

"How Should Christians Respond to our LGBT friends?" (+ Q&A;)

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[0 : 00] Sure. Thank you so much for that testimony. And I just want to pray because, yeah, even as you were sharing your testimony, I think, you know, those who don't want to hear your story were trying to jump in.

So I want to pray just for you to be able to speak freely from your heart, knowing that we're here, eager to listen to what you have to say. Let's pray. Oh, Father, we thank you so much. We thank you that your kindness does lead to repentance. And we pray that you would be with Christopher, our brother, as you speak to us through him. Thank you so much. Even in the midst of adversity, we even pray for Charles Calvin.

Would you soften his or her heart, even as they continue listening to this live stream? And Father, we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Over to you, Christopher.

Amen. Well, obviously, we see that the message of biblical sexuality is so often understood as not being good news.

[1 : 05] And even the message of the gospel is offensive. So how do we realize that but not be offensive ourselves?

You know, there was a survey done in North America, and they ask young Americans, both Christian and non-Christian, what do you think about Christians in general?

And they ask positive things and negative things. And what we found was actually quite shocking that Christians are viewed to be from the bottom. Let's see if we can go to the next slide.

Yep. So we see that Christians are viewed to be from the bottom, confusing, not accepting, boring and sensitive, out of touch, too political, old-fashioned, hypocritical, judgmental.

And guess what's at the very, very top? It says anti-homosexual. And so what we see is, and that is a huge percentage, actually, of people that are even unbelievers that view that we are anti-homosexual.

[2 : 20] And then people who are actually Christian, it's actually 80%. So if we can go, there we go, 80% of Christian youth and young adults, age 16, 29, believe that we ourselves are anti-homosexual.

And know what it doesn't say. It doesn't say anti-homosexuality. I-T-Y, three letters, but big difference. Anti-homosexuality is maybe more, maybe possibly the behavior or even the topic. But I always wish we were better known for than against. But according to this survey, Christians, we are viewed to be against gay people.

And that is wrong. The gospel is not against anyone. It's for people turning from their sins and turning to Christ. But it's still for people.

And so should we be for people. So how can we do a better job at engaging on this, holding true to the gospel, and share the love of Christ to our friends and loved ones in the LGBT community and those who are not Christian?

[3 : 29] How do we do that well? Well, my talk is going to send around four main points. And the first one has to do, and if you, by the way, if you like my notes, you can click on this QR code and you can scan this.

You can get a digital copy of my notes. This is kind of like a Dropbox link. And if you kind of don't, you know, miss it or something like that, that shortened URL at the very bottom will be in the bottom right-hand corner of my screen.

And then I'm sure I'm going to send it off to Pastor William so you can bother him if you don't get it. But also feel free to email me. I'd love to be bothered in a good way by people.

So feel free to shoot me an email as well for my website. So the first point is that we need to be convicted about our own sin first.

You know, when I lived as a gay man for many years, I felt Christians were telling me that somehow gays and lesbians deserved a hotter place in hell. That Jesus had to hang on the cross a little bit longer for gays and lesbians.

[4 : 38] It's sin, but it's not the worst sin. But sometimes we treat it like, you know, a horrible, the worst, worst sin of them all. But that's not true. You know, some people might say, well, it's an abomination.

Yes, this is an abomination. Same-sex relationships are an abomination. But the Bible calls a lot of other things an abomination. For example, in Proverbs 6, it says, there are six things the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination.

You know what it lists there? Things like lying, cheating, pride. So when is the last time your friend was a little bit prideful and he said, you are abomination? Maybe we should, because when we do that, we want to trivialize sin that really grieves God's heart.

So we see that, you know, yes, it's sin, but it's not the worst sin. And so we see that actually, you know, it's sin, but it's not the worst sin.

And what we need to do, if we can go back, I think I went too far forward, that, you know, some people will say, well, but, you know, I feel really uncomfortable when I look at this one particular sin.

[5 : 45] And, you know, you know, they even say, well, you know, I feel really disgusted, you know, but I think that feeling of disgust that some people might feel for this particular sin that they might not struggle with.

It's just a fraction of what God feels when he looks at their own sin. So our sin is just as odious in God's eyes than someone else's sin, because at the end of the day, our hope is that people would come to know Jesus.

But that's never done through a wholer than thou attitude, is it? I've never met anyone who came to Christ. Oh, I came to Jesus because this older lady, she was so pompous.

