

Answering Objections to Christianity



Shining Mountains Bible Study Fall 2020

“Christianity is misogynistic. The god of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, oppresses women as less than fully human like men are. It is anti-women’s rights.”

Problematic Passages

Read the following passages. Briefly describe why the passages appear to be misogynistic.

1. Leviticus 12:1-5
2. Deuteronomy 21:10-14
3. Deuteronomy 25:5-10
4. 1 Timothy 2:11-14
5. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35

Problematic Practices

The following are anonymous quotes from WELS women in research gathered in a seminary thesis¹:

- *How the doctrine challenges*: “I’m stubborn and independent and strong.... That selfish part of me that doesn’t want to take the back seat at times—that part I struggle with.”
- *Feelings of equality*: “I don’t really say that I’m a feminist, but I don’t say I’m not a feminist either because I do like having equal opportunities like voting rights, and women should be treated with respect.”
- *Feelings of inequality*: “In this strong sort of [church] culture... you start to think, ‘Okay, women aren’t allowed to do this or that.’ You start to feel devalued, you know?”
- *Where the doctrine makes life difficult*: “[My college roommate] would always be like, ‘Why are you getting an education if you want to be a stay-at-home mom?’ And that was something I constantly had to defend. That was kind of hard.”
- *Cherished aspects of the doctrine*: “I like the idea of the man taking care of the woman.... I understand that God didn’t really put it there to be demeaning to one party.”
- *More female involvement*: “My belief is that we could do more to use women’s gifts more broadly.”
- *How the teaching is applied*: “I just see a complete lack of female representation.”
- *Calls for more discussion/education*: “I [would like to see] more education around the controversial topics, making them not so taboo.”
- *Impression of the pastor who taught the doctrine*: “[When the pastor rushes past the doctrine,] it makes me think he’s ignorant because he doesn’t realize that the issue’s bigger and needs more dissection and explanation.”

¹Kurtis Wetzel, “Hearing the Helpers: An Examination of How WELS Women Understand the Teaching of the Roles of Men and Women in an Age of Feminism,” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary thesis, 2016, 20-21.

Discuss struggles or difficulties women have had or could have at Shining Mountain or in a church body like WELS. *Men must first listen to the women at their tables before they can comment!*

Ideal Passages

Of all the Gospels, Luke's Gospel most emphasizes Jesus' treatment of the poor, the marginalized, and the women of first century Palestine. Certainly, the ancient world was much more patriarchal than it is now.

1. **Read** Luke's account of the resurrection in light of the quote below (**Luke 24:1-12**).
Discuss what is so striking in how Luke records the resurrection.

"Additionally, the accounts of the resurrection in the Bible were too problematic to be fabrications. Each gospel states that the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection were women. Women's low social status meant that their testimony was not admissible evidence in court. There was no possible advantage to the church to recount that all the first witnesses were women. It could only have undermined the credibility of the testimony. The only possible explanation for why women were depicted as meeting Jesus first is if they really had. N.T. Wright [a New Testament scholar who wrote The Resurrection of the Son of God] argues that there must have been enormous pressure on the early proclaimers of the Christian message to remove the women from the accounts. They felt they could not do so – the records were too well known. The accounts of the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection would have been electrifying and life-changing, passed along and retold more than any other stories about the life of Jesus." -Timothy Keller, The Reason for God

2. **Read Galatians 3:28** and **defend** this statement: "In biblical usage, a different role does not mean an inferior status. It may help to think about it in terms of a sports team or an orchestra.

Ideal Practices

3. **Read Ephesians 5:21-33** and respond: **Agree or Disagree**: "The problem with apparent misogyny within Christianity is not the Bible. It's with how men fail to treat women the way the Bible tells them."
4. **List** some ideal practices our church could do to counter the attack of misogyny:

Conclusion

Practice how you would answer this objection to Christianity.