

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



John 8:32
And ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

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11

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A DISCUSSION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Jim Stauffer

I recently observed and participated in a discussion on line concerning this subject. Those participating were definitely not members of the Lord's body. As a result their arguments followed reasoning not supported in God's word. It is a compilation of points made in that forum that spawned this article which shall be an attempt to refute worldly reasoning about spiritual matters.

The general consensus of opinion was that homosexual is congenital and a person is either born "gay or straight".

A question posed was, "Why would anyone choose a lifestyle that would cause him some level of persecution by society and in some cases danger as well?" Without resorting to Scripture we are forced logically to understand people choose dangerous activities often in life for either the thrill involved or the pleasure. This is easily illustrated by the man who chooses to drink alcohol and continues to allow it to make him drunk. The results of his drinking are always worse than the time spent imbibing. Drunken rages or driving erratically to the danger of self and others, alienating friends and family are all results of such binges. Yet the person continues to choose this behavior because he enjoys getting drunk. Then when it is clear alcohol has taken control of him, we hear he is a sick man, suffering an addiction. This is a self-imposed condition. It is not a sickness and a man can turn away from this by changing his affections. **(Col. 3:2; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)**

Another lament was the way a homosexual is treated by the heterosexual population. The idea of judging another when his sin does not directly affect you was said to be abusive. The answer to this is very simple. Sin is sin and God does not condemn one for homosexuality more so than he does a heterosexual for adultery. They are in the general sense of fornication under the same umbrella of sin. But what was missed here is the fact that God, who is the One in position to judge all men, is the One who condemns homosexuality

(Lev. 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:10).

Any child of God who believes any sinner should be treated with disdain rather than love in an attempt to bring him to the Lord is just plain wrong. but anyone who thinks treating someone with respect demands you accept their conduct as morally acceptable to God in spite of what He says is just as wrong.

Another defense of homosexuality was that when my neighbor practices homosexuality it does not affect me at all. Again, this person is attributing the criticism of the sin to those of us humans. The fact is, God condemns homosexuality and the Christian who tells his neighbor this is acting out of love for him as opposed to the neighbor who approves and allows him to continue in sin awaiting the judgment that is based on righteousness **(Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10).**

Then there was presented the very common expression. Jesus died on the cross to forgive us of our sins. Yes, he did. And He has promised to do that for all who will repent and confess their sins. There is no example, no passage of Scripture or any indication in the Bible that man will receive forgiveness for sins that he does not regret and sincerely repent of and confess to God **(Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 7:9,10; 1 John 1:7-2:2).**

Of course the old idea that the wording in the Bible is not to be believed as it is written. There was never any explanation as to how one can understand how to use the Bible. Everyone agrees with the Bible when someone is healed of sickness by the Lord or when the love of God is discussed. The problem with this mentality as stated above is people refuse to accept love as the motivation for warning people about sin and the eternal implications of it.

This article will show how such discussions often evolve. It is not easy to approach people about sin.

We must, however, never concede the authority of Scripture. If we do not use its authority to determine right and wrong, sin and righteousness, we will soon be just as far from the truth as those who accept homosexuality as pleasing to God.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: ANGER AND MURDER

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, Raca! shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, You fool! shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matthew 5:21-22; see verses 21-26).

While anger and murder may have dominated the conquests of Rome for many years, Jesus calls us to a higher standard. Rejecting scribal manipulations, Jesus says to look inwardly. Murder was proscribed in Moses' Law (**Exodus 20:13**). Murder does lead to judgment. But so does the attitude that leads to murder. It may be hard to assess an attitude of anger in a court of law; still, God knows. Even more, kingdom citizens need to be careful about their words. *Raca*, an Aramaic swearword for *blockhead* or *fool*, brings you to judgment. Anger leads to ill-said words. Before you blow up and say something you shouldn't say, try to assuage your anger. While the Sanhedrin was the highest court of the Jews, remember, that Jesus is listening.

In the story of Cain and Abel, anger and worship were joined; it didn't end well; so, too, in the kingdom. Offering your gift is a good thing. But if the heart is full of bitterness, you need to make amends with the offended brother; then you come back to God. How many churches could again grow and thrive if only wounded feelings, estrangement of brethren, and pride could be replaced by a determination to simply do better? We may be closer to a murderer than we imagine.

Who is the adversary Jesus speaks about? It could be someone to whom you owe money or a debt of some kind. Certainly, in 1st c. Roman Palestine there were lots of tensions between the Jews and their landlords. Whatever the answer, the point is the same. If we have done something against someone, anyone, we need to make it right. Only then can we in truth and spirit come before the Lord. Do so before you get to court. If not, dire consequences ensue.

It is interesting that Jesus speaks of hell, *gehenna*, eternal punishment. When we withhold mercy from others, what can we expect? When we refuse to forgive, what will be our destiny? The good news is good news only for those who accept. If you and I are going to be kingdom citizens, if our righteousness is going to exceed that of the Pharisees, then we have to get our hearts right. That challenge is a huge one; yet, we must accept it with joy and determination. It is the only way to truly come to Jesus.

Randy Harshbarger

Convenient Preaching

Christians are being tried and tested for their love of truth. Many are courageously standing for that which they know to be right, while others, not studying the Bible for themselves, are swept away by the pleasant and fair speeches of teachers and preachers who seek only to scratch itching ears with *"great swelling words, showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage."* (**Jude 16**) Myriad of Christians are confusing the difference between convictions and conveniences. They conveniently stand for doctrine which is most popular, receiving the "praise of men," rather than standing for doctrine of Christ by conviction, being rewarded with the "praise of God." (**John 12:43**) Such an attitude is manifested by the failure to teach against worldliness, looseness and laxity in moral living, and by putting emphasis on number and size rather than spiritual stature. Many seem afraid to condemn anything, but stand ready to praise everything. We have watered down our convictions, sweetened our dispositions, and become so sophisticated with worldly wisdom and intoxicated with our "place under the sun" of prominence in the religious world that we stand powerless in the face of error and evil.

by Robert Harkrider, Taken from the Beacon Electronic Edition 9/4/16

Two Sources of Authority

by Marc W. Gibson

"The baptism of John, where was it from? From heaven or from men?" (Matt. 21:25).