I've never heard that. It's someone who's gentle and compassionate and knows their own brokenness. That is what draws people to Christ. So number one, that we need to be convicted about our own sin first.

Second is we need to be consistent. And this is consistent in three ways. First of all, regarding relationships. What's your relationship status? And there's this enormous, you know, this enormous kind of pressure among Christians that, you know, you need to get married.

[7 : 02] And I think even in our Chinese culture, I mean, of course, through high school, college, don't get married. Get your degree. You know, that's a pressure for my mom and dad.

And then once you graduate from college, you know, it's like, when are you going to give me my grandchildren? So it's this huge pressure. And if you're not married and you're in your late 20s, you know, there's something wrong with you.

And I understand that, you know, we need to see that maybe dating, you know, as the world does, isn't a good thing. But sometimes in the way that we are really pressuring people to get married, it actually ends up trivializing marriage and trivializing this really precious, holy union with two people. So we look at marriages like the only way to be happy and singleness is a bad thing. Singleness is equivalent to loneliness. That's what my gay friends tell me. You know, what you want me to be is to be lonely for the rest of my life.

And what they're doing is they're actually equating singleness with loneliness. But I know for certain that singleness is not equivalent to loneliness because I know some people who are married and they're still miserably lonely.

[8 : 13] So marriage is not the cure to loneliness. The cure to loneliness begins with a relationship with God. That is the cure to loneliness, not another person.

But we sometimes in our culture, in our Chinese culture, do treat marriage as the cure to loneliness. That marriage is the only way to be happy. You know, if right now and, you know, our youth grow up and they grow up in the church and oftentimes they leave the faith.

And I think many times it's on this one issue. This is one of the many things that causes them. They just don't understand biblical situation. They don't understand why a loving God would allow someone to not be in a relationship, to have to be single because what's the presupposition behind that?

The assumption is that singleness is a bad thing. I mean, we need to lift up the beauty and gift of marriage. And I'm not saying that marriage is bad. I'm just saying that marriage is good, but singleness is good as well.

We need to lift up the beauty and gift of marriage. But I think we've done that at the expense of singleness. So now singleness, at best, is a consolation prize.

[9 : 27] You know, I'm so sorry you're single. We single Christians often, what they get more than anything else is pity. Oh, you know, I feel so sorry for my friend who's, you know, heaven forbid, 25 and still single.

You know, they must be miserable. They must be so sad. And, you know, we feel sorry for them. But we need to realize that singleness, many singles that I know, they want to get married.

But just God hasn't provided that soulmate yet, that partner to do life with. We need to look to the Word of God, what God's Word says about singleness.

And we see in 1 Corinthians 7 that not only does Paul say that singleness is good, he calls it a gift, like a good thing. And I know the majority of, you know, Christian singles that I know don't like that verse.

I have yet to meet anyone that's made 1 Corinthians 7 their life verse. You know what I mean?

Sincerely, 1 Corinthians 7. Woo-hoo! It's usually the opposite. Like, I see what Paul is saying here, that this is good and it's a gift, but I don't really understand that.

[10 : 34] I don't feel that. As a single man, I'm 51 years old, I'm single, and I know that singleness, it's not easy. But having spoken to some married people, I hear that marriage at times can be difficult.

But with those difficulties come blessings. In the same way, singleness, it's not easy. But there's also blessings that come with those difficulties.

Why is it then, as a church, we focus on the enormous challenge of singleness and the great blessings of marriage? See how this is just starkly inconsistent and unbiblical?

You know, so, you know, we can all agree that marriage is a gift. Yes, marriage is a gift. When it comes to singleness, very few people wholeheartedly agree that singleness is a gift.

Instead, people normally say that singleness, it's a calling, seriously. You know, not like, not anyone can be single. You have to be either Superman or Wonder Woman to be single, which I don't know if you've noticed, but most of the superheroes are single.

[11 : 38] And their love interest is their weakness, you know, which gives the wrong message to kids. You have to have superhuman power just to be single. And no wonder why all our youth are so confused about marriage and singleness, because we're giving them wrong message.

And the majority of my Christian friends are married. They're happily married, but they tell me marriage takes work. Loving unconditionally, not easy. Paul even says in Ephesians 5, husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church.

You know, and how do you do that? By laying his life down for his bride, the church. So, husbands, lay your life down.

Amen, ladies? So, I don't know what husband that doesn't struggle with that nearly impossible calling. So, do you know what I say tongue-in-cheek? I say marriage. Whew, that's a calling, seriously.

