

A Christian's Field Guide to...

Homosexuality in Present Culture



By Joshua Stucki

This booklet is a practical Q&A guide based on Scripture that addresses the above issue that presently has a demanding presence in our culture.

Psalm 19:13 – “Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.”

Restoration Movement Literature

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ANSWERING FIFTEEN OF THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS OF A CHRISTIAN'S POSITION ON HOMOSEXUALITY

Note: Some questions that are answered below are in the form of a statement. Nonetheless, they are still called “questions” for the sake of still requiring an answer to the statement.

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Q1) “The Bible does not say homosexuality is wrong”; or, how can they say that? There are many verses condemning it. (Also, what does the Bible say about homosexuality?)”)

The reader is correct in that there are many verses condemning it, so there are four logical answers to your question:

1) The person saying it is genuinely ignorant: they do not know about the verses, they have never read them, or are just repeating what they have been told (last one is most likely).

As unbelievable as it may seem, this is a distinct possibility: for people who have either grown up in the church or have at least been a Christian for awhile, it seems unconscionable that people would not know at least the basics of the Bible. However, our culture has largely been eradicated from Biblical education in the public square, so it is no longer the exception to the rule when people do not know even the very basics of Christian morality, conduct, or the basic Bible stories.

In this case, it can be helpful to print out a sheet of Bible verses, quoted out, that show homosexuality as a sin (I suggest putting New Testament verses on top, and then Old Testament verses on bottom). See below for those in this same question for those verse references. This alone will provide adequate proof and settle this particular matter. Be sure to be kind and offer it as knowledge, not with any frustration.

2) The person saying it is in denial. They know about the verses, may have even read them themselves, but have decided to believe otherwise. Denial may sound absurd, but it is both common and powerful: if you say something does not exist, many other [gullible] people will believe you, even if all the evidence is contrary to what is said. Words are powerful!

Again, a sheet of quoted out Bible verses on the subject (New Testament ones quoted first) will provide undeniable proof, right in front of their eyes, of the Biblical truth on the subject. See below for those in this same question for those verse references.

3a) Some say that since Jesus did not specifically condemn homosexuality so that is what they mean by “the Bible”.

This is an argument from silence, so logically, it means nothing: if Jesus never mentions homosexuality, no direct conclusion can be made from that fact alone. If I never said that I have not been in Hawaii that is an equally meaningless statement!

However, Jesus not only defined what marriage exclusively is Matthew 19:4+5, but in those same verses He also exclusively identified gender as male and female. Jesus is quoting from Genesis 2:24, so by doing so, Jesus is demonstrating that *since the beginning of time* God has considered marriage and gender absolutes, regardless of what dispensation of time we are talking about.

Also see question #2c for more information regarding Jesus’ view.

3b) Some also say that the word “homosexuality” in the Bible was not even in English Bibles until about 100 years ago.

This is absolutely true; this is because the word “homosexuality” did not exist in English dictionaries until about 100 years ago. Once the word was coined, the translation became possible.

Before that, the word was often rendered, “effeminate”, or specifically men that act like women so that will appear attractive to other men for sex (obviously then, “homosexuality”).

3c) Some also say that the word “homosexuality” can just mean “sexual immorality”, that it is a vague word.

This is true; the word by itself does not define itself (we certainly not want to be guilty of circular reasoning). So how do we absolutely show that homosexuality is wrong in Scripture then?

Romans 1:24-32 does not use the word homosexuality; instead, Paul describes homosexuality in detail (“men inflamed with lust for one another, and women also inflamed with lust for one another” – verse 27), so there is no doubt this is what he is talking about. Paul also groups these same descriptions with other sins like murder and greed (verse 29). So let there be no doubt the New Testament views homosexuality as sin.

So when we read 1 Corinthians 6:9 that mentions homosexuality right along with adultery, we can be confident that the same author (Paul) from Romans 1:24-32 means what he says and says what he means.

Jude 1:6+7 makes equal the sin and consequence of “strange flesh” between angels and women to be the same as homosexuality from Genesis 19, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

As well, there is Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (also spelled out in detail), and 1 Timothy 1:10 (again, Paul), that further solidifies that God has always seen homosexuality as wrong.

So there is no actual justification for saying that “the Bible does not say that homosexuality is wrong”. It either boils down to ignorance, denial, or a poor understanding of words mixed with ignoring all other explicit references and context (so a mix of poor understanding and denial and/or ignorance).

4) Some say that the Bible really does not condemn homosexuality no matter what verse or reference you go to: there are now many articles (especially on liberal blogs and news websites) that attempt to use some very imaginative way to try to get the Bible to say what it does not say. Paul addresses this as well:

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.” – 2 Timothy 4:3

Otherwise, do not fall for it. The Bible has warnings everywhere warning against false teachers, which is precisely what the above is. James 3:1 says teachers will be held doubly accountable; their consequence will be their own.

Perhaps the greatest litmus test for someone who calls themselves a Christian but believes the Bible really does not condemn homosexuality is to ask the same question Jude 1:4 asks after explaining that developing a license for immorality always results in the following question being answered in the negative: “Do you believe Jesus is the only way to heaven?”

You will find this to be a universal “no” from those who support homosexuality. This is because one cannot accept Jesus as Lord and then rejects what He says in His Word. This author, personally, has never met an exception.

