

EQUIPPED: Tough Questions

Chapter 4

What Does the Bible Really Say About LGBTQ & Modern Day Morals?

It's 'normal' Estefani, she said as my mind frantically chased calm.

Uninvited ether-sleep, courtesy of a few local thieves, balks any notion of *normal* she hoped we'd believe.

No matter where you're from, there's nothing normal about being ethered and robbed in the middle of the night. But we paid our rent on time and she didn't want us to leave. And after all, missionaries should expect things like that.

Funny what some people normalize when personal agendas run deep and experience lobbies to define it.

When she said it was *normal*, what she really was saying is, this is *acceptable* here. That we should *accept* it as a *normal* occurrence - *normal, acceptable* behavior.

So what's *normal*? And who decides what *normal* and *acceptable* is supposed to look like anyway? How does one person's version of *normal* and *acceptable* eclipse another's?

Simple truth is, *Truth* is exclusively God's to decide. He alone reserves the right to define *normal* and *acceptable*. Right and wrong. Holy and unholy. Righteousness and sin. And He doesn't leave us to wonder what it is. He threads Truth throughout His Word. The Bible - the only real foundation of all that is true, *acceptable*, right, and even *normal*.

But there's a war against God's *normal*. Our American culture has *normalized* what God calls sin. We've embraced divorce, casual sex, abortion, racism, stealing, disrespect of authority, crude and brash words and behavior, pornography, sensuality, drunkenness, drugs, and a gamut of sinful conduct. A battle against *Truth* is raging on around us - rearing its ugly head in the cultural, racial, political, and religious arenas of our day.

There's a definite fight for who gets to control our *normal* in this flesh and blood existence under the sun. A war being waged in the heavenliness for the hearts, minds and souls of us all. But it's nothing new. It's been going on since the creation of mankind.

The Battle Is Real

Read Ephesians 6:12 and describe the war we're fighting.

We've worn the scars. Been wounded in the fight. We're far too acquainted with the war. We're in the middle of a fight. But God calls us to a different kind of fight. He calls us to stand strong and demonstrate the beauty and the power of what His Word fleshed-out looks like in real life when grace and truth collide.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 and explain what kind of fight we are called to.

We're called to the front lines in a fight for Truth. **But Christians need to stop fighting this spiritual war with fleshly hearts and in fleshly ways.**

This lesson comes with a bit of a warning. We're going to go to some awkward and uncomfortable places. To conversations we've avoided, misunderstood, and responded inappropriately to. But we need to go there.

We need the unabashed boldness to speak truth to the cultural issues of our day. Not brash, brazen boldness. **But authentic, audacious, biblically-grounded, grace-soaked boldness that loves deep and hard with the kind of love that loves enough to risk scorn for the sake of someone's eternal soul.**

Mere flawed and fallible humans assuming Divine authority to define what only the infallible omniscient Creator of the universe can.

The thing is, **we've embraced sin and called it tolerance. Silencing the truth that unshackles restless souls has become the demise of nations and lives.**

We've coveted the cushy, easy consensus of loud voices who cry out that we accept their *normal*. Imagine...mere flawed and fallible humans assuming Divine authority to define what only the infallible omniscient Creator of the Universe can.

God chooses what is *sin* and what is not. God decides what is normal and what is not. God defines *acceptable*, not us.

And God's Word is our ultimate authority, even for those who don't acknowledge that it is.

A Good Hard Look at Sin

So, what does God's Word say that sin is? Most simply stated, *sin* is *missing the mark*. Missing God's standard. Falling short of God's glory, holiness, righteousness. It's transgressing, disobeying, or trespassing God's Word.

Sin is not only about what we do wrong, it's also about what we fail to do right.

Read the following verses and explain what they say about sin.

Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:23, Galatians 5:19-21, James 4:17.

Look again at Galatians 5:19-21. The list of sins looks like something from our daily headlines. Adultery, fornication, immorality, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, fighting, jealousy, outburst of anger, selfishness, drunkenness, partying, murder, orgies, and heresy. Sounds oh-too familiar, doesn't it?

Sin, in all of its forms, is more than what we do outwardly. It's who we are inwardly.

Read through the following verses and share what one thing they have in common.
Matthew 12:34; Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 10:11; Psalm 14:1; Proverbs 21:2; Proverbs 24:12; Ezekiel 11:21; Ezekiel 16:30; Luke 6:45

Ultimately, sin is a *heart issue* that separates us from God. We're all sinners. But if we've been born again into His forever family, we've been cleansed, forgiven, and bestowed with the Holy Spirit who lives in us equipping and enabling us to live victoriously for Christ.

But we live in a world where the masses are calling what is wrong, right and what is right, wrong. **Modern morality eclipses biblical truth in the hearts and minds of those who intentionally reject it or sincerely don't know what it says.**

There was a day when, although sin was still just as real, it wasn't embraced as normal like it is today.

