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COMMUNICATING THE WORD FIRST LOOK FEEDBACK

SPT 101/511 – Research Reports on Transgender Issues

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS DEAL WITH OUR CULTURE'S TREATMENT OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE?

I'm so impressed with your diligence on this assignment, and more importantly your intelligent and Godly approach to this significant problem. Here are some general comments about the half dozen or so Research Reports turned in early (see online at [DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies/SPT511/InitialFeedbackonResearchReport1\(Transgenders\).pdf](https://DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies/SPT511/InitialFeedbackonResearchReport1(Transgenders).pdf)) —

A. My apologies regarding the [Research Report spec sheet](#). You need not label the final part of your Research Report "Conclusion." "Closing Thoughts," or "Issues Still Needing Attention," or "Recommendations for Further Thought" are all viable alternative labels, depending on your communication goals. You might even consider "Caveat Emptor" or "Unresolved Issues" as a final subhead, again depending on your communication goals.

B. Be wary of "thats." They stop the flow and are often unnecessary. For example, read these sentences without the "that."

- "They need to know that God loves them and is ready to forgive them with open arms." That that is cumbersome and unnecessary. :-)

Here's another:

- "They need to know that God loves them and is ready to forgive them with open arms."

And others:

- "This research concludes [*sic*] that transgenderism is a complicated issue, but not too hard for the One who created us..."
- "That as a Christian we must look to scripture and realize things can..."

And this last example—using "that" instead of "who" chills my heart:

- "We need to be a church that has compassion, love and understanding, and become a church that listen [*sic*] to what the broken hearted has [*sic*] to say..."

- C. Be careful about causation. Just because two events occurred together does not warrant a causal conclusion. Having a gender identity issue is not inherently evil, although some approaches to gender identity are indeed evil. Make sure you stick with the evidence; many of your Research Reports were devoid of Scriptural support, yet replete with culture malfeasance analysis (e.g., parental abuse or government interference without parental involvement).
- D. It is theologically and pragmatically useful to teach others that "Christ" & "Messiah" are titles, not names. For example, we would not normally say "Edward King;" we would say, however, "King Edward" or "Edward the King."

We can reinforce the reality of His identity by saying/writing, for example, "Jesus the Christ" or "the Christ" came to earth and was born as Jesus/Yeshua in Bethlehem. Other examples include...

- We are baptized in the name of the Christ, or more correctly: "We are baptized by the authority of the Christ."
 - We pray by the authority of Christ Jesus.
 - The Christ came to earth as Jesus of Nazareth.
 - Christ Jesus was the Son.
 - Jesus the Christ is the Son.
 - Jesus of Nazareth, son of Yousef, was the Christ.
 - As the Messiah, Jesus fulfilled the Scripture's predictions.
- E. Quotations longer than two typed lines are to be indented (left AND right), and typed single-spaced (e.g., Scripture quotes or longer quotes from sources). My apologies for not clearly specifying same in the [Research Report spec sheet](#).
- F. Always, always, always proofread.¹ Usually, your reader can understand, but your failure to proofread could suggest you are not a careful person, nor precise. You do not want to be perceived as careless or imprecise. Such errors affect your credibility even though comprehension may not be affected. Consider:

- "Although they hope to find a real solution, their hopes is misplaced..."
- "When it comes to sin, there is really only once price fits all, death."
- "Christians and people in general feels threatened by the transgender, LGBTQ, and the non-binary community..."
- "...and He listen to what people had to say."
- "The church use to be strong and it..."
- "The church should be helping to change lives and supports people experiencing..."

And even a copy of the Research Report question: "HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS DEAL WITH OUR CULTURES TREATMEANT OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE?"

¹Even your professor failed this test; if you note my email with this information sent to you on September 9, the opening sentence read, "I'm so impressed with you diligence on this assignment, and..." Yikes. Color me embarrassed.

G. Generally speaking in a Research Report, the use of contractions is unacceptable. If you are quoting someone else, however, quote them *exactly as written*. The same principle applies to spelling and grammar errors. Simply add (underline implies italics)—

[sic]

after the errors to let the reader YOU recognize the typo, misspelling, or grammar glitch.

H. Generally speaking in a Research Report, the use of first person or second person case is at least unwise, if not unacceptable. If the writer believes X to be true, then "X is true" is acceptable; "I think X is true" is not. When you have written "X is true," the reader naturally concludes the writer "thinks" X is true.

Similarly, using the first person plural "we" as in "We will be discussing in this paper..." is problematic at best. A better sentence might be: "This report will discuss..."

You may think using second person is friendlier, and it often is, but it is nonetheless often too informal. Addressing the reader as "you" violates a variety of rhetorical norms. BUT sometimes the use of second person is necessary. In general, typically use the third person; e.g., "This writer concludes..." or "The reader might conclude, but..."

I. Research depth was often shallow. Very few of you dealt with autogynephilia which is definitely warned about in Scripture. Similarly, if you did not take into account the birth rate of people born with both sex organs, you have not "done your homework."

Very few mentioned the Trevor Project and similar organizations dealing with transgender people. And, for the record, just because you find a group's conclusions distasteful, does not mean you should not become familiar with their point of view. For example, will you ever be able to converse well and meaningfully with an Islamic or LDS soul if you have not read the Quran or the Book of Mormon? Learn the Truth by comparing the Truth to the truth.

J. I love and simultaneously hate Wikipedia and similar sources. They are notoriously unreliable on many details (ergo my disdain) AND often a good starting point for more reliable sources (ergo my affection). Whatever you do, do not use a Wikipedia article or similar source (e.g., news media) as a source--unless your research is about Wikipedia-like sources or news media.

K. Taglines, lollipops, and powerful endings are critical, whether writing or speaking. Here's a great one. Read what one of your colleagues wrote as his/her last sentence:

"Like Martin Luther King Jr. said [in] I Have a Dream, let's go back to those days, when the church fought for your rights and everyone's rights, no matter who you were."