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Should we support Gay Marriage?

Romans 6:19: (NASB) ...For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

The world and the times we live in present great opportunity, as well as great challenge. We are daily overwhelmed with the clamoring for individual rights by so many, and for the most part, this is a great thing. This morning we are going to look at one of the most volatile topics of all - gay rights and gay marriage. Where should we stand? Should we be supportive? Opposed? Does the Bible send a clear message on this? What did Jesus have to say?

What is the issue?

Genesis 2:20-24: (NASB) ²⁰The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. ²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³The man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.



Observations:

- No suitable (literally!) conspicuous helper for the man.
- God is often called our helper, using the same Hebrew word in the Old Testament.
- God made woman from man, she is of the same makeup as he.
- Therefore, they are to be joined and become as one flesh.
- This union is not based on love - it is based on a commitment. Commitment is the overriding factor in this covenant made before God.

Bible misinterpreted, Episcopal Gay Bishop Gene Robinson, NBC Today

- *The traditional understanding of what the Bible says about homosexuality is flawed and needs to be reinterpreted. We used scripture to justify slavery, to subjugate women and now we are realizing that what the Bible initially seems to say about same sex relationships is not actually what we are talking about today...*

Do the Scriptures present a harmonious perspective on this subject, or are they silent? Are statements repeated between Old and New Testaments? **There was a carryover from the Genesis Scripture to the New Testament: Matthew 19:6:** The point is often made (as we shall see) that the Bible does not deal at all with same sex relationships; therefore, they are acceptable as long as they fit within the guidelines as other relationships regarding respect, love, etc. The point is also often made that we as Christians are just a bunch of uninformed zealots whose heads are in the sand.

Some people believe the Christian viewpoint has nothing to do with reality. We would like to debunk that theory as we progress.

To begin, the concept of marriage between a man and a woman is throughout the Bible, and we are using this as a basis. **Hebrews 13:4:** (NASB) *Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

In the Womb, Identical Twins Introduction, National Geographic, 12/21/08

- *Are people born gay? In the general population, the chance of someone being gay is less than a 5% chance...unless you have a gay twin! Then the chances are much higher. If you are fraternal sharing half your genes, there is a 25% chance that you will also be gay. If you are identical sharing all your genes, there is about a 50% chance you will also be gay.*

The Bible does not comment directly upon this issue. But it does comment on things that are "natural" in the New Testament that we will discuss later in this program.

Let's first look at something that many say destroys the Bible's credibility - polygamy. Many say that the Bible is "full" of this practice and it goes against the one man/one woman marriage concept, therefore exceptions to that concept are acceptable. But consider this:

- There are only a few examples of polygamy in the scriptures;
- Most notable are kings of the Old Testament;



There are NO Christian examples of polygamy - only one man/one woman

Did God endorse or tolerate polygamy?

Deuteronomy 17:14-20: It was not God's design for Israel to have a king like everybody else. God gave instructions on how that king was supposed to act, even though it wasn't what He wanted. He respected their free will. To be godly, the king was not to have multiple wives. The king himself was to hand write these laws and keep them for continual reading.

Did God support polygamy? No, He tolerated it. As a Christian, are we trying to do things God's way, or are we trying to rationalize so that our way is "good enough?"

God warns about wrong courses but shows His willingness to let the consequences of our actions have their effect.

 **In the Womb, Identical Twins Fetal Development and Testosterone, National Geographic, 12/21/08**

- *It can't all be up to genes, otherwise every identical pair of twins would either be both gay or both straight. Some other factor must be at play. In their first few weeks, all fetuses develop along similar lines. If nothing changed, each of us would be born female...at about eight weeks, testosterone masculinizes the body and also masculinizes the brain.*

The program went on to say that there is a noted difference in the masculinization of the brain in the two twins. It could be the reason one has the orientation that the other doesn't.

Let's assume for now that it is nature that creates homosexuality. Does that mean that people born with a homosexual orientation are inherently more sinful than someone who is not?

Just as God set the standard for Israel's kings and allowed their free will, so the standard was set for the leaders of the true Christian church in the New Testament - no matter what your personal physical tendencies. There are standards that God set, even if you are not naturally inclined to be "satisfied" with just one wife...**1 Timothy 3:1-2:** Standards were put in place. There are clearly things that we therefore should do and shouldn't do.

So, what does the Old Testament say regarding homosexuality?

Let's begin with the two primary Old Testament texts that address the issue: **Leviticus 18:22**

Leviticus 20:13: Are these Scriptures talking about a monogamous relationship? Or just a physical act? Does it matter?

