

*What am I
supposed to do?*

PRACTICAL, PERSONAL, BIBLICAL ETHICS

1

**Warning: This sermon will discuss some delicate things frankly.
Please use your parental discretion for younger children.**



2

“Anti-gay Christian Bigotry”

-- “the same regressive way of reading the Bible as was used to justify slavery, anti-Semitism, apartheid, the suppression of women, the rejection of good science, and the slaughter of the native peoples.” (Brian McLaren - <https://auburnseminary.org/voices/applaud-fervently-deny-nashville-statement/>)

-- That’s what some may say of this sermon.

-- But the goal is to try to answer graciously but clearly what the Bible says I’m supposed to do when the culture around us says the rainbow is about sexual inclusion rather than about God’s promise not to again judge the earth with a flood.

TR: Others may say, “Who are YOU to judge?” But, WE are here today, so the question is . . .



3

**“Who are WE to judge?”
-- Who are WE?**

TR: We are folks who hopefully remember the words of our Lord and Savior when He said . . . (PICK UP LOG AND HOLD UP TO MY EYE)

Matthew 7:1-3

"Judge not, that you be not judged.
²For with the judgment you pronounce
you will be judged, and with the
measure you use it will be measured
to you. ³Why do you see the speck that
is in your brother's eye, but do not
notice the log that is in your own eye?

ESV

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READ SLIDE

TR: Verse 4

Matthew 7:4-5

Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

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READ SLIDE

-- Who are WE?

-- WE are people who remember that it is really easy to have a log in one's eye.

-- Especially if we don't struggle with the same sexual temptations as others . . . isn't it easy to look down on people who struggle with things you and I find trivial and not an issue for us.

-- There's a reason why alcoholics find it easy to be vulnerable in a group of recovering alcoholics, isn't there?

TR: Who are WE?



We are sinners saved by grace, at least I hope you've come to faith in Christ already.

- We are individuals and a local fellowship of believers who humbly admit that we all still have sins that so easily beset us.**
- We all still have areas of our lives that are like potholes we keep driving into . . . pride, jealousy, bitterness, pornography, love of money, gossip, etc.**

TR: We really want to be the humble and gracious. Yet we also realize that as people under the Word of God, we need an answer to the question, spoken with a different inflexion . . .



7

READ SLIDE . . . that is, who is under the judgment of God for their sexual ethics.

-- With whom is the Lord not pleased by how they are living in this area?

TR: We want to be humble and gracious but there is still a judgment to be made . . . a judgment about where we are to build our houses.

Matthew 7:24-25

"Everyone then who **hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

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**Jesus, to whom we seek to show allegiance in all things, said . . .
READ SLIDE**

TR: Verse 26

Matthew 7:26-27

And everyone who **hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

ESV

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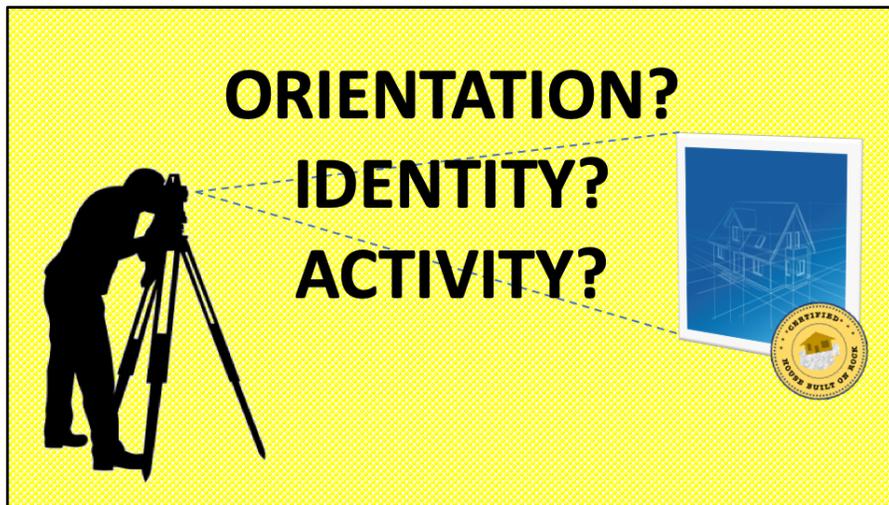
READ SLIDE

TR: Our desire to make sure WE are the humble and gracious, does not mean we do not need to survey the landscape and judge where to build the house of our lives.