Q2) Why does Paul talk about homosexuality so much in the New Testament, and other authors barely mention it?

2a) Paul's ancestry, the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5), had nearly met its end due to God's judgment on homosexuality. In Judges chapter 20, God sends the other tribes to destroy the tribe of Benjamin for their acceptance of homosexuality in their camps. Only out of mercy did Benjamin survive at all, but its survival would also mean it remained the smallest of the tribes of Israel.

If in your family history you knew of something that had almost meant its destruction, you naturally would warn others about it too!

2b) Paul also traveled much more extensively, since he was a missionary, than any other New Testament author. Whereas most of the other authors were more or less located in their ministries, Paul was all over Asia Minor and southern Europe. His cultural encounters were much broader than his contemporaries, and when he ran into homosexuality in Rome, for example, he was very explicit about its implications in his letter to the Roman church, therefore.

As well, Paul wrote Timothy (1 Timothy 1:10) about homosexuality, because Timothy traveled some as well (sometimes with Paul, sometimes without). Paul did not want there to be any mystery to Timothy about this subject therefore as Timothy encountered it during his travels.

2c) Paul also wrote to the church at Corinth about it (1 Corinthians 6:9) because they had many other "sin" issues in their church as well. In fact, 1 Corinthians is often referred to as Paul taking the church "to the wood shed" because of their many allowances in sinful behavior.

However, Paul is not alone in his expositions against homosexuality:

Another author that mentions homosexuality is Jude in Jude 1:6+7, who equals the sin and consequence of angels and women to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah.

As well, Jesus excludes all other kinds of godly, married, sexual relationships or understandings about gender in Matthew 19:4+5, quoting Genesis 2:24 -

When people want to learn about how to identify counterfeit money, they do not study the counterfeits, because there are always a million of those. Instead, they study the real thing! We can always identify a fake if it does not match the genuine article. All the same, Jesus does not need to spell out every possible deviation from God's plan to condemn it; He simply states the genuine article – one man, one woman, married for life – and anything that deviates from that is sin (including divorce, which unfortunately, commonly is not seen as the destructive sin that it is as well).

Finally, the Old Testament references like Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 can be used to solidify the fact that God has always seen homosexuality as sin in history, and that fact has not changed.

Q3) “How can God say my feelings are wrong? I was born this way!” (The argument from nature/genetics)

The above statement is the probably the oldest and most prevalent argument given “for” homosexuality. It also requires a gentle approach, because it is a sincerely-sensitive subject:

First, there is consensus that feelings do not dictate truth by themselves; if desire is our justification for what we do, there truly is no end to what may be done in the name of how we feel (how many of us hold back our feelings every day, especially while driving? 😊).

Yet, this is how society is choosing to determine what is right in our society in many cases. None of us “feel” patient, but we all know that patience is a virtue. None of us “feel” like being nice to someone who is being mean to us, but we know that it is not productive to retaliate. So, often it is our benefit to deny our feelings and do the exact opposite!

So, the only real argument in the above statement is the possibility of being “born this way.” This is the argument from nature, or genetics – “that if my DNA dictates that I am gay – then I am – and nothing can change that.”

Often times well-meaning but unnecessarily harsh rebuttals are offered like, “If you were born a pedophile, does that excuse pedophiles?” This is not going to win anyone over!

Instead, let us talk about a desire absolutely everyone has at least to some degree – to eat. Everybody is born with the desire to eat; some are born with the desire to eat way too much! Your preacher is one with the latter. I can promise you I did not request an appetite that could easily eat 8,000 calories a day if I did not constantly restrain myself. There is consensus that eating too much is always harmful; that if I was born this way or not, it is still harmful. That if I feel like eating too much, it is still not justified in any circumstance.

I know that if I eat what I should not, especially in volumes I should not, I will do damage to my body, possibly even prematurely kill

it. My feelings – my appetite – how I was born – are all exactly opposite of what is good for me!

Homosexuality is much the same way; people with desires towards people of the same sex certainly do have those desires. Their desires certainly exist, or we would not be having this discussion. All the same, however, those desires (just like too-big-an-appetite) do not dictate what is good. Instead, homosexuality is by nature non-functional (it does not reproduce) and unnatural (anatomy is used in ways that nature did not intend) and thus always homosexual behavior always has a greater chance for spreading disease than heterosexual activity. Most importantly, God has always opposed it, in the Old Testament or New.

Otherwise, there is no inherent benefit from homosexual behavior, but there are negatives (without even discussing the spiritual issues involved).

So we can feel a variety of ways about something, or even be born a particular way, and neither justifies any particular action or state of being.

The next question goes right along with the above:

Q4) “But I can’t change who I am! I can’t ‘pray away the gay!’”

(Or, how to reach out to those who presently practice homosexuality)

This statement has a degree of truth in it, and it is important to recognize that fact. There is absolutely no Scripture that says anyone can “pray away the gay”, or pray away any other temptation for that matter:

In fact, the stories and verses of anyone in the Bible dealing with temptation (which is basically all of them) are a matter of overcoming the temptation, **not** getting rid of the temptation itself. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:13 –

“¹³No temptation^[c] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted^[d] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,^[c] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

From this verse we might even say that Paul is admitting that even homosexuality is “common”; this does not mean a majority, but rather that certainly more than one person is struggling with any given temptation – so we can take comfort that we are not alone.

