



Answers for Chris Lesson 5

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Answers for Chris

Course Overview

- ▶ Lesson 1 - Chris' World – Values, Meaning and Truth in Our Culture
- ▶ Lesson 2 - Questions About God, Suffering and Pain
- ▶ Lesson 3 - Questions About Christian Exclusivity, Judgment and Hell
- ▶ Lesson 4 - Questions About Genocide and Slavery in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 5 - Questions About Sexism and Homosexuality in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 6 - Questions About the Bible and Science
- ▶ Lesson 7 - Questions About the Bible, Superstition, and Mythology
- ▶ Lesson 8 - Questions About the Message and the Messenger

Biblical Treatment of Women



- ▶ Does Christianity oppress women? Since the Bible contains commands regarding head coverings, submission, and silence in churches, doesn't that prove it is misogynistic?

Human Dignity Revisited

- ▶ Like Chris, we should take the issue of all human dignity, both male and female, seriously
 - ▶ We oppose practices against women such as domestic violence, sex trafficking and exploitation, rape, forced marriage, and genital mutilation
- ▶ In the context of natural order, how does Chris conclude that man, as the more physically dominant gender, should not be allowed to control women?
 - ▶ As one created in the image of God, the Bible actually establishes the basis for woman's natural dignity
 - ▶ The Bible goes further by explaining that there are no "classes" in Christ (slave/free, male/female, rich/poor)

The Bible and Women

- ▶ The Bible teaches the principle of gender equality not gender equivalence
 - ▶ Gender difference ≠ Gender superiority/inferiority
- ▶ Equality is identified by ultimate value and significance
 - ▶ Gal 3:28 – there is neither male nor female in Christ
 - ▶ Jn 4 – Jesus acting contrary to cultural divides
 - ▶ Women’s engagement in Jesus and the apostles’ ministries
- ▶ Equivalence is identified by assuming gender identity in terms of physical capability, behavioral and emotional responses, and roles and responsibilities

Biblical Non-Equivalences That Often Sound Offensive to Chris

▶ Physical strength

- ▶ 1 Pe 3:7 states women are the “weaker partner.”
 - ▶ This deals with physical gender differences but actually encourages honor and non-oppression of wives

▶ Authority and leadership in the home and church

- ▶ “Headship” and “submission” verses (e.g., 1 Co 11:3, Eph 5:22, 1 Ti 2:1 and 1 Pe 3:1) along with elder/deacon qualifications communicate a chain of authority
- ▶ Chris often infers this as gender inequality and male dominance...a thorough conversation is required to unpack the differences

The Bible and Authority/Leadership

General Observations

- ▶ To have a useful conversation, we should understand
 - ▶ The Bible states everyone is under authority...even Christ (1 Co 11:3)
 - ▶ The Trinity itself demonstrates equality without equivalence (Php 2:5-8)
 - ▶ Without clear lines of authority and leadership, confusion reigns (1 Co 14:33)
 - ▶ Authority does not mean authoritarianism (1 Pe 3:7, Eph 5:25)
- ▶ Anecdotally, I find fewer women concerned about men leading than apathetic men leading poorly

The Bible and Authority/Leadership

Handling Some Difficult Verses

- ▶ **Head-coverings (1 Co 11:2-16)**
 - ▶ In Paul's time, women were approaching the Lord in public worship with heads uncovered
 - ▶ Similar to pagan priestesses
 - ▶ In most ancient cultures including Corinth, and some modern cultures, removing of head covering indicates respect in the presence of a superior
 - ▶ Therefore Paul says:
 - ▶ When a man approaches the Lord he is to “uncover” as a sign of respect before Christ
 - ▶ When a woman approaches the Lord , she is to remain “covered” as a sign of man's authority between she and Christ
 - ▶ The head covering is cultural, the principle is persistent

The Bible and Authority/Leadership

Handling Some Difficult Verses

- ▶ Teaching, authority, silence, and deception (1 Ti 2:9-15)
 - ▶ Teaching and authority refers to formal pastor/teacher role within the sphere of public worship
 - ▶ Quietness refers to not acting as the teacher
 - ▶ Paul reinforces
 - ▶ the created order (v13)
 - ▶ the failure of both genders in the Fall (v 14)
 - ▶ the blessing of both genders in redemption

Biblical Treatment of Homosexuality



- ▶ Isn't Christianity homophobic and anti-gay? Don't evangelicals encourage oppression of the LGBT community by seeking to deny their civil rights?

Agreements and Differences

- ▶ Like Chris, we should take the issue of all human dignity seriously
 - ▶ We oppose disrespectful speech and violent acts against others based on their sexuality
- ▶ We do not accept that opposition to homosexual practices constitutes fear or hatred i.e., homophobia
- ▶ We do not accept that in order to love someone, we must agree with their lifestyle

The Progression of Societal Sin

From Romans 1:18-32

- ▶ Based on Greco-Roman culture, the Bible gives us a blueprint for the moral devolution of a society
 - ▶ Suppression of truth about God
 - ▶ Refusal to worship God according to who he is
 - ▶ Religious and personal idolatry
 - ▶ Sexual degradation and impurity
 - ▶ Homosexual and lesbian sin
 - ▶ Depraved God-haters full of envy, murder, violence and deceit; lacking in love and mercy
 - ▶ Approving and applauding evil at every level

Where Modern Christians Have Been Right and Modern Christians Have Been Wrong

- ▶ Christians have been right to identify homosexuality as a Biblical sin
 - ▶ Ro 1, 1 Ti 1, 1 Co 6
- ▶ Christians have been right to uphold marriage between one man and one woman
 - ▶ Mark 10
- ▶ Christians have been wrong to “camp out” on homosexual sin to the exclusion of others
- ▶ Christians have been wrong to focus primarily on reforming societal behavior rather than gospel redemption

Understanding the Gay Rights Strategy

- ▶ In the 80s and 90s through “The Overhauling of Straight America” and similar publications, gays developed a very clear and successful strategy:
 - ▶ Make culture indifferent about homosexuality
 - ▶ Portray homosexuals as victims not aggressive challengers
 - ▶ Give protectors a just cause e.g., injustice and furthering civil rights
 - ▶ Make gays look very good – identify prominent gays in history and encourage prominent gays to come out today
 - ▶ Make victimizers look bad – analogous to the KKK, fascists and bigots
 - ▶ Portray evangelical Christians to be culturally regressive and threatening
 - ▶ Overcome traditional Biblical objections through promoting alternative theology and theologians
 - ▶ Solicit funds and actively engage the media
 - ▶ Actively work through judicial and legislative causes

The Bible and Homosexuality

- ▶ To have a useful conversation, we should
 - ▶ Decouple the linkage between the way the Bible treats race and sexuality
 - ▶ Race is amoral while sexuality has a distinctly moral component
 - ▶ Race is immutable while research suggests there is no absolute genetic vs. environmental contribution to sexuality
 - ▶ Show God's view on sexuality is not culturally adaptable and homosexuality is not a greater sexual sin than others
 - ▶ Diffuse the stereotype that opposing a belief or lifestyle translates to hatred or fear
 - ▶ Show the solution for homosexual sin is the same as any other sin – there is no difference (1 Co 6:11)