church that leave people unprepared to handle the pressures they face and remain faithful to Jesus.

The second series, called "Can You Trust the Bible," ran from mid-April through early May in 2023. In this series we learned that it is reasonable to conclude that the Bible is a trustworthy record of God-inspired writings that tell us the truth, and so is infallible and authoritative.

We strongly recommend reviewing both of these series.
They can be found on Connections' YouTube channel:
@ConnectionsCommunityChurch

How to use this book

FORMAT

A chapter of this workbook is devoted to each week of our 8-week journey.

Each chapter contains the following sections:

Section One contains some of the big ideas from the weekend message and space for you to take notes, make reflections, or jot down questions.

Section Two is a 5-day devotional to help you think deeper through the issues. Here you will find a portion of the Bible to read and some reflection questions to ponder. We recommend reading from the New International Version of the Bible. Other good translations would include the English Standard Version and the New Living Translation.

Section Three has several small group discussion questions. We strongly encourage each person to process their thoughts, questions, and insights with other people who are taking this journey with them. Groups are designed to be a safe place where you can think out loud and hear the perspectives of others as you seek to come to your own conclusions.

Section Four provides additional resources for further exploration. Here you will find some recommended websites, videos, podcasts and books for those looking to dive more deeply into topics.

**A note about these resources: Their inclusion does not mean we endorse everything an author or speaker might say.*

If you have a specific question on the topic we are discussing each week, there are 2 ways you can submit a question:

- 1. You can email us at Questions@my3c.org**
- 2. You can use the “I Have a Question” tab on our Church Center app**

We will address as many of these questions as we can in follow-up videos and digital publications. Follow us on social media to stay up to date.



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One

TRIPPING UP

Is Christianity offensive?

To be offended is to be hurt, irritated, or outraged by what someone says or does that violates your sense of right and wrong.

Jesus Offended People

Many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?” Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you?” From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.
John 6:61,66

The things Jesus taught were sometimes at odds with what people deeply believed. Their choice: Change what they believe is true or be offended and reject the teachings of Jesus.

This same choice is ours.

Today, some people walk away because they think Jesus taught something that He really didn't teach. Others walk away because they've never been taught the beauty or rationality of what Jesus taught us.

And some walk away because they just can't accept that what He really said is true.

Believe or Walk Away

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.
2nd Timothy 4:3-4

We hope to gain **clarity** on what Jesus taught on some of the most controversial issues in our culture, and grasp the **beauty** and **rationality** of what He taught us.

Guiding principles for this journey:

- 1. The Bible, accurately interpreted, tells us the truth.**
- 2. Everyone falls short of the truth.**
- 3. Truth may hurt, but it never damages people.**
- 4. Truth, mixed with grace, over time, changes lives.**



SERMON NOTES



READ

2 Timothy 4:1-5

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

REFLECT

- What will some professing Christians reject? What does this refer to?

- What will they embrace instead?

- What must you do to avoid this tragedy? How will you apply this to your life?

READ

John 8:2-11

At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

REFLECT

- What was Jesus’ attitude toward the Pharisees?

- What was Jesus’ attitude toward the woman?

- What was Jesus’ attitude toward the woman’s sin?

- What can we learn from this story about how to treat people who are practicing a sinful lifestyle?

READ

Matthew 7:21-29

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

REFLECT

- What warnings are we given in vs. 21-23? How do we know what is and is not of God?

- What does Jesus say it takes to build a life that is successful in the end?

- How well are you doing at building an eternally successful life?

- How could you improve?

READ

Matthew 13:53-58

When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.” And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

REFLECT

- Why were many people from Jesus’ hometown offended at his teachings? *(The clues are in how they identified him.)*

- What losses did these people incur because they were offended by Jesus?

- How does your conviction about who Jesus is connect to your willingness to accept what Jesus said (even if it contradicts what you previously believed)?

READ

James 1:19-25

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

REFLECT

- How can anger get in the way of learning and growing?

- What attitude should we have toward the teachings of Jesus?

- What is necessary for the teachings of the Bible to bless your life?

Small Group Discussion Questions

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

What are your biggest fears or questions about this series? What do you hope to gain from this series?

Review the 4 building principles for this series. What are your thoughts about each one of them?

Additional Resources

Websites

Some of the best apologetic websites to search for answer to questions:

Aplogetics315

<https://apologetics315.com>

CARM - Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry

<https://carm.org>

Apologetics Press

<https://apologeticspress.org>

Videos

Red Pen Logic

<https://www.youtube.com/@RedPenLogic>

Great short videos exposing the lack of logic behind many anti-christians memes and slogan.

Books

**These books are excellent at establishing a Christian worldview and living as a faithful Christian in a challenging culture.*

How Now Shall We Live? by Church Colson and Nancy Pearcey

Total Truth by Nancy Pearcey

**Good overview of understanding the Bible's teachings on the major cultural issues Christians are confronted with today.*

Questioning the Bible: 11 Major Challenges to the Bible's Authority by Jonathan Morrow

**Good basic case for the credibility and trustworthiness of the Bible.*

Is the Bible Really True? By Josh McDowell and Dave Sterret



Two

WILDFIRE

Is Christianity Sexually Regressive?

Sex

God designed us as sexual beings with sexual desires that are quickly aroused, intensely felt, and pleurably fulfilled.

(Husband) “You have captured my heart, my treasure, my bride. You hold it hostage with one glance of your eyes. Your love delights me, my treasure, my bride. Your love is better than wine. Your lips are as sweet as nectar, my bride. Honey and milk are under your tongue. You are my private garden, my treasure, my bride. Your thighs shelter a paradise of pomegranates with rare spices...”

