

Sorry, But We Won't Rewrite the Bible for Gays and Lesbians

In response to my open letter to Isaac Archuleta, who describes himself as a bisexual Christian, Richard S. posted a lengthy comment on my personal Facebook page, including this statement: "The logical conclusion to your theology (gays can change and if they don't it must be because they don't have faith or are deceived) is extremely damaging to the souls of gay people. "That was the point of Isaac's letter. No amount of nice words will erase the damage. Only honest reconsideration of your theology will bring healing. Please don't discount/deny the faith of your gay brothers and sisters. They have much to contribute to the church."

Of course, Richard has completely misstated what conservative Christians believe (we don't say or believe that if gays don't change "it must be because they don't have faith or are deceived"), just as other parts of his comment not quoted here were also based on serious misunderstandings.

But that is secondary to the bigger issue, and Richard is one of many who are telling serious Bible believers that, "Only honest reconsideration of your theology will bring healing."

He could not be more wrong.

First, what Scripture says on homosexual practice is not negotiable, and no amount of new books or videos or personal stories will change that.

As I explained in my book *Can You Be Gay and Christian?*, "no new textual, archeological, sociological, anthropological, or philological discoveries have been made in the last fifty years that would cause us to read any of these biblical texts

differently. Put another way, it is not that we have gained some new insights into what the biblical text means based on the study of the Hebrew and Greek texts. Instead, people's interaction with the LGBT community has caused them to understand the biblical text differently."

Simply stated, if not for the sexual revolution, no one would be reexamining what the Scriptures state about God's intention for His creation.

No one would be wondering if two men or two women could "marry" or if a husband could also be a wife.

No one would be doubting that the Lord made men for women and women for men and that any deviation from that pattern was contrary to His design and intent.

As one New Testament scholar was candid enough to admit, it was clear to him that the Bible forbade homosexual practice, but when his own daughter came out as a lesbian, he changed his opinion on the subject.

That's why I've often stated that there is not a single argument that can be brought from God's Word to defend homosexual practice, but there are powerful emotional arguments that can be brought. In that context, I'm often reminded of Jesus' words that, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37).

The father of a "gay Christian" activist changed churches when his home congregation rejected his son's views on homosexuality. When asked about these words of Jesus, he commented that there were other churches he could go to, but he had only one son.

I could only wince when I heard his words, so loving in one way but so destructive in another.

Second, if there was something to reconsider in our theology we would gladly do it. The truth be told, as impossible as the “gay Christian” arguments struck me, I went to the Lord about them, buying the books that defended this new way of reading Scripture, reading the stories and listening to the stories of professing gay Christians, allowing my heart to be torn and my mind to be challenged.

At the end of the day, as a biblical scholar, a lover of Jesus and a lover of people, it was impossible for me to accept their arguments. The Word is just too clear on this, and without some kind of emotional or social or other pressure to reconsider what Scripture states, no one would deny this.

Third, those who argue that Christians agree to disagree on lots of things without denying each other’s faith fail to realize that they do not agree to disagree on behaviors that Scripture strongly condemns—unless they themselves are living in some kind of moral compromise.

We’re not dealing here with a question of whether speaking in tongues is for today or whether Christians are required to tithe or whether Jesus is coming before the tribulation.

We’re dealing with redefining the very meaning of marriage and claiming that a behavior that is plainly condemned in the Old and New Testaments—I’m talking about same-sex cohabitation—is now blessed by God.

And while God alone is the judge of every professing Christian, be that person gay or straight, we cannot embrace as fellow brothers and sisters those who are affirming, practicing and even celebrating homosexuality.

We will put our arms around everyone who struggles with same-sex attraction, loving them and embracing them and encouraging them in their walk with the Lord, whether their walk entails transformation from homosexual to heterosexual or whether it entails celibacy.

But we will not and cannot affirm and bless what the Lord Himself opposes. To do so is to do a disservice to those in the LGBT community.

Fourth, God's message of grace and truth brings healing and wholeness and deliverance and freedom, as millions of people from every walk of life can attest, including large numbers of people who once identified as LGBT.

I'm quite aware that there are genuine homo-haters in the Church. I plan to address this yet again in the coming days; God is their judge as well. I'm quite aware that Christians have often failed to demonstrate Christlike love and compassion to the LGBT community—to put it mildly.

But I'm also quite aware that when we speak the truth in love and people actually hear what we're saying—not the interpretation they put on our words but the real message of our words—if that message is received, it will bring life not death.

To all of you reading this article who say, "I'm gay, I'm Christian, I'm involved in a same-sex relationship, and we're thriving in the Lord," I invite you to call my radio show, to send me your story or, if you live in my city, to get together with me and some of your friends—not for the purpose of debate but for the purpose of honest, loving, heartfelt interaction.

And if you have time, would you watch my video, *Can You Be Gay and Christian?* and tell me what I don't understand and where I don't display genuine empathy?

And if you'd like to read my book by the same title and you genuinely can't afford it, email me your story, include your address, and I'll send you a copy for free. You will not find a hateful word in the book, but you will find someone who cares.

In the end, though, your issue is with the Lord, not with me.

I can assure you that He understands and He will provide everything you need if you truly entrust your life to Him.
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