

# Confronting Christianity

## Week Eight: Doesn't Christianity Denigrate Women?

Pre-Group Reading Material: Chapter 8 (Pages 131-152)

Questions:

- Have you read, and do you enjoy Harry Potter? What point does the author make by using the story about Snape and Dumbledore? What might we miss if we only examine a few passages in the Bible that deal with gender?
- How would you describe relationships between men and women in the world today? How about in our church today?
- While Jesus clearly teaches us to call God Father (Matt 6:9), God repeatedly uses feminine metaphors to speak about his care for his people. Read Isaiah 49:15, Matthew 23:37, and I Thessalonians 2:7 (Regarding Paul). What do these metaphors teach us about God and his character?
- In pages 132-135 what insights about sex and gender does the author draw from the creation account in Genesis 1-3?
- How are women depicted and treated in the gospels? Do you have a favorite story where Jesus interacts with a woman? (136-138)
- What teachings in Scripture about women did the author struggle with? (139) If you are a woman, have you ever been bothered by the fact that the Bible asks wives to submit to their husbands or that the Bible appears to restrict the office of church elder to men only?
- While our culture might view submission in Ephesians 5 as suppression or subjugation, how does McLaughlin explain submission? When a husband and a wife are working together in harmony like God intended, what picture do they help display?
- While it is important to understand what the Bible says about relationships between men and women, it is also important to understand what it *doesn't* say. What things do we sometimes assume that God wants that are more traditional and less biblical? (141-143)
- McLaughlin says; *"No one who uses the Bible's teaching on marriage to justify chauvinism, abuse, or denigration of women has looked at Jesus."* (143) What does she mean by this? How should the person of Jesus shape the way we think about the relationship with husbands and wives in marriage? If you are a man, what can you do to help mend broken relationships and build trust with the women around you?
- According to the author, how might marriage benefit women? (146-149)
- What is the historic relationship between Christianity and women's rights? What elements of the modern women's rights movement can Christians support and what elements can't they support? (146-152)
- The author says that being pro-life does not entail being anti-woman (151). How could Christians combat and disprove this mistaken belief?