

“I Do” Not!

A Social And Political Critique Of Same-Sex Marriage

When I was a child, I enjoyed watching fireworks during the fourth of July. Of course, it wasn't just watching them that I enjoyed, it was also using the sparklers. I was around five years old when I was given a sparkler by my parents who preceded to instruct me “Jeriah, be careful. It's hot.” As a five-year-old pyromaniac, I didn't pay much attention. I was given repeated warnings not to let the spark run down the rod to the point where it would burn my hand. So, the scenario went something like this: “Jeriah, be careful. It's hot.” “Jeriah, be careful. It's hot.” “Jeriah, be careful. It's hot.” “See Jeriah, I told you to be careful. It's hot!”

Perhaps I am doing something similar in this article. The idea of same-sex marriage has lit a spark of hostility and hatred among many groups, such that it has become almost impossible to talk about such an issue without emotions rising and vulgar and ad hominem attacks running rampant, and from both sides of the issue at that! I recognize the inherent danger in tackling such a sensitive subject. This would explain why I have not addressed the issue thus far. Who needs that kind of stress?

Before I detail my reasons for lighting this spark, I must first give a background to the discussion. As I write this article, two lawsuits have been brought before the United States Supreme Court. These law suits center on same-sex marriage and are challenging state rulings that any marriage other than one man and one woman are unconstitutional. It truly is unclear how the courts will rule. It is against this backdrop, when same-sex marriage has its best chance yet of becoming federal law, that I write.

I write because I was challenged to post “rational” responses to the issue, without a reference to Jesus as my supreme authority. So, I write to provide socially conservative, reasonable, and cumulative case arguments against same-sex marriage. Second, I write for my church. Before anything else, I am a pastor and I must provide the people I shepherd with a comprehensive way of thinking about this issue. Finally, I write for the many (a few of whom are friends) who have walked away from homosexuality and to say that homosexuals cannot change cheapens their struggle.

I suppose, as a matter of procedure, I should first make clear what I AM arguing for and what I AM NOT arguing for. I am arguing for defining marriage as it has been traditionally defined in America: the legal union between one man and woman wife.

I am not arguing for the illegality of homosexual behavior or that those in such relationships are second class citizens (a point I have yet to prove, but don't get ahead of me). I am also not arguing that same-sex marriage has destroyed traditional marriage. Traditional marriage has destroyed traditional marriage. Men and women who have decided that marriage should be based upon the whimsical desires of the moment rather than on loving commitment to the good of another have destroyed and cheapened traditional marriage. But that is an article for another time! I am also not arguing that those involved in same-sex relationships should not receive the civil benefits from their partner on the basis of their same sex relationship, or that somehow privileges like hospital visitation should be denied. Rather, I am arguing that the solution to legalize same-sex marriage is the solution to the wrong problem. The real issue here lies in the broken system of social security and government intrusion. But again, that is an article for another time.

Now, as they say, on to the main event. It's time to light the sparkler! My arguments against making same-sex marriage legal are as follows.

1. Civil Unions Are An Inadequate And Dangerous Solution To The Problem.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that finding alternative solutions is not a good idea.

B. What I Am Arguing: Employing civil unions in conjunction with marriage is a poor solution. If civil unions are given to same-sex couples, then, whether now or later, others will want it too. It will then become a national “second rate” marriage to which people, men and women, will flock because it is perceived to be less of a commitment than marriage.

Interestingly, this is the same line of thought as used by Gay Rights Activist Andrew Sullivan in a debate with evangelical Douglas Wilson.¹ Here, however, he uses the argument to critique the thought that civil unions should be “good enough” for same sex couples. I am simply agreeing with him and saying that it isn't good for anyone!

2. Same-Sex Marriage Is Inherently Useless To The Promulgation Of Society

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that the only purpose of marriage is procreation, or that those who marry but are infertile, should not be able to marry. This would be impossible to regulate.

B. What I Am Arguing: I am arguing that monogamous, heterosexual marriage is the only

marriage that can positively grow a society. It is ideal for reproduction, ideally suited to bring both male and female influences to bear upon the raising of children, and ideally monogamous to support stability and longevity. Even in terms of pure naturalism and the belief that all changes in various species are a result of natural selection acting on random mutation, no species has developed a predominately homosexual orientation. Why? Because they would die out! It is not physically advantageous.

3. The Argument For Same-Sex Marriage Based Upon Biological Behavior Is A Philosophically Poor Foundation.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that there is not a biological component to same sex attraction. Even in my Baptist, fundamentalist theology, I understand humans to be a theological dichotomy, such that we are both immaterial (heart, soul, spirit, mind, will) and material (chemicals, biology, genetics, living tissue), yet we are a functional monism, such that what happens in one affects the other and vice versa. Though, having read the empirical research, I am not convinced of the *pure* biological nature of homosexual attraction, that is not the point I am arguing here.

