Heterosexual and Homosexual Marriages – Are Straight and Gay Marriages Identical?

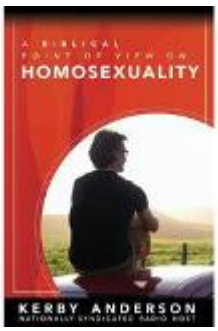
Although Kerby wrote this article before same-sex marriage was legalized, his assessment of homosexual relationships has not changed because the intrinsically disordered nature of same-sex relationships has not changed. He identifies the measurable benefits of heterosexual marriage over other types of family set ups. Then he considers the difficulties introduced by homosexual marriage in obtaining the same benefits. With the fundamental differences between them, considering them to be equivalent will not make it so.



Is there any difference between heterosexual marriage and homosexual marriage? We are told that there is essentially no difference between the two and thus marriage status should be granted to anyone of any sexual orientation. This is not true (as I discuss in more detail in my book *A Biblical Point of View on Homosexuality*{1}).

Traditional, Heterosexual Marriage

Let's begin by talking about the benefits of traditional marriage. Traditional marriage is the foundation of civilization. So before we even consider the impact of homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and other alternative lifestyles, we should consider the benefits of traditional marriage to society.



An excellent summary of the studies done on married people can be found in the book, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better off Financially* by Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher.{2} Here are just a few of the many findings from the research:

- Married people are much happier and likely to be less unhappy than any other group of people.

• Married people live up to eight years longer than divorced or never-married people.

• Married people suffer less from long-term illnesses than those who are unmarried.

• Married people are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse.

• Married people have twice the amount of sex as single people and report greater levels of satisfaction in the area of sexual intimacy.

A look at individual studies by social scientists also confirms these conclusions. For example, married men and women report greater satisfaction with family life.{3} Married couples report greater sexual satisfaction.{4} Married women report higher levels of physical and psychological health.{5} Married people experience less depression.{6}

Researchers at the Heritage Foundation have also compiled numerous statistics that also demonstrate the positive impact of marriage. Traditional marriages have higher incomes when compared to step families, cohabiting couples, or those who

never married.{7} Traditional marriages also result in lower welfare costs to society when compared to divorced couples or out-of-wedlock births.{8} Married women are less likely to be victims of domestic violence, and married couples are more likely to be happy and less likely to attempt suicide.{9}

The studies compiled by the Heritage Foundation also found many positive effects on children.{10} For example, they found that:

• Children in married families are less like to suffer serious child abuse.

• Children in married families are less likely to end up in jail as adults.

• Children in married families are less likely to be depressed as adolescents.

• Children in married families are less likely to be expelled from school.

• Children in married families are less likely to repeat a grade in school.

• Children in married families are less likely to have developmental problems.

• Children in married families are less likely to have behavioral problems.

• Children in married families are less likely to use drugs (marijuana, cocaine).

• Children in married families are less likely to be sexually active.

Children benefit from traditional marriage in the same way just as was previously mentioned adults. For example, they are better off financially. The National Longitudinal Survey of

Youth found that child poverty dramatically increased outside of intact marriages.{11} Children in married homes are generally healthier physically and emotionally when they reach adulthood than children from other home situations.{12}

Although these are relatively recent studies, the conclusions have been known for much longer. In the 1930s, British anthropologist J.D. Unwin studied 86 cultures that stretched across 5,000 years. He found that when a society restricted sex to marriage, it thrived. However, he also found that when a society weakened the sexual ethic of marriage, it deteriorated and eventually disintegrated.{13}

Differences Between Heterosexual Marriages and Homosexual Marriages

Are heterosexual couples and homosexual couples different? The popular media treats heterosexual couples and homosexual couples as if they are no different. One headline proclaimed, "Married and Gay Couples Not All that Different," and essentially said they were just like the couple next door.{14}

There is good reason to question that assumption. Dr. Timothy Dailey has compiled numerous statistics that demonstrate significant differences.{15} He shows that "committed" homosexual relationships are radically different from married couples in at least six ways: relationship duration, monogamy vs. promiscuity, relationship commitment, number of children being raised, health risks, and rates of intimate partner violence.

Consider the duration of a relationship. Gay activists often point to high divorce rates among married couples, suggesting that heterosexuals fare no better than homosexuals. Research shows, however, that male homosexual relationships last only a fraction of the length of most marriages. By contrast, the National Center for Health Statistics reported that 66% of

first marriages last ten years or longer, with 50% lasting twenty years or longer.{16}

Various studies of homosexual relationships show a much different picture. For example, the Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census of nearly 8,000 homosexuals found that only 15% described their "current relationship" lasting twelve years or longer.{17} A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the "duration of steady partnerships" was one and a half years.{18} In a study of male homosexuality in reported in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that "few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners."{19}

Another key difference is "monogamy versus promiscuity." Married heterosexual couples are more monogamous than the popular culture and media would have you believe. A national survey published in the *Journal of Sex Research* found that 77% of married men and 88% of married women had remained faithful to their marriage vows.{20} A national survey in *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* came to essentially the same conclusions (75% of husbands and 85% of wives).{21}

By contrast, homosexuals were much less monogamous and much more promiscuous. In the classic study by Bell and Weinberg, they found that 43% of white male homosexuals had sex with 500 or more partners, with 28% having 1,000 or more sex partners.{22} And a Dutch study of partnered homosexuals, published in the journal *AIDS*, found that men with a steady partner nevertheless had an average of eight sexual partners per year.{23}

The authors of *The Male Couple* reported that in their study of 156 males in homosexual relationships lasting from 1 to 37 years, "Only seven couples have a totally exclusive sexual

relationship, and these men all have been together for less than five years. Stated another way, all couples with a relationship lasting more than five years have incorporated some provision for outside sexual activity in their relationships."{24} They also found that most homosexual men understood sexual relations outside the relationship to be the norm, and usually viewed standards of monogamy as an act of oppression.

