

## Is Progressive Christianity Christian?

What is Progressive Christianity? The idea behind it is that Christianity needs to change with the times. It rejects the Westminster Confession, the Apostle's Creed and other confessions and creeds. What you believe is not as important as what you do. Love your neighbor without exceptions. Love all people without judgment except if your neighbor is one of those judgmental people who adheres to the Westminster Confession. Michael J Kruger, a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in NC, has written a book on Progressive Christianity. On his website, he gives an introduction to 10 tenets of Progressive Christians: <https://michaeljkruger.com/what-is-progressive-christianity/> The first tenet he mentions is "Jesus Is a Model for Living More Than an Object for Worship". The second one is "Affirming People's Potential Is More Important Than Reminding Them of Their Brokenness". The translation is that Jesus is not to be worshiped as the second person of the Trinity. He is just a moral person who is an example to follow. Jesus is not the Savior because people aren't sinful especially if you are part of an oppressed class. Jesus' death on the cross was a model of speaking truth to power and being willing to die for it. They don't believe in the substitutionary atonement of Christ. Is that Christian? I have heard Mark speak of Progressive Christianity but it wasn't really on my radar. It just sounded like old liberal Christianity to me. It recently came on my radar because of someone in the national news who is a product of Progressive Christianity. He has been in the news, on Joe Rogan's podcast, on the Late Late Show (digit only), and various other media. He is running for the US senate and is therefore in the national spotlight. We don't live in Texas, so the politics is for Texans to deal with. I want to focus on his Progressive Christian beliefs. By his own admission he says his views on the Bible and Christianity inform his politics although he says that he has fought hard for the separation of church and state. His name is James Talarico. He went to Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary which is associated with the PC USA. A quick glance at the seminary's website quickly reveals that they are Progressive Christians. I want to look at some of James Talarico's statements which are informed by his Progressive Christianity.

### Read Genesis 1:1-2.

On Oct 14, 2021, while debating Texas House Bill 25 (about banning men from women sports), he said "God is both masculine and feminine and everything in between. God is non-binary." His rationale was that in the first two lines of Genesis, the Hebrew word for "God" is masculine and the Hebrew word for "Spirit" is feminine. What is wrong with the statement that God is non-binary, male, female and everything in between?

Is grammatical gender the same as biological gender? We don't have masculine and feminine grammatical genders for nouns in English. Many other languages do, like Hebrew and Greek. One example of grammatical gender not aligning with biological gender in Hebrew is a word which means "person" or "human".

אדם (adam) — "person / human"

אדם (adam) is grammatically masculine.

It can refer to any human being, male or female.

Does God have a gender? If so, what is it? See John 4:24.

Does anyone know what he meant by “everything in between”? What is everything in between male and female? He provided no support that God is everything between male and female. It sounds inclusive but it doesn't make sense when you think about it. Was he implying that God encompasses the full range of LGBTQIA+? When later asked about his statement, he said that he intended to be “provocative,” but his point was that “God is beyond gender.” His statement was definitely provocative but I don't know how anyone could derive the point “God is beyond gender” from his statement that God is “male and female and everything in between”. If we take him at his word, then he is a really bad communicator. He says one thing but means the opposite. Also, if his point was that “God is beyond gender”, how does that relate to a bill about men in women's sports? God isn't playing sports. Humans are.

In defense of his position he also quoted from Galatians that “there is neither male nor female”. He said that if anyone has a problem with that, they should take it up with Paul. See Galatians 3:27-28. Why does this verse not support men in women's sports? If this verse had any bearing on men in women's sports, he would first need to show that the Bible says that ALL people have “put on Christ” and are “in Christ”. Second, he would need to explain why in a number of Paul's letters, like Titus, he had different instructions for men and women. He also had instructions for slaves. Galatians 3:28 also says “there is neither slave nor free”. Titus was written after Galatians. Did Paul forget what he wrote in Galatians?

### **Read Luke 1:26-38.**

In 2025, James Talarico was on Joe Rogan's podcast (Joe Rogan Experience #2352). He spoke about abortion. “I say all this in the context of abortion, because before God comes over Mary, and we have the incarnation, God asks for Mary's consent... so to me, that is an affirmation in one of our most central stories that creation has to be done with consent. You cannot force someone to create... so that's how I come down on that side of the issue.” On Nov 20, 2022, Talarico sponsored Texas HJR 56, a House Joint Resolution proposing a constitutional amendment to protect the right to abortion. It says in part, "The legislature shall not pass a law that abridges an individual's access to abortion care if the individual's decision to access abortion care is made in consultation with a licensed physician." He believes abortion should be legal up to birth as long as the person consults a licensed physician. So, if you want an abortion, you just go to a physician who only performs abortions and consult with them. What do you think they will say since that is how they make their money?

He sees consent in verse 38. If that was true, what if Mary said "no" and God honored her choice? Then everything that God said through Gabriel, in verses 31-33 and 35, would have been a lie. Are there any examples where God asked for someone's permission before he fulfilled his plans?

If Mary lived in Texas and his proposal passed, then he would support Mary aborting her baby any time before birth as long as she consulted a licensed physician. He believes that life begins when the baby takes its first breath. So if the baby is aborted any time before the baby's first breath then Talarico does not view that as the taking of life. Genesis 2:8 says "then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature". That is the basis for his definition of life. What Bible passages would refute his view?

### **Read John 14:6.**

In January 2026, James Talarico appeared on "The Ezra Klein Show". He said "I believe that Christianity points to the truth. I also think other religions of love also point to the same truth." ... "I believe that Jesus Christ reveals that reality to us, but I also believe that other traditions reveal that reality in their own ways, with their own simple structures. And I've learned more about my tradition by learning more about Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam and Judaism. And so, I see these beautiful faith traditions as circling the same truth about the universe, about the cosmos". This is a common belief of progressive Christians. Some progressives say that John 14:6 teaches universal salvation. I don't know how they explain passages like John 5:24-29. How does Judaism, which believes that Jesus is not the Messiah, and Christianity, which believes that Jesus is the Messiah, point to the same truth? I guess for progressives, the truth doesn't point to Jesus, it points to love. That belief still does not reconcile with the many statements that Jesus made about himself and those who either do or do not believe in him.

What are the essential tenants of true Christianity? Where do we find truth? Tonight we have just scratched the surface of Progressive Christianity. Is Progressive Christianity Christian? 2 John 1:9a says "Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God."

### **References:**

- Allie Beth Stuckey has a podcast about James Talarico. It is episode 1315. She discusses both his theology and his politics. I think she is a Reformed Baptist. The link is [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v\\_HYj\\_GzCac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_HYj_GzCac)
- Texas House Bill 25, 2021 is found at <https://legiscan.com/TX/text/HB25/id/2434187>
- James Talarico's argument against Texas House Bill 25 can be found at [https://youtu.be/EJ\\_qoRXLpws?si=OzcOMUXbyQbk3def](https://youtu.be/EJ_qoRXLpws?si=OzcOMUXbyQbk3def)
- In 2025, Talarico talked about abortion on the Joe Rogan Experience #2352. The link is [https://youtu.be/\\_jOGPvMftb8?si=RtrU9ihqJ1\\_aTw3b](https://youtu.be/_jOGPvMftb8?si=RtrU9ihqJ1_aTw3b) The discussion begins around the 23 minute mark.
- Talarico's discussion about all religions of love circling the same truth is on a January 2026 episode of "The Ezra Klein Show". The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa6fiO2EgJ4> The discussion begins around 10:48.