Singleness, that's a gift. I don't have to lay my life down for anyone yet. But I'm not at all trying to say that singleness is better than marriage or worse. I'm just simply saying that godly marriage and godly singleness are two sides of the same coin.

[12 : 48] We should no longer only emphasize one over against the other. And I don't think we're ready to address sexuality until we first redeem singleness.

So, we need to be consistent regarding relationships. Second, we need to be consistent regarding sexuality. What is God's standard when it comes to sexuality? You know, because I hear Christians that are like saying the Bible promotes heterosexuality.

I'm like, okay, where? Where? Oh, Genesis 2. God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and? Steve, right? Well, let's think about that.

You know, is that truly, you know, yes, God made Adam and Eve, but does that then, is that equivalent to saying that God's standard is heterosexuality?

So, let's define heterosexuality. Heterosexuality means being attracted to someone of the opposite sex, being sexually intimate with someone of the opposite sex. That's a pretty broad definition.

[13:48] So broad that I could be, you know, having, you know, a dozen, maybe dating a dozen girls and being intimate with them, and that's considered heterosexual.

I could also be maybe a married woman, and I'm cheating on my wife with another woman, and that's also considered heterosexual. I could be an unmarried man, but I have a live-in girlfriend, and we even have a couple children together.

Those are all heterosexual but sinful in God's eyes. God would never say heterosexuality is my goal when that included some forms of heterosexual sin.

Because, yes, marriage between a man and a woman is one form of heterosexual relationship, but it is not representative of all. And what we need to realize is this framework, heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, this whole framework, I'm not just saying this one term, I'm saying the whole framework is a secular framework that tries to divide humanity according to sexual desires.

God never intended humanity to be into categorized by different, by our sexual desires, or any desire for that matter.

[15:10] So if it's not heterosexuality, not homosexuality, what framework are we going to have? I think we need to set the secular framework aside and use a biblical one. And what is that? It's holy sexuality.

And what is holy sexuality? Reading through the full counsel of God, there's only two paths. First path is when you are single, you're going to be sexually abstinent. The other path is when you are married, you're going to be faithful to your spouse of the opposite sex.

And when I say marriage, I'm using the only definition that we find in scripture between a man and a woman. Actually, that Jesus reiterates in Matthew 19 and Mark chapter 10.

So quite simply, holy sexuality is chastity and singleness and faithfulness in marriage. And you might think, well, that's fine, but my gay friend only has this one option to be single for the rest of his or her life.

Not necessarily so. Let me tell you this illustration of a friend of mine. He lived as a gay man for many years, comes to Christ, stops pursuing same-sex relationship because of his relationship with Christ.

[16:07] He was part of a great church. He became really close friends with this young lady that was also a new Christian. She came from a broken past. She dated a lot of boys. She was sexually active. She even had a few abortions.

When she came to Christ, she just committed that she didn't want to date. She just wanted to focus on a relationship with God. So the two of them became best friends. There was none of that weirdness that often happens between a young man and a young woman.

Does he like me? He just spoke to me. What does that mean? Nothing. So we have them just become really, really close friends. And after some time of being best friends, he started noticing some things about her that he hadn't noticed before, like her hair.

She smelled good and she had curves. He says puberty is hard going through. Once try going through puberty twice. He got up enough courage, asked her out on a date.

After some dating, he asked her to marry him. And on their wedding night, he told his new bride, he said, honey, I cannot explain this.

[17:14] I'm not attracted to any other women. I'm only attracted to you. Holy sexuality. Sanctification is never dependent upon sexual desires.

It's not dependent on any desire for that matter. Sanctification is only dependent upon the God who is holy himself.

Chastity and singleness, faithfulness in marriage. Holiness is a gift from God. Third, we need to be consistent regarding change. What in the world does change? What does change look like?

I mean, does change mean, you know, going from gay to straight? Obviously not. But what about if a person is still tempted in some way?

Does that mean that this person is no longer, you know, hasn't been fully transformed? Well, do we apply that principle to any other sin struggle? Let's say I knew of a friend who was a drunk, comes to Christ, stops drinking.

[18:17] But after years of sobriety, he admits that he still wants to drink. But he doesn't. The Holy Spirit empowers him to say no. Would we tell him you haven't been changed?

We need to lay some hands on you. You need some deliverance. I hope not. Because the manifestation of God's grace is more evident in his life because he says no to his flesh and says

yes to God.

So change is not the absence of temptations. But change is the spirit-wrought ability. So I added that in there because it's not my ability.

