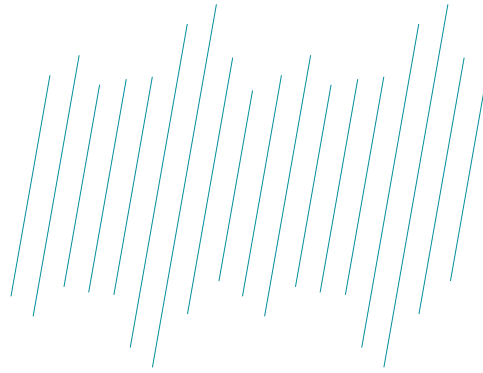




## **TOUGH TOPICS**

**What the Same-Sex Marriage  
Argument Is Really About**



## About ReStory Ministries

ReStory Ministries is a nonprofit organization committed to resourcing churches to address homosexuality and gender identity. We are working to see every church equipped, every family prepared, and every believer informed by equipping pastors, missionaries, and ministry leaders to respond biblically to these issues and the people affected by them. Ultimately, we believe that when the Church is equipped, new stories of transformation are told!

ReStory Ministries is endorsed by the Assemblies of God. We are in agreement with the Assemblies of God core doctrines, position papers, and official statements. We do not make any official statements on behalf of the Assemblies of God.

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Joe and his wife Renee have been married since 1987 and are the proud parents of two grown sons.



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# TOUGH TOPICS

## What the Same-Sex Marriage Argument Is Really About

How are Christians to respond in a culture where “love is love,” same-sex marriage is legal, and those who oppose same-sex marriage are considered haters? Is taking a position really worth the controversy?

If marriage were a secondary issue, maybe not. But **some truths have to be held fast, and something as primary as the definition of the family is unquestionably one of them.** For this reason we count ourselves among those who object to the modern redefinition of marriage to include same-sex unions, and our objection is based on both theological and social concerns.

***Some truths have to be held fast, and something as primary as the definition of the family is unquestionably one of them.***

### Theological Concerns

Marriage is first introduced in Genesis chapters 1 and 2, when God addressed the need He created in man for partnership, a need answered by the creation of woman and the divinely sanctioned union of the two.

**So from the beginning, the male-female partnership, sexual union, and family unit were pronounced good and needful.** Jesus reiterated the rightness of this definition of marriage in Matthew 19:4-6 when **He affirmed God’s intention for the marital union to be permanent, monogamous, independent, and heterosexual.**

Throughout all of Scripture, no other form of sexual partnering is blessed or commended by God. So if He intended same-sex marriage as an option for some, we wonder why there is no biblical instruction whatsoever for same-sex couples. Surely God, who inspired the authors of the Bible, knew there would always be lesbian and gay partnerships. If He recognizes such partnerships as marriages, why did He so plainly ignore them in His word, while recognizing and instructing heterosexual couples in both Testaments?

**Not only do we find no positive examples of homosexual partnership or behavior in the Bible, we also find no reference to homosexuality which is not negative.**

Biblical prohibitions against it in any form (Lev. 18:22; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Tim. 1:9-10), combined with the absence of any positive reference to it in the Bible, make it impossible to accept any theological approval of same-sex relations, much less a conceptualization of them as constituting a marriage.

We also see Old and New Testament references extolling marriage between a man and a woman as not only beneficial to humanity, but also as being an illustration of God's relationship with His people (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:32; Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 9:1; Eph. 5:22-32; Rev. 21:9-11). **That makes marriage a divinely appointed illustration, often referred to as a "type," something established to explain and model eternal truths.**

Scripture also tells us that we are made in the image of God, reflecting His unity-in-diversity as a Triune being, and that males and females image God in that way (unified in humanity, diverse in gender).

The term *echad* used in Genesis 2:24 about a man and his wife becoming one [echad] flesh, is the same word used to describe God in Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one [echad]" (NIV 2011).

**Therefore, we image God in procreating and ruling the earth in the same way that God created us and rules over the universe.** That's an eternal truth, established from the beginning and repeated throughout the witness of the Word.


**Eternal truths cannot be revised, neither can the institutions that are established to represent them.** For these reasons, we have serious theological objections to a redefinition of marriage that is inclusive and affirming of homosexual partnering.