God's Word on Same Sex Relationships

As we enter into this conversation and dive into the Word to discover what God says about sin, we do so knowing that **God's love transcends every sin and every wayward heart.** That Jesus came to not only save us from our sins, but to set us free from them.

Because Scripture does that. It brings us face to face with who we are in light of who God calls us to be. And we choose...His way or ours.

Our eternal souls hang in the balance of what God's Word says and how we choose to respond to it.

The goal of this study is not to condemn but to simply present what God's Word says so those who sincerely want to know the truth can make an informed decision about which path they want to take.

So, we're going to go there. We're going to have that uncomfortable conversation. **Because real love loves enough to share not what people want to hear, but what they need to hear. The truth. The kind of truth that sets people free and makes them whole and healed and brings clarity to all that is confusing.**

Read each of the following verses and, in your own words, describe what God's Word is saying about this specific sin.

Leviticus 18:22

Leviticus 20:13

Romans 1:26-27

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

God's Word is uncompromisingly clear about same sex relationships and gender identity. But it's important to note not only what God's Word speaks clearly about, but what God's Word never sanctions, as well.

Scripture...

- Never mentions God approving of a romantic relationship between the same sex
- Never mentions marriage between the same sex. In fact, quite the opposite (Mark 10:6-9)
- Never mentions same sex partners adopting or parenting children
- Nowhere in Scripture is someone born *gay, bi, or trans*
- Nowhere in Scripture are genders confused or redefined

Contrary to modern day morality highlighted in the media and embraced by the masses, Scripture says that same sex relationships are not only considered sin, they're called an abomination.

In the Hebrew, the word *abomination* is the word *tow`ebah* which means an *abominable thing, unclean, wicked, disgusting*. God calls what mankind deems *normal* an abominable thing.

Sounds harsh. But arguing with Scripture is futile.

He's the Divine Ruler of *normal* and *acceptable*. We don't get to decide. We only choose whether or not we will trust our Creator enough to know He knows what's best for us - and say yes to Him and His plan for our lives - or choose our own.

Scripture doesn't try to make the truth more palpable. It's not sketchy about sin. God calls it what it is. Warns us of its consequences. Tells us to repent. And gives us power to overcome it. **If we would only be willing to fling high the white flag of our lives and surrender our all to the One who gave His all for us.**

That's true for us all. Sinners to the core of our being. Not just those struggling with same sex attraction, gender identity, adultery, fornication, immorality, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, fighting, jealousy, anger, selfishness, drunkenness, partying, murder, orgies, and heresy.

It's just as true for those who are in blatant sin as it is for those who sit in the pews week after week. Church attendance doesn't save the lost. Jesus does.

So, What Do We Do in Today's Current Culture?

Specifically, how do we deal with a culture that is blatantly championing immorality, the gay and transgender lifestyle when God's Word clearly calls it sin?

We know the *Christian* answer...what we're supposed to say... ***"Love the sinner, hate the sin."***

Love doesn't mean approval. It means seeing past the sin to see the people. Their hearts. Their needs. The places where they've been broken. The scars they wear. The pain they hide.

We can't grace love to people we refuse to see. We have to choose to see them.

Because I hope, like me, **you want everyone to know down to their very bones the kind of love that redeems everything.** The kind of joy that bursts uncontainable. The kind of healing that weaves together the undone and mends the scattered, fragile, and frail.

Because, I hope, like me, you know your pain was felt, your scars were seen, your great and grotesque sin was forgiven by the One who left the noise of the 99 to seek you out, make you His, and make you whole.

Because, sin enslaves, torments, defeats, destroys. But ***Jesus frees, forgives, heals, wins.***

Because, I hope, like me, you, who have become His, haven't forgotten what it's like to be without Him. Alone. Afraid. Longing for your best life. Unsure of how to grasp it tight.

So, we begin and end with love...and truth. Grace-infused truth.

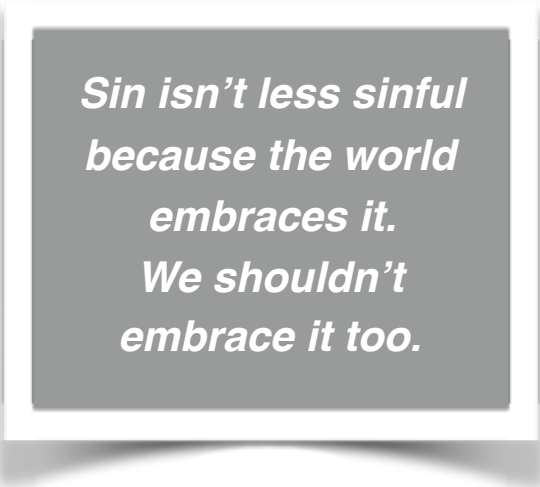
You see, there is a huge difference between the LGBTQ *agenda* and LGBTQ *community*.