It's not my own strength or your own strength. But it's the spirit-wrought ability to what? To be holy, to be sanctified, even when we are tempted.

Jesus Christ was tempted in every way, but he was without sin. So the issue isn't being tempted, but it's what we do with that temptation. So we need to be convicted.

[19:18] Second, we need to be consistent. Third, we need to be compassionate. You know, I taught at Moody for 12 years, and every semester I have students that confide with me, they're wrestling with their sexuality.

And what breaks my heart is how often they will share that they've never told anyone, haven't told anyone, haven't told their pastor, their best friend. And because of feeling so isolated, they sometimes even wrestle with depression and even thoughts of suicide.

That should move us, that for whatever reason, that they feel that they can't share this one struggle with anyone else in the church.

So for some, this can be an issue between life and death. So how can we be more compassionate? Well, first, we need to be, we just expect that this is present here, right?

Right in our own churches, in our own homes, in our own pews, in our own small groups. I mean, we shouldn't be surprised, you know, when that we have, you know, in our own churches.

[20:24] Because I still get that when people are shocked. I'm like, I don't know how, you know, this, my friend of mine has same type of attraction. I'm like, why? Well, he comes from a good home. He has Christian parents. He was even homeschooled. And I'm like, wait, are you really saying that if someone comes from a good home and has Christian parents, that they're somehow exempt from struggling with sin?

Okay, newflash. I bet even, even in our group, that I bet there's probably one or two of you that's struggling with sin.

You don't have to raise your hand or stand out. I mean, we're all struggling with sin, right? I mean, what's the body of Christ? Are we a group of people who've got it all together, don't have any problems? We got our ducks in a row.

We hold hands once a week and we sing kumbaya. Is that what we are? Or is a body of Christ a group of people who know that we are broken and we need Christ?

I'm just going to be honest with you. I am broken and I need Christ. Anyone out there that can relate to that in any way, shape, or form. And so let us all hand in hand walk together to him.

[21:28] Not because I can fix you, but because I know someone who can and his name is Jesus. So we just need to simply find our solidarity in the fact that we're all, I really don't think we need to segregate ourselves further into our sin groups.

I mean, I think, yes, sometimes focus groups can be helpful, but we should not stay there. I really don't need another person that's struggling with the same sin.

And I don't think we all need that. What we need is Christ and the body of Christ. That's what we need. Second, know your position. And this is more than just saying it's sin.

Don't do it. What I'm really talking about is like, what's our main takeaway? Because this should be the thing that we need to constantly remind ourselves when we're communicating, when we're living, when you're at work, when you're on the elevator, when you're at church, when you're eating dinner.

I mean, what's our main takeaway like for life in general or anytime we talk to people? It's not, oh, don't do that. You know, whatever sin we're talking about for the moment.

[22:42] No, this is my main takeaway. Follow Jesus. That is the most important thing. We too often focus upon the sin issues, which, yes, I mean, I'm not saying just go ahead and sin.

You do you. I'm not at all saying that. But the most important thing always, we cannot help people to not sin, fix them up, and then bring them to God.

No. Follow Jesus. It is through your relationship with Christ that we are able to walk, to go and sin no more. This is my testimony.

My testimony is not about a person who used to identify as gay and no longer does anymore. This is my testimony. I once was lost, and now I'm found.

I was blind, but now I see. I did not believe, and now I believe in the only one who is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

[23 : 45] That's my testimony. And so we need to make that always the main thing. Nothing can ever take the main stage except for Jesus. So know your position.

Third, maybe you're thinking, like, you're here, and you're listening in Sunday service, and we're like, okay, we're talking about sexuality. And, like, in the back of your mind, you have this good friend, Christian, but you've always wondered whether they're wrestling with this.

So you're like, how do I ask? How do I bring it up so I can let them know I love them? I'm there for them. Don't. Imagine if someone came up to you just out of the blue.

Be like, hey, do you have same-sex attractions? Awkward, okay? Like, I don't know ever how you could make that, like, smooth, even over Zoom. Awkward.

So what you need to do instead is give assurance of your friendship. Tell them, I thank God for you, and I just want you to know nothing can change my love for you, my friendship. You just create the safe space and invite them in it.

[24 : 47] Fourth, let's be a group of people who say no to the gay jokes and the bullying. You know, I mean, and it's what can be sad sometimes is it's sometimes it's the Christians that are doing the gay jokes, and we can justify it, right?

