

## **The Need for Traditional Marriage**

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[www.fcfellowship.org](http://www.fcfellowship.org)

If you are already convinced that “traditional marriage” – i.e. the marriage of one man and one woman – should continue to be encoded in law in our culture and not changed, these comments are not for you.

If you are already convinced that “gay marriage” – i.e. marriage between members of the same sex – should be allowed and encoded in law in our culture, these comments are not for you.

If you are unsure, if you considering the change in the legal understanding of marriage as it is being presented to our culture by the gay rights movement, these comments *are* for you.

I ask of you one thing. I ask you for an open mind. This is my definition of “liberal.” My definition of “liberal” and “conservative” are different from most people’s. I do not use these terms to describe a person’s politics, economics, or position on this or any other issue. I rather use these terms to gauge the willingness to listen. I use these terms to describe the extent to which a person is genuinely willing and able to listen to and interact with a point of view other than their own. By my definition, a “conservative” is not willing to do this. A conservative’s objective in the manner I use the term is to overpower other points of view and impose their own. A “liberal” by my definition is at the other end of that spectrum. A liberal is someone who begins by listening, by seeking to understand. A liberal uses his or her ears before opening the mouth. A conservative opens the mouth without opening the ears. At some point decisions must be made and implemented. But dialogue and understanding prior to that is essential for a just and credible outcome.

That is why I begin with saying that if you are convinced already, no matter which way you believe, these comments are not for you. If your mind is made up, it’s made up. They *are* for you if you are willing to consider to a set of thoughts – and ultimately, commitments – that influence the most important dimension of life, and that is the fabric of human relationships. And if you see the relational pain and chaos in our culture that I do, you too are concerned.

I want to begin by being honest about my own commitments. If you want to take issue with what I say, start with one or all of these. From my vantage point, everything else flows from here. The following represent core values that, in my opinion, would make the world a better place if everybody believed and lived them.

**Every human being is loved by God.**

**Every human being has flaws.**

**Fathers and mothers need to be committed to and treat each other lovingly.**

**Fathers and mothers need to be committed to and treat their children lovingly.**

The first statement is a statement of faith. The others emerge, ultimately, from observation. They withstand empirical scrutiny. I would argue that human relationships begin to break down when the last two, especially, are not lived. I am aware of not only a lot of studies, but also educators, social workers, law enforcement professionals, and professionals in the judicial system who would agree. When the foundation cracks the house breaks apart. When pain is injected at the beginning, it goes deep and gets acted out further on down the road. Humpty Dumpty's broke, and everyone's trying to figure out how to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again. The solution is to go back to the foundation and heal the pain. It is infinitely better, of course, to not have foundational pain to begin with. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

I know there are people who possess a different faith than mine. Yet others may view faith as a problem and not a resource. Permit me to speak for a moment as a Christian pastor. I know there are some here who may experience a primary sexual attraction towards members of their own sex. Some may have children, siblings, friends, or co-workers who are gay. The word I have for everyone is: "Jesus loves you, this I know, for the Bible tells us so." The message of the cross is the message of the unconditional love of God in Christ. No matter who you are, God loves you. He loves you so much He sent His Son to die for you. There is no greater love than that. And if God loves you, who are we not to?

For those who share this faith, let me offer this reminder: who are we to condemn anyone in any way? In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus *commands* us not to judge others (Mtt. 7:1-2). In fact, if I understand that passage correctly, when we judge others we are only constructing our own judgment. Let me also point out that all the sins of I Cor. 6:9-11 are on the same plane. The greed and swindling of v. 10 are on the same level as the sexual sins of v. 9. Frankly, our culture is beset with a sickness of the soul at present, and I believe that it is very much because of the former far more than the latter.

I begin by offering replies to frequent comments that I have heard from advocates of gay marriage. As I do so, I must begin with a protest.

***Christians (/>the church/>people of faith) should not be involved in this question because they are trying to impose their morality on society.*** In a democracy, law is made by the people. Everyone has the right to participate. It is discriminatory to exclude anyone. The paradox here is that Dr. Martin Luther King founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a leading organization of the civil rights movement. Dr. King's faith was the foundation of his rationale. Did Dr. King's explicit faith contribute to, or detract from, the moral force of his arguments? It is disingenuous to present gay marriage as a parallel to the civil rights movement on the one hand, but then object to the current participation of religious people and groups on the other. Can't have it both ways.

