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Can Gay Rights and Christianity Co-Exist?

1 Corinthians 10:23: (NASB) *All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.*

Some subjects stimulate the heart and not the mind and others stimulate the mind and not the heart. Then there are those that do both - to an extreme. Today we have such a subject: gay rights, gay marriage and Christianity. How should we, as Christians, view these things? Should we be redefining our vision of families? Should we be focusing on being compassionate and understanding? How much of the Bible is relevant to this issue here in the 21st century? Stay with us as we honestly and respectfully take this journey.

Is it right to judge others whose lives are simply different?



Being gay given by God, Same Sex Marriage, Dr. Phil

- I never made a choice to be gay. I was born this way. Do you think we would have suffered discrimination, the hate, the murders and the beatings that we've had throughout our lives because this is a choice? Because this is what we want? This is a biological thing that has been given to us by God and we have embraced who we are and we love ourselves. And we just ask you, as we love you, we are all children of God and we ask that you love us!*

We will assume during this program that being gay is *not* a choice, and that people are born that way. First point: (please do not take this out of context) God did not make anyone gay. Nor did he make anyone straight. He didn't make Rick short or give Jonathan a great melodious voice. These are products of birth and genetics. He allowed us to grow up in this world naturally through genetics. Psalms 51:5 Romans 5:8: We are *all* products of a sinful and unfair world. God made Adam, Eve, and Jesus. What do they all have in common? They were made perfect. **In this sinful world there are (if you believe in the Bible) some basic and universal examples for how to live:** Genesis 2:20-24: The only appropriate partner for the man was the woman. They were built differently to be complimentary to each other. This was the human model.



Father and uncle raised her, Same Sex Marriage, Dr. Phil

- ...I am the product of a gay "marriage." Well, actually unfortunately my "uncle" and father couldn't get married. I was raised by two men. And I want to say, I think they did an exceptional job. My home was nothing but wonderful. We had traditional family values. We had holidays. I saw nothing but love and healthy things were invited in my home. And those two men did a phenomenal job. When my uncle died in 2002, my father was not entitled to his social security rights; we had to get a directive to even go into the ICU because you are not considered immediate family. This man raised me for 27 years of my life, and I could barely hold his hand when he died. So it should be for everybody. So, please, change, open your heart a little bit - my family was good. My father and my uncle are amazing men.*

This is a very compelling argument. So, obviously some of us are wired differently - isn't that unfair? Do we have to change the rules to match everybody's wiring?

Example: PEANUT ALLERGY: I absolutely love peanuts but can't eat them. That's not fair! I think all non-allergic people should be banned from eating peanuts because a few can't eat peanuts!

Just because I can't doesn't mean others shouldn't.

Does our Christian perspective treat everyone equally and fairly?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: (NRSV) *⁹Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*



Gloria Allred on felons, Same Sex Marriage, Dr. Phil

- Scott Peterson, a convicted murderer, who murdered his wife and his unborn child, has the right to marry in California even though he's undeserving of that right and same gender couples who have been together for 50 years and who are deserving to have their love and commitment recognized under the law are denied that right. There's something wrong with that!*



Example: Assume I love basketball and really want to be an NBA player. The problem is I am 5'4" tall and not physically gifted. It's not fair! Just because you are tall and gifted doesn't mean you should be able to get what you want, because I can't get what I want! I think that the NBA should mandate that there be at least 2 players on each team under 5'8" and that these players be required to have regular playing time and of course, equal contracts! By the way, I have been told to be a jockey instead – great! The problem is I don't like horses. You can't divert my desire away from my dream and try to get me to be what I don't want to be!

Just because I am built differently doesn't mean others have to change or redefine what they do, and always have done well, to make room for me and my preferences.

We can never create a fair world in a world that is run by sin. Why doesn't Jesus speak about gay relationships, pro or con? It sure would settle the issue for Christianity. The answer is simple - the Old Testament law did not allow for gay "relationships." It did not say that people wouldn't be born gay. Jesus *did* verify the sacredness of the relationships that were God-honored and God-sanctioned. Yes, Jesus preached loving everybody. Yes, Jesus preached accepting people. But he always spoke in the context of drawing the people from where they were as sinners to a higher way of living. Matthew 19:3-6: Jesus was specific in what God joined together. He gave no allowance for living outside of that relationship.