Oh, well, it's a sin. Yes, but homophobia is also a sin. To make fun of other people is also a sin. So how about instead of saying, and maybe you work with youth, and youth can be really flippant with their words.

That's so gay. That T-shirt is so gay. A T-shirt cannot be gay. Like, clothing don't have sexuality. That's just not possible. So instead of saying, that's so gay, how about this?

How about saying, that's so Baptist, or that's so Presbyterian, or something really, really creative like that. I think it was something really, really good. So we need to be convicted, consistent, compassionate, and then lastly, we need to be complete.

And this is complete in our message. We need to be complete in what we say. You know, this is, you know, it's complete in what we say.

[25 : 54] We focus upon God's truth because it's the truth that sets us free. So what is the truth then? You know, a Christian be like, oh, I got that.

It's a sin. Like, is that all? Yeah, that's it. It's a sin. Well, that's all we say. It's a sin. That's equivalent to giving someone a one spiritual law track. Now, I might be showing my age here, but, you know, 20 years ago, when I first came to Christ, we still had these tracks that we'd pass out.

I don't know if you guys, if that was a thing in New Zealand, but that's a thing in the United States.

So they had these gospel tracks that would share the gospel. And so, you know, pass them out.

And there was one called the four spiritual laws that share the gospel, you know.

Well, this is not the four spiritual laws, but this is the one spiritual law that goes something like this. You're a sinner and you're going to hell. Sorry.

In case you didn't know, that's not good news. There's like nothing good about that. That's only bad news. But think about it. That's pretty much the only message we've been giving to the gay community.

[26 : 59] You're a sinner. You're going to hell. There's no hope for you. It's no wonder why the LGBTQ plus community want nothing to do with us because we have not been giving them the good news. We've been only sharing them the bad news.

So what is the good news? You know, in 1 Corinthians 6, Paul says, do not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. And he goes on to say, list 10 sins. And in this list of 10 sins are two Greek words that focus upon homosexual behavior.

Sometimes people look at these verses, 1 Corinthians 6, 9, and 10. You know, they'll say, look, gays and lesbians won't inherit the kingdom of God. When they do that, they conveniently forget about the eight other sins.

Because if we look at all 10 sins, none of us should inherit the kingdom of God. Bad news. Well, praise the Lord.

Paul didn't stop there. He goes on to say in one of my favorite verses in the whole Bible, 1 Corinthians 6, verse 11, where he says, Such were.

[28 : 04] What tense is that verb, were? It's past tense, right? Such were. Some of who? You. But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and

the spirit of our God.

So our message, it has to be redemptive. It needs to focus upon the good news of Jesus Christ. Because our friends in the gay community, their main problem is not their sexuality. Their main problem is their need to surrender to Jesus. My biggest sin was not being in a same-sex relationship. My biggest sin was unbelief.

So we need to make the first thing the first thing. We need to be redemptive in everything that we do. So how do we, you know, and I'm just going to give you some practical things here at the very end.

How do we minister well? How do we share the good news? How do we walk with others that are struggling with same-sex attraction? So I'm going to focus first on the first group, Christians who have same-sex attractions.

[29 : 10] How do we walk with them? Then I'm going to talk about how do we share the gospel with people who identify as gay, many of them who don't know Christ. Some who say, oh, no, I can be gay and Christian, but you look at their life and it's not living according to the gospel.

And so they're maybe believing a false gospel. So I want to share them the true gospel. So how do we, first, first group, share a walk with a Christian who has same-sex attractions?

So, for example, let's just say after this weekend, tomorrow, next week, next month, next year, you have a really close Christian friend that confides with you.

I'm wrestling with my sexuality. Do you know what to say and do? Here's some things that I would suggest. Number one, thank them. Thank them for trusting you with this.

You know, don't freak out. Keep, you know, keep your screaming in your inside voice. But thank them. Thank them for trusting you with this really private, personal matter.

[30 : 18] It means a lot that they share this with you. Tell them that they're not alone. And, you know, because many times Christians with same-sex attractions think that they have to go through life all alone.

That's a scary thing. Third, help remind them that their identity needs to be in Christ. You know, I've, this could probably be one of the most important points here toward the end, identity in Christ. And why is this? Because we, even Christians, but the world has confused sexuality with who we are.

If you have a friend who identifies as gay and you were to ask him, say, I know what gay means, but I want you to use, I want to hear how you define what gay means.

No one will ever say, when I say I'm gay, I mean, this is what I feel. They will not say, when I say I'm gay, I mean, this is what I do.

