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# 10 BIBLE PASSAGES THAT TEACH A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

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JUN 8, 2017

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As cities and communities around the United States celebrate Pride Month this June, LGBTQ and straight Christians alike look to their faith for answers about how to engage in our increasingly pro-LGBTQ culture.

The long history between the church and LGBTQ people is one fraught with tension, pain, and, sometimes, violence. Those who believe that homosexuality is a sin often point to several well-known Scripture passages from the Old and New Testaments. Most of the Christian debate about human sexuality has centered on interpretation and emphasis of these passages.

In his [book](#) *God and the Gay Christian*, Christian LGBTQ activist Matthew Vines challenges LGBTQ-condemning interpretations of these Scriptures — sometimes referred to as “clobber passages.” But these clobber-texts aren’t the only Scriptures that can guide faithful Christians as we seek a godly understanding of sexual and gender identity.

Here are 10 Bible verses that emphasize the value of love over the law, the God-belovedness of all people, and the special affirmation of those who have been historically rejected as unclean or unholy.

## 1) Genesis 1:26: “Let us create humankind in our image.”

In the Bible’s creation story, God makes clear that, out of all of creation, human beings are created in God’s image. That God is referred to in the plural in this passage could even suggest the idea of God containing a diversity of identities within God’s own mysterious and infinite self. The assurance that all human beings are created in God’s image reminds us from the get-go that everyone is a sacred creation, and that God’s image is broader than our own experience and understanding. Someone may look — or love — differently than you do, and still, simply by being a human, reflect the image of God.

## 2) Acts 10:15: “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.”

In Acts 10, Peter has a dream in which he is commanded by God to consume food that is deemed “unclean” according to Jewish law. When Peter protests, God reminds him that God’s declaration of what is clean is above — and may even contradict — any command of the law. This dream serves as a crucial instructive for Peter later in the passage, when he encounters Gentiles, which Jewish law would normally reject. This passage reminds us that God’s promise and beloved community are not defined by our own rules or boundaries, or even our own understanding of God’s law.



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### 3) Acts 8:26-40: “What is to prevent me from being baptized?”

This passage recounts Philip’s encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch, and is probably the most-cited biblical story by those seeking to affirm queer identity within Christian faith. Eunuchs in biblical times were othered and ostracized because of their failure to adhere to sexual norms. Common cultural understanding of the time would have held that their status as eunuchs barred them from inclusion in God’s community. And yet, this eunuch seeks to follow the path of Christ even as he continues to live out his sexual otherness. And he is welcomed and joyfully baptized into Christ’s community. The eunuch’s question to Philip — “What is to prevent me from being baptized?” — underscores that his sexual status is not a barrier to inclusion in the eyes of God.

### 4) Isaiah 56:3-5: “For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.”

This text from Isaiah establishes that God’s love for those deemed “sexually other” — re-emphasized generations later in Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch — in fact predates Jesus’ radical message of inclusion and love. God promises everlasting recognition and inclusion for all who honor God, regardless of whether they have been deemed outsiders.

### 5) Isaiah 43:1: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

This message from the prophet Isaiah emphasizes God’s steadfast love and protection for God’s people. This verse in particular reminds believers that we are loved and claimed by a God who redeems us and will always be with us — not out of our own achievement or deserving but out of God’s devotion. For many who are queer and/or transgender, this passage can serve as a reminder that we, too, are called by name and do not need to be afraid.

### 6) Galatians 3:23-29: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”

This well-known passage from Galatians is used in many contexts to sound the Christian call of unity in the face of division and difference. In fact, most of Galatians is an instruction to early Christians to embrace Gentile Christ-followers, even though they did not share in other early believers’ Jewish history, tradition, or laws. Paul makes clear in these verses and elsewhere that Christ’s promise is abundant and available to all people, and that those divisions and prejudices that have historically kept groups of people apart or given some power to some over others have no place in Christ’s community. The particular phrase “there is no longer male and female” offers a challenge to traditional binary understandings of gender roles.

### 7) Matthew 22:37-40: “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew addresses the great number of Jewish laws and prophetic teachings — including those that many consider to condemn homosexuality — by making clear that the overarching command of a faithful life is love: love of God, and love of neighbor. This command to love underpins any and all other commands. And so, pursuit of law-abiding faithfulness that does not first root itself in love fails to understand the true purpose of the law and the true call of faith.

8) Psalm 139: “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

This beautiful, famous psalm sings of God’s intimate and intentional knowledge of each person. It suggests that every crucial part of our identity was known to God, crafted by God before we were born — and that, as beings made in such love, we are created good. This psalm also suggests that there is nowhere we can go that will remove us from God’s steadfast love and presence.

9) Matthew 15:21-28: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ ”

This story in Matthew’s Gospel details Jesus’ encounter with a Canaanite woman. Her nationality makes her an outsider, and on this basis even Jesus rejects her when she comes seeking his help for her daughter. But the Canaanite woman challenges Jesus on his refusal, and Jesus praises her faith and heals her daughter after all. This story demonstrates that God’s love is so expansive, it can surprise and stretch even Jesus Christ himself. It encourages Christians to be mindful of our own prejudices and understand that God’s love isn’t as restrictive as our own.

10) 1 John 4:7-8: “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”

This passage from 1 John emphasizes the centrality of love. It suggests that love is always from God, and a reflection of God. Thus any genuine love, no matter what form it takes, comes from God and glorifies God.

Anyone seeking to follow God must also seek to love others. We must trust that anyone who loves is also born of God.



**Layton E. Williams**  
Layton Williams is the the author of *Holy Disunity: How What Separates Us Can Save Us* (WJK Press, Oct. 2019)

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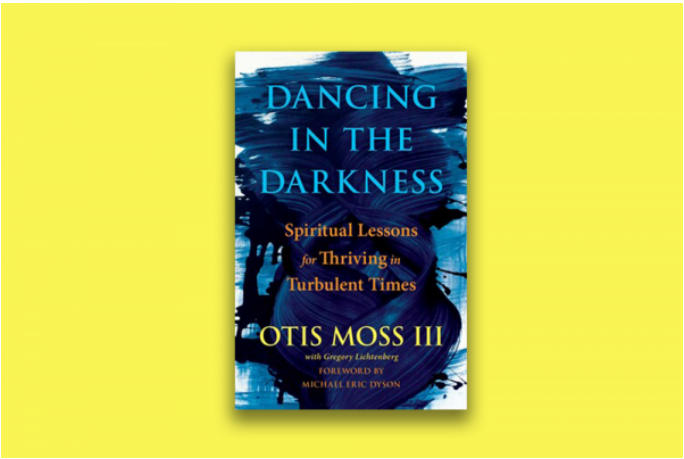
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