 Mayor - let people live their lives, *Same Sex Marriage, Dr. Phil*

- *Let people live their lives with dignity, respect and honor, without feeling oppressed, without feeling that people of different points of view are oppressing their points of view on them. What I believe in is the capacity for people to live their dreams regardless of sexual orientation, regardless of their gender, regardless of their race. Equality - you cannot run the 90-yard dash and call an institution that is separate, equal. Equality is treating people equally and fairly regardless of their sexual orientation. We have got to stand on the principle of full equality for the gay and lesbian community.*

Not only did Jesus sanction marriage, but he set the standard higher to get a divorce, underlining how important the one man/one woman concept was.

Does some stranger's gay marriage even have any effect on me?

Romans 1:18-23: Who are those spoken of in these verses? Verse 18 discussed *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. When we look at the way the Scriptures lay out the man/woman relationship, we believe that stepping outside of that is a form of idolatry, worshipping the created instead of the Creator. Romans 1:24-25

 Does a gay marriage affect yours, *Same Sex Marriage, Dr. Phil*

- *...For all of us to open our hearts to what is going on here, what we ought to be talking about is the real disparities and the real inequities that they face in the loss of marriage equality. I don't think that good Christians want anyone to suffer, or want anyone's families to be harmed or treated inequitably in any...*

Example: A 50-year old man is deeply in love with not one, but six 13-15 year old girls. They all want to marry and are all happy as multiple wives. Shouldn't we just let them live their lives? They truly love each other! After all, the girls are old enough to decide what to do with their bodies without parental interference (they can get abortions can't they?) and the thing about being 18 is really just an arbitrary number – besides, these girls are mature way beyond their years...

The bottom line question here is – where do YOU draw the line? Each of us has a point at which we say – no, it's just not right to go there. Where is YOUR line and by the way, why do you even have your line? What are the reasons YOU have that are so compelling? What makes YOUR line so special? Why should I have to abide by YOUR line?

The lines that we draw typically are what we feel is just and right vs. wrong. We are trying to draw the line where God has drawn it for us. The line given to us by God is very clear, especially if one wants to be a follower of Christ.

THE BIG QUESTION: What about gay Christians? We believe they should not engage in a physical relationship with someone of the same sex. But that is the same for a straight Christian living with someone of the opposite sex. One is just as wrong as the other. Both are



sins, so let's put it in perspective. Christianity requires us to sacrifice things in our lives so we can step up higher to a God-acceptable way of living. We may not like it and it doesn't seem fair, but what do we do with a line God has drawn for us?

The marriage concept is not only religious, but it has been a secular institution among most cultures for the last 6,000 years. It established the most basic of all human units - the family unit. Marriage between a man and a woman was clearly recognized in a legal sense long before any government tried to define it. We must apply the principle of loving God first, (as we discussed last week) especially with a topic like this. We believe the *behavior* is wrong, not that a group of people are bad. Is the Bible old fashioned and no longer applicable?

Where does compassion fit into this whole dilemma?

 **Who did Jesus attract, *discussion on Christianity and homosexuality*, youtube.com**

- *When I got to Philadelphia, I met a kid in college who told me he was attracted to men and he felt like God made a mistake when He made him. That's what he felt from the church, that's what he felt from society, from hearing things like 'this is not natural.' So he felt that God made a mistake and he wanted to kill himself and that breaks my heart. I feel like if that kid can't find a home in the church, who have we become? We need to attract the people that Jesus attracted. Jesus attracted the hurting, the broken, the socially ostracized.*

That is a very compelling argument! Jesus *did* go to the broken and the ostracized. ...**What did he say to them?** Matthew 11:28-30: Important truth: Jesus does call us to him to ease our burdens. God did not "make" anybody gay. God did not "make" anybody straight. God did not make anybody tall or short. We are products of our gene pool, which is in the context of a sinful world. God created Adam and Eve. God made Jesus flesh. What do the three have in common? They were created perfect. God allowed these things and so much since then has been unfair because of sin. We agree that the young man in the last sound bite should be able to find compassion and understanding from his church. How do we do that? Jesus calls us to him as we are, not so we stay that way, but so we can become what we can be by following him. He calls us to transformation. If we are not focused on transformation, then we are missing the main point of what Christianity is about. We are to come to Christ and put away the sin of the past. **We have to step out of our previous affiliation and into the school of Christ:** Romans 6:17-19: This is how we apply compassion to the issue. As Christians, we are supposed to *leave behind* whatever is not Christ-like! That is the point of the Christian church. It is to transform us from sin to righteousness; from earthliness to spirituality. There is no better way to compassionately deal with someone having an issue than to love them for who they are and show them the way Christ laid out for us, so they can step up. One can be gay but put aside a gay lifestyle and be acceptable to God. The Bible does not deal with sexual orientation; rather, it deals with acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. We need to focus on what is acceptable to God. **Mortify deeds of the flesh:** Romans 8:11-13 **Choose your master:** Colossians 3:2-5: Remember, even the greedy will not inherit the kingdom! We should put greed away from us with the same zeal. We cannot be a follower of sin and a follower of Christ at the same time. We want to make the choice to work towards spirituality.

