

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



# THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

April 21, 2019

## DO YOU LOVE GOD? (AS HE HAS COMMANDED)

by Jim Stauffer

"And He said to him, *"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."* **"This is the great and foremost commandment."** (Mat. 22:37-38) If we believe in both God and the Bible as His word, it is imperative we love him above and beyond any person, object or objective.

Let us follow that passage with, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5:8) It is only appropriate to return His love when we understand that without Christ as the atonement sacrifice, we could not be justified in the eyes of God and therefore would die in our sins and spend eternity in a devil's hell (Rom. 3:24-26; John 8:24; John 5:28,29).

The subject matter to which this bulletin is devoted is very controversial among people of the world. The simple reason is because they *love the world and the love of the Father is not in them* (1 John 2:15-17). That is not intended to be hateful but is intended to be sound teaching.

Paul charges Timothy to teach and preach sound doctrine. In the process he makes clear sound doctrine (teaching) will collide with ideas promulgated by men. He tells him his purpose in remaining in Ephesus is *that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines* (1 Tim. 1:3). Obviously the strange doctrines he was to oppose are the enemy of the sound doctrine he was to teach. At the close of 1 Tim. 1:10 in which he completes a list of unrighteous men who conduct themselves unlawfully (contrary to Gods' law), he says this conduct is contrary to sound teaching which is according to the gospel (verse 11).

Paul leaves no doubt Timothy is to openly and aggressively oppose such conduct and teaching that is outside the parameters of the gospel, which is sound teaching.

Recently I saw a comment on Facebook that asked the question, *Why do preachers spend so much time*

*opposing homosexuality and not other sins such as adultery?* The answer is they do not oppose homosexuality more than adultery or stealing or drunkenness, etc. However, it does appear we are forced to spend more time challenging those who promote homosexuality because it is set forth as something God approves as noted in Tim Haile's article that follows. No large, well funded organization is saying adultery or stealing or drunkenness is approved by God. But everywhere we turn we are dubbed as haters of mankind when we teach what the Bible teaches on homosexuality.

Let us be exposed to what Paul tells Timothy about such people who would as Isaiah says, *call evil good and good evil* (Isa. 5:20). *"But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these."* (2 Tim. 3:1-5) **Lovers of self:** When men suggest anyone who loves another of the same gender should marry them he is in violation of Scripture, pure and simple. He has decided to love himself more than he loves God who sent His Son to die for him. Legally he has this right, but when he asserts his legal right to such a homosexual relationship he forfeits his right to the necessary justification by the blood of Christ needed for salvation. **Lovers of money:** When one decides money and a career that enriches himself is more important than standing for what God says is appropriate conduct for a disciple of Jesus Christ, he has chosen an object, money over the God of heaven who loved him first (See 1 Tim. 6:10). **Lovers of pleasure:** We hear the argument that men are created that way and that is the sexual pleasure they were

designed for. God does not make us one way and then demand we be different than our creation. All men have a variety of differing temptations. Many are much more tempted to engage in drunkenness or stealing or adultery. Everyone must be determined to overcome temptation with the assistance of God (**1 Cor. 10:12,13**). We cannot decide the sinful act we prefer is made acceptable to God because we feel too weak to resist. He will strengthen us in such time of need (**Phil. 4:13**).

So, yes, there is more public discussion of the sin of homosexuality than of others, simply because men are claiming it is approved of God when He has clearly taught us the opposite.

I, therefore, challenge those who oppose God on this issue or any other to search your heart to see if you love God with all your heart, soul and mind or if you are bent on loving self, money or pleasure ahead of Him.

### Mayor Pete's Pro-Gay Creator

Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Indiana, is one of the many democrats running for President. He is gay and he is "married" to a man. He also has a very pro-gay political agenda. However, unlike most, Pete Buttigieg tries to use religion to promote the gay lifestyle and agenda. Being an Episcopalian, Pete Buttigieg faces no criticism from his church for his sexual behavior. Episcopalians do not believe that homosexuality is sinful. Of course, this position puts them at great odds with Scripture.

Buttigieg recently made the national news when he said in a public statement to Vice President Mike Pence, "If you got a problem with who I am, your problem is not with me — your quarrel, sir, is with my creator."

Mike Pence believes homosexuality to be sinful and that marriage is between a man and a woman. However, Pence is also on public record saying that homosexuals should be granted the same *civil* liberties as other people. Pence's opposition to the practice of homosexuality does not deny civil rights to homosexuals. It is also my position as a Bible believer, that since all humans are free agents, they have the God-given *ability* (not *permission*) to live their lives as they please, provided that they do not "*harm*" their "neighbor" (**Romans 13:10**). As shown by the previous context in **Romans 13**, those whose sins result in "*harm*" to their neighbor (other people) must be punished by civil authorities. While *all sin* must be denounced and opposed, not all sin harms neighbors and we leave those judgments in the hands of God who will one day judge even "*the secrets of men*" (**Romans 2:16**). Free agency includes free speech, which means that people like Buttigieg and Pence ought to be free to discuss their differences about moral issues and still accept each other's personal rights.

### Our Creator And Homosexuality

But what about Mayor Pete's statement about homosexuality and the "creator?" Mayor Pete's implication is that his "creator" approves of homosexuality and gay marriage. My immediate reaction to Mayor Pete's statement was that he must have a different "creator" than I do! The Creator that I serve has condemned homosexuality *in every dispensation* of human history! There has never been a time when our Creator has approved of homosexuality. It is regularly condemned in Scripture alongside other sins — including other sexual sins. Mayor Pete's "creator" doesn't exist. It is a fiction.

God designed marriage to be between a male and a female (**Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6**). God does not join same-sex couples in marriage.

