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Christianity's Impact on the World, Part 1

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Knight & Rose Show - Wintery Knight and Desert Rose

Wintery Knight and Desert Rose discuss how Christianity has influenced society in many different areas. In this episode, we discuss the sanctity of life, health care, and the status of women. We start by talking about the beliefs and practices were dominant in pre-Christian culture. We then explain what the Bible teaches, and what practices emerged from these beliefs. This is the first of a three-part series.

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Transcript

Welcome to the Knight and Rose Show, where we discuss practical ways of living out an authentic Christian worldview. Today's topic is "Christianity's Impact on the World, Part 1." I'm Wintery Knight. And I'm Desert Rose.

Welcome, Rose. So we're going to begin a three-part series in which we'll be discussing how Christianity has impacted the world. Today, we will look at the cultural changes that

Christianity introduced in three specific areas, sanctity of life, health care, and the status of women.

Let's start with sanctity of life. What was the Greco-Roman view of the value of human life before Christianity? Well, Romans had a very low view of human life. I'll read a quote from Richard Frothingham, who wrote "The Rise of the Republic of the United States." He says, "The individual was regarded as of value only if he was a part of the political fabric and able to contribute to its uses, as though it were the end of his being to aggrandize the state." So that really describes the view of life in the Roman Empire prior to the rise of Christianity.

And I actually still see this today quite a bit. I've mentioned before that I've traveled to a lot of different countries, mostly developing world nations, that have not been heavily influenced by Christianity. And it seems really common to see things in those types of places that exemplify the low value of human life.

So for example, people will get hit by cars and they'll just be left to die. No one will stop. No ambulance will come.

Nobody calls 911 or its equivalent. Children will drown in a public place and no one seems to even notice or care. Former leaders are killed when new leaders come into power.

These are the types of behaviors that were common before Christianity and still are common where Christianity has not taken root. Yeah, they're actually common in even in our blue states where Christianity is most in decline. Yeah, that's true.

Yeah, it's not just other countries. These things are actually happening in blue states like New York, California, and Oregon. I follow a guy named Andy No, which is spelled N-G-O on Twitter.

And he tweets out a lot of these videos of crimes happening in states like New York, California, and Oregon. And one of them that he shared just recently was a video from a jewelry store where the owner was beaten up and had a bloody face and a big head wound during a robbery. But really the one that shocked I think a lot of people was his video of a convenience store worker being robbed and then being forced to kneel down and being executed when it was completely unnecessary for the robbery that he be executed.

And he was on his knees and shot in the back of the head. So these things are happening a lot. And I think people assume that we're always going to have good Samaritans who want to stop these things.

But the worldview that emerges from this kind of Greco-Roman utilitarianism and the secular left pluralism is that objective morality isn't real. And so people have this fear of

imposing their morality on a situation. Yeah, you're right.

I mean, as I think about it, as you say that there have been so many instances lately on which people have been committing more and more violent crimes against unarmed people and bystanders are just seen doing nothing, you know, recording with their phones or just continuing to walk by, protecting others is not free. And the secular left worldview that's dominant today really doesn't rationally ground it. It grounds doing what makes you feel good, doing what makes other people like you.

And so we're going to see, I think as Christianity continues to decline in this country, we're going to see more and more of that kind of senseless violence, unfortunately. So what does the Bible say about human life? Well, according to Genesis 1.27, all humans are made in the image of God. So all of us, every one of us has dignity and value and worth.

Because of that, we are the crowning jewel, so to speak, of God's creation. And Psalm 8.5 talks about how all humans are crowned with glory and honor. And in fact, God cared so much about humans that the sun left glory and perfect fellowship with the Father and Spirit to come to earth as a man.

And He endured the Father's wrath so that people could be reconciled to God. The Christian view also, of course, says that murder is wrong. We see that in Exodus 20 verse 13 in the Ten Commandments.

According to Christianity and the Bible, human life is to be honored and it's to be protected regardless of a person's productivity or quality. It's very much in contrast to that quote I read a minute ago about how people only matter insofar as they advance the goals of the state. And children were valuable to God and they are valuable to God.

