

Patrick Morley: Christians Should Never 'Normalize' Any Sin

It's important for every men's leader to have a thought-through position on same-sex marriage that's based on Paul's principle of bringing people to spiritual maturity by "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). Here are thoughts I posted on Facebook last week during the Supreme Court deliberations on same sex marriage:

I am a recovered homophobic. I say "recovered" rather than "recovering" because I am long since over it. Here's how it happened. When I went into ministry I started meeting men with same-sex attraction—not a lot, but enough. Here's the deal. Every man with a same-sex attraction that I've actually gotten to know is someone I really, really like as a person. I can't say the same for every adulterer, manipulative addict, and prideful person I've gotten to know.

So why not just endorse same-sex marriage? Because of the classic Christian principle of "hate the sin, love the sinner." We can and should love every person with the love of Christ, but without condoning their sin—whether that's adultery, pride, promiscuity, pornography, or homosexual behavior.

Sin is sin. Christians should never "normalize" any sin. To say it's okay to engage in homosexual behavior because of same-sex attraction would be like saying it's okay to commit adultery because of opposite-sex attraction. That makes no sense.

But people are people. Christians should also never "demonize" any person because they have a propensity to sin—whether to commit adultery, cheat on taxes, have sex outside of marriage,

or engage in homosexual behavior. That makes no sense either.

All of us sin every day. We all need the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of Jesus every day. Is there anyone among us so dull that at the end of any given day you would actually want what you deserve?

Let's face it. If Jesus didn't love sinners, he wouldn't love anyone at all. So let's be uncompromising about the truth, but humble how we use it.

People made comments, and here are three exchanges that I think reflect the kinds of things you may hear also:

Marie B Corn: If homosexuals (or adulterers) whom one really likes as a person claim to be a Christian, should Christians fellowship with them (1 Cor.5:1-5)?

Every Christian experiences sexual attraction to other people. For most it's the opposite sex. But some Christians experience same-sex attraction. The issue in both cases is what you do about it. The great Henry Nouwen, for example, struggled with same-sex attraction for his entire life, but he was celibate. Most red-blooded males struggle with opposite attraction for their entire lives, but don't act on it. But in either case, when they do, yes, they need to be held accountable.

The purpose of withholding fellowship, however, is always restoration. The 1 Corinthians 5 passage should be read in conjunction with 2 Corinthians 2:5-8, which deals with the restoration of that same sinner. However, when the person is a family member, I think it is a mistake to withhold relationship.

Dlakudze Sizo Dlaks: I think u are confused & u want to confuse athaz!! Why do u want us to like homosexuals? They r an abomination & a curse to this world!!

Diakudze, I would appeal to the following two teachings of

Jesus: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:43-45). "But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?' Jesus answered them, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance'" (Luke 5:30-32).

Paul Wilson: One problem: If same gender attraction is not a matter of choice, is it a sin?

Paul, same-sex attraction by itself is a temptation, not a sin. It's no different than opposite-sex attraction to your neighbor's wife. It's what one does with the temptation. The Bible draws a distinction between temptation and sin. Temptation can and should be resisted (See 1 Corinthians 10:13). Sin should be confessed and behavior adjusted (See 1 John 1:9).

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