Paul himself had a “thorn in his side” that he prayed God would take away, but God did not. Instead, Paul testifies in 2 Corinthians 12:7b+8 –

“I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.””

Even the Apostle Paul could not “pray away the thorn!” This is very important to realize about homosexuality or any other temptation; God is not necessarily going to take it away (though the silenced voices of some would say that He sometimes does⁷).

Jesus Himself endured EVERY temptation (think about that) that man has, yet He resisted/overcame them all:

“¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.” – Hebrews 4:15

So Jesus knows what it is like to have too big of an appetite and yet resist eating too much. Jesus knows what it is like to have the temptation

to lust after a woman (or, a man) and resist. Jesus knows what it is like to feel any temptation – anything – and still resist and overcome!

Therefore, any so-called therapy that tries to tell someone that God will take away their temptations is lying; God never said that. God said He would give us the ability (i.e. choice) not to give into those temptations.

Indeed, if we can be patient when we do not feel like it, if we can resist cheating because of our commitment to our spouse, if we can hold back when we are angry, if we can be peaceful when others are violent – then we can resist temptation when we choose to. **UNDENIABLY**, all have sinned (Romans 3:23), and therefore we are **ALL** going to fail sometimes. However, this does not excuse us; God’s grace and plan for eternal life are not a license to give in or give up (Romans 6:1).

This author thinks a genuine understanding needs to be had for those who struggle with homosexuality (or gender uncertainty) in today’s world; they struggle with something possibly only their Lord Jesus understands (Hebrews 4:15) among their particular peer group (I do not claim to understand it personally, only empathize).

So the next time an understandably-upset individual confronts you about the above, listen first, and then tell them about how Jesus has felt what they feel, and He understands. Pray for strength, as that is what is Biblical, not for the “gay to go away.”

Finally, do not expect someone to be able to pray effectively or receive strength from God if they have not come as they are to the cross: if they have not believed upon Jesus, being willing to turn away from their sin (repentance), confess Him, and be baptized into Him, they have not even begun the journey yet! It is important to lead people to

salvation before they can have victory over their temptations. We come as we are to the cross, not already fixed, but broken!

Our feelings cannot tell us what is right or good, but nonetheless they can be cruel sometimes. Be understanding, kind, gracious, and patient. Truth has never been easy to swallow, although it is sweet to the core when it finally sinks in.

Q5) “Should the church lobby against gay marriage? 1 Corinthians 5:12 says it is not our business to judge those outside the church.”

This is a complex question (with a corresponding complex answer), but there are many reasons to lobby against gay marriage, both spiritually and otherwise:

1) The definition of “marriage” including anyone except a man and a woman has only been changed worldwide in the last 15 years, as of this writing. The very first gay marriage anywhere was in the Netherlands, on December 21st, 2000. That is less than 1/4 of 1% of all recorded human history!

So it has not even been half a generation, as they say, that gay marriage has been on planet earth. Regardless of anyone’s thoughts of the matter, that is very little time to determine what effect that will have on the future of humanity. Those who claim “we have sufficient evidence that it renders no harm to society” are, at best, being very, very fast to come to that conclusion, very subjectively.

For example, there have been absolutely no kids grown to adulthood yet that have had two gay married parents since their birth, anywhere on earth. So again, since there is no data – there can be no real conclusions.

2) Almost in all developed countries there is a genuine shortage of young people to support the aging population: in America, the Baby Boomers greatly out-number the millennial generation; in Japan, the older live longer than anywhere else in the world, and yet they have one of the world's lowest repopulation rates.

At the same time, homosexual marriage is only presently legal in many of those same countries, exacerbating the problem: naturally, homosexual unions do not produce children, and therefore cannot help in counteracting this trend.

Needless to say, abortion has the same effect – reducing the newly born population while the older population continues to age, unsupported.

As well, it creates an unbalanced electorate – since the baby boomers and other older generations have not had the effects of both homosexuality and abortion, they disproportionately have a greater say. Is it really any coincidence that the burdens of national debt and Social Security deficits will be carried on by the smaller, less-represented populations as a result?

3) Defense of traditional marriage for millennia has held at its basic understanding that it's basic purpose was for the benefit of any procreated children – otherwise an inherently unselfish reason.

This is also evidenced by the fact that it was legal for many centuries in many countries to annul a marriage if one spouse or the other was found to be infertile, because procreation was the basic purpose of marriage.

The new definition of marriage naturally requires a reason focused on self – that love between people is the basis for marriage.

For this reason, now that marriage is based on one's self-directed desires, it can literally be redefined to many anything, because it's no longer focused on a selfless reason, but one that is ultimately self-directed.

Although for tax and other sociological reasons now, marriage between three or more people is impractical, those tax and other reasons can be changed to accommodate this new reality. What used to be immutable is longer so: so what used to accommodate its uniqueness will now be reformulated to suit the wider potential definitions.

