

## LGBTQ FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

**I support the Bible of marriage, which states that marriage is between a man and a woman.**

*The concept of "traditional marriage" has changed over time, and the definition of marriage as always being between one man and one woman is historically inaccurate.*

There are at least **eight** different marriage/family styles mentioned in the Bible without criticism. Of these, many were non-consensual and some involved continual rapes.

### **Man + Woman (Nuclear Family):** [Genesis 2:24](#)

- Wives subordinate to their husbands
- Interfaith marriage forbidden
- Marriages generally arranged, not based on romantic love
- Brides unable to prove virginity were stoned to death

### **Man + Wives + Concubines**

- Abraham ([Genesis 25:6](#))
- Gideon ([Judges 9:18](#))
- Nahor ([Genesis 22:24](#))
- Jacob ([Genesis 35:22](#))
- Eliphaz ([Genesis 36:12](#))
- Caleb ([1 Chronicles 2:46](#))
- Manassah ([1 Chronicles 7:14](#))
- Solomon ([1 Kings 11:3](#))
- Belshazzar ([Daniel 5:2](#))

### **Man + Woman + Woman's Property:** [Genesis 16](#)

Man could acquire his wife's property including her slaves

### **Man + Woman + Woman + ... (Polygamy)**

- Lamech ([Genesis 4:23](#))
- Esau ([Genesis 36:2](#))
- Jacob ([1 Timothy 4:13](#))
- Ashur ([1 Chronicles 4:5](#))
- Gideon ([Judges 8:31](#))
- Elkanah ([1 Samuel 1:2](#))

- David ([2 Samuel 2:2, 3:2-5, 3:13-15, 11:27; 1 Samuel 25:39-43, 27:3, 30:5, 30:18](#))
- Solomon ([1 Kings 11:1-3](#))
- Rehoboam ([2 Chronicles 11:21](#))
- Jehoram ([2 Chronicles 21:17](#))
- Joash ([2 Chronicles 24:3](#))
- Jehoiachin ([2 Kings 24:15](#))
- Belshazzar ([Daniel 5:1-31](#))

### **Man + Brother's Widow (Levirate "brother-in-law" Marriage):** [Genesis 38:6-10](#)

- Widow who had not borne a son required to marry her brother-in-law
- Must submit sexually to her new husband

### **Rapist + His Victim:** [Deuteronomy 22:28-29](#)

- Virgin who is raped must marry her rapist
- Rapist must pay victim's father 50 shekels of silver for property loss

### **Male Soldier + Prisoner of War:** [Numbers 31:1-18, Deuteronomy 21:11-14](#)

- Under Moses' command, Israelites kill every Midianite man, woman, child; save for the virgin girls who are taken as spoils of war
- Wives must submit sexually to their new owners

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### Male Slave + Female Slave: [Exodus 21:4](#)

- Slave owner could assign female slaves to his male slaves

- Female slaves must submit sexually to their new husbands

**Marriage is a religious institution and it comes from the Bible.**

*Marriage is an ancient institution, predating recorded history.*

Early marriage was seen as a strategic alliance between families. In some cultures, parents even married one child to the spirit of a deceased child to strengthen familial bonds.

Marriages in the West were originally contracts between the families of two partners, with the Catholic Church and the state staying out of it. **In 1215, the Catholic Church decreed that partners had to publicly post notices** of an impending marriage in a local parish to cut down on the frequency of invalid marriages (in place until the 1980s). **Until the 1500s, the Church accepted a couple's word** that they had exchanged marriage vows.

Monogamy may seem central to marriage, but polygamy is throughout history. Monogamy became the guiding principle for Western marriages sometime between the **sixth and the ninth centuries**. There was a protracted battle between the Catholic Church and the old nobility and kings who wanted to say 'I can take a second wife. The Church eventually prevailed, with monogamy becoming central to the notion of marriage by the ninth century.

Still, monogamous marriage was very different from the modern conception of mutual fidelity. Though marriage was legally or sacramentally recognized between just one man and one woman, until the 19th century, men had wide latitude to engage in extramarital affairs.

Only by about 250 years ago did the notion of love matches gain traction, meaning marriage was based on love and possibly sexual desire. But **mutual attraction in marriage wasn't important until about a century ago**.

Source: <https://www.livescience.com/37777-history-of-marriage.html>

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**The Bible says that homosexuality is a sin.**

*The New Testament indicates that many acts are "abominations," all of which relate to violations of cultural practices and norms of the time. The Old Testament is subject to inaccurate translations and failure to consider the context of a handful of passages which contribute to the perception by some that the Bible addresses monogamous same-sex relationships.*

Picture a man and a woman who are devoted to each other. They have a loving, caring, faithful relationship. Now, use those same words to describe a relationship between two men. Does it really matter? Just like heterosexual relationships, same sex relationships are not harmful to anyone, and are characterized by positive motives and traits like faithfulness, commitment, mutual love, and self-sacrifice. Is a prohibition on same sex relationships consistent with the overarching message of Jesus Christ, and are they are consistent with the traits of sin?

