

Valuing what God Values

Part 9: God's Word about Homosexuality

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Full Text (for reading on your own)

Freedom looks like something

Jesus paid the price! We are not bound by our past any more! We are free! The chains are broken. We are washed in the blood of Christ and freedom looks like something!

The kingdom of God is through impartation, not just revelation. Who we associate with will equip us for our next season.

A bit too reserved

We are a little too reserved as a church. If you base how much you dance during worship on how much Peter dances during worship, you may be short-changing yourself! We can all offer a sacrifice of praise to God. It's not a sacrifice of praise because it hurts your lips; it's a sacrifice of praise because you are laying your dignity down! Sometimes we are not sacrificing our dignity so we are not making a sacrifice of praise. David danced right out of his clothes.

Don't let Peter be a high-water mark for your expressiveness in worship! He wants some ministries that are not his ministries! If you have a ministry where you want to dance before the Lord, or do flags before the Lord, or let out a shout of joy before the Lord, do it!

Most sermons, Peter watches blank stares the entire time. Yet after the sermon, he will receive great feedback. He has to presume that if "no one is talking, I guess the food is good!" "Don't look at their faces!"

You don't need a certification to shout "amen" during a sermon. However you honor a speaker will determine how much you receive from them. Much of the gift of God meant to function in a speaker on your behalf can be drawn out by your honor of it!

Yes, things should be done decently and in order, but the church misses the will of God far more from lack of pushing into the things of the Spirit than from pushing too far. You can miss the will of God both ways - going "too far" and also by not going far enough. May we not stop 80 steps short of how far God wants us to go for fear of going 3 steps past how far He had planned! God is looking for someone not to be lukewarm.

Ask for God's blessing

Before you have your next hard meeting at work, pray for God's blessing over the meeting. Before you enter a negotiation, pray for God's blessing over the negotiation. Truly ask God to bless it! "God help me to be righteous in this negotiation. I don't want to do anything that is not right, and I ask for your favor NOW over this negotiation." Don't try to think every bit of it through. Know some basic facts about what the market supports and then feel out the peace of God as you talk with them.

So often Peter will be unsure of a meeting and then ask God's blessing over it and the outcome is incredible. He will go to the bathroom to pray ahead of time if necessary. Some people's "water closet" is his prayer closet at times! "In the name of Jesus, I declare your blessing NOW over this meeting!"

A great move of God is upon the church

There has been a revolution in the secular world. Where? Look no further than President Trump! There has been a shaking in the world. There is now meant to be a reformation in the church sphere. Mark Crawford has been saying this for more than a year. "Revolution leading to reformation."

May we be a church in which each of us is fit for the works of service! May we not be wooed by the ways of the world but instead have a purity of thought - cherishing the Word of God in our hearts that we would be able to minister and set people free! We shall know the truth and the truth will set you free, but if you are confused about the truth, you won't set many people free!

Three mistakes in ministering about homosexuality

There are three mistakes the church can make in ministering about homosexuality. The *first* is to say that is the worst sin on the face of the planet.

Ephesians 2:1-3 says "*And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*" We were sinners! The first mistake in ministering about homosexuality is to blow it out of the water as if there were not lots of other sins to go around ... and as if the people that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb were not sinners before they were redeemed! Did you get saved while an adult? Most of us were probably involved in some sort of sexual sin. Why? Unsaved adults have a propensity to sin. That's why they are called sinners; it's their nature - and it was our nature too! We are now called saints because God has given us a new nature and has written His will upon our hearts. When we are born again, our hunger changes! What used to be a delicacy oftentimes becomes detestable to our taste overnight!

In 1 Corinthians 5:9, Paul says *“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.”* In other words, don’t spend time with them, don’t have coffee with them, don’t have dinner with them, and don’t have them be your roommate. Paul then clarified and in so doing made a really important point: *“Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.”*

Paul was saying “of course the unbelievers of the world are sexually immoral, and if not that they are covetous, and if not that they are idolaters - or maybe they are all of it.” Paul was saying “don’t keep company with a brother who is sexually immoral.” Many of us ignore these parts of scripture, but they are plain as day. While we should definitely NOT remove ourselves from unbelievers who are sexually immoral, we should from seasoned believers who are choosing to be so. If we will love that person enough to take a strong stand on the Word of God, they will be forced to think about the error of their ways.

Again, for unbelievers, however, it is par for the course. Beg them to be reconciled to God! They don’t have a sin problem; they have a Son problem! *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”* (2 Cor. 5:19) Some of us tend to think homosexuality is the WORST WORST WORST sin ... forgetting that it is natural for unbelievers to sin ...

