



Basic Guidelines for a Loving Conversation on Same-Sex ‘Marriage’

Many Christian women are discouraged as we process the loss of the marriage battle at the Supreme Court, and rightly so. But 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 reminds us that, “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” The passage goes on to explain that we carry in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. *In our body*. In the very way we live embodied lives — from reaching a hand out to someone hurting, to living sexually whole lives ourselves — our sin is dying so that flourishing life can come.

We have a call. A mission to motivate us in our times of trouble. It is time to shake off our petitions and attend to our work. It is time to be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope that we have. And that is what marriage is. Marriage is hope. Marriage is hope that in the brokenness and confusion of this dark world there is still love. Lasting, selfless, unfailing love. And ultimately, by standing up for marriage, we are standing up for Jesus. The ultimate body given in love.

But how on earth do we do this? Secular people simply don’t understand our beliefs about marriage, sexuality, and gender. This is not the first time the Church has faced something like this. In ancient Rome, Christians were known for their peculiar sexual ethic. It was the work of early Christians that ended such abhorrent practices as infanticide, once accepted and normal. Again, we are being called to explain our peculiar views in both word and action.

We at Concerned Women for America (CWA) have already put out a [call to action](#), giving you the crucial first steps to follow. We must indeed pray, preserve, and participate in actions that will counter the fallout of this ruling. But we must also arm ourselves with basic, simple, loving explanations of marriage that we can share with our community and anyone whom God might place in our path — this includes a myriad of people with diverse religious backgrounds and very different experiences with marriage. Hebrews 13:4 reminds us that, “Marriage should be honored by all.” Marriage impacts everyone, not just the two people in it, and there may very well be those scarred by experiences that may or may not be directly their own. If one has never seen the beauty of Biblical marriage, one cannot be blamed for not understanding it.

This makes tone all the more important in these discussions. In response to the ruling, pastors need to be reminding Christians of the Biblical imperative to have a mutual commitment to both truth and love.

The goal is to be able to explain marriage in the coming months. Even if we win this fight, even if all our conscience rights are protected and someday the ruling is overturned, we still need to know this information. We still need to actively understand marriage both for ourselves, our communities, and those we encounter. Because there will always be someone hungry to learn what it truly means to love. Marriage can be that picture pointing us to the ultimate Lover of our soul.

1. Pray Often

Ask the Lord to purify your own heart from your own sin. Ask Him to show you where the Church has failed and what to do about it. Ask Him to put people and opportunities in your path so that you might share the truth in love, whatever He would have that look like.

2. Listen to People

Sometimes it is just as important to listen as it is to speak. There is great wisdom in silence. We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit Who reminds us that there is, “a time to be silent and a time to speak (Ecclesiastes 3:7).” Listening well also means repeating back to people what they said to ensure they feel heard and understood.

3. Ask Questions

It is extremely likely that the reason your friends hold the views they do is because it is what they have been told. It is quite common for someone never to have heard the conservative viewpoint articulated. Some have also never thought through defending their own view. Make them think about what it is they believe and why. And also ask about their own personal life experiences that have contributed to this opinion. Make sure they know you value their opinions and even their emotions. We believe truth can be most fully found in the union of heart and mind.

4. Tell Stories

Jesus always spoke in parables. In a conversation recently with a Christian supporter of same-sex “marriage,” I told the story of a friend of mine who has never met her biological father and all the pain it caused her. I then explained that many same-sex couples would also be depriving children of their biological parents. Personal, simple anecdotes like that allow us to calmly explain that this is about more than the two “gay” people involved.

5. Don't Be Afraid to Be Friends

Christ was frequently criticized for eating with tax collectors and sinners. It's absolutely okay, encouraged actually, to be open to people who have vastly different worldviews than you. You have to be discerning, but overall, it can be a wonderful way to have influence on someone who is more likely to listen if they know you actually care for them as a person outside of the issue. There is great wisdom in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13a, “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case, you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate

with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler ... What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside." Notice that Paul warns not against being friends with the immoral, but worries rather about the hypocrites. We are to disassociate with people in the Church who give us all a bad name by refusing to repent and, instead, insist upon living like the world, particularly in taking advantage of others. This tough love is for other believers not unbelievers. Also, note that he puts sexual sin in a list equal with many other kinds of wrongdoing.

