

Can the Discovery Really Make a Difference For the LGBT Community?

[FAQ 02]

The discovery is very exciting, although we already have all the proof we need to defend gay people from the bible-bashers...

D. P.

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Does the LGBT community really have “all the proof they need to defend gay people from the bible-bashers”? In response to the above, Michael Wood asked D. P. the following questions: How do you know that the Apostle Paul accepted homosexuality? What evidence do you have? The following is Michael Wood’s reply to D. P.’s answer to those questions.

Let’s take a look at your response from a conservative’s perspective.

1. “I would not say I’m that concerned whether Paul accepts homosexuality or not.”

Many liberal Christians make it clear to conservatives that Paul’s view on homosexuality doesn’t matter to them. Once a conservative senses that someone doesn’t care what Paul thought, they immediately shut down. Paul’s words are God’s words to them. So if the premise of an argument is that Paul’s words don’t matter, the premise goes against one of their deepest held beliefs. It’s no mystery why they don’t change their minds in this circumstance.

So what’s the alternative? The alternative is to care deeply about whether Paul accepted homosexuality or not. This is where the new discovery comes in. Now, with full integrity, you can start a discussion deeply concerned about them embracing Paul’s view of homosexuality. Instead of shutting the conservative down, you are now discussing homosexuality in terms of their values, not yours. This makes all the difference in the world.

2. “Paul seems to have issues with sexuality in general...”

The conservative has already shut down after the first point, and now he is extra convinced of his view upon hearing this second notion. In his mind he is thinking, “How dare you accuse Paul of having issues with anything, let alone sexuality.” The more the conservative feels his values being attacked, the more strongly he clings to what he already believes. This doesn’t make him an unintelligent human being. It’s human nature. All people get defensive when their deepest values are being challenged. (This should be respected, never made the object of scorn and ridicule.)

Now, I’m confident that you don’t speak to conservatives exactly the same way that you expressed yourself in your email to me. Yet, I’m also sure that you can’t cloak these feelings when you discuss the Bible with them. If you genuinely believe that Paul had issues with sexuality, then this will come across in your conversations, and you will only strengthen the conservative’s beliefs because of it.

So what's the alternative? The discovery shows that the historical Paul had a surprising lack of hang ups, even when it came to sexuality. The historical Paul deliberately excluded idolatrous, same-sex orgies from his list of mortal sins. That's amazingly progressive! That's a very 'issue free' stance.

Let me give you another example, one dealing with opposite-sex acts. Paul considered adultery to be against the law. (Romans 13:8-9) Yet he wrote that everything is lawful within the context of pre-marital sex with prostitutes. (1 Corinthians 6:12) Fortunately, the historical Paul is the opposite of your current view of him. This is wonderful news! Now, instead of getting conservatives to dig in their heels, you can show them how careful Paul was when dealing with sexuality. Paul dealt with sexuality in a methodical, consistent manner. Any sexual act that violates Leviticus 19:18 is mortal sin (whether opposite-sex such as adultery or same-sex such as the rape of young boys). Any sexual act that doesn't violate Leviticus 19:18 wasn't mortal sin (whether opposite-sex such as pre-marital sex with prostitutes or same-sex such as idolatrous, same-sex orgy feasts). Paul was fully committed to the idea that only the Justices of the Torah (only the commandments based on Leviticus 19:18) were the Law. He never deviated from this, even in his discussions of sexuality.

3. "Another reason I don't concern myself with Paul is because Jesus is the Savior."

This 'Jesus not Paul' argument might be the single most popular one used by Christian liberals today. And they are losing the battle because of it. This argument is a direct assault on the conservative belief that Paul's words are God's words. So of course it's not going to change their minds. In fact, this entire notion will only cause conservatives to dig their heels in even deeper as, one more time, they feel their deepest values being attacked.

So what's the alternative? The alternative is to fully, totally and completely embrace Paul. After all, the discovery shows that Paul and Jesus taught exactly the same thing! Jesus taught that only the Justices are the Law. (Matthew 19:16-19) Paul taught the same thing too. (Romans 13:8-9) The whole 'Jesus not Paul' viewpoint is based upon the mistaken notion that Paul somehow taught something different than Jesus. Once liberal Christians let go of their now outdated view of Paul, they are destined to bring many conservatives into the fold. With the new discovery, conservatives are now destined to embrace homosexuality because they must if they want to embrace Paul too.

4. "Paul to me, seems like a very conflicted person.... Paul's views which are conflicted with Jesus because of a false identification of the source material from which translation into English occurred, then why should we count Paul's words over Jesus, since they likely agree anyway."

This is yet another attack on a deeply held conservative belief. Conservatives have a deep seated need to believe in the integrity of the Greek source material; most especially when it comes to Paul. The more this material is attacked, the more they dig in their heels. By this point (especially after the three previous points) the conservative has already mentally left the discussion. And please forgive me for repeating that they have every right to do so.

So what's the alternative? Once again, the discovery solves this problem too. The discovery shows that Paul was perfectly consistent within the source material that we have today! There's no need to discount the source material. Quite the opposite! We need to parade the contents of the source material in front of the world, because Paul is perfectly consistent that only the Justices of the Torah are the Law. He never deviates even one iota from that stance out of fear of contradicting Jesus.

5. “So, no I’m not aware of a passage where Paul comes out in support of same-sex marriage or employment nondiscrimination, so I can’t know if he accepts it, but I can know that since he never addressed it on its face, then he likely didn’t have a problem with it.”

This is probably the second most popular liberal Christian argument. “The Greek New Testament doesn’t contain any condemnation of homosexuality therefore Paul likely didn’t have a problem with it.” But what does a lack of references to homosexuality infer? Actually, it doesn’t infer anything, in either direction. It’s an empty inference, not a positive one. Then, when conservatives think of how Paul seemingly addressed other sexual issues, they become deeply convinced that Paul must’ve condemned homosexuality, whether he specifically wrote about it or not. This argument from silence may appear strong to the multitude who use it, but it is logically meaningless and therefore ineffective when dealing with conservatives.

So what’s the alternative? Fortunately, the new discovery overcomes the inherent flaws of the ever popular argument from silence.

What’s the inference of Paul believing the Justices are the Christian’s entire obligation? The inescapable conclusion is that Paul didn’t consider homosexuality to exclude them from heaven. This is the first time in two millennia that the ball has been taken across the finish line, and the game is finally over. Now, for the first time in 2,000 years, conservatives have an irrefutable reason to change their minds about homosexuality, and very many will if the LGBT community shares this discovery with them. The field is ripe for the harvest.

It’s time to stop blaming the conservatives for not changing their minds. Quite frankly, they had no reason to before. But now the LGBT community has everything it needs to change their minds. This discovery is what the LGBT community had been waiting for.

With this discovery, a new day has dawned. Full equality is finally within reach. If the LGBT community gets involved in spreading the word, they will succeed.