

Clarity and Compassion: God's Word, Same Sex Marriage, and People You Love

What If Someone I Love Is Gay?

Sunday Evening Bible Study

September 20, 2015

1. The Proposed Amendment: Article 8 (General), Section 7 (Marriage)

We believe that the term “marriage” has only one meaning, which is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union designed by God to last as long as they both shall live (Gen. 2:18–25; Matthew 19:4–6; 1 Timothy 3:2; Heb. 13:4).

2. Further Explanation of the Amendment, Article 8, Section 7:

- 2.1. Marriage is designed by God for at least three purposes: 1) to provide the most stable environment for the procreating, nurturing, socializing, civilizing, and discipling of children (Gen. 1:22; Ex. 20:12; Dt. 6:4–7; Mal. 2:15; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:24); 2) to create a partnership between a man and a woman for their mutual good, spiritual growth, sexual purity, and physical care (Gen. 2:18; Ps. 54:4; 1 Cor. 7:1–5; Psalm 5:19); 3) to illustrate, to both the church and the world, God's unfailing love for and impeccable faithfulness to his people (Eph. 5:25; Rev. 19:7).
 - 2.2 We believe that God has expressly and exclusively reserved sexual intimacy and intercourse for heterosexual marriage (Exodus 20:14; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:9,18; 7:2–5; Heb. 13:4) God expects the married to live in faithfulness to their spouse and the unmarried should live pure and celibate lives, refraining from sexual intimacy (1 Th. 4:3; Mt. 19:12). Sexual immorality in any form (including adultery, fornication, homosexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Mt. 15:18–20; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Romans 1:26–27; Lev. 18:22; 1 Tim. 1:10; Gen. 19; cf. Jude 7).
 - 2.3 We believe that God creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26–27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
 - 2.4 We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking his mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19–21; Rom 10:9–10; 1 Cor. 6:9–11).
 - 2.5 We believe that every person, regardless of their sexual orientation, past sexual sins, or current views on marriage, even if they disagree with ours, must be afforded love, compassion, kindness, dignity, and respect (Mark 12:28–31; Luke 6:31; 1 Peter 3:15; John 8:11; Titus 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24).
-

3. Why Amend The First Bible Church Constitution? An Amendment does 7 things:

3.1 Directly addresses *Obergefell vs. Hodges* (June 26, 2015).

3.2 Flies our colors in midst of a massive treason in the church in America.

- a. ~~(b) That both parties understand that Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will, and with intent that it be lifelong.~~ Stricken from the Episcopal Church Canon by Amendment (AO36) at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, June 30, 2015.
- b. “Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the wellbeing of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives.” (Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., amendment approved March 17, 2015).
- c. “It has taken countless hours of prayer, study, conversation and emotional turmoil to bring me to the place where I am finally ready to call for the full acceptance of Christian gay couples into the Church” (Tony Campolo, Evangelical author, pastor, professor, June 8, 2015).
- d. “I am for marriage. I am for fidelity. I am for love, whether it’s a man and woman, a woman and a woman, a man and a man. I think the ship has sailed and I think the church needs — I think this is the world we are living in and we need to affirm people wherever they are.” Rob Bell, former mega-church pastor, March 2013.
- e. “We will no longer discriminate based on sexual orientation and demand lifelong celibacy as a precondition for joining. For all members, regardless of sexual orientation, we will continue to expect chastity in singleness until marriage.” *A Letter From the Elder Board*, City Church, San Francisco, August 27, 2015
- f. “It has dawned on me with shocking force that homosexuality is not primarily an issue of Christian sexual ethics. It’s primarily an issue of human suffering. With that realization, I have now made the radical decision to stand in solidarity with the LGBT community” (David Gushee, Evangelical minister, Professor at Mercer University, November 2014).

3.3 Confesses that we are a people submitted to the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:1–4).

3.4 Clarifies that we are in solidarity with historic, apostolic Christianity.

- a. “Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.” (Westminster Confession, 1646).
- b. “Therefore He also wishes us to honor it (marriage), and to maintain and conduct it as a divine and blessed estate; because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should [legitimately] live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God” (Luther’s Larger Catechism, 1529).
- c. “Dearly beloved friends, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of his congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted of God in Paradise...” (Church of England, Book of Common Prayer, 1552).
- d. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time (London Baptist Confession, 1689).

3.5. Strengthens our legal position to claim the religious liberties that are endowed to us by God and recognized in the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States.

3.6. Forms the basis upon which to craft church policies that reflect a Biblical worldview (i.e., wedding policies, facilities use policies, etc.).

