

QUESTIONING GOD

INVITING SEEKERS, SKEPTICS, AND INQUIRING MINDS

#TMHQuestioningGod 

WEEK 1: *Why does God allow so much suffering?*

WEEK 2: *If God knows the future how can we have free choice?*

WEEK 3: *Isn't it Circular Reasoning to Use the Bible to Prove the Bible?*

WEEK 4: **Why are some Christians so homophobic?**

WEEK 5: *Why do Christians think everyone should follow Jesus?*

APPETIZER – What's Going On?

James 1:19-20

ANSWER IN A SENTENCE:

Because people fear what they don't know, and religion offers an escape from people who are not like us, making the problem worse.

ANSWER IN ANOTHER SENTENCE:

Because people hate what makes them uncomfortable, and religion makes the problem worse by giving hateful people the authority of God.

NOTE: Many Christians are mislabeled homophobic for simply holding to a traditional interpretation of Scripture. In fact, the assumption that Christians are homophobic just for holding a different view is another irrational and judgmental fear we could call "Churchophobia". We all have our issues.

DINE IN – Third Way Fellowship

Matthew 19:3-12 VS Genesis 2:18 & 1 Corinthians 7:9

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW...

- Marriage as male and female is God's original idea and ideal.
- Male and female together reflect the fullness of God's image in us.
- Ultimately, God is the one who joins us together in the covenant of marriage.
- It is possible for a marriage to be "official" in human terms, but unrecognized and unauthorized in God's eyes.
- Singleness is given a new high value by Jesus.
- Spiritual family – a real, genuine, close-knit, loving togetherness – is God's way for us all to live, meaning singleness need not equal aloneness. (That is implied in the concept of a kingdom eunuch, who sacrificed biological family for kingdom family.)

A PROGRESSIVE VIEW...

- God originally designed us for covenantal companionship.
- In the New Testament, God champions singleness, but allows for marriage when singleness is too hard.
- God delights in covenantal love, fidelity, and partnership.
- Biblical teaching against same-gender sex (e.g., **Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, etc.**) does not account for the possibility of marriage, which was unacceptable in Bible days (note **Romans 1:31**).
- What the Bible would say about gay marriage if it were one day a possibility is not known with certainty, so today we can err on the side of grace, knowing God's heart for covenant love.

THE THIRD WAY...

STEPS TO THIRD WAY FELLOWSHIP...

1. **LOVING** THE OTHER (A choice we make.)
2. **ACCEPTING** THE OTHER (Practicing gracious hospitality)
3. **UNDERSTANDING** THE OTHER (Listening & learning respectfully)
4. **KNOWING** THE OTHER (Taking time to be with)
5. **SERVING** THE OTHER (Finding ways to contribute)

TAKE OUT – Letting Love Lead

Jesus says...

- Love EACH OTHER (**John 13:34-35**)
- Love GOD and your NEIGHBOUR as you love YOURSELF (**Matt 22:36-40**)
- Love your ENEMY (**Matthew 5:43-45**)

So – who's left not to love?



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Home Church Questions...

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic]

1. What's your response to Thelma's interview?
2. How would you respond in a sentence if someone asked you why some Christians seem so homophobic?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture]

3. Let's have a friendly debate. Divide into two groups, one taking the side of the "Right" and the other the "Left" as laid out in the sermon notes. Give yourselves five minutes to review the material and then take ten minutes to discuss; presenting the most compelling scriptural case you can for your side. (If you have time, repeat the exercise, rotating which team is representing which side of the argument.)
4. As Christians debate over who should or shouldn't be married, it is quite possible for the New Covenant emphasis on singleness to become muted beyond all conscious consideration. Re-read Jesus' words about singleness in **Matthew 19:3-12** and Paul's cautions in **1 Corinthians 7:32-36**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you in these passages?
 - b. A eunuch for the kingdom gave up the possibility of biological family to serve the needs of the kingdom, making kingdom people his "family". What is Jesus saying here about the Church? (Also see **Mark 10:29-30**.)
 - c. What are some practical ways the Church can do a better job at being spiritual family?
 - d. How might the New Testament emphasis on singleness effect how we approach the gay marriage debate?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together]

5. Read what James the brother of Jesus says in **James 1:19-20**. Honestly, how much "listening" to whatever side you disagree with have you done lately? How much has anger become a go-to emotion for you on this issue? Are there other issues that generate less listening and more anger in you?
6. What are some practical ways your home church and/or huddle can do a better job at being spiritual family and a safe place for people who might feel like they are on the outside looking in?

NOTE: Do you carry any self-defeating secrets that keep you from experiencing the joy of full acceptance? If you want, talk about them with your huddle, or at a later time with your elder.

Quotes...

Today we ask the most voted for question of this series – Why are some Christians so homophobic?

Christianity is both homophobic and misogynistic. If Christianity has an image problem it is because it deserves to have an image problem.

~ Lucy Wainwright, *Atheist Blogger*

There is an unwritten (and slightly depressing) rule in some evangelical Christian circles that the quickest way to ascertain if a church is theologically sound is to find out what they think about homosexuality. This makes same-sex relationships THE battleground for conservative and liberal Christians today.

~ Justin Brierley, *Unbelievable?*

This decision [of the Church to support gay marriage], taken in its context, falsifies the gospel of Christ, abandons the authority of Scripture, jeopardizes the salvation of fellow human beings, and betrays the church in its God-appointed role as the bastion and bulwark of divine truth.

~ J. I. Packer, On his protest against the Anglican Church

This [accepting even the possibility of God approving same-sex marriage] is a tragic development for the cause of Christ, because it trivializes perdition — and therefore, the cross.

~ John Piper, *Desiring God Blog*

It is perhaps less important to know what is "right and wrong" morally speaking, than to know how to act toward those we consider "wrong".

~ Dan Haseltine (Lead singer for Jars of Clay)

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

~ Jesus