

Calling Homosexuality a Sin Is Truth, Not Hatred or Bigotry

The Bible's teaching on human sexuality is clear: The only kind of sexual intimacy Scripture countenances exists between one man and one woman, within marriage. This teaching is restrictive, limiting, narrow. It also possesses the singular advantage of being accurate, in the sense of being a faithful representation of what the Bible says.

One need not agree with the Bible to acknowledge its clear teaching. Regarding efforts to diminish the Bible's teachings about **homosexuality**, specifically, former Benedictine monk Luke Timothy Johnson, now of Emory University, writes, "I have little patience with efforts to make Scripture say something other than what it says, through appeals to linguistic or cultural subtleties. The exegetical situation is straightforward: we know what the text says."

The text says that heterosexual fornication and adultery, and homosexual intimacy, are sins against God and those who bear His image. Agree or disagree—you're free to make that decision. But have the intellectual honesty not to engage in the almost comical expositional gymnastics required to make the Bible say something it doesn't.

Having read the above, many Americans will be dumbfounded: You mean there are people whose allegiance to an anachronistic collection of ancient writings which articulate an archaic moral code actually drives their thinking and behavior today?

Yes. Many intelligent, well-educated, independent-minded people have come to the conclusion that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments uniquely reveal the mind, the will, and the plan of God for humankind. That their meaning is

adequately clear to have propositional authority. That their teachings are not subject to reinterpretation contingent on popular culture or personal whim.

Is everything in the Bible easy to grasp or accept? No. Were it, the Scriptures themselves would not so candidly acknowledge the realities of doubt and unbelief. But the labor with which one comes to and sustains his faith produces good fruit, since—yeah, here goes the fundamentalist again—the Bible is true.

This is important to understand for two reasons: First, evangelical Protestants, faithful Catholics and Orthodox Jews don't pick and choose their moral standards. We accept them, based on our belief in the divine inspiration of our written texts, and how we see them vindicated in human experience.

Second, our acceptance of these tenets is not merely intellectual. I affirm that the street outside my office is paved with black asphalt: This is the recognition of an obvious external reality, but one that does not animate my convictions about the purpose of life or the means by which I should live it. Unlike mere intellectual assent, since we believe our moral standards are issued by a God with Whom we have a relationship, and to Whom we owe our core allegiance, we cannot keep them neatly confined to the space within our crania. In other words, we are obligated by our Creator not just to acknowledge the correctness of what He has said but to live accordingly.

That means we reject homosexual behavior as morally acceptable. It means we also reject the numerous heterosexual sins as well, including sexual infidelity to a spouse and intercourse before marriage. We also affirm that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman, for life—and that this definition is unchanging.

I know of no conservatives who wish to disrupt homosexual

homes. We don't want to be invasive any more than we want to be coerced ourselves. But we reject the redefinition of marriage on theological grounds, as well as on a surfeit of sociological data showing that children benefit most by being raised by a mother and a father.

This is not bigotry. It is not hatred. It is not homophobia. It is, to quote one of my pastors, theophobia. We fear God, and thus we submit to what we believe is His revealed will. No one is requiring any homosexual to do anything. Catholics, Protestants and Jews who believe biblical morality is absolute and final are being asked to treat homosexuality as morally neutral behavior. Yet we do not believe it is, and thus cannot countenance its widespread social or legal acceptance any more than we accept heterosexual cohabitation.

No one is demanding that any homosexual become a heterosexual, or that homosexuals be in any way harmed, demeaned, or persecuted. To the contrary, true Christians should and do show the love of Christ to every image-bearer of God, whether that person is homosexual or heterosexual. Period.

We simply believe that sexual intimacy is reserved by God for heterosexual, monogamous marriage. That's inconvenient and difficult for many of us, heterosexual and homosexual. It's also what we believe the Word of God says. Therefore, for us it is determinative of not just belief but also practice.

Coercion and repression are the signs of fascism. No one, in any sphere, is either coercing or repressing homosexual men and women. Rather, homosexual activists seek to shut down those who believe their behavior is immoral. Raise a moral concern about homosexuality and immediately accusations of bigotry and hatred are showered upon you. The outraged viciousness of the response is commensurate with the intensity of one's allegiance to full cultural and legal affirmation of homosexuality. Since traditional believers won't change on this point, efforts are made to bully us into silence or

reserve our beliefs for our homes and the four walls of our houses of worship. We are called names, are threatened in late-night phone calls, or, in the case of my colleagues and I at the Family Research Council, we become the intended targets of a would-be assassin's bullets, as last summer's shooting at our building demonstrates.

Persons of biblical faith—who believe the Bible says what it means and look to it as the source of truth, not just comfort—have no alternative but to stand with Scripture. For this, we are accused of a lack of love. Nonsense: There can be nothing more unloving, or more cowardly, than ignoring a train as it is about to strike someone on its tracks. If we warn against the consequences of sexual sin, whether heterosexual or homosexual, we do so not with self-righteous condemnation but sincere concern for those wrestling with such sins.

The homosexual left insists that everyone endorse same-sex relationships as morally and legally valid. We will not. They want to **redefine marriage**. We refuse. They want homosexuality to be affirmed universally as morally good or at least morally neutral. We cannot. They want full and affirming integration into every social institution, whether it be the military or the Boy scouts or, for that matter, churches of all kinds. We cannot support it.

This is not hate. It's moral conviction. It will not change.

Here we stand. We can do no other. God help us. Amen.

Rob Schwarzwald *is senior vice president at Family Research Council. This article appeared on , Feb. 8.*