4) By the law of a country putting homosexual marriage on the same level as traditional marriage, there are factors that have been summarily dismissed by law that still have every day, practical effects on society:

a) The always-greater spread of disease among the homosexual and bi-sexual population. This is still true, and simply always will be.

b) Kids in families who want a mom and a dad, but only get one or the other. Many grow up resenting this already, and with gay marriage so young, the total results of this are still completely unknown.¹

c) Absolutely no kid grows up with a mom and a dad and says they only wanted moms or dads (outside of maybe when one parent or the other disciplines them!). It is simply not a natural state to only have one gender representing the family (what single parent does not want a

¹ <https://www.lifesitenews.com/opinion/not-all-children-raised-by-gay-parents-support-gay-marriage-i-should-know-i>

solid, hard-working spouse to help them? This author was a previous-single parent as well).

d) Mixed couples are always statistically more likely to have or adopt kids than same-sex male couples. The latter adopt kids as a group always at a negative rate to their total number.

e) Society is still much divided on the issue, and despite some saying otherwise, it is going to remain this way: those who equate gay rights to civil rights still have blacks and other minorities opposed to their unions.² Those who practice homosexuality are in opposition to thousands of years of marital and religious tradition spanning the whole world, since the beginning of recorded human history. The incredible speed of the advancement of their agenda has not served to unite countries and peoples, but divide many people groups, churches, families, and politics. Of course, they do not desire these things, but they are consequences nonetheless. No one gets to choose the consequences of their actions; they come all the same.

5) Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 5:12 is not talking about politics, or law; he is talking to a church who has sinful behavior and they are using the outside world's behavior (such as their local customs) to defend their actions. This is why Paul follows up in that same verse and says,

“Is it not your business to judge those inside the church?” – 1 Corinthians 5:12b

Otherwise, standards for Christians are the same regardless of what the world does, or what culture or time or country we live in.

² <http://caapusa.org/>

We cannot “force” change in the outside world, but we can evangelize its many advantages, which in effect is lobbying for society’s consideration of the matter. Since, especially in America, we live in a republic, that is exactly what happens. If society rejects it, the church keeps doing what it knows are right anyway. If society accepts it, we enjoy that influence for as long as it lasts.

Either way, we never stop preaching or advocating for what is right – and thus what is good – whether it is lawful to or not (Acts 4:19+20).

Q6) “Gay marriage does not interfere with anyone else.”

This common assertion is stating that gay marriage is nobody else’s business, because it does not affect anyone else. It’s a private matter, it is argued, “let it alone.”

As hard as it may be to accept, gay marriage has already had profound impacts on all of society, and to deny this is simply denial:

1) Businesses in many states that do not want to participate in gay marriages are now effectively shut down by massive fines for not participating. This is in addition to the loss of commerce, the talent those people had to contribute to society in that business, taxation, and personal choice in that matter.

In these situations, the law did not provide homosexual couples access; it simply shut down access to everybody. This is how laws that attempt to act against conscience always work: opposite of their intent.

2) Heterosexual children growing up under homosexual households have no primary example of a functional, heterosexual relationship growing up.

(This is often countered with, “Homosexual children growing up under heterosexual parents have the same problem!” This is, again, in denial of the fact that every child growing up in a heterosexual-couple household at least always has someone of the same gender to relate to.)

3) Families, cultures (including each individual race), churches, and other social structures have become divided over this issue, sometimes leading to estrangement, abandonment, violence and hatred (all undesirable, but all consequences nonetheless).

4) History of successful individuals in their respective past eras is now demonized for their anti-gay views, when in their time basically all of culture agreed right along with them. Examples: Edgar J. Hoover and Ronald Reagan (he called gays, “sick unfortunates”). The only logical option in this course is to demonize virtually all of history and every character in it for accepting and knowing what society and culture has always believed and accepted until this last little bit of recorded human history.

5) There are already lawsuits in England and elsewhere in an attempt to force churches and clergy to marry same-sex couples. Even if they lose, the “effect” of having to endure, fight, and pay for litigation is a significant effect all on its own (as anyone who has been through divorce court can testify – win, lose, or draw – everybody loses in some respect).

These among other consequences of gay marriage show there are and will continue to be real effects in others’ lives because of the ruling.

Q7)“The fourteenth amendment guarantees the right to gay marriage. The Supreme Court recently said so.” (The argument from law)

This statement has to be answered carefully; one can counter with truth, but it is meaningless unless it is done with “grace and love” (1 Peter 3:15):

First, the Supreme Court has ruled lots of things in its long history that ended up being wrong/reversed:

- 1) Prohibition of alcohol. (Constitutional Amendment 18 reversed with Constitutional Amendment 21).
- 2) Black slaves were property. (Dred Scott v. Sandford - 1857)
- 3) Separate but “equal”. (Plessy vs. Ferguson – 1896)
- 4) Interracial marriage illegal. (Pace vs. Alabama – 1883) (Ironically, also used the 14th amendment to justify itself)
- 5) Japanese Americans were a threat to the rest of the citizenry. (Korematsu vs. United States – 1944)

These decisions, among others, are now universally condemned. So just because the Supreme Court in today’s day and era with its current justices says something, means nothing in and of itself other than they determine the present law for that time.

Second, the fourteenth amendment was ratified in 1868 for the purpose of granting blacks full citizenship. No one disagrees that was the purpose.

Attempting to take an amendment from nearly 150 years ago and use it to justify homosexuality as a fundamental right is simply out of context of its original intent and out of the mind of its original authors: At the time (and for over a hundred years following), homosexual behavior was outlawed, and naturally not in their lifetimes or their children's lifetimes was that changed.