B. What I Am Arguing: I am arguing from a more philosophical basis that biologically produced behavior cannot be the rational basis for determining morality. It is true that, in the animal kingdom, there are cases of homosexuality. But some animals also eat their children or kill the mate after intercourse. There are plenty of examples of supposedly biologically based behaviors that should never be considered morally indifferent, normal, or healthy. Anger, alcoholism, addiction, personality disorders, or schizophrenia all have biological components to them and yet none of these should be thought to be morally acceptable on the basis of such a component. This is not to necessarily equate homosexual behavior with such behaviors. I only seek to demonstrate that the rationality of putting biologically related behaviors beyond the sphere of question or critique is entirely inadequate as a refutation.

Even when considering the plight of interracial marriage (a civil rights issue of not too long ago), it was not enough to say that, because there is a biological component (skin pigmentation), it is unconstitutional to bar interracial marriage. The inherent morality of the union was the deciding factor. Interracial marriage avoided all of the moral “pot holes” that articles like this list out. Thus, it needs to be determined that, not only can same-sex individuals cannot not change (which I am not convinced is true, based on the teaching of God’s Word, my reading of the peer-reviewed journals, and on the basis of the

testimonies of individuals), but the morality of the thing itself needs to be addressed.

It should also be recognized that the door of biological justification swings both ways, and often smacks us on the back side as we seek to walk through it. If we are nothing more than the sum of our parts and we are all simply products of our biology, then the person who refuses to serve same-sex couples is simply dancing to the tune of his or her own biology. He or she is biologically determined to not want to serve such people due to the chemical fiz of his or her own brain. If biology is the basis for morality, on what basis can one judge the same-sex couple to be biologically right and the wedding cake maker to be biologically evil? The example reveals that the issue must be settled by a question other than simply an appeal to biology.

4. The Argument For Same-Sex Marriage Based On The Definition Of Morality As That Which Does Not Harm Anyone Else Is Also A Philosophically Poor Foundation.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I do not accept the claim that same-sex marriage doesn’t hurt anyone. Certain parts of human anatomy are not safe for sexual intercourse and no amount of political correctness will change this. Further, as was previously demonstrated, same-sex marriage does harm others as it is not good for the sake of society.

B. What I Am Arguing: But even if same sex marriage does not hurt anyone, can that really be the standard for determining morality? What about the peeping tom who never gets caught? The woman being observed doesn’t know he is there. Is she being harmed? No. Is the act itself still inherently wrong? Yes. The basis for morality must be more than simply the degree of harm it causes to another. Further, morality must be based on more than simply what I would want done to me. For example, some people want people to be straight forward with them while others want people to be more sensitive. The way I want people to speak to me is not necessarily the way I should speak to others.

5. The Arguments For Same-Sex Marriage Are A Slippery Slope Into Polygamy, Pedophilia, And Bestiality.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that homosexuality is a slippery slope into such behaviors, as though if you engage in homosexuality you will inevitably engage in these other areas.

B. What I Am Arguing: The arguments used by advocates of same-sex marriage are all arguments that can, have been, and will be used by other groups. For example, that a denial of same-sex marriage refuses happiness to those who, by natural state, are happy in

love, is an argument that can be used by any of these other groups. Who is the homosexual that he or she has the right to deny loving relationships to a person who loves and is committed to his horse, or to the woman that believes that one man just isn't enough to get the job done, or the gentle old man who just wants to be with his pretty granddaughter? I mean, love is love, right? Do they not bleed, do they not love? The only way to deny such relationships is if the government imposes a definition of "love" into United States law, an action I hardly believe will resonate with anyone!

Further, I understand that the "slippery slope" argument is a logical fallacy. However, it is an informal fallacy, a fallacy that isn't wrong, but just isn't complete. It would be illogical to say that something is wrong simply because it could lead to other things that are clearly wrong. The morality of the thing itself must be established. However, my other arguments seek to establish that and, frankly, sometimes you shouldn't play on the moss-soaked ledge because it really is slippery.

6. Adoption Or Surrogacy For Same-Sex Couples Unnaturally Forces A Motherless Or Fatherless Situation Upon A Child Who Has No Say In The Matter.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that two fathers or two mothers cannot provide a home situation for a child that promotes love, health, or values.

B. What I Am Arguing: A child should not be forced to grow up without a mother or father, simply because the parents decided that it was preferable to them personally. While certain essentials of rearing children may be adequately, even superbly, met by same-sex parents, it is not justifiable to force a situation upon a child in which that child is denied a mother or a father. It seems very strange that, in an age where women are standing up for women, they refuse to acknowledge that two men raising a child is a strong declaration that a child doesn't need a mother... and vice versa.

