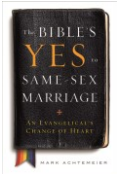


Mark Achtemeier on Same-Sex Marriage and the Bible: A Video Series

<http://covnetpres.org/mark-achtemeier-sex-marriage-bible-video-series/>

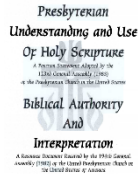
Suggestions for Discussion

Resources:



Mark Achtemeier,
*The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage:
An Evangelical's Change of Heart*

<http://www.wjkbooks.com/Products/0664239900/the-bibles-yes-to-samesex-marriage.aspx>



*Presbyterian Understanding and Use of Holy Scripture and
Biblical Authority and Interpretation*

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/_resolutions/scripture-use.pdf.

See a summary at http://covnetpres.org/?attachment_id=6607.

Session 1. *Open to God, Alive to God's Word*

Can you identify how you came to hold your own position on same-sex marriage?

If you are heterosexual: Are you aware of knowing someone who is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender? Has that awareness affected your views?

If you are LGBT: What is your experience with the church's "traditional" teachings on sexuality and marriage?

Read Matthew 7:15-20 and Romans 13:8-10. How are these passages related to one another? How do they inform your approach to same-sex marriage?

Which principles from the PCUSA documents on biblical interpretation are particularly pertinent to this lesson?

Session 2. *Marriage, Sex, and Love: What Is God Up To?*

What is your understanding of the purpose(s) of marriage?

Read Ephesians 5:15-33. How does this passage inform your own marriage, or other marriages with which you are familiar? Are the gender roles implied in this passage essential to the purposes of marriage?

Read Luke 17:1-4. Some believe that homosexual practice is a sin, and that condoning such sin is leading persons to destruction. Others believe that the sin lies in the condemnation that can lead lesbian and gay persons to despair and/or to renounce the church. How do we expect God to judge a person who is sincere in his or her convictions on this subject, but wrong? Is one's salvation dependent upon being right about this?

Which principles from the PCUSA documents on biblical interpretation are particularly pertinent to this lesson?

Session 3. Hearing God's Word as Blessing

Dr. Achtemeier investigates the context of the passages that seem to condemn same-sex relationships and identifies that they are referring to sexual violence, ritual prostitution, or pederasty – not committed, loving relationships. Do you find it ironic that passages condemning failure to extend hospitality to strangers (Genesis 19) and challenging judgmentalism (Romans 1-2) have been used to exclude and judge LGBTQ persons?

Dr. Achtemeier observes that the church's teaching on sexuality sometimes seems "take the form of arbitrary lists of rules that don't seem to have any rhyme or reason to them." Is it important to understand the reasons underlying biblical rules for sexual behavior? How does being able to articulate the reasons affect the church's capacity to speak to the world about sexual ethics?

What are some of the characteristics of God that we see in Jesus Christ? How does your understanding of God's character revealed in Christ inform your understanding of God's will for our sexuality?

Which principles from the PCUSA documents on biblical interpretation are particularly pertinent to this lesson?

Session 4. Sexual Ethics and the Church Today

Dr. Achtemeier mentions usury and slavery as biblical issues about which the church has changed its teaching. Can you think of others? What principles were applied in making those shifts?

If you were articulating a life-giving sexual ethic, what commandments and prohibitions would you include, and why?

What is the role of grace in the Christian life? In the church's conversations about sexuality?