

WHY DON'T CHRISTIANS SUPPORT HOMOSEXUALITY,

1Cor.6:9-11, John 4:4-26 Why? Questions for Christians #14

◆**Intro:** If you've already read the title of our message today you may already be off on the wrong foot. As I've said all summer the Questions for Christians that we've been asking are things non-Christians often ask Christians, and things Christians are often hoping not to be asked because answering for our faith is not simplistic, and requires serious thinking. This can be quite challenging, but we need to be able to share the reasons for our hope in Jesus. It has been our intention to answer a lot of these questions from the biblical texts. In review, we've asked among others:

- ◆Why am I here at all?
- ◆Why believe in a God?
- ◆Why does there seem to be a conflict between science and the bible?
- ◆Why is there evil and suffering?
- ◆Why believe in the Resurrection?
- ◆Why does Christianity seem exclusive?
- ◆Why trust a bunch of hypocrites?
- ◆Why would strong people need a crutch like Christianity?
- ◆Why is abortion such a big deal to Christians?
- ◆And today, "Why doesn't Christianity support homosexuality?"

◆Now as I have said, *often times the questions people ask assume things that are not true at all.* For example, the more you study both the bible and science, the more you will find they

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do not contradict each other at all. And again, if you really knew the teachings of the Bible you also know Christianity is not exclusive in the sense of only wanting some kinds of people to come in. No, God invites everyone, of all stripe and color. Yet in another sense Jesus himself is exclusive; he says he is the only God and the only savior. His followers are merely sharing the one answer they have found to their own sinfulness; Jesus. And then there is today's topic of **sexuality**. Many assume that Christians are against homosexuals, and are homophobic, but that is not true. The Bible teaches that homosexual activity is against God's commands, but it also teaches that God loves people even though they sin and break God's commands. And that is why God sent his son; not to condemn but to save.

◆ *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." John 3:17, 18, NIV.*

◆ You see, Jesus did not come to accuse. He came to save us from the guilt we already had. With that in mind we will address God's design for human sexuality. Some of my sons' classmates through their years of Christian schooling, (some of whom were also members of our church), have at different points announced to the world that they were in fact gay. This, you can imagine led to a lot of questions and discussions. One of my sons asked me.

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"Dad, can homosexuals go to heaven?" My response was this: "Well son, can greedy people go to heaven?" To which he replied, "Well Baam!" (which being interpreted means something like, "I suddenly see how clear and obviously the answer is. Why didn't I think of that before?") You see, he was remembering the biblical truth that...

◆**1. Christians affirm that Jesus loves and died for all kinds of sinners, regardless of their particular failures or sins.**

◆All ground is level at the cross. We underestimate the gravity of the fallen human condition. **All sin puts us all in - the same place of needing grace.** This means that the greedy person is as much in danger of eternal punishment as the sexually immoral. It's right there in Paul's list!

◆"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, NIV.

◆We just tend to notice the sins we find astonishing, or powerful. I know people who just *don't* struggle with greed much at all. They are generous, thrifty, and very content. I know people who are just *not* badgered by the demons of lust and sexual looseness. They however may have slanderous tongues that gossip and degrade those around them, who always know more

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than you, and enjoy showing that to be the case! That's also on the list of folks that don't fit the Kingdom of God. Romans 3:23... *All of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (repeat it to yourself)*

◆A. We forget that acceptance into heaven and the eternal Kingdom of God requires absolute purity and absolute holiness. No exceptions. Therefore, we are all at the bottom of the well even if some of us look prettier, or appear taller. We are not to condemn people who deal with homosexual desires anymore than we would condemn ourselves for the sins we deal with. (I say "deal" vs "struggle" because we are not always bothered by what our Holy God calls sin. So while we may not see our own wrong as a struggle, it remains a reality we must deal with.)

◆B. Now what does the Bible say about how God and his only Son, Jesus the Messiah, view sinful fallen people? (Remember, we are in the number.) It says Jesus came for sinners, not "good" people. It says Jesus hung out with prostitute types and tax-collecting cheater types engaging with them and befriending them. It says that God sent his son to us *before* we even had any inclination of needing to make a course correction!

◆*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8, NIV.*

◆What does this mean for us? Mark Middelberg put it well when he explains "we should affirm God's love for all people regardless of their lifestyle or particular activities or sins they are engaged

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in." This is what Jesus did with the woman at the well, isn't it? She was surprised he would talk with her, a woman, and a Samaritan one at that; two strikes against her in Jewish culture. And he clearly knows all about her sexual exploits; five different men, and having a sexual relationship with yet another she's not married to. And yet this is not where Jesus started with her, was it? First he **engages** her. (She does not want to be engaged with. That's why she's at the well in the heat of the day, alone.) Then he **offers** her something, namely the truth about himself as the messiah. In the end he points out the folly of her choices last, and then only to show her that he came from God! He did not affirm her lifestyle, but affirmed her as worth his attention. And he stayed in her Samaritan town for two days!

◆[Background info: pious Jews would not walk on soil of Samaria. Samaritans were seen as lower class. If a Jew wanted to travel from Galilee to Jerusalem he merely had to travel south. But that was where Samaria was. So he would actually cross to the east side of the Jordan river, travel south, and cross back to the west side after passing Samaria. Whereas our text says of Jesus that he "had to go through Samaria" (v4). Clearly the Son of God went here intentionally.]

◆C. Implications of Jesus example?