READ SLIDE

TR: Let's survey the biblical landscape . . .



11

Specifically, today we ponder how we can HEAR and DO the Words of Scripture in regard to the issues of sexual . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Let's level our transits and find the biblical points of reference by looking at these texts. Beginning with the foundational ones early in Genesis.

Genesis 1:27

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.**

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READ SLIDE

-- God created humanity. He created us in His image. He created humankind as male and female.

TR: In the second chapter of the Bible we see what Moses wrote God revealed to him that Adam said.

Genesis 2:23b-24

**"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."**

**²⁴Therefore a man shall leave his
father and his mother and hold fast to
his wife, and they shall become one
flesh.**

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READ SLIDE

- There are many passages assume that we can tell the difference between men and women.**
- While the Bible honestly presents many ways marriage was distorted throughout history, God's "built on the Rock" desire has always been for one man and one woman.**
- This is reflected in both old and new Testaments.**
- The importance of this is seen that this relationship ultimately portrays God and His People, His Bride.**

TR: Passages that directly address the questions raised by the LGBTQ movement in our country include the following:

Genesis 19:4-5

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. ⁵And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

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READ SLIDE

- A few verses later this is called a great wickedness.**
- Some say that this was about coercive homosexual practice, or gang rape, or the lack of hospitality.**
- Remember, Sodom was judged before this incident . . .**
Abraham asking God to spare it for even 10 righteous people.
- The fact that all the men surrounded the house suggests that this was a way of life for them.**

TR: In the NT, Jude certainly doesn't just use Sodom and Gomorrah as many passages do . . . as a picture of God's judgment in general.

Jude 1:7

just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise **indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire**, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

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Jude makes clear that it was the sexual immorality and pursuit of unnatural desire . . . READ SLIDE

TR: The Law of Moses also addresses this. We know we now are no longer under the Law, but under the New Covenant. But that doesn't mean we cannot learn about God and His desires from the Law.

Leviticus 18:22-23

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. ²³And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.

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READ SLIDE

-- Homosexuality and bestiality are addressed as being wrong, an abomination.

TR: A few chapters later this prohibition is repeated.

Leviticus 22:13

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

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READ SLIDE

-- This text is in a context of condemning adultery, as well as relations with a step-mother, daughter-in-law, woman and mother, animals.

-- The “putting to death” was part of the Mosaic Law for Israel under that covenant. We are not under that covenant. We do not live in a theocracy and so the command to put them to death does not apply to us. But it surely shows you how seriously God thinks about this.

TR: The Law wasn't just concerned about actual sexual activity, it also addressed the question of sexual identity and cross-dressing.

Deuteronomy 22:5

A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.

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READ SLIDE

-- It seems that confusing the male and female identities, as defined by our biological sex at birth, was wrong in God's eyes.

TR: The New Testament affirms these concerns when the Apostle Paul says in Romans . . .

Romans 1:26

For this reason God gave them up to **dishonorable passions**. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature;

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READ SLIDE

- Note that this addresses sexual orientation and not just sexual activity when it says “dishonorable passions.”
- Even as heterosexual lust is wrong, so it is wrong to lust after someone of the same sex.

TR: The text goes on . . .

Romans 1:27

. . . and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

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READ SLIDE

- The words Paul the Apostle choose came from the Greek translation of Genesis 1:27 (the LXX).
- This strongly suggests that he was going back to the original design God intended, which was one man and one woman.