(Wife) “Awake, north wind! Rise up, south wind! Blow on my garden and spread its fragrance all around. Come into your garden, my love; taste its finest fruits.”

Song of Solomon 4:9-16

Purpose and Parameters

Sex is best and healthiest when aligned with its God-designed purposes and respecting its God-established parameters.

Our sinfulness damages the beauty of our sexuality.
Manifestations of sexual brokenness include:

1. Promiscuity
2. Adultery
3. Homosexuality

What is a Christian to do?

- ALIGN with God's design for your sexuality.
- TEACH your children the beauty of God's design for sex.
 - STAND for God's beautiful and healthy sexual ethic.
- LOVE people who are sexually scarred or sexually misled.





SERMON NOTES



READ

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.

REFLECT

- As Christians, what are we to avoid? How would you define this?

- What does it mean to “control your own body” sexually? Is it possible to do this? If so, how?

- What does God warn us about that will happen if we fail to comply to this instruction?

- What has God called us to? What does this mean?

READ

**Read the follow verses and answer the questions for each.*

REFLECT

- Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Where does the battle for sexual integrity begin? How do we “guard our hearts” when it comes to sexual integrity?

- Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

What are we to “put to death”? How do you think we do this?

- Hebrews 3:12-13 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

What do we need to avoid having our hearts hardened by sin?

READ

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

REFLECT

- What strategy for sexual integrity is given to us in this passage? What would this look like in your life?

- How does sexual sin differ from other sins?

- To whom does your body belong? What is (among other things) your body?

- How do you use your body to glorify God? How does this apply to us sexually?

READ

Proverbs 5:1-23

REFLECT

- This chapter is all about avoiding an affair. What does the temptation to have an affair look like? (Vs. 3) “For the lips of the adulterous woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil;”

- What results from an affair? (Vs. 9-14) “lest you lose your honor to others and your dignity to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich the house of another. At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. You will say, “How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors. And I was soon in serious trouble in the assembly of God’s people.”

- What strategies should be employed to avoid an affair?
 - According to vs. 8

 - According to vs. 15-19

 - According to vs. 20-23

READ

Romans 1:26-32

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

(Note: "God gave them over" means that he allowed them to go the direction they desired to go and to experience the results of their choice.)

REFLECT

- What are "natural" sexual relations? **i.e. "according to design" or "according to our nature"*

- What are unnatural ones? How does God describe these unnatural relations?

- What does the practice of unnatural sexual relations lead to? **Note: the listing in vs. 29-32 are representative of what can develop, not that every one of these will develop in every person.*

- If a Christian experiences unnatural sexual desires, what should he or she do according to 1st Peter 2:11?

Small Group Discussion Questions

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

How well were you taught God's design for sex when you were growing up? How has this impacted you? If you have kids, how do you plan to teach them about their sexuality?

Temptation to sexual sin is a universal human issue. What do you do to combat sexual temptation? How do you deal with lust (the pull toward unhealthy sexual thoughts and practices)?

In light of Jesus' example and teachings...

- How should we relate to those with same-sex sexual attraction?

- How should we relate to members of the LGBTQ+ community?

- What do you think the church could do to reach the LGBTQ+ community with the gospel?

Additional Resources

Websites

Check out some great resources for healthy marital sex at this helpful blog post:

<https://thehopefilledfamily.com/christian-sex-advice/>

Christian Sexuality YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/@christiansexuality5565>

Helpful resource for parents and students.

For some good resources on talking to your kids about sexuality check out

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/resources-sex-education/>

Books

Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With? by Sam Allberry

An excellent explanation of God's intent for sex and why it matters.

Is God Anti-Gay? by Sam Allberry

Easy to read with lots of helpful information.

Holy Sexuality and the Gospel by Christopher Yuan

A thoughtful, biblical guide to understanding human sexuality.

People to be Loved by Preston Sprinkle

A deeper dive into same-sex attraction and same-sex relationships that is compassionate, biblical, and fair-minded.

Books

****Here are some stories of people who came out of same-sex relationships after coming to faith in Christ.***

The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert by Rosaria Butterfield

Gay Girl, Good God by Jackie Hill Perry

Out of a Far Country by Christopher Yuan and Angela Yuan
Especially helpful for parents with same-sex attracted children.

A Change of Affection: A Gay Man's Incredible Story of Redemption by Beckett Cook

****Helpful resources for parents of LGBTQ+ children:***

Embracing the Journey: A Christian Parents' Blueprint to Loving Your LGBTQ+ Child by Greg and Lynn McDonald

Uncommon Love: God's Heart for Christian Parents of Gay Kids by Mary Comm



Three

DISINTEGRATION

Is Christianity Transphobic?

Design

God created human beings in His image and as a beautiful binary: male and female.
Men and women are designed largely similar, but strategically different.

Differences in **REFLECTING** God's image.

Differences in **RELATING** to others.

Differences in **REPRODUCING** more people.

Each difference was intended to drive us together - in marriage, in families, in communities, in cultures, and in nations - and make us **better together** in all we do.

Disintegration

Something has gone horribly wrong. How did we get here?

>Adam and Eve - People separated from God.

>Rene Descartes - The mind separated from the body.

>Immanuel Kant - The mind separated from objectivity.

>Judith Butler - Gender separated from sex.

>John Money - Body separated from design.

>Critical Theory - People separated from civility.

Gender confusion has become widespread and normalized in our culture.

- Educationally
- Medically
- Legally
- Socially

Results?

Physical, psychological, relational, personal and spiritual damage.

What should a Christians do?

1. Accept yourself as God has designed you
2. Understand the beauty of God's gender binary
3. Equip your children to weather the gender storm
4. Love those struggling with gender identity issues
5. Be a healthy gender influencer



SERMON NOTES



READ

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.

