

Confronting Christianity

Week Nine: Isn't Christianity Homophobic?

Pre-Group Reading Material: Chapter 9 (Pages 153-174)

Questions:

- While she is in a healthy heterosexual marriage, the author continues to experience sexual attraction to other women, and even says that she doesn't expect those desires to fade. Discuss what it looks like to live with unwanted and unfulfilled desires. What do you think she means when she says that "Heterosexuality is not the goal of the Christian life" (154)?
- On page 155 Rebecca suggests that for her, and for those like her, Christianity's historic prohibition of same-sex sexual relationships is an "inconvenient truth". Is this historic Christian position on human sexuality inconvenient for most Christians today? Why or why not?
- McLaughlin says that; "The Bible *commands* same-sex relationships at a level of intimacy that Christians seldom reach."(155) What does she mean by this? Have you experienced the depth of intimacy in Christian friendship she describes from the New Testament? If you haven't, why do you think this is?
- In her discussion of boundaries, the author says that the Christian framework for human sexuality is "highly restrictive" (157). What does she say is the only place where sexual intimacy is allowed? What type of sexual behaviors are disallowed under this framework? How might these restrictions be experienced differently for someone who is attracted to the same sex than someone who is attracted to the opposite sex?
- Though some say today that the Bible does not condemn loving, same-sex sexual relationships, McLaughlin strongly argues from the Bible that any same-sex sexual behavior is outside of God's design. What does she point to in Scripture to defend her position? (162-166) Which of her arguments stood out most to you?
- McLaughlin says that; "Christians have often confused the Bible's clear boundaries around sex with a license for unloving, superior, and judgmental attitudes toward gay and lesbian people." (166) She goes further to say that; "...many Christians today do need to repent of their unbiblical attitudes." (167) How have some Christians failed in their speech and actions toward gay and lesbian people? What things need to be repented of?
- What widely held beliefs about human sexuality does McLaughlin call into question by sharing the research of Lisa Diamond? (168) In his 2015 Supreme Court opinion, Justice Anthony Kennedy says that "psychiatrists and others recognized that sexual orientation is both a normal expression of human sexuality and immutable." Can Diamond and Kennedy both be right?
- Many in our world today would look at the advance of gay rights in the same way they would look at the civil rights movement. In what ways does McLaughlin seek to distinguish between race and sexuality? (170-172)