

Clarity and Compassion: God's Word, Same Sex Marriage, and People You Love, 9
The Mutual Consent Argument: "How Does Same Sex Marriage Hurt Your Marriage?"

Sunday Evening Bible Study
November 15, 2015

1. **The argument stated:** What business is it if a same sex couple wants to get married? Your freedom to marry someone of the opposite sex is not impinged. As long as two consenting adults want to get married, they should be free marry. Besides, your own Bible says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." You wouldn't want anyone telling you that you can't marry the person you love, so shut up.
2. **Our response:** As Christians, we are called by God to love our neighbor. Love is more than a feeling. It is an act of the will and it asks, "What can I do that is in the best interest of my neighbors? How can I behave in a way that protects and prolongs their lives and fosters a culture of love and justice?" We believe that the institution of marriage, as it has been defined by every generation of American until now, is the best hope for such a culture to thrive.
3. **Our poetic response through John Donne: 'No Man is an Island'**
No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.
4. The Founders knew the experiment in self-government would work only if our citizens are virtuous and educated (good and smart). Therefore, the First Amendment protects the church and the press.
5. Building the foundation for living a virtuous and educated life is the responsibility of parents.
6. Necessary virtues for a strong nation and good citizenship: 1) Respect for authority; 2) Work ethic; 3) Responsibility to care for others; 4) Financial discipline; 5) Trustworthiness (keep your word, honor contracts); 6) Get the education you need to be productive.
7. The purpose of marriage: The United States has, from its founding, recognized that the purpose of marriage is to spiritually, emotionally, physically, sexually, financially, legally, and permanently bind together one man and one woman for the good of all its citizens, especially its most vulnerable. Traditional marriage is the best means to produce virtuous citizens who are capable of self-government. It has an especially civilizing effect on men.
8. Therefore, the government of the United States has always had an interest in defining, defending, regulating, honoring, extolling, encouraging, and incentivizing traditional (heterosexual, monogamous) marriage.
9. Thesis: *Traditional marriage is superior to all other arrangements for the preservation of the United States of America. Redefining marriage to include a variety of other arrangements dilutes and dishonors marriage in the culture.* Lines of argument you might pursue:
 - 9.1 Historical argument: No culture in recorded history has advocated or legalized gay marriage. No state in the U.S. legalized gay marriage until 2003. No President of the United States advocated gay marriage until 2012. Inventing or defending gay "marriage" could *not* have been the original intent of the founders and therefore is not a constitutional guarantee.
 - 9.2 Constitutional argument: To redefine marriage is not the role of the Supreme Court, but would require an amendment, similar to the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments which ended slavery. The definition of marriage should be left to the citizens of the states.