And Jesus showed that in Matthew 19.14, for example, in His famous statement, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them," when the disciples were kind of trying to push them away. Yeah, I think it's important for people to not just look at what the Bible teaches and look at the words, but try to reflect on it, what view of human beings is being taught here. And then how would that impact how we treat other human beings who are designed for this eternal relationship with God, which is valuable, and they have access to that relationship whether they can be productive, you know, in the state or do the state spitting.

So I once wrote a blog post about a second century Christian book called the Didykhi, which is pronounced, sorry, it's spelled D-I-D-A-C-H-E. And in chapter two of that book, it says, "You shall not murder a child by abortion." So was this a big change from the Greco-Roman view at the time? Yeah, so the view that Christians held was very different from what the Greeks and Romans had believed and practiced. In Roman times, sexual immorality was rampant.

Chastity was all but non-existent. Married women frequently had affairs. They would become pregnant and then have abortions to hide the evidence of their affairs.

Abortion, therefore, was very common among the Romans and the Greeks, although it wasn't actually common among Jews because they did hold to the sanctity of life even in the womb, of course. And when Christianity became about, Christians denounced abortion as murder. They opposed it.

They condemned it. And they even institutionalized anti-abortion laws in the West, which held until essentially the Christian worldview began to be abandoned. Right.

So today we see Christians taking this issue of sanctity of life very seriously by operating crisis pregnancy centers and adoption agencies, always trying to get the selfish adults to be more careful about their decisions with sex in order to benefit the unborn children and even the born children who are very weak and vulnerable at that stage in their life. On the other hand, you see secular leftists operating clinics that will kill unborn children. I saw some stories a while back of videos taken of all of these actors in the abortion business who were profiting by getting money for selling the body parts of unborn babies.

And that's just something that no Christian would do. Yeah. So it's really strange because I know atheists, we talked about this in a previous show about ethnic answers to common atheist questions.

And even that show we did on morality where we talked about slavery and atheists are always saying, oh, the Bible, you know, supports slavery. And this is this is just a, you know, kind of a dumb view. But just to point out again, if atheists politically are voting for abortion through all nine months of pregnancy and even in fantasize and then they're voting to not punish people for selling the body parts of aborted babies, slavery is less bad than that.

And if they're willing to, if they're willing to support the really bad thing, then clearly they would support the less bad things too. They want to deny it, but it's hard to deny it. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. And similarly, in the Roman Empire, infanticide was also widespread.

So few families had more than one girl because while having boys was considered an honor to the parents, having girls was considered a real inconvenience. And so when a family had a second girl, they would kill them often by drowning them by exposure to the elements, by cutting their throats and sacrificing them to pagan gods. There were all sorts of methods of discarding a second female child, sometimes even a first.

There was a second century inscription at Delphi that was discovered and it reveals that in a sample of 600 families, only 1% raised two daughters. So this was very, very

uncommon. Yeah.

This is like rare. Like even today, like you see people doing sex selection abortions and race selection abortions, especially in certain cultures like China and East India. So without some kind of view that every unborn child is valuable and made for a relationship with God, this is the kind of thing that happens.

Selfish adults say, Hey, I'm bigger than you and I'm going to kill you if you don't benefit my life. Yeah. It wasn't only when parents would have daughters that they would kill them.

They also would commonly kill their infants when they found out they were disabled. Christians, on the other hand, vehemently opposed infanticide wherever they encountered it. And it was officially outlawed in the year 374 under the Christian Emperor Valentinian.

And of course, anti-infanticide laws became the norm throughout the West because of the Christian influence. Christians, again, not only condemned child abandonment, but they even frequently took abandoned children into their home and adopted them and raised them as their own. And so, you know, when we see adoption practiced as such a kind of common practice in our culture today, that really is rooted in Christians taking in unwanted children.

And it's primarily Christians who have adopted children ever since. Yeah. It's almost like I'm sensing that non-Christian morality is about maximizing the pleasure of the strong at the expense of the weak, you know, survival of the fittest.

Yes. Yeah. Where we heard that before.

Right. And Christians are always trying to interfere with this and saying, "Oh, no, you can't do that to unborn children or to little children. You can't impose bad circumstances on them just because you want to have a good time." But that's not free.

