

Which Lives Matter?

When asking the question, "Which lives matter?", I think it's appropriate to ask it in the context of our current culture and the issues that are present there. So when you hear people talking about which lives matter, what key issues does that subject usually surround?

3 key areas in our world today:

1. Racism
2. Sexism
3. Abortion

1. Racism

-The first thing to realize is that there is only 1 race, the "human race". Rather, there are different ethnicities within the human race. All human beings have the same physical characteristics (with minor variations, of course). More importantly, all human beings are equally created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world....". The "world" is all inclusive and includes every "race" as we will call them from here on out.

-All racism is hinged on what we call, "xenophobia", which is the fear or hatred of anything strange or foreign, particularly as it relates to people. This condition is a result of our sin nature and selfishness. If it doesn't pertain to us, benefit us, or isn't common to us we innately form a disconnect with it, which has the potential to grow into a fear or hatred of it. But it all comes down to the differences.

-God is the creator of these differences. In Genesis 11 we see mention of the tower of Babel and how God confused the people with different languages and in this way scattered them all over the world. The Bible is not clear about where different skin colors come from and because of that there are many different theories concerning that. A logical explanation is that the genetic information needed for different skin colors was present in humans from the beginning and as the people were scattered according to their languages the genetic pool for each group got smaller. Continued cycles of reproduction would begin to weed out the more rare traits and traits that were not suitable for the climate. This would result in more distinguished differences between the groups over time.

-Example

-All long and short haired dogs live together in a mild climate. There is an even mix of the two.

-The people of that region all move away to places of extreme cold and hot. They take an even split of the dogs with them.

-As time goes on the short haired dogs in the cold climate don't live as long as the long haired dogs. They don't get to reproduce and pass on the short hair gene and so it begins to fade away.

-In the hot climate the long hair dogs don't survive as long and so they are not able to pass on the long hair gene.

-Given enough time those genes less suitable will be done away with and you will end up with more distinct differences between the two groups than there was to begin with.

-Do we see racism in the Bible?

-The most glaring picture of racism in the Bible is the relationship between the Jew and the Gentile. But it was not supposed to be like this.

-The Jews were a people set apart. They were meant to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) that ministered to the gentile nations. It was through them that "all nations" of the earth would be blessed. (Acts 3:25)

-But they instead became proud of their position and began to think of themselves as greater than the gentiles. This is made evident in (Acts 15:5-11).

-Conclusions

-Although we see evidence of racism in the Bible, we see that it is a product of sin and not of God's design.

-Galatians 3:28, *"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

-God does not show partiality or favoritism (Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11)

-Again John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world....".

-Revelation 5:9 says, ".....For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

-Our command is to "go and make disciples of all the nations....."-Matthew 28:19

2. Sexism

-In our current culture, sexism or gender inequality is something that is discussed or rather argued over quite frequently. But the truth is that in our society there are not very many outstanding examples of this. However if you take a look into history and into the Bible the situation is vastly different.

-Many times throughout history we can find women being mistreated, devalued, and used up only to be thrown aside.

-The story of Hagar in Genesis 16 is just one picture of the way women were treated in that time period.

-Is sexism permitted or even commanded in the Bible?

-Many critics of the Bible will point to 2 two verses in the Old Testament to justify their claims that the Bible is flawed and therefore cannot be God inspired.

-Deuteronomy 22:28-29, *"28 Suppose a man (seizes and) has intercourse with a young woman who is a virgin but is not engaged to be married. If they are discovered, 29 he must pay her father fifty pieces of silver. Then he must marry the young woman because he violated her, and he may never divorce her as long as he lives."*

-Exodus 22:16-17, *"16 'If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to anyone and has sex with her, he must pay the customary bride price and marry her. 17 But if her father refuses to let him marry her, the man must still pay him an amount equal to the bride price of a virgin."*

- At first these verses look like they are meant to force a woman to marry someone who has raped her. And while that may very well be the result, the law was meant as punishment for the man and help for the woman.
- Context will help us to understand this better.
- Understand that the purpose of laws is to discourage people from certain courses of action and also to enforce punishment if those actions are taken. With that understanding let's look into these laws.
- The law permitted divorce in certain situations but under these circumstances that was negated and if the guy had no desire to be married to that particular woman then that was a loss for him.
- The man also had to pay the bride price, even if the father refused to allow his daughter to marry him. Again this is a loss on the guy.
- In this society virginity was prized. If a woman were not a virgin, it would have been very likely that she would have never been desired as a wife and therefore would live as a single woman. And to be a single woman was to struggle to provide for yourself and many times meant selling yourself into slavery or prostitution just to survive. In this way it was a help to the woman that the man was commanded to marry her and not just leave her as defiled and undesirable.
- In 2 Samuel 13 David's daughter Tamar was raped by her half brother and afterwards seemed to desire to marry him rather than to live alone for the rest of her life.
- It was because of the way women were treated and viewed in that day and time that God gave such laws to His people.

-Where did it come from?