In Luke 7:36-50, we see the story of Jesus visiting in Simon the Pharisee’s house. The account then notes that a “sinful woman of the city” entered. Perhaps she was a prostitute or perhaps she was the town thief. The scriptures are not clear on that matter, but it is clear that her sin was conspicuous because the religious folks were aware of it. While the Pharisees were disturbed by the sinner being in their house, she proceeded to minister and weep over Jesus because she apparently realized He was the Savior. The Pharisees deride Christ for associating with her. Yet Jesus tells her “your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

The woman came to a religious house and she was rejected because of her sins - even though she was coming for a Savior! May it never be so here at Agathos. If you are reading this document and are struggling with a homosexual lifestyle, we welcome you to join us to meet your Savior. His Name is Jesus. He died for your sins. You can receive Him by faith!

So, one of the main issues we can have going on when we address homosexuality is we just don’t see it in the proper context of what it is. The **second** is to ignore homosexuality and not teach about it from the pulpit. The **third** is to even affirm it from the pulpit - going against what the Word of God is clear on.

Cultural Context

Ignoring or not teaching on homosexuality is what the vast majority of theologically conservative pastors are doing. A recent Barna study found that 90% of theologically conservative pastors in America said the Bible is very clear on social issues such as abortion and homosexuality. Yet, 90% of that same group of pastors say they NEVER speak on those things from the pulpit.

If 90% of pastors were willing to speak from the Word of God clearly on this matter, we would not have any hesitation as to why Peter was speaking on this topic.

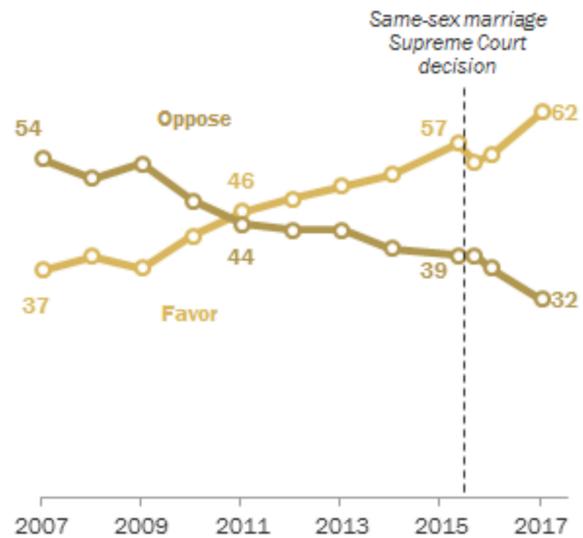
According to a very recent (June 2017) Pew Survey, over a 10 year period Americans completely flipped from being only 37% in favor of gay marriage to now being only 32% opposed to gay marriage. In just one decade the thoughts about homosexual marriage in our country have flip-flopped.

Over the last decade, the non-religiously affiliated have gone from 60 to 85% in favor of gay marriage. Unfortunately, the shifting persuasion about sexual persuasion is not just happening in the secular world, but is also happening in American churches. Over the same time period Catholic and mainline denominations have gone from 40% in favor to nearly 70% in favor. Those labeled as “white evangelicals” have gone from 14% in favor in 2007 to now 35% in favor. If you do the math, that is a 2.5x (or 250%) increase in favorability towards homosexual marriage in just 10 years among a group that is professing to be evangelical (gospel-sharing) Christians!

In the last 10 years, has the Bible been re-written? We need to sober-up in the Body of Christ and read the Word of God. There is no confusion in the Word of God about this matter. God’s Word contains statements on homosexuality from 4,000 and 2,000 years ago and yet has NOT CHANGED yet. “*The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.*” (Isa 40:8) Yet in 10 years, the American persuasion about sexual persuasion has changed drastically - even with a 250% increase in the church! It is so important for pastors to speak up on this very relevant topic!

Public support for same-sex marriage reaches new milestone

% who ___ allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally



Notes: Data for 2007-2015 based on yearly averages.

Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

How do we best love homosexuals?

This message is based on the Word of God which is in direct conflict with what a lot of popular culture encourages. Said more accurately (being that God's Word has not changed), popular cultural has shifted over the past decade such that it is now opposing God's Word on this issue.

There are many people who think 100% opposite of what this message will share from the Word of God. Many of those people are indeed very genuine in their desire to love homosexuals. There are people on both sides of this issue with truly genuine hearts in their desire to love homosexuals. Remember our battle is not against flesh and blood.