TR: Texts like this make it clear that this prohibition against homosexual and lesbian sexual activity still applies to the time after the coming of Jesus.

1 Timothy 1:8-10

understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, ¹⁰the sexually immoral, **men who practice homosexuality**, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

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In 1 Timothy we are told . . . READ SLIDE

-- The role of the Law was not to save people but to condemn us in our sins SO THAT we would turn to God's provision of redemption in Jesus.

-- As we just saw, the Law condemns those who practice homosexuality.

TR: The idea of practicing sexuality is given more detail in 1 Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, **nor men who practice homosexuality,**¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

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READ SLIDE

TR: “nor men who practice homosexuality” is a translation of the original . . .

nor “malakoi” nor “arsenkoitai”

These two words give us the detail of both the effeminate, passive partner in a homosexual relationship and the “men who have intercourse with men” – a word Paul seems to have made up himself.

-- Those who claim to be Christ-followers who support the embracing and endorsing of practicing LGBTQ as full members in their churches would say . . .

-- this is addressing only of non-committed same-sex relationships.

-- Or that Paul’s focus what on prohibiting male prostitution or pedophilia, that is, exploitative relationships.

-- I’m certain these were included in Paul’s mind, but there is no evidence in the text that he was limiting his meaning to casual or exploitative

TR: The great news for all of us, no matter what logs we’ve struggled with in our own eyes, is that we all can be redeemed. The passage we just read continues . . .

1 Corinthians 6:11

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

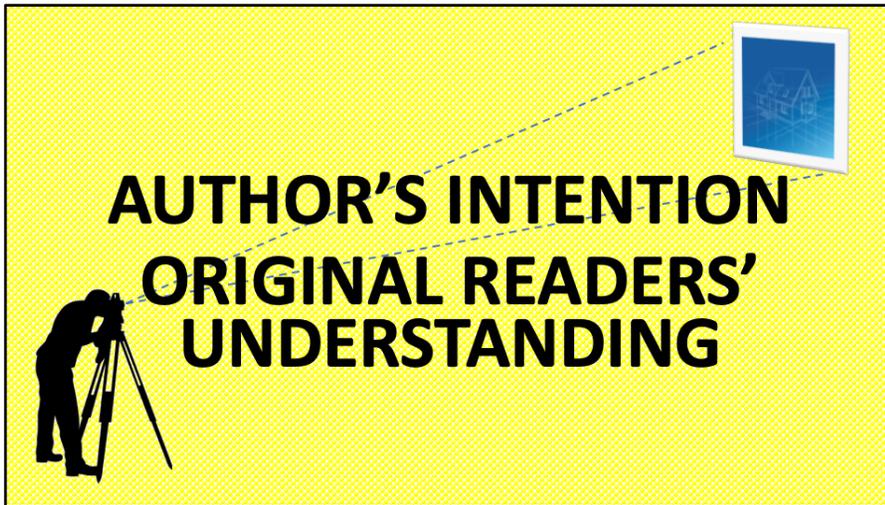
ESV

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READ SLIDE

-- murderers, sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers . . . “some of you” . . . “some of us”
WERE such.

TR: If we want to build our house on the rock, by applying the truth of God’s Word given to us by Jesus through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then we must seek to survey out the . . .