3.7. Makes it more difficult for future generations of church leaders at First Bible Church to abdicate the authority of Scripture”

4. An Important Distinction: Same sex attraction vs. same sex conduct.

Same sex attraction (SSA), or sexual orientation, is not in itself a sin, no more than opposite sex attraction is a sin. The sin is committed when the attraction is acted on in ways the Bible prohibits (lust, sexual contact, etc.). A Christian might struggle with *same sex attraction*, but abstain from *same sex conduct* for the glory of God. These Christians are in right relationship with the Lord and with his church. Therefore, their same sex attraction or sexual orientation should not exclude these Christians from full church membership (1 Cor. 6:9–11).

5. What are the ten main objections to the Biblical definition of marriage?

1. The emotional argument: “What if someone I love is gay?”
2. The genetics argument: “What if I was born this way?”
3. The silence argument: “Didn’t Jesus approve of same sex marriage by saying nothing?”
4. The polygamy argument: “Doesn’t the Bible contradict the ‘traditional’ definition?”
5. The divorce argument: “Aren’t traditionalists being hypocritical?”
6. The shellfish argument: “Isn’t the Bible full of crazy laws Christians don’t obey?”
7. The majority argument: Don’t you want to be on the right side of history?”
8. The male prostitution argument: Isn’t Paul only condemning promiscuity?”
9. The civil rights argument: “Isn’t being gay like being black?”
10. The mutual consent argument: “How does same sex marriage hurt your marriage?”

6. Objection #1: The Emotional Argument: “What if someone I love is gay?”

6.1 What are the chances that someone you love is gay?¹

- 96.6% of American adults identify as straight.
- 1.6% of American adults identify as gay or lesbian
- 0.7% of American adults identify as bisexual
- 1.1% of American adults identify as “something else”

6.2 The “evolving” views on same-sex marriage (SSM):²

	<u>2001</u>	<u>2015</u>
Americans who oppose SSM:	57%	39%
Americans who favor SSM:	35%	55%
Men who favor SSM:	32%	53%
Women who favor SSM:	38%	58%
Religiously unaffiliated who favor:	61%	82%
White mainlines who favor:	38%	62%
Roman Catholics who favor:	40%	57%
Black Protestants who favor:	30%	34%
White evangelicals who favor:	13%	24%
Silent generation (1928-45) who favor	21%	39%
Baby Boomers (1946-64) who favor	32%	45%

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Washington Post, July 15, 2014

² <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/07/29/graphics-slideshow-changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>

Generation X (1965-80) who favor	49%	59%
Millennials (1981 or later) who favor	51%	70%

- c. Most people who have “evolved” on this issue have not done so because of intellectual reasons (enlightening facts, groundbreaking evidence in history, theology, or biology). Rather, they “evolve” on the issue for emotional reasons (passionate feelings because someone close to them is gay). Therefore, the more people they know and love who are gay, the more likely they will approve of gay marriage.
- d. The range of people we love with same sex attraction.

People we think we know: Gay celebrities; 1985, Rock Hudson dies of AIDS; **1991**, First kiss on TV between a homosexual couple; **1996**, Lesbian wedding on *Friends*; **1997**, Ellen DeGeneres announces she is a lesbian; **2005**, *Brokeback Mountain*; **2008**, Katy Perry releases, *I Kissed a Girl*; **2009**, *Modern Family* debuts on ABC. "... it's smart, nimble and best of all, funny, while actually making a point about the evolving nature of what constitutes 'family'" (Brian Lowry, Film Critic); **2012**, Anderson Cooper of CNN announces he is gay. **2014**, Ty Herndon, Country singer, comes out.

People we know very well: Gay family members. Our Siblings: (Ex., David Gushee) and children (ex. Fred Harrell, Evangelical pastor of City Church in San Francisco)

- e. The appeal to emotion: “a logical **fallacy** characterized by the **manipulation** of the recipient's emotions in order to win an argument, especially in the absence of factual evidence... Instead of facts, persuasive language is used to develop the foundation of an appeal to emotion-based argument.... Appeals to emotion are intended to draw visceral feelings from the acquirer of the information. And in turn, the acquirer of the information is intended to be convinced that the statements that were presented in the fallacious argument are true; solely on the basis that the statements may induce emotional stimulation such as fear, pity and joy.”
- f. Biblical warnings against the emotional argument: Prov. 14:12; Jer. 17:9; Ro. 1:24-27.

6.2 Compassion: What should we do about this? (James 1:19).

- a. Love them unconditionally: Do they know you have not rejected them?
- b. Listen to them intentionally: Do they feel understood and safe?
- c. Speak to them truthfully: Do they hear God’s counsel from you?
- d. Treat them kindly: Do they experience God’s compassion from you?