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Would Jesus Endorse Gay Marriage?

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I never would have stuck my nose into this business except for what I heard Elton John say during a CNN interview last week, “If Jesus Christ was alive today, I cannot see him, as the Christian person that he was and the great person that he was, saying this (gay marriage) could not happen.”

Following Him Around

I’ve been reading through the Gospels every month for two-and-a-half years and it’s changing my life. I had studied elements of Jesus’ life while doing research for my books, *Awaken the Leader Within . . . how the wisdom of Jesus can release your potential* and *The Jesus Experiment*. But reading his story every day is different. It’s like following him around rather than sitting with him for a few hours.

That’s why Elton John’s comment got my attention. If Jesus would endorse gay marriages then supporters of such unions would justifiably have the moral high ground.

Since I’ve now read through each of the Gospels 30 times I can tell you I never once saw the words, “homosexual,” or, “gay.” Of course, you could go to biblegateway.com and type those words into the search engine and you’d know the same thing in seconds.

In light of the fact that Jesus never discussed the topic, it would be easy to think Elton John was right—or wrong, depending on a person’s previously held point of view, which I suspect shapes most people’s thinking.

What Jesus Did Say

In order to find out if Sir John was right, let’s look at what Jesus did say about a related subject.

In Mark 10:2 some Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife.

Instead of giving a direct answer, Jesus responded with a question of his own—something he often did. He asked the Pharisees, “What did Moses command you?” (Mark 10:3). The Pharisees answered, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.” Now remember, Moses was the ultimate authority to the ancient Jews. What he said was written in stone, literally. So the religious leader correctly quoted Moses and waited for Jesus’ reply.

The Side of Abused Women

Rather than simply agreeing with what Moses had said, Jesus explained why God permitted divorce in the first place. He told them God allowed divorce because of hard-hearted people. In ancient Israel men could divorce a woman for the smallest annoyance and she could end up on the street. I’m impressed that Jesus took the side of

abused women. He addressed the mistreatment of women and would soon say something to help end it.

The Foundation He Spoke

Jesus next spoke words that formed the foundation of his belief regarding sexual morality.Jesus said, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh, consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore, God has joined together, let no man separate” (6-9).

Jesus cited Genesis 1:27b and noted that from the beginning the two, a man and a woman, would become one flesh and enter into a permanent relationship. *Please note that Jesus emphasized the twoness of a sexual union.* Why is the number “two” important? Because there are two sexes. In Genesis 2:18, God said he would make a helper “suitable” for Adam. The word for “suitable” means corresponding to him. She would be unlike any of the animals he had spent years naming. She would be his completer and he would be hers.

According to Jesus, the moral foundation for sexual morality is based on: The *twoness of the sexes, male and female, and the permanence of the marriage union.*

A Higher Standard

As an aside, I find it interesting that Jesus revoked the Old Testament law regarding marriage and divorce and in doing so, he raised the standard for sexual morality. He repudiated injustice toward women and the idea of easily breaking the marriage union. Previously, men could divorce a wife and throw her aside.

Yet Jesus equalized the roles between men and women by binding men on the same standard of monogamy that had been expected of women. Jesus went further in his sexual demands for purity than anyone in the ancient world. Moses permitted divorce, Jesus did not, except in the case of adultery. God commanded people not to commit adultery—a behavior. Jesus commanded his followers not to commit adultery in the heart—a thought.

What Would Jesus Say?

So what would Jesus say about gay marriage? He would probably say something like, “What did Moses say?” And then he would quote from Genesis.