[31 : 22] What will they say? When I say I am gay, I mean, this is who I am. Note how gay is not about, you know, this is what I feel.

Gay has become, it is being gay. That verb being, it's about being. It's about essence. Sexuality has become our essence.

But it's not. Like, if there's one thing that I believe that Christians miss is that we do not see how the world, and even we fall into this as well, that we have made gay, bi, straight to be not, to become who we are.

But sexuality is not who we are. It's how we are. I actually think this term gay, straight, bi, heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, yes, it's a secular framework that I think we should not really use when it comes to biblical framework.

But when we talk to the world, we need to use these terms. But actually, these terms should never be used, shouldn't be used to define people, but more accurately, they define our experience.

[32 : 31] They modify, you know, they describe our experience. We have heterosexual feelings. We have homosexual relationships. We have, see how these things, they actually define our feelings, our attractions, our relationships, but they shouldn't really define our person.

And if sexuality is not who we are, then who are we? We are all created in the image of God, and then when we come to Christ, our identity is in Christ. And why does this matter?

Because whatever we put our identity in, it's going to impact how we think, how we live, the relationships we build, the choices we make. So identity is everything.

And I think oftentimes, we put our identities in the wrong thing. So identity in Christ, super important point. Fourth, be realistic. In other words, don't give these false promises that just pray really hard and you could pray away the gay.

That's not how it happens. Prayer is important. Yes, it is. But we don't pray so that we don't have problems. I pray so that when difficulties come, I'm praying that I remain faithful to God.

[33 : 41] Fifth, don't focus on the externals. Like sometimes people are too overoccupied with how a person dresses or the length of their hair. And that's important, but not as important as surrendering to Christ.

I want heart change, but heart change is not from the outside in. In other words, like how people walk or talk or dress. That's change is always from the inside out. Lastly, we need to strengthen in a relationship.

Like we all have needs for intimacy, but how should that be met? If we're with, if this is a message for all, all singles, how should our needs for intimacy be met if we aren't in a relationship or we aren't married?

The Bible actually communicates that pretty clearly. You can't get through a New Testament book without it talking about brothers and sisters and the family of God. What is a family of God?

The church. We need each other. Brothers and sisters, that is not just a metaphorical term. That is a real category that we can't just say, oh, that's what is going to be in eternity.

[34 : 53] No, it's going to be now. So we need to live that out. What I need most as a single man, as a person who struggles with my own flesh, is I need the body of Christ, the spiritual family.

So what should we do with our friends in the gay community? First, some things that you should not do. Do not compare this with an addiction, pedophilia, or murder.

It's just not a good way to win people to Christ, okay? Second, don't use these two words, lifestyle or choice. I never used those words when I lived as a gay man.

This is not something I did because I wrongly view this as who I was. Third, don't say love the sin or hate the sin. Do it. Don't say it. Like when you tell someone, I love you, but I hate your sin, they don't feel loved.

Lastly, don't feel that you have to debate with people all the time. Like I get this a lot, you know, when Christians are like, well, they asked me a question. I got to answer it. Well, look at what Jesus did. Jesus didn't answer every question.

[35 : 56] It's amazing. Like when you're going through Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John next time, just note whenever Jesus was asked a question. Like remember once toward the end of his life here on earth, he was Simon before Pilate.

Sometimes they asked him a question. He answered with a question. Like, should we pay taxes?

He's like, give me a coin. Whose inscription is this on this coin? Like he asked a question.

Other times he gave an answer just to a different question. You know, like, should we, you know, is it okay to divorce? And he's like, well, God made the male and female. Two shall become one flesh. So he answered with the two become one flesh, but he also throws in this part about marriage. That is between one man and one woman, which by the way, I believe that is the strongest apologetic for man and woman in marriage.

That's in Matthew 19 and Mark chapter 10, parallel passages. So we don't have to debate all the time. Instead, and the reason why Jesus didn't answer every question is because he was God and he knew the question being asked was not the question of utmost importance.

[37 : 02] And we can say the same thing. For example, when people ask, do you think this is sin? I know that that's not the question of utmost importance. Because even if they agreed with my answer for that about morality, and if they don't know Christ, they're still lost.

Morality will never save anyone. So I always want to deflect it to the more redemptive question. For example, you know, if, you know, if someone asks you, do you think this is sin?

I would say, my friend, I know you don't even believe in God. So what does it matter to you what God thinks? So let's first, before we talk about that, what God thinks, let's talk about the existence of God.