Are we as Christians bound by the Old Testament Law?

Let's 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 - they are only one man/one woman

Did God *endorse* or *tolerate* polygamy? Deuteronomy 17:14-20: Read these verses carefully! God did not want Israel to have kings, but they demanded it anyway. God said that these kings should not have multiple wives, but they did not listen. God, therefore, was not in favor of polygamy in the Old Testament, but He allowed it, along with the other sinful things done. God warns about wrong courses but shows His willingness to let the consequences of our actions have their effect.

If we do not take the moral guidelines of the Scriptures and hold them up as a standard, then where does our standard come from? The answer to this is, inevitably, that it would come



from what we believe to be right within ourselves. For Christians as we follow after Christ, there are unacceptable behaviors. We can start there but he doesn't want us to finish there. If we are coming to Christ and we are gay, we must decide to follow Christ and not our desires. What happens when we "self-rule?" Idolatry takes root because we are following the creature rather than the Creator. This is really falling under the rule of Satan.

Our **Emotions** hid our **Ethics**: Our emotions drive us rather than a standard. Our seeking of **Pleasures** overpowers our following of **Principles**: When we get involved in such things, it is only a downward course. King David is a good example of this, relying on his own thinking. The fulfilling of our **Desires** buries our focus on our **Discipline**: Our personal desires take over the discipline of keeping things in check in following after Jesus. Our **Feelings** about things override our **Faith**: Sometimes we feel things are right but it contradicts when faith says it is right. So there is a decision to be made. Our **Circumstances** cause us to question our **Conviction**: Because circumstances change doesn't mean our conviction ought to change.

Remember that Jesus made even the thoughts of certain activities sinful. What do we do with that? It has been said, "You can't prevent birds from flying overhead, but you can prevent them from nesting in your hair." Thoughts will come into our heads, but it is up to us to refocus, pray for strength, and not entertain those thoughts. Others will help us so we can live up to a higher standard.

Should we become Christian activists?

2 Corinthians 5:20: Does being an ambassador mean to become politically involved in the fight?



Never met an ex-black person, Same Sex Marriage, Dr. Phil

- *(An African-American woman speaking regarding equating the gay rights struggle to the civil rights of the black community. It is a different kind of struggle and she found the comparison insulting.) It's a struggle to have basic rights - I don't care what you do - you have never met an ex-black person!!*

For Christians, it is a scriptural imperative that we remain separate from the world:

1 Corinthians 10:14-24: Don't make sacrifices of goodness to something not godly. Like it or not, as a Christian we cannot live a life divided. Why do we, at Christian Questions, firmly hold to the line that marriage is between a man and a woman?

- It is a 6,000 year old line - established right from the beginning of mankind;
- It established the most basic of all human units - the family unit;
- It was clearly recognized in a legal sense long before any government tried defining it;
- It has been considered sacred and honored throughout all of history;
- It works and has worked in myriads of cultures for 6,000 years;
- It has been viewed as a model according to which we can build a happy, fulfilled life;
- It is, literally, the natural way to conceive children;
- It is the natural way to raise children, as a child is literally the product of a man and a woman;
- It, by virtue of the physical makeup of men and women, defined provider and nurturer; and
- It is the standard by which, even in this morally decrepit society, child rearing is measured.

And now the religious reasons:

- We believe this line to have been drawn by God;
- It was confirmed by Jesus; and
- It was confirmed by the apostles.

Do we believe in gay marriage? No. Are we going to tell somebody because they are gay they are not acceptable to Christ? No. What we are going to say is that according to Scripture, we need to behave in a way that would be acceptable to God through Jesus. All of us have to leave sinful things behind and strive towards what is spiritual. In relation to people who are not Christians who are gay, we must love them and respect them, even if they position themselves as our enemy.

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