

Can You Be Gay and Christian?

Here Comes the Hate

As expected, within hours of my newest book becoming available online, the hate-fest began, with some of the craziest charges yet, including a reference to my allegedly “rigid Ayatollah-like scripture rants.” (I kid you not).

But should be we surprised? Those who are on the wrong side of the Scriptures often respond with venom and anger, and we must overcome their hatred with truth and love.

The book of which I speak, *Can You Be Gay and Christian?* wrestles with the challenges faced by those who are same-sex attracted and want to follow the Lord, putting the reader in their shoes (by quoting from many of their writings), raising their objections to the traditional understanding of the Scriptures on the subject of homosexual practice, and seeking to find the balance of grace and truth in ministering to those who identify as LGBT.

And while I am 100 percent sure that God does not endorse or bless homosexual practice or acts, I am equally sure that He has a tender place in His heart for those who struggle with these issues in their own lives and who have a desire to serve and love Him.

And the more I have read the books and listened to the stories of “gay Christians” (sometimes face to face) and the more I have prayed for them, the more my own heart has been broken, and I trust that brokenness will be apparent to readers of the book.

At the same time, I don’t expect that to stop the haters from hating—which is something very different from an honest reader differing with the contents and conclusions of a book—so it’s good to be prepared for the onslaught before it comes.

All of us who stand for biblical truth, which is the ultimate expression of love, can expect attacks like this.

To be perfectly clear, though, getting maligned and mocked online is hardly persecution. Obviously! I have washed the feet of a martyr's widow in India (I had previously laid hands on her husband and commissioned him in ministry) and stood at the funeral of one of our ministry school grads who was killed by Muslim terrorists.

Some of my colleagues have been shot, stoned or tortured, and I have preached overseas when militant, armed Hindus came onstage, took our equipment and shut down our meeting.

So, having someone post a nasty review of one of my books neither demands a pity party nor an entrance into *Fox's Book of Martyrs*. (No, it does not qualify as persecution when someone unfriends you on Facebook either.)

Personally, when I'm mocked and maligned for doing good, I am blessed and encouraged by it. Plus, there's no way you're going to tackle controversial issues without having some people love you and others hate you. It comes with the territory.

But I share some of this "review" here—ironically, the first one on the book, unless it gets pulled by Amazon or by the reviewer—just to illustrate what we can expect when we speak the truth in love regarding homosexual practice. (To be perfectly clear, the issue is not whether someone can have same-sex attractions and follow Jesus if they resist and renounce those attractions. Of course they can. The issue is whether someone can practice homosexuality and follow Jesus at the same time, and the answer is of course they cannot.)

Here, then, is what you can expect.

1. Personal attacks. Regardless of how gentle your tone, if you don't give your approval to homosexual practice, you will

be maligned. And if you dare to stand for righteousness in society, prepare to be slandered.

The “reviewer” refers to me as “the world’s worst anti-gay, a man obsessed with male homosexuality”—in case you didn’t know it, if you stand for sexual purity, you’ll be accused of being the opposite of what you stand for—“trying to put the best face on his tired old tirades ... trying to sound reasonable,” whereas I am actually “a relic from a quickly vanishing era.” (Yes, prepare for the trash talk too—namely, that our side has lost and so we should throw in the towel.)

He continues: “Brown is in the same place segregationists were in after the Civil rights laws and sea change in public opinion.” (So, those of us who say that God intended a man to marry a woman are just like those who oppressed blacks. Really?)

Yes, the “reviewer” claims that I am “a fossil filled with rage that his rigid Ayatollah-like scripture rants are not leading us to execute gays in the public square.”

Perhaps the author of this review is projecting his own anger toward those of us who love Jesus and wouldn’t think of compromising His Word so as to placate others. Perhaps he’s upset that we are not being executed in the public square.

He also speaks of my “hysteria” and, as if to discredit himself even more, says in a follow-up comment that I remind him “of anti-Semites who write book after book denying the Holocaust.”

To my fellow Christian leaders and pastors and friends who address these issues: Be prepared for similar attacks.

2. Misinformation. Remarkably, in a few short sentences, the “review” states the following falsehoods:

- I conflate “homosexual orientation with pedophilia in

chapter five.” Talk about a blatant misrepresentation of content, but that is one that we will always hear.

- “Brown ignores the world-changing revelations of the evangelical ex-gay leaders, who have been saying since January 2012 that nobody changed from homosexual to heterosexual.” Actually, while some former leaders in the ex-gay movement have stated this, countless others have offered their testimonies as living proof of God’s transforming power. For an amazing story, see David Kyle Foster’s brand-new release, *Love Hunger*.
- “Brown ignores the fact that we have seen the end of the major national and international ex-gay ministries from Australia to the US and Europe.” In reality, there are plenty of such ministries around the world that are thriving, with more requests for help than they can handle. For one good example, see the Restored Hope Network.
- “Brown ignores the fact that gay conversion therapy is being outlawed in a growing number of states and nations as medical associations explain it helps nobody and harms many.” Actually, while this oppressive intrusion on doctor-client relationships passed in two states (and is being challenged there), it has been stopped in the last five states where anti-change activists attempted to introduce it.
- “He fails to mention there are 76 ‘abominations’ in [Leviticus], but 75 are ignored today.” Actually, every word of this sentence is false, since only homosexual practice is referred to specifically in the singular as an “abomination” in Leviticus, while those sins referred to as “abominations” (in the plural in Leviticus 18) are roundly rejected by believers today, including incest and bestiality. (And where in the world did he get the number 76?)

The good news is that, in the end, truth always overcomes lies (2 Cor. 13:8) and the darkness cannot extinguish the light

(John 1:5).

I personally believe that just as the Lord poured out His Spirit on hundreds of thousands of hippies and rebels and drug users (like me!) during the Jesus People Movement of the late '60s and early '70s, He will do the same in the LGBT community.

Let us ask the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth laborers into this important harvest field, and let us ask Him to prepare our hearts to welcome people from all backgrounds into our midst, introducing them to Jesus, the only Savior and Lord.

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