Like, those conversations about God and about his son Jesus Christ can lead to salvation. So that's what you should not do.

Then what should you do? Number one, pray. Pray and fast. First, if we want people to come to know Christ, we need to pray for the Holy Spirit to intervene in their lives.

[38 : 14] That the Father who saves, that he would save. That Jesus who died for him would woo him to himself. So we need to be praying and fasting.

Second, we need to listen. We need to listen. If you want others to listen to you, we need to listen to them first. Third, we need to be intentional. And, you know, we need to reach out to those who don't know Christ yet.

Unbelievers aren't going to come knocking on your door. We need to go across the street, invite your gay neighbor. Of course, after all this COVID stops, invite your gay neighbor over for dinner or coffee or whatever it is.

And I know right away, Christians are like, but wait, if I do that, am I condoning their sin? Good question. But last time I checked, we usually have sinners over for dinner.

Nothing new, right? You're just eating with them. You're not sinning with them. There's a big difference. So we need to be intentional. But fourth, we need to be patient and persistent.

[39 : 18] You know, I, it took me eight years. And not, it took me, I mean, my journey to come to Christ was eight years. I was lost, lost, lost.

But I know people who've been praying for decades. If God was in the long haul for you, let's do the same for others. Lastly, be transparent. Share what God is doing in your life lately.

You know, I would never have considered the gospel if I didn't see the gospel lived out in my parents' lives. I wouldn't have picked up the Bible from the trash can. Is that not crazy? I picked up something from the trash, a Bible.

That was, it was not even soiled. That's what was so cool. It was like someone had just put it on. It was, it wasn't dirty. It wasn't all, you know, trash all over because I wouldn't have picked it up. I wouldn't have picked up that Bible if I didn't see the Bible lived out in transparency in the lives of my father and my mother.

I did not leave pursuing same-sex relationships because my mom and dad convinced me they were sinful. I left it because they showed me something better.

[40 : 25] And his name is Jesus. Jesus. Our job as followers of Christ is to show a dying world out there that no matter what they're clinging to, all the fool's gold in the world, a job, a career, money, not only is Jesus better than all of that, but following Jesus is best.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for being such a loving, amazing God. Lord, we know that we are not able.

We cannot save ourselves. We can't save our friends. Only you can. So we pray. We pray for people who have been trying to get in and try into this conversation and interrupt, Lord, that you would intervene in a miraculous way, Lord.

I mean, I have so little faith, God, that sometimes I'm like, it's not possible. Lord, it's impossible. But praise Jesus that you are the God of the impossible.

Lord, do the work. Here in the United States, in New Zealand, in Auckland, in the church, in the community. Lord, show us your glory so that we can show others your glory.

[41 : 51] We love you, God. We ask all of these things in the beautiful name of Jesus. And the people of God said, amen. Cool. Thank you so much, Christopher.

So we're going to head into a time of Q&A.; And so there is actually quite a few spicy questions. So I hope you're ready. But the first question, and I think it's great, it's to do with the balance between loving those who might identify as LGBTQ versus staying strong and firm in what we believe in.

So the first one is, should we attend a same-sex wedding in a Christian, just in any context? Yeah. What's your thoughts on that? Well, I think it's important that, you know, however we answer this, we need to be consistent, answer all these questions is we need to be consistent that we're not elevating this higher than others.

And, you know, for example, if I had a friend who cheated on his wife and divorced his wife and then cheated on his wife with his secretary or something like that, like, would I go to that wedding?

[43 : 15] You know, I think that would be kind of more consistent in that way. Now, I mean, because sometimes you're like, well, what if they're like living together and then they get married? Well, I mean, kind of in that situation, they're sort of making it right, even though as a pastor, if I was actually pastoring them, I would tell them to not live together for a period of time.

You know, get right with the Lord and focus upon your relationship with Christ before getting married. But I don't think that's a close analogy, but I think it's important to look at how the Bible communicates about marriage and weddings.

Actually, the Bible begins in Genesis 2 with a wedding, Adam and Eve. The Bible ends with a wedding in Revelation, the ultimate wedding, Christ in the church. And then throughout scripture,

like Jesus' first miracle is done at the wedding at Cana.

In the Old Testament, we have the metaphor that's used over and over and over again, and it is Jehovah God, Yahweh, being the husband to a very rebellious harlot, Israel.

In the New Testament, we have where Jesus is the bridegroom and the church is the perfect bride. So we see that actually marriage is a very, very strong, very important metaphor that God uses.