A third difference between heterosexual and homosexual couples is "level of commitment." Timothy Dailey argues: "If homosexuals and lesbians truly desired the same kind of commitment signified by marriage, then one would expect them to take advantage of the opportunity to enter into civil unions or registered partnerships."{25} This would provide them with legal recognition as well as legal rights. However, it is clear that few homosexuals and lesbians have chosen to take advantage of these various unions (same-sex marriage, civil unions, domestic partnerships), suggesting a difference in commitment compared with married couples.

These three differences (along with others detailed by Timothy Dailey) demonstrate a significant difference between heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Gay and lesbian couples appear less likely to commit themselves to the type of monogamous relationship found in traditional marriage.

Is It Natural?

Many in the homosexual movement say that their feelings are natural. Often they even say that their feelings are God-given. So how could they be wrong? Years ago Debbie Boone sang a song with the lyrics, "How can it be so wrong when it feels so right?" That is the argument from many in the homosexual movement. It feels natural, so it must be natural.

But God's character as revealed in the Bible should be our

standard. There are many sinful acts that feel natural, but that does not mean they are moral. Romans 1:26-27 makes it very clear that these passions are unnatural:

> For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Homosexual desires and temptations may feel natural to some people, but they are not what God intends for human beings. Any sexual encounter outside of marriage is immoral. The Bible refers to the sin of sexual immorality nearly four dozen times. Homosexuality, along with fornication and adultery, are all examples of sexual immorality.

Although God created a perfect world (Genesis 1-2), it was spoiled by sin. The effects of sin impact us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Homosexual temptation, like other sexual temptations, is a result of the fall (Genesis 3). When Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees, He reminded them that God "created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'" (Matthew 19:4-5).

Although there is a concerted effort to push for homosexual marriage within our society, we have seen in this article that there are fundamental differences between heterosexual marriage and homosexual marriage. For more information on this topic, visit the Probe website and read many of our other articles on homosexuality. And you might pick up a copy of my book, *A Biblical Point of View on Homosexuality*.

Notes

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25. Dailey, "Comparing."

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Same Sex Marriage: A Facade of Normalcy

Sue Bohlin takes a look at the arguments for same sex marriage and finds them lacking from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective. She explains that those pushing for same sex marriage have redefined it into something it never was and was never intended to be.

What's Marriage For?

In any discussion on same sex marriage, we need to start at the beginning: What is marriage is for, anyway? Marriage begins a family. The family is the basic building block of society. It has always been this way from Adam and Eve down to today.

Man did not invent marriage; God did. He invented and ordained marriage as the foundation for all human society when He gave Eve to Adam and pronounced them man and wife. Marriage is one of those institutions that is found in every human culture. Across the globe and across the ages, marriage has always been defined the same way: one man and one woman in a committed relationship, providing a safe place to bear and raise children. I would suggest that since this pattern for marriage applies to all cultures and all times, this indicates that God is its inventor and creator. It's such an intrinsic part of the way we relate to each other that even those who have lost track of the story of the true God (the non-Judeo-Christian cultures) still practice marriage according to the pattern God designed: one man and one woman in a committed relationship, providing a safe place to bear and raise children.

God has woven "marriage into human nature so that it serves two primary purposes throughout all societies."{1} The first is the way men and women were created to complement each

other. Marriage balances the strengths and weaknesses of masculinity and femininity. Women help civilize men and channel their sexual energy in productive rather than destructive ways. Men protect and provide for women—and any children they produce together.

Marriage is built on a basic building block of humanity—that we exist as male and female. The strong benefit of marriage as God intended it is that males and females are designed with profound and wonderful differences, and these differences are coordinated in marriage so that each contributes what the other lacks.{2}

The second purpose of marriage is producing, protecting, and providing for children. Marriage ensures that children have the benefits of both mother and father. Each gender makes a unique and important contribution to children's development and emotional health, and marriage provides the best possible environment for children to thrive as they enjoy the benefits of masculinity and femininity.

Those who are pushing for same sex marriage don't see marriage this way. They seek to redefine it as a way to get society's stamp of approval on their sexual and emotional relationships, and a way to secure financial and other benefits. Both of these reasons are about the adults, not about children. Both reasons are driven by the philosophy of "How can I get what I want? How can I be happy?" It's a very self-centered movement.

Many homosexuals want the right to marry only because it confers society's ultimate stamp of approval on a sexual relationship—*not* because they want to participate in the institution of marriage.

Why Same Sex Relationships Are Wrong

Let's look at several reasons (though not an exhaustive list by any means) that same sex relationships are wrong.

First, homosexuality is an attempt to meet legitimate needs in illegitimate, ungodly ways. We all have God-given heart hungers to feel loved and known and validated—to feel that we matter. God intends for us to have those needs met first by our parents and then by our peers, but sometimes something goes wrong. People find themselves walking around with a gaping, aching hole in their souls, longing to make the connections that didn't happen when they were supposed to, earlier in their lives. From both the women and the men that I know who are dealing with unwanted homosexuality, I hear the same thing: "I just want to be held, I just want to be known, I just want to be special to someone." But turning to homosexual or lesbian relationships to get those needs met is not God's intention for us.

Second, same sex relationships are outside of (and fall far short of) God's created intention for sex. God made us male and female, designed to complement each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Two men or two women coming together can never live out God's intent for His creation. The biology of our gender shows us that same sex relationships don't work, but opposite sex relationships do. It is unwise to ignore the obvious about how the pieces fit, or don't fit, as the case may be.

Third, marriage is an earthbound illustration of the mystery of Christ and the church.{3} There is a mystical unity of two very different, very *other* beings coming together as one. Only the profound differences of man and woman display this mystery. "If the man represents Christ and the woman represents the church, then a male to male partnering would be, in essence, a symbolic partnering of God with Himself apart from His people. Likewise, a lesbian relationship would become a symbolic partnering of God's people without Him. Either option is incomplete, unnatural, and abhorrent."{4}

Fourth, same sex relationships are idolatrous. In Romans 1, Paul describes the downward spiral of people who worship the

creature instead of the Creator. When God says intimate relationships with people of the same sex are forbidden, and people insist on pursuing them anyway, they have elevated something else to the position of a god. It could be the other person, or sexual pleasure, or even just one's own feelings, but all these things become idols because they are more important than anything else, including God.