Key Old Testament Principle: The Law judges based primarily upon what you do. For the most part it was a black-and-white separating process: Do wrong and you are punished; do right and you are blessed.

It did not judge intention.

 **Truth about Homosexuality and the Bible, Reverend Michael Piazza, youtube.com**

- *Almost all of the Levitical Laws are ignored. We ignore the laws like those prohibiting eating pork, eating shellfish or wearing clothes of two kinds of fiber. Those laws are just as out of date as the laws against homosexuality.*

While we do freely admit that we are not bound by the ritualistic laws of Leviticus, it is important to look at the context of these texts and see if they are "throwaways" as Mr. Piazza indicates. The broad context of **Leviticus Chapters 18-21** is very practical, outlining core values:

Chapter 18: Laws in immoral relations specific to not doing what others do.

Chapter 19: Laws on idolatry and the proper treatment of others.

Chapter 20: Laws on human sacrifice and immorality.

Chapter 21: Regulation concerning the priesthood.

Are he following all "throwaway" verses? Leviticus 18:1-3: The warning was not to adopt the moral behavior of the Egyptians or the Canaanites.

Leviticus 18:6-23: (NKJV) ⁶None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: (pursue sexual intimacy) I am the Lord. ¹⁵You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she is your son's wife—¹⁶You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. (When your brother becomes one with his wife, that is why it is now his nakedness) ²¹And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, (burning your children in sacrifice to the god Molech) nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. ²²You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. (This one statement is not out of context with the others.) ²³Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.



This entire chapter involves acts that we agree are not right. Leviticus 18:24: If within the context of these strong moral guidelines there is a prohibition against homosexuality, what does that mean? Does it cancel out a loving homosexual relationship? We will continue to explore...

What did Jesus have to say about gay relationships?

 **Jesus silent, Reverend Michael Piazza, youtube.com**


- *Jesus, whose disciples we are, said nothing about homosexuality - that fact alone should be enough to give thoughtful Christians pause.*

Was Jesus truly silent on the matter? Well, he did NOT mention any specifics on homosexuality, but...he was also silent about incest - does that mean he condoned it? ...he was also silent about wife swapping - does that mean he condoned it? ...he was also silent about witchcraft and bestiality - does that mean he condoned it? Jesus was not silent on these things, he just had no need to be specific! The Law that he himself fulfilled addressed all of this. Matthew 5:17: Jesus looked at the moral law and held to it. Jesus then goes on to teach about several moral matters of the Law and even raises the original standards! Matthew 5:21-22: The harder standard to live by is that even by being angry at your brother, it is as if you are murdering him. Jesus looked at the spirit of the Law and not the letter of the Law. Matthew 5:27-28: Now it is not enough to avoid adultery, but we must avoid even the thoughts of adultery! The Law judged actions. They will still be judged, but now even the thoughts have to be addressed. The standard is even higher. Matthew 5:31-32: Fornication by definition is any sexual act outside of marriage, so Jesus DOES deal with the issue. This would include living together before heterosexual marriage, too!

We have to acknowledge the emotional trauma people go through when dealing with homosexuality. Do you think God can't love us for who we are? Wrong. We are not defining sexual orientation by who God loves and doesn't love. God loves everyone; Jesus died for everyone. Matthew 11:28-30: How does Jesus draw us and what does he expect for us once we are drawn? Do we know someone who has had (heterosexual) sex outside of marriage? Do we shun them and look at them like they are a gross individual? And yet this sin is on par with homosexuality and our own sins. We have to remember that Jesus didn't shun the sinners. He preached to them and loved them, and that is what we are called to do. We have to have compassion even though we personally live by a different standard. Homosexuality is not a "different" sin from the rest of them in a category all its own. There are lots of sins deemed "abominations," including sinning against the Holy Spirit and idolatry. (See Proverbs 6:16-19: seven things are listed as an abomination, including sowing discord among the brethren. In Proverbs 12:22: Lying lips are an abomination. There are others as well...)

Does the rest of the New Testament condemn gay relationships?

Romans 1:18-23: Who are those spoken of in these verses? Verse 18 - *all* ungodly and unrighteous. What follows is a very sweeping indictment of all who are outside of God's favor. Paul is saying that whatever we do or think that is not ultimately in praise of God is idolatry.