You know, a lot of people who are growing up today, who are maybe atheists even, they're wondering, "Where's my mother? You know, where's my father? Why am I being raised by people who didn't give birth to me? Why am I in the foster care system? Why am I being treated so badly?" And the answer is, "Well, I'm really sorry to tell you this, but society has embraced your worldview of atheism and secular leftism, and you can't ground inconveniencing the adults for the sake of the babies and the children." And so, you can't help yourself to that. In fact, one of the reasons why I became a Christian and took to it so energetically is because I had experiences when I was young where I really sensed the moral law and really saw that people who were in charge of me inside the home and outside the home weren't really looking out for my best interests. And there just isn't - if you don't have a God to ground that kind of standard, you can't look at

these stronger people and say, "You shouldn't do that.

You shouldn't treat me like that." Right. And we should expect more and more unborn children and born children to suffer as the arc of civilization turns away from Christianity. Yep, exactly.

Well said. What else did Christianity introduce to the world? So the gladiator games were also really common in the Roman Empire. People loved watching men stab and slice up one another to death.

This was top-rate amusement. And sometimes the men fought against other men. Sometimes they fought against animals and were gored to death.

And thousands upon thousands of gladiators were killed, not to mention animals who were killed during the seven centuries of this horrific practice. Christians condemned and even boycotted the gladiator games. And they were condemned and they were hated for doing so, but such is the life of the Christian.

We are persecuted for standing up for the truth, standing up for life, right? So Christians grew in number. They grew in influence. And eventually it was Christian emperors who banned the games.

Okay. Yeah. So allowing individuals to be deliberately killed for people's enjoyment has actually not been permitted in Western societies since the gladiator contests were outlawed.

And historian W.E.H. Leckie wrote this. He said, "There is scarcely any single reform so important in the moral history of mankind as the suppression of the gladiatorial shows, a feat that must be almost exclusively ascribed to the Christian church." Again, I would just say people need to kind of consult with themselves and look at their worldview and say, "Why is this wrong? What are the resources within my belief system that make it such that it's wrong to look at someone who is in kind of a bad situation, you know, like a captured soldier or somebody raised as a slave or something? Why is it wrong to throw them in a coliseum and make them fight lions so that the rest of us can be happy?" Mm-hmm. And entertained.

Yeah, be entertained. Like there's a secular system of morality called utilitarianism where there's no human rights because there's no designer of the universe. And whatever is best for the majority of the people is considered immoral.

So, you know, a utilitarian couldn't condemn these gladiatorial games as wrong. And the question is, for non-Christians, is how do you condemn this without just saying, "I don't like it," or "This is my opinion"? Because you're not liking it and your opinion can be countered by somebody who is armed, you know, or it has a bunch of soldiers at their beck and call. Mm-hmm.

So, I think it's important for people to look at this and say, "We don't want this to happen and what kind of worldview should we promote in the culture so that this doesn't happen?" So how else did Christianity impact the world for good? Well, there are a few other issues related to the sanctity of life. For one thing, Christian emperors outlawed the branding of human faces. Criminals and slaves used to be branded on their faces to recognize them as such.

Christian emperors also outlawed crucifixion, which of course was the cruelest form of human execution. And the spread of Christianity beyond the Roman Empire also resulted in changes. For example, human sacrifices were commonly practiced in the Americas.

The Aztecs would lay people on a sacrificial block and cut open their chest and then they would tear out the heart while the person was still alive. They would string up the victim's head on a skull rack as trophies. So they'd have a bunch of skulls on this rack.

Ew. And yeah, from all the people they had sacrificed. And they would pass out people's body parts as prizes, which were then, the body parts were then made into a stew and eaten.

So then the Mayans, they also ripped open people's chests and tore out the beating heart while the person was still alive. They would also cut holes in people's tongues and draw a rope festooned with thorns through the wound to collect blood. And they also ate captured soldiers.

They had the sauce made of peppers and tomatoes that they would eat humans with. It's really, really just disgusting and horrific. So these types of practices were very common in the Americas, like I said.

And when Christians came over and began to have a greater influence, these types of things were stopped. Right. And it's not hard to sort of see the difference that Christianity makes today even, because you can find societies where there is no trace of Christianity, where owning a Bible is punished by death.

You just have to look at a country like North Korea. So there, this law against owning a Bible punishable by death. And remember what you were saying at the very beginning about that view of life, where the utility of the life for the state is what made you have a right to life? Well, people living in North Korea who don't cooperate with the government can just be killed or thrown into forced labor camps.

