

What God Says About Same-Sex Marriage: How ~~Would~~ Did Jesus Treat Those Struggling with Sexual Sins?

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I. Introduction

When it comes to those struggling with homosexuality, it's interesting, sometimes we turn that sin into the worst sin ever. This makes us do strange things and act in ways we wouldn't towards others. At times, it seems we even rob homosexuals of their basic humanity. We're scared to be around them and enjoy their company for fear that someone might think we approve of their sin. But is this the way we treat others? Is this the way Jesus treated those struggling with sexual sin or any other sinner?

II. How Are We Supposed to Treat Those Struggling with Sexual Sin?

We shouldn't treat the sin of homosexuality as if it's in a class by itself. We should recognize it's a sin but we shouldn't let it blind us from seeing the person behind the sin. Among the seven sins that God hates are pride and lying, Proverbs 6:17. When was the last time we treated liars and the proud the way we treat homosexuals? It seems we're selective about the sins we're willing to hate. We should treat all sinners, even and perhaps especially those struggling with sexual sins, the way Christ did: with love and grace, with a desire to see them restored by God.

How did Jesus treat those struggling with sexual sins?

The Woman at the Well, John 4, Jesus purposely goes through Samaria to get to Galilee. Why? To have a serious conversation with a particular woman. Who is she? By society's standards (Jesus' and hers), she's an outcast who doesn't deserve the company of anyone, let alone a Rabbi like Jesus: she's a woman who's by herself, a Samaritan, and a woman of low character—she's living in sexual sin.

So how does Jesus treat her? Who does Jesus see, a person He can't be around, a racial rival who can't drink out of His cup, a loose woman? Is this what Jesus sees, a wicked sinner? No, in fact Jesus saw her sin as the shackle that had enslaved her, made her a captive of this false identity she was living: she thinks she's a woman who's not complete unless she has the love and companionship of a man. That's why He put His finger on her moral problems, not to highlight them, but to free her from them. She thinks her salvation is in the love of a man; Jesus shows her that her salvation is in Him.....how do you see those struggling with sexual sin, as outcasts or people who need Jesus' salvation.....which, by the way, they will not find without you?

The Woman Caught in Adultery, John 8, the religious leaders, experts in God's Word, brought a woman to Jesus who was caught in adultery (where's the man?). God's Law demanded the death penalty for such sinners and that's what the mob, led by the religious experts, wanted. The mob sees a wicked adulteress, what does Jesus see? First, Jesus, who is God in the flesh, gave them this Law. Second, He didn't give it to them to kill each other with it. He gave it to them to call them to a godlier life so that they *all* would realize their need for His salvation, Galatians 3:24. Therefore, Jesus didn't see another sinner who needed to be punished with death. He saw a daughter of God who had been so deceived, so fooled about who she really was that she committed adultery.

So what does Jesus do? He does what needs to be done with every sinner if they're ever going to be rescued from their sin: He removes her condemnation, **then** He calls her to a godlier life. You can't just tell someone to stop sinning, to do this is to be on the side of the religious leaders who want to stone this woman to death. You first have to remove their condemnation and then call them to a godlier life.

Thus, here we have the clearest example of how to treat those struggling with sexual sin. God's Word is not to be the club we use to beat those who struggle with sin. It should reveal to them (and us) the real problem behind our sin, which should then drive us to show them mercy instead of condemnation. The religious wanted to use it as a club and beat this woman to death. Jesus took their club away and turned it on them, rescuing the woman in the process. **Then**, He shows her who she was meant to be: a child of God and not an adulterous woman deserving of death.

How did Jesus treat sinners, period?

He loved Hanging Out with Them and He Longed to Heal Them, Mark 2:13-17, sinners of all types were constantly flocking to Jesus; they followed Him wherever He went. Why did they like hanging out with this Rabbi and not the other Rabbis? Because of how the other Rabbis, the experts in God's Word, saw them. When Levi throws Jesus a party, not only are His disciples there, but all those sinners that keep following Jesus. So there's Jesus eating and drinking with all these sinners. But at this party there are also other Rabbis. What's their opinion of all this? They can't believe their eyes; how can this Rabbi eat and drink with sinners?! Jesus replies, "The well don't need a doctor; the sick do. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." All the religious leaders could see were untouchable sinners. All Jesus saw were children made in God's image who needed His salvation. These self-righteous leaders were supposed to bring God's salvation to these sinners but all they could do is condemn them.

He Saw Them as Beloved Children of God Deserving of His Forgiveness, Luke 7:36-50, here Jesus is invited to dinner by a Pharisee, a religious leader and expert in God's Word. But something unexpected happened. A woman walks in on them. We're told that she's a sinner, who is known to the Pharisee as a sinner. Apparently she came to anoint Jesus' feet because she's so thankful for God's forgiveness. But she's overcome with emotion and begins to cry uncontrollably. To add insult to injury, she lets her hair down—something no decent woman would do in public—so that she can wipe the tears off of Jesus' feet. She then keeps kissing Jesus' feet and anoints them with oil. The Pharisee and his guests are disgusted by the whole scene and it proves to the Pharisee that Jesus is no prophet, "How could a prophet let this sinner touch him?" Jesus then reveals who the real sinner is: this Pharisee is self-righteous, which keeps him from showing Jesus basic common courtesies and drives him to see a filthy sinner unworthy of even touching his dirty feet. Jesus, however, saw a woman so overwhelmed by God's forgiveness that she would throw all convention aside in order to express her love and gratitude to God for having forgiven her sins. To Jesus sinners weren't outcasts; they were people in need of God's healing and salvation.

III. Conclusion

How should we treat those struggling with sexual sin, homosexual or otherwise? The way Jesus did, like people who deserve your friendship, mercy, and help. Think about how we treat other sexual sinners: two studies show that 80% of evangelical Christians ages 18-29 have had sex before marriage. In a recent ChristianMingle survey 61% of self-identified Christian singles said they're willing to have casual sex without being in love while only 11% said they're waiting to have sex until they're married. Yet another study conducted by USA Today of young adults ages 18-31 showed that 65% of professing Christians now live together before marriage. Have all these Christians who're living in sexual sin been blacklisted or are they still participating in our churches?