



RELEVANCE OR REVISION?

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**Are Christians called to re-write the Bible in order to truly love our gay friends and neighbors?
I think not, and here are ten reasons why:**

1. For centuries homosexuals have been harassed, demeaned and even murdered for simply being who they are. As followers of Christ, we of all people should demand fair and decent treatment for all, including our gay and lesbian neighbors and co-citizens.
2. Furthermore, the command to preach the gospel to every living creature surely gives us a mandate to find effective means of reaching the gay population through evangelism, acts of charity and pastoral care. This is especially true if we wish to be a church that is relevant to our community and culture.
3. We are called to love on a more private level, as well. Our words, actions and attitudes towards gays must reflect Christ's love and compassion. Indeed, if we name Him as Lord, then all aspects of our behavior must give evidence of His Lordship. Our love for homosexual people, then, must be seen in our kindness, respect and concern for them.
4. Love never sacrifices truth. Nowhere in Scripture do we find God calling His leaders or His people to compromise the truth about sin in order to truly love sinners. On the contrary, severe judgment is pronounced on those who attempt to revise the truth, even for "loving" reasons. (Isaiah 5:20)
5. The importance of this couldn't be clearer in this time of foggy morality. It's one thing for talk show pundits and modern philosophers to preach a "touchy-feely" gospel that makes everyone feel good. But if Believers take sin seriously, as the Bible surely calls us to, then the very thought of telling anyone that God condones their sin is unimaginable! If we affirm that a person's relationship with God is the most crucial aspect of their life, and if we know that they harbor an ongoing sin that damages or even destroys that relationship, then surely we are not acting in love by telling them that their sin is anything but wrong nor destructive.
6. We see no contradiction between this approach and our calling to love our neighbor as ourselves. We want the doors of our church to be thrown open ever more widely to all people, homosexual and heterosexual. Gays and lesbians must be welcomed into our sanctuary, and our hearts. Our first desire for them is that they know and receive the Gospel, and that they find us a people with whom they can dialogue, interact and learn.

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7. But acceptance and approval are not the same. While we should *accept* all people, we can no more dare to *approve* of a homosexual relationship than we can approve an adulterous heterosexual one. Our standards for church membership and leadership cannot be revised to include those who celebrate, rather than resist, what God specifically forbids. Like our Lord, we are called to lovingly accept all people, as He did. And like Him, we are to call wrong by its name, regardless of the politics or modes of the time. When dialoguing with a Samaritan woman living in an unmarried relationship, Jesus recognized her sin without rejecting her. (John 4: 1-26) Add when refusing to condemn an adulterous woman, He also commanded her to “Go and sin no more” (John 8: 9-11) expressing the perfect union of truth and love. We can afford to do no less.
8. If the Bible did not clearly condemn homosexuality in both testaments, we might have fewer reservations about the ordination of openly gay ministers, or the general approval of homosexuality so prevalent in some of our churches. But we see nothing vague in the Bible’s prohibitions against such things, as spelled out in Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20: 13, Romans 1: 26-27, I Corinthians 6: 9-10, and I Timothy 1: 9-10. Behavior that violates Biblical standards has to be condemned by anyone who claims to take the Bible seriously.
9. We hold this standard to ourselves as well. As we recognize the myriad of sins in our own lives, we remember John’s blunt assessment: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” (I John 1:8) We recognize our many sins, and by God’s grace we seek to overcome them. And just as we refuse to adjust the Bible to accommodate our own faults, so we reject any attempt to twist the Scriptures to accommodate anyone else’s, even when “love” is the rationale.
10. When the Church takes it upon herself to sacrifice truth in the name of compassion, she presents a grave danger to herself and to the world around her. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated it well:

“The Church must be reminded that it is neither the
master nor the servant of the state;
rather, it is the *conscience* of the state.”

To which I might add: *God forbid the conscience of the state should lose its own conscience.*

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