The only logically-consistent course today would have been to create another constitutional amendment for gays along the same line as this one was created for blacks, yet that was not the course taken.

For this reason, given a few years and a few justices later, and a few bad news breaks, and all of this could be reversed. Naturally, this would/could be devastating for many people, so it is important that we do not make light of it, but simply here are pointing out facts regarding the inherent weaknesses involved in this approach to legalize gay marriage nationwide.

Q8) "It is discrimination not to grant the same rights as minorities to the gay population." (The argument of equality)

This is another question that has to be answered carefully: not because of reason, but because of explosive emotional response usually obliterates any chance of having a reasonable discussion.

First, it must be stated that if gay rights was the same as Civil Rights, then there should be universal acceptance of this fact by the minority communities currently protected by the Civil Rights Act and other acts of legislation that followed. However, there is not: whereas those who received protected status for their race did not reject those who wanted protected status for their color or age, there is absolutely no universal acceptance of homosexual individuals into that group. In fact,

there is actively rallying against it from many groups, such as Seculars against Gay Marriage³, the CAAP, among others.

As well, libertarians of all creeds and colors reject government influence into private business:

The legal concept of discrimination was born in the United States during the 1960's Civil Rights era, when "separate but equal" and segregation were ceased. Since then, discrimination has become the term coined when someone is "arbitrarily treated different than another" who is part of another legal concept created at the same time called a "protected class."

Protected classes granted up to this point have been exclusively age, race, religion, color, national origin, or sex. There are also some protections for pregnancy, disability, and veterans.

So it must be clear that obviously not everyone or everything they do is part of a protected class – or ever will be. Therefore, the Civil Rights Act (and other acts since) has attempted to grant people rights by effectively, practically giving them some advantages over those who are not otherwise in a protected class. Hence anyone can see why these and other "protected class" issues coming up have been so contentious, and continue to be.

To answer the statement that was given, we must therefore ask ourselves not only about the potential application of "protected class" status to homosexuals, but if "protected classes" is really a sustainable model by which to approach this subject:

³ <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Seculars-Against-Same-Sex-Marriage/293011477509961>

If homosexuals are elevated to “protected class” status, then the legal questions begin to be asked, “Whose rights are superior? The homosexual who demands service for the wedding, or the religious person whose conscience does not permit them to participate?” Where this is already an issue – like Oregon – the issue has been decided in favor of gay rights over religious rights.⁴

This, of course, is the problem with “protected classes” to begin – there is no practical equality – there are simply inherent, superior advantages to this status.

As well, religious rights, as dictated by the First Amendment, will effectively and therefore become, “the right to worship”, instead of the right to “exercise” one’s religion as the First Amendment explicitly states. So, to sum these items up: the Civil Rights Act and following legislative efforts trump the long-practiced and still-stated Constitutional rights of any individual.

Interestingly – so far anyway (although this is not necessarily true elsewhere⁵, and so there is no guarantee for our future either⁶) – churches and ordained ministers are “exempt” from performing or participating in gay weddings. Again, from the “protected class” arguments, this should not matter, but arbitrarily it presently does.

However, from a religious freedom perspective – especially a Christian’s – there is no difference between a minister and an everyday church member: both are considered priests in their religion (1 Peter 2:5+9). Therefore, for one Christian “to have rights” not to participate,

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⁵ <http://thelibertarianrepublic.com/millionaire-gay-couple-suing-force-church-hold-wedding/>

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but another not to, is inherently unconscionable – it is discrimination it and of itself.

This author was also in business for fourteen years, and can testify that the freedom to accept or refuse business at will is essential, and for one reason alone: only mutual transactions really work out in the end anyway. “Forcing” an individual in any circumstance to operate outside of his or her most basic conscientious beliefs has never worked; they will simply be punished for not complying. Therefore, discrimination simply turns the tables – the one who felt discriminated against gets to discriminate (“punish”) another.

The end result of all this is a simple summary:

- 1) Not everyone is in a protected class
- 2) Therefore, those in a protected class effectively, practically enjoy superiority/more rights than those who are not
- 3) Therefore, those discriminated against get to discriminate against others
- 4) “Equality” has been legally redefined to mean “being a protected class”...
- 5) But since churches and ministers are still presently exempted, it’s really not “equal”
- 6) Which means, consistently – eventually – they will be forced to comply as well.
- 7) And therefore what was been going on will continue – that “protected class” will trump Constitutional “free exercise” whenever the

issues goes to court (after all, courts interpret legislation or cases brought to them, they do not amend the Constitution).

The only consistent solution for all is not to have protected classes when it comes to private commerce – to let the market and all individuals have the freedom to sort these kinds of things out on their own. That is the only way people are truly equal – equally able to engage or not engage in mutual commerce, trade, or relationships as they so desire.

It is this preacher's opinion - the government, by comparison – which has to represent and support all peaceful, tax-paying citizens – must grant equal access to all citizens in government offices and functions. Accommodations for religious purposes can still be made as long as somebody in the office can fulfill the required duties willingly.

Some will say that will result in “whites only” restaurants, etc. Yes, but would you eat there? I would not, and neither would most others; I would protest with giving my business to a non-racist restaurant. All the same, those on the fringe can still try to survive “discriminating” – freely at least – if they want to try to, while society just moves from them and largely supports and enjoys the much greater free and non-discriminating enterprise (while also enjoying the taxes the “discriminating” individuals and businesses are still paying into the system).

