
DEALING WITH PEOPLE WITH SINFUL LIFESTYLES

John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of **grace** and **truth**."

- **Grace** without truth deceives people and ceases to be grace.
- **Truth** without grace crushes people and ceases to be truth

HOW TO DEAL WITH UNSAVED PEOPLE WITH SINFUL LIFESTYLES

By grace, we want to **love** others, no matter what kind of lifestyle they live.

In truth, we want to **instruct** others, letting them know about their sins and the Lord's reaction to sin.

Is it possible?

Is it possible to love someone, but hate their lifestyle? If so, how do we show them Christ-like love?

- Suicide rates in the U.S.A. (2013)
 - 12.94 suicides per 100,000 people
 - **LGB's are 4 times more likely to commit suicide**
 - **Alcoholics are 120 times more likely to commit suicide**

People living sinful lifestyles are often unhappy and more likely to commit suicide.

Hurting people need Jesus!

By percentage, how many homosexuals to you think we have in America?

As representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been authorized to offer salvation to all.

- Romans 5:6, "Christ died for the ungodly."
- 2 Corinthians 5:15, "(Christ) died for all."

We cannot share the Gospel with someone that we refuse to talk to.

- Keep in mind that if you could possibly reorient someone from being gay, or a drunkard, or an adulterer, that doesn't mean this person will go to Heaven.
- We don't need to get the sin out so that Christ may come in; we need to get Christ in so that the sin will go out.

Is it possible?

Is it possible for the Lord to change someone's heart, lifestyle, or sexual orientation? 1 Cor. 6:9-11

HOW TO DEAL WITH SAVED PEOPLE WITH SINFUL LIFESTYLES

All those who profess to be saved have a peculiar responsibility before the Lord to walk in obedience to His Word.

- Ephesians 5:3, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be **gentle** unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In **meekness** instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

While acting in gentleness and meekness, we should still stand firm for the truths of the scriptures.

- Jude 3, "...ye should **earnestly contend** for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Is it possible?

Is it possible to 'earnestly contend' without striving?

QUESTION: What does the bible have to say about same sex marriage?

ANSWER: This is a very important question. It's one that is dividing our nation and our churches. What was once thought to be sinful is now thought of as normal in most places. Some states have already legalized same sex marriages, while some appear to be on the brink of legalizing them. Even our President and Vice-President have spoken openly about being in favor of same sex marriages. I am going to make this into a two-part question by following this one with another question: How should Christians behave towards people that live a homosexual lifestyle?

As far as your original question, the Bible does not really say anything about same sex marriage. That doesn't mean that the Bible approves of it, but it doesn't address same sex marriages. The reason for that is that the Bible speaks of marriage as the Lord instituted it, and it is always between a man and a woman. From the very outset, we see the Lord's establishment of marriage in the Garden of Eden. Let's read **Genesis 2:24**, "**Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.**" The word 'wife' here is the same Hebrew word that is translated 'woman' in **verse 22**, which says, "**And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.**" This is the first mention of marriage, and it sets the principal of marriage being between a man and a woman. The Lord Jesus references this in **Matthew 19:4-6** where it says, "**And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**" Again, we see the Godly pattern for marriage is one man married to one woman. It is important to note that in all of scripture, there is not one marriage mentioned that is not between a man and a woman.

As a society, people are more receptive to the idea of homosexuality than ever before. Have we become more civilized and therefore more accepting of all kinds of thought, or have we become cold and indifferent to the clear teaching of scripture? In today's society, we are forsaking the Bible as our standard, and therefore we are losing the standards the Lord has set forth. I am reminded of the nation of Israel in the days of the judges where we read in **Judges 17:6** that, "**In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.**" Doesn't that sound like the days we're living in now? In our day, someone that takes a Christian stand against homosexuality is called intolerant, bigoted and homophobic.

What does the Bible, the only source of authority say about homosexuality? Let's start by looking at **Leviticus 18:22-23** which says "**Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.**" This is the NIV translation of the verses. The word 'detestable' is translated 'abomination' in the KJV. The word literally means, "Something morally disgusting." I realize these are harsh words; words that are not tolerated today by the world. However, these are not my words; they are the words of the Lord. In **verse 23**, the Lord states that it is a perversion to have sexual relations with an animal. It's amazing how that thought is still disgusting to society, **but verse 22** has been rejected. In **Leviticus 20:13** we see that under the law homosexuality was punishable by death. It states, "**If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.**" There are about six or seven distinct portions in the scriptures that condemn homosexuality. For the sake of time, I will give you a few so you can look them up for yourselves: **Romans 1:24-27**, **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**, and **1 Timothy 1:8-11** are some New Testament references. Notice that homosexuality is not the only sin condemned in these passages; just one of many.