**Note: "be courageous" in the NIV and NLT is more literally and more accurately translated "act like a man" like in the ESV. The traits surrounding it imply that these things are what men should be doing.*

REFLECT

- What does it mean for a man to be on guard? Against what?

- What does it mean for a man to stand firm in the faith? What is needed for a man to do this?

- In what ways should a man be strong? Why do you think this might be an important trait for a man?

READ

Proverbs 31:10-31

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

REFLECT

- What surprises or encourages you most about this portrait of femininity?
- If you are a woman, how can this passage challenge you to become more fully who God made you to be?
- If you are a man, how can this passage challenge you in supporting your wife or women in your life?

READ

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

REFLECT

- What binary did God establish when He created human beings?

- In what ways are men and women the same?

- What should men and women be doing in partnership with each other?

- What did Jesus teach about this gender binary in Matthew 19:4? (*“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’*)

Small Group Discussion Question

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

In what ways might gender stereotypes in our culture feed into gender confusion?

In what ways do you struggle with accepting your God-given gender, or in fulfilling the expectations that God has for you as a man or a woman?

How can we help other people, like our children or friends, be more self-accepting of their bodies and their gender?

When issues on transgenderism come up at work or school, what would be your strategy in dealing with it in a Christian way?

Additional Resources

Websites

Transformed: A brief biblical and pastoral introduction to understanding transgender in a changing culture

<https://www.eauk.org/assets/files/downloads/Transformed.pdf>

A short, simple primer on the transgender issue

Videos and Podcasts

Natasha Crain podcast episode 28: Understanding and Responding to the Transgender Ideology with Frank Turek

Alissa Childers video podcast How to Protect Children and Teens from Transgender Activism with Dr. Jeff Myers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6RFoCluaDo>

Detransition: The Wounds That Won't Heal video podcast of Jordan Peterson interview Chloe Cole

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6O3MzPeomqs>

The Journey Back to My True Identity - Walt Heyer & Kathy Grace Duncan Focus on the Family

Part one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9YExJ7dWn0&t=67s>.

Part two: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GNkV9NHp8pA>

Resources for parents

Exposing the Gender Lie by Jeff Meyers and Brandon Showalter

A short, powerful book (free download at <https://www.summit.org>) that informs parents on the issues and provides practical advice on protecting your children.

Understanding & Responding to the Transgender Movement by the Florida Family Policy Council

<https://www.flfamily.org/issues-research/education/transgender-movement/>

A helpful resource for parents, kids, and schools. Contains links to informative topics on the transgender issue.

Explaining Gender Identity to Kids, parts 1 and 2, Foundations Worldview video podcast.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su5LFlpn75E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVGhmX4AwQA>

Two practical, simple guide for talking to your kids about transgender issues:

1. Talking to Your Kids About Transgender Issues article found

<https://www.familylife.com/articles/topics/parenting/foundations/spiritual-development/talking-to-your-kids-about-transgender-issues/>

2. Talking to your children about transgender issues by Focus on the Family found at

<https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/talking-to-your-children-about-transgender-issues>

Books

Transgender by Vaughn Roberts (*Part of the Talking Points book series*)

A short, easy-to-read, and informative overview of transgenderism in the light of Christian teaching.

Embodied by Preston Sprinkle

A thorough and compassionate explanation of the Bible's teaching on sex and gender.

Love Thy Body by Nancy Pearcey

A comprehensive book by a respected scholar that demonstrates the beauty of God's design of a gender binary, champions a high view of the human body, and sheds light on the origins of the assaults on gender.

Irreversible Damage by Abigail Shrier

A non-Christian investigative journalist takes an in-depth look into the rapid rise of transgender claims among adolescent girls.



four

SHATTERED

Is Christianity Misogynistic?

People were created separately but equally. One male, one female.
Male first, female second. One from dirt, one from flesh.

But...

Equal in essence. (Both are made in the image of God)
Equal in intent. (Both are charged with dominion over the earth)

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image...". So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 1:26-28

Perfect partners - largely alike but strategically different - working together under God's direction to fulfill their created purpose for each other and the world.

Shattered

When the first humans sinned, they shattered their relationship with God and each other. Their hearts became flawed; the image of God became marred; their desires became twisted.

Women would try to control their husbands (and men in general).
Men would rise up and dominate their wives (and women in general).

The battle of the sexes began. And soon things got very, very ugly...

But God intervened

In Old Testament times, He protected women from abuses through the law.
In New Testament times, He restored women to honor through Christ.

The greatest womens movement in human history is Christianity!

Clearing up some common objections

- “Let the women be silent!” - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35
- “No leadership for you!” - 1 Timothy 2:11-15



SERMON NOTES



READ

Judges 4:1-7

Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, now that Ehud was dead. So the Lord sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the Lord for help. Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, “The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you: ‘Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin’s army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.’”

REFLECT

- Whom did God use to lead Israel and deliver them from the oppression of the Canaanites? What things do we find her doing in this passage?

- What does this say about God’s view of women?

- In what ways did Deborah defy feminine stereotypes?

- What was Barak’s attitude toward Deborah? How should this inform our attitude toward women in leadership positions?

READ

Exodus 1:15-21

The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?” The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

REFLECT

- In what ways did the midwives show courage and wisdom?

- What happened to the Hebrew people because of the midwives actions?

- What motivated their courage? What does this mean?

- How did God respond to the midwives courage? What principle can we learn from this?

READ

Acts 18:1-4 & 24-26

After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. - Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

Romans 16:3

Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 16:19

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.

**Note: in Greek writing, the person mentioned first is often considered the leader or more dominant person.*

REFLECT

- What ministries (Christian activities) was Priscilla involved in?

- What qualities or gifting would Priscilla have needed to do the work God called her to?