While the Bible doesn't change, our understanding is continuously undergoing change. For example, Luke 16:18 seems to clearly establish the Bible's position on divorce and remarriage: *"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery."* In 1884, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) approved a statement on the sanctity of marriage, declaring adultery to be the only justification and legal basis for divorce and prohibiting ministers from remarrying divorced persons.\*

However, the UMC position evolved, becoming more permissive in 1940, then 1960, and again in 1984, becoming increasingly consistent with the central message of Jesus' ministry+: *"Divorce does not preclude a new marriage. We encourage an intentional commitment of the Church and society to minister compassionately to those in the process of divorce, as well as members of divorced and remarried families, in a community of faith where God's grace is shared by all."*~

\*<http://unitedmethodistreporter.com/2016/04/28/divorce-and-remarriage-in-american-methodism-the-evolution-of-church-positions-from-1884-to-2012/>  
~<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/the-nurturing-community#divorce>  
+<https://bibledebates.wordpress.com/2010/03/27/methodist-changes-on-divorce/>

Also, see these resource links:

[Does Christian Scripture Really Condemn Homosexuality?](#)

[The Clobber Verses - Six verses cited at gays, lesbians, same-sex relationships and the LGBTQ+](#)

[The Bible Doesn't Say That Homosexuality is a Sin  
An Analysis of the Seven Scriptures Sometimes Claimed to Refer to Homosexuality](#)

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**The United Methodist Church has long considered homosexuality contrary to Christianity.**

*The UMC position labeling homosexuality incompatible with Christian teaching wasn't enacted until 1972.*

Sixteen years AFTER this ban (in 1988), the General Conference created a "Committee to Study Homosexuality" to present a report to the General Council on Ministries. While the committee membership was intended to be "truly inclusive," no gay people were allowed to join the committee. Nevertheless, after four years of study (in 1992), the committee reached the following consensus:

- The 7 references to homosexuality in the Bible represent ancient culture and not the will of God. They cannot be taken as definitive.
- Homosexuality is a normal human sexual variant, which can be healthy and whole.
- Covenantal, committed, and monogamous homosexual relationships should be affirmed.
- These conclusions are supported by God's grace, which is visible in the life of lesbian and gay Christians.

A majority report recommended: ***"The present state of knowledge and insight in the biblical, theological, ethical, biological, psychological, and sociological fields does not provide a satisfactory basis upon which the church can responsibly maintain the condemnation of all homosexual practice."***

This report, from the UMC's own appointed committee, was "received" by the General Conference, but not approved.

Source: [http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom\\_umc6.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/hom_umc6.htm)

**Same sex marriage doesn't make sense because the primary purpose of marriage is procreation.**

*Many heterosexual couplings are unable to procreate, but this does not disqualify them from becoming married.*

In many early cultures, men could dissolve a marriage or take another wife if a woman was infertile. However, the early Christian church was a trailblazer in arguing that **marriage was not contingent** on producing offspring.

As well, this line of thought would also mean that infertile couples\*, couples too old to have children, couples in which a partner was physically, emotionally, or mentally unable to conceive, and couples who simply don't want to have children are also precluded from marriage. Because (as of 2012) married couples without children outnumbered married couples with children by 9%~, that would mean a lot fewer marriages.

\*6% of married women aged 15-44 are infertile, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Infertility," [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), Feb. 13, 2014

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~ Jonathan Vespa, Jamie M. Lewis, and Rose M. Kreider, "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2012," census.gov, Aug. 2013

**Homosexuality is unnatural.**

*Homosexual behavior has been documented in about 500 species as of 1999, ranging from primates to gut worms.*

The presence of same-sex sexual behavior in mammals was not officially observed on a large scale until the 1990s due to possible observer bias caused by social attitudes towards LGBT people making homosexuality in animals a taboo subject.

Source (and list): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_mammals\\_displaying\\_homosexual\\_behavior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_mammals_displaying_homosexual_behavior)

**Homosexuality is a choice.**

*If sexual attraction is a choice, anyone could choose to be homosexual or heterosexual. Can you choose to be the opposite of what you are?*

Whether it's a choice isn't a rational or faith-based argument against same sex relationships. Regardless, the overwhelming evidence is that same sex attraction is not a choice, and it's not a mental disorder. In fact, being gay is part of the normal range of human sexuality. Same sex attraction is not a mutation, but much like the genetic determination of the color of your hair.~

And from a rational standpoint, who would choose such a life given the pain and discrimination experienced from such a decision? Responses from homosexuals include:

- "Being gay is not a choice. No one would choose to be gay and go through all the ridicule."
- "Of course it's not a choice! When did you choose to be straight? Why would you want to throw yourself against the current of society?"
- "Nobody would choose to become a second class citizen and to get death threats and not be accepted by their own family."
- "With such an anti-homosexuality society, I'd rather choose to be straight (sadly saying).
- "Growing up I would have chosen straight if I could so the ass kicking would have stopped."\*

In any event, were it a choice, that would mean that everyone, including you, could choose to be gay. Could you choose to be gay? When did you choose to be straight?