There is one person who loves homosexuals perfectly. His Name is Jesus! He came to give them life and that life more abundantly! God so loved them that He gave His only Son that whoever believed in Him would never perish but have eternal life!

On the other end of the spectrum is satan. He has three prerogatives with homosexuals, just as he has 3 prerogatives with you: steal from them, kill them, and destroy them. How can you be destroyed after you are already killed? Hello! That's Hell.

All people in the entire world are somewhere in between those polar opposites (Jesus and satan) in their love for homosexuals. Some (like Hitler or ISIS) hated or hate homosexuals like their inspiration - satan. They are closely aligned with satan. We on the other hand love homosexuals. There are Christian ministers who even have a special calling to that community and their love for them has grown even deeper. And then of course, there is Jesus who loves them perfectly, unashamedly, and completely.

Accordingly, a lot of people are trying to answer this question: "how do I best love homosexuals? How do I best love the gender confused?" There have been people asking this in the church. Many of us have been asking this question. You may have friends or relatives who are struggling with homosexuality or their gender identity. Perhaps they are not struggling with it - but instead embrace that lifestyle fully. You are trying to figure out how to love them because you have Jesus in your heart - you have love in your heart - and you want to give them love! Likewise, there are many people who are not in the church who are trying to figure out how to do that too.

There are two basic ways that everyone approaches "HOW do I love them best?" That's what this message is about - how do we best love homosexuals - and there are two basic ways that people approach it:

(1) *a way that seems right to men.* This is the first basic way that people approach loving homosexuals. Either those who are trying to love them come up with their own ideas or the homosexuals themselves suggest ways to best love them. These are ways that seem right to men.

(2) ***a way that's right to God.*** We know that Proverbs says that verse twice for good reason. (Prov. 14:12 and 16:25). *“There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end is the way of death.”*

There are many very genuine ways that people try to lots of things in life - that are genuinely wrong. Those are the two basics “ways” to approach answering the question “how do we best love homosexuals.” This message is about ***loving homosexuals in a way that's right to God.*** Our goal is to discover what that way is.

Minister or man-pleaser?

Some of you may be uncomfortable with your pastor speaking plainly from the Word on homosexuality because you have friends, family members, and/or co-workers who are homosexual and “if they knew” that you go to a church where the pastor believes this and you didn't walk out, that they would walk out on you and your friendship.

To be plain, that is demonic manipulation on their behalf. That is a spirit of witchcraft. Manipulation is witchcraft. When people for any issue (homosexual or otherwise) hold your friendship with them collateral for agreement with their sin, that is totally demonic. Remember, it is demonic - meaning our battle is not against flesh and blood. Often the people do not even know what they are doing. Their tongue is set on fire by hell. They know that you love them and they are threatening to end your friendship with them “if they knew what you believe about homosexuality.”

The thing is, you've believed this the whole entire time you've known them and you've been loving them the entire time without exception. You are not ending the friendship because you disagree with them. You are loving them all the more. Look at you go!

So, for a homosexual friend or family member to threaten to end their relationship with you because you believe what the Bible says about homosexuality is (1) very immature and (2) is manipulation.

Some of you think they are threatening to do that if they knew what you believed, but they actually are not at all. You are just worried that they could be. One of the biggest things that keeps us from ministering with out reservation is that we are far too concerned with our reputation. Jesus, however, voluntarily chose to become of no reputation! *“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”* (Phil. 2:8) He had the right to have a reputation - so insightful, so loving, so powerful. Yet He chose to be of NO reputation! That humility led to His obedience.

God has called us all to be ministers. You can be a minister or you can be a man-pleaser. You can't be both.

Of course, there have been groups of people that have been so adamant that they need someone to agree with their opinions about things that they have actually heaped up ministers for themselves. Many ministers will now say “you just don’t understand the cultural context of the Bible times ... look we found these drawings on walls in Pompey ... now we know the Bible meant something different about this than everyone knew it meant a 10 years ago.”

2 Timothy for 4:1-4 records Paul charge to preach the Word without making compromises with those who have an agenda about what they want the Word to say: *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”*

Paul told Timothy to imagine in his mind’s eye that he would stand before God and be judged for his ministry. He implied “you’ve got to have a vision of eternity if you are going to operate with wisdom now.” Believers will never come before the white throne judgement because you cannot be condemned - you are His workmanship. We are going to come before the Judgement Seat of Christ because we are in Christ - but our works will be tested by fire at the judgment seat of Christ. “I was loving that person for a whole decade!” But if all that loving you were doing for 10 years was rooted in fear of man, it is not going to trick God at all ... the fire will reveal those were your works not God’s works. His works get in to Heaven (including you!) but your works and my works don’t! So Paul was telling to Timothy to remember that his works as a minister would stand before Christ and be tested for what sort they were!