- What was Paul's attitude (he was the one writing the verses we read) toward Priscilla? How should this inform our attitude toward women in positions of leadership?

READ

Acts 2:17-18

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

REFLECT

- What do men and women believers share equally?

- What would this mean regarding the following works of the Holy Spirit?
 - In gifting Christians? (1st Corinthians 12:7)

 - In empowering Christians? (Ephesians 3:16)

 - In leading Christians? (Romans 8:14)

 - In standing before God? (Romans 8:15-17)

- What conclusions would we be confident in drawing from these realities?

Small Group/Reflection Questions

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

As you look around the cultural landscape, what evidences of do you see of the shattered relationship between men and women, and between husbands and wives?

Read Galatians 3:26-28 - This passage is not teaching that there is no longer such a thing as gender differences. What do you think it is teaching when it comes to how the kingdom of God works and how we look at each other?

Read Ephesians 5:22-29 - God seems to assign gender roles in the home but not in the church or in culture. What might be God's wisdom behind this? What do you think a husband being the head of the home means? How is it to be practiced?

**Important note: Whenever male "headship" is referred to in the Bible, it is not men's headship of women a husband's headship of his wife and home.*

Additional Resources

Websites

Is there misogyny in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/misogyny-Bible.html>

How did Jesus view women?

<https://www.uncover.org.uk/questions/how-did-jesus-view-women/>

Is God a Misogynist? The Gospel Coalition podcast by Mary Willson Hannah

https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/conference_media/is-god-a-misogynist/

Paul and Women article at <https://christianthinktank.com/fem09.html>

Videos

Is God Sexist? by Dr. Jo Vitale on the Jude 3 video podcast

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRjlWfF-A2w>

Is the Bible Sexist? Dr. Amy Orr-Ewing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UWQ6_6S_io

Is Christianity Anti-Women? Message by John Ortberg

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4fsGe152dc>

The Toxic War on Masculinity The Alisa Childers video podcast with Nathan Crain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGMXks4-w3w>

Is The Church Sexist? Apologia S01 E04

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPgRdaVUPiQ>

Short form videos:

Why is the Bible so sexist? Video by Baptist Youth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDATFjJFGmw>

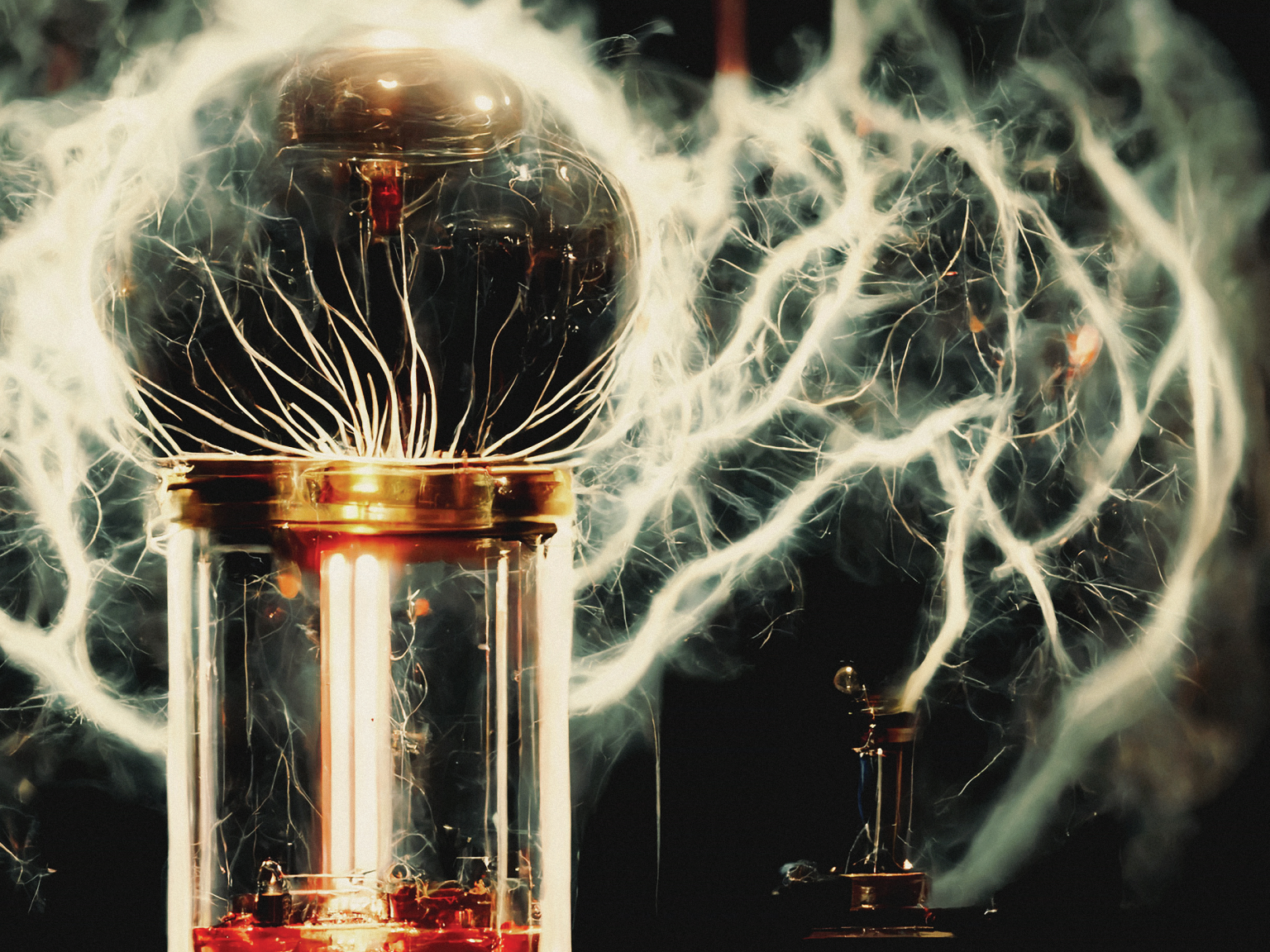
Does the Bible value women and men equally or does it support sexism? RZIM video Q&A by Jo Vitale
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxc7nbWPPIE>

Is the Bible Sexist? What Would You Say? Series video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7YPEdYiKvE

Books

Is God a Misogynist? by David Wilber

A great explanation of the literal, cultural and historical meaning of the perplexing passages that can appear misogynistic - but aren't!



five

DEFENDING the POWERLESS

Is Christianity Anti-Choice?

Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person*.

Genesis 2:7

*Literally, "the man became a being alive".

"He's Alive!"

The moment a human being is alive, you have a person.
What else could it be?

Just being a human being bestows inherent dignity -
not for what they have done or can do,
but for who they are.

- >Each person **bears the image** of God
- >Each person is **designed uniquely** by God
- >Each person has a **life-purpose** given by God.

God demands that every living human being be respected and treated
with the dignity that personhood requires.

When does a human being become a living being (*a person*)?

At Conception

Pro-abortion reasoning justifies the killing of a fetus.
Advocates don't argue that a fetus isn't alive or that a fetus isn't human.
They argue that

A fetus is not a person

Arguments form the morality of abortion and boil down to these four:

- 1) Size.
- 2) Level of development.
- 3) Environment.
- 4) Dependency.

Pro-abortion slogans galvanize acceptance of abortion.

- “My body, my choice”
- “Keep your laws off my body”
- “Abortion is a decision between a woman and her doctor”
- “Abortion is a right” (“reproduction right” or “women’s rights”)
- “Abortion is a healthcare issue”

The arguments for abortion and the slogans that persuade people are all unscientific, incoherent, inconsistent, and irrational.

What is a Christian to do?

1. Personally, show compassion on those who have had abortions and dealing with crises pregnancies.
2. Organizationally, support pregnancy centers and adoption agencies.
3. Relationally, have civil, respectful, and informed conversations about abortion.
4. Politically, vote for pro-life candidates and pro-life legislation.



SERMON NOTES



READ

Psalm 139:13-18

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you.

REFLECT

- What was God's involvement with development after conception?

- When God was forming you, what did he have in mind? **Note: "thoughts" is often translated "plans"*

- How did the knowledge of being designed and created by God with a plan in mind impact the writers self-image? How should it impact yours?

READ

Proverbs 31:8

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.

REFLECT

- What obligation does God give to those who follow Him?

- Does this verse apply to pre-born human beings?

- How can you live out this command?

READ

Exodus 21:22-24

If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

REFLECT

- What was the Law's prescription for dealing with a forced premature birth...

- If there is no harm to the baby?

- If there is harm to the baby?

- What does this say about the personhood of a fetus?

READ

*Read the following verses and answer the question.

Jeremiah 1:5

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

- What is God’s intention toward every pre-born baby?

Psalms 100:3

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

- To whom does a fetus ultimately belong? What are the implications of this?

Luke 1:15

for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

- Is there any difference in how God referred to this baby before or after birth? (*Look at the pronouns*) The filling of the Holy Spirit is done to people. What does this say about this pre-born baby?

Small Group/Reflection Questions

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

Why do you think the pro-life/pro-abortion debate is so heated in our culture? What can Christians do to dial down the heat and dial up the conversation (and persuasion)?

What are some reckless, inappropriate ways people in our country have expressed opposition to abortion? What are some responsible ones?

How could or should the church show compassion toward women who have had an abortion?
Toward women in a crisis pregnancy? Toward women who want to be pregnant but cannot?

Additional Resources

Websites

Good sources of information on pro-life issues:

Americans United for Life <https://aul.org/>

National Right to Life. <https://www.nrlc.org/>

Videos

What the Bible says about abortion. Zondervan video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTYDyQZtu7w>

The Most Compelling Pro-Choice Argument on TIKTOK? Red Pen Logic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ughgm4ww1JE>

Abortion and the Bible. Explainer Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKbTqhcwq4>

What does the Bible say about abortion? Got Questions? Ministries

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq8Cw4tp1po>

What Makes a Fetus a Person? | Reasonable Faith Podcast

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNIAAI1-MCQ>

Human Being vs Human Person. Healing Our Culture informational video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8rTqLhwoL4>

Books

Christianity and Abortion by Eric Jones

A very good explanation of the Christian position for being pro-life based on Scripture.

Abortion by Vaughan Roberts & Lizzie Ling (A Talking Points series book)

A concise overview of the Bible's teachings on the subject in a compassionate tone.

Abortion Recovery

Resources for those struggling with the aftermath of abortion.

Focus on the Family

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/get-help/post-abortive-recovery-resources/>

Save One

<https://saveone.org/>

Forgiven and Set Free Bible study

<https://www.amazon.com/Forgiven-Set-Free-Post-Abortion-Bible/dp/080105723X>

SELAH

A “Selah” in the book of Psalms is an intermission; a time to pause and reflect.

