



#6 Isn't the Bible culturally and socially regressive?

For example, its teachings about women...

...and sexual morality...and what about homosexuality?

Is the Bible regressive regarding women?

1. By whose standard do we measure and judge what is regressive or progressive?
 - A. The problem you have with some teachings of the Bible may be based on an unexamined belief in the [superiority](#) of your culture and historical moment over all others. (CS Lewis and Tim Keller)
 - B. Moral relativists claim that there is no basis for objectively judging one culture's morality to be better than another's, [yet](#) they truly believe that some practices of some cultures are morally inferior to others.
 - C. Atheism can't speak to morality. Any attempt to question the morality of the God of the Bible based on atheistic ideas of right or wrong, progressive or regressive, is filled with error and self-contradiction from its inception. Darwinian evolution leads [logically](#) to racism and sexism.
2. The Biblical passage that bothers you may not teach what it appears to be teaching. Consider [cultural](#) context.
 - A. Example: Roman slavery vs. chattel slavery
 - B. Example: OT laws regarding treatment of women
 - C. Modern critics cite OT laws without understanding the intent of the law or how the Israelite community interpreted and applied the law. Also, understanding the historical context of Israelite law against the backdrop of laws and practices of [other](#) nations is very helpful.
 - D. Supposed "New Testament Atrocities"
3. Bible teaches equal value with differing roles and responsibilities.
 - A. The Bible teaches that men and women are of equal value both being made in the [image](#) of God. (Gen 1:26-27)
 - B. The Bible assigns different roles and responsibilities for men and women.
 - C. Only since the 20th century, has Western culture grown increasing opposed to the idea of male leadership and female submission to male leadership.
4. Jesus, NT teaching, and early Christianity [elevated](#) women above 1st century cultural norms.
 - A. In the Greco-Roman world, Christianity accorded women considerable status and made life far more attractive for all female members.
 - B. No infanticide among the Christians. ([Female](#) infanticide was common.)

- C. No forced [early](#) marriage among Christians.
 - D. No abortion among the Christians.
 - E. No double standard for men among the Christians. Christian women also enjoyed very important advantages in terms of a secure marriage and family life.
 - F. No [frivolous](#) divorce among the Christians.
 - G. No forced remarriage of [widows](#) among the Christians.
 - H. Christianity held great appeal for women, such that there was a higher percentage of women in the churches than men.
 - I. In Christian communities women enjoyed superior status, relatively greater power and freedom in comparison with their pagan counterparts.
5. Compare "Christian" communities and societies to others. Which treats women better?

Is the Bible regressive regarding sexual morality, including homosexuality?

1. The Bible teaches that many things are [wrong](#). (Proverbs 6:16-19; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 12:20)
2. Jesus taught us to [love](#) our neighbors as ourselves. (Luke 10:27)
3. Western society has changed its views on heterosexual morality and homosexuality in the past few decades. Who is to say that the new morality is progressive? When a society accepts, then approves behaviors it once identified as wrong, how is that progressive?
4. Tim Keller notes that to stay away from Christianity because part of the Bible's teaching is offensive to you assumes that if there is a God he wouldn't have any views that upset you.
 - A. Consider the Bible's core claims about who Jesus is and whether He rose from the dead [before](#) rejecting it for its less central and more controversial teachings. Distinguish between the major themes and message of the Bible and its less primary teachings.
 - B. A "Stepford God" is a robot that never crosses my will. It is a god who is wonderfully compliant and beautiful, but not personal. A god who can't [challenge](#) and correct your thinking is a god with whom you cannot have a personal relationship.
 - C. If you eliminate everything from the Bible that offends your sensibility and crosses your will, then you will never have a God who can [contradict](#) you. You'll have a god of your own making, not a God with whom you can have a relationship and genuine interaction.
 - D. An authoritative Bible is the precondition for a personal relationship with God.

Message

NT Christianity affirms
Christ's moral authority and every person's dignity.