## Social Concerns

But our objection to the redefinition of marriage isn't just doctrinal. We have social concerns as well, because we feel **we've embarked on a social experiment with negative ramifications for children and for the nature of marriage itself.**

This is not to challenge the ability of gay and lesbian couples to love or to live responsibly. They are capable of loving each other and their children deeply and of raising them in stable home environments. In fact, a responsible lesbian or gay couple might provide a healthier home environment than an irresponsible or highly dysfunctional heterosexual couple. But **comparing best-case to worst-case scenarios isn't an effective way to settle an issue.**



**The kind of parenting that's in the best interest of children is what should be determined and held as the standard.** On this point, there's disagreement among the experts.

Social sciences have offered support for same-sex marriages, arguing that children raised by healthy same-sex couples fare as well as those raised by healthy heterosexual couples. The American Psychological Association,<sup>1</sup> the American Psychiatric Association,<sup>2</sup> and the American Academy of Pediatrics<sup>3</sup> have all concluded that homosexual partnerships can also be effective parenting partnerships.

**But experts are not uniform in their support for this reconceptualization of the family.** Mark Regnerus, associate professor of sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, released a comprehensive New Family Structure Study in 2012 showing a contrast between children raised in same-sex parent homes versus those raised in opposite-sex parent homes.

The contrast was anything but minimal. **Children raised in same-sex parent homes were found to be more susceptible to poor educational development, impulsive behaviors, depression, and substance abuse, among many other problems.**<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, Australian sociologist Sotirios Sarantakos studied 174 primary school children raised by married heterosexual couples, same-sex couples, and cohabiting couples, and reported that “married couples offer the best environment for a child’s social and educational development,” with children of married heterosexual couples faring the best.<sup>5</sup>

Additional studies indicate **there are parenting skills unique to men and women, making the male-female parenting team the most effective,<sup>6</sup> while also concluding that the bond between children and their biological parents is the strongest adult-child bond.**<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, same-sex couples can and do parent well. But research does call into question whether same-sex parenting is as beneficial as opposite-sex parenting, which, studies indicate, is still in the best interests of children.

## The Redefinition Doesn't Stop Here

The redefinition of marriage as heterosexual is just the beginning. **The definition of marriage as permanent and monogamous is also subject to further revision, once the male/female concept of marriage is discarded.**

Far fetched? Hardly. This has been a concern for more than two decades, since prominent journalist and pro-homosexual apologist Andrew Sullivan, arguing in favor of same-sex marriage back in 1996, concluded that the common practice of 'nonmonogamy' among homosexual couples would influence, then eventually be adopted by, heterosexual couples as well:

*There is more likely to be greater understanding of the need for extra-marital outlets between two men than between a man and a woman. . . . But something of the gay relationship's necessary honesty, its flexibility, and its equality could undoubtedly help strengthen and inform many heterosexual bonds.<sup>8</sup>*

So the common practice of "open relationships" among gay male couples, in which both parties have sexual partners outside the relationship, will probably, according to one of today's most prominent gay spokesmen, influence heterosexual married couples to adopt the same practice.

*New York Magazine*, in fact, reported in 2005 that "[m]any straight couples struggling with these issues [monogamy] look to gay male friends, for whom a more fluid notion of commitment is practically the norm."<sup>9</sup>

Joe Quirk, a gay therapist and writer, views this as a healthy development when he notes, "if innovatoin in marriage is going to occur, it will be spearheaded by homosexual marriages."<sup>10</sup>

While a growing segment of the culture celebrates these innovations, we are alarmed by them and the potential they carry for a general destabilizing of the family unit and the subsequent, inevitable destabilizing of society at large.

For these reasons, we oppose the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex coupling, for reasons that are both theological and social. We are especially concerned as we see a growing intolerance for, and limitation of, any expression of the disapproval of homosexuality.

At the same time (which can hardly be a coincidence) we see our culture tampering with an institution God both designed and defined, and a likely deterioration of general cultural stability soon to come.

Plainly put, **what God has called “good” we also call “inalterable.” We thereby respectfully oppose attempts to refashion an institution both sacred and beneficial to all and refuse to embrace this refashioning within our families and churches.**

## Endnotes

- 1 American Psychological Association, “Lesbian and Gay Parenting” (2005), <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/parenting>.
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- 4 Mark Regnerus, “How different are the adult children of parents who have same-sex relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Study,” *Social Science Research* 41, no. 4 (July 2012): 752-770.
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8 Andrew Sullivan, *Virtually Normal: An Argument About Homosexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 202-203.

9 “The New Monogamy?” *New York Magazine*, November 21, 2005, <https://nymag.com/lifestyle/sex/annual/2005/15063/index2.html>.

10 Scott James, “Most Successful Gay Marriages Share an Open Secret,” *New York Times*, January 28, 2010, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/29/us/29sfmetro.html>.