

The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage ~ Video Series Lesson Plan
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Meeting 1

Introductions

1. Leader: Be clear about the purpose(s) of the gatherings.

Examples: Not to convince anyone, but to provide participants with the Biblical language to express their beliefs. To review good Bible study methods. To consider an example of changing one's mind rather than stubbornly staying put; how can we live open to the Spirit's call on our own thoughts and convictions? To build relationships.

Leader hint: be upfront about your own agenda. If you say you want a dialogue, but want a pep rally, understand that you will be sending mixed messages and possibly be disappointed.

2. If the group has new people, ask them to introduce themselves. If the group is already well-acquainted, invite others to offer up their thoughts about the subject of gay marriage in the church.
3. Set ground rules, since this is deeply personal. (You may ask group to make up their own rules if this is a new group.) Let's assume that we come with mixed thoughts and feelings. For some of us, our impulses are stronger than rational argument. Let's also be attentive to the possibility of histories of affairs and other "sexual secrets" in this room. Tread lightly – the subject runs deep.

Prepare for Video

1. Listen for what triggered Mark to start looking at Scripture again.
2. How come Kristi's story affected Mark?
3. Brian reviews five laws for reading Scripture.

Show Video #1

Discussion

1. Ask members to offer one thing that stood out the most: was this something new or a rephrase of something they already thought?

Leader: come prepared to offer something. [For me, it was the sense that living in God's ways should produce fruits/joy/fulfillment. I've experienced that, but didn't have Biblical testimony to understand.]

2. Achtemeier defines an evangelical as someone who takes Bible seriously.

3. Introduce COGNITIVE DISSONANCE. **Cognitive dissonance** refers to a situation involving *conflicting attitudes*, beliefs or behaviors. This produces a *feeling of discomfort* leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs or behaviors to reduce the discomfort and restore balance etc. This is what Mark Achtemeier had. His experience was more and more contrary to his traditional understanding of sexuality. So he began to rethink his Bible work.

Has this happened in your life – regarding your faith or anything else?

4. Review the five elements of Scripture study:

- Does it make sense?
- Christ-centered
- Interpret Scripture with Scripture
- Context
- Understand the Purpose of the Law-Giver

5. How did Irenaeus describe counterfeit teachings that used Scripture to explain itself?

Meeting 2

Review

1. Review Irenaeus – mosaic of the king versus mosaic of the dog. What does this tell us about quoting scripture?
2. Five elements of Scripture study
 - Does it make sense?
 - Christ-centered
 - Interpret Scripture with Scripture
 - Context
 - Understand the Purpose of the Law-Giver

Are any of these new to you? Are any more helpful than others? How is this different from fighting verse against verse?

Prepare for Video

1. Do you think God has a purpose for marriage? If so, what is it?
2. Listen for Brian's interpretation of God's purpose for marriage and family life.
3. How does he address the idea of "natural" versus "unnatural" receiving God's blessing?

Show Video #2

Discussion

1. According to Brian, what is God's plan for marriage?
2. Does this resonate with you?
3. What stood out as helpful?
4. Do you disagree with any of his interpretation?

Meeting 3

Review and Check in

1. According to the video, what is God's plan for marriage? (To help us be self-giving Christians.)
2. What do you think is God's plan for marriage/Does God have a plan for marriage?

Prepare for Video

Today's video looks at some of the traditional scripture passages used to condemn same-sex behavior. We'll stop it throughout to talk.

Show Video #3

1. Show beginning – up through Pederasty.

What is the behavior that the Bible is condemning in these examples?

- Gang rape deployed as a weapon to keep foreigners out
- Cult prostitution
- Pederasty

2. Watch through discussion of Romans.

How does Paul use same-sex behavior in his Letter to the Romans?

3. Finish viewing video.

If Achtemeier is right, what does this say about the church's teaching about sexuality? Do you find this convincing? Why or why not?

Meeting 4

Review

Has anything new been presented that speaks to you?

Prepare

Two things to listen for

1. How does John Calvin interpret the Biblical teaching about lending money for a profit in a changing world? What strategies can we borrow?
2. What are the three guiding questions we can ask to help us “live better and not just avoid sin”? How does “good theology” make those questions possible?

Show Video #4

Discussion

1. Calvin
 - looked at agricultural community versus mercantilism
 - purposes of God/compassion for poor
2. Guiding questions based on being saved by grace and to help us live better and not simply avoid sin.
 - How do I stand in relationship to God? What parts are consistent with God’s will? What parts are not?
 - How do I avoid backsliding? What do I have to be on the lookout for?
 - How can I take positive steps in gratitude and love?
3. What other insights does Mark Achtemeier share?
4. What does it mean to you when you hear “moving the church closer to the Kingdom of God?”