However, let's acknowledge the objection, and proceed on a strictly civil basis.

***The divorce rate is 50%, so how can people who (essentially) are not doing well at marriage themselves possibly object to gays getting married?*** This is actually an argument *for* traditional marriage. When advocates of traditional marriage argue against changing the definition of marriage, they do so on the basis of other changes to marriage we've made already and their accompanying results. If you mess with the foundation, the house becomes unstable. The current divorce rate illustrates the need to bolster traditional marriage, not change it further. Changing it further will move us away farther. Farther from what? Here are the facts.

At the beginning of the "boomer" era marriage law was changed from "fault" to "no-fault" divorce....roughly, during the 1960's. What has been the result? After adjusting for the 70% increase in the population of the United States since 1960, here is a generation's reality:

**Divorce** has **increased 400%**, from 9% of marriages in 1960 to 50% today.

**Births to single mothers** have **increased 700%**, from 5.3% in 1960 to 36.8% today.

**Children being raised by one adult** have **increased 300%**, from 9% in 1960 to 26.7% today.

**Teen suicide** has **increased 300%**, from 3.6/100000 in 1960 to 12.8 today.

**Violent crimes** have **increased 300%**, from 160/100,000 in 1960 to 480 today.

Who is happy about this? Who is broadcasting this? Our culture is suffering a relational holocaust. **Marriage is the social unit by which the next generation is brought into the world, and raised. If we redefine marriage to be a civil right between individuals irrespective of sexual preference, we change the platform of its definition and move farther away from its role as the foundation of personal and social well-being.**

***Marriage is a fundamental human right*** (i.e. irrespective of sexual preference) ***guaranteed by the Constitution.*** Here is where the parallel to the civil rights movement is called upon for support. This is the main legal argument being presented to overturn the will of the people in some states, as with California's Proposition 8. Depending upon how events develop, look for this argument to be presented in the United States Supreme Court some day with the purpose of overturning the 30 states that have written traditional marriage into their state constitutions, and the other 10 states that still have DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) legislation standing on their books. This compares to the current 6 states where gay marriage is recognized. Had Congress' 1996 DOMA legislation been phrased as a constitutional amendment at the time, traditional marriage might well be written into the United States Constitution right now, having surpassed the necessary 38 state quorum for ratification. But that's another story.

Here is why, in my opinion, this argument is invalid. There is a significant difference between civil rights irrespective of race, and, when it comes to marriage, civil rights irrespective of sexual preference. The difference is as follows.

Civil rights irrespective of race means that every human being is entitled to the same treatment under law as any other, irrespective of race. To be treated differently under law because of your race is discrimination.

Civil rights irrespective of sexual preference means the same thing. It means that every human being is entitled to the same treatment under law as any other, irrespective of sexual preference. To be treated differently under law because of your sexual preference is discrimination. This includes the right to marry.

Here's the problem. If marriage is a civil right irrespective of sexual preference, what does this mean for other sexual preferences besides straight and gay? There is a wide variety of sexual preferences and lifestyles. If sexual preference is a legitimate category for legal and economic entitlement when it is lived out – i.e. in marriage - then in principle that same right needs to be extended to *all* sexual preferences. All races have equal rights; all sexual preferences should have parallel equal rights. To entitle one or two sexual preferences in law and not others discriminates against the others. If sexual preference is granted full civil rights in relation to marriage, all sexual preferences will eventually need to be treated in parallel fashion.

Lest you think that this argument is a fabrication created for polemic purposes, consider what has been said from within the gay rights movement itself. Google **“1972 gay rights platform.”** Research the gay rights organizations represented at that conference and read the last two platform statements under “State,” numbers 7 (**repeal of all laws governing the age of sexual consent**) and 8 (**repeal of all legislative provisions that restrict the sex or number of persons entering into a marriage unit**). Now imagine that you are in a courtroom, hearing arguments to declare age of consent laws unconstitutional and discriminatory. Age of consent laws legislate against sex between an adult and a minor.

I do not adhere to the following line of reasoning, but I'm trying to “hear” a courtroom argument on behalf of those who do.

