

BIBLICAL SEX ETHICS AND SAME-SEX ATTRACTION at Medway Community Church

At Medway Community Church (MCC) we believe that whether culturally in vogue or out, the Scriptures are inerrant and the only infallible rule for faith and conduct; consequently, we strive to maintain a Biblically derived ethic of sexuality. MCC seeks to be a community of grace where people of all lifestyles and experiences are both welcome to worship and warmly encouraged to explore the life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Q: At MCC, are those within the LGBTQ¹ community welcome at normal services and other church functions?

Absolutely. Unless someone poses a danger to others or they are intentionally disruptive, MCC embraces all people – regardless of lifestyle or sexual preference – inviting them to attend our worship services, small-group Bible Studies, community service events, and many other fellowship opportunities. Correspondingly, our church family is encouraged to invite to MCC their gay and straight friends, family, and neighbors.

Q: Is there Scriptural evidence that suggests a gay marriage or homosexual lifestyle is inconsistent with Christian conduct?

Aside from the more general passages about sexual purity and thought-life, there are six texts in the Bible that directly address homosexual behavior: three in the Old Testament (Genesis 19, Leviticus 18, Leviticus 20) and three in the New (Romans 1, 1 Corinthians 6, 1 Timothy 1). The consistent teaching of the Bible is clear: in each instance where the Bible addresses homosexual behavior, it is to oppose a gay lifestyle as out of alignment with Christian faith.

Q: If sexual orientation is inherent, rather than a choice, are people still culpable for acting upon those sexual desires?

Regardless of political or religious rhetoric, the individual who experiences same-sex attraction will likely testify their sexual desires do not feel like a choice. And as with virtually all temperaments and proclivities, there are probably both intrinsic and extrinsic contributors. Genetic tendencies and preferences, however, do not vindicate our choices (be they regarding greed, pride, lust, gossip, homosexuality, etc). The human heart is both vulnerable and culpable – swept along, yet also actively making choices. And we are Biblically responsible for those choices (Matthew 5:19).

Q: Do you believe homosexuality is somehow worse than other sins, or in a different category altogether?

No. While various forms of sin will carry various consequences, ultimately all forms of both sexual and non-sexual brokenness require the same thing: the cleansing and life-changing atonement of Jesus Christ. Whether one's particular sin pattern is sex outside of marriage, pornography addiction, pathological lying, adultery, theft, or any one of a thousand other forms of rebellion against God, the Gospel of Christ can transform both our hearts and our behavior.

Q: Does MCC officiate gay marriage ceremonies or civil unions?

We do not. While we deeply love our gay and lesbian friends, it is our conviction that Scripture affirms either marriage between a man and woman or celibacy as the two given norms for sexual expression (Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:25-33, Matthew 19:9-12). Put simply, we believe our first

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning

allegiance must be to the Word of God. We are grateful for our nation's protection of the free exercise of religion, which allows us to sincerely heed our conscience while we strive to humbly and faithfully live out the Bible's instruction.

Q: Why do you think Scripture presents marriage as a one-man/one-woman institution?

Ultimately, like all spheres of divine instruction, the creation design for marriage is God's prerogative. Some of the historically accepted understandings for male/female marriage are that:

1. It images God's Trinitarian nature (diversity and unity in one).
2. It reflects God's life-giving love (the union does not self-terminate, but will often multiply and extend to future generations).
3. It pictures Christ's relationship with His church (see Ephesians 5:25-33).

Q: Should homosexuals simply try harder to either alter their orientation or minimize their same-sex desires?

If both homosexual and heterosexual lifestyles may (and often *do*) fail to be governed by Christ, then it follows that the antidote for homosexuality is not mere heterosexuality. A homosexual, like anyone else, can pursue a heterosexual lifestyle yet remain bound by lust, greed, and fear. The purpose of the Gospel, and Christ's atoning sacrifice, was not to adjust a few partitioned areas within an individual's life. Rather, the crucifixion of Jesus was necessary because God is against all who are by nature living apart from him in rebellion and self-service. Through the cross, God calls people to set their minds not on the things of man, but the things of God – dying to self and made an entirely new creation. (Mark 8:33-35, 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Q: How will I be treated at MCC if a member of my family confesses same-sex attraction, or currently lives as a practicing homosexual?

You will be loved – plain and simple. You and your family will be welcomed as sinners in need of grace, by sinners in need of grace. At MCC we claim the right to be honest with the Bible and to address the topic of homosexuality from time to time. On one hand, we have no intention of over-stressing it to the detriment of the many other things Scripture teaches. On the other hand, we want to speak of sexuality often enough so that those trying to surrender this part of their lives to Christ will be encouraged, and others will not be misled by a culture that increasingly allows only one side of the discussion to be heard.

(unanimously approved by the Board of Elders 07/2014)