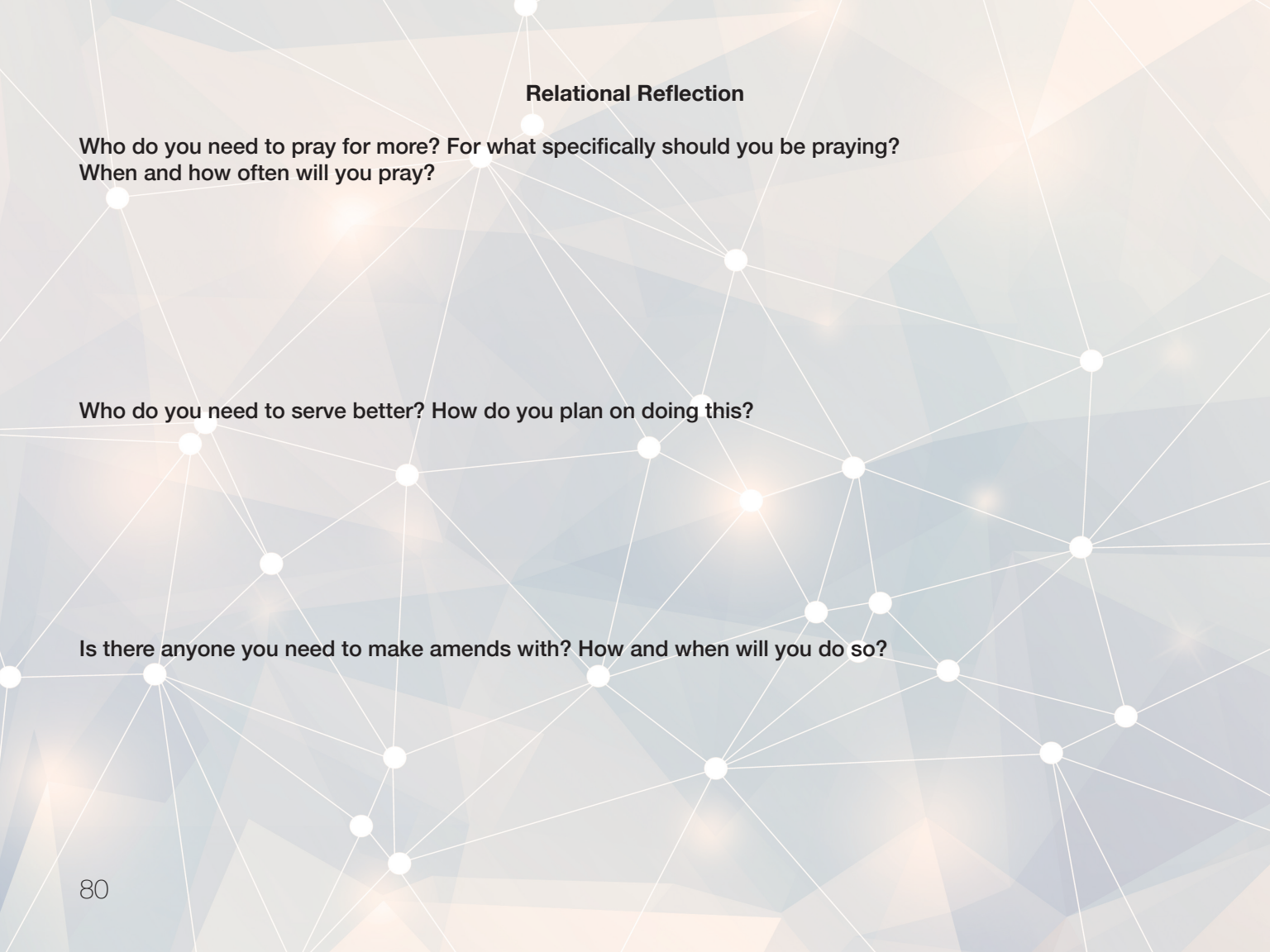
We are taking an intermission between Week 5 and Week 6 of our series to keep things in perspective. We want to ponder what God is doing, and wants to do in our lives, in our relationships, and in our world.

Personal Reflection

How has God challenged your thinking in this series so far?

What changes are you considering/concluding that God is asking you to make?

How do you view the importance of our body? To whom does your body belong? As a follower of Jesus, how do you honor God with your body?



Relational Reflection

**Who do you need to pray for more? For what specifically should you be praying?
When and how often will you pray?**

Who do you need to serve better? How do you plan on doing this?

Is there anyone you need to make amends with? How and when will you do so?

Kingdom Reflection

What is every person's greatest need? How should this influence your conversations and your behavior?

How will you better advance the purposes of Jesus in the lives of your family, your church family, and your community?

How will you stand for the truth in a loving way that honors Jesus? How will you love people with whom you have a serious disagreement?



Six

ALLIES NOT ENEMIES

Is Christianity at Odds with Science?

Science and Christianity:

>Bitter adversaries?

>Separate domains?

>Beautiful partners?

It all depends on how you define the terms.

but...

Science as originally conceived and the Christian faith as properly understood are beautiful partners!

Ancients said God revealed Himself in two books:

The Book of God's Word

and

the Book of God's Creation.

Special revelation and general revelation.
Properly understood, they both tell the truth about who God is!

>The Bible requires the same kind of faith as science.

Everybody lives by faith. The question is how reasonable is your faith?

>The Bible teaches accurate science.

Though the Bible is not a science textbook, it speaks scientific truth.

>The Bible is a perfect compliment to science.

The more important questions that science cannot answer, the Bible can.



SERMON NOTES



READ

Genesis 1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. *(Continue reading in Bible...)*

REFLECT

- How does the Bible tell us that something came out of nothing?

- Can science answer this question? If so, how? What are the answers proposed?

- If there is an all-powerful “1st cause,” who is outside of the natural laws He made, what would that do to one’s belief in the miraculous?

READ

Psalm 14

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. Do all these evildoers know nothing? They devour my people as though eating bread; they never call on the Lord. But there they are, overwhelmed with dread, for God is present in the company of the righteous. You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but the Lord is their refuge. Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores his people, let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

REFLECT

- What premise does a foolish person begin with? Is this premise scientific?