Homosexual and lesbian relationships are wrong because God designed us for something far better. The nature of the gospel is to bring transformation to every aspect of a believer's life, and many people have discovered the "something better." (See my article, "Can Homosexuals Change?")

The Differences Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Relationships

Sometimes you hear gays or lesbians say, "We're just like anybody else. We have two kids, a dog, a mortgage, and we worry about the economy. We just don't want anybody telling us who we can love." My friend Brady, who used to be part of that gay sub-culture, calls the homosexual lifestyle "a façade of normalcy." And it is *only* a façade.

Consider the huge variance in the stability of relationships. Despite a high divorce rate, 57% of heterosexual marriages last over twenty years.{5} The average length of homosexual relationships is two to three years.{6} Only 5% of them last 20 years.{7}

And consider the issue of promiscuity. In heterosexual marriages, over three-fourths of the men and 88% of the women remain faithful to their marriage vows.{8} Most sexually active gay men are promiscuous, engaging hundreds of sexual partners over a lifetime.{9}

The concept of a committed relationship is very different for

the two groups. Most heterosexual couples are faithful and stable. When homosexual men are in what they call a "committed" relationship, this usually includes three to five outside partners each year.{10} Rev. Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Church, told the *Dallas Morning News*, "Monogamy is not a word the gay community uses. . . . We talk about fidelity. That means you live in a loving, caring, honest relationship with your partner. Because we can't marry, we have people with widely varying opinions as to what that means. Some would say that committed couples could have multiple sexual partners as long as there's no deception. Each couple has to decide."{11}

In Holland, which legalized gay marriage in 2001, the average is eight outside partners.{12} One study of gay men who had been together for over five years could not find one single monogamous relationship.{13} Not one!

Women in lesbian relationships often stay together not because they want to, but because they're stuck financially and emotionally. "I heard one speaker say at a Love Won Out conference, "We don't have partners, we have prisoners." Of course, that's not universally true, but over the years of walking toward Jesus with women who were no longer in lesbian partnerships, I have heard over and over, "We didn't know how to do life apart from each other."

Heterosexuals live longer, happier lives. Sexually active homosexual men live a dangerous and destructive lifestyle. They are at huge risk for contracting AIDS, and run a much higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases than straight men. The gay community experiences three times more alcoholism and drug abuse,{14} and much more promiscuity and domestic violence than the straight world.{15} Gay men can expect to live twenty years less than their straight neighbors.{16}

And finally, a home with a mom and a dad is the best possible place for children. Homosexual parents put kids at risk. The

American College of Pediatrics discovered that children raised by gay parents tend to be more dissatisfied with their own gender, suffer a greater rate of molestation in the family, have homosexual experiences more often, and are encouraged to experiment in dangerous, destructive lifestyle choices.{17}

Please hear me: We're commenting on the extremely high-risk *behavior* that is part and parcel of a homosexual lifestyle. That's not the same thing as condemning the *people* who engage in it. A homosexual lifestyle *is* a façade of normalcy, but it can be changed.

Answering Arguments for Same Sex Marriage

Let's look at several arguments being offered for same sex marriage.

The first is that marriage will encourage faithfulness and stability in volatile homosexual relationships. But the nature of homosexual and lesbian relationships is broken to begin with. Two broken people will not create a whole, healthy relationship. The best description I've ever heard of same sex relationships is "one broken little boy looking for his daddy, connecting with another broken little boy, looking for *his* daddy." And the same is true of women. Neither a marriage license, nor the approval of society, can fix the nature of a relationship that is irretrievably broken at its core.

Another argument is that we need same sex marriage to insure hospital visitation. But it's the patient who decides. If he appoints his partner as a health-care proxy, even if he's in a coma that document will insure access to the hospital. We don't need marriage for that. It's a smokescreen.

A third argument is that we need same sex marriage to insure survivorship benefits. But that's what a will is for. You don't need marriage for that.

Some say that we need same sex marriage for Social Security benefits. This is an interesting argument, since Social Security benefits were created to address the financial inequity of father as breadwinner and mother as stay-at-home caregiver. Homosexual relationships are usually two-incomes. It's very rare to have one stay-at-home caregiver of the kids, since homosexual relationships do not and cannot produce children naturally. When they do, they are borrowing from God's plan for creating families.

Then there's the discrimination argument. There are really two issues that fall under this argument: *denied liberties* and *denied benefits*.

Concerning the issue of denying the liberty to marry, this argument doesn't hold water. Any person can marry whoever he or she pleases, with certain restrictions that are true for everyone. You can't marry a child, a close blood relative, a person who is already married, or a person of the same sex. These restrictions apply equally to everyone; there is no discrimination here. The problem is, some people don't like the restrictions.

True discrimination functions against an unchangeable identity, such as gender or color. Homosexuality is a lifestyle, a chosen behavior. Even sexual orientation is changeable. It's not easy, but it *is* possible.

The other issue of discrimination is denied benefits. But benefits are granted to families because society has an interest in providing a safe place for children to grow up and be nurtured. So the government provides child-oriented benefits such as inheritance rights and tax relief to ease the financial burden of children. Insurance policies and Social Security benefits provide for the money gap between wage-earner and caregiver. These benefits are inherent to *families*. The essence of marriage is about building families. Homosexual relationships cannot build families legitimately. They have to

borrow from heterosexual relationships or technology to create children.

Final Points to Consider

Joe Dallas draws on his wisdom and experience as a former homosexual to address the issue of same sex marriage in his book *When Homosexuality Hits Home.* He provides some excellent points to consider about this subject.{18}

We can recognize that people genuinely love each other, and we can respect their right to form a partnership, even if we disagree with the nature of their partnership. We can say a relationship is wrong without disrespecting or condemning the people in that relationship.