**The Patriarchal Dispensation:** Under what we call the Patriarchal dispensation, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were incinerated by God for the sin of homosexuality (**Genesis 19:5, 24; Jude 7**). Not only has God always condemned homosexuality, He also defines it as unnatural. The apostle Paul wrote, "*For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of the error which was due*" (**Romans 1:26-27**).

That homosexuality is "*unnatural*" is obvious from the fact that human civilization would cease if everyone was gay. Procreation would stop and humanity would soon expire. Of course, we must not ignore the *spiritual consequence* that "*those who practice such things are worthy of (spiritual) death*" (**Romans 1:32; compare Romans 6:23**).

**The Mosaic Dispensation:** The Law of Moses explicitly forbade homosexuality and even made it a capital offense (**Leviticus 18:20 & 20:13**). Note: We are no longer under the Law of Moses, so I am not suggesting that we should have the death penalty for the sin of homosexuality. I cite these passages, as well as **Genesis 19**, to prove that the "Creator" or God of the Bible has condemned homosexuality **in every age of humanity**.

**The Gospel Dispensation:** The New Testament also condemns homosexuality. As shown above, **Romans 1:26-27** explicitly condemns homosexuality. While it might be argued that **Romans 1:18-32** addresses the *past actions* of Gentile people, the sins that are listed in that text are repeated elsewhere in the New Testament. For example, Paul wrote the Corinthians, "*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" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).** Paul told Timothy that the law was made *"for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine"* (1 Timothy 1:10). And as noted above in connection with **Genesis 19**, the inspired Jude characterized the sexual conduct of the condemned people of Sodom and Gomorrah as aberrant and sinful (**Jude 7**). Both the Old and New Testaments explicitly condemn homosexuality.

### Conclusion

Mayor Pete Buttigieg's "creator" cannot be the "Creator" of the Bible. While God is a loving and merciful God who is always willing to forgive sinners, He will do so only after they have repented. Peter wrote, *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9; see also **Luke 13:3-5**). After specifying homosexuals and sodomites as people who will not enter heaven, Paul said to the Corinthians, *"And such were some of you..."* (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). His point was that they had repented of their sins and were *no longer* practicing them (see **2 Corinthians 7:7-10** for his explanation of the nature of genuine repentance). God forgives and accepts those who repent of their sins and meet His other conditions of salvation, including faith, confession and baptism (**Acts 2:38, 41; Romans 10:10**). This means that the *"fornicators"* of **1 Corinthians 6:9** had to stop having unmarried sex. The *"adulterers"* had to stop having sex with those not their mates, and the *"homosexuals"* had to stop having sex with those of their same gender. No matter what the sin was, they had to stop it in order to be forgiven by the one, the true and the only Creator. Mayor Pete's "creator" is a mere fiction.

**Tim Haile; Parkway church of Christ**

## HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is probably the most explosive issue in our modern culture. We are bombarded by pleas to accept this so-called alternative lifestyle from the White House all the way down to local communities. The liberal media derides any viewpoint that resists, even in a civil way, the very idea that two people of the same sex should not enjoy love, marriage, intimacy, and legal protections. The "religious world" weighs in on this issue quite often. The Church of England (Anglican; U.S. counterpart is the Episcopal Church), openly accepts homosexuality and routinely appoints "gays" to positions of ecclesiastical authority.

*The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press* reports that among the general U.S. populace, opposition to homosexual unions is increasing. While it is true that there is greater tolerance for the homosexual

lifestyle among Americans generally, strong opposition still remains to these unions (the media would never let that fact be known, though). *The Pew* report indicates that more Republicans than Democrats oppose "gay" unions. The same report also says that people who claim to have a faith basis for their lives are more likely to have negative views about homosexual and lesbian unions. This is probably not a surprise to most.

Are you surprised to learn that "church-goers" generally have stronger views against homosexual unions, than those who do not attend any kind of religious services? "Mainline" protestants (Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, etc.) are more likely to be accepting of homosexuality. This is partly so because these people will hear lessons about accepting this kind of life as being O.K. Evangelical churches (and only for the sake of illustration would I include "us" in that statement) are more likely to sound warnings about the sin of the homosexual lifestyle.

Are you surprised to learn that among the general population of the U.S., young people are far more accepting of the homosexual lifestyle than older folks? You might say: Well, that doesn't include my children! That doesn't include "church kids." Don't count on it. Don't be naïve. Talk with your children about this issue. Speak with a public school teacher about the prevalence of this lifestyle and the acceptance of it; the results might shock you.

One of the greatest challenges for NT Christians is how to respond to this very real social, cultural phenomenon. Our culture often calls anyone who opposes the gay lifestyle "gay bashers." Whatever the social or moral challenge may be, we have the responsibility and perhaps the opportunity to communicate the love of Christ to those who are caught in the web of sin. Hating anyone is a sin. Loving all people is a duty. Do we truly believe that only in Christ we find salvation?

**Randy Harshbarger**

### Some Quotes Worth Pondering . . .

"Lord, when I am wrong, make me willing to change; when I am right, make me easy to live with."

"The world belongs to the man who is wise enough to change his mind in the presence of facts."

"What a pity human beings cannot exchange problems. Everyone seems to know exactly how to solve the other fellow's."

"Sometimes we are so busy adding up our troubles that we forget to count our blessings."



*Let us be reminded to pray for those we support who are preaching in other areas of this country and also of the world. Remember to pray for Kyle Bennett in Boston Ma., Matt Hodge in Marshfield, Mo. and Cleveland Reddinger in El Dorado, Ks. Overseas we need to remember, Wilfredo Pelino and Jonathan Sapitula in the Philippines as well as Moses Tivane in Mozambique.*

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## ***What Must I Do To Be Saved?***

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10