

Which Is Worse: Homosexuals or the Bigots Who Persecute Them?

Many people think that Christians are judgmental because our beliefs suggest that there are **boundaries** to the faith and that certain **practices are wrong**.

I. What is wrong with homosexual practice?

A. Arguments for homosexual practice

1. Gay people just want to follow their hearts. If loving a person of the same gender makes them happy, what is it to you? Why can't you leave them alone?

2. Homosexual practice in the New Testament was adult men abusing young boys. So when Paul wrote against homosexuality he was actually opposing pedophilia, not gay marriage between consenting adults.

3. The Bible is an old book which should not be applied literally. Many Christians used to think that the Bible endorsed slavery. Someday we'll be embarrassed that we also thought it endorsed oppressing homosexuals. Banning gay marriage is a social injustice tantamount to racism.

Newsweek, December 15, 2008, p. 4: the editor Jon Meacham wrote that the "conservative resort to biblical authority is the worst kind of fundamentalism."
"...to argue that something is so because it is in the Bible is more than intellectually bankrupt—it is unserious, and unworthy of the great Judeo-Christian tradition."

p. 30: Lisa Miller said that "A mature view of scriptural authority requires us, as we have in the past, to move beyond literalism. The Bible was written for a world so unlike our own, it's impossible to apply its rules, at face value, to ours."

p. 31: "If we are all God's children, made in his likeness and image, then to deny access to any sacrament [in this case, marriage] based on sexuality is exactly the same thing as denying it based on skin color—and no serious (or even semiserious) person would argue that."

B. Scripture against homosexual practice

Genesis 1-2 (Natural Law)

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13

1 Corinthians 6:9

arsenokoitai (“male bedder”): “men lying with males”
malakoi: “male prostitutes,” soft or effeminate men

Romans 1:26-27: “even their women”

C. A Christian response to homosexual practice

1. civil rights

2. marriage

3. human flourishing (creation, fall, and redemption)

D. Helpful books on homosexuality

Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001)

Stanley J. Grenz, *Welcoming but not Affirming* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998)

II. How do Christian beliefs promote love?

Secularists/Naturalists: altruistic people suffer from docility and bounded rationality.

Muslims: do your best and pray that Allah will accept you.

A. Model for love: our Triune God

B. Motive for love: salvation by grace (Martin Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian*)

C. Means for love:

Jonathan Edwards, *True Virtue*: We only truly love the other when we love the other in God. Loving any creature less than God is ethnocentric, an extension of loving myself. E.g., I love my kind of people: my family and friends (against outsiders), my team (against Michigan), my country (against other nations), my fellow earthlings (against aliens).