

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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How Should We Treat LGBTQ People?

(Michael Baker)

The majority of the religious world are in a state of confusion when it comes to treatment of people involved in LGBTQ groups, and what the word of God says. LGBTQ is an acronym claimed by those who are either homosexual, transgender, or those who are questioning their own physical identity. It has become more common for churches to accept people of this community lately. James Martin SJ is a priest who wrote *Building a Bridge*, which speaks about the Catholic church's obligation to welcome LGBTQ people. When he was asked why, he replied “*Because they are human beings. -- They're all Catholics too.*” Martin says that Jesus “*was always trying to include people, and made a point of specifically reaching out to people who felt marginalized.*” Jesus did reach out to sinners, but He never encouraged sin. Jen Hatmaker is a “Christian-author” who said “*My beloved little church went downtown to the Austin Pride Parade and gave out free mom hugs...*” Is this how God wants the church to treat LGBTQ people? It can be difficult to answer because so many Christians are labeled homophobes in standing for the truth. If we are not to accept them into the church, how must we treat them?

We must treat all sinners with kindness because God wants them to turn to Him. We ought to treat the LGBTQ followers just as any other person in the world who has sinned. Paul said in *Acts 17:30* that God “*commands all men everywhere to repent.*” We as Christians cannot tolerate or look past sin, as it disgusts God. Therefore, the Christian is to have no respect for sin. *1 Peter 2:24* tells us that sin is what put Jesus on the cross. Sin is what brings upon spiritual and eternal death as revealed in *Romans 6:23*. But realize we are not the ones who determine what sin is, God does. Sin is breaking His Law and we, as followers of His Law, are to show no partiality when it comes to His judgement of sin.

That does not mean we treat sinners harshly because they broke God's Law. We must treat sinners with compassion, just as both God and Jesus did. Jesus showed compassion for all men by dying for us. God has compassion on us when we sin by giving us a chance to repent. In *Acts 8*, Simon the sorcerer sinned by thinking he could purchase the apostles gifts. Peter condemned his sin and told him to “*pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you*” *Acts*

8:22. Even though he sinned, there was still an avenue of repentance awaiting him. People of the LGBTQ group do sin, but it can still be forgiven by God. We must strive to show them compassion, just as God does.

We must treat sinners with sensitivity as the Gospel exposes their sin. LGBTQ or not, any person can be sensitive to the Truth. But should we turn off the light of Truth because it exposes any kind of sin? No, we must shine the light of Truth, so those in darkness can find their way to salvation, just as Jesus said in *John 8:12*. It's not us as Christians condemning the practice of those in the LGBTQ group, it's God that condemns this sin. We are simply the ones who are showing them His Word.

Jesus came to “*seek and save the Lost*” *Luke 19:10*. God does not “*will that any man should perish, but that all should come to repentance*” *2 Peter 3:9*. Those that are in the LGBTQ community are lost, just as any other sinner. While we must be kind to them, their sinful ways stand in opposition to God's word. Let us not shy away from trying to reach anyone because of the ridicule we may endure while standing for the Truth.