It's amazing how all these communist countries like the Soviet Union and Mao's China and North Korea have these concentration camps where they throw people who dissent from the goals of the state. Yeah, exactly. I mean, it was atheist regimes that killed 100 million people in the 21st century alone.

This is not unusual. Yeah, again, if your worldview is survival of the fittest and you have

an accidental universe then you don't get to have interactions with people where you say, "I have a human right," or, you know, "the moral law says you shouldn't do that." Those things are gone unless the people are on camera or something or they have whatever, some sort of system that is going to cause them to go against their own self-interest. You're out of luck.

Right, exactly. Yeah, let's move on to another area. So what did the Greeks and Romans think about healthcare? Well, before Christianity, hospitals were essentially non-existent.

There were a couple of makeshift hospitals for soldiers and gladiators, but this was basically just to like sew them up so they could get back to work, soldiering and gladiator-ing. But there were no charitable or institutionalized hospitals. There were no established hospitals for nursing, for ministering to the general populace, you know, anything like, there was nothing like what we think of hospitals today.

The sick and dying were usually kind of just thrown outside to die alone. They were at a minimum isolated and not taken care of because people didn't want to catch anything from them. And the disabled, like I mentioned earlier, were abandoned, humans left to die of exposure, adults were left to fend for themselves.

So there's a quote from historian Dionysius from around 250 AD. He wrote that the pagans, "Thrust aside anyone who began to be sick and kept aloof even from their dearest friends and cast the sufferers out upon the public roads half dead and left them unmarried and treated them with utter contempt when they died." That was in the works of Dionysius, Epistle 12.5. You see something like that even today in countries where Christianity is really far in decline. Like I'm thinking about the stories I blog about from the UK with their National Health Service, you know, healthcare system or from the Netherlands, where they have, where they introduce euthanasia and Canada as well, where people have assisted dying.

Basically what happens is the government is saying, "Well, you're no longer useful to us because you're costing us a lot of money in healthcare and we want to spend that money on other people who are still healthy and paying taxes. So we're just going to, you know, let you die and/or help you die." So that kind of thing is fought against by Christians because they say, "No, no. Life is really precious.

You shouldn't treat people as means to an end." But again, when Christianity goes, you can't help yourself to that belief. It's no longer grounded and there are consequences in the society from letting Christianity disappear. Yeah, exactly.

Yeah, I've seen that firsthand in the countries that you mentioned. So Christian beliefs are different, of course. The Bible says that all humans have equal dignity and value and worth, that all humans have a redeemable soul.

We see in the example of Jesus that he went through Galilee healing every disease and sickness among the people and his healing acts were never divorced from his concern for people's souls. So like in Luke 9, verse 10, it says that Jesus sent the 12 disciples out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. So these were top concerns for Jesus.

Most importantly, preach the truth, but also, you know, care for them, heal the sick, treat them as the image bearers that they are. So those are the Christian beliefs. So what was the impact on the world from those beliefs? Well, the sick and disabled and dying were cared for.

There was concern for them. They were loved. They were initially cared for by Christians in their own homes.

And so I had mentioned the Greek historian Dionysius a minute ago in his quote about how the pagans treated their sick. He wrote of how the Christians treated their sick as well. And he said this, "Very many of our brethren, while in their exceeding love and brotherly kindness, did not spare themselves, but kept by each other and visited the sick without thought of their own peril and ministered to them assiduously and treated them for their healing in Christ and died from time to time, most joyfully, drawing upon themselves their neighbor's diseases and willingly taking over to their own persons the burden of the sufferings of those around them." So this is in stark contrast, obviously, to the way the Romans and the Greeks and others treated the sick.

And so with the rise of Christianity came the rise of care and concern for the sick, for the disabled, for the dying. Hospitals began to pop up all over the place after Constantine became emperor and they could do this sort of thing. Yeah, there's something in Christianity about treating other people more importantly than yourself, like treating them as if they were more important than you.