[44 : 32] And I don't ever want to trivialize the thing that God makes really important. So I would actually have a hard time actually going to the wedding ceremony. With that being said, I don't think that the answer always has to be necessarily yes or no.

I mean, like if it's a distant friend or maybe a cousin, it's a little easier to be like, I can't make it because, I mean, just, you know, I mean, you've got a busy life. But if it's a really close relative, like let's just say, you know, when you guys are older, maybe a son or daughter, you know, or maybe a brother or an uncle or something like that, it's harder to say no.

So I don't think you necessarily have to say no to everything. It could be you don't go to, I know some parents who would not go to the ceremony, but they would be there for the weekend, you know, as there's a lot of other events around that.

Maybe they might not go to the ceremony, but they might go to the reception. It's a free dinner. Why not? And so you could, you know, there's other options than just simply not completely going.

But whatever decision you make, especially if it's, you know, something that's a difficult to communicate, I wouldn't do that over the phone or a text or an email. I would try to do your best to do it in person, which may mean that you would need to fly to that person to see them and tell them and just communicate that you do love them.

[45 : 52] Wow. Yeah, that's really good insight. I've never thought of it like that. But yeah, the second question is around homophobes.

So what are some wisdoms that we can, you can advise us as brothers and sisters when there are other people in our church who are homophobic in a way? Yeah. So, you know, if there's another Christian who's making inappropriate comments, you know, hopefully we're not talking about anything physically violent or whatever.

You know, I mean, I'm going to assume that that's not the case. Obviously, if it is, then I mean, then we've got a whole nother issue there. You don't even have to even talk about the sexuality thing.

But let's just say it's just really rude, crude, hurtful remarks. And they're, you know, it's trying to make it funny. I think it's actually best to not call people out in front of everyone else.

Because someone like that might, you know, be very good at cornering things and making, you know, just kind of have a bully attitude.

[47 : 03] And so I always find it best. And of course, I mean, if this is someone who says they're a Christian, now, if it's kind of like a new person or I don't know, someone that I don't know well or someone that I know is not even Christian, then I'm kind of like, I don't know if I would necessarily, I don't want to excuse it.

But I don't have that relationship where I can really talk to them, you know, man to man or, you know, woman to woman or whatever is the situation. But I would maybe pull them aside and have them, you know, and just say that, you know, we want to do everything and be like Christ.

And our word should never tear down, but build up, you know, something like that. So I would take them aside and have that conversation because, and you can even make it personal and you can be like, I have a good friend who's gay.

I would love for them to come to know Christ. And let's just say I invite them to church and they hear what you said. They probably won't ever come back to church again, or they would probably just say screw Christians or something like that, you know.

And so I think I would do that in a more personal way, as opposed to kind of calling them out as a whole group. Thank you.

[48 : 14] Honestly, thank you so much. I think as a last question, and for those who still have questions, you're still thinking of questions that aren't not answered.

Please come and attend the discord tonight with William. I know he's not as professional as Christopher, but you know. There he is. William's still got wisdom, I hope. But as a last question, how can we be praying for you?

Oh, that's so nice. Well, I think I shared it with the leaders before, but just 14 days, no, I don't know how many days ago.

It was maybe a little more than that. It was on the 13th. So what is that? 16 days ago, my dad had a heart attack. And he stopped breathing.

His heart stopped. They tried CPR for seven minutes. And the heart didn't come back. And so they had to do a breathing tube and all that.

[49 : 14] But he was like unconscious for two days. So he is, but amazingly, he's doing really good right now. Like we don't sense any like brain damage or anything, you know, because when the heart stops, no blood to the brain, which means should mean, you know, some type of brain damage.

And he's like, he's walking by, like, there's no loss of arm or, or whatever, you know, not, I mean, not loss of arm, but like, like use of an arm or nothing like he's walking fine.

So it is totally the grace of God. And, you know, I'm like my mom and I thought that she was going to be a widow now. And I mean, so we're just taking every day as a gift. So just pray for my dad very specifically and just pray for us as a ministry.

Cause I've, I've just got, um, it's not my ministry, but it's our ministry. So my parents and I, um, they're a big part of my ministry and it's just, you know, I just got to think, you know, our days are numbered.

Um, but just what our ministry is going to look like in the next five years, you know, and if I get five years, praise the Lord with them. Um, so we'll just see. So if you could pray for that, that'd be really, I really appreciate that.