

# **Arbor Foundations**

## **17 – Marriage, Homosexuality and Gender**

### **THE WHY?**

#### **The Need for Biblical Clarity & Confidence in Today's World**

*Never have the sexual ethics of our culture been more confused and contorted. Divorce is rampant; co-habitation before or instead of marriage has become normal; new technologies have made pornography immediately accessible; and the once inconceivable notion of same-sex "marriage" is now recognized by law in a growing number of jurisdictions. The need for a clear voice from the church on these matters is critical, both for the health of our own community and for our faithful witness to the world.*

*(EFCA Statement on Human Sexuality, 2013)*

#### **Supreme Court Case: Obergefell v. Hodges**

- On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a 5-4 ruling, holding that the Fourteenth Amendment's *equal protection clause* requires a state to license a marriage between two people of the same sex. The decision also requires states to recognize a marriage between two people of the same sex when their marriage was lawfully licensed and performed in another state.
  - Note: this ruling came just 9 years after President Clinton signed into law the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which, for federal purposes, defined marriage as "only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife" (1996).
- Religious Protection "Carve Out" Clause
  - *Finally, it must be emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered. The same is true of those who oppose same-sex marriage for other reasons. In turn, those who believe allowing same-sex marriage is proper or indeed essential, whether as a matter of religious conviction or secular belief, may engage those who disagree with their view in an open and searching debate. The Constitution, however, does not permit the State to bar same-sex couples from marriage on the same terms as accorded to couples of the opposite sex.*
    - The Question: How long will this exemption be upheld? (Matthew 6:33-34)

### **Key Foundational Truths to Remember**

#### **Key Truths to Remember about God's Word**

- *Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. (Psalm 119:98)*
- *The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. (Psalm 119:160)*
- *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. (Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:24-25)*
- *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. (Matt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33)*
- *...having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.... (1 Peter 1:23)*
- *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

#### **Key Truths to Remember about This World**

- We live in fallen, cursed world where spiritual darkness is ever present.
- Men & women are spiritually dead until they are made alive by the regenerating power of God's Spirit.
- The human heart is greatly deceived and desperately sick apart from God (Jeremiah 17:9)
- Unless the Light penetrates the darkness, humanity embraces societal norms that fit their desires.
- *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. (Eccl. 1:9) – Remember Noah's Day, Sodom & Gomorrah, Time of the Judges, Greek & Roman Era ....*

**Key Truths to Remember about our Great Lord & Savior**

- He is the Light that has penetrated the darkness
- He is the King of Kings, Creator of All, and who has defeated death and Satan
- He is still rescuing men and women from the kingdom of darkness, and bringing them into His Family.  
*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, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 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.*** (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
- He is someday going to return in all His glory and majesty and set all things right. (Revelation 21:23)

**The Biblical Basis and Definition of Marriage**

“Marriage is the original and foundational institution of human society, established by God as a one-flesh, covenantal union between a man and a woman that is life-long (until separated by death), exclusive (monogamous and faithful), and generative in nature (designed for bearing and rearing children), and it is to reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church.” (EFCA Statement on Human Sexuality, 2013)

- God created marriage at the beginning of the human race as a lifeline union between one man and one woman. (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:21-25)
  - The relationship between Adam & Eve is the *pattern* for all marriages to follow in the earth.
    - Marriage between a man and woman is the most fundamental institution in any society.
  - Jesus affirms the institution of marriage as God’s ordained *pattern* in Matthew 19:3-8.
- Marriage is a sacred institution which mirrors the mysterious and wonderful bond between Christ and His Church. Marriage is much more than merely a contract between two persons. It is a covenant grounded in promises between a man and a woman which finds its divinely intended expression in the “one flesh” union of husband and wife, and between the “one flesh” union of husband and wife and God. (Ephesians 5:22-33)
- Scripture grants two life-enhancing options for sexual behavior: monogamous marital relations between one man and one woman (Gen. 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-24; Matt. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:5-8; Rom. 7:2; cf. Heb. 13:4) or sexual celibacy (1 Cor. 7:7; Matt. 19:12). Either is a gift from God, given as He wills for His glory and the good of those who receive and rejoice in His gift to them.