And I'm just thinking, like when you're talking, I'm thinking about all the Christian teachings that apply to this and how these are kind of countercultural, just to try to alert people to the fact that these things again are not free. I will say this though, like, you know, just thinking about some of the famous non-Christians that we know about, like people like Darwin and Margaret Sanger and stuff, it's amazing how their survival of the fittest commitment gets them involved in nasty things like eugenics and genocide. I remember reading about Germany in the Second World War and what a huge deal it was.

Well, not just Germany, but the Soviet Union as well. What a big deal it was to Hitler and Stalin that Darwinism was true and that, you know, that they have no compassion for the weak, that the fittest survive in these things. And when your rulers believe that, that has a big impact on how you're going to live.

Exactly. Accordingly, you know, Christians were leaders in building hospitals. The first

hospital was built by Saint Basil in Caesarea in Cappadocia in the year 369.

The sick were cared for and also people were trained in how to care for the sick. Christians also created hospitals in other places as well, including inside monasteries. And by the middle of the sixth century, hospitals were securely established throughout most of Christendom in both the East and the West.

So these hospitals were the first voluntary charitable institutions that the world had known. Did they keep making them? They've continued making them ever since. So Christian crusaders constructed hospitals in the Middle East.

Christian conquistadors built the first hospitals in the New World. And it was predominantly local churches and Christian denominations that built hospitals in America. In fact, just 10, 20 years ago, you could tell that it was Christians who had built them just by their name, you know, Saint Jude and Presbyterian Hospital and things like that.

Lately, there's been a huge push to get rid of those names and secularize them. I mentioned the first hospitals in the New World in 1524, Hernando Cortez, the conquistador founded the hospital called Jesus of Nazareth Hospital in Mexico City. It's actually still operational today.

And Christians also established hospitals for the mentally ill. Alvin Schmidt wrote an excellent book that I highly recommend called *How Christianity Changed the World*. And you can actually read about all the topics that we're going to discuss in far more detail.

But this is a quote from him. He said, "Although the average hospital today is no longer a charity institution, the precedent that the early Christian hospitals set not only alleviated human suffering, but also extended the lives of multitudes of people, whether rich or poor. Moreover, these institutions reflected Christ's love for mankind.

Today, this innovative humanitarian contribution, the hospital, is unanimously appreciated throughout the world." Okay, let's move on to another topic. So how did Christianity impact Greco-Roman views of women? Well, before Christianity, Greek and Roman wives were not treated very well. Greek wives, for example, had virtually no freedom.

They couldn't leave the house without a male escort who was trusted by their husband. They couldn't eat or interact with male guests who were there even in her own home. Greek husbands had mistresses for sex.

This was just standard common practice, not to mention the little boys that they would have sex with. The average Athenian woman basically had the social status of a slave. Girls didn't go to school at all, and women were forbidden from speaking in public.

I mean, just all of these aspects of their lives indicate that they were really not treated well. They did not have freedom, and women today would be horrified at how women were treated prior to Christianity. All that stuff is coming back though.

I think people imagine that they can cut off the Christian roots of the society and then help themselves to live happily ever after. You know, there's - I've shown you videos about this. I'm not sure if I should be saying this, but about women talking about manifesting their perfect husband by being very detailed in their journaling.

There's this idea that comes, I think, from Disney about how the perfect husband is somewhere out there. And the reason he's perfect is because the relationship is going to proceed indefinitely, permanently, and exclusively with no infidelity or abandonment or abuse because this person is the one that the universe intends for them. Yeah, and all this manifesting what you want so that you can get it by writing about it and thinking about it and having positive vibes and all that nonsense comes from new age, paganism, Oprah.

A secret. Yeah, exactly. And her secret that's not really a secret has all that garbage in it.

Yeah. Yeah. The point I want to make about this is that you can't make men that are good for marriage like that, and the universe doesn't care about you to provide you with perfect husbands just because you write about it.

Yeah, the universe isn't conscious. The universe isn't conscious. So, they kind of invent this cosmology where they're going to get everything that they want.

But how do we make good husbands? Like, we have a Christian worldview that we teach to young men, and then those men have reasons to be chaste. They have reasons to be evaluating commitment. They have reasons to be faithful.

They have reasons to care about their children. They have reasons to be good at spiritual leading and moral leading. It comes out of the worldview.

And when you take away the worldview, you can journal as much as you want and you can have crystals and you can get mystical tattoos and everything. This will not manufacture a man who can produce behaviors as if he were a Christian when he's not in fact a Christian. So, I won't say anything more about it.