For example, look at the relationship between Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. Tracy was a married man when he met and fell in love with her. For decades they had a deeply committed and affectionate relationship although they never married. Note two glaring and conflicting facts about their relationship: it was adulterous, and therefore wrong, and they truly loved each other. You can find a number of good things about their relationship, such as the way they respected each other and cared deeply for each other and seemed to be good for each other. When we say it was morally wrong, this does not deny the good things about their relationship. But to recognize the good things does not change the fact that it was morally wrong. The two are not mutually exclusive.

With gay or lesbian couples, we can acknowledge that there may, indeed, be deep love and commitment to each other. After all, humans have an amazing God-given capacity to love—even outside the bounds of His design and commands. But God cannot and does not sanction homosexual relationships, so we cannot either. We can respect those involved without capitulating to their demands.

Redefining marriage is especially unacceptable to Christians, since it is spelled out in both Testaments as a type of God's relationship with His people. In the Old Testament, God is portrayed as the husband of the nation of Israel, and in the New Testament, Jesus is the bridegroom of the Church. Marriage is far more than a social construct that provides for the creation of new families. It is a living parable that helps us to understand the dynamic, mysterious relationship between God and His people. How can we redefine something that has such a deep, spiritual meaning? Even if that were not part of the equation, we would still need to deal with the truth that marriage was created by God, and we do not have the right to tinker with His creation.

The problem with same sex marriage is that it doesn't work, it doesn't fit, and it is an attempt to make right something that is intrinsically, irretrievably wrong. God created us in His image as both male and female, and intends that His full image be expressed as men and women come together in designed complementarity. This is impossible in same sex marriage.

Notes

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See Also:

- Can Homosexuals Change?
- Did Phil Get It Wrong? Is Homosexuality Sin?
- Homosexual Myths
- Homosexuality: Questions and Answers
- Homosexual Theology
- When Someone In Your Congregation Says "I'm Gay" (Pastors' Brochure)

And also our answers to e-mails about homosexuality issues

Responding To President Obama's Same-Sex Approval

President Obama recently gave public support to gay marriage. How do we respond from within a biblical worldview?

Some Christians have used this news event to highlight the way the church is blowing it on the opportunity to be "Jesus with skin on" to the GLBT (gay | lesbian | bi-sexual | transgender) community. This sentiment is especially prominent among people under forty who often have good friends who identify as gay.

There are two different issues that need to be kept separate: how the church treats gay-identifying *people*, and the church's position on the culture-affecting issue of gay identity and so-called gay marriage. The first provides an opportunity to display a welcoming attitude of grace, which says, "We're glad you're here like the rest of us messed-up sinners who

desperately need Jesus. He loves you and accepts you just the way you are, but He loves you too much to let you stay that way. Come embrace holiness with us as we learn it together." (And this message is just as true for drug and porn addicts, as well as Pharisaical holier-than-thou folks addicted to judgmental moralism.)

The other is about refusing to budge on what God has said about sexual sin, which does not change. Homosexuality is no more right, holy or acceptable today than it ever was in Bible times. Neither is heterosexual fornication, adultery, or pornography-driven lust. It's not just that sex outside of God's plan for marriage (which is limited to one man and one woman, per the created intent in Genesis 1 and 2) breaks His law-His rules are given as a gift to keep us from breaking our hearts.

Jesus said He came to bring a sword (Matt. 10:34), and this issue is one of the areas of conflict He was bound to cause because His standard of holiness, and His call to live in it, is at odds with the human desire to do what we want regardless of what God thinks. Is homosexuality a sin? This is a simple question, but it needs a complex answer. Same-sex attraction (SSA) is usually not a choice; it's something people discover, usually with pain and horror. (Females, naturally more relational, can cultivate it and be emotionally seduced toward lesbianism, though, even with no previous leanings that way.)

But does it "fall short of the glory of God," one way Scripture defines sin (Rom 3:23)?

Certainly.

Same-sex attractions are a corruption of God's intention for healthy personal and sexual development, the result of the Fall and of living in a fallen world. I get this. I have lived with polio ever since I was six months old. I didn't choose this disability, but is it a sin? It certainly falls short of

the glory of God, and polio is part of living in a fallen world. It's one of the ways I experience the infection of sin. I did not choose the fallen-creation consequence of polio, yet I have to deal with it. My *responses* to it can be sinful, just as those who experience unwanted SSA have to deal with the fallen-creation consequence of homosexuality, but their responses to it can be sinful.

(By the way, there is no evidence of a genetic cause for homosexuality. The "born that way" myth cannot be supported biologically. But there are good reasons that many people end up with same-sex feelings; for more information, please read my articles in the homosexuality section of the Probe website, as well as articles on the Living Hope Ministries website at www.livehope.org.)

When people give in to the temptations of SSA and engage sexually with other men or other women, God's word has a very serious word for it: *abomination* (Lev. 18:22). But it's important to understand that the abomination is the act, not the people.

President Obama referred to the golden rule (treat others as you want them to treat you) as his rationale for supporting gay marriage:

> *[Michelle and I] are both practicing Christians and obviously this position may be considered to put us at odds with the views of others but, you know, when we think about our faith, the thing at root that we think about is, not only Christ sacrificing himself on our behalf, but it's also the Golden Rule, you know, treat others the way you would want to be treated. And I think that's what we try to impart to our kids and that's what motivates me as president and I figure the most consistent I can be in being true to those precepts, the better I'll be as a as a dad and a husband and, hopefully, the better I'll be as president.{1}*

In 2008, in defending his current position against same-sex marriage but for civil unions, he said concerning people who might find his position controversial, "I would just refer them to the Sermon on the Mount, which I think is, in my mind, for my faith, more central than an obscure passage in Romans." {2}

Two things strike me about this. First, he's not consistent about his application of the golden rule; he's pro-abortion-but of course he doesn't want to be hacked to pieces without anesthesia, which is precisely what certain abortion procedures entail.