- 9.3 Physiological argument: Same sex marriage cannot produce children. Same sex intercourse involves much higher health risks of infections, trauma and injury, reducing lifespan by up to 20 years. These medical costs are ultimately the burden of all citizens.
- 9.4 Demographic argument: In 1940, the ratio of workers to Social Security beneficiaries was 159:1. In 2013 the ratio was 2.8:1. The problem is not that there are too many children being born, but that there are too many children being born into the wrong kind of circumstances.
- 9.4.1 48% of babies born in the U.S. are born to unmarried mothers and 48% of births in the U.S. are paid for by Medicaid (53% in Alabama).
- 9.4.2 Government expands in proportion to fatherlessness. When men don't take responsibility for their babies, the government becomes a surrogate husband and father.
- 9.4.3 Children in homes without biological fathers are more likely to do poorly in school, drop out of high school, commit crimes, go to prison, run away from home, be sexually active, become pregnant, experience depression, commit suicide, live in poverty. They are less likely to become productive, tax-paying citizens.
- 9.4.4 Only 38% of Alabama children live with their married, biological parents.
- 9.5 Economic argument: Because gay marriages produce no children, they provide no effective social or financial benefit to the citizens of the United States. The alleged positive impact of adoptive gay couples is statistically insignificant (< 0.2%). In effect, same sex couples want the benefits of marriage (tax incentives and public esteem) without the responsibilities.
- 9.6 Sociological argument: Since there is no history of gay marriage in any culture ever, there is no long-term data to measure the consequences for children adopted by gay couples. Conflicting and controversial studies should have been carefully weighed before SCOTUS federalized gay marriage and conducted a social experiment with so much at stake (see Mark Regnerus, *How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships?*).
- 9.7 *Ad Absurdum* argument. If the Constitution guarantees the freedom of "everyone in the country who wants to be married" to anyone they want, where does this end? This is an unsustainable precedent.
- 9.8 Unintended Consequences Argument: When same sex marriage advocates appeal to the Golden Rule ("do unto others" Mt. 7:12) or the second commandment ("love your neighbor" Mt. 22:39) they are taking the words of Jesus out of context. Jesus never intended for these commands to be taken in isolation. All of his teaching informs us on *how* to love our neighbor. Because our hearts are deceitful (Jer. 17:9) and our consciences unreliable (1 Tim. 4:2), we have unlimited capacity for rationalization. Therefore, we cannot be trusted to figure out the most loving course of action. That's why God gives us specific rules. The as-long-as-no-one-gets-hurt approach requires an omniscience none of us possess. Only God knows what is good and right for us and only he knows the future.
10. Therefore, as a follower of Jesus Christ, the most loving things I can do are to:
1. Defend my own marriage and take responsibility for equipping my own children to be productive, self-disciplined citizens who do not depend on a government with an unquenchable appetite for money and power.
 2. Persuade my fellow citizens in the public square to honor the time-tested institution of traditional marriage and manage their own children so that we continue to be a nation marked by peace and prosperity. *Peace and prosperity diminish in proportion to the dishonor the culture shows to marriage!*

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The Majority Argument: "Don't You Want To Be On The Right Side of History?"

The argument stated: History is Darwinian and humans are evolving to higher life forms. Each generation becomes more enlightened about ethics, but there are always slackers who are unenlightened and lag behind the evolutionary process. One day, future generations will look back and see what idiots they were and everyone will know they were on the wrong side of history. People who oppose same sex marriage are such idiots.

Our response: This argument ignores the reality of past history and is built on the premise that the progression of history is scientifically knowable, predictable, and inevitable. We maintain that this is an unwarranted premise for the following reasons.

1. **It commits the *argumentum ad populum* (appeal to people) argument.** This argument states that "if many believe it, it must be true." As same sex advocates watch polls tipping in their favor, they are seizing on the momentum to intimidate their political opponents. To say "you're on the wrong side of history" is to say "You're going to lose eventually, so just give up."
2. **It commits the small sample fallacy.** Same sex marriage advocates are only interviewing a "small sample" of human beings who have ever lived.
3. **It commits the historian's fallacy of "chronological snobbery,"** which is the "erroneous argument that the thinking, art, or science of an earlier time is inherently inferior to that of the present, simply by virtue of its temporal priority."
4. **It commits the guilt-by-association fallacy.** To pronounce those who defend traditional marriage as being on "the wrong side of history" links them to racists, bigots, and haters of the past.
5. **It displays an ignorance of history.** The past is replete with failed movements that used the "wrong side of history" ploy. Nothing could be more Darwinian and evolutionary than the eugenics associated with Nazi Germany. Manipulative rhetoric and a series of military victories convinced a majority of Germans that the Aryan race was superior to all others, including Jews, gypsies, and blacks, and that a Third Reich was inevitable. The holocaust was an attempt to eliminate these "inferior" races from the gene pool. Most Germans were convinced they were on the right side of history.
6. **It cannot see that the principle of evolution is a two-edged argument.** Evolution argues against homosexuality as a favorable trait for the human species. If homosexuality is a genetic trait, natural selection would eventually eliminate it from the human race, or at least keep it to a minimum (less than 4%). In the evolutionary scheme, homosexuality is more likely a genetic defect. Therefore, evolutionary history argues against the widespread success of homosexuality in the future.
7. **It fails to take into account the law of unintended consequences.** This refers to dangerous outcomes not foreseen or intended by a purposeful action. How can same sex marriage advocates possibly know the future outcomes of the legitimization of same sex marriage since it has never been done before in history? There is no history in which to test the theory of which they are so confident.