There are many other points to be made here, but suffice it to say this: the system has never been equal, and still is not, and never will be, and mutual relationships are the only ones that truly function anyway. “Forcing” does not happen; simply “punishing for not complying” is all that does. When those previously discriminated against begin to trump their new rights on others, by definition there is not equality, but simply

a turning of the tables from abused to abuser, from victim to one who creates victims.

Q9) “By permitting gay marriage, the suicide rate of homosexuals will decrease, and other psychological orders as well.” (The argument from health)

1) Since gay marriage is only 15 years old worldwide as of this writing (first gay marriage in the world was December 21st, 2000 in the Netherlands), there is no long-term science, and very little peer-reviewed short term science to work with: it is simply premature to make the above statement even about the present generation, especially in America, where gay marriage has just arrived nationwide.

2) This effect could be true of any kind of individual who could do what they wanted uninhibited by law; it is an argument from license, not right or wrong, or what is healthy for society as a whole.

3) The testimonies of those who were once practicing homosexuals but now are not, but yet still living healthy, happy, and productive lives, are silenced in our present culture.⁷ Regardless of what anyone thinks, these people are saying the same things that gays said decades ago but are now accepted – “We are who we are.” In this case, they are previously-practicing homosexuals who no longer are. This, of course, by the same logic, should have raised their likelihood for depression, anxiety, suicide, etc. but it has not done so.

⁷ <http://ex-gaytruth.com/ex-gay-testimonies/>; <http://www.thebible.net/cnlfg/>

Q10) “I do not believe in the Bible, so it’s your belief, not mine.”

(The argument from a plural society)

Whether we believe something or not is irrelevant: all that matters is whether or not it is true.

For example, I may not “believe” in cancer, but cancer is there nonetheless. This is also the same defense for the issue of hell: its terrible truth does not demote it to falsehood just for being terrible.

So we have to ask the real question: is Christianity as the Bible describes it true? If it is, then we must believe Philippians 2:10+11 –

“at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.”

Christianity, and even Judaism before it, was a never “tribal” religion as-is often asserted: from their inception, they were designed and meant to be for the whole human race.

God told Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that through Him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

The angel announcing Jesus’ birth said, “I bring you good news that will be great news for all people” (Luke 2:10).

Revelation 20:12+13 tells us that God will judge all people – the living and the dead (also see John 5:22+27, 30, Acts 17:30+31, Romans 2:16, Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10, and 2 Timothy 4:1+8 for similar language).

All of the above informs us of one fact: the Bible teaches that God's judgment will be universal – for all people – of any class from any time period or from anywhere. Therefore, it is very important for anyone to know where they stand with God:

Romans 3:23 says ALL have sinned and thus fallen short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

So, if we believe the Bible, we are sinners, condemned, but have hope of a Savior – if we will follow His terms of pardon (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:16).

If we do not believe the Bible, it does not matter – our belief does not change the immutable truths of God's Word. There may be many people not expecting their final judgment, but it will come, nonetheless.

It is outside the context of this work to produce a comprehensive, systematic approach to Christian evidences, but the reader is invited to read this author's two books on the subject – "Basic Objective Reasons for Believing in God, Jesus, and the Bible" and Volume 2 of that same work for additional information.

There are also excellent apologetic works by Josh McDowell, Dr. William Lane Craig, among others (Lee Strobel also presents easy-to-read, journalism-style versions of apologetic literature). This author will state that their doctrine is not as strong as their apologetics; the reader is always encouraged to double-check anything "Bible" they purport with Scripture itself! (Acts 17:11)

Q11) “You’re sin is no better than mine!”

This is an absolutely correct statement; nonetheless, two wrongs do not make a right:

If a hypocritical believer lies, cheats, steals, and commits adultery, he is absolutely sinning and is under God’s judgment for doing so. Not coincidentally, these same sins are listed right along with homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9.

As well, the above poorly-behaved believer does not excuse, or give license to, anyone else to sin (Romans 6:1). We are all absolutely sinners (Romans 3:23); the difference between an unbeliever and a Christian is not anything but one thing – forgiveness. And that’s everything!

An honest Christian will admit he is a hypocrite any day; the difference between him and the impenitent man is that the Christian admits it!

Q12) “You’re just trying to scare me into believing your religion!”

Christians have a desire to evangelize for two distinct reasons:

- 1) Jesus told them to (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15+16) because of the promise of eternal life, heaven, and never-ending joy.
- 2) There is such a place as hell, and Christians do not want anyone to go there.

When, if ever, is it OK to use hell to make someone understand their need for Christ?

As an evangelist, I only go there when all else fails. It is not typically an effective approach, but it does mean I have done my full duty to present the Gospel and its consequences, either way.

Why would eternal damnation burning in flame not be a good incentive? Frankly, people either do not believe it, or are repulsed by it, or many so-called “conservative” scholars have begun teaching hell is ultimately temporary or all wicked are simply, permanently eliminated.

