

# Why We Oppose Same-Sex Marriage

“If two men are in love, and want to declare their commitment, why should we keep them from marrying each other?” “If two gays want to be married, aren’t they...



By FamilyLife

*“If two men are in love, and want to declare their commitment, why should we keep them from marrying each other?”*

*“If two gays want to be married, aren’t they upholding the institution of marriage rather than weakening it?”*

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*“If a pair of homosexuals want to marry and provide a home for children who would otherwise be without a family, then how can that be wrong?”*

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In our ongoing cultural conversation about homosexuality and same-sex marriage, we will continue to have friends and family members who will be asking us questions like these. Unfortunately, many Christians today lack the ability to clearly articulate their views on marriage. We often find it difficult to respond to questions or arguments made by those who disagree with us.

If we want to defend the centuries-old understanding of marriage, we should start by looking carefully at what God has to say about it. When we speak of the “sanctity of marriage,” we mean to say that marriage is a holy and sacred institution created not by man, but by God. That means that no matter what legislators or justices say, the definition of marriage is not ours to tamper with.

Before laying out a defense for marriage we need to make two very important points:

First, we in the Christian community need to apologize for the way we have interacted with the LGBT community. As those who have been forgiven by God through Christ’s sacrificial death on our behalf, we must exhibit the love of Christ to *all* men and women. We can stand for the

truth and be loving at the same time. This we must do.

Second, our authority to speak to the needs of our nation today is the Word of God. The Scriptures teach that there are absolutes and that there is such a thing as right and wrong. Truth is never tolerant of a lie. The real battleground around this debate on homosexual marriage begins with the question: Who is your authority? We believe that the timeless truth of Holy Scripture gives us the authoritative blueprints for life. We respect those who wish to deny the truth of Scripture. We would ask for a mutual respect in return.

### **Mirroring God's image**

Two different passages in the first two chapters of Genesis tell of the purposes God set forth for marriage. The first is Genesis 1:26-28:

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

The first critical purpose for marriage described here is to *mirror God's image*. God made humanity to mirror His image on Planet Earth. The Hebrew word for "mirror" means to reflect God, to magnify, exalt and glorify Him. We are to be God's representatives to a world that desperately needs to see who He is.

For example, the union of a man and woman reflects the image of God by forming a picture of the intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and His followers. This is a theme that appears throughout the New Testament in passages such as Ephesians 5:22-33. A husband's love and sacrifice for his wife, for example, are pictures of Christ's love and sacrifice for the Church.

It's important to emphasize two things here. First, *marriage is not about us; it's about God*. From the beginning our purpose—as individuals and as couples in marriage—is to glorify God. We were created with the capacity to enjoy a relationship with God and to love and serve Him. As Jesus says in Matthew 22:37, the greatest commandment is, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

Second, *God ties His image to human sexuality*. Marking human beings as distinct from the rest of creation, Genesis 1 says "In the image of God He created him—male and female He created them." In other words, our gender differences as men and women are part of how

we understand who God is.

Specifically, our gender differences reflect God as three persons with one essence. In his book, *A Christian View of Homosexuality*, Glenn Stanton explains:

*The members of the Trinity exist in community together at the most intimate level, for while they are Three, they are One. They love one another passionately. Their relationship is exclusive and permanent, i.e., from eternity; there have always been three members and they don't delete, exchange or add partners. Another important aspect of the Trinity's relationship is that of "distinguishable peculiarity." This means that while the members of the Trinity are of the same essence, they are peculiar and distinguishable from one another in their primary characters, much like males and females at the human level. This means that humanity is uniquely fashioned out of these characteristics of the Trinity (relationship, love, intimacy, relational exclusivity, permanence and distinguishable peculiarity) for these things.*

Homosexuals have suggested for years that their practice is an acceptable alternative lifestyle. Many claim that their sexual attraction is something they were born with. Some have even suggested that God made them as homosexuals. While the impact of nature vs. nurture can be debated, God makes it clear in Scripture that acting on homosexual attraction is sin.

The practice of homosexuality isn't a preference or an uncontrollable desire—it's actually a stark confirmation of a person's rebellion against the Designer. Romans 1:21-27 tells us that, as humans failed to honor God, their "foolish heart was darkened" and "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator ... For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."

The issue of sexual behavior isn't a matter of simple preference. Our sexual choices and behavior reflect on the image and glory of God. Our stand against homosexuality is ultimately a stand *for* the wisdom and perfection of the created design and a choice to honor the Designer.

### **Multiplying a godly legacy**

A second purpose for marriage is *to produce children*. In Genesis 1:28 when God commands Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..." The most obvious aspect of this command is that God designed male and female to join physically and reproduce children. Procreation is an integral part of God's design for marriage.

