

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

OPPRESSIVE OR LIBERATING? CHRISTIANITY AND WOMEN

This segment comes from **EPISODE 4: POWER + HUMILITY**.

The church's record of holding power – from Emperor Constantine in the 4th century onwards – has involved some terrible acts of coercion, exploitation, and abuse. Yet Jesus set an example of selfless service, and started a “humility revolution” that fundamentally transformed the West and the way we think about leadership and power. For groups like women and indigenous peoples, what has it looked like when Christians have exercised power for selfish benefit? What has it looked like when they've exercised it for the good of others? This segment looks at how, in different times and in different ways, Christianity has had both positive and negative impacts on women.



THEME QUESTION

Place a mark on this line for where you think Christianity falls on the scale between oppressive and liberating for women.



ENGAGE

1. Look at [this infographic \(cpx.video/genderequality\)](http://cpx.video/genderequality) about gender equality in Australia released in 2018 by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Discuss with another student:
 - a. Do any of these statistics surprise you? Is there one that particularly stands out to you?
 - b. Why do you think these inequalities exist?
 - c. How do you feel about these statistics?

2. What do you imagine would be challenging about being a woman in ...
 - a. Afghanistan in 2018?
 - b. England in 1880?
 - c. Jerusalem in 30AD?

UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “Oppressive or liberating? Christianity and women”
(cpx.video/women)

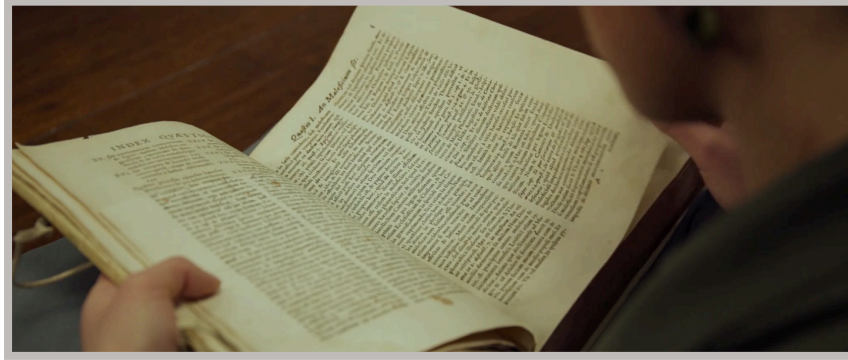
1. How did Jesus respond to the women he met?



2. Compare and contrast some of the ways life was different for Christian women and non-Christian women during the Roman Empire.

Christian women in the Roman Empire	Non-Christian women in the Roman Empire

3. Describe the attitude towards women presented in the 1487 bestseller *Malleus Maleficarum* (“The Hammer of She-Witches”) mentioned in the video.



4. Suggest reasons why there might be such a disconnect between Jesus’ relationship with women and some of the later actions of the church.

BIBLE FOCUS

READ Mark 5:25-34

1. Describe this woman’s experience in life before she met Jesus.
2. How do you think she would have been treated by Jewish society at the time? (To help, read Leviticus 15:25-27 and 15:31).
3. What is Jesus’ response to the woman? How does this compare to how society treated her?

READ Galatians 3:23-29

1. According to v.26, how does a person become a “child of God”?
2. V.28 mentions several contrasting groups, from which children of God can come. Paul says there is neither:
 - a. Jew nor _____
 - b. Slave nor _____
 - c. Male nor _____
3. Think about society at the time. How might they have responded to the above statements?

APPLY

1. Write two diary entries from the perspective of the woman Jesus healed from bleeding - one before she met Jesus and one after. Try to capture the events that took place and the emotion surrounding the events.
2. Write a short comment on *Malleus Maleficarum* from the sort of perspective Jesus might have had.
3. How should followers of Jesus today feel about past abuses of women by the church?
4. Is it justifiable for people to say they don't want to be a Christian because of the church's mistreatment of women in the past?

EXTEND

1. Investigate one of the women from the New Testament who helped Jesus' mission, e.g. Mary (mother of Jesus), Mary Magdalene, Lydia, or Priscilla.
 - a. What was her role in the mission of Jesus?
 - b. How does this add to your understanding of women and Christianity?
2. Watch the Centre for Public Christianity's 2017 Richard Johnson Lecture delivered by Amy Orr-Ewing on the topic "[Is Christianity Bad News for Women?](https://www.cpx.video/amy)" ([cpx.video/amy](https://www.cpx.video/amy)) After watching, choose an emoji to describe your reaction to the video, and post a "comment" describing your reaction to the video and any questions you have after watching it.