

BEING JUDGED BY HOMOSEXUALS

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Christians who declare that homosexual conduct is sinful and something of which the practitioner must repent to be in a right relationship with God are sometimes condemned by homosexual apologists for violating the Lord's command not to judge. They also are accused of being hateful simply for telling homosexuals what God has revealed in the Bible. These charges are groundless and hypocritical, but those making them are impervious to correction or enlightenment because they are not interested in the truth of the matter. They are only interested in whether the charges are useful in shielding their consciences or advancing some other agenda.

This effort to suppress disapproval of homosexual conduct is done in the name of love for homosexuals, but it is a false love. Genuine love is willing to pay a price to bless its object, willing to risk hostility and alienation by speaking painful truths for the sake of its object. As the Spirit wrote through Solomon, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy" (Prov. 27:6, ESV).

The truth is that homosexual conduct is sinful (e.g., Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:10-11). This was unanimously recognized by Jews and Christians for millennia. Pretending otherwise does immeasurable harm by enabling a delusion that will keep the homosexual trapped in sin and blinded to his or her need to come to Christ in repentance. Who really loves the homosexual? Is it the one who reinforces his defiance of God and thus helps to pave the road to his eternal condemnation or the one who exposes that defiance in the hope he will turn to Christ for eternal life? To ask the question is to answer it.

Our culture appreciates the nobility of "tough love" in other circumstances, such as in training rebellious teenagers or dealing with alcoholics, but demonizes tough love of homosexuals as "homophobia." The church cannot be intimidated. As Christ loved sinful humanity enough to endure public scolding in order to bless it, so we as his disciples must love homosexuals enough to do the same. Those who come to the light will be forever grateful; those who refuse will realize on "that Day" that we were acting for their good.

The point of the Lord's statement about judging in Mat. 7:1 (Lk. 6:37) is that one is not to judge inappropriately, not to judge by one's own standards rather than God's or not to judge in a biased and harsh way. The claim that Christ's prohibition of judging means that Christians are not to label any conduct as sinful or inform those engaging in that conduct of the need to repent is transparently false.

Jesus repeatedly taught the need to obey God's will as part of the faith response that receives salvation (e.g., Mat. 7:21-27, 12:50, 24:45-51, 25:14-30, 25:31-46; Lk. 13:23-28), and repentance is part of the message that disciples are commanded to preach

to the world (e.g., Lk. 24:46-47; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20; Rom. 2:4-5; Heb. 6:1; 2 Pet. 3:9). Jesus instructed the church to exclude from its fellowship those who refuse to repent of their sin (Mat. 18:15-17). He chastised the Christians in Pergamum and Thyatira for tolerating impenitent sinners in their midst (Rev. 2:14-16, 2:20) and praised the Christians in Ephesus for hating the sinful practices of the Nicolaitans, which he also hates (Rev. 2:6). Paul, speaking by the Spirit of God, warned the churches in Galatia that those who live in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21). He was incensed that the church in Corinth was tolerating the sexual immorality of one of its members and demanded that the person be excluded from the fellowship (1 Cor. 5:1-5).

The hypocrisy is that those who seek to exempt homosexual conduct from moral condemnation on the basis of Christ's words about judging condemn as mean, hateful, un-Christian, etc. those who dare to inform others of the Bible's teaching about homosexual conduct. If they believe the proscription of judging means that it is not our place as flawed humans to condemn any kind of conduct, on what basis do they condemn the act of telling others that homosexual conduct is sinful? They apply their alleged sensitivity to judging quite selectively: it is wrong for you to judge their conduct, an offense worthy of contempt, but it is fine for them to judge yours. When one sees such blatant contradictions, it is a clue that something other than a pursuit of truth is at work.

The question, of course, is not whether God loves homosexuals. The cross of Christ proves forever the depth of God's love for all mankind. The question is whether the homosexual will love God. One cannot love God and live in defiance of his commandments (Jn. 14:15, 14:21-24, 15:10, 15:14; 1 Jn. 2:4-6, 5:3; 2 Jn. 6). Whether that is comfortable or not, it is true.

Jesus said in Mat. 10:34-38 (ESV):³⁴ "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Loyalty to Christ will at times conflict with loyalty to family. When that happens, the Christian's overriding commitment to Christ can generate hostility and division. We do not desire or welcome that reaction, but we will not make an idol of our family and choose peace with it over faithfulness to the Lord. Here we stand; we can do no other.