6. Don't be a Pharisee

Jesus died for them as much as you. In this fallen world, you both face your own sexual brokenness met by Jesus' open arms. The difference is they don't know the way of peace and forgiveness, and the best way to show them is to live it yourself. Be vulnerable about your own struggles. Do not judge them or see them as lesser. I've read some pretty angry, hateful speech from some claiming to be on our side.

7. Meet Them on Common Ground

It is unlikely (though not impossible) that in one conversation you will be able to change someone's mind entirely. Look for ways where you actually agree. After seeing my photographer friend post, "This wedding vendor accepts all kinds of love," I asked her if she agreed people should be FORCED to provide the photography service. She said no, but they should refer to someone who will as a matter of courtesy. We agreed! It was victory enough for now.

8. Live in Loving Christian Community

We don't believe someone should have to be married to be accepted by society and loved by people. That would be discriminatory to single, divorced, and widowed people. Justice Kennedy wrote in his opinion that, "Marriage responds to the universal fear that a lonely person might call out only to find no one there." It is a horrible assertion that it takes marriage to cure loneliness. I know many newly "married" homosexuals will look to marriage to fill a relational hole that is first filled by God, and then by non-eroticized, deep, healthy relationships. If you are in a married relationship, you have a special responsibility to include within your family's daily life those hurting, lonely people who do not need earthly marriage to fill their hearts, but a heavenly one. Christian married couples are to look out for lonely singles around them. What about that husband or wife that was just widowed? How about that single mom down the street? They should be included in casual gatherings. Homosexuals are actually good at living in community because they feel their cause unites them. It is sad to see Christians don't always feel that same interconnected sense in fighting for our eternal cause.

In conclusion, Sara Groves has an old, amazing song called "Conversations" about sharing the Gospel with others. "I'm not trying to judge you. No, that's not my job. I am a seeker, too. In search of God. Somewhere, somehow the subject became taboo. I have no other way to communicate to you. That this is all that I have, this is all that I am." Her words apply equally to the marriage issue, which is, after all, so inextricably

tied to the Gospel itself with Christ as our bridegroom. “I don’t know how to say this. I don’t know where to start. Just know that I care for you. And I’m speaking from my heart.” That is all we can do.

Questions About the Case

Q: What are the primary concerns of CWA after this ruling?

A: We believe this ruling touches on many of our seven core issues, beginning with Defense of the Family and extending to Religious Liberty (including states’ rights), Education, and Sexual Exploitation. We believe the issue of “gay marriage” will have rippling effects through these various issues as we see endangered conscience rights, state authority trampled, sexual education curriculum changes, and extra instability to the homes of children where either a mom or a dad is cut out their lives.

Q: Does the new Supreme Court Opinion protect Religious Liberty?

A: No. Just the opposite. As Chief Justice John Roberts said in dissent, “[P]eople of faith can take no comfort in the treatment they receive from the majority today.” Out of the 34-page majority opinion, only one paragraph (three sentences, to be exact!) addresses religious liberty. Justice Clarence Thomas in his dissent expressed grave concerns, saying the decision may have, “potentially ruinous consequences for religious liberty.”

It does not, however, take away the religious liberty guaranteed by the First Amendment, so we will continue to fight in the courts on this issue for years to come. *The question is what happens when the right to religious liberty expressly guaranteed by the First Amendment comes into conflict with this newly minted constitutional right to same-sex “marriage.”*

Q: If Concerned Women for America sees this as a state’s rights issue, how is this distinct from believing that states should have a right to institute slavery as a reality despite its immorality?