We may attack agendas and policies but we don't attack people.

Radicals' agenda-pushers are wreaking havoc on the hearts of young people today. But it started in the 1930's with a strategic secular humanistic plan. Their goal? To remove God from our society and leave us to define our own idea of *acceptable*.

As citizens, we need to know and teach our children that our country that was founded on Judeo-Christian ethics. And we have a right *and* a moral obligation to stand for biblical truth.

But how do we stand without coming across harsh or hateful? How do we deal with modern morality and the whole LGBTQ agenda when it scoffs at Scripture and unravels the fabric of our society?



***Sin isn't less sinful
because the world
embraces it.
We shouldn't
embrace it too.***

Better than we have been!

Christians are guilty of embracing sin as if they've forgotten the cost of their freedom.

But they're also culpable for shunning those in need of hope as if they've forgotten they were once hopeless too.

Sin isn't less sinful because the world embraces it. We shouldn't embrace it too.

We can't keep wounding the ones we're called to woo to Christ and wonder why they run.

Let's look at 4 questions inquiring Christians are asking.

1. What do we need to know?

Christians can't be ostrich-like. Sticking their proverbial heads in the sand, ignoring what is going on in our world.

Mark 13:33-37, Mark 14:38, Acts 2:40, 1 Peter 3:15, 1 Peter 5:8 are just a few verses that all tell us to stand guard, stay awake, be aware of what is going on in our world.

For heaven’s sake, pay attention to our times. Know what people are espousing as truth. In our churches. In our political arenas. In the entertainment industry and the media. In our communities. In our schools. We need to know what is going on.

Review the chart below and fill in your own personal analysis of what is going on in our world today based on the sins listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

SIN	WHERE WE SEE IT TODAY	WORLD’S RESPONSE	CHRISTIAN’S RESPONSE
Fornication (Premarital sex, living together, hooking up)			
Idolatry (Putting things before God, including self)			
Adultery (Infidelity, unfaithfulness)			
Homosexuality (Same sex romantic relationships)			
Sodomite (Someone who engages in sodomy)			
Robbery (Stealing, cheating, embezzling, pilfering)			
Covetousness (Wanting what other have, greed)			
Drunkenness (Intoxicated, without self-control)			
Reviler (Foulmouthed, slander, abusive)			

You see, it’s not just LGBTQ issues that are flooding our culture. It’s the unbridled modern interpretation of morality that has *normalized* what God calls sin creating chaos and confusion.

But the church can't expect to impact a world it ignores. Nor can it be prayerful or strategic about reaching the world if it continues to hide from it.

World-changers know, understand, and are determined to influence the culture. The church can't biblically influence a worldview when it's engaged in applauding, accepting, or even attacking it. Awareness is necessary if we want to impact this world.

2. Should Christians boycott businesses that blatantly oppose Scripture?

It's simple really. Or maybe not. Maybe yes. But maybe *no*.

Read Proverbs 14:34 and explain how righteousness and sin have affected our nation.

We stand strong for truth because it's what sets people free.

Can we boycott? Yes. Should we boycott? Maybe. But if we do, we need to do so with respect and we need to offer solutions.

Whispering when the world blares loud will do more to quiet cries for corruption than wailing condemnation through the aisles with a Bible in one hand and your child's hand tethered to the other.

It's not about whether to boycott or not. It's about intentionally pursuing the goal. Your goal. My goal. Our ultimate *Great Commission* goal. To reach 'em and teach 'em. The beautiful simplicity of our sacred call.

Can you filter your boycott through the Great Commission? If so, then boycott your heart out! But if your goal is not to reach the lost for Christ and disciple the saved, what is it?

Corporations catering to the crowd generally cling to their version of *acceptable*. Because lost people act like lost people because they're lost. We can't expect a blind person to be able to see any more than we can expect a lost CEO to adhere to biblical principles?

So, if you feel led to boycott, boycott. But please honor Christ in the way you choose to do it. Offer solutions instead of straight up objections.

3. Should Christians judge?

Don't judge me man! Ever heard that? Me too! But God's Word may surprise you on the answer to this one!

Read John 7:24.

What does John 7:24 call us not to judge? _____

What does John 7:24 call us to judge? _____

What does that verse actually mean? _____

We don't judge according to appearance. We don't even judge someone's heart. We can't. But **people confuse *being judgmental* with *judging or making a judgment about something*.**

Christians aren't called to be judgmental or condemnatory. We're called to make prayerful and biblically based judgement about right and wrong solely founded on Scripture.

Example: If someone is lying, we judge righteous judgment by determining that they're lying. But we can't hurl hurtful words their way and then wonder why we couldn't win them to Christ. At the same time, we aren't called to ignore it either.

