

Questions & Answers on Gay Marriage, Homosexuality and the Teaching of the Orthodox and Catholic Church:

I. Definition:

Homosexuality: In general, some form of sexual relationship among members of the same sex. From a moral standpoint, three levels are to be distinguished: tendency, attraction, and activity. (1) Homosexual tendencies in any person are within the normal range of human nature, whose fallen condition includes every conceivable kind of impulse that with sincere effort and divine grace can be controlled. (2) Sexual attraction for members of the same sex may be partly due to the peculiar make up of certain individuals or, more often, the result of indiscretion or seduction and presents a graver problem; yet this, too, is not by itself sinful and may in fact be an occasion for great supernatural merit. When the condition is pathological, it requires therapy. (3) Active homosexuality is morally indefensible and has been many times forbidden in revelation [i.e., the Holy Scriptures] and the teaching of the Church (*Modern Catholic Dictionary*, Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.).

II. Questions and Answers:

Q. It shouldn't matter who you love. In other words, as long as you are in love, shouldn't you be allowed to marry anyone you want?

A. The Christian response to this is to recognize that this argument is untrue and false. Do these proponents really believe "it doesn't matter who you love"? Do they really believe you should be allowed to marry anyone you like? Would they support, for example, brothers marrying their own sisters, fathers or mothers marrying their own sons or daughters? Or what about a man marrying two, three, or multiple wives? How about a woman marrying multiple husbands?

Therefore, Christians reject homosexual marriage not only because it is morally wrong but also because they see in this radical attempt to redefine marriage an actual opening up to many other aberrations. In fact there is much more reason to reject homosexual marriage than there is these other examples. Homosexual marriage can be rejected for clear biological reasons because it is unnatural. Men are physically not made to fit together with other men, nor are women made for each other. Men are clearly biologically made for women and vice versa. This is why procreation results from a man and a woman. It's also why the biological differences between a man and a woman are known as their reproductive organs.

But these other examples mentioned above have no clear biological reason to reject them. Instead they are rejected primarily for moral reasons. But whose morality should we follow now, if not Christian? If we allow homosexuals to marry in our

country, we really have absolutely no reason to deny marriage to anyone.¹ This is quickly becoming a mockery of the meaning of marriage and we are showing what a very sick society we have become. Only a sick culture and society is unable to see the obvious problems with homosexual unions. Therefore Christians reject all attempts to redefine marriage, including allowing homosexual unions, as the destruction of the family structure on which healthy civilizations have always been based.

Q. Why should it matter who you love?

A. From a Christian perspective, we have no objections to actual love. We have no problem with true love. Even two men or two women can love each other very much, like brothers or sisters. A soldier will often give his life for his fellow soldiers because of a strong brotherly bond of love. Others can have a father-son or a mother-daughter loving relationship, even if they are not related. But this is not what Christians reject as wrong about homosexuality. We don't object to two people loving or caring about each other. There is nothing wrong with this. But homosexuality goes far beyond a simple familial type love. Homosexuality, as the name implies, involves people of the same (homo) sex having sexual relations together. This is what Christians are opposed to, not love. Homo-sexuality is a wholly different expression which shouldn't even be called "love."² What homosexuals do to each other is disordered and rejects the truth of God which He has placed in our bodies, souls and spirits. Sex engaged in outside the marital bonds of a husband and wife is an abuse and misuse of our gift of human sexuality that He has given us. Homosexuality is not love, it is lustful and sinful according to God's revealed truth.³ Anytime sexuality is abused, and used in a way that contradicts God's truth, it is lust, it is sinful and it is wrong. True Christians, will always oppose it.

Q. Aren't Christians judging people with homosexual desires as being wrong? Didn't Jesus Christ tell us not to judge and that we should love everyone?

A. For a Christian to pretend like homosexuality is ok, or good, would be a terrible lie. Christians are called by God to proclaim His truth to the world and to live this truth. Engaging in homosexuality is a terrible choice that has devastating effects on the lives of those who engage in such a life-style. It further hurts the innocent children who are forced to live in such unhealthy circumstances. It would be the most hateful and hurtful act for a Christian to lie to people with homosexual desires and tell them that this life-style is ok with God and good. The only loving response to those living this way is to lovingly tell them the TRUTH, that God calls them out of this darkness into the light of His truth.

People struggling with homosexual desires need to hear the truth, and the only place they can go to hear it clearly is from Christians. People with homosexual desires

¹ Mormons, for example, have been requesting to be allowed their religious practice of polygamy for over a century now. How can we deny them this, if we are going to reject traditional marriage?

² Even calling homosexual practices (or those who engage in them), "Gay" is misleading. The word "gay" means to be "bright and happy." Homosexual acts are a manifestation of darkness and sadness rather than of gaiety.

