

Four Christian Ways to Respond to 'National Coming Out Day'

Yesterday was National Coming Out Day. The "Human Rights Campaign" has published a "resource guide to coming out" as well as ways straight people can "demonstrate your support for LGBTQ people and equality worldwide."

As I have discussed often, the Bible consistently forbids homosexual activity. Not because God hates gay people, but because He loves them. Their Creator wants what is best for them and knows that all sexual relationships outside of heterosexual marriage are damaging to those who engage in them.

My point this morning is not to revisit this issue, but to think with you about ways to relate biblically to LGBTQ people. God's word has much to say not only about homosexual relationships but also about how best to relate to those who engage in them.

One: Agree with Scripture.

Whenever biblical truth is rejected by society, it is tempting to side with society. As I noted yesterday, only 52 percent of self-identified evangelicals agree strongly with the statement, "Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin." As our culture has decided that truth is personal and subjective, many have been persuaded that they can do with their bodies whatever they wish. This ethic affects abortion, sexual activity, euthanasia and a host of other issues.

But it is still true that "all Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). Neither God's nature nor His truth have changed. What was wrong when the Bible was inspired is still

wrong today. There's an old saying, "God said it, I believe it and that settles it." Actually, we should say, "God said it and that settles it, whether I believe it or not."

Two: Understand the issue.

We must be like the men of Issachar who "had understanding of the times" (1 Chron. 12:32). For many Americans, including those in the LGBTQ community, homosexual rights are simply civil rights. They liken this issue to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Defending the biblical position is seen as homophobic, bigoted and intolerant.

Three: Earn the right to share God's Word.

The fact that many in our culture view LGBTQ rights as civil rights means that we must speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). We must convince those who disagree with us that we are motivated not by our supposed bigotry but by what is best for them. We need to build relational bridges across which we show God's compassion and grace in ours.

Four: Love unconditionally.

Homosexuals are a small minority of the population, but they are loved unconditionally by God. Our Father loves each of His children, whatever our sexual identity or gender expression. We are all tempted by sexual sin. Jesus died for every sin we have ever committed and will ever commit. The ground is truly level at the foot of the cross.

Imagine that you were gay. How would you want to be treated by someone who believed that the Bible forbids homosexual activity? What would most likely draw you to Christ and His truth? Ask the Spirit to answer that question in your heart as He leads you to serve those in the LGBTQ community.

Yesterday was "National Coming Out Day." Let's make today "National Reaching Out Day" to the glory of God.