

Courageous Christianity: Challenging Conversations on LGBTQ++

Genesis 1:27; 2:18-24; 5:2; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6

Book recommendations and acknowledgement:

Jimenez, Jason. "Challenging Conversations: A Practical Guide to Discuss Controversial Topics in the Church." Baker Books, 2020.

Lutzer, Erwin W. "We Will Not Be Silenced: Responding Courageously to Our Culture's Assault on Christianity." Harvest House Publishers, 2020.

Trueman, Carl R. "The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution." Crossway, 2020.

"I am a woman trapped in a man's body." (Trueman, p. 19)

How, when, and why has this statement become acceptable, meaningful, and even normalized in our society?

Examples:

- ❖ Isaac Simmons, Ms. Penny Cost in drag, is certified as a candidate for ministry in the United Methodist Church.
- ❖ H.R.5 - 117th Congress: Equality Act. Passed House on 2/25/21. Legislation is currently in the Senate.
- ❖ Department of Education intends to redefine sex to include sexual orientation and gender identity
- ❖ IL legislative bill SB 818 ("Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act") supported by pro-abortion and LGBTQ organizations requires all public schools to align "personal health and safety" teaching in K-12 with the "National Sex Education Standards." Passed both houses, waiting for the governor to sign.

Questions:

- What should we, as Christians, believe about homosexuality, gay marriage, transgenderism, LGBTQ++, and other issues of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI)? (gender fluid, nonbinary)
- How should we treat someone who is gay, transgender, etc....?
- Can someone be gay or a transgender person and still be a Christian?
- Do these issues even affect us as Christians? If so, how?
- What do you do if your son or daughter comes to you saying he/she is gay or trans?

Initial thoughts:

- We are all sinful, fallen beings and have proclivities to sin (adultery, lying, covetousness)
- It is easy for us to be horrified by these kinds of sins (at least have a hard time understanding)
- All people are human beings created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity and kindness
- You don't have to approve of everything a person does or believes in order to love them.

I. Conversing with "compassionate conviction"

1. Without compromise, stand firmly on biblical truth which remains unchanged through time
2. Express your views persuasively but with respect and kindness
3. Show care and compassion for them as an individual

Three examples from Jesus:

1. The Samaritan woman (John 4) - Jesus didn't simply label her as a prostitute/adulterer
2. Zacchaeus (Luke 19) - Jesus didn't condemn him as a thief
3. The leper (Mark 1:40-45) - Jesus didn't throw rocks at him and call him a filthy, unclean person

Mark 1:41 And Jesus, **moved with compassion**, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

The gospels often emphasize Jesus' compassion for people, even those who were despised sinners!

Some practical suggestions when talking with people:

- Be careful about automatically labeling them or condemning them. Nobody likes this (i.e. homophobe)
- Help them from the inside out, not the outside in. Our job is not to “cure” or “fix” them but to point them to Christ.
- Don't make assumptions such as thinking a person struggles because they aren't trying hard enough or aren't repentant.
- Don't promise complete healing/victory. We can't guarantee a person will be completely free from sinful desires or temptations.
- Ask them questions if it seems appropriate to better understand them.
- Help them set up some accountability if they are willing or to seek pastoral or professional help

II. Countering three myths of LGBTQ+ dogma

Myth #1: Homosexuality is not a sin; People are naturally born that way.

- The Scriptures couldn't be more clear that homosexuality is sin and violates God's natural, created order. Anyone who claims otherwise is misinterpreting biblical teaching.

Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:21-24

Leviticus 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: **it is abomination.**

Leviticus 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an **abomination**: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

Romans 1:24-27 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to **dishonour their own bodies between themselves**: (25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (26) For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their **women did change the natural use into that which is against nature**: (27) And likewise also the **men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly**, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

1 Timothy 1:9-10 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (10) For whoremongers, **for them that defile themselves with mankind**, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

- Historically, the church has held that the Bible views homosexual practice as an extreme sexual offense
- We live in a sin-cursed, fallen world that has twisted God's original design and intent.
- Fallen people have always tried to take what is morally wrong and make it acceptable.
- Homosexuality only points to the prevalence of sin and the need of salvation from our sinful natures.
- People are reconstructing their identity from the culture, not from Scripture.
- Just because something becomes normal, common, or acceptable does not mean it is biblical or OK.

Myth #2: God approves of same-sex marriage

- The Bible teaches that God created intimacy in marriage between one man and one woman for life
- God made humans with two biological genders that are complementary to each other (Gen 2:18, 20)
- Jesus Himself affirms this in His teaching.

Matthew 19:4-6 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them **at the beginning** made them **male and female**, (5) And said, For this cause shall a **man** leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his **wife**: and they twain shall be **one flesh**? (6) - Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mark 10:6-9 But **from the beginning** of the creation God made them **male** and **female**. (7) For this cause shall a **man** leave his father and mother, and cleave to his **wife**; (8) - And they twain shall be **one flesh**: so then they are no more twain, but **one flesh**. (9) What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

- Therefore, same-sex marriage goes against:
 - God's design - the way He created marriage
 - God's purpose - the reason He created marriage
 - God's pattern - the relationship He created in marriage (Ephesians 5:22-33)

Kevin DeYoung argues, "If marriage is simply the formation of a kinship bond between those who are committed wholly to one another, there is no reason why multiple persons or groups of people cannot commit themselves wholly to one another."

Myth #3: A person can determine their own gender

- A person's gender is not achieved after birth; it is received at conception

Genesis 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male** and **female** created he them.

Genesis 5:2 - **Male** and **female** created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

- God created only two genders and chooses which of the two each person would be
- A person cannot determine their own gender contrary to their biology and genetics.
- A person who does so must reject reality in favor of their feelings/emotions.
- Sexual reassignment surgery and hormone therapy does not change the genetic reality of the individual
- It is incredibly tragic and irresponsible to see parents allowing children to take puberty blockers and transgender hormone therapy which only reveals the utter confusion taking place in our homes.

Vaughan Roberts says, "True freedom, according to Scripture, is found not in asserting our radical independence and trying to be who we're not made to be. True freedom is found in embracing and being who we are. A fish that decides to make a bid for freedom by jumping out of the water will not be free -- because it is created to live in the environment of water. And as soon as we try and become what we are not, far from enjoying freedom, we can't expect to flourish."

III. Convincing through biblical ideals

- God designed and created the world, defines marriage, and made each individual
- Sin has twisted and corrupted God's design
- One's sexual orientation or gender confusion does not define a person
- A person's identity is not found in their sinfulness or sexuality but must be found in Jesus Christ

Biblical truth may sound harsh or judgmental to the world. The Christian position may not approve of a person's sexuality, marriage, or gender identity but that doesn't mean we can't/shouldn't love the individual. In fact, telling someone the truth to prevent them from harm demonstrates love. It might not be easy to speak up, but love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7).