

**Thinking,
and talking,
about issues of
sexuality and
gender with our
friends.**

Session 04:

Ok,

But is this Loving?

KEY THOUGHT:

Any assertion people make must be backed up by a trustworthy (and relevant) source of information.

A little understood fact about Christians:

Christians simply aim to repeat the message of Jesus, as given to us through the writings of the New testament. For us, Jesus earned the right to tell us what the world really is, and how to live. Any authority lesser than his authority does not compete with his claim. If there's a conflict, he wins. We have no choice.

So, Followers of Jesus just ask, a simple questions: What does the bible (God) say about this issue? Then we just seek to understand, live out, and report what it says. Since what God says is *true*, and God is loving, this is the most loving thing we can do—and what God says is what will lead to the best for men and women. The fruit of our culture's ways, on the other hand, is self evident—**how are we doing** out there, with all these new ideas?

Talking Point:

And suggest something like this:

“In fact, isn’t all this brokenness in our society that results from misuse of *sexuality evidence* that we don’t know what we’re doing? All I know is history has proven that the bible’s directions for sex allow it to be a powerful, life-giving force for good in the world.”

Discussing this with non-Christian friends:

Maybe discuss the Christian concept of *sin*—it cuts someone off from God, and injures any human involved.

Sin is sin partly (though not primarily) because of this damage it does to us in both of these directions.

“Sin hurts people. Always. Everyone. All the time...”

Discussing this with non-Christian friends:

All of this means that even though homosexuals say their sexuality is good and healthy, they are actually harming themselves, whether they know it or not — like a drug addict taking a hit.

So, it *is* loving for us to call our friends away from homosexual sexuality—because we're calling them away from something that is harming them.

**How to Love
People and
Be Sure You're
Loving Them.**

Two Huge Truths:

1. God is the source of our life and all human blessing.

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” – Jesus (John 17:3)

2. Sin cuts us off from God.

*Your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you...
(Isaiah 59:2)*

(Another way to say it...)

Friendship with God is the highest good.

Sin Ruins the relationship.

**...so, sin keeps us from true life, and
from all that is truly good.**

(Another way to say it...)

Friendship with God is the highest good.

Sin Ruins the relationship.

...so, sin keeps us from true life, and
from all that is truly good.

It has the power to keep us from those
things *eternally*.

A Key Point:

God made us.

So God defines the relationship.

God tells us what things mess the relationship up (that is, what separates us from him).

**God is good... so
what messes up
our relationship
with him is... evil.**

**Evil is anything
that messes up
our relationship
with God.**

Christian Logic:

A main characteristic of love is that it wants what's best for people.

Love desires the good for those it loves.

If “the best” for humans is found in friendship with God, then...

...if we love people...

...we will want them to be close to God.

Christian Logic:

So, if we love people, we will want to promote closeness to God in their lives, and we will want to work against anything that puts distance between them and God.

Christian Logic:

In other words: Since it is loving to want the best for people, it is loving to call them away from things that separate them from God, their highest good.

Christian Logic:

Since sin is what separates people from God... it is a loving thing to call people away from anything the bible defines as sin.

1 John 4:7-5:3

- 7 Beloved, let us love one another,
for love is of God;
and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
- 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
- 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us,
that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world,
that we might live through Him.
- 10 **In this is love,**
not that we loved God,
but that He loved us
and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

A beginning definition of love: (1 Jn 4:10)

God is the measure of love (not us.)

Our love can only be called love if it matches God's love.

So, what is the measure of God's love?

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” (4:10)

What is the measure of love? God’s self-giving which issues in a total purging of all sin. Some implications...

- Love is selfless, giving, and concerned with sin
- Love doesn’t express visible affection without ever dealing with the big issue of Sin
- Love leads people from sin to holiness, darkness to light
- Love is affection expressed according to knowledge of what truly matters

...our love must conform to this to truly be called love.

1 John 4:7-5:3

¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹² No one has seen God at any time.

If we love one another, God abides in us,
and His love has been perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us,
because He has given us of His Spirit.

¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son
as Savior of the world.

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,
God abides in him, and he in God.

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us.

God is love,
and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 4:7-5:3

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this:
that we may have boldness in the day of judgment;
because as He is, so are we in this world.

¹⁸ There is no fear in love;
but perfect love casts out fear,
because fear involves torment.
But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

²⁰ **If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother,
he is a liar;**
for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen,
how can he love God whom he has not seen?

²¹ And this commandment we have from Him:
that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

1 John 4:20

*If someone says, "I love God,"
and hates his brother, he is a liar...*

What is hate?

Leviticus 19:17-18

*You shall not hate your brother in your heart.
You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not
bear sin because of him...but you shall love
your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*

In Leviticus 19, “Hate” is...

Animosity or **indifference** towards the visible people God has put in our lives.

(1 Jn 4:20 – It demonstrates animosity or indifference towards the invisible God.)

God commands the opposite, that you love your brother.

