

Kris Vallotton: Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

For many people, it's hard to understand that not only are there hundreds of contrasting Scriptures in the Bible, but also much of the Bible is God's documentary on man and not God's commentary on how to live life. Therefore when people say, "I live by every word in the Bible," it's not really true. The fact is there are many words in the Bible you're not supposed to live by because God is simply recounting a story and not validating someone's behavior!

I think it's important to stop here and say that just because God recounts someone's story, doesn't in any way mean He agrees with him or her. Sometimes it is obvious when God is sharing a documentary with us, for instance, when bad people in the story do something bad (Judas is a good example of this). The challenge comes when good people in the Book do something bad. Because we don't know what to do when good people are acting unrighteously in the Bible, we often retell the story in a way that sanitizes our hero.

Not a Beauty Contest

Esther is one of my favorite Bible heroines. Her beauty, grace and courage rescued the Jewish people from a terrible genocide. Yet the way that we recount the story of Esther is often filled with fables and dishonesty. Despite popular opinion, Esther did not enter a beauty contest; she entered a sex contest.

Each of the king's beautiful, virgin concubines were ordered to sleep with the king overnight and if he liked them, then they would return to the second harem (the equivalent of round two). Thankfully Esther took first place, or the story would have read much differently. The contest took place because

Queen Vashti refused to dance before the drunken king and his powerful guests. She refused to compromise her values to entertain the king. She refused to give in to the peer pressure of royalty.

The truth is, Queen Vashti is the woman who had great character and strong convictions. But the king divorced Vashti because he couldn't handle a woman who stood up to his debauchery. (Carefully read Esther Chapters 1-2.)

How does someone who says they live by every word in the Bible, process the book of Esther? Do they teach their young people that Esther is a great example of how to win friends and influence people? If your daughter felt like she was called to bring the kingdom to the marketplace, could she pattern her strategy to influence mega corporations after Esther's exploits?

Obviously it wouldn't be OK for her to pray that the leader of some huge corporation would dump his wife to date her so she could influence the direction of the company towards the kingdom, would it?

Right or Transformed

By now you're probably asking yourself, "OK, Kris, what are you trying to say?" Actually, I'm trying to point out a few things: for one, we often read the Bible to validate what we already believe to be true and recount the stories in our mind to satisfy some need we have to be right instead of being transformed. Secondly, it's common for the Bible to recount stories without God giving us His perspective of the characters who lacked integrity or who had a flawed worldview.

For example: Abraham deceived King Abimelech by telling him Sarah was his sister and not his wife (to save his own neck no less). God came to King Abimelech in a dream and reprimanded him for taking Sarah as his wife and nearly committing adultery with her. The funny thing about the story is, that

God never talked to Abraham in the Bible about lying! In fact, He protected him, and in the next verse He prospered him.

Years later, Abraham's son, Isaac, also lied to the same king about his wife, Rebekah. Isaac went on to name one of his two sons Jacob, which is the Hebrew word for deceiver or liar! Does this mean if you love the Lord you can get away with sin? Of course not! It simply highlights the fact that we need the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth and that the Bible's silence on a matter doesn't mean that He condones a person's behavior.

What stories in the Bible seem to contradict themselves? Tell me about it in the comments below.

For more on this subject, check out my book *Fashioned to Reign*. Sign up for Kris' newsletter here. {eoa}

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