Second, choosing the golden rule over "an obscure passage in Romans" shows he doesn't understand that "the entirety of [God's] word is truth" (Ps. 119:160). Both the Golden Rule and the Romans 1 passage are true; it's not a choice between the two. Since he used to give lectures on Constitutional law at the University of Chicago, I doubt that he would ever use the term "an obscure phrase in the Constitution," because obscurity is about one's perception of importance, not the actual importance of a matter. To a Constitutional lawyer who respects the document, every phrase of the document is important. To a serious [true] Christ-follower, every word of His scriptures is important.

The issue of same-sex marriage isn't about people's right to live in committed relationships, to do life together. It's about demanding society's approval for "the façade of normalcy." It's about demanding approval for what God has called an abomination (the sexual act, not the people engaged in it).

Ryan Anderson wrote in the *National Review Online*,

> *"What's at issue is whether the government will recognize such unions as marriages – and then force every citizen and business to do so as well. This isn't the legalization of*

something, this is the coercion and compulsion of others to recognize and affirm same-sex unions as marriages."{3}

American culture is definitely moving toward normalizing homosexuality, but from God's perspective it will never be normal or natural (Rom. 1:26-27). And it's God's perspective that matters.

Notes

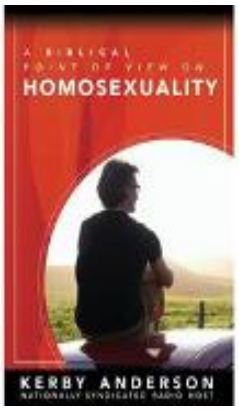
1. www.dennyburk.com/president-obamas-scriptural-defense-of-gay-marriage/
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Answering Arguments for Same-Sex Marriage – A Christian Worldview Perspective

Kerby Anderson considers the arguments in favor or same-sex marriage from a biblical worldview perspective. He shows that arguments such as tolerance, equal rights, and no impact on others do not hold up under critical examination. As Christians, we can love those who live a different lifestyle without allowing them to claim their lifestyle is identical and harmless to society.

Shouldn't We Be Tolerant?



As more and more states are either legalizing same-sex marriage or willing to recognize same-sex marriages from other states, it is crucial that Christians know how to answer arguments for same-sex marriage. We will look at some of these arguments and provide answers from my book, *A Biblical Point of View on Homosexuality*.{1}

One of the first arguments for same-sex marriage is that we should be tolerant. We used to live in a society where the highest value was a word with a capital T. It was the word Truth. Today, we live in a society that has switched that word for another word with a capital T: Tolerance.

Should we be tolerant of other people and their lifestyles? The answer to that depends upon the definition of "tolerance." If by tolerance someone means we should be civil to other people, then the answer is a resounding "yes." In fact, civility should be the hallmark of Christians. Jesus expressed the goal of civility when he taught that "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

Civility also includes being gracious even in the midst of disagreement or hostility. Other people may be disagreeable, and we are free to disagree with them. But we should disagree in a way that gives grace. Often such a gentle response can change a discussion or dialogue. Proverbs 15:1 reminds us that "a gentle answer turns away wrath."

Civility also requires humility. A civil person acknowledges

that he or she does not possess all wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, one should listen to others and consider the possibility that they might be right and that he is wrong. Philippians 2:3 says, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself.”

There is also an important distinction we should make between judging a person and judging their sinful behavior. Some have said that the most frequently quoted Bible verse is no longer John 3:16 but Matthew 7:1. It is where Jesus says, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged.” People misuse this verse all the time to say you should not judge anything another person does.

The context of this verse is important. It seems that what Jesus was condemning was a critical or judgmental spirit. It is a judging spirit when someone believes they are superior to you. Jesus was obviously not saying that people should not make judgments. A few verses later Jesus calls certain people “pigs” and “dogs” (Matthew 7:6). He even calls some “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15). There are many passages in the Bible that admonish us to use sound judgment and discernment (1 Kings 3:9; Proverbs 15:14; 1 Corinthians 12:10; Philippians 1:9-10).

The Bible says that Jesus was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14) and provides a model we should follow. We should model both biblical compassion and biblical convictions when considering the issue of homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

Don’t Homosexuals Deserve Equal Rights?

Each person in our society deserves equal rights. But redefining marriage is not about equal rights but about adding special rights to our laws and Constitution. Currently we all have the same right to marry a person of the opposite sex who

is of a certain age and background. We don't give people the right to marry their siblings. We don't give people the right to marry a young child. As a society we have placed certain limits on marriage but give everyone the equal right to marry under those specified conditions.

When we redefine marriage, then all sorts of new relationships will also vie for social acceptance. Already the legalization of same-sex marriage in one state had resulted in the call for the legalization of polygamy. Some gay activists are calling for the legalization of polyamory (multiple sexual relationships with multiple partners).

We should also realize that the government is not prohibiting homosexuals from engaging in their behavior or even having a partner. All government is saying is that it is not going to redefine marriage to include same-sex relationships. And when citizens of this country have been given an opportunity to vote on a constitutional amendment in their state defining marriage, they have overwhelmingly approved of the traditional definition of marriage.

As we have already noted, the push for same-sex marriage has been more about respect and acceptance than it has been about rights. If government recognizes the legal validity of gay marriage, then that places government's "seal of approval" on homosexuality.

Often when gay activists are calling for equal rights, they are really asking for special benefits. Homosexuals have the same right to marry as heterosexuals. They have the right to marry a qualified person (age, marital status) of the opposite sex. Homosexuals and heterosexuals cannot marry someone of the same sex, someone who is too young, someone who is already married, etc.

But the activists argue that because they cannot marry someone of the same sex, they lose out on certain benefits. But that

is not a justification for redefining marriage. It may be a justification for reconsidering the benefits we provide as a society, but it isn't a justification for changing the definition of marriage.

Consider the issue of visitation rights. Gay activists argue that government needs to grant same-sex marriage rights to homosexuals so they will have visitation rights. But again, this may be an argument for changing the laws concerning visitation, but it isn't an argument for redefining marriage.