A: The issue of state rights and sovereignty extends as a principle beyond a misguided application to slavery. Outlawing slavery was within the jurisdiction of the federal government, because it was a human rights issue. Homosexual “marriage,” by contrast, is not a human rights issue, because there is no fundamental right to “gay marriage,” neither in natural law (the law written on human hearts), nor positive law (the man-made laws and legal structures including the Constitution). In fact, this ruling deeply endangers religious liberty, which is within the scope of both natural and Constitution jurisprudence.

Q: How can one counter the argument that laws defining marriage as between a man and woman violate the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment?

A: The Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment merely states that no state shall “deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” As you can see, that phrase says nothing about the right to same-sex “marriage.” The Court is using an invented legal tactic to read new and non-existent rights into the word “liberty.” Due Process precedent requires the Court to uphold only rights that are “so rooted in the traditions and conscience of our people as to be ranked as fundamental.”

The right to same-sex “marriage” is most definitely not rooted in our traditions; it is, rather, a new cultural invention. The Court acknowledges the newness of this “right,” but still classifies it as “fundamental,” because it is imposing its own sense of fairness and innovation, ignoring clear legal precedent.

Q: How can one counter the assertion that laws defining marriage as between a man and woman violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment?

A: The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment states that no state shall “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” Traditional marriage laws treat everybody equally; it only requires that persons meet the definition: one man and one woman. There is nothing discriminatory about that. Before this ruling, every person had the same right to marriage, the same right to choose to marry a person of the opposite sex, because that is what marriage means. The rights of each person to engage in a certain institution or action do not change because some chose not to engage in that institution or action. The right to go to church is not discriminating against those who chose not to attend church. Likewise, the right to get married was not discriminating against those who chose not to get married, for whatever reason.

The Court declined to do what homosexual activists asked them to do, which was to declare homosexuals a “suspect class,” as it had done in the case of race. Perhaps knowing that, as [CWA’s brief](#) before the Court said, homosexuals fail miserably on one of the crucial factors of the suspect class test: the requirement to be “politically powerless.”

Still, even if designated a suspect class, the government would only be required to show a “compelling state interest” to justify laws defining marriage as one man and one woman. And the stability, support, and promotion of the natural family, considered the building block of society throughout our history and the best environment for the next generation to develop, would certainly meet that criteria. Thus, nothing in the Constitution compels the Court to rule traditional marriage laws unconstitutional.

Q: Does the state have any business defining marriage at all — traditional or otherwise?

A: The government has an interest in marriage, because it has an interest in children — in the next generation of citizens, which is crucial for our civilization. Chief Justice Roberts said in his dissent that marriage, “arose in the nature of things to meet a vital need: ensuring that children are conceived by a mother and a father committed to raising them in the stable conditions of a lifelong relationship.” He continued: “Therefore, for the good of children and society, sexual relations that can lead to procreation should occur only between a man and a woman committed to a lasting bond. Society has recognized that bond as marriage. And by bestowing a respected status and material benefits on married couples, society encourages men and women to conduct sexual relations within marriage rather than without.”

Q: Why should all Christians be concerned about this ruling?

A:

- **Children**

Many headlines support opposite conclusions when it comes to the well-being of children raised in same-sex households. The trick is to have large, random, and representative samples that do direct comparisons between children raised in opposite vs. same sex households. When such strict study restrictions are present, such as in the [Mark Regnerus Family Structures Study](#), the results show that there are statistically significant differences: children in same-sex households suffer from less safety, more depression, more welfare, less education, more arrests, more attachment disorders, and more drugs, smoking, and TV. Some of these negative effects were starker for homosexual families even in comparison to unstable heterosexual households. It is true that there are more studies to be done, especially comparing stable and instable homosexual families, but unfortunately, stable homosexual families are difficult to find as same-sex relationships lend themselves to [more fluidity](#).

- **Religious Liberty and Adoption**

Several Catholic adoption agencies, including those in Boston, San Francisco, and D.C., are being [forced to close](#) their doors or lose government partnerships because of their reasonable and religious policy to provide adoptions only to married, opposite-sex parents.