- Just like every other problem we see in the world today, sexism is a result of sin in the human race. This means that it was not in God's original plan, therefore it is not condoned by God.
- In Genesis we see that God created man AND WOMAN in His own image (Genesis 1:27). This means that God created men and women equally, but while they were created equally they were also created differently.
- God intended for men and women to be different and to have different roles. We see evidence of this all the way back to the moment of creation.
 - The method of creation was different. (Genesis 2:7,22)
 - They were made to complement each other. (Genesis 2:18, 1:28)
 - Their curses were different. (Genesis 3:16-19)
- The Old Testament is not the only place where we find distinction between men and women. The New Testament has some pretty straightforward guidelines concerning the differences between the two.
- Ephesians 5:21-33**, *"21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. 24 As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. 25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her 26 to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. 27 He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church"*

without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.³⁰ And we are members of his body. ³¹ As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." ³² This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. ³³ So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

-In these verses we see that each role is different yet designed to work together.

A wife is supposed to submit and follow while a husband is supposed to love and lead in such a way that the wife's submission is easily justified.

-1 Timothy 2:11-15, *"11 Women should learn quietly and submissively. 12 I do not let women teach men or have authority over them. Let them listen quietly. 13 For God made Adam first, and afterward he made Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived by Satan. The woman was deceived, and sin was the result. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing, assuming they continue to live in faith, love, holiness, and modesty."*

-This is God's design, for men to lead and women to follow.

-It is also very evident that the biological differences between men and women make each one suitable for different roles.

-Examples: A 5'2" woman doesn't have a chance at being drafted into the NFL. It's not because she's a woman, it's the same reason a 5'2" man would not be drafted into the NFL.

If you're on the 10th floor of a building that's on fire do you want to see a 5' 110 lb woman climbing the ladder towards you, or would you feel more secure if it were a 6'2" 250 lb man.

-True Equality

-1 Peter 3:7, *"7 In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered."*

-This verse points out a few different things but the thing I want to focus on is that it points out the differences between men and women at the same time it shows their equality.

-Typically women are weaker physically. That's not discriminatory it's just fact.

-But men and women are equal in that they both are able to receive God's gift of new life.

-The equality that men and women have is the best kind of equality. Spiritual equality.

-Galatians 3:28, *"There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

-Again this verse affirms that we are equal in Jesus.

3. Abortion

-For the Christian, the issue of abortion should be very black and white. There should be no grey areas. But the truth is that in today's culture there are so many conflicting arguments and so many opinions, that Christians sometimes get caught in the middle not knowing exactly what to think.

-When it comes to the argument for abortion there are 2 major platforms that pro-choice people like to stand on.

1. Cases of rape or incest
2. Cases where the mother's health or life are at risk

-1. Cases of rape or incest

-When it comes to this situation some find it hard to argue against abortion for fear of sounding insensitive about the crime committed against the woman. But being concerned for someone's life doesn't mean you are automatically unconcerned about another's well being.

-The old saying "2 wrongs don't make a right" fits well here but it could use some more explaining.

-In the Bible we never see a situation where committing a sin is justified or commanded because someone has committed a sin against you. We see plenty of instances where justice is a response to sin but never where sin is a response to sin.

-If someone cut my arm off, it would be ridiculous for me to go find some random unrelated person and cut their arm off as response to what happened to me.

-The baby that comes from a woman being raped is not responsible for that and should not be made a victim as a result.

-“But why should the mother have to deal with the consequences?”

-All sin comes with consequences whether it's sin that we commit, or sin that is committed against us.

-We can even experience the consequences of sin when it's not committed directly against us. If someone in my family or one of my friends is murdered I am going to experience the consequences of that sin in a big way.

-The bottom line is that we live in a sin sick world and we all live with and experience the consequences of sin every day. A woman who is raped and becomes pregnant as a result is no exception to that fact.

-And the truth is that raising that child is not mandatory. Adoption is always an option.

-2. Cases where the mother's health or life are at risk

-This is a very hard question to answer, but it is one that is often asked.

-The thing we have to realize when we consider this question is that this is the reasoning behind less than 10% of 1% of all abortions that are performed. (Estimated 882,000 abortions in America in 2017. That means less than 88 of those were due to this reason.)

-Statistically speaking this number is negligible and therefore should never be used to argue for a woman's right to "choose". Yet it is always one of the main arguments brought up.

-The truth is there is no clear cut answer in this situation. It is between the mother, the father, and God as to what decision should be made in these situations.

-Although the Bible does not address the issue of abortion directly it does show us God's position towards children in the womb.

-Jeremiah 1:5, "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations."

-Psalms 139:13-16, "13 You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. 15 You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. 16 You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed."

-Exodus 21:22-25, "22 'Now suppose two men are fighting, and in the process they accidentally strike a pregnant woman so she gives birth prematurely. If no further injury results, the man who struck the woman must pay the amount of compensation the woman's husband demands and the judges approve. 23 But if there is further injury, the punishment must match the injury: a life for a life, 24 an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, 25 a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise.'

-If God considers a child in the womb to be a life then we should too.

The question is, "Which lives matter?"

-The answer is simply all lives.

-We are valued above all other creation because we were created in the image of God.

-Genesis 1:26-27, "26 Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.' 27 So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

-Ultimately the value of something is determined by what someone is willing to pay for it

-1 Peter 1:18-19, "18 For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. 19 It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God."