- How does this assumption impact many in the field of science?

- What does a "no God" assumption lead to intellectually according to vs. 2,3?

- What does it lead to socially, according to vs. 4-6?

READ

Romans 1:18-23

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

REFLECT

- What can be inferred about God from the physical universe? (Vs. 18-20)

- What do some people choose to do with the knowledge of God displayed in the universe? (Vs. 21a)

- Vs. 21b says this choice impacts one's reasoning process. What do you think it means for one's "thinking to become futile" and for a "heart to become darkened"?

Small Group/Reflection Questions

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

Have any claims of science ever caused you to doubt the Christian faith or a particular Christian teaching? Have you come to a resolution?

Why do you believe what you believe? On what basis do you answer the most important questions of life: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going?

How would you explain the rationality of what Christianity teaches, like the existence of God or the reliability of the Bible?

Additional Resources

Websites

Reasons to Believe
<https://reasons.org/>

Answers in Genesis
<https://answersingenesis.org/>

Videos

Science Confirms the Bible. Answers in Genesis lecture
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFYswvGoaPU>

Think the Bible Isn't Scientific? Living Waters
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fhe_V4_NoNE

Do God and science contradict each other?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxA-gdq_LUs.

**Note: we may not fully agree in some details in this brief, powerful video, but it is well worth 8 minutes of your time!*

These videos by Dr. John Lennox are deep and very helpful in thinking through issues of science, faith, and reason.

- Theism & Science <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOPt8OGTzJM>
- Does Science Require Faith <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYN3131IT2k>
- Can Science Explain Everything? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0AKUTHcl04>

Origins Debate: Creationism or Theistic Evolution?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3sQpt4enNY>

A well-presented, civil debate of differing theistic views of the origin of the universe.

Books

Can Science Explain Everything? By John Lennox

A concise explanation of the true nature and limitations of science, and how Christian teaching and science work together.

The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel

An investigative journalist talks to experts to determine the evidence for God.

The New Answers Book: Over 25 Questions on Creation / Evolution and the Bible by Ken Ham

Concise answers to basic questions by a leading voice for 7 literal days of creation.

The Way the World Is: The Christian Perspective of a Scientist by John Polkinghorne

A well-renowned scientist reveals the harmony of science with the belief in God.

God and Stephen Hawking by John Lennox

A fascinating critique of Stephen Hawking's view of a naturalistic explanation for the existence of the universe.



Seven

SET MY PEOPLE FREE!

Is Christianity Pro-Slavery?

The text of Jesus' first sermon is found in Luke 4:18-19:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Freedom!

He was making His purposes clear. **Jesus is the ultimate liberator.**

- >Freedom from the penalty and power of sin.
- >Freedom from the pressures and worries of life.
- >Freedom from lack of purpose or direction in life.

But wait...

Isn't the Bible pro-slavery?

“There are verses that condone and even promote slavery.”
“The Bible was used to justify slavery by Christians in the U.S.”
“The apostle Paul condoned slavery.”


Hmmmm...

Let's take a closer look.
Things may not be as they appear.
Or as they have been explained.
Or as accusations claim.

Consistently, the Bible teaches us that slavery is evil and freedom is good.

In the Old Testament, slavery was uniquely limited and highly regulated by the Law.

In the New Testament, slavery was destroyed at its root by Jesus.

A 3D rendered tunnel composed of a series of glowing blue, semi-transparent arches that recede into the distance, creating a strong sense of perspective. The floor is dark and reflective, mirroring the light from the arches. The background is solid black.

The Christian view of the CREATION and understanding of the GOSPEL should compel every follower of Jesus to FIGHT ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION!



SERMON NOTES



READ

Read the following verses and describe how God wants His followers to treat the oppressed.

- Psalm 10:18

defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

- Psalm 74:21

Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace; may the poor and needy praise your name.

- Psalm 82:3

Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

- Isaiah 58:6

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

- Who are the oppressed in today's world?

READ

Deuteronomy 15:12-18

** Some regulations regarding “slavery”*

If any of your people—Hebrew men or women—sell themselves to you and serve you six years, in the seventh year you must let them go free. And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the Lord your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. But if your servant says to you, “I do not want to leave you,” because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, then take an awl and push it through his earlobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your female servant. Do not consider it a hardship to set your servant free, because their service to you these six years has been worth twice as much as that of a hired hand. And the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do.

REFLECT

- In what ways was the “slavery” practiced under the Old Testament law different from the kind of slavery that is practiced in the modern world?

- When treated as God requires, what would be a common response on the part of a “slave” when being set free? What does this say about the relationship between the people involved?

- What is the rationale given for not practicing the kind of slavery we see in the modern world?

READ

Luke 4:14-20

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

REFLECT

- How would you describe the activities that Jesus said He came to do?

- Who would be included among the “prisoners” and “oppressed” in our world today?

- What is the desire of Jesus toward these people? How does He secure their freedom? What role do we play in this?

Small Group/Reflection Questions

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

In what ways do you understand that modern-day, race-based slavery differs from the “slavery” that talked about in the Old Testament?

How do the teachings of Jesus destroy the concept of any kind of human slavery?

What are the kinds of slavery practiced in our world today? What could Christians do to help secure their freedom?