Notice Paul also says “convince, rebuke, exhort.” If the only gear I have to my preaching is to encourage, I am not being scriptural. The message about Creation had some elements of it that were some “convincing” - not just some encouraging. And in this message, I am doing some “correcting.” You can be a minister of God or a pleaser of man, but you cannot be both.

The time of not enduring sound doctrine, and having itching ears (wanting to hear a certain message) is now and so the key for a minister is to not be trying to please man but instead be trying to please God.

Recall John 6:41-70. In this section Jesus tells His followers that they need to eat His flesh and drink His blood. The Bible says that when the disciples heard it they thought it was a “hard saying.” Some feel that way concerning what the Bible says about homosexuality. What was Jesus’ response? “Does this offend you?”

Take a close look at John 6:66 (notice John 666): *“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.”* Look at the very next verse. Jesus didn’t waste any time: *“Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?””* You can only be manipulated by who you serve (and God will NEVER manipulate you). If you serve God and God alone you will look to the others and say “do you want to go away too?”

Jesus wasn't phased by the crowds leaving. You may think “no, Jesus, you were ministering to those people and you would have changed their lives ... and now they won't be here any more ... they ran away from you because you offended them.” That's how we often think about our friends who are homosexual knowing that the church that we go to preaches the Word of God.

Jesus' response shows that He would not allow Himself to be manipulated by the fear of man or the accolades of man. He had made Himself of no reputation. “You guys want to go too?” Jesus knew He wasn't going to change His message. “Since this message isn't going to change, just want to give you a chance to walk out too.” He even offered for the 12 He had felt led by God to pick to leave Him!

We do not want to be man-pleasers if we want to be ministers. 1 Thes. 2:4 says Paul spoke *“not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.”* Gal. 1:10 says *“For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”* If you are still pleasing men, you cannot be a servant of Christ. We are all on a journey there, but if some part of us feels like it is dying in having to go into this message, we need to recalibrate to being pleasers of God not pleasers of men.

We are not born with a right for everyone to like you. You are fearfully and wonderfully made -and everyone will love you? Accept you? Agree with you? Not in there ... You are just fearfully and wonderfully made. People's response to you speaking the truth in love (always from the motivation of love) is beyond what you can and SHOULD try to control.

A Pastoral Prescription

If you are going to minister to homosexual people, you need to check 2 things in your heart on perhaps a monthly basis. Take 5 minutes in your prayer time and use your imagination with God to consider 2 scenarios in your heart:

- (1) Imagine yourself standing before a flamboyantly gay man and the Lord telling you to correct him to his face. Then consider with God in your heart “God is there any fear or hesitation that comes up in my heart? ... Anything that comes up in my heart that belies that I would be disobedient at your Word in that situation?” If there is, just invite God “God, I invite you in to burn that out of me. Prepare me to be a true minister who will simply speak what you tell me to speak.”

(2) Next, imagine yourself standing before a transgender woman and you hear God say “just love them today.” And you see a picture in your mind’s eye of another Christian walking by and all you are doing today is loving them, hugging them, just comforting them. Then consider in your heart with God “is there any discomfort with having another Christian seeing you just loving on them today?” If there is any discomfort there just say “God, burn that out of me.”

It could be that with the same person on different days, the Lord tells you to do two different things. We have to be fine with the whole spectrum of it. The one side of the spectrum is where God leads you to be very direct “do you want to leave too?” It could blow them out but God says “just tell them direct.” On the other hand we have to be willing to be a shoulder to cry on, an arm to hug them, and just a heart that loves them. Both have to be “ready responses” to share at any point.

So if you want to love on (minister) to the homosexual community, this is your pastoral prescription ... take these scenarios before God on a monthly basis and see if there is a hesitation around one or both of those. If there is a hesitation, no big deal because you are making your imagination work for you. You are saying “God, I don’t have to live that situation and fail at it. Burn that thing out of me so that I can have purely Your Heart.”