I want to do a whole show on that. But I just want to point that out. Like, let Christianity decline and you will not be able to help yourself women to the kind of marriage that you imagine can exist apart from the Christian worldview.

It does not exist. Yeah, exactly. And we see the perspective that Greeks had in part through the Greek poets who were fond of equating women with evil.

So, Aristophanes in his play *Lysistrata*, he has the chorus saying repeatedly, "For women are a shameless set, the vilest of creatures." Wow, sounds like that. Shall we did on Islam? Yes, yes, it does. About women in Islam.

Anyway, Carrie. Right, right, exactly. I've read several times and I've had the thought on my own even that if you want to learn about how women were treated prior to Christianity, look at Islam today.

So, beginning with childhood, girls had little or no social value at all. They were often left to die as we talked about before. And Roman women were in a similar situation.

They could not testify in court. They were essentially sex slaves for men. Girls were married off as child brides all over the ancient world.

We're talking about 11 or 12 year old girls before puberty and they were usually given away, sold to much, much older men talking about 11 year olds with men in their 50s. And this very low view of women and their rights was standard throughout the world. So, yeah, that all sounds like Islam.

That gives you a really good picture of the impact that Christianity has had on the world when you look at Christianity and how women have been treated as a result of Christian beliefs and in Christian marriages versus looking at Islam today. Give us some details about that. Well, so Christians believe that men and women are made in the image of God like we've talked about many times.

Women receive salvation the same way men do by grace through faith. Galatians 5 talks about that. Jesus treated women with dignity and with kindness.

We have an example of that with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. Jesus taught women, if you recall, Mary at Jesus' feet learning from him while Martha was running around trying to get food ready and all of that. And Jesus praised Mary for doing what is good by sitting at his feet like a disciple, like a male student, learning from him. Jesus instructed Martha with important theological truths in John 11, 25 and 26.

Jesus also first appeared to women like we talked about in our first episode when he rose from the dead and then he told them to go inform the men. We see that in Matthew chapter 28 starting in verse 10, I believe. And so he basically sent them out as the first evangelists told them to go tell the men what they had seen.

And all three synoptic gospels record that women followed Jesus throughout his public ministry. That was highly unusual phenomenon in first century Palestine. But Matthew, Mark and Luke all record that.

In Romans 16 verses 1 and 2, we see that Phoebe was a *Diaconos*, which is the word for Deacon. Priscilla and her husband Aquila taught Apollos in Acts 18. And from the

surrounding context, it appears that it was a really, really good thing.

They made him better and more effective after teaching him. And scholars believe that Priscilla was actually the primary teacher in that and those interactions and that that's why her name was listed first, because that's how you honored kind of the primary person in the act. - Yeah.

I mean, if the game is, how are we going to be reconciled with God, then there's nothing better about being a man necessarily for that. If the game is, let's go out and fight the neighboring tribe, then yeah, maybe upper body strength makes a difference. So Christianity is a great religion for women in that regard because they can distinguish themselves and participate.

- Yeah, they're very, they're... Exactly. They're incredibly valuable, equally valuable as men and have equally valuable roles, even though not always the same. - Yeah.

I mean, we're traditional. We believe in male, female differences and we believe in male leadership, but if the goal is the same and everyone is responsible for participating, then women have important work to do. - Yeah.

So yeah, we've actually talked about how men are supposed to treat women in Christianity in two of our episodes. We did episode six, like how single men are supposed to treat single women and episode seven on marriage. Those are great episodes.

If anybody has not listened to those, I would encourage you to go back and listen to those. - Speaking about marriage, did Christianity have any impact on how people see marriage? - Absolutely. Yeah.

So Christians allowed their daughters freedom in who they would marry. They did not sell their 11-year-olds, their 10-year-olds or 12-year-olds into marriage to older men. They delayed marriage into the late teens and early 20s.

Polygamy was outlawed. Mistresses were deemed completely unacceptable. That is adultery.

It's not okay. And we see this elevating of women immediately in marriage and throughout areas, regions, cultures where Christianity has really had a big impact. - Have you ever heard about this Hindu practice called, I think it's called Sati? - Yeah.

