

God Can Use Me – Developing Thick Skin and a Tender Heart

Lesson 5 – The Bible and Homosexuality: *What’s The Church’s Response to Be?*

Motivated to Change? Two Questions

Source – Article by Raymond Ibrahim in Frontpage Magazine, April 3, 2013 – See video at http://www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=SnaCMCeFmas

- Expressing open **HATRED** and **DISGUST** for anyone is no way to get them to **CHANGE** behavior or allegiance.

Ephesians 4:30-32 (NIV) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of **all** bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.”

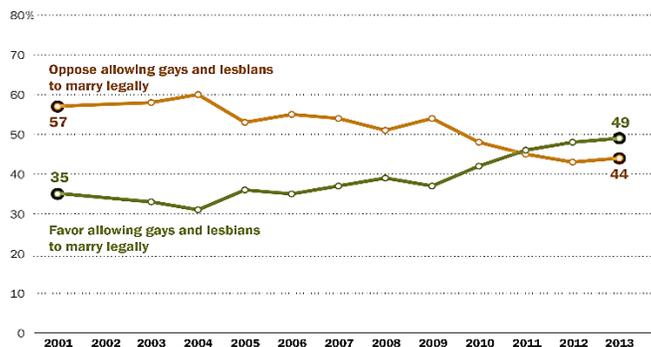
- If there’s a group of people today who we **CHRISTIANS** need to relate to with kindness, with the offer of God’s forgiveness and with graciousness, it’s the **HOMOSEXUAL** community.
- We need to be relating to them, inviting them to hear the reality of Jesus Christ, who died on a cross for all of our sins, was buried, rose again on the third day, is seated at the right hand of God the Father, and offers eternal life to all who come to Him in obedient faith – in other words, relating to them with the **GOSPEL**.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Bad News in the Polls and Even in the Pews

Changing Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage

Percent of general public who...



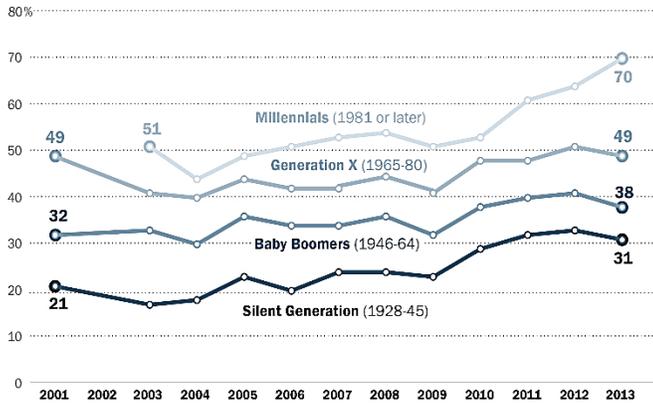
Source: Aggregated data from Pew Research Center polls conducted in each year, 2013 figures are based on one poll.
Pew Research Center • Updated March 2013

In 2001 only 37% of Americans favored allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally. Now that number is 49% approving.

In 2001, 57% of Americans were opposed to same sex marriage being legalized. Today that number is 44%.

Changing Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage, by Generation

Percent who favor same-sex marriage among ...

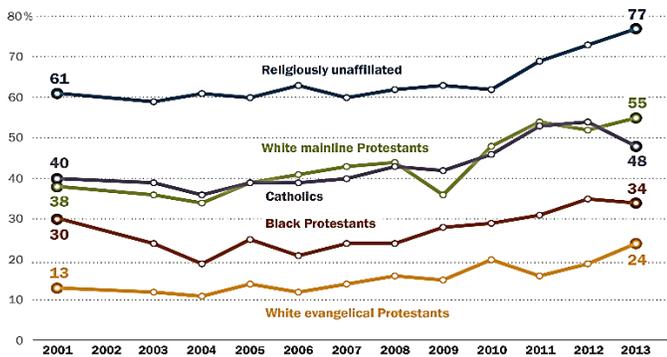


Source: Aggregated data from Pew Research Center polls conducted in each year. 2013 figures are based on one poll.
Pew Research Center • Updated March 2013

This graph charts opinions sorted by age groups. Simply put, the younger a person is the more likely she/he is to see no problem for culture, etc. with sanctioning same-sex marriage. But note, with only one exception – Gen X’ers (born 65-80), every other age group has moved to a position less opposed to the legalization of same sex marriage. And if you were born in 1981 or later (the Millennials) your age groups approves men marrying men / women marrying women at the rate of 70%.

Changing Attitudes on Same-Sex Marriage, by Religious Affiliation

Percent who favor same-sex marriage among ...



Source: Aggregated data from Pew Research Center polls conducted in each year. 2013 figures are based on one poll.
Pew Research Center • Updated March 2013

Every category of Church in America has shown a growing approval of same sex marriage. You might say, “Well look at us. At least we (mostly) Caucasian evangelistic churches are holding the line.” 24% is 1 in 4, friends.

What Should Christians Expect from their Government Regarding Homosexuality?

Examples of Christians/God followers in Government

- Joseph
- Daniel
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- David
- Solomon
- Nicodemus
- Ethiopian treasurer

Recommended Bible Passages on Christians and Government

Jeremiah 29:4-14, Matthew 22:17-22, Romans 13:1-7, Acts 5:27-29, 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

Good News

1. We do not need to **WONDER** or doubt about the Bible’s position on homosexuality. The Bible calls it “**SIN**”.

Leviticus 18:22 (NLT) "Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin."

