



# QUICK FACTS

What Does *The Center for Faith, Sexuality, & Gender* Believe?

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01

## What does *The Center* believe about marriage and sexual relationships?

Christian marriage is a lifelong covenant union between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:3-5). Sexual relationships are reserved for marriage, and any sexual relationship outside the covenant of marriage is sin (Lev. 18:6-23; 1 Cor. 6:9).

Further reading:

- [Preston Sprinkle, \*Does the Bible Support Same-Sex Marriage?\*](#) (David C Cook, 2023)
- [Rebecca McLaughlin, \*Does the Bible Affirm Same-Sex Relationships?\*](#) (The Good Book Company, 2024)

02

## What does *The Center* believe about singleness?

Both singleness and marriage are gifts given by God for the good of the Church (1 Cor. 7:1-40). Because sex is reserved for marriage, all Christian singles are called to celibacy while they are single. Many Christians will eventually marry after a temporary season of singleness; others will be single their entire lives. Christians who stay permanently unmarried can experience full, rich, and obedient lives in Christ, just like Jesus himself did as a single man on earth!

Further reading:

- [Gregory Coles, \*Single, Gay, Christian\*](#) (InterVarsity Press, 2017)
- [Sam Allberry, \*7 Myths about Singleness\*](#) (Crossway, 2019)

03

**What does *The Center* believe about biological sex?**

Bodily difference between male and female is part of God's creative design for humanity, reflecting God's own fullness (Gen. 1:27). Our sexual embodiment as male and female is connected to our Christian obedience; when the Bible speaks directly to men or women—including when it instructs us about marriage and sexual ethics—it speaks about our sexual embodiment as male and female (Matt. 19:4-6). However, the Bible does not command men and women to fit narrow stereotypes of culturally defined masculinity or femininity.

Further reading:

- [Preston Sprinkle, \*Embodied\*](#) (David C Cook, 2021)

04

**What does *The Center* believe about lust?**

Lust is a behavior of the mind: a choice to sexually covet another person (Matt. 5:27-28). All forms of lust—including both opposite-sex lust and same-sex lust—are sins from which Christians should repent (Rom. 1:26-27; Col. 3:5).

Further reading:

- [A. J. Swoboda, \*The Gift of Thorns\*](#) (Zondervan, 2024)

05

**What does *The Center* believe about sexual temptation?**

The Bible clearly distinguishes between temptation and sin (James 1:13-15; Heb. 4:15). There is a difference in Scripture between experiencing sexual temptation and committing the sin of lust (1 Cor. 10:13). By God's grace, many Christians experience less sexual temptation as they grow in their faith; however, no Christian is promised that we will be free from sexual temptation (or any struggle) in this lifetime (1 Pet. 5:8; 2 Cor. 12:8-10).

Further reading:

- [Preston Sprinkle, \*People to Be Loved\*](#) (Zondervan, 2015), pp. 144-149
- [Nate Collins and Gregory Coles, "Is Same-Sex Attraction \(or 'Being Gay'\) a Sin?"](#) (The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, 2017)

06

**What does *The Center* believe about sexual desire?**

When the Greek word for “desire” (*epithumia*) is used in the New Testament to describe sexual desire, it typically means “lust.” This kind of desire is a sin (see #4 above) and should therefore be repented from. However, the English word “desire” can also mean sexual *attraction*, which could lead to a possible *temptation* to lust but isn’t lust in itself. This kind of desire (that is, temptation) is not a sin (see #5 above), though our mental or physical response to it may be sinful (Heb. 2:18).

Further reading:

- [Nate Collins and Gregory Coles, “Is Same-Sex Attraction \(or ‘Being Gay’\) a Sin?”](#) (The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, 2017)

07

**What does *The Center* believe about repentance?**

When Christians fall into sin (whether internal or external), Jesus invites us without reservation to turn from our sin and run towards him (1 John 1:8-10). As we practice repentance, we will increasingly live in ways that honor God and steward our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Repentance does not mean that our temptation will disappear (James 1:2-3).

08

**What does *The Center* believe about sanctification?**

Sanctification is the process by which Christ makes His people holy (1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:21). In some cases, sanctification may include a diminishment of sexual temptation, but most Christians will continue battling against sexual temptation for our entire lives (Phil. 3:12). For people attracted to the same sex, God may choose to use either celibate singleness or marriage to an opposite-sex spouse as an avenue of sanctification.

Further reading:

- [Laurie Krieg and Matt Krieg, \*An Impossible Marriage\*](#) (InterVarsity Press, 2020)
- [Debra Hirsch, \*Redeeming Sex\*](#) (InterVarsity Press, 2015)

09

**What does *The Center* believe about sexual attraction change?**

Every person who follows Christ is changed by Christ, as He empowers us to repent from sin and pursue holiness (Eph. 4:20-24). This change will transform our behaviors over time—including our ability to say “no” to lust and resist sexual temptation—but it doesn’t necessarily remove or change the direction of our attractions. While some people experience a degree of fluidity or change in their attraction over time, it’s rare for anyone to change from exclusively attracted to the same sex to exclusively attracted to the opposite sex.

