

6 Ways We Should Respond to the Gay Marriage Verdict

It's official. Thanks to the Supreme Court's ruling last week in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, gay marriage has been legalized in this country. Same-sex relationships are the new normal. The rainbow flag was unfurled on June 26, the White House was illuminated with rainbow colors, and our president tweeted "Love Wins" after the historic ruling.

The decision didn't shock me. Seventy percent of our country already had gay marriage laws on the books, so most of us saw this coming. I don't agree with the small percentage of our population who pushed to win this right, but I have to support their right to make it. Yet at the same time I am horribly grieved that a lifestyle that is so contrary to Christian morality is being celebrated in a country that once honored Christian values.

Life will be different in America now—so we might as well prepare for the change. Just as *Roe v. Wade* redefined the way Christians approached the issue of abortion, this new Supreme Court ruling has changed the game. I recommend we take the high road. Here are six ways we should respond:

1. Recognize that we are a religious minority. Some American Christians think we have a right to control culture. That's not a biblical concept. Yes, we are supposed to shine the light of Christ's influence in a dark world by preaching the gospel and by demonstrating the compassion of Jesus. But we live in this world as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Pet. 2:11). We are not a "moral majority." We are not welcome here.

Paul told Timothy: "The godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12). I'm not afraid of persecution. If the United States government decides to throw me in jail

because I believe the Bible, I will join a host of brave Christians who have suffered worse treatment—including today's martyrs in the Middle East. Let's stop whining when sinners don't behave like we want them to. Our job is not to control people but to extend God's mercy to them. Mature believers lay their lives down for sinners, just as Christ did.

2. Get busy evangelizing your community. Perhaps the Supreme Court's gay marriage ruling will wake us up to the fact that the United States is now the third largest mission field on earth. We are not a Christian country, so let's stop pretending we are. The fact that gay people can now legally marry is not going to change the Great Commission. Jesus said: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The sad truth is that most American Christians weren't sharing their faith when our laws were based on Christian morals. Will this new ruling motivate us to care about sinners?

3. Repent for hateful attitudes toward the gay community. As an evangelical Christian I believe the Bible is clear about sex: God created it as a gift to be expressed within the confines of marriage between a man and a woman. But that doesn't give me a right to bash gay people. The love of God draws people to repentance. In the past year I have heard a lot of hateful language aimed at homosexuals—including church leaders using words like "queer" to describe the gay community. Let's ask God to break our hearts so we can be free from bigotry and self-righteousness.

4. Keep teaching the truth about biblical morality. This is certainly not a time to back away from the Bible. We can't compromise. But while we uphold what the Scriptures say about homosexuality, let's be just as committed to preaching the truth about adultery, fornication and divorce. We are viewed as hypocrites by the world because we argue against gay marriage when we haven't shown them that our own heterosexual marriages work. We also must offer compassionate counseling to people who want to overcome homosexual feelings, just as we

offer healing prayer to those who struggle with depression, gender confusion, addiction or the effects of abuse or abortion.

5. Defend our religious freedoms. The last time I checked, the United States was still listed as a democracy. But the church must work overtime to make sure our government doesn't force churches to perform same-sex marriages. Gay couples can find state officials or pro-gay clerics to perform their ceremonies, but the state has no business forcing a church to renounce its core teachings. If the government tries to control the content of Christian preaching to prevent what is deemed "hate speech," there will be nothing left of our Bill of Rights.

6. Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Today some doomsday Christians say they wish God would judge America like He did Sodom and Gomorrah. I prefer to take the strategy of Abraham, who prayed for Sodom because He understood the mercy of God—even though he lived before the New Covenant era. Today we live in the age of grace, and we should petition God for a global revival rather than asking Him to call down fire on people who offend us.

Pray for mercy. Pray for a fresh wave of evangelism. Pray that the Spirit's power will inundate our nation and unleash a third Great Awakening. That is our ultimate hope.

J. Lee Grady *is the former editor of Charisma and the director of The Mordecai Project. You can follow him on Twitter @leegrady. He is the author of The Holy Spirit Is Not for Sale and other books. Check out his ministry at .*