NOW you’ve delighted yourself in the Lord on this matter. So, if you have the lead of the Lord “just to love on them” you will not feel condemned afterwards that you did not correct them because you KNOW your heart was and is willing to call them out. Just last week you were before the Lord and you got to the place that you were completely willing to call someone out on their sin to love them. “But I know that is not the witness I had this time” and therefore I have peace with what I did choose to do because that is the lead of the Lord you felt you had. In the same way, if you do call someone out very directly, you can have peace because you know you are 100% fine not saying anything - 100% fine just loving, supporting, comforting. You know you are fine with both gears, then with a clear conscience you can just listen to the Lord and say “God how would you have me to do it? How would you have me to bless them? I only have one goal - it’s how to love them. And I only now one way to love them that I want to be a part of it - which is God’s way - not what seems right to a man but I want to do what’s right to You God.” Grace and Truth came together in Christ.

This is the preparation of the heart that causes you ahead of time to not be a man-pleaser but a minister.

Coming up next

Next we will look at the 6 main scriptures (3 OT, 3 NT) that speak directly about homosexuality. Really 6 scriptures is plenty - there are only 5 on communion for instance! But we will discover there are actually a lot more scriptures than 6!

Additionally, Peter plans to address some FAQ's:

- Why didn't Jesus say anything about homosexuality? (He actually did make clear statements about it)
- Can a homosexual be a Christian?
- Aren't some people born this way?
- Should I go to their "wedding?"
- What about same-sex attraction?
- What about those who are gender confused?
- Physical effects of homosexuality
- Spiritual effects of homosexuality

May we be Equipped!

2 Timothy 3:16-17 says *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* The WORD OF GOD is what equips us to minister!

We want to know what the Word of God says on homosexuality because we want to LOVE homosexuals! And do you know how you love homosexuals? You give them what the Word of God says!

*Jn. 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are **life**."*

*Rom. 8:5-6 "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is **death**, but to be spiritually minded is **life and peace**."*

*Ps. 1:1-3 "**Blessed** is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But **his delight is in the law of the Lord**, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And **whatever he does shall prosper**."*

If you give people the Word of God, they get life. They don't get death. They get life and peace. They are blessed, and whatever they do prospers! Does that sound like something bad to give someone? Sounds like something really good! Keep reading:

Rom. 12:2 *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect** will of God.”*

Jn. 10:10 *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have **life**, and that they may have it **more abundantly**.”*

That’s why the Word of God came to us ... to give us life and life abundantly!!! God’s Word is ALWAYS GIVEN TO US TO GIVE LIFE and TO GIVE US LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY.

God’s Word will never steal from you! If you want to give people life, not death, peace, and caused them to be blessed, and if you want their lives to be good, perfect, and pleasing so that in total they get life and life more abundantly, then you would study to understand the Word of God on a matter so that you could GIVE THEM THE WORD OF GOD so that their life could be set free!

That’s what we are going to step into next time! Because, if you have not searched out the SCRIPTURES on homosexuality before it might be because you believe you have a better way to love people than God does. But His Word is perfect, converting the soul!

It is a lie that says “those are those 6 scriptures you beat people over the head with.” Oh you mean the 6 scriptures that when said in love set people free? There is not better way to love some one than to give them the Word of God!

Discussion Introduction (for reading as a group)

You don’t need a certification to shout “amen” during a sermon. Yes, things should be done decently and in order, but the church misses the will of God far more from lack of pushing into the things of the Spirit than from pushing too far. God is looking for someone not to be lukewarm.

Ignoring or not teaching on homosexuality is what the vast majority of theologically conservative pastors are doing. As a result, there has been a 250% increase in favorability towards homosexual marriage in just 10 years among a group that is professing to be evangelical (gospel-sharing) Christians! Has the Bible been re-written in the last 10 years?

“There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end is the way of death.” This message is about **loving homosexuals in a way that’s right to God.**

You can be a minister or you can be a man-pleaser. You can’t be both. It is God’s Word that equips us to minister. God’s Word gives people life - not death, peace, and causes them to be blessed. It brings about good, perfect, and pleasing things in their life so they experience life and life more abundantly. So let’s seek out what the Word of God is on how to best love homosexuals!

Points to Ponder . . .

- How should we relate differently to the sexually immoral who are not believers vs. those who are “brothers”?
- How did Jesus demonstrate love towards sinners? How does this differ from a Pharisaical or “pop culture” approach?
- How did Jesus handle His message being found offensive / being rejected?
- Why has this message become counter-cultural in such a short time?
- Thinking about the “pastoral prescription” scenarios ... which one makes YOU more uncomfortable - or are you at peace with both? (Be humble and honest ... we are family!)
- Why should we not feel bad about sharing the Word in order to love on homosexuals?
- Looking at “what’s coming up next” are there any other FAQ’s you were hoping to learn more about?