That's the East Indian practice of burning widows alive on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Yeah, that's absolutely awful. And not just in India, but widows in China and even Scandinavia and New Zealand are also, we're also expected to burn to death on their husband's funeral pyre.

So children and teens who were married and their husband died, they would be expected

to do the same, to end their own lives this way by burning alive. And if they somehow managed to escape when it was attempted to throw them on the funeral pyre, they were outcasts for life or if they were caught, oftentimes they would be buried alive. - Wow.

That's terrible. That's absolutely horrific. What does the Bible say about how we should treat widows? - It's very, very different, of course.

In Christianity, widows are honored. They're not burned alive. They're not expected to die or be killed as soon as their husbands die.

So Christians vehemently oppose this practice and replaced shame and poverty and death of widows with honoring and caring for widows. James 1, 27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after widows in their distress." - Wow. It's just like the opposite.

- It's the exact opposite. Yeah. And British Governor General William Bentinck outlawed Sati in India in 1829 and it's still illegal today.

Hindus have at times sought to revive this tradition and sometimes they've even forced it upon widows despite the law, but it is outlawed because of this British Christian man who said this is absolutely unacceptable. - Yeah. So whenever people are talking about Sati, I think I'm pronouncing it right, but it's actually spelled S-A-T-I.

So I have to read this quote from a British general and the colonial governor of India whose name is Charles Napier. So he was having a disagreement with some Hindu priests about the legality of Sati and he told them this, "This burning of widows is your custom, so prepare the funeral pyre. But my nation also has a custom.

When men burn women alive, we hang them." - Oh my goodness, that's awesome. - You see that so rarely unless it's like Matt Walsh. You see that kind of boldness about challenging, you know, moral evil.

It's just sad that Christians have kind of capitulated to the wanting to feel good and the wanting to be liked. So now we're just like, "Oh, secular leftists, what do you like and what can we agree with you about?" - Yes. How can we be really, really nice to you and make you think that we're really, really, really nice and not challenge your evil? - Once upon a time, Christians believed that Christianity was not only true, but that it was good for other people.

And that's how I accepted it when I was a kid. I was like, "Oh, this is good for me." You know, today we've kind of lost that confidence. - Yeah, and they truly believed that what is opposed to the truth and opposed therefore Christianity is dangerous for people and so people need to be protected from evil.

So let me tell you another example. Chinese foot binding, I'm sure you're familiar with

that. - Yeah.

- That existed for at least a thousand years. This was done actually originally to make girls look more attractive to men because when their feet were bound and broken and made smaller, it actually caused them to walk tiptoe and to sway seductively and men like this. So their feet became severely deformed.

Sometimes their toes fell off. Sometimes gangrene led to amputation, even death. And it was Christian missionaries who led the crusade to abolish foot binding until it finally became illegal in 1912.

- Well, not too far away. - Yeah, exactly. And then of course there's female genital mutilation, which is still practiced in much of the Muslim world.

- Yeah. - But just horrific practice as well is challenged wherever Christians, committed Christians encounter it. It is Christianity that has really reduced the incidence of FGM throughout the world.

- Yeah. I think the common denominator here is Christians believe that every human being is made for a relationship with God. And the way we treat other human beings is to respect their purpose.

So we don't do anything to them that takes them away from being reconciled with God and binding someone's feet or burning them on a funeral fire or these other kinds of behaviors. They're just not appropriate for the goal that God has for his creatures. All right, let's get some book recommendations and then we'll end the episode.

- Okay. Well, I mentioned this resource, this first one earlier, but *How Christianity Changed the World* by Alvin Schmidt is excellent. A newer book is called *Dominion* by Tom Holland.

That's a great one on this topic as well. Rodney Stark, he actually recently passed away, but he's one of my favorite sociologists. He wrote *The Triumph of Christianity* that has a lot of information about how Christianity changed the world for better as well.

J. Warner Wallace has written a book called *Person of Interest*. It actually has a DVD, *Lessons That Go Along with It*. And Vishal Mangalwadi wrote a book called *The Book That Made Your World*.

So all of these talk, not only about the topics that we address today, sanctity of life and women and such, but also the topics that we're going to discuss over the next couple of episodes as well. - Yeah, that's fantastic. I'm looking forward to it.

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