**1869 Baptist London Confession of Faith – Chapter 25: Of Marriage**

1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. (Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:15; Matthew 19:5,6)
2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and the preventing of uncleanness. (Genesis 2:18; Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 9)
3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord; and therefore such as profess the true religion, should not marry with infidels, or idolaters; neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresy. (Hebrews 13:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Nehemiah 13:25-27)
4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity, forbidden in the Word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful, by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. (Leviticus 18; Mark 6:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1)

### **The Biblical Position on Homosexuality**

- The Scriptures have much to say about sexual behavior, from the beautiful affirmations of the Song of Songs to the clear prohibitions found throughout the Bible (e.g., Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 6:9-10, 15-18; Gal. 5:16-21; 1 Thess. 4:3-8). The Apostle Paul affirms that among believers “there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality” (Eph. 5:3). All homosexual behavior is specifically condemned as sin in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Gen. 19:4-11[cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-7; Jude 7]; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22-25; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:8-11). This includes both male and female homosexual activity, both the more passive and more active roles in homosexual practice, and all varieties of homosexual acts.
- The gospel is full of grace and truth. It is an offer of grace and forgiveness to sinners as well as a call to live a holy life. It empowers us in the struggle to resist sin, including the sin of homosexual practice (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 4:20-24; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Tit. 2:11-13).
- Temptation, including sexual attractions, is not sin. Sin is yielding to temptation. Jesus himself was tempted, yet without sin (Matt. 4:1-11, Heb. 4:15).

**Rosetta Champagne Butterfield:** <https://rosariabutterfield.com/>

(Sexual) Sinners and Jesus <https://matt-tully-l8s5.squarespace.com/sexual-sinners-jesus>

How Sexual Orientation Became the Idol of Our Day and What Christians Need to Do about It

<https://www.frc.org/university/how-sexual-orientation-became-the-idol-of-our-day-and-what-christians-need-to-do-about-it>

1. As sinners saved by Grace, we as Christians must seek ways to minister to and support those among us who struggle with same-sex attractions, and those who have family members or others close to them who identify as LGBT+
2. The Church must seek ways to reach out in love to those in our society who identify as LGBT+

### **The Biblical Position on Gender**

- God created human beings as male and female (Gen. 1:27). The complementary, relational nature of the human race as “male and female” reflects the created order given by God when He created human beings “in His image” (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1, 3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jam. 3:9; cf. Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10). (EFCA Statement on Human Sexuality, 2013)
- Normal Physical Reality: the sex of an individual is determined by a pair of sex chromosomes. Females have the same kind of sex chromosome (XX); Males two different kinds of sex chromosomes (XY).
- Abnormal Physical Occurrences (Intersex): there are people born with any of several variations in sex characteristics including chromosomes, gonads, sex hormones, or genitals that do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies.
  - The birth of an intersex child is not common, occurring in fewer than 2 out of every 10,000 births – about .018% of the population. (Dr. Leonard Sax, “How Common Is Intersex?”, *Journal of Sex Research*, 2002).
  - Denny Burk, [What Is the Meaning of Sex?](#) (Crossway 2013)

**CBMW Nashville Statement 2017** <https://cbmw.org/nashville-statement/>

#### Article 4

- WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God’s original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing.
- WE DENY that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

#### Article 5

- WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God’s design for self-conception as male or female.
- WE DENY that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

- WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about “eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb.” With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known.
- WE DENY that ambiguities related to a person’s biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

- WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture.
- WE DENY that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God’s holy purposes in creation and redemption.

**SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT?**

Scripture sets forth a Christian vision of human sexuality as a *good gift* of God. The divine design for sexual expression within the commitment of marriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the well-ordering of human society and is integral to human flourishing.

*We believe that God’s design for His creation and his way of salvation serve to bring Him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God’s good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us.*

**CBMW Nashville Statement 2017**

**Resources for Further Study****Confessions, National & Church Statements**

- Westminster Confession of Faith: [XXIV. Of Marriage and Divorce](#)
- 1689 Baptist London Confession of Faith: [XXV of Marriage](#)
- [The Manhattan Declaration](#) September 28, 2009 <https://www.manhattandeclaration.org/>
- The Evangelical Free Church of America (2013): *A Church Statement on Human Sexuality with a specific focus on Homosexuality and Same-Sex “Marriage”*  
[https://www.efca.org/sites/default/files/resources/docs/2013/05/a\\_church\\_statement\\_on\\_human\\_sexuality\\_3.pdf](https://www.efca.org/sites/default/files/resources/docs/2013/05/a_church_statement_on_human_sexuality_3.pdf)
- The Nashville Statement 2017 <https://cbmw.org/nashville-statement/>

**Other Resources**

- Andrew Walker, [God and the Transgender Debate](#) The Good Book Company (Aug. 15, 2017)
- Denny Burk, Book Review: The Dangers for ‘Harry’ Becoming ‘Sally’ (The Gospel Coalition) Posted Feb. 28, 2018. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/when-harry-became-sally-ryan-anderson/>
- Kairos Journal <https://kairosjournal.org/>
- Paul David Tripp, [Sex in a Broken World: How Christ Redeems What Sin Distorts](#) (Crossway, 2018)
- Rosetta Champagne Butterfield <https://rosariabutterfield.com/>
- Samuel Jones, “Book Review: What the Gospel Means for the Transgender Debate” (The Gospel Coalition) Posted Feb. 17, 2017. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/what-the-gospel-means-for-the-transgender-debate/>
- Todd Miles, [A Pastoral Approach to the Transgender Debate](#), The Gospel Coalition (Oct. 20, 2017) <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/god-transgender-debate-andrew-walker/>
- Vaughan Roberts, [Transgender](#) The Good Book Company, (Oct. 3, 2016)
- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan Academic, 1994. <https://courses.zondervanacademic.com/grudem-systematic-theology>

**Select Annotated Resources from the (EFCA Statement on Human Sexuality, 2013)****General**

Stanley J. Grenz, *Welcoming but Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998).

