

"SETTING THE STAGE"

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"Where the Girls Are" is teaching series about myths and misconceptions we think the Bible teaches us about Women.

There are two "loud" camps within Kessid around this Topic/Series.

- Why are we even talking about this? All is clear!... "I have nothing to learn!" Camp.
- Oh, great! More PC garbage from the pulpit!... "You'll never change my mind!" Camp.
- I receive both positions, and promise to answer each one directly... Just not today!
- Instead, I want to "Set the Stage" for how we are going to thrive within such a controversial series...

To start, I'd like to offer a quick 2-part reminder about, "YOU The Church, and who WE are called to be."

- Many people today understand the church as a building...
- This is not a biblical understanding of the church.

First - The root meaning of *Church* is not that of a building, but of people.

- The word "church" is a translation of the Greek word... Def: ekklesia, which is defined as "an assembly" or "called-out ones." (Vs) Romans 16:5a – "Greet also the church in their house..."
- Paul refers to the church in 'their house'—not a church building, but a body of believers living within their homes.

Second - The Church is the body of Christ, of which He is the head.

(Vs) Ephesians 1:22-23 – "And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all."

- According to the Bible, the church is The Body of Christ – all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation are a part of this Church.

So, again, in review...

- The root meaning of *Church* is not that of a building, but of people.
- The Church is the body of Christ, of which He is the head. I really think we have this part down at Kessid. Our Story has taught us these things... It's this next part I'm curious to see play out here...

For it is these people’s behavior that really defines and decorates them...

(Vs) John 13:35 – “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

It is also said...

(Vs) John 17:21 – “That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

So, this early thriving Church wasn’t earmarked by buildings or pastors or even doctrine, but by... “Loving Unification.”

- I believe this is how we will thrive during this series... By adopting a Spiritual posture of “Loving Unification.”
- If this is your heart... We will be fine!
- If it is not... then that’s okay. I don’t have enough parking spaces for everyone as it is.

Now, allow me to give you some handlebars by which to steer yourself through the next few weeks...

- Here at Kessid, we believe there are close-handed and open-handed issues discussed within the Bible.

“When it comes to close-handed issues, we believe they are The non-negotiable tenants of our faith.”

- A few examples of Close Handed issues...

There is only one God.

(Vs) 1st Cor. 8:6 – “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.”

All have sinned and so live separate from God.

(Vs) Rom 3:23 – “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

Saving relationship with Jesus is the only way to forgiveness and so restoring relationship with God.

(Vs) John 14:6 – “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

- We believe these are Close-Handed issues, and so should be foundational to the faith of all born-again Christians.
- We believe – When it comes to Open-Handed issues, the Bible often teaches a range of faithful options.

A few examples of open-handed issues...

- Women wearing makeup.

(Vs) 1st Tim. 2:9 – “Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire.”

- Men having long hair.

(Vs) 1st Cor. 11:14 – “Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him...”

Question: Too easy? That’s because most of us aren’t wrestling with these issues anymore...

- Tattoos.

(Vs) Lev. 19:28 – “You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the Lord.”

A little less clear?

Here’s A Quick Tattoo Teaching:

- The reason for the prohibition of tattoos in this passage is not stated, but it is likely that tattooing was a pagan practice connected with idolatry and superstition...
- It was probably common for the pagans to mark their skin with the name of a false god or with a symbol honoring some idol.
- God demanded that His children be different... What we can take from this command the principle that, if a Christian chooses to get a tattoo, it should never be for superstitious reasons or to promote worldly philosophy.
- The bottom line is that getting a tattoo is not a sin, per se. It is a matter of Christian freedom and should be guided by Biblical principles and rooted in love.
- We believe these are all Open-handed “Culture instead of Commandment” issues....

Defining these types of Close-Handed and Open-Handed issues is very important for any Church Community...

- I speak a lot around here about church hurt, church woundings, and even church damage... Much of the hurt happening within the church is due to a lack of thoughtful engagement around these types of issues...

“The Church is Masterful at saying one thing but doing another.”

- ...at Confessing one thing to be true, while practically Functioning in the opposite direction...

For example:

- “We accept everyone!” ... As long as your lifestyle adheres to my understanding of acceptable.

- “We believe struggles should be faced and overcome! ... Unless your struggle is socially acceptable, or too similar to my own... Then it becomes a ‘Nobody’s perfect’ or “Everybody’s human” situation.
- And so, our “Confessional verses Functional” presence in the community is constantly at war within itself...
- Because of this... We often prove ourselves to be a non-committal, wishy washy and hypocritical people... at best.
- **This is Important!** Because all of this adds up to become the voice of the local church to their community.

When it comes to the views we hold around women in our church, what will the voice of Kessid sound like?