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“Hate” is... **Indifference** towards the sin in the lives of the people God has put in our lives.

God commands the opposite, that you love your brother...

1 John 4:7-5:3

²¹ And this commandment we have from Him:
that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

1 John 5

¹ Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God,
and everyone who loves Him who begot
also loves him who is begotten of Him.

² By this **we know that we love the children of God,**
when **we love God**
and **keep His commandments.**

³ For this is the love of God,
that we keep His commandments.
And His commandments are not burdensome.

Sharpening our definition of “love.”
What is love of our neighbor?

How do we know if we love God’s children? (and by extension, people in general?)

1 John 5:2

“By this we know
that we love the children of God,
when we love God
and keep His commandments.”

Key:

Loving others means
keeping
God's commands
towards them.

**Loving others means keeping
God's commands towards them.**

And...

**“His commands are not
burdensome.” (1 John 5:3)**

So...

We know that we're loving others (according to *God's* definition of love) when we are joyfully keeping his commands towards them because of our affection for God.

A Massive Implication:

**Nothing that
promotes sin in
someone's life can
be called "love."**

Nothing that promotes sin in someone's life can be called "love."

Because:

- 1. Sin involves the breaking of God's commands.**
- 2. Sin separates people from God, which is their highest good.**
- 3. Love, by definition, actively works to get rid of sin.**

#LoveHatesSin

So, “Love” means looking into God’s word, finding out what he wants, and then doing those things for others, *and* helping them do those things as well.

It includes actively helping others escape the bondage of sin and darkness to find freedom. It means helping people who don’t yet trust Christ to escape judgment and find the liberty of perfect love. It means helping people be able to keep God’s commands for themselves.

Jesus loved people by calling them to repent.

The Bible Says:

Everyone needs to repent.

Everyone can repent.

God defines repentance.

God enables repentance.

Talking Point: “Isn’t all this brokenness in our society that results from misuse of sexuality *evidence* that we don’t know what we’re doing?”

Say: “I’m not ok with all this brokenness from all this sinful sex. It breaks my heart. It’s painful to see so many people suffering like this.”

**So, yes, we're loving our neighbors
by disagreeing with them. (Even though
this is culturally considered a paradox.)**

Of course, we must do this *lovingly*:

- **Listening**
- **Compassion**
- **Action (not word only, but deed and truth)**
- **Winsomeness**
- **Clarity**
- **Boldness**

And, when we repeat and explain what Jesus taught in loving, winsome ways, we are loving people, because, if they listen to what we say, leave their sin behind, and follow Jesus *themselves*, they will find all the health, joy, and meaning we ourselves know—they'll find friendship and closeness with God, which will fix things in them (like He fixed it all in us), especially all the things all this sin could never fix. If we love people, we'll want this for them, and we'll even press through opposition to say and show all these truths.

Q + R

1. **Christians love all gay people and transgender people.**
2. **LGBTQ are all welcome to come here...**
3. **...and we say the same thing to everyone who comes:** Repent. Turn away from what the Bible calls sin and believe Christ. You can find the love of God and a whole new identity in him. Everyone is welcome to find the new life he offers, and to join us as we all seek to learn more and more how to follow Christ faithfully based on his written word. We want everyone to join us.
4. **No one has to join us on this road.** If repentance is not something you're interested in, you can choose not to be a part of our community in any meaningful way. This is true of any and all kind of people, regardless of their sexuality.

3. The Bible.

What did Jesus say?

He told people they were generally pointed away from God, and called them to turn back to God.

See [Matthew 4:17](#).

“Repent” = “Reorient yourself towards God.”

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3. The Bible.

What did Jesus say?

He spoke about these things in a way appropriate to his context: he upheld the OT laws regarding purity, and addressed the issues of his day.

See [Mark 7:17-23](#).

3. The Bible.

What about the rest of the NT?

When the Christian message moved outside of the context of Judea, they began mentioning these things explicitly.

See [Romans 1:24-29](#).

3. The Bible.

What about the OT?

Do we cherry-pick verses?

No, we read the bible according to its self-described method of interpretation. Jesus fulfilled the whole OT law, and his teachings govern our life now.

3. The Bible.

What about the OT?

Do we cherry-pick verses?

Example: Christians don't offer sacrifices, because *Jesus is our sacrifice*. We know this because the NT teaches us to think this way. **We resolve all issues of interpretation this way.**

3. The Bible.

What about the OT?

Do we cherry-pick verses?

The bible must be read
intelligently, on its own terms,
taking **the flow of the story** into
account, and then the reasons
why Christians do or don't keep
certain verses makes sense.

Three Books

Kevin DeYoung (Short)

What does the Bible really teach about Homosexuality?

Robert Gagnon (Academic)

The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics

Sam Alberry (Give Away)

Is God Anti-Gay?

Jesus' message:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'? Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin... Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

John 8:31-36

Jesus' message:

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

John 3:3-8

Jesus' message:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus' message:

“Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations...”

Luke 24:46-47

4. The Good News and New life

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11