

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE

BUT ARE AFRAID TO ASK

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How Should Christians understand LGBTQIA+ Issues?
Matthew 19:3–6

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3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?” 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

How Should Christians understand LGBTQIA+ Issues?

Jesus affirms the God-given design of male and female

- “He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female” (v. 4).
 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27).
- How are sex and gender related?
 - Definitions
 - Sex – Sex refers to a person’s biological status and is typically categorized as male, female, or intersex (American Psychological Association)

- Gender – “a person’s internal, deeply held sense of their own gender, which may or may not correspond to their sex assigned at birth” (American Psychological Association).
- Transgender – “an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression, or behavior does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth” (American Psychological Association).
- Should sex determine gender?
 - “Jesus is saying that this is not simply *how things once were*; it is *how things still are*” (Robert S. Smith, *The Body God Gives*, 334).
 - This doesn’t mean gender must be defined by cultural stereotypes.
- What about intersex?
 - Intersex – “an individual who exhibits sexual characteristics of both sexes” (American Psychological Association).
 - “For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it” (Matthew 19:12).
 - Is intersex a third gender?
 - “Most males and females with an intersex condition also have a penis or a vagina, while some intersex persons have both a penis and a vagina. But no intersex person has an innovative new sex organ . . . that’s neither penis nor vagina, neither male nor female” (Preston Sprinkle, *Embodied*, 122).
- Our sexed bodies determine whether we are male or female.

Jesus affirms the God-given design of sexual difference in marriage

- “and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (vv. 5–6; quoting Genesis 2:24).
- “Why, then, does Jesus start in Genesis 1:27—‘God made them male and female’—which explicitly highlights sexual difference? Such difference is, in itself, irrelevant to the question of divorce. That is, it’s irrelevant if one’s sex makes no difference in marriage. If Jesus didn’t think that sexual difference is essential for marriage, then his quotation of Genesis 1:27, which talks about sexual differences, is unnecessary and superfluous. But Jesus does quote it, so it would seem that male-female pairing is part of what marriage is according to Jesus” (Preston Sprinkle, *People to Be Loved*, 35–36).
- Why must there be sexual difference in marriage?
 - “15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’ 18 Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ 19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he

would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man said, ‘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’” (Genesis 2:15–23).

- Good/Not good – regarding order and function
- “Helper fit for him” – Adam needed someone like him (i.e., human) but unlike him (i.e., female).
- “One flesh” certainly means more than sexual union, but it doesn’t mean less.
 - “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).
 - “Adam and Eve’s sexual difference seems to be a beautiful and intentional necessity for marriage” (Preston Sprinkle, *People to Be Loved*, 34).
- Marriage is meant to be between a male and female.

Jesus affirms the God-given dignity of every human being

- How does Jesus affirm the God-given dignity of every human being?
 - He became one!
 - “He is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15a).
 - “Jesus’ sexed embodiment challenges the notion that biology is irrelevant to identity” (Preston Sprinkle, *Embodied*, 73).
 - He treated the marginalized with dignity.
 - “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’” (Luke 7:34).
- How can we affirm the God-given dignity of every human being?
 - Don’t ridicule LGBTQIA+ people
 - Befriend LGBTQIA+ people
 - Listen to LGBTQIA+ people
 - Serve LGBTQIA+ people
 - “The greatest apologetic for truth is love” (Preston Sprinkle, *Embodied*, 221)
- We should treat humans, whether they identify as male, female, or something else, with dignity.

Christians can affirm the God-given design for gender and sexuality *and* the God-given dignity of every human being.