Homosexuality is a result of the fall of man. This fall into sin has infected the entire human race with sin, perversions, and abominations. It distorts what God created us to be. Homosexuality is clearly a perversion of the created order. Obviously, men and women were designed to "fit" together sexually. In plain language, the genitals of a man were created to be compatible with the genitals of a woman. The main purpose for the sex act is for procreation, but two people of the same sex cannot reproduce. A man has no body part that was created to receive the genitals of another man. The same is true of women. Although the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality, you really don't even have to believe what the Bible teaches in order to recognize that homosexuality is not natural. Men were created for women and women were created for men.

Let me be clear about another thing. Love between two people of the same sex is no sin. Most people are familiar with the words found in **Ruth 1:16-17** which says, "**Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.**" You might hear these words at a wedding. These words were spoken by Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi. Let's also look at **1 Samuel 18:1** which says, "**And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.**" The love between these two men is well known. For one person to love another is no sin, in fact it is so commendable. The perversion is when two people of the same sex become sexually active with each other.

Why are some people sexually attracted to others of the same sex? I don't know if that question can be answered except to say that because of the fall of man, there are many perversions in the world. I do know that many people are attracted to alcohol, many are attracted to children, many are attracted to pornography and many are attracted to gambling. The list goes on and on. Just because we find ourselves with a certain attraction, does not justify us acting out those attractions. Just because there are many others with the same attraction does not make it right or normal.

QUESTION: How should Christians behave towards people that live a homosexual lifestyle?

ANSWER: Most of us at least are acquainted with someone that is homosexual. We need to be aware of how the Lord wants us to treat people that live that lifestyle. As we saw in our last question, those that committed homosexual acts were to be put to death. **Leviticus 20:13** tells us, **“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.”** Under the Jewish law, if two people were caught committing adultery, they were also to be put to death. **Leviticus 20:10** says, **“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”**

In **1 Corinthians, chapter 5**, we have an incident where a man was committing adultery with his step-mother. I know that sounds disgusting, but it happened. Were they put to death? If you read the account, you will see that the man was disciplined by the church so that he would repent of and stop his terrible actions. In fact, this man did repent and the Apostle Paul said to them in **2 Corinthians 2:6-7**, **“Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.”**

So, what’s the difference? The world is not under the Jewish law; we are living in the day of God’s grace. The Lord Jesus, Himself, fulfilled all the requirements of the law with His death on the cross. He said in **Matthew 5:17**, **“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”** The Apostle Paul spoke of the **“dispensation of the grace of God”** in **Ephesians 3:4**, which is the day we continue to live. This does not mean that sinful acts are now permissible. It means that now, instead of swift and harsh judgment, the Lord wants to deal with the offender in grace and truth so that they may come to repentance of their sins.

We need to act in grace and truth towards those that live in sin, whatever the sin may be. We read in **Romans 2:4** that, **“the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”** Homosexuality is not the only sin that we need to deal with. Let’s read **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**, **“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”** Besides homosexuality, we read here of fornicators, idolaters, thieves, drunkards, and others. My friends, let’s make sure that we don’t become selective about the sins that we condemn. Perhaps we speak out against homosexuality, but do not have a problem with the man that is living with his girlfriend, or the married woman that is having an affair. We have patience with the poor man that drinks too much, but lash out at the gay men we see holding hands. This is not right. As believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, we should acknowledge that all sin dishonors the Lord.

If we meet or know someone that is homosexual, or is a drunkard, or is an adulterer, we need to realize that the Lord loves these people. His desire is that they be saved as we read in **2 Peter 3:9**, **“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”** What these people need; what we all need, is the Lord. Keep in mind that if you can possibly rehabilitate someone from being gay, or a drunkard, or an adulterer, that doesn’t mean this person will go to Heaven. We don’t need to get the sin out so that Christ may come in; we need to get Christ in so that the sin will go out.

Of course, there are those that live these lifestyles that profess to be saved. In that case, let’s keep in mind **2 Timothy 2:24-26** which says, **“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”** Let’s speak the truth to them in love.

Remember too, that love does not mean tolerance of sin. In John, chapter 8, we have the familiar story of the woman that was caught in the act of adultery. She was brought before the Lord for condemnation. Upon her acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord, she received forgiveness. She also received the word of the Lord to stop sinning. We read in **John 8:11**, **“And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”**

One of our biggest problems today is that many of our so-called spiritual leaders condone such behaviors as homosexuality, adultery, and so on. **Isaiah 5:20-21** warns, **“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”** Of course, this is not new. In the Old Testament, we find spiritual leaders doing the same thing. Let’s read **Jeremiah 23:14**, **“I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.”** A man will not likely stop his wickedness when his spiritual leaders are telling him it is not sinful.

May we be faithful to love those that are living contrary to God’s Word and share with them the precious truth of God’s Word. Is it really possible to love the sinner and hate the sin? Absolutely! The Lord does, and we can, too.