1 Timothy 1:8-10 (ESV) Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine ...

Jude 1:7 And don't forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of sexual perversion. Those cities were destroyed by fire and serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God's judgment.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NLT) Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that.

2. We do not need to **DEBATE** the various ideas on the origin of homosexual practice. The Bible states it is the result of futile **THINKING** and misplaced **DESIRE**.

Romans 1:21-25 (NIV) For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

- Humans chose to worship and desire **CREATION** rather than the **CREATOR**. (I don't want God – I want His stuff.)
- Humans claimed that this foolish action was **WISDOM**.
- Humans chose to believe this lie: We are **SMARTER** than **GOD**.

Romans 1:26-27 (NIV) Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. **Even** their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

- The ultimate expression of desiring the created rather than the creator is to worship/desire **SELF** – someone just like me.
- This leads to relationships out of agreement with **NATURE**.

3. We do not need to **STRUGGLE** with whether a homosexual can become a Christian or not – they **CAN**. Nor do we have to ask what needs to be our first goal for the homosexual – It is sharing with them **CHRIST** and the **GOSPEL**.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NLT) Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality,¹⁰ or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.¹¹ **Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God** by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

The Bible and Homosexuality – What's the Church's Response to Be?

Response 1: We can come to understand the **FUTILITY** of the arguments in favor of homosexuality.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 (NIV) Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,¹¹ **in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.**

5 of the Most Common Street-Level Arguments for Homosexuality

1. If you're not hurting anyone else, what's wrong with it?
2. Since you're a sinner, too, who are you to call out others?
3. Jesus didn't say anything about homosexuality.
4. Some animals have same-sex relations, so if it's in nature it must be natural.
5. The homosexuality condemned by Paul is a different type of homosexuality than we see today.

1. If you're not hurting anyone else, what's wrong with it?

Matthew 22:36-40 (NIV) “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang **on these two commandments.**”

- Jesus put a greater command in front of the “do unto others” rule: that you **LOVE** the Lord your God with **ALL** your heart, mind and strength.

John 14:15 (ESV) If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

- We love Jesus by **OBEYING** Him.

2. Since you're a sinner, too, who are you to call out others?

- When we share the Bible we are communicating **GOD'S** revelation of Himself to us. The Bible convicts **ALL** of us in our sin.
- So, the question is not, "Do we sin?" but is there **REPENTANCE** of sin in response to what God says in the Bible? (Is there a turning away from sinful attitudes and actions in my life?)

3. Jesus didn't say anything about homosexuality.

Matthew 15:18-20 (ESV) But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this **defiles a person**.¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, **sexual immorality**, theft, false witness, slander.²⁰ These are what defile a person.

- Jesus not specifically mentioning or condemning something does not imply that it is an **ACCEPTABLE** behavior. Idolatry, incest and many other evils are not mentioned specifically by the Lord.
- Jesus does address all sexual sin in Matthew 15. "Sexual immorality" is the Greek word, 'porneia' and means including **ALL KINDS** of sexual defilement and acts of overt sexuality that the Bible condemns. (in either the Old Testament or the New Testament)

4. Some animals have same-sex relations, so if it's in nature it must natural.

- Many things are done by animals that humans denounce or call **CRIMINAL** if done by one human to another, even in the area of **SEXUAL** practice.

5. The homosexuality condemned by Paul is a different type of homosexuality than we see today. (Revisionist 'scholarship')

— (5a) Then it was an abusive Master forcing himself on a slave. Today it's a long-term committed relationship of love.

— (5b) What the Apostle Paul objected to was heterosexual men participating in homosexual activities.

- At the scholarly level, the (5a) argument has been almost completely rejected due to **ARCHEOLOGY**. There are plenty of pottery pieces and writings in antiquity that shows that monogamous, loving homosexual relationships existed in those days.
- The (5b) argument comes down to "if this is my **ORIENTATION** – the way I am wired by nature – then it must be ok." Saying, "I **DESIRE** this" never is enough to make something right."

Response 1: We can come to understand the **FUTILITY** of the arguments in favor of homosexuality.

Response 2: We can treat all people as Jesus treated them – with **LOVE** and **PATIENCE** and have the same hope for them that He did – that they would receive the **GOSPEL** and walk in the light of **OBEDIENCE** to Him.

The Woman “Caught” in Sex Sin

John 8:2-11 (ESV) Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them. ³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst ⁴ they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵ Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” ⁶ This they said to test Him, that they might have some charge to bring against Him. Jesus bent down and wrote with His finger on the ground. ⁷ And as they continued to ask Him, He stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ And once more He bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before Him. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Action 1 – Put down the **STONES** and pick up the **LIGHT**.

Action 2 – Draw Bible-based **LINES** of behavior but also build Christ-connecting **BRIDGES** to anyone one the other side of those lines.

- No one was brought to Christ by Christians affirming **SIN** as a **LEGITIMATE** way to live.
- Most, if not all, significant change takes place in the context of caring **RELATIONSHIPS**.

Action 3 – Be **WELCOMING** of anyone no matter the path they walk but, with patience and love, point the way to the **ONLY** path that leads to joy and eternal life.

John 3:17 (ESV) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

- Our goal is not **CONDEMNATION**, but **SALVATION**, just as God’s purpose was for sending His Son.
- In general, **ANYONE** is welcome to attend and participate in the worship assemblies and other activities of the Central church.
- And anyone who **SURRENDERS** her/his life to Jesus as Savior and is willing to **FIGHT** the battle against temptation is welcomed as a member of this family of Christ.