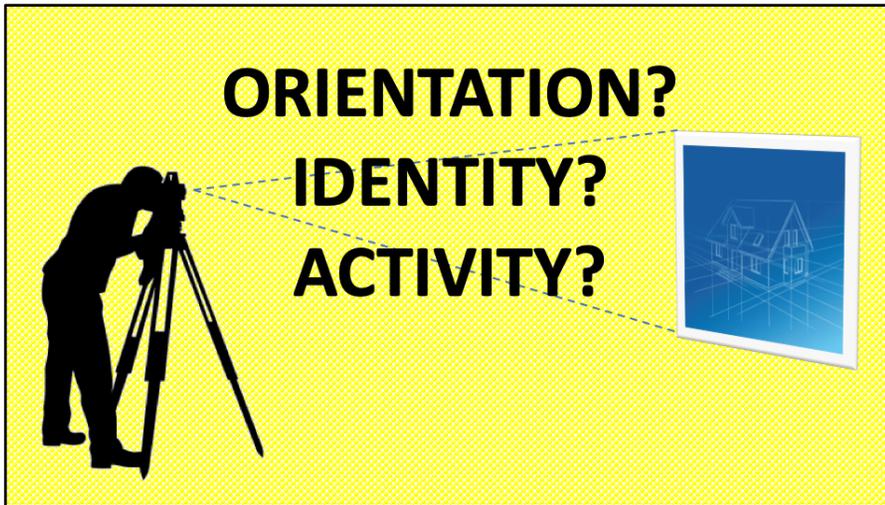
READ SLIDE

-- We build on the sand if we understand the meaning, but don't apply it.

-- We also build on the sand if we say the text means what it doesn't and then apply the falsehood. We still haven't applied the teaching.

-- EX: "Don't throw rocks at the house." Then child throws a rock. "What are you doing?" "You said, 'Don't throw rocks.' I only threw a pebble."

TR: So, what are we to JUDGE about . . .



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Sexual . . . READ SLIDE

-- **ORIENTATION** = same-sex-attraction - some have it as a result of the Fall, even as others have lust issues with the opposite sex and others are easily addicted to alcohol or drugs.

-- We just bring these desires to Jesus, confessing them and certainly not acting on them.

-- As Christian brothers and sisters, we join these folks who struggle with this, not in condemnation, but in helping them overcome the sins that so easily beset. Even as they perhaps help us overcome other sins that so easily beset US!

-- **IDENTITY** = We are not our own, we did not create ourselves. We must submit our sense of self-identity to God.

-- Even as I have spoken against us saying, "That's just me. Can't you accept that?" We must not be satisfied with any identity other than the one we have as God's redeemed creation.

-- **ACTIVITY** = Only in marriage. And marriage is one man and one woman. And changing the definition of marriage is only calling "stones" as "pebbles" and saying it doesn't apply.

TR: One author said he was glad the Nashville Statement was posted, so that LGBTQ people would know which churches are safe for them. I've included where to find this statement on the inside back cover of the worship flier.



But the real question all people should ask is, “How can I make sure I build my house upon the rock?”

--

-- Recently the Oversight Elders approved a policy on Human Sexuality. Under the Values section we endorsed the Nashville Statement that you can look up online. We also had four big strata of rock that we surveyed in our policy.

TR: Let me review them briefly. They too are found on the inside back cover of the FF.

- 1. God created humankind in His image, and He created us male and female. We are not free to identify ourselves by a different sex or gender. Nor should we actively endorse others doing so by addressing them by inappropriate pronouns and salutations.**

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READ SLIDE

TR: Second

2. God instituted marriage as a good gift between one man and one woman, as defined by our biological sex at birth. Christian marriage is therefore limited to such a relationship.

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READ SLIDE

TR: Third

3. God created sexual intimacy and it is a good gift to only be enjoyed by a man and a woman within their covenant relationship of marriage. God forbids all sexual intimacy outside of the marriage relationship, whether homosexual, heterosexual, or bestial.

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READ SLIDE

TR: Fourth

4. God desires of us to have pure and holy actions and thoughts, thus making all sexual lust after others sinful. This is different than the appropriate sexual desire between a husband and wife.

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READ SLIDE

TR: Even for those who agree with these 4 bedrock statements, there is still another challenge. It takes us back to our original question, but with a different inflexion again.



Who are we to judge?

READ SLIDE

-- **WE** = people who must be careful with the logs in our own eyes.

-- **JUDGE** = what is the bedrock of God's truth that we must apply?

-- But now the question is whose actions we should be judging, always leaving judgment of their hearts, their motives, to God.