 **We had to leave the ministry (two men fall in love after preaching against it), Exodus Founder, Michael Bussee, youtube.com**

- *We couldn't come out to each other about our feelings...and the internal tension became so bad we couldn't keep up saying we were "ex-gay" because we both realized we had fallen in love with each other. We decided that we really had a responsibility to stop calling ourselves "ex-gay" and leave the ministry and we did in 1979.*

Romans 1:24-25: Worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator...this is idolatry, plain and simple. The first commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before me. It is very damaging to live such a life.

- *Gary had three children by that time and loved his wife. I had my daughter who was three years old at the time and loved my wife and daughter. And we knew that we would have to leave the church. We were rejected by the church, we lost all of our friends and our support group. We lost basically everybody. We moved in together and held a commitment ceremony, exchanged rings and he and I went on to live quietly and stayed out of the whole "ex-gay" controversy.*

If you are gay or straight, leaving a marriage covenant for someone else is the greater sin. They made a covenant before God and left. The act of homosexuality is in the same category as a heterosexual leaving their marriage for someone else. Breaking a sacred covenant is part of a larger issue, not just homosexuality. Romans 1:26-27: There are certain things that we shouldn't



do, according to God's word. It doesn't matter what your sexual orientation is. Sin affects each of us very differently. I have difficulties you don't have and vice-versa. We both need to overcome different things and sometimes we can't change the way we are. But we have to learn to live with who we are in a God-honoring fashion. The argument has been used that "sexual orientation," or what is "natural" was not understood in Biblical times, meaning that Paul is speaking about heterosexual people committing homosexual acts in these scriptures. Actually, the opposite is true - because there was no "sexual orientation" as a platform to comment from, Paul would here be pointing back to that which is "natural" - the original state of man and women. Paul here condemns acts of idolatry, not orientation - any sex outside of marriage is idolatrous... See the Bonus Material at the end of the CQ Rewind Full Edition for more on this.

Be warned - do NOT sit in the seat of judgment on these things!! Romans 2:1-3
1 Corinthians 6:9-11

- There are many categories of things that will keep us out of the Kingdom - not just homosexuality.
- "...and such were some of you." Some true Christians had previously done these things. We can't continue to act on our natural propensities that are against the will of God.
- The early Christians stopped what they were doing, were forgiven, washed, sanctified and were then faithful.
- There is a double standard presented here - the standard of higher living for those called to spirituality.

At CQ, do we support gay marriage? No. But we tolerate gay marriage because it is within the laws of the land. We believe there has to be a standard we abide by but need to deal with and tolerate those things that are legal. We can be respectful and yet disagree. We live in a time where there a lot of laws we don't personally like, but we need to be respectful of them because they are laws. Live your life according to the standard that you believe is the higher standard. Learn to be tolerant of those things around us.

Just because someone is gay does *not* mean they are "bad." Just because someone lives with their heterosexual partner doesn't mean they are bad. However, they are not living according to the standard Jesus wants us to live by. If we want to be a dedicated Christian following Christ, then we need to rise above the things of this earth. For example, If we lived in a land that allowed slavery, we would respect the law of the land but would not have slaves. We would not participate in it and would speak out against it wherever it was possible and appropriate to do so. We can be under the law but not be supportive of it. There is God-given mercy on those that do not agree, but we are not to be the judge because we are all sinners. We believe that all will be resurrected - gay or straight - because Jesus died for all. What happens when we try to govern ourselves? Idolatry takes root because we are following the creature rather than the Creator.

Luke 9:23-24: Jesus is saying that we need to be able to deny ourselves in order to follow him.

Self-denial is different for each of us!

- Is it a difficult task of self-denial to ask someone to give up chocolate if they don't even like it?
- Is it a difficult task of self-denial to ask someone to curb their anger when they are naturally calm and non-reactive?
- Is it a difficult task of self-denial to ask someone to put away the "toys" in their life when they don't really have any?
- Is it a difficult task of self-denial to ask someone to monitor their words about others when their natural propensity is to always speak kindly?
- Is it a difficult task of self-denial to ask someone to refrain from sex who has a very low sex drive? NO! The problem is, because our world is so overly sexualized, we are programmed to believe that sex is a must in all cases...

Self-denial is the ability to put down that with which we struggle. For each of us, that list will be very different. Living the gay lifestyle is not condoned accordingly to Scripture. Neither is living with your girlfriend if you are male. The point is all of us have things we need to deal with. Our job is to be compassionate, kind, and understanding and scriptural when we deal with all of these things. We want to be encouraging and helpful every step of the way.

*So should we support gay marriage...?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...Think about it...!*