In addition, God set up the family as one of his primary institutions (the other being the Church) to tell each succeeding generation about who He is and how they can know Him. God's original plan called for the home to be a sort of greenhouse—a nurture center where children grow up to learn character, values, and integrity. Psalm 78 instructs parents to teach their children to "...put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments..."

This training in obedience is not only an essential responsibility of the family, but it also is designed to be an outgrowth of the marriage. Research studies make it clear that a stable family with both father and mother provides the best environment for children to thrive, mature, and become responsible citizens of any nation and culture.

Male-male or female-female relationships cannot produce children unless something extraordinary is done to assist them. While it is true that gay couples can raise children, and can adopt needy children, they will not, however, multiply a godly legacy when they are living in rebellion to God. In addition, gay couples cannot model what God designed for a child to experience growing up: a complete picture of a male and female completing one another in the marriage relationship. Children were made by God to be nurtured by the love of a mother and a father from birth.

## Mutually completing one another

Another of God's purposes for marriage is found in Genesis 2:18-24:

*Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

This passage provides a vivid description of another one of God's purposes for a man and a woman to *mutually complete one another in the marriage relationship*. Adam was in his own state of isolation in the Garden of Eden, and so God created woman to eliminate his aloneness. In 1 Corinthians 11:11, the Apostle Paul echoes the



teachings in Genesis 2 when he wrote: “However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.”

In marriage, God brings together a man and woman of different temperaments, personalities, backgrounds, strengths, and weaknesses, and makes them one. They are stronger together than they are alone. This oneness is symbolized and celebrated in sexual union—the act of becoming “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Sex is not just for procreation, but involves a bonding of two souls as they delight in each other.

These passages in Genesis 1 and 2 also make it clear that God not only created the institution of marriage, but He also is intimately involved in bringing a husband and wife together physically through the act of intercourse in marriage. He gave Adam a helper specifically designed for him. God designed a man and a woman to complete one another and He commanded them to become “one flesh.” As Jesus said, just after quoting from Genesis 1:27, “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Matthew 19:6).

Male and female were created to be complementary to one another in every way—from their emotional and spiritual needs to their anatomical structure. While same-sex couples may attempt to experience some aspects of this “completion,” they nevertheless are maintaining a lifestyle built around a sexual rebellion against God. In

most cases, this will lead to an inability to make the type of commitment God desires in marriage. Studies show, for example, that even when homosexual men commit themselves to a partner, many still regularly engage in sex with other men several times a year.

The physical act of a husband and wife becoming one within marriage is easily understood. They were designed by God *for* one another. However, two men or two women were not designed by God to become one flesh with one another. The physical joining of two men or two women is *not* a natural act.

### **Redefining marriage**

An unselfish commitment to God and to each other is the foundation of a godly home and the bedrock of a stable culture. The more we seek to redefine marriage, and chip away at God's original design for the home, the more we put our families and our nation at risk.

This debate about same-sex marriage is the latest outgrowth of a culture that for decades has been drifting from biblical standards of truth and morality. The sexual revolution, for example, sought to bring legitimacy to sex outside of marriage. The women's liberation movement worked to revolutionize the roles of men and women in marriage and in our society. Throw in a rising emphasis on materialism and personal happiness, and you end up

with a dramatically new way of looking at marriage. In her book, *The Divorce Culture*, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead writes:

*... Americans began to change their ideas about the individual's obligations to family and society. Broadly described, this change was away from an ethic of obligation to others and toward an obligation to self... This ethical shift had a profound impact on ideas about the nature and purpose of the family... People began to judge the strength and "health" of family bonds according to their capacity to promote individual fulfillment and personal growth.*

When millions of Americans view marriage from the mindset of "What's in it for me?" concepts like responsibility, self-sacrifice, and lifelong commitment become secondary. Is it any wonder that our divorce rate is so high? Or that the number of children born outside of marriage continues to rise? Or that an increasing number of couples are opting to live together instead of marrying?

And now the continuing push to legalize same-sex marriage is seeking to redefine marriage even further. From the moment God created marriage, it was designed with a man and woman in mind. God designed two sexes male and female—He did not create four sexes. Same-sex marriage cannot fulfill God's purposes for marriage.

**What's at stake?**

We believe that the strength of a nation depends upon the strength of its families. We've already seen the results of redefining the concept of marriage over the last few decades; do we want to continue experimenting? Are we better off morally and spiritually as a nation? Are our children better off emotionally with the weakening of the family unit? Can our nation survive the social re-engineering of its most basic unit, marriage?

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