

Session 12

“Don’t we All Have Rights?”

The “Rights Fight”: Gay Rights, Gay Marriage, Tolerance Guidelines

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:21-25

Today’s Lesson Objectives:

1. Describe how the “rights Fight” in America is undermining marriage, and what we can do.
2. Be able to cite Bible references to Gospel “right(s)” and state how Paul models selflessness.
3. Cite scriptures to share with Gay Rights activists of God’s assessment of homosexuality.
4. Be ready to give a defense for biblical marriage based on Genesis foundations.
5. Be ready to counsel parents how to biblically deal with a child tempted by homosexuality.

Key Verses: John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them **He gave the right** to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*

Revelation 22:14 *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may **have the right** to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.*

Exodus 21:10 *If [a man] takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal **rights** [of his first wife].*

1 Corinthians 9: ³ *My defense to those who examine me is this:* ⁴ **Do we not have a right** to eat and drink? ⁵ *Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?*

2 Thessalonians 3:9 **not because we do not have the right** to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

Introduction

America is the most rights-obsessed society in history! America was born from a dispute about rights. Our Founding Fathers penned in the *Declaration of Independence*: “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*”.

Almost every political and social issue of our day eventually reduces to someone invoking his or her rights. Gay Rights is one of the biggest social issues debated today. Unfortunately, churches are often reluctant or ill-equipped to confront the issue. So today’s lesson will focus on this issue particularly in relation to Biblical marriage guidelines, as a framework for effective apologetics questions to ask a friend or loved one who questions your position on this issue. Also, in our years as foreign missionaries we have occasionally had to comfort and counsel Christian parents who thought they raised their children with Christian values but had a child or other loved caught in homosexual behavior. Or how would you counsel a Christian wrestling with homosexual temptations, or maybe even “come out of the closet”? This session will attempt to deal with these questions Biblically, compassionately, and appropriately.

Guide to the Presentation

A. A Christian Response to the “Rights Fight”

1. Most people have a general sense of what a right is, but when asked to define “rights” people often find it to be difficult. Generally we think in terms of government **Protections**: Things the State (or other individuals) is not permitted to take from me or is duty-bound to protect for me; and **Privileges**: Things I am free to do without interference. So “Gay Rights” advocates are talking about being included in civil rights by passing laws that overthrow traditional morality-based laws outlawing homosexuality as lewd behavior.
2. A Word Study of “**Rights**” in the Bible reveals that the word (in the plural) only appears in the Old Testament, and only 10-20 times depending on the translation, referring to requirements of the Mosaic Law. God is a **righteous** God and He requires that people be treated justly, so after the Flood of Noah’s day He instituted government to make laws, and He Himself gave Israel the Levitical Law starting in Exodus 20.
3. Exodus 21:10 is the first of the 10+ appearances of the word, and clearly refers to a legal requirement of the Law for marriage: *“If [a man] takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights [of his first wife].”* All Old Testament examples are of legal government ordinances which God requires man to keep.
4. In the New Testament, the Gospel writer John mentions a right (singular) when we believe and receive Christ through the Gospel: John 1:12 is **the right** to become children of God, entering into His Eternal Kingdom at conversion; and Revelation 22:14 the **right** to the tree of life entering into God’s eternal city after Jesus resurrects us bodily.
5. Jesus never refers to “**rights**” in His earthly teaching. We are to obey laws and enjoy rights of the government, but always ready to suffer loss.
6. Paul is the only NT writer who refers to rights, and always only in the sense of defending himself for not claiming or using a supposed right. John MacArthur comments that these passages use irony or sarcasm against false teachers who do claim rights trying to invalidate his ministry. Here are examples for discussion, starting with 1 Corinthians 9:3-5 which we read earlier with our key verses:
 - 1 Corinthians 9: ¹² If others have this **right of support** from you, shouldn’t we have it all the more? But we did not use **this right**. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Don’t you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?

- 2 Thessalonians 3:⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;⁹ not because we do not have the **right to this**, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.
7. In stark contrast, we live in a culture where people routinely invoke their rights and constantly invent new "rights," most have given very little thought to the nature and foundation of rights. If the Christian worldview is rejected, rights stand on nothing more than a foundation of sand, and we know what that leads to (Matthew 7:24-27!).
 8. The prevalence of rights disputes/claims in American culture is one more reason why Christians need to be trained in apologetics. While the current direction of rights claims in American culture can be a source of discouragement for Christians, we need to see that America's obsession with rights brings a wonderful opportunity to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our interest in learning how to explain and defend a Christian view of rights should not be limited to trying to stem the tide of cultural decay.
 9. Read John 1:12 again, which we can use to explain the Gospel along with Philippians 3:20 *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!"* The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as declared in the New Testament, made use of rights terminology because this would have made sense to a resident of the Roman Empire.