Additional Resources

Websites

Does the Bible Condone Slavery? Article from Emergence
<https://emergencenj.org/blog/2019/01/04/does-the-bible-condone-slavery>

Does God Condone Slavery? by Midtown Fellowship
<https://midtowncolumbia.com/blog/does-god-condone-slavery>

Why It's Wrong to Say the Bible Is Pro-Slavery, The Gospel Coalition website
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-wrong-say-bible-pro-slavery/>

Videos

Does the Bible Condone Slavery and Genocide? by J. Werner Wallace
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbRUKkZ5pTk>

Slavery And The Bible by CrossExamined
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCv_Yk_JzZU

Doesn't the Bible Condone Slavery, Sexism, and Genocide? Abdu Murray on RZIM
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jv8w6ur7co>

Slavery and the Bible Explained!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2q3fqj-BIY>

Did God Sanction Slavery in the Old Testament? Biola University, Dr. Paul Copan
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CyLpygp4eSE>

Books

Is Slavery Sanctioned in the Bible? By Isaac Allen

A thorough exegesis of the Bible's teaching on this subject using word studies and cultural contexts.

How (Not) to Read the Bible by Dan Kimball (chapter 6).

This excellent book touches on many issues. The treatment of slavery is short but on point.



HEADS

FIGHT
ET IT BE
TEM

riso.



JUDE
OUR SUPPORT



FRIENDSHIP IS NOT ABOUT
BEING UNDEFEATABLE
ABOUT BEING SEPERATE
AND NOTHING
CHANGES!

DREAM
TEAM

LOVE IS EVERYWHERE
THE SANDERS

EVERYONE



I AM
NOT
THE ONLY
ONE
WHO SPEAKS

I WOULD DIE FOR YOU
BUT I WON'T LIVE FOR YOU

BE THE CHANGE
YOU WISH TO
SEE IN THE
WORLD.

ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKE

VAMOS X
AHIA DARNOS
BESURIS

Eight

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

Is Christianity Violent and Judgmental?

“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.”
1st Thessalonians 5:23

God is all about peace

Peace with God.

Peace with others.

Peace within our hearts.

So what's with all the violence and judgment in the Bible?!
Genocide. War. Murder. Plagues. Disasters.

Is the “God of the Old Testament” a moral monster?!

What if it turns out that all that “violence” and “judgment” are good?

Is that even possible?

Well, not “all”

Much of the violence we read about in the Bible isn't God committing, commanding or condoning violence; it is simply God reporting the violent acts of people.

So how do we make sense of all the violence and judgment found in the Old Testament?

No judgment, no justice.

We all want justice.

No justice, no love.

We all need love.

No love, no peace.

We all seek peace.



Believe on Jesus.

Share the good news.

Promote biblical justice.

Trust God's timing.



SERMON NOTES



READ

Romans 2:1-4

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

REFLECT

- It is so easy to be judgmental and want justice done to others. What does God warn us about in this passage?

- On what basis does God judge?

- What does God do to turn people from sin and inevitable judgment?

- What does this say about God?

READ

Romans 2:5-11

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

- What do you think "the day of God's wrath" might be referring to?

- What is the picture of justice that God presents in this passage?

Romans 3:21-23

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- What makes it possible for a person to escape judgment (justice) for the sins they have committed?

READ

Malachi 2:17-3:5

You have wearied the Lord with your words. “How have we wearied him?” you ask. By saying, “All who do evil are good in the eyes of the Lord, and he is pleased with them” or “Where is the God of justice?” “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the Lord Almighty.

REFLECT

- What “wearies” God, according to 2:17?

- What kinds of people will God bring justice upon? Who will he bring justice to?

- What do you think God’s justice is like for those who have done evil?

- What do you think God’s justice is like for those who have been oppressed?

READ

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

REFLECT

- What awaits every follower of Jesus? **By “we” Paul means himself and all other Christians.*

- How will justice be done on that day? **Note: the word here translated “bad” fundamentally means “worthless” or “of no good or lasting value”.*

- We are all sinners, deserving judgment (justice) for our sin. But what remedy has God provided for us, according to Isaiah 53:4-6? What must we do to escape just judgment for our sins according to John 3:16?

Small Group/Reflection Questions

**Review the 4 guidelines for this series found in Week One.*

What are your biggest takeaways or questions from the weekend message or your devotional reading?

With what you know about world history, how common would you say violence was among human beings? Why do you think this is so? How violent is our world today? How can violence be subdued?

How does the notion of God's justice/judgment make you feel? How does God's perfect knowledge and gracious nature impact those feelings?

Justice often seems delayed. How can what God says about ultimate justice be of comfort to us in these times? How should final, perfect justice impact the way we live?

Additional Resources

Websites

Thinking Through Old Testament Violence by Andrew Judd of The Gospel Coalition
<https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/thinking-old-testament-violence/>

Did God Condone Violence Found in the Old Testament? by Jessica Brodie
<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/god/did-god-condone-violence-found-in-the-old-testament.html>

Why is there so much violence in the Bible?
<https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/why-is-there-so-much-violence-in-the-bible>

Videos

A Response to the Angry, Immoral God Objection by CrossExamined
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqgD2zw1Y5Q>

Is God a Moral Monster? Dr. Paul Copan on Preston Sprinkle podcast
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_0DGVnkx-w

Why is God so different in the Old Testament than He is in the New Testament? by GotQuestions.org
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHutQ04SSbs>

Doesn't the Bible Condone Slavery, Sexism, and Genocide? Abdu Murray on RZIM
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jv8w6ur7co>

Violence in the Old Testament series, 7-Minute Seminary videos by Seedbed.
Part 1: Violence in the OT - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hotJ7p0f9l&t=27s>
Part 2: Violence in Joshua - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGVn1gaSsAs>
Part 3: Violence in Judges - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf2lX1nYkKw>

Books

Is God a Moral Monster? by Paul Copan

A thorough treatment of the Old Testament passages where God seems to not be all that good.

Two follow-up books by Copan are also valuable: Did God Really Command Genocide?
and Is God A Vindictive Bully?

God Behaving Badly by David Lamb

Addresses all the ways God claims to be one thing but sometimes seems to act like something different.