Dennis Hollinger, *The Meaning of Sex: Christian Ethics and the Moral Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

Dale Kuehne, *Sex and the iWorld: Rethinking Relationship Beyond an Age of Individualism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

David Peterson, ed., *Holiness and Sexuality: Homosexuality in a Biblical Context* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2004).

**Biblical**

Michael Bird and Gordon Preece, ed., *Sexegesis: An Evangelical Response to 'Five Uneasy Pieces' on Homosexuality* (Sydney: Anglican press, 2012).

Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001).

Andrew Goddard and Don Horrocks, ed., *Biblical and Pastoral Responses to Homosexuality: Resources for Church Leaders* (London: Evangelical Alliance, 2012) [Resources for Church Leaders](#)

Dan O. Via and Robert A. J. Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003). There are numerous resources on Gagnon's [website](http://www.robgagnon.net/). <http://www.robgagnon.net/>

**Theological**

Robert George, et al., "What Is Marriage?" *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* (2010, Vol. 34.1): 245-287. This article contains a powerful and convincing argument against SSM based on church tradition, natural law and the public good, i.e. not first and foremost on theological grounds. An electronic copy is [available](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1722155). [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1722155](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1722155)

Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson and Robert P. George, *What Is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* (New York: Encounter, 2012). This book began as the article listed above. It has expanded and become much more thorough in its instruction and defense of marriage between a man and a woman. It is one of the best defenses written for the contemporary discussion/debate.

Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision Of The New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996).

William L. Kynes, "The Marriage Debate: A Public Theology of Marriage," *Trinity Journal* 28/2 (Fall 2007), 187-203.

Christopher Chenault Roberts, *Creation And Covenant: The Significance of Sexual Difference in the Moral Theology of Marriage* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007).

**Pastoral**

Andrew Goddard and Glynn Harrison, *Unwanted Same-Sex Attraction: Issues of Pastoral and Counselling Support* (London: Christian Medical Fellowship, 2011).

Andrew Goddard and Don Horrocks, ed., *Biblical and Pastoral Responses to Homosexuality: Resources for Church Leaders* (London: Evangelical Alliance, 2012).

Mark Yarhouse, *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors and Friends* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 2010).

## Select Annotated Resources from the (EFCA Statement on Human Sexuality, 2013)

### Social Science

All of these resources address science and the social sciences. This is an area that has had a profound influence on how homosexuality is understood. In many ways, this has become the cultural “bible” or authority on this topic.

Stanton L. Jones, “[Same-sex Science](#),” *First Things*, 220 (February 2012), 27-33. For an expanded version of this article cf. Stanton L. Jones (January 2012), “[Sexual Orientation and Reason: On the Implications of False Beliefs about Homosexuality](#).”

Stanton L. Jones and Mark Yarhouse, *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church’s Moral Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000).

Stanton L. Jones and Mark Yarhouse, *Ex-Gays? A Longitudinal Study of Religiously Mediated Change in Sexual Orientation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007).

Stanton L. Jones and Mark A. Yarhouse, “A Longitudinal Study of Attempted Religiously- Mediated Sexual Orientation Change,” *The Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 37 (5) (2011), 404-427.

### Testimonials

Julian Hardyman, “[An interview with Vaughan Roberts: A battle I face](#),” *Evangelicals Now* (October 2012) Roberts acknowledges that he has same-sex inclinations, but he lives under the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible and knows that to act upon those inclinations would be sinful.

Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010). Hill shares a similar story to Roberts. It enables one to understand how fellow believers who struggle with these inclinations desire to be faithful, and how we as the church must grow in our awareness of and ministry to these fellow believers.

Christopher Keane, *What Some of You Were: Stories About Christians and Homosexuality* (Sydney: Matthias Media, 2001).

### Other

Voddie Baucham, “[Gay Is Not the New Black](#)”

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/gay-is-not-the-new-black/> This is an excellent argument against treating “gay rights” as the contemporary “racial civil rights”, which is argued by many today.

Kevin DeYoung, “[The Church and Homosexuality: Ten Commitments](#)” *The Gospel Coalition Website* (Posted May 20, 2012)

Dan Kimball, *They Like Jesus but Not the Church: Insights from Emerging Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).