Practical Questions

There are three guiding questions that the Christian must consider in wrestling with the difficult scenarios we face now and in the future.

- 1) Is this action I am considering specifically forbidden in Scripture? If so, don't go.
- 2) Would this action be considered by most reasonable people to be approval of same sex relationships (Romans 1:32)? If so, don't go.
- 3) What course of action is the most loving and compassionate thing to do—not just the easiest thing to do (Gal. 5:14)?

Because none of the activities below are specifically prohibited in Scripture (except 5), Biblical Christians will disagree about on the best course of action. I offer my opinion, informed by Scripture and common sense.

1. **Should I attend my friend's same sex wedding?** Probably not. The historic purpose of marriage ceremonies is for the community to give its consent and approval to the union. For centuries, the

congregation was asked if anyone knew of any legal or moral reason why these two should not marry. They were commanded to “speak now or forever hold your peace.” Attendance at such a ceremony is tacit sign of approval and your silent presence states you have no objection to it. *So what to do?* Politely send your regrets. If they ask why, express how honored you are that you thought to invite them. Explain to them the Biblical definition of marriage and your understanding of the purpose of wedding ceremonies. Invite the couple to your home for dinner after they return from their honeymoon.

- 2. Should I do business with homosexual persons?** Of course. Conducting business transactions do not normally convey approval of lifestyle. If you decide to not do business with people who are violating God’s laws, you will soon find yourself out of business, not to mention breaking the law. You cannot be consistent in this. Furthermore, it is unkind.
- 3. What if your business relates directly to the wedding industry?** Again, you can’t be consistent in denying them your business. Suppose a couple wants to get married, after they fell in love with each other while married to other people. Their unbiblical divorce and subsequent remarriage is not permitted by God. Do you intend to refuse all such weddings? If you are worried that your participation in a same sex ceremony might convey approval, be clear with the customers. Tell them you really appreciate their business and you will provide the highest quality goods and services (cakes, catering, photographs, etc.), but you feel like it is important that they know where you stand as a matter of integrity. Humbly ask them to respect your conscience and refer them to your competitors. Assure them that you completely understand if they would like to use another service provider. Most reasonable people would prefer to choose another service provider. In this way, you have complied with the law and exercised your right to free speech. This is still the United States of America.
- 4. Should I issue licenses to same sex couples?** All Christians who hold public office are required to work in a system that carries out policies contrary to Biblical ethics. There are two alternatives. First, no Christians should ever hold public office. Two, Christians hold public office and work within the system, bearing witness to the truth, and executing the duties of the office as long as those duties do not require the Christian to disobey the commands of Scripture. Where in Scripture are Christians prohibited from issuing marriage certificates to same sex couples? Can the Christian office holder be consistent in withholding marriage certificates from people who are forming an “unbiblical” marriage? Is there a creative alternative that will work for everyone? How likely is it that Daniel served in an administration that only carried out Biblical policies? Since most people do not view the issuing of a marriage certificate as the personal approval of the officeholder, it is probably best to just issue the certificate.
- 5. Should a church welcome same sex couples into church membership?** No. Church membership, by its definition, would convey approval of same sex relationships and marriage. Whatever would result in church discipline should also prevent church membership.
- 6. Should a church welcome same sex couples?** Absolutely! All are welcome at First Bible Church. Our doors are open to anyone who is seeking the truth and inquiring about God. We always want First Bible Church to be a safe place for unbelievers to ask tough and honest questions. The presence of same sex couples in our Sunday services would be a great sign that we are showing compassion. The same can be said for heterosexual and unmarried couples who are living together, or an alcoholic who was drunk the night before, or a woman who just had an abortion, or a businessman who proudly thinks his generosity will earn him a place in heaven. Welcoming these people into our services conveys no more approval of their lifestyle than does a hospital accepting patients into the ER.

Final Considerations

1. Baseball wisdom from Yogi Berra: “Its tough to make predictions, especially about the future” and “It ain’t over ‘til its over.”
2. Eternal wisdom from God’s Word: In the future, we will be fully vindicated and all will see we are on the right side of history (1 Peter 4:4,5; 2 Tim. 4:1–4).