Again, “believing” in something or not has no bearing on hell’s actual reality and the Bible teaches hell is real, permanent, forever, and awful. See chart below:

What Happens to the Unsaved? Chart by Joshua Stucki	
Length of Punishment:	Nature of Punishment:
1) Everlasting – Dn. 12:2 2) Unquenchable – Mt. 3:12; Mk.9:43-48; Lk. 3:17 3) Eternal – Mt. 25:31, 46; Jd. 1:7, 2 The. 1:9 4) Does not die – Mk. 9:43-48 5) Exists in hell – Lk. 16:19-31 6) Forever – Jd. 1:13 7) “Forever and ever” – Rv. 14:11, 20:10 8) No rest – Rv. 14:11	1) Sheol is not merely “the grave”, or death itself – Jonah 2:2 2) Fire, or, lake of fire – Mt. 3:12, 25:41; Mk. 9:43-48; Lk. 3:17; 2 Pt. 2:4; Jd. 1:7; Rv. 19:20, 20:10, 21:8 3) “Hell”, or, like the burning trash heap outside Jerusalem – Mt. 5:22, 23:15+23, Mk. 9:43-48 4) Punishment – Mt. 25:46; Mk. 9:43-48 5) Can see, speak, feel – Lk. 16:19-31 6) Burned – Hb. 6:8 7) Gloom of utter darkness – Jd. 1:13 8) Torment – Rev. 14:11, 20:10
Who will be there?	Other Facts:
1) Devil – Rv. 20:10 2) Beast – Rv. 19:20, 20:10 3) Demons – Jd. 1:13 4) The False Prophet – Rv. 19:20, 20:10 5) The Wicked, great or small, rich or poor – Rv. 20:13-15	1) God is just – Jb. 34:10 2) Christ Himself renders the punishment – Mt. 10:28, Rv. 1:18b 3) The lost are resurrected as well as the saved – Dn. 12:2, Jn. 5:29 4) Can see, hear, and feel – Luke 16:19-31 5) Punishment after death for the unsaved is a

<p>6) Worshippers of the beast and its images – Rv. 14:11</p> <p>7) Whoever has the mark of the beast – Rv. 14:11</p> <p>8) The cowardly, faithless, detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, liars – Rv. 21:8</p> <p>8) “Hades” and its residents – Rv. 20:12-15</p> <p>9) The uncharitable – Lk. 16:19-31</p> <p>10) Sodom and Gomorrah, forever – Jd. 1:7</p> <p>11) Anyone not found in the book of life – Rv. 20:15</p>	<p>sentence handed down – Mt. 23:23</p> <p>6) “Worm” is a synonym for the resurrected body of the damned – Mk. 9:43-48, Dn. 12:2, Jn. 5:29</p> <p>7) Hell, Sheol, fire, lake of fire, punishment, sentence, second death, contempt, resurrection of judgment, burned, destruction, torment, no rest – all synonyms because the same “residents” are present in each of these places when discussed separately.</p>
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This author admits that one reason the above chart was created was to convince himself; hell is something no one wants to believe, including me, nonetheless, I am subject to truth, not the other way around:

If we choose not to believe the Bible, we must call it a liar and abandon it. If we do believe the Bible, we must honor its commands to save ourselves! (Matthew 16:25, Mark 8:35, 13:13, Luke 9:24, Acts 2:40, 1 Timothy 4:16, 2 Thessalonians 2:10)

Now it is important to realize that the Bible never says – at any point – that it is possible to “pray away” or “scare away” homosexual feelings. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says God gives us the power to overcome our temptations, but not necessarily relief from them; the Apostle Paul had a thorn in his side that God would not remove despite his constant requests for relief (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Instead, we are each invited to the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit (our comforter and our guide), and the promise of eternal life! (Acts 2:38; John 3:16) This life is full of difficult decisions and tough

choices, with or without God. Let's do it with God, His Way, and watch the blessings come!

Q13) “Christians have a persecution complex. They are not really persecuted.”

Many outside the church believe the church has “a persecution complex” – otherwise – each time something does not go the church's way that is “persecution” according to them, when the truth is it all depends on the issue:

When prayer was removed from public schools in 1962 (Engel vs. Vitale), this upset Christians because many public schools were founded with the idea of promoting literacy for the purpose of every man being able to read the Bible for himself. It was both strange and hypocritical to Christians to remove religious instruction of any kind from the schools who benefited from the religious people who founded them for that primary purpose.⁸

When abortion was legalized nationwide in 1973 (Roe vs. Wade), the idea that conceived, developing human beings could be snuffed out of existence for the mere convenience of the mother was appalling (it still is). The abortion battle wages on more than a generation later as a result (the author wishes to go on and on about this subject, but is preparing another book on this matter exclusively, so he will restrain for now).

As donated Bibles have been removed from hotel rooms⁹, chaplains dismissed from the military¹⁰ (for not counseling to the approval of

⁸ <http://www.cityofboston.gov/freedomtrail/firstpublic.asp>

⁹ <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/travelodge.explains.why.they.removed.bibles.from.their.hotel.rooms/39761.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/frc-calls-on-christians-to-support-navy-chaplain-facing-discharge-for-expressing-biblical-views-on-homosexuality-135644/>

same-sex couples and premarital sex), military officers dismissed for Bible verses¹¹, students denied admission based on their Christian beliefs¹², among other issues¹³, we can see the above is not just a matter of Christians “not getting their way” – it has resulted in hypocrisy, murder, one-sided discrimination, court marshals, rejection of previously-accepted and welcomed paid-for and donated material, and denial of opportunities for Christians.