B. A Biblical Definition Of Marriage (from IBCD Care & Discipleship Handbook:

10. Throughout the Creation Week, every time God created something He called it "Good", until Day 6 when Adam was alone.
11. A shocking evaluation: In Genesis 2:18 *Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."*
12. How could something be "not good" before the fall? The situation was not bad, or evil, but instead it was lacking.
13. The wife is designed by God to make her husband complete
14. Marriage is a lifelong covenant relationship between one woman and one man.
Gen. 2:19-20, 24; Matt 19:4-5
15. Why did God bring all the animals to the man?
16. No other creature is a suitable helper. Only a woman can complete a man (and only a man can complete a woman).

A. Develop a Presuppositional Apologetic Response To Gay Rights:

17. Homosexuality is a perversion of God's design (also polygamy, divorce, fornication, etc)
Gen 2:24, Rom 1:26-32; Matt 19:5,8; 1 Tim 3:2; Deut 17:17; 1 Cor 7:2

18. A homosexual union cannot produce life. Even from a strictly naturalistic (science without God) view, what is the most obvious conclusion about homosexual union? According to Darwin and the theory of natural selection, survival for the purpose of reproduction (preserving the species) is the standard

B. Response When A Loved One Comes "Out Of The Closet:

We'll close with this short reading of 2 letters by Todd Friel, illustrating two very different responses of a father to his son who has expressed or confessed his homosexual temptations and tendencies, hoping for some help with his struggle since he was brought up in a Christian environment. Sadly many parents and pastors take the first approach or choose to ignore .

A word Study of “Rights” and civil right in the Bible, and “Doing right”

Exodus 21:10 If [a man] takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal **rights** [of his first wife].

Exodus 22:1 [*Property Rights*] “If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

Leviticus 25:31 The houses of the villages, however, which have no surrounding wall shall be considered as open fields; they have redemption **rights** and revert in the jubilee.

Proverbs 29:7 The righteous is concerned for the **rights** of the poor, The wicked does not understand *such* concern.

Proverbs 31:5 For they will drink and forget what is decreed, And pervert the **rights** of all the afflicted.

Proverbs 31:8 Open your mouth for the mute, For the **rights** of all the unfortunate.

Proverbs 31:9 Open your mouth, judge righteously, And defend the **rights** of the afflicted and needy.

Isaiah 5:23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the **rights** of the ones who are in the right!

Isaiah 10:2 So as to deprive the needy of justice And rob the poor of *their rights*, So that widows may be their spoil And that they may plunder the orphans.

Jeremiah 5:28 ‘They are fat, they are sleek, They also excel in deeds of wickedness; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the orphan, that they may prosper; And they do not defend the **rights** of the poor.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the **right** to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, [power KJV]

Romans 9:21 Or does not the potter have a **right** [power] over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

Romans 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is **right** in the sight of all men.

Romans 5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the **right** time Christ died for the ungodly.

1 Corinthians 9:4 ³ My defense to those who examine me is this: ⁴ Do we not have **a right to eat and drink**? ⁵ Do we not have **a right to take along a believing wife**, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

1 Corinthians 9 ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? ¹² If others have this **right of support** from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use **this right**. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder

the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?

2 Corinthians 13:7 Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is **right**, even though we may appear unapproved.

Ephesians 6:1 [*Family Relationships*] Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is **right**.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is **right**, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, think on these things.

2 Thessalonians 3: ⁸ nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we *kept* working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; ⁹ not because we do not have the **right to this**, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no **right** to eat.

James 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows *the right* thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

1 Peter 3:17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is **right** rather than for doing what is wrong.

2 Peter 1:13 I consider it **right**, as long as I am in this *earthly* dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder,

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the **right** to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.

When Did You Choose to Be Straight?

by Roger Patterson on July 5, 2013 on answersingenesis.org

Roger Patterson responds to help people answer one of the many attempts of skeptics to discredit the authority of God's Word over every aspect of life.

T. J. from Belgium recently asked the question below on Ken Ham's Facebook. Roger Patterson responds to help people answer one of the many attempts of skeptics to discredit the authority of God's Word over every aspect of life. As Christians, we must be prepared to look to Scripture as the sufficient source of truth as we exalt Jesus Christ as the hope of the world.

Ken, I'd be really interested to hear your thoughts and wisdom on this silly video which came to my attention recently. In it, members of the public are asked "when did you choose to be straight?" How should we respond to this question as born-again believers?

– T. J., Belgium

T. J., Thank you for your question and for your desire to stand up for truth in a wicked and perverse generation.

With the ascending popularity of embracing homosexual lifestyles as normal, many Christians find it difficult to argue against the different approaches from those who support homosexual marriage and other aspects of the homosexual or any other sexually deviant lifestyle.