◆1. Jesus' followers, are to imitate him in loving people from the inside out. Often times religious people begin with the

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outside first: correcting their neighbor on the drinking parties; calling them out on their choice of music, or dress code, or rule-breaking. That's what the Pharisees did, right? That's not what Jesus did although he never condoned sin or ignored it. Jesus spoke to the woman's heart realities first. In another example (John 8) a woman caught in the act of adultery was dragged before Jesus for a judgement. Jewish law required death by stoning. So Jesus invited anyone without sin throw a stone. Everyone left. Jesus' words to her were "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and leave your life of sin." He didn't hate her. He didn't despise her. He didn't ridicule her. He didn't condemn her. And he didn't condone her sin either. In essence, he invited her to repent. He started with the her inside, *and* her accusers insides by the way!

◆2. Therefore to the person who feels homosexual tendencies we say the exact same thing as we say to the person living life wanting everything everyone else has (greed): *God loves you. You matter to God. And you matter to his family the Church. And God invites you into a life of forgiveness and holiness earned for you through the love of Jesus.* Come in and join us in receiving his grace. Can a greedy person go to heaven? Yes, if they repent of their sinfulness and ask Jesus to apply his merit to them!

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It's the same for every other kind of sin. There is no sin more powerful than Jesus' cleansing blood!

◆2. Christians **affirm God's model for human sexuality.**

Throughout God's word we find one model and one model only for sexual relations: between a husband and a wife. In the very first book of the Bible describing the origin of life and the design of the universe we read that "a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will be united as one." Gen2:24. This simple statement references two marriages, both following the same pattern: father + mother; man + wife. Two people. Two genders. This is the norm that Scripture never deviates from. Jesus himself repeated it verbatim in Matthew 19.

◆"*Haven't you read,*" he replied, *"that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."* Matthew 19:4-6, NIV.

◆ Jesus reiterates the necessity of both genders (male and female) as well of the state of marriage as the lone environment for sexual activity ("one flesh" in hebrew literature).

◆"Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ...Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a

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temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;" 1 Corinthians 6:16-19, NIV.

◆ In addition, the Apostle Paul quoted the same Genesis text in his letter to the Church of the Ephesians. So here's the point: Everywhere the Bible references the gift of sexual union as God designed it, it is between one man and one woman in exclusive marriage relationship.

◆ If anyone—of gay, straight, or any other sexual persuasion—is engaging in sex outside of marriage, he or she is violating God's plan. If you accept the Bible's teaching on sex, you are left with this and only this option."

◆ **3. Christians affirm the need to seek holiness in all settings.** Perhaps you are troubled because you want to do the right thing, but so many wrong things still tempt you. You long to be free from wanting things God says are not good.

◆ A. Temptation is not a sin. Jesus was "tempted in every way, just as we are, yet without sin." (Heb.4:15) Sin always appeals to a good thing in the wrong context. That's what makes it powerful! Transgression has to do with whether we act on temptation in thought or deed. Don't beat yourself up for experiencing temptation. Acknowledge it so you can fight it, and keep seeking holiness!

◆ B. Another misguided assumption is that *having a desire or orientation, even from birth, makes it legitimate.* Lady Gaga sings about being "born that way" and everyone hoots and hollers

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caught by the music and her persona. But the same can be said for greed, selfishness, and even prejudice. People are born that way too. Some folks are born with tendencies toward anger, or alcohol, or violence. We're all born with sinful affections. That doesn't make those good. Followers of Jesus find that **much** of what he says goes directly against innate desires. Nonetheless they take it on faith that holiness is the best way to live. It's not about finding your own orientation. It's about finding what's holy and therefore healthy.

◆ **Conclusion:** Do you sometimes feel lost and out of place? Unaccepted? Do you sometimes feel hopelessly enslaved by your own passions? The account in John 4 is a beautiful solace. It's interesting that the first overt revelation Jesus made of his Messiah-ship was to a sexually promiscuous Samaritan woman. One who felt unaccepted, guilty, and clearly ruled by her passions. Yet she and her townsfolk came to rejoice and believe in the "savior of the world" (41-42) even before Jesus' own people. Its a proclamation of hope, people.

◆ After his list of struggles that don't fit into God's kingdom Paul says these hopeful words:

◆ ""And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:11, NIV.

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◆ Did you see the three hopeful words in that text? There is nothing that Jesus cannot wash from you. There is no one he cannot sanctify. He is the God who can forgive because he is the God who satisfied the Fathers justice by paying for our past sins, and those we will still fight with in the future! Can a person who believes in Jesus but still battles with greed go to heaven? Of course they can! They are in the battle because they are repentant. Can a person who accepts Jesus forgiveness but who struggles with same sex attraction make it to God's Kingdom? Of course they can. Jesus came to save people who sin!!

◆ Play video: <https://www.facebook.com/AnchoredNorth/videos/1563314947050165/>

Daily Readings and Meditations:

Lk 15:1-7, Matt 11:16-19,

What similarities do you see in the two passages?

What types of people do you think others find it easy to look down on? Who was the last person you've seen who might feel like a "loser"?

Lk.19:1-10

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What do you think happened to the crowd after Jesus met Zacchaeus? What's the evidence that something changed in Zach? What's your evidence?

Eph 5:1-2; 1Pet3:15-16

What are some specific things to imitate? Anything else in the context (verses around what you read)? Tell about someone you know who does this well.

Lev20:13; 18:1-30, Romans 1:24-27

Which practices in chapter 18 were common and accepted at that time? (hint v3). Which are happening today? How do you think people explain away these passage? How do you explain away where you cross God's lines?

1Cor 6:9-7:9

Why is specifically sexual immorality such a big deal? Who owns your body? (see 7:4 for more) What does 7:5 reveal about intimate relations in marriage?