A bigger question is whether this is really a problem. In this day where major corporations and governmental entities are granting domestic partnership rights, it is difficult to see this as a problem. If such a case were brought to light people could use public pressure to force the hospital to change its policies.

Isn't Homosexual Marriage Like Interracial Marriage?

When objections are raised about legalizing same-sex marriage, proponents argued that the same concerns were said about interracial marriage. For years gay activists have tried to hitch their caboose to the civil rights train. While many in the African-American community have found this comparison offensive, the tactic is still used on a fairly regular basis.

There are significant differences between interracial marriage and same-sex marriage. First, removing certain state laws banning interracial marriage did not call for a *redefinition* of marriage but merely an *affirmation* of marriage. Traditional marriage is not about equal rights but about establishing norms for sexual relationships within society. We ban discrimination based on race because it is an immutable characteristic that each person has from the moment of conception. And the word "race" appears in the Constitution.

A person who participates in homosexual *behavior* is different from someone who is born with an immutable *characteristic*. As many people have pointed out, there are no former African-Americans or former Asian-Americans. But there are hundreds of people who have left homosexuality.

Actually, interracial marriage and same-sex marriage differ from one another at the most fundamental level. The genetic difference between various races is insignificant biologically. A recent study of human genetic material of different races concluded that the DNA of any two people in the world would differ by just 2/10ths of one percent.{2} And of this variation, only six percent can be linked to racial categories. The remaining ninety-four percent is "within race" variation. And the moral difference between the races is also insignificant since the Bible teaches that God has made all of us "from one blood" (Acts 17:26, KJV).

But even though race and ethnicity are insignificant to marriage, gender is fundamental to marriage. There is a profound biological difference between a man and a woman. Marriage is defined as a bond between a man and a woman.

The Supreme Court case of *Loving v. Virginia* struck down state laws prohibiting interracial marriage, arguing that marriage is one of the "basic civil rights of man."{3} The Supreme Court of Minnesota later ruled in *Baker v. Nelson* that race and homosexual behavior are not the same.

To legalize same-sex marriage is to change the very nature and definition of marriage. And there is good reason to believe that is exactly what gay activists want. Michelangelo Signorile is a leading voice in the homosexual community. He explained in *OUT* magazine that the real goal in legalizing same-sex marriage was to radically transform marriage.{4}

He later goes on in the article to admit that the idea of the "freedom to marry" was actually a suggestion from the Los

Angeles PR firm which they thought would be successful because it would play well in the heterosexual world.

Does Same-Sex Marriage Hurt Traditional Marriage?

One of the arguments against legalization of same-sex marriage is that it will have an adverse effect on traditional marriage. Proponents of same-sex marriage argue that it will not have any impact. They ask, "How can my marriage to someone of the same sex have any impact at all on your marriage?" So what would be the consequences of same-sex marriage?

First, when the state sanctions gay marriage, it sends a signal of legitimacy throughout the culture. Eventually marriage becomes nothing more than sexual partnership and the sanctity of marriage and all that goes with it is lost.

When same-sex marriage is legalized, the incidences of cohabitation increases. This is not theory but sociological fact. Essentially, Europe has been engaged in a social experiment with same-sex marriage for decades.

Stanley Kurtz has written numerous articles documenting the impact of same-sex marriage on traditional marriage in the Scandinavian countries. When the governments of Sweden and Norway permitted same-sex marriage, he noted a trend away from marriage. According to Kurtz: "Marriage is slowly dying in Scandinavia." A majority of children in Sweden and Norway are born out of wedlock, and sixty percent of first-born children in Denmark have unmarried parents.{5}

A second consequence of same-sex marriage legalization would be the complete redefinition of marriage and the introduction of a variety of marital relationships. Already we are seeing court cases attempting to legalize polygamy. The most prominent case involved Utah polygamist Tom Green. He and his

lawyer used the Supreme Court case of *Lawrence v. Texas* as a legal foundation for his marriage to multiple wives.{6} It is interesting to note that when the Supreme Court rendered its decision in the *Lawrence* case, Justice Antonin Scalia warned that the decision could lead to the legalization of same-sex marriage and the redefinition of marriage.{7}

Traditional marriage rests on the foundation of biblical teaching as well as cultural tradition. Theology, legal precedent, and historical experience all support the traditional definition of marriage. Once you begin to redefine marriage, any sexual relationship can be called marriage.

Third, the redefinition of marriage will ultimately destroy marriage as we know it. For many gay activists, the goal is not to have lots of same-sex marriages. Their goal is to destroy the institution of marriage.

Stanley Kurtz believes that once same-sex marriage is legalized, "marriage will be transformed into a variety of relationship contracts, linking two, three or more individuals (however weakly or temporarily) in every conceivable combination of male and female."{8}

Does Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage Really Affect Families?

Those who oppose same-sex marriage often point to the connection between marriage and family. Traditional marriage provides a moral and legal structure for children. Proponents of gay marriage point out that many marriages do not have children. Thus, the connection is irrelevant.

While it is true that some marriages do not result in children due to choice or infertility, that does not invalidate the public purpose of marriage. Marriage, after all, is a public institution that brings together a father and mother to bring

children into the world. Individuals may have all sorts of private reasons for marrying, but there is an established public purpose for marriage.

If couples choose not to have children or are not able to have children, it does not invalidate this public purpose. There is a distinction between purpose and use. Over the years I have written a number of books. I would like to believe that every person who has a copy of one of my books has read it. I know that is not true. Some sit on shelves and some sit in boxes. Others sit in used bookstores. The fact that some people don't read my books doesn't mean they were not intended to be read.

Likewise, we shouldn't assume that the connection between marriage and family is insignificant simply because some couples do not or cannot have children. One of the public purposes of traditional marriage is procreation.