- **Religious Liberty and Tax-Exempt Status**

There have already been calls to diminish or strip churches and religious organizations of their tax-exempt status, even charities doing such great work as feeding the poor. Religious and charitable organizations [could easily be attacked](#) and deprived of tax benefits.

- **Religious Liberty and Businesses**

Organizations such as [cake bakers](#), wedding photographers, and [T-shirt printers](#) are being forced to provide their services to “gay weddings” or rallies. Upon refusal, they are facing intense legal battles and exorbitant fines. In Oregon, for example, Sweet Cakes by Melissa is being fined \$135,000 for their refusal and being [threatened with further fines](#) if they dare speak out about the injustice they have suffered.

- **Religious Liberty and Government Officials**

Judges and clerks involved in the government will, because of this ruling, be forced to issue marriage licenses — in violation of their deeply held religious beliefs — to couples they don’t believe can actually get married. In other words, a Christian judge will be required to grant a marriage standing before the law to a same-sex couple, when participating in such a ceremony would violate their conscience. Some counties are trying to grant religious exception rights to such governmental officials, which will likely be an ongoing debate. Some judges feel the purpose of their job requires them to comply, [regardless](#) of their own personal views.

Q: How are we to understand bisexual and transgender additions to the “gay” and lesbian movement?

A: The LGBT movement proclaims the goodness of a man wanting to be a woman while saying there is no express way to define a woman’s sexuality. There is a misapplication of the idea of freedom into choosing whatever sexual lifestyle you desire, regardless of the consequences to yourself and others, with very few limitations. The gold standard among the majority of LGBT activists is that consent creates correctness. In some circles, pronouns are constantly being added to LGBT — from lesbian, “gay,” bisexual, and transgender, to adding new letters like “I” for intersex or “Q” for queer or questioning, or “A” for asexual or “P” for polyamorous. There are also lists of [countless pronouns](#) to identify yourself as neutral, various genders, and multiple sexualities.

As Mark Tooley, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, recently commented, “America’s errors typically aren’t due to secularism or revived paganism but some form of Christian heresy.” In this case, it’s Gnosticism — the belief that the material world does not matter and can be rejected in favor of some ephemeral sense of “self-actualization” and “lofty-spirituality” without dogma and without a sense of absolute truth grounded in [material reality](#). Christianity has always been about the union of body and soul, but homosexuality severs an individual from his or her own body, and, therefore, from part of his or her own self.

As Christians, we believe God made male and female evident by our biology. The mutual consent to act on a desire does not automatically justify that desire. The agenda of the LGBT movement is in stark contrast to our Christian views on marriage, sexuality, relationships, and the family. Even discarding explicitly religious arguments, the sexual philosophy of the LGBT movement will be harmful to secular social concerns, such as children’s well-being and religious freedom.

Q: What can we do to still stand up for marriage now that this ruling is out?

A: There are still many community and legislative measures that will aide us in a continued fight for what marriage truly means. There will be proposals for a Constitutional Amendment protecting and defining marriage as between one man and one woman. There will be court cases about religious freedom concerns, such as the rights of cake bakers to refuse to make wedding cakes for “gay” ceremonies. There will be legislative proposals to protect the rights of adoption agencies to only place within opposite-sex households, and laws to protect religious freedom rights such as The First Amendment Defense Act. It is important to consider supporting these legislative and judicial measures with activism and advocacy.

[Joining CWA](#) is an easy way to stay on top of everything that is happening at the federal and state level.

Meanwhile, it is vital to stay strong while engaging with your community about these issues. As tempting as it may be to adopt the “Benedict Option,” after a monk named Benedict who escaped the crumbling debauchery of Rome to live a monastic life, this is not the time for such a retreat, but rather a brave charge. As CWA President and CEO Penny Nance explains, “We can all become Benedictine monks [or] we can clear our

throats, we can lean forward, we can have a conversation with our neighbors, and we can try to do something practical to protect ourselves and to lead our country forward.”

Be sure to visit ConcernedWomen.org for the next installment of this series, “How to Answer Common Objections.”