

How Christianity Changed the World

Sexual Morality

Roman writers (Juvenal, Catullus, Martial and Ovid) testify that sexual activity between men and women had become depraved before, and during the time that Christians appeared in Roman society. Adultery, fornication, homosexuality, sadism, orgies and bestiality had become common and were even illustrated on household items like oil lamps, bowls, cups and vases. Yes, even their children saw these items, so modesty was nowhere to be found.

Adultery

Adultery was exclusively defined in terms of the women's status, not the man's, and was a property violation. So, a man, married or single, couldn't be accused of adultery but a woman could because she was another man's wife and adultery was a property offense punishable by death. Because of this, many married women registered as prostitutes so they were not exclusively seen as their husband's property and could then commit adultery without being punished.

Into this culture, Christians said that sex between a husband and wife was an expression of mutual love and respect, not of self-serving lustful gratification.

1st Corinthians 7:3, 1st Peter 3:7

They also believed the sex act made them "one flesh" and required them to be faithful to each other. Contrary to the GR pagan view, they saw sex outside marriage as wrong and sinful. Per a 2nd century document, "They (Christians) have a common table, but not a common bed." Believers also saw marriage as a type of relationship between believers and God. **Ephesians 5:22-33**

(Continued next page)

How Christianity Changed the World

Homosexuality

Homosexuality in ancient times was mostly pederast or pedophilic (between an adult man and a young boy). GR gods didn't set high standards, nor did they ask for repentance, which was weakness. Christianity condemned all forms of homosexuality as being wrong and sinful and contrary to the way God made humans. ***Romans 1:27, Jude 7***

Today's outlawing of pedophilia is completely due to Christianity's influence. But the Bible doesn't differentiate between pedophilia and adult homosexuality, including lesbianism. All these acts are sinful sexual perversions in God's eyes. It seems wherever pagan values reign, that homosexuality eventually becomes practiced (example: the American Indians).

Obviously, Christians weren't admired for rejecting the Roman's sexual immoralities. Saint Augustine said in the 5th century that the Roman's despised Christians because they opposed their unrestrained sexual lifestyles. Tertullian said that the Romans so despised the Christians that they hated the name 'Christian'. No other world religion elevated sexual morality to this degree (or anywhere close to it).

Status of Women

Were ancient women accorded the same rights as men? Let's take a look:

A Greek woman:

Wasn't allowed to leave the house without her husband or his escort
(usually a male slave)

When her husband's male guests were present in his home, she wasn't allowed to be with them and had to retire to her own part of the house. But the husband's mistress could be there and accompany him to events outside the home. His mistress was his companion and sexual partner.

(Continued next page)

How Christianity Changed the World

Status of Women (continued)

A Greek woman: *(continued)*

The wife couldn't divorce her husband, whereas he could divorce her anytime.

Girls didn't go to school; throughout their lives they weren't allowed to speak in public.

Greek poets equated women with evil; it was the Greek myth of 'Pandora's Box' that blamed women for introducing evil into the world.

Greek female infanticide (the killing of newborns) far exceeded that of males.

One Greek scholar wrote that a male offspring was her principal source of prestige and validation, whereas a female child was an economic and social burden.

Roman women:

Although they enjoyed a little more freedom than the Greek women, they still had none of the rights and privileges that the men enjoyed.

Many women received some education in grammar and reading; they still were not allowed to be present when their husband had guests for meals.

She was under the absolute legal control of her husband, who had ownership of her and all of her possessions. (the Roman law of 'Mannus')

She couldn't divorce him, although he could divorce her at any time.

She even lacked the right to tell her husband's slaves what to do.

She was legally prohibited from owning property.

A husband could even kill his wife for a non-adulterous offense with the approval of an extended-family tribunal. For his wife's adultery, the husband alone could kill her.

She was prohibited from speaking in public or in court.

(Continued next page)

How Christianity Changed the World

Status of Women (continued)

The low regard for women also showed itself in how they were treated sexually. Chastity, in the Christian sense, was almost unknown in heathen societies. Women were slaves to man's lower passions. GR women were often temple prostitutes, like in the temple of Aphrodite (Diana). Pagan gods had very low standards with regards to women and sexuality.

Christianity and Women

John 4 (the Samaritan woman at the well) For a Jew to speak to a Samaritan was bad enough, but to speak to a woman in public was terrible.

John 11 (Mary and Martha) To teach a woman was bad enough, but Jesus called for a verbal response from Martha. (Oh heavens, call out the PC police...!)

Women followed Jesus: **Mark 15:41 and Luke 8:1-3**

Jesus healed women: **Mark 5:24-34**

The Apostolic church welcomed women: **Philemon 2, Colossians 4:15, 1st Corinthians 16:19**

Women were the first to see the resurrected Christ: **Matthew 28:10**

Christianity's growth was also the result of Christian women not practicing abortion and infanticide, which were extremely common to the Greeks and Romans. Given the Roman culture's negativity towards women, they saw the Christian view as a threat to their domestic tranquility. They also saw it as a weakness.

(Continued next page)

How Christianity Changed the World

Christianity and Women (continued)

In 374 A.D., the Roman Emperor Valentinian repealed the thousand year old laws against women because of ***Galatians 3:28***.

The pagan husband lost the power of death over his family (wife and children).

Women were granted essentially the same rights as men in property.

They also were granted custody of their children who were previously the sole possession of their husbands.

Christian women married later than their pagan counterparts, but also married men of their choice, whereas before, the father had made that decision. The Western tradition of a woman choosing her own mate is due solely to Christianity.

Many ancient women were veiled (wore veils), only single women, prostitutes and women in the lower classes weren't required to wear veils. Christianity put a stop to this.

Although Greeks and Romans had their mistresses, they weren't allowed to marry more than one woman. Most other ancient societies, especially in the Middle East, allowed and encouraged multiple marriages (one man with several wives, but not the other way around). To a large extent, Christianity stopped this; however it still exists in many non-Christian nations today, especially Muslim countries.

Because of Jesus and his teachings, women - especially in the West - enjoy more privileges and rights than at any other time in world history.