-- Should we bash gays? Should we bully transgender folks? Should we go to the niece's wedding to another woman? Should we eat with the gay couple from next door?

-- **WHO** are we to judge?

TR: I find 1 Corinthians very helpful at this point.

1 Corinthians 5:9-10

I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

ESV

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READ SLIDE

-- We are to have a separation, but not from the immoral of this world.

TR: Rather, as verse 11 tells us . . .

1 Corinthians 5:11

But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

ESV

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READ SLIDE

-- **Who are we to judge? Those who claim to be a brother or sister in Christ.**

TR: Paul continues . . .

1 Corinthians 5:12-13

For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?** ¹³God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

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READ SLIDE

- Clearly there was an **INSIDE** and **OUTSIDE** of the local church . . . suggesting that membership was somehow recognized.
- For unbelievers to act like unbelievers, to be given over to dishonorable passions, how could it be otherwise? They do not have the Holy Spirit, they have not been born again, they are not new creatures in Christ.
- The church is not a collection of perfect people pointing the finger and judging those outside.
- But we are also not a collection of unrepentant sinners who want to be lord of our own lives, deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong.

TR: Rather, "such were some of" us . . .

1 Corinthians 6:11

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

ESV

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as we read earlier until we were washed, sanctified, and justified.

-- Cf. my blog post - "Should we even eat with them?!" – referenced on the back inside cover of the FF.

-- Steps: ask them if they are followers of Jesus; if so, then ask if they have looked at the passages of Scripture that deal with their sinful actions; if they are not convinced by Scripture and yet continue to claim faith in Jesus, begin church discipline. If you can't fully escalate with the help of others (because they are not part of a church), then tell them you are going to consider them to be an unbeliever, if they agree then eat with them. If they protest, do not eat with them or have close association.

-- Remember, we judge each other's actions, not each others' motives.

TR: But WHO are we supposed to judge. Those inside the church, beginning with ourselves.



Who are we to judge?

We are to judge (without being judgmental)
and care-front those who profess to be
Christ-followers, inside the church body

READ SLIDE

-- **Who are we to judge?**

TR: Those inside the church . . . beginning with ourselves.

1 Corinthians 11:28-31

But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. ³⁰For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹**But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.**

ESV

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The commands a few chapters later in 1 Corinthians make clear that we begin by judging ourselves.

-- Before we go taking specks out of other people's eyes, inside the church, not outside . . .

-- . . . we judge ourselves . . . READ SLIDE

-- When we decide that we are the final arbiter of what is right and wrong when it comes to sexual orientation, identity or activity.

-- When we cast the Word of God behind our backs and try to make God in our image.

-- When we assume our inability to change ourselves means "that's just the way we are, and that's OK."

-- When we don't believe God can change us so that our true identity is found in Christ.

-- AND THEN WE celebrate Jesus' death as our substitutionary sacrifice by partaking of communion . . . we trample the Son of God underfoot, as Hebrews 10 tells us.

TR: But that's is also true for all the other besetting sin logs that our in our various eyes. May God help us all to submit to His Word, by being a hearer AND a doer.



So, WHO are we to judge? Those inside the church, beginning first with ourselves, so that we can be gracious, gentle and yet firmly biblical.

TR: I hope your desire is like mine . . .



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. . . to build our house on the rock. To build the houses of our lives, on the Rock of His truth.

-- Because we want our houses to stand when the floods of God's judgment come.

-- This is His building code, not ours.

-- Pretending it doesn't apply to us may seem to save us from costly repentance now . . . but there will be disaster in the future when it all collapses.

-- How could anyone call themselves a loving Christian, who yearns for their neighbors to experience eternal life, and NOT tell others the truth.

-- Sin is sin. Jesus is the Savior. Let us turn away from our besetting sins . . . even AGAIN . . . confessing them and finding God so gracious to forgive us when we humble ourselves before Him.