Of course, the side who acted against the Christians above does not see the above stories that way; however, when Christians are denied rights others are not (and therefore suffer materially, physically, or otherwise) – the plain truth is clear – genuine persecution has occurred.

However, Jesus told us to anticipate this from the very beginning of His ministry:

“¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” – Matthew 5:11+12

Otherwise, none of the above should be a surprise; nonetheless, if it is possible to maintain those rights peacefully (Romans 12:18), we should (Acts 22:25).

Q14) “How should a Christian respond to persecution?”

First, realize that your persecution was predicted by Jesus (Matthew 5:11+12), and the long history of the martyrs proves He was right.

¹¹ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/marine-officer-court-martialed-for-refusing-to-remove-bible-verses-from-her-desk-139619/>

¹² <http://www.christianpost.com/news/college-student-denied-admission-into-program-because-he-said-god-is-most-important-in-his-life-118531/>

¹³ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/07/02/sweet-cakes-by-melissa-fined-same-sex-wedding_n_7718540.html

Second, we are to take comfort in the fact that the world hated Jesus first (John 15:18), but He has overcome the world (John 16:33).

Third, we should realize that trials of many kinds have many long-term benefits, preparing us for further service and blessings (James 1:2-4).

Fourth, we should also realize that we are likely doing things right if the devil is after us! (Ephesians 6:11) This author's father often told him growing up, "If the Apostle Paul ever had a good day, he probably wandered what he was doing wrong!"

Fifth, we should peacefully (Romans 12:18) contend (Jude 1:3) for our rights, just as the Apostle Paul did (Acts 22:25). Paul contended for his rights as a Roman citizen for Christ's purposes in the above Scripture. We can certainly do the same therefore to defend our own rights to live our lives as Christians.

Sixth, we should obey any law that does not directly conflict with God's law (Romans 13:1-5). We should set an example for the world, be a light (Matthew 5:14) as productive (1 Thessalonians 4:11), law-abiding citizens (Titus 3:1).

Seventh, if it comes down to it, we can break man's law if there is no way to coincide it with God's law (Acts 4:19+20). However, we should only do so to the extent necessary to be a faithful-to-God yet peaceful (Romans 12:18), otherwise law-abiding (1 Peter 2:13-17), tax-paying (Mark 12:17) citizen.

Eighth, in the event of persecution for Scriptural Christian living that cannot be lawfully stopped, non-violent civil disobedience will become necessary (Matthew 5:38-41). Despite what our persecutors may

do, we are called to love, bless, and help them if or when needed (Matthew 5:43-46). For our patient endurance, we will receive the victor's crown – salvation itself – on that last day! (Matthew 10:22+23; Revelation 2:10)

We cannot be ultimately afraid of those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul (Matthew 10:28). Every time there has been mass persecution in the past, the martyr's suffering and even blood has won converts, governments, kings, princes, and Presidents to its message. That may very well be our calling soon; it is not possible to say. Regardless, we are to equip ourselves with the Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17), to be ready – to be prepared – because sometimes Christians must suffer, and we can endure.

As a final note, some advocate survival-preparedness like stocking food, guns, ammo, silver, gold, etc. On this particular subject, exercise freedom, but not to the detriment of others (Romans 14:1ff). If other Christians choose not to prepare as describe above, that is their personal choice.

Also, it is sin to hide money in order to try to avoid paying taxes (Luke 20:25). If Jesus, Paul, and others had to pay taxes to a corrupt Roman government, so we too are not exempt from doing so.

A good rule of thumb is always to save what God has made – things like land, gold, silver, and other naturally-occurring metals always has and always will have value, simply because God made them, and all things God has made are “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Things that men have made – like paper money – always fail in time. Do not put your trust in men (Psalm 146:3), but God (Psalm 118:8), for all things (Proverbs 3:6).

Q15) “When, or is it ever OK, to defend myself or my family with regards to persecution?”

This is one of those – by nature – difficult questions. To a degree, it is a matter of conscience:

Many martyrs have died “defending” their faith by standing true even unto death without any physical resistance (outside of possibly attempting to flee). These are martyrs like described in Revelation 6.

Some others have attempted to defend themselves in times past through the use of arms: some quote Luke 22:36 in defense of this position.

Whatever your position, this author would not use weapons (i.e. guns or anything else) to defend anything except if my family’s lives were immediately threatened. I would not use them if I was being carted to jail for preaching, or for protecting whatever possessions we have.

If one is to use Luke 22:36 in context of the verse, then Jesus is having the disciples take a sword for the purpose of defending life itself, not possessions or against imprisonment. Clearly, the Apostles were imprisoned – even executed – for their preaching, and this was allowed by God in those circumstances many times.

Other times God has miraculously rescued those persecuted – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego come to mind (Daniel chapter 3).

So prayerfully consider any position taken; potentially taking a life is the most serious decision anyone could make, and it should not be made lightly and for yet the most grave of circumstances. This author, again, would not use violence for anything other than the immediate defense of life.

We do not know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future – God (Proverbs 19:21; Romans 8:28). We are told to prepare (1 Peter 3:15), but not to worry, as too many of us are guilty of (Matthew 6:25). Let us cast our anxieties upon Jesus, because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Always remember, final victory is ours! (Revelation chapter 19, and also chapters 20-22)