- You alone have the right to define and/or identify your sexual identity
- You have the right to express your sexual identity
- You have the right to express your sexual identity with others by mutual consent (e.g.: you should be able to love whomever you want)
- Sexual activity between minors by mutual consent is not illegal
- Sexual activity between adults and minors by mutual consent is illegal
- “Age of consent” definitions are arbitrary and unconstitutional
- Minors have the right to engage in consensual sexual activity with others regardless of others' age

Be alert to the term “intergenerational intimacy.” That is a term that some use to sidestep the inflammatory emotions evoked by terms such as “pederasty” and “pedophilia.” Intergenerational intimacy is a way to label such sexual preferences without the baggage of our culture's value judgments about them. Do not regard this alert as contrived. Greek

culture during the time of Plato provides an illustration. Sex between men and boys was common. Gay sex was common. For some, such preferences were regarded as superior to love between a man and a woman. There are other sexual preferences (variations) as well, regarded as normal by those experiencing them. Some European nations have legalized gay marriage. I predict that in another generation or two they will return to ancient Greece. They will go back for the future.

My point is, a line of reasoning such as the above is consistent with the 1972 Gay Rights Platform, and is the predictable outcome if we redefine marriage as a civil right irrespective of sexual preference. **If this is not the case, let the gay rights movement repudiate these segments of the 1972 Gay Rights Platform, and outline the legal and constitutional basis for doing so.** The rationale is as important as the repudiation. In my opinion, it cannot be done without simultaneously disassembling the argument for gay marriage.

Marriage is not a civil right irrespective of sexual preference. Marriage is the social unit by which the next generation is brought into the world, and raised. That is a descriptive statement regarding a primary social reality. Every human being has been brought into this world by a mother and a father, and every young human being needs love from both. If there's a fundamental human right, that's it right there. If we could set that up, in one generation this country would witness a reversal of the current path we're on.

That is why it is my conviction is that we do not want to go back for the future. Instead, we need to get back to the foundation. To conclude with the manner I began:

**Every human being is loved by God.**

**Every human being has flaws.**

**Fathers and mothers need to be committed to and treat each other lovingly.**

**Fathers and mothers need to be committed to and treat their children lovingly.**

The question of gay marriage cannot and should not be avoided. My appeal is that you be informed, be involved, and participate towards upholding traditional marriage in law in our culture.

## Appendix

States where the people have voted to add to their state constitution the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman (30):

Alabama	Kansas	Oklahoma
Alaska	Kentucky	Ohio
Arkansas	Louisiana	Oregon
Arizona	Michigan	South Carolina
California	Mississippi	South Dakota
Colorado	Missouri	Tennessee
Florida	Montana	Texas
Georgia	Nebraska	Utah
Hawaii	Nevada	Virginia
Idaho	North Dakota	Wisconsin

The vote in Hawaii put the responsibility for defining marriage in the state legislature (and not, therefore, the state supreme court).

States where DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) law has been voted by state legislatures and not overturned in court (10):

Delaware	Minnesota	Washington
Illinois	North Carolina	West Virginia
Indiana	Pennsylvania	Wyoming
Maryland		

Overall, DOMA legislation has not withstood legal challenge, which is why voters have had to revise their constitutions to retain the traditional “one man, one woman” definition of marriage in their state

States where gay marriage is legal (6):

Connecticut	Maine	New Jersey
Iowa	Massachusetts	Vermont

Gay marriage will become legal in New Hampshire in 2010.

A vote to write the traditional definition of marriage into the state constitution has been put on the ballot in Maine. A similar ballot initiative is being pursued at present in Iowa.

States that have not defined/redefined marriage at the legislative or constitutional level (3):

New Mexico	New York	Rhode Island
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This above information was obtained from [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

All of the above is likely to be brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. One of the constitutional issues is the application of Article IV, section 1 to this issue: "Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof." In other words, for a gay couple to get married in one state, but then move to another, and not have their marriage recognized in that state, is discriminatory and unconstitutional. Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in 2004, said: "In the end, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide on marriage equality and it will base its decision on the U.S. Constitution, not anything in any of the state constitutions."

Corrections/ updates on this information are requested and welcome.