

## Highlights for me of our Four LGBTQ discussions

May 22, 29 and June 5 and 19

Stan Culy

Although Nat Woodruff and I led this group together, he has a separate report and this is mine. It was thrilling to have 17 people the first night of class which showed that many members of our church felt this was a significant issue and many of whom could express themselves very well on this sensitive subject. In that first session there was a lot of sharing of our own positive experiences of gays and lesbians. By the last meeting, there were two other people who came for at least one session and there were 7 people who came for three or four sessions.

We looked several times at the Old Testament passage in Leviticus 20:13 which says that “a man shall not lie with a man because it is an abomination and both men shall be put to death.” We have been told that this is part of a purity code the Hebrew people developed to distinguish themselves from the pagans around them. Nevertheless, the death penalty announced in this passage convinces me that this has no application in our current society.

Nat reminded us that when we elevate our human reason to decide whether or not a part of the Bible applies to us or not, we become Christian Humanists. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism outlined four criteria we can use to discover religious truth: They are (1) Scripture, (2) Reason, (3) Tradition, and (4) Experience. This is called the Wesley Quadrilateral.

In our second session, we delved into more detail about the first letter of Paul to the Christians in Corinth, Greece; specifically referred to as 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolater, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.” (RSV 1971 Edition) The King James Version uses the words “effeminate nor abusers,” because the word “homosexuality” was not put into print until 1847.

Nat helped us focus on the thought that even though the word homosexuality has been used in this passage, in no way, does this scripture describe the LGBTQ community of our present day.

Nat also brought two important questions before us:  
Can we elevate human reason in relationship to the Bible and still be faithful to it?  
Can conservatives maintain unwavering adherence to all teachings of the Bible? ( He raised specifically the passage in 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 which says “as in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches.”)

Although, it didn't seem like we built many bridges of understanding with conservatives, we had very meaningful conversation all around and we are grateful for all who attended. This ended our series for now but the prospect was raised to discuss related subjects, some which Pastor Cheol will teach.