At the center of every civilization is the family. There may be other social and political structures, but civilizations survive when the family survives. And they fall apart when the family falls apart. Michael Novak, former professor and winner of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, put it this way: "One unforgettable law has been learned through all the oppressions, disasters, and injustices of the last thousand years: if things go well with the family, life is worth living; when the family falters, life falls apart."{9}

Marriage between a man and a woman produce children that allow a civilization to exist and persist. Marriage begins the foundation of a family. Families are the foundation of a civilization.

Notes

1. Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical Point of View on Homosexuality* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2008).
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3. *Loving v. Virginia*, Supreme Court of U.S., 388 U.S. 1, 1967.
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6. Alexandria Sage, "Utah polygamy ban is challenged: U.S. Supreme Court' sodomy ruling is cited," *Associated Press*, 26 January 2004.
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Talking Points Against Homosexual "Marriage"

The November 2003 decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court that gave homosexual couples the constitutional right to marry has intensified debate about same-sex marriage. There are currently six different court cases concerning same-sex marriage. The topic of same-sex marriage will be in the news and part of popular discussion. Therefore, here are a few key talking points on the subject of homosexual marriage.

1. Right vs. privilege: Gay activists talk about the "right" to get married. Yet in the next sentence they talk about obtaining a marriage license. Marriage is a privilege, not a

right. Therefore, the state must have a standard for issuing a license. We don’t give a license to anyone who wants to drive a car. You must know basic information and demonstrate an ability to drive. We don’t grant a medical license to just anyone. Someone must demonstrate a level of competence. Marriage isn’t a right, it is a privilege that the state can and should regulate.

2. Devalues marriage: Giving same-sex couples the right to marry devalues true marriage. Imagine if at the next awards ceremony, everyone received an award. Would anyone value the award if everyone received one? Any adult is permitted to marry another adult of the opposite sex. But you can’t marry a child, you can’t marry a blood relative, you can’t marry someone already married, you can’t marry someone of the same sex.

3. Basic biology: Homosexual relations deny the self-evident truth that male and female bodies complement each other. Human sexuality and procreation is based upon a man and a woman coming together as one flesh. Marriage between a man and a woman promotes procreation and makes intimate sexual activity orderly and socially accountable.

4. Public health: Homosexual sex is dangerous and destructive to the human body. The International Journal of Epidemiology reports that the life expectancy at age 20 for gay and bisexual men is 8 to 10 years less than for all men. If the same pattern of mortality were to continue, researchers estimate that nearly half of gay and bisexual men currently 20 years of age will not reach their 65th birthday.

5. Counterfeit: Arbitrarily granting a marriage license to a same-sex couple doesn’t constitute marriage. It is a counterfeit of true marriage. It is like trying to tape two same-sex electrical plugs together to form an electrical current.

6. Monogamy/fidelity: Same-sex marriage will not be monogamous. One lesbian writer calls gay marriage "monogamy without fidelity." Another homosexual columnist writes of "a broader understanding of commitment." A recent Dutch study found that homosexual relationships last, on average, about 1-1/2 years and that men in those relationships have an average of eight partners per year outside their main partnership.

7. Children: Marriage between a man and a woman is the ideal family unit. It promotes procreation and ensures the benefits of child rearing by the distinct attributes of both father and mother. Two research papers by Timothy Dailey for Family Research Council (Homosexual Parenting: Placing Children at Risk and Homosexuality and Child Sexual Abuse) document concerns about children raised in gay marriages.

9. Majority rule: A recent poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that public opposition to gay marriage is increasing. In July, 53 percent opposed same-sex marriage. By October 59 percent were opposed to same-sex marriage.

10. Popular vote: States legislatures have already spoken to the issue of same-sex marriages. Thirty-seven states have already passed a Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) stating that marriage is between a man and a woman. In 1996 Congress also passed a national DOMA.

11. Religion: The Bible teaches that homosexuality is not natural and is wrong (Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Other religions also concur with this judgment.

12. Emotional: Gays and lesbians are relationally broken people. Just as in heterosexual marriage, two broken people cannot produce a whole, healthy unit. However, heterosexuals can get help for their brokenness and repair the relationship, but the relationships of homosexual couples are intrinsically and irreparably flawed.

“Jesus Contradicts the O.T. Law, Especially Regarding Homosexuality!”

You point out that the Old Testament forbids homosexuality. Yes it does, but Jesus’ teachings in the gospels have superseded the primitive teachings of the O.T. For example in Matthew 5:17-34 Jesus systematically rips apart some of the most important Jewish laws. When he says he has come to fulfil the Law, he is not talking about the Pharisees’ law, he is talking about God’s Law. People who say that Jesus agreed with the Jewish laws are completely wrong– even an idiot can see this.

People who practice homosexuality in their own homes, with each others’ consent are not breaking the law “love your neighbor as yourself.” They are not harming anyone! What is harmful though is the constant attack by you so-called Christians on them which provides gay people with much misery. I am not homosexual myself – the reason why I am sticking up for gay people is because I am a Christian. Wake up to the fact that the law of loving your neighbor has replaced the O.T. laws.

Your essays clearly show you have some degree of intelligence – why can’t you see that Jesus’ law is in contradiction to the law of the Jewish scriptures?

Hello _____, Thanks for your e-mail. I will try to respond to your comments as best I can.

> *You point out that the O.T. forbids homosexuality. Yes it does, but Jesus’ teachings in the gospels have superseded the*

> *primitive teachings of the O.T. For example in Matthew 5:17-34 Jesus systematically rips apart some of the most important Jewish laws. When he says he has come to fulfil the law, he is not talking about the Pharisee's law, he is talking about God's law. People who say that Jesus agreed with the Jewish laws are completely wrong – even an idiot can see this.*

I'm sorry, I fail to see which laws Jesus is ripping apart in this passage. What I see is that He is going beyond the LETTER of the law, to the SPIRIT of the law, to make it abundantly clear that Yahweh is concerned with the motives and intentions of the heart and not merely surface obedience. If a person holds to the SPIRIT (or intention) of the law, he will also obey the LETTER of it. This is a long way from "ripping apart" the law.