Further reading:

- [Greg Johnson, \*Still Time to Care\*](#) (Zondervan, 2021)
- Gregory Coles, “Is Reintegrative Therapy Making People Straight?”, [Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)” (The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, 2022)

10

**What does *The Center* believe about civil (legal) same-sex marriage?**

As Christians, we don’t need to change the laws of the nation we’re living under in order to follow God; we can “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (Matt. 22:21). The legality of civil same-sex marriage in many Western countries doesn’t change our understanding of what marriage looks like for Christians. We can show respect for our governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7) and our neighbors (Mark 12:31) without agreeing that every legal form of marriage fits God’s vision for marriage.

11

**What does *The Center* believe about identity?**

We believe every Christian is created in God’s image and is being renewed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Being “in Christ” is our core identity. All other identities and experiences (American, Nigerian, Democrat, Republican, pastor, lawyer, straight, gay, bisexual) might be important, but they should never be our core identity as Christians.

Further reading:

- [Rachel Gilson and Gregory Coles, “‘Gay’ vs. ‘Same-Sex Attraction’: A Dialogue](#)” (The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, 2019)

12

**What does *The Center* believe about the phrase “gay Christian”?**

A Christian’s core identity is “in Christ” (Gal. 2:20; see #11 above). But this doesn’t mean we can’t also name other parts of our experience. If someone says “gay Christian” and means that their core identity is in their sexuality, we don’t agree with this use of the phrase. But if someone uses the phrase “gay Christian” as a shorthand for “I am a Christian who also experiences attraction to the same sex,” and their life shows that they are striving to live under the lordship of King Jesus, then we honor their desire to be honest while also being obedient to Jesus and pursuing Him as their core identity.

Further reading:

- [Gregory Coles, “Can Followers of Christ Have Sexual Identities?”](#) (Evangelical Review of Theology, 2019)

13

**What does *The Center* believe about celibate partnerships?**

Celibate partnerships, covenant friendships, and other forms of committed friendship can be incredibly diverse in nature. Some of these relationships are aligned with what we see in Scripture, while others might not be. When someone uses a term like “celibate partnership” to describe a relationship, we want to start by understanding what they mean by that term. We believe any relationship that is not a marriage should not give the impression that it is one. We also believe Christians should flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18) and wisely avoid situations that could cause a fellow believer to stumble (Rom. 14:13-21).

Further reading:

- [Gregory Coles, “Understanding Celibate Partnerships and Committed Friendships”](#) (The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, 2022)

14

**What does *The Center* believe about living on mission for Jesus?**

Every Christian is called to be a missionary to the world around us, no matter where we live (Matt. 28:18-20). Being a good missionary involves learning the language and culture

of the people in our lives, finding ways to effectively communicate the good news of Jesus (Acts 17:16-34; 1 Cor. 9:19-23). The LGBTQ conversation presents an opportunity for all of us to live like missionaries, building relationships and becoming curious about the people God has placed in our lives.

15

### **What does *The Center* believe about Christian kindness and gentleness?**

Because kindness and gentleness are fruits of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, no one can claim to follow Christ without living a life marked by kindness and gentleness (Gal. 5:22-23). When we fail to be kind and gentle toward our Christian siblings, our LGBTQ neighbors, or anyone in our lives, we are called to repent and invite the Holy Spirit's transforming work in our hearts (Rom. 8:1-11).

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### **What does *The Center* believe about "agreeing to disagree"?**

Some Christians have proposed that Christian disputes about sexual ethics and the definition of marriage are "secondary issues" about which we should "agree to disagree." At *The Center*, we see marriage playing a crucial role in the storyline of Scripture (Gen. 1-2; Ezek. 16; Hos. 1-3; Rev. 19), and we don't believe we can dismiss it as merely a secondary theological issue. At the same time, we recognize we have no power to decide whether people are *allowed* to disagree with us; many people already *do* disagree, with or without our permission. Our goal is to exhort every Christian toward ever-deeper obedience and discipleship, even and especially when we believe them to be wrong about important theological questions (Heb. 3:13).

Further reading:

- [Preston Sprinkle, \*Does the Bible Support Same-Sex Marriage?\*](#) (David C Cook, 2023), pp. 215-228
- [Preston Sprinkle, "The Debate about Same-Sex Marriage Is Not a Secondary Issue"](#) (The Center for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, 2017)

## 17

**What does *The Center* believe about people who disagree with us?**

People disagree with our ministry about all kinds of topics, for all kinds of reasons. We commit to speaking kindly and gently about all these individuals, no matter the reason for their disagreement or the posture they take towards us (Col. 4:6). Whenever we name an individual or organization—or even when we allude to them without naming them—we commit to representing them truthfully and charitably. We believe that accurately representing people’s beliefs, avoiding slander and misrepresentation, is a biblical value every Christian should pursue (Ps. 101:7; 120:2; Prov. 12:17).

Further reading:

- [Preston Sprinkle, \*Does the Bible Support Same-Sex Marriage?\*](#) (David C Cook, 2023), pp. 17-34