There is no doubt from Scripture that living a homosexual lifestyle is a sin—a truth that has been clearly demonstrated by many people's explanation of the relevant passages. Knowing it is a sin, Christians must be prepared to call those who are practicing this sinful lifestyle to repentance and faith in Christ to forgive that sin as well as all of their other sins so that they can be made righteous before God and enter His kingdom ([1 Corinthians 6:9–11](#)).

The interviewers in the video ask people on the street in Colorado Springs, "Is being gay a choice?" and then follow up with "When did you choose to be straight?" Based on their reactions, it appeared that many of the people had never considered such an idea. Many responded to the second question and another follow-up question by acknowledging that being gay might be just as "normal" as being straight. However, none of the people in the video (one man is wearing a cross necklace) even bring God into the argument. This should never be the case for a Christian. To be a Christian is to be identified with Jesus Christ. Jesus prayed that His followers would be sanctified by the truth of the Word of God ([John 17:17](#)). Therefore, we should be prepared to defend who and what we are on the basis of God's Word.

The Myth of Neutrality

The questions being asked presuppose a neutral state from which you choose to be gay, straight, transgender, bisexual, a fornicator, an adulterer, etc. So, we must reframe the question since it does not align with reality. God made us male and female and designed us for heterosexual activity within the bounds of marriage ([Genesis 2:18–25](#)). That must be the defined normal position from which

anyone chooses to wander or hold fast. We must start our arguments from the truth of God's Word, not from the presuppositions of a worldview that rejects God.

I did not choose to be straight; God made me straight. All people are born within the male and female order of creation.¹ If I choose any other possibility (e.g., LGBTQ, an adulterer, a fornicator, etc.), I am choosing a perversion of God's good design. I am willingly choosing to act on sexual desires that God has called sinful rather than embracing what God has commanded. All of these choices are made by turning away from God's intention of normal, not away from some mythical neutral position based on an evolutionary view of man.

Morality Requires an Absolute Authority

Without the foundation of a moral absolute, there is no basis upon which anyone can call any kind of sexual behavior wrong; they can only call it different and pass no moral judgments. Christians look to God for the absolute standard and trust in His revealed truth to make our judgments.

Arguing that people are born gay and that it is not a choice is arguing against what God has clearly revealed in the Bible. Even if people are born with a propensity to seek sexual affection from the same sex, that does not make it right. To argue from this position, the people making the argument would have to excuse other moral wrongs because certain people are born with a propensity to lie, murder, rape, steal, and so on. That is, if they were to be consistent. Any moral perversion, from a tendency to lie to a tendency to be a psychopathic serial killer, would be justified from the same "born-that-way" argument. The problem is that their worldview is inherently inconsistent because they do not acknowledge God as the absolute authority when it comes to morality. They borrow from the Christian worldview when they like to condemn rape and murder, for example, but then reject God's commands regarding homosexual sin, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, and other sins where they do not prefer to follow God (*Ephesians 4:17–5:21*).

How to Respond Biblically

Bottom line—do not let those who stand against God lead you into a discussion that dismisses God from the arguments (*Colossians 2:1–10*). First, reframe the question to begin your argument from God's truth. Explain that God's Word clearly defines human sexuality and that homosexual behavior is sinful in God's eyes. Then, ask them upon what basis they would judge any sexual behavior to be wrong. By so doing you are exposing the failure of their worldview to even account for the categories of right and wrong, showing them that if their actions were consistent with their thinking, they could never condemn anything as wrong. This is an implementation of the "don't answer/answer" strategy described in *Proverbs 26:4–5*. If they appeal to some moral argument, simply ask them, "Why is that the correct standard?" until they have realized that they have no authority upon which to make such moral claims. Then point them to the God who is that authority—Jesus Christ.

Those who reject God as the ultimate moral standard are thereby also rejecting Christ. They have suppressed their knowledge of the true and living God to serve an idol that they have made in their minds (*Romans 1:18–32*). It is the privilege of a Christian to serve as an ambassador for King Jesus and to herald the offer of freedom from sin to all those who are at enmity with Christ (*2 Corinthians 5:20–21*). God has promised to all those who repent and put their trust in Christ that He will deliver them "from the power of darkness" and grant them a place in "the kingdom of the Son of His love" who has provided "redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins" (*Colossians 1:13–14*).

Christian, you were once an enemy of God but have now been reconciled to Him in Christ (*Romans 5:10–11*; *Colossians 1:21–22*). Boldly proclaim that there is hope in Christ and share the gospel with all who will hear.

Footnotes

1. In this cursed and fallen world, there are those born with ambiguous genitalia, hermaphroditism, and other genetic disorders that have resulted from sin. In these cases, careful consideration in cooperation with wise biblical counsel and the empowering of the Holy Spirit must be exercised in determining how to handle many of the issues involved. See “Feedback: Hermaphroditism”