The chief priests and elders questioned Jesus concerning the authority for His work, saying, "By what authority are You doing these things? and who gave You this authority?" Jesus did not dispute the need for authority. In fact, he asked them a question about authority concerning the baptism of John, promising to answer their question if they answered His question.

Jesus' question tackled the foremost issue in any study of authority - its source. Jesus identified two, and only two, sources of authority - heaven and men. "Heaven" has reference to divine authority, that which is provided by God. Such authority is found in God's revelation to man. God's word to man today is the word of Christ in the New Testament (**Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 3:3-5; Jude 3; Colossians 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:13**). When we do what God has revealed in the divine pattern of His word, we are acting by heaven's authority!

On the other hand, man's authority is just that, human authority - that which stands in contrast to divine authority. This human authority can be manifested in several ways:

- * Preachers and scholars - following what men say.
- * Creeds of men - religious doctrines of men.

- * Majority opinion - what most people believe.
- * Personal opinion - what I think is right.
- * Emotions - what I feel is right.
- * Sincerity - what I really believe is true.
- * Results - the end justifies the means.

Each person must decide which religious authority he will follow - man or God. God's word is truth (John 17:17). If most folks choose to follow man, division and confusion will continue in our world. Choose to follow Jesus and His divine authority. He is the only true way.

Received from Ron Halbrook

Polygamy is next

No one can be surprised at this move, & it did not take long for someone to make the move!

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/polygamous-montana-trio-applies-for-wedding-license/>

CBS News/AP/July 1, 2015, 5:48 PM

Montana man seeks license for second wife

Last Updated Jul 1, 2015 10:44 PM EDT

HELENA, Mont. - A Montana man said Wednesday that he was inspired by last week's U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage to apply for a marriage license so that he can legally wed his second wife.

Nathan Collier and his wives Victoria and Christine applied at the Yellowstone County Courthouse in Billings on Tuesday in an attempt to legitimize their polygamous marriage. Montana, like all 50 states, outlaws bigamy - holding multiple marriage licenses - but Collier said he plans to sue if the application is denied.

"It's about marriage equality," Collier told The Associated Press Wednesday. "You can't have this without polygamy."

County clerk officials initially denied Collier's application, then said they would consult with the county attorney before giving him a final answer, Collier said.

Officials at the clerk's office did not have an immediate comment, and Yellowstone County Attorney Scott Twito did not return a call for comment.

The Supreme Court's ruling on Friday made gay marriages legal nationwide. Chief Justice John Roberts said in his dissent that people in polygamous relationships could make the same legal argument that not having the opportunity to marry disrespects and subordinates them.

Collier, 46, said that dissent inspired him. He owns a refrigeration business in Billings and married Victoria, 40, in 2000. He and his second wife, Christine, had a religious wedding ceremony in 2007 but did not sign a marriage license to avoid bigamy charges, he said.

Collier said he is a former Mormon who was excommunicated for polygamy and now belongs to no religious organization. He said he and his wives hid their relationship for years, but became tired of hiding and went public by appearing on the reality cable television show "Sister Wives."

CBS affiliate KTVQ first interviewed the couple back in January when they appeared on TLC.

"We just want to add legal legitimacy to an already happy, strong, loving family," Nathan Collier told KTVQ.

KTVQ reports that as the two filled out their marriage application they were met with questions. "There's a spot on there where you put the dissolution date of your previous marriage and we put not applicable," said Christine Collier.

Some employees at the courthouse were even caught off guard. "So, are you legally married, you didn't get divorced?" asked one clerk.

"We're not even asking for acceptance, we're just asking for tolerance. Let us live our lives together without fear," said Nathan Collier.

The three have seven children of their own and from previous relationships.

"My second wife Christine, who I'm not legally married to, she's put up with my crap for a lot of years. She deserves legitimacy," he said.

"It's two distinct marriages, its two distinct unions, and for us to come together and create family, what's wrong with that?" said Christine. "I don't understand why it's looked upon and frowned upon as being obscene."

Collier said he sent an email asking the ACLU of Montana to represent him in a possible lawsuit. ACLU legal director Jim Taylor said he has not seen the request. Taylor said he has no opinion on Collier's claims, though the Supreme Court decision on gay marriage "is about something very different."

Anne Wilde, a co-founder of the polygamy advocacy organization Principle Voices located in Utah, said Collier's application is the first she's heard of in the nation, and that most polygamous families in Utah are not seeking the right to have multiple marriage licenses.

"Ninety percent or more of the fundamentalist Mormons don't want it legalized, they want it decriminalized," Wilde said.

A federal judge struck down parts of Utah's anti-polygamy law two years ago, saying the law violated religious freedom by prohibiting cohabitation. Bigamy is still illegal.

The state has appealed the ruling, and the case is pending in the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Wilde said most polygamous families are satisfied with the judge's ruling and believe taking it further to include multiple marriage licenses would bring them under the unwanted jurisdiction of the government.

But she said the Supreme Court's decision on gay marriage should strengthen their chance of winning the appeal.

"We hope the Supreme Court decision will show the direction the nation is going," she said. "It's more liberal, it's more understanding about people forming the families the way they want."

In Christian love, Ron Halbrook

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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SUNDAY SERMON:
MAN FACES GOD IN
JUDGMENT



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