³ See the essay, the "The Teaching of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church on Homosexuality" on this same website.

need to hear the Good News that Jesus Christ died to free all of us from our sins so that we don't have to live our lives enslaved to them. Jesus Christ can actually deliver them from the homosexual life-style -as many people who have been freed from the homosexual lifestyle can attest.⁴ He can offer them forgiveness of their sins. He can offer them His own Divine Life which is the only thing which can fill them and remove the pain and hurt which has driven them into the homosexual life-style (which often is a result of some sexual abuse they have suffered or very hurtful unfulfilled relationship they have had, perhaps with one of their own parents).

In addition, the Christian community known as the Church can offer them loving support as they seek to be delivered from the homosexual life-style. We understand that often deliverance from sin is not instantaneous. Instead it takes a serious commitment and sometimes life-long repentance, conversion and deification (becoming God-like). The Church has great resources and means to help them to accomplish this. The truth is homosexual acts are gravely sinful and immoral. But the Good News is Christianity can help people with homosexual desires to be delivered from this life-style. Christianity offers this same hope, through the power of Christ's Resurrection and the grace of the Holy Spirit, to all repentant sinners.

The only people which God cannot help, are those who deny that they are sinful, or who deny their sins. Therefore if Christians lie to people struggling with homosexual desires and tell them what they are doing is not sinful, that homosexual marriage is not wrong, we do them a terrible disservice and deny them the grace and liberation that can come through the Church. This would be the most hateful thing for Christians to do to those with homosexual desires. Therefore Christians are against homosexual acts and so-called "gay marriage" BECAUSE WE LOVE THOSE WHO ARE STRUGGLING WITH HOMOSEXUAL DESIRES AND WANT THEM TO BE SAVED. This is just as Jesus Christ loved the woman who was caught in adultery. He forgave her but he didn't pretend like her sin was ok. Instead our Lord told her to "go and sin no more."⁵

Q. Isn't it true that if you have homosexual feelings that this is simply the way God made you and your life won't be fulfilled until you live can this out freely? If a person with homosexual desires repents and stops having homosexual relations but continues to have homosexual urges or thoughts (even for the rest of his/her life), won't this mean he or she will always be "a homosexual"?

A. Authentic Christianity teaches that because of the fall and the sin of our first parents our nature has been corrupted and in many ways distorted. One of the chief effects of this corruption is the fact that we all die. Another effect is that we experience many emotions, desires and temptations that are very bad for us. We may even experience these a lot but this doesn't mean engaging in them will help us. If these desires are the opposite of what God has revealed is good for us, then we should not engage in them at all because they will only bring us pain and suffering. The rejection of these wrong desires is the very thing that can make us strong, meritorious and heroic Christians.

⁴ Group's like "Courage" have done great work to help people struggling with homosexual desires to be able to live in accord with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

⁵ St. John 8:1-11

Some people have strong desires to gamble, some to drink alcohol or take drugs, some to overeat, some to steal, some to kill or hurt others, and some have strong desires to engage in sex in ways that contradict the way it was meant or what it was made for. Some of these sinful desires are even believed to be embedded in our DNA. We are psychosomatic beings (i.e., made of body and soul) and are impacted by the lives of our ancestors not only physically but even emotionally and spiritually. But this does not give us the “green light” to engage in these sinful or bad actions, nor does it mean that just because we have the desire, our happiness is dependent on our engaging in these acts. Many times it is the exact opposite. Freedom and happiness can only come about by fulfilling God’s plan for our lives. This means living in accord with what He has revealed to be truly good for us.

We are not defined by our desires but rather by our actions. For example, a person who gets the desire to kill an innocent person is not a murderer, unless he actually does the killing. A married man may get a strong desire to engage in sex outside of marriage. But this does not mean he is an adulterer or that the only way he can be truly happy is to engage in adultery for the rest of his life. Nor does it mean that just because he has these feelings, that deep down inside, he is really just an adulterer. The fact is, if he resists these feelings and prays for God to help him do this, God will make him stronger and these feelings will decrease. Eventually these feelings may even go away completely. If Jesus Christ can heal the leper, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead, surely He can heal us and set us free from our sinful desires. But even if a person must struggle against sinful desires for the rest of his life, he still is not an adulterer if he doesn’t live out an adulterous life-style or engage in acts based on these feelings.

The same is true of someone who experiences homosexual feelings or desires. Such feelings do not automatically mean that this person is a homosexual. This is the lie our culture is selling our kids today, *i.e.* if you have a desire, this makes you something. This is simply untrue. One is a homosexual only if one engages in homosexual relations. The bottom line is we all get sinful temptations. *It is what we do with these temptations that describes who or what we are.* And if we repent (or turn away) from any wrong doing, such descriptions are no longer correct or apply. A person who engages in homosexual acts can leave that life-style and God can help him or her do this. The Church is here to help anyone who wants to come to God but she cannot deny God’s truth. ***No one can change this truth, not even a Bishop, Patriarch or Pope, because Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.***⁶ His teachings are “once for all delivered” and never change.⁷

To Him be the Glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

⁶ Letter to the Hebrews 13:8

⁷ St. Jude 1:3