It is further unjustifiable to ask a child to assess which situation is more preferable when, in the vast majority of cases (if not all), children of same-sex couples are brought in through surrogacy or adopted early on and have no way to reference an alternative. Suppose I were to ask a person whether she liked riding on an airplane or boat better. She may answer that, to her, a plane is preferable because it will help him arrive at his destination faster, which is certainly better. To such a reply, I would have perfectly acceptable reason to ask whether or not that person had ever been on a boat, or if getting to the destination in a timely manner was the only goal a person could conceivably have for choosing one or the other. The

point is that asking children who have grown up in same-sex families if they felt fulfilled is irrelevant if they don't know any better because they never had a mother or a father, which ever the case may be.

7. The Issue Of Same-Sex Marriage Should Be A State Issue, Not A Federal Issue.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that the federal government has no authority.

B. What I Am Arguing: The tenth amendment explicitly states, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."ⁱⁱ The Constitution does not declare that defining marriage is a role of the federal government, therefore, it is a state issue.

8. Same-Sex Marriage Is A Violation Of 1st Amendment Rights.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that same-sex marriage violates my personal rights.

B. What I Am Arguing: The first amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."ⁱⁱⁱ

Once same-sex marriage has been established, hate crime laws (sorry, I meant "anti-discrimination laws") will then be created to prevent any discussion as to its morality. Those who object, for either the reasons outlined in this article, or for religious reasons, will be treated as criminals. This whole debate is really not a debate about civil liberties, such as the right to marriage and to enjoy certain legal privileges. It is ultimately a quest to seek universal approval and legal protection from challenge. It is false to assume that this issue will not impact churches and the faith of those who disagree. If this is framed as a civil rights issue, then the church, if it refuses to do wedding for such individuals, or refuses to admit practicing same-sex marriage couples to join local churches, or, God-forbid, tells such individuals to repent, will be told that it is violating civil rights.

We need to re-evaluate the concept of "hate crimes" in light of the principle of freedom of speech. Whatever the solution is to this debate, it should not come from government suppression either for or against same-sex marriage. Only in a land where free speech and debate is tolerated and encouraged can good decisions be made. However, to avoid further confusion, I will address the issue even farther.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that those who commit the heinous crimes of assault, murder, or harassment should not be prosecuted.

B. What I Am Arguing: These crimes are already listed under titles other than hate crimes. To outlaw even speaking such truth or to outlaw the exclusion of certain individuals is like the parent who walks into the elementary school and demands that little Johnny be kicked out and punished because little Johnny didn't want to play with her little Davey. Should people learn to get along? YES! Should it be the government's job to enforce this? NO!

9. Same-Sex Marriage Does Violate My Religious Conscience.

A. What I Am Not Arguing: I am not arguing that all of an individual's personal convictions should rule the masses.

B. What I Am Arguing: Well, I tried to stick with social and political arguments, but, alas, I failed! I freely admit that I could not help but bring my religious conviction into the discussion. But at least I waited until the end, right?

I am arguing that the individual has the right to voice any and all personal convictions. I would not have my Christian convictions if I were not convinced that they were true. Why would I not vote for God's prescribed morality if I believe God is real and has made such morality known? He has done so on repeated occasions, but the text I am most drawn to is 1 Corinthians 6:9-12. I love this text because it shoots straight with the readers. "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God."^{iv} I

also love this text because no sin is singled out. All sin, as Romans 3:23 states, "falls short of the glory of God."^v No one escapes the all-seeing, all knowing eye of the Lord.

Yet, the text continues that, "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."^{vi} Jesus, as we celebrate at Easter, died on the cross to pay the death penalty for all of us in that list. But He did not stay dead. After all, can the grave hold God? He rose on the third day. And because our penalty has been paid by Christ, if we cry out for mercy to God, if we trust Him, that He died for our sins and rose again, if we follow Him, He will make us new from the inside out. We are not basically good people who do sin sometimes. We are sinners who all need to be rescued from slavery to a harsh master that can never be satisfied, all the time lying to us that, with just a little more, we will be.

On the flip side, I do not deny that those of another conviction should be able to voice those same convictions. Only let the arguments win the day, not emotions.

These arguments have been persuasive to me. However, I could be wrong. I truly could be seeing things wrong or blinded by bias. But I don't think I am. I will close by declaring the following: if my arguments can be definitively answered and refuted, I will stop speaking on the issue and give my support to the civil declaration of the constitutionality of same sex marriage. However, until that time, I reserve the right, duty, responsibility, and privilege of being convinced by arguments, reasons, and debate, as does every other person, so that each person can be, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "fully convinced in his own mind."^{vii}

ⁱ Sullivan, Andrew; Wilson, Douglas. Is Civil Marriage For Gay Couples Good For Society?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhxtVaoLjY>

ⁱⁱ United States Constitution. National Center for Constitutional Studies. 2010. Pg. 21

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid. Pg. 23

^{iv}The New American Standard Bible. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

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^v Ibid: Romans 3:23.

^{vi} Ibid: 1 Corinthians 6:11.

^{vii} Ibid: Romans 14:5.