I do agree with you, however, that the Lord Jesus did not agree with the Jewish laws that were like fences built around the inspired laws of God, but which were not, in themselves, laws of God. Those laws don't appear in the Bible though. The commandments against practicing homosexuality, however, were not Jewish laws, but God's laws.

> *People who practice homosexuality in their own homes, with each others consent are not breaking the law "love your neighbor as yourself." They are not harming anyone!*

Morality aside, ask any physician how healthy the homosexual lifestyle is. Ask the Center for Disease Control how healthy the homosexual lifestyle is. Ask counselors who are trying to help people leave the homosexual lifestyle and get beyond their painful homosexual desires. Talk to the parents, siblings, spouses and children of practicing homosexuals and ask if they are not harming anyone.

Let's put the homosexual issue aside and substitute another

deviant sexual lifestyle. Do you think you would write to someone and say, “Men who are attracted to pre-school children and entice them into their homes to have sex with them, are not breaking the law ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’ In fact, these men are loving these children—isn’t that admirable? They are not harming anyone! The men are enjoying the sex, and the children are enjoying the attention…and what child doesn’t enjoy attention?”

I would suggest that you would never say something like this, and I would further suggest that the reason such a large portion of our culture has decided that sex between two men using parts of their bodies that were intended for excretion, not sex, is acceptable, is a result of a carefully-planned disinformation campaign. It is not a result of something normal and natural and God-intended.

> *What is harmful though is the constant attack by you so-called Christians on them which provides gay people with much misery. I am not homosexual myself – the reason why I am sticking up for gay people is because I am a Christian.*

It’s interesting to me that you seem so devoted to the issue of “love,” yet do not hesitate to cast aspersions on my relationship with Jesus Christ by calling me a “so-called Christian.” This doesn’t strike me as very loving, or am I missing something?

I’m also wondering if you read my entire article, or just bits and pieces. Because I strongly believe that the responsible Christian response to the homosexual movement is one of deep compassion for the individuals caught in unnatural, unfortunate desires while not compromising on what God has said about the homosexual ACT. In fact, I have received e-mail accusing me of “sticking up for gay people,” to use your term.

People like me who speak out, agreeing with what God has said about homosexuality, are not causing all the misery gays

experience. That happens long before someone even comes out or tells their first friend of these unwelcome feelings and attractions. There is misery inherent in a homosexual orientation; it means something is wrong, in the same way that there's something wrong with someone who is sexually attracted to small children. And that's why these feelings need to be dealt with and healed, not celebrated as something good and beautiful.

(I will admit, with a great deal of sadness, that there has been a terrible amount of judgmental condescension from Christians towards homosexuals, that has, indeed, caused grief. There is no excuse for not making a distinction between the desires, which are wrong but unasked-for, and the people experiencing them. I know God does.)

> *Wake up to the fact that the law of loving your neighbor has replaced the O.T. laws.*

No, the law of loving your neighbor *sums up* the O.T. laws. At least the moral ones. If you keep all the moral laws of the Old Testament, you will be demonstrating love for your neighbor. Not stealing, telling the truth, not charging usurious interest against your neighbor, and keeping all sexual activity within marriage are all demonstrations of love for one's neighbor.

The law against homosexual actions is part of the moral code; the consequence of death by stoning is part of the civil code, which controlled how the people of God were to conduct their lives in a culture where God was their head and not a law-making king. It makes sense for the civil code to be done away with, because the people of Israel are no longer living under that system. But God has not done away with a single commandment of His moral code, because the moral laws are rooted in the person and character of God Himself.

What is it that makes homosexual activity sin? The fact that

God has ordained sex to be the glue that holds *husband and wife* together. Sex is so powerful that it is only safe within the confines of marriage, because it acts like superglue between two souls. Tear them apart and you have broken hearts. So why not make homosexual marriage legal? Because Ephesians 5 says that marriage goes beyond merely a civil convenience; it is an eloquent word picture that God ordained to help us understand the amazing unity within diversity of Christ and the church. Men and women are so different that it's a mystical union when they come together in marriage. Man and man coming together, or woman and woman, does not provide the dynamic difference that mirrors the "otherness" of Christ-and-the-church. Gay relationships are sameness, not otherness. So gay marriage can never be blessed by God because marriage means far more than simply living together, even having sex together. It's supposed to teach us something about God.

> *Your essay clearly shows you have some degree of intelligence – why can't you see that Jesus' law is in contradiction to the law of the Jewish scriptures?*

Well, I do thank you for the compliment <smile>. . .I don't see it because it's not there. Have you read the whole New Testament? How about just the four gospels? If you look at what the Lord Jesus taught, one thing you'll see is that He mentioned two things people often overlook. One is references to Sodom and Gomorrah as places of judgment, which the Bible makes clear were judged for homosexual sin. Jesus believed in Sodom and Gomorrah, and He believed in the judgment they received. In fact, He was involved in sending the judgment. The other thing is His references to fornication, which means any sex outside of marriage. All homosexual sex is fornication. Even if there is some sort of religious ceremony, it's still fornication because you can't get around God's restrictions on marriage, which is one man and one woman. God is not impressed by our ceremonies when they disregard what He has established.

A lot of people like to talk about Jesus' law of love; what's intriguing to me is how they never balance it with the fact that Jesus also talked about holiness, and purity, and justice. While it's true that many homosexuals love each other, that kind of love still falls short of God's standard of holiness. There's nothing holy about what God has called an abomination. That is not "the law of Jewish scriptures" as if they were written by scribes and Pharisees; that is the very word breathed by God Himself. There is no contradiction between the Old and New Testament when it comes to what is moral, what reflects the character of God. Homosexual sin is not love as God defines it, regardless of how the culture tries to persuade people it is.

Thank you for reading this far. I hope what I've said gives you something to think about. I also pray that the Lord gives you a higher esteem for the ENTIRE Word of God. Jesus said not one jot or tittle of it would pass away. That's a pretty high value on it. May we all value His word so highly.

Respectfully,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries