

What Do We Say to a Committed Same-Sex Couple Raising Children They Love?

It's easy to oppose "the LGBTQ agenda" when it is brazen and vulgar, marching down our city streets in open display. Or when it supports the genital mutilation and chemical castration of children.

But what do you say to that very nice, same-sex couple who lives next door, the ones raising the abandoned child they adopted? Are they also a part of an evil agenda? Should they be demonized and condemned?

When singer Amy Grant was criticized for hosting her niece's same-sex wedding ceremony (despite her Christian roots), she replied, "I never chase any of those rabbits down the rabbit hole. I love my family. I love those brides. They're wonderful, our family is better and you should be able to be who you are with your family and be loved by them."

To paraphrase, "This is about family and about love. Why must you religious fundamentalists get all worked up about how two people love each other?"

In Grant's eyes, loving Jesus also includes embracing this same-sex couple. As she said, "Honestly, from a faith perspective, I do always say, 'Jesus, you just narrowed it down to two things: love God and love each other.' I mean, hey—that's pretty simple."

The fact is that there are countless thousands of gay couples whose lives are very similar to the lives of heterosexual couples. They go to work. They spend time with their friends. They have hobbies. And although they are half as likely as heterosexual couples to be raising children, thousands of them

are, in fact, devoted parents.

Just listen to the Congressional testimony of former Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney as he shared how he and his same-sex partner have adopted and raised unwanted children for 27 years. He sounds as devoted to these children as any heterosexual father. And he claims that adoption agencies reach out to LGBTQ couples because these couples are more likely to adopt unwanted kids.

He said, "It was because they [Adoption Alliance] had learned in the 1990s that there were certain types of kids who are not going to be adopted, where the circumstances of their birth, through no fault of their own obviously, was difficult or confronting for traditional adoptive parents, where there were issues of HIV or rape or incest, sometimes mixed with concerns about interracial adoption. And what these adoption agencies learned, to their credit, was that there were LGBT couples in cities like New York who would say yes to these children, not as an alternative to the straight couple that was going to raise them. As an alternative to never being adopted. Because no one was going to adopt these kids. And it was that insight, that LGBT couples were willing to cross lines of difference because they had experienced doing so in their own lives, that they had less preoccupation or hysteria with things like HIV, that they were more willing to adopt across lines of difference like race or religion, that there was an opportunity for kids that would not have a home to have a home."

What do we say to a gay man like Maloney, or to the many, loving same-sex couples?

It's easy to point to the gay couples arrested for raping their adopted children or pimping them out for sex. It's also easy to point to the higher levels of promiscuity in the gay community, in particular among men, even those in "committed" or "monogamous" relationships.

As Ari Karpel argued in an op-ed for The Advocate in 2011, “Anti-equality right-wingers have long insisted that allowing gays to marry will destroy the sanctity of ‘traditional marriage,’ and, of course, the logical, liberal party-line response has long been ‘No, it won’t.’ But what if—for once—the sanctimonious crazies are right? Could the gay male tradition of open relationships actually alter marriage as we know it? And would that be such a bad thing? With divorce rates at an all-time high and news reports full of famous marriages crumbling at the hand of flagrant infidelities (see: Schwarzenegger, Arnold), perhaps now is the perfect time for the gays to conduct a little marriage makeover.”

But, to repeat, there are plenty of gay couples where partner swapping is not the norm (in fact, a 2018 study claims that monogamy is becoming more common among gay couples). And there are plenty of gay couples who would die for the kids they are raising.

I could also mention the fact that plenty of heterosexual couples commit sexual sin. Some of them abuse their children too.

Homosexual couples and individuals hardly have a monopoly on sin.

As followers of Jesus, then, who know what the Bible says about homosexual practice, what do we say to our gay neighbors, friends and family members? And how do we relate to them?

In the end, it’s quite simple.

We treat them like any other neighbor, friend or family member.

We love them. We take a genuine interest in their lives. We treat them as our equals in that we are all created in God’s image, we are all fallen and we are all in need of redemption.

If the door is open, we share the gospel with them, recognizing that their same-sex attractions are not the root of their fallen nature but simply a manifestation of their fallen nature. And if they come to faith, we seek to disciple them, which, of course, will mean major life changes.

But this is often the cost of following Jesus. I have friends whose spouses left them when they came to faith because of deep religious differences. And in some countries, conversion to Christianity is against the law, even punishable by death. Being a disciple is costly. But the price Jesus paid for us is far more costly, and the glory of knowing Him is far more wonderful than any sacrifice we are asked to make.

As for the children raised by that caring gay couple, again, we don't doubt the devotion of the two moms or two dads. And if we are not asked for our opinion, we keep it to ourselves.

But if we are asked how we feel about same-sex parenting, we make clear that we don't doubt the love and devotion of these parents. Yet we restate, without apology, our belief that God's best plan is for a child to have a mother and father, since the world's best dad is not a mom and the world's best mom is not a dad. And there is something unique and irreplaceable in the roles that moms and dads play.

 If we are branded bigots and haters and homophobes, so be it. We will do our best to overcome those negative judgments with genuine, long-term love.

We will not demonize these couples, and we will not celebrate them.

Instead, we will join grace and truth together with the goal of introducing them to the priceless, transformative love of God. That's what disciples do. {eoa}

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