

THE PLAUSIBILITY PROBLEM

THE CHURCH & SAME-SEX ATTRACTION

A plausible biblical response

Not just: “The Bible says it’s wrong”

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-10; I Timothy 1:9-11

Instead ask: “What does the Bible say marriage is for?”

- Procreation? Yes

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." **Genesis 1:28 (NIV)**

...but remember:

²⁹ "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. **Mark 10 (NIV)**

- Purity? Yes

⁹ But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. **I Corinthians 7 (NIV)**

...but remember:

³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable... **I Thessalonians 4 (NIV)**

- Intimacy? Yes

¹³ My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. **Song of Songs 1 (NIV)**

...but remember:

²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. **2 Samuel 1 (NIV)**

- Destiny? YES!

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. **Revelation 21 (NIV)**

Song of Songs; Ezekiel 16; Hosea 1-3; John 3:28-29; Matthew 9:15; Ephesians 5:25-33

“...God made us as sexual beings - as men and women with a desire for union - precisely to tell the story of his love for us. In the biblical view, the fulfilment of love between the sexes is a great foreshadowing of something quite literally "out of this world" - the infinite bliss and ecstasy that awaits us in heaven.” **Christopher West**, *Fill these Hearts: God, Sex and the Universal Longing*, p.11.

“...the ultimate reason (not the only one) why we are sexual is to make God more deeply knowable. The language and imagery of sexuality are the most graphic and most powerful that the Bible uses to describe the relationship between God and his people - both positively (when we are faithful) and negatively (when we are not).” **John Piper**, *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, p.26.

A plausible pastoral response

Identity in Christ

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. **John 1 (NIV)**

“The girl with same-sex desires might conclude she is doomed to be a lesbian because she isn't drawn to boys and still fights her attraction to girls. Family members who have to cut up their credit cards to keep from spending every paycheck on what they see advertised may conclude they're just not "spiritual" enough to follow Christ because they still war against their wants. Nonsense. You are not what you want. You are who you are. And that's defined by the Word of God.” **Russell D Moore**, *Tempted and Tried*, p.72.

How can we all ensure our identities are defined by God’s Word - and not the world around us?

Church is family

⁴⁶ While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”

⁴⁸ He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” **Matthew 12 (NIV)**

“Marriage and family are temporary for this age; the church is forever. I am declaring the radical biblical truth that being in a human family is no sign of eternal blessing, but being in God's family means being eternally blessed. Relationships based on family are temporary. Relationships based on union with Christ are eternal. Marriage is a temporary institution, but what it stands for lasts forever.” **John Piper**, *This Momentary Marriage*, p.111.

How can we all make sure talk of “church family” isn’t just talk?

Singleness is good

⁷ I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. **1 Corinthians 7 (NIV)**

“The excessive value the Western world has placed on individualism fosters a psychological tendency to associate singleness with living alone. This is a tendency the church should resist. Christian singleness is not a denial of the underlying principle of Genesis 2:18, that it is not good to be alone. Neither Jesus nor Paul as single men was devoid of relationships. On the contrary, their relationships flourished in both number and depth by the freedom and flexibility their singleness afforded them.” **Barry Danylak**, *Redeeming Singleness*, p.215.

How can we all be as affirming of singleness as the Bible is?

Suffering is normal

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. **Mark 8 (NIV)**

"God will so order the afflictions that befall you in the way of righteousness, that your souls shall say, We would not for all the world but that we had met with such and such troubles and afflictions: for surely, had not these befallen us, it would have been worse and worse with us. Oh the carnal security, pride, formality, dead-heartedness, lukewarmness, censoriousness, and earthliness that God hath cured us of, by the trouble and dangers that we have met with in the ways and services of the Lord!" **Thomas Brooks**, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, p.115.

How can we help each other appreciate the good results of suffering in our lives?

We are the plausibility problem

“Many churches decorated with words announcing salvation and new life are often little more than parlours for those who feel quite comfortable in the old life, and who are not likely to let the minister's words change their stone hearts into furnaces, where swords can be cast into ploughshares, and spears into pruning forks.” **Henri JM Nouwen**, *The Wounded Healer*, p.86.

www.livingout.org / www.spiritualfriendship.org / www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk

Sam Allberry, *Is God anti-gay?* / Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting* /
Ed Shaw, *The Plausibility Problem* / Alex Tylee, *Walking with Gay Friends*