~<http://www.health24.com/Sex/Sexual-diversity/The-verdict-is-in-homosexuality-is-not-a-choice-20150807>

\*[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-siebold/need-more-proof-being-gay\\_b\\_5805680.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-siebold/need-more-proof-being-gay_b_5805680.html)

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### Homosexuality is personally offensive to me.

*Believing something to be unpleasant is not a basis for Biblical interpretation or restricting others from practicing their faith.*

While everyone is entitled to feel any way they like, being uncomfortable doesn't constitute a rational or faith-based argument against same sex relationships. It's likely that everyone considers the prospect of their own parents having sex, or people they consider unattractive having sex to be icky. But there's no religious prohibition on such acts. In fact, it's pretty evident that the opposite is true.

And just as with heterosexual relationships, the mechanics of sex is only one component of a relationship that includes love, caring, faithfulness, and self-sacrifice.

### Why should I even consider the idea that homosexuality is not a sin?

*Even many conservative Christians are reconsidering the idea that homosexuality is a sin.*

C.S. Lewis: *"It is Christ Himself, not the Bible, who is the true word of God. The Bible, read in the right spirit and with the guidance of good teachers, will bring us to Him. We must not use the Bible as a sort of encyclopedia out of which texts can be taken for use as weapons."*

Over the past decade, **evangelical support for gay marriage has more than doubled**, according to polling by the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute. The shift is especially visible among **young evangelicals under age 35, a near majority of whom now support same-sex marriage**. And gay student organizations have formed at Christian colleges across the country, including flagship evangelical campuses such as Wheaton College in Illinois and Baylor in Texas.\*

Two-thirds of U.S. Catholics now support same-sex marriage, as do a similar share of white mainline Protestants (68%). The share of white evangelical Protestants who support same-sex marriage has grown from 27% in 2016 to 35% in 2017.~

Some of the most prominent evangelicals—megachurch pastors, seminary professors and bestselling authors—have publicly announced support for gay marriage. The Presbyterian Church, a Protestant denomination with a significant minority of evangelicals, voted to allow ministers to perform same-sex weddings.\* These are some well-known evangelical Christians who have publicly broken from the traditional hardline position against same-sex marriage:

- [Brian McLaren](#). *"Over time, I could not square their stories and experiences with the theology I had inherited. So I re-opened the issue, read a lot, restudied Scripture, and came to believe that just as the Western church had been wrong on slavery, colonialism, environmental plunder, subordinating women*

*segregation and apartheid (all of which it justified biblically) ... we had been wrong on this issue."*

- [Adam Hamilton](#). Earlier in his ministry he, too, thought the Bible condemned homosexuality and thus he believed it would

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not countenance the existence of long-term, committed homosexual relationships. But after much study Hamilton changed his mind — and has written about that change.

- **[Tony Campolo](#)**. *“I asked myself a very simple question: can I deny homosexual couples what I am personally experiencing in the way of blessings and joy in a relationship? I just knew too many couples who were living out the Christian life, who were committed to the work of the kingdom and who were in edifying relationships.”*
- **[Jen Hatmaker](#)**. The evangelical leader, author, and HGTV star publicly changed her views on gay marriage in 2016. Hatmaker broke from her evangelical base, telling the Religion News Service that she supports same-sex marriage and believes LGBT relationships can be holy. Such statements followed a social media post in which Hatmaker called for LGBT inclusion in churches.
- **[Jim Wallis](#)**. The founder of Sojourners magazine, Wallis was raised evangelical. He defended traditional marriage in a 2008 Christianity Today article, saying he wasn’t sure he’d perform a same-sex blessing. In a 2013 interview, Wallis answered “yes” when asked if he supported same-sex marriage.
- **[Matthew Vines](#)**. After taking a leave of absence from Harvard University to study the Bible and homosexuality, Matthew Vines gave a speech at his church about accepting gay Christians that has amassed over 1 million views on YouTube since 2012.
- **[Rob Bell](#)**. The former pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church publicly stated his views on gay marriage in 2013. *“I am for marriage. I am for fidelity. I am for love, whether it’s a man and a woman, a woman and a woman, a man and a man,” Bell said. “And I think the ship has sailed. This is the world we are living in and we need to affirm people wherever they are.”*
- **[Trey Pearson](#)**. In a post on his website titled “My Coming Out Letter,” Christian rock musician Trey Pearson told fans that he identified as a gay man, despite being married with children. He explained in 2016 that he was raised in a faith that taught him “sexual orientation was a matter of choice,” so he repressed his sexual desires most of his life.
- **[Rachel Held Evans](#)**. In 2015, The Washington Post called Christian author Rachel Held Evans “the most polarizing woman in evangelicalism” based on her positions on homosexuality, topics she’s grappled with publicly since 2008. In an old post, “An Evangelical’s Response to Homosexuality,” she refuses to choose a side but admits to wondering if the evangelical church “has it wrong.” In recent years, she has referred to herself as an “ally.”

\*<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/07/evangelicals-gay-marriage-108608>

~<http://www.pewforum.org/fact-sheet/changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>