We're called to respond biblically with grace seasoned with salt. To help. Not to hurt.

Our lives should look like we're begging people to know Christ not like we're pushing them away from Him.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20.

What does this verse say we are? _____

What is God doing through us? _____

What are we to be doing on behalf of Christ? _____

Judging righteous judgment isn't the same as condemning. Judge, yes. But don't condemn.

4. What can we do?

* Pray (1 Timothy 2:1, 2 Peter 3:9)

Love and acceptance are universal to the soul. Those steeped in the LGBTQ lifestyle and other modern day morality issues are men and women who breathe deep down longing for belonging. Just like we all do.

Beyond sin, every heart aches for Jesus. Even if they don't even realize it. The love and acceptance He alone offers. The peace and the freedom He died to give us.

So pray for real people. Consistently. Earnestly. Relentlessly. Pray.

* Pray for those who are in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

We live in difficult days. Too much is at stake to remain prayerless people. It's time to pray like the soul of this nation hangs in the balance—because it does.

So, pray for those in all types of authority to be gripped by the love and wisdom of God. To repent. To be more concerned about pleasing the Lord than they are about pleasing man.

* Be a voice (Proverbs 31:8-9, Proverbs 17:15, 1 Peter 3:15-16)

Boycotting isn't the only way to make your voice heard. Write letters. Speak to leaders. Post. Blog. Tweet. But whatever you do, do it in a way that honors God, not in a way that makes people think Christians are crazy, hateful, or ungodly. Grace seasoned with salt is the best way to be a voice and effect cultural change.

Remember: You can stand strong against modern day morality and the LGBTQ agenda without standing against the community of people in need of Jesus.

* Love with the love of Jesus

The love of Jesus is not just for moral, upright, and heterosexual people. It's for all people. 2 Corinthians 6:9-11 reminds us that we were just as undone before Jesus saved us as the ones we are trying to reach with the hope of Christ.

When Jesus calls people to Himself, He brings sins to light, offers His love and forgiveness and, if anyone is willing to receive Him, He says, “Go and sin no more.” He makes us Free. Delivered. Redeemed. Saved.

That’s the beautiful truth of the Gospel that we’re called to spill out into the lives of others. Glimmers of grace. Heapings of hope. Towers of truth. All with the love of Jesus.

You see, as Christians, we can’t lean so far on the grace side that anything goes and God’s holiness is disregarded. But we also can’t lean so far on the truth side that we negate the grace and goodness of God that leads us to repentance and makes us His.

*“Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed!”
Psalm 85:10*

It’s time for us to let grace and truth collide. To become the light that’s set on a hill, the salt of the earth, intentional, devoted ambassadors of the Living God.

In our lesson today, we’ve surveyed Scripture in search of what God’s Word says about our modern day morality and LGBTQ. And now we know.

But knowledge can become information overload unless it oozes out from the pores of our existence as who we are because it’s what we choose. Ultimately, because He chose us between heaven and earth, on a blood-stained wooden cross some 2,000 years ago.

What will you do with what you know now dear Christian who wondered what God’s Word really said? Will you stand strong for truth? Will you risk the wrath of man and the chiding of the masses for the sake of the soul of that one who will receive Christ? For the One who died so that you would be set free too? Whose normal will you accept as acceptable?

How will you respond today to what you’ve learned from God’s Word?

DIG DEEPER

Below, I've included an open letter to a teenage girl whom I know that is struggling with her gender identity. I'm sharing it here because I want you to not only hear my heart on this but perhaps it's something you can print out and share with someone you know who is struggling with their on gender identity. Feel free to print it and give it to whomever God leads.

An Open Letter to the Teen Girl Who Is Struggling With Gender Identity

You wondered if I would judge you, so you quickly made your way to the door **trying to hide the shaved side of your head and hoping I wouldn't see that you had bound your breast.**

But I couldn't let you leave without letting you know I saw you, I cared, and **condemning you isn't my job. Loving you is.**

So, there in the hallway, we made small talk.

You, hoping the conversation would end. Me, hoping you'd want it to last longer.
I have so much I want to share with you. But nobody wants to talk about it. They want to pretend like it's not happening and just keep moving forward.

But it is happening. It's happening to you. It's happening in your heart. And it's a battle I don't want you to lose!

You may feel like no one sees the cry of your heart, like no one cares, but I see your struggle. I see you. You're not invisible. Especially not to God.

I'm much older than you now. But I was your age once. Not in some distant-kind-of way that can't touch your trials, but in an *I-get-what-you're-going-through* kind of way that can relate on so many levels.

Not with the gender thing, but with the identity thing. And that's really what the war going on in your heart is all about. Identity.

It's been said that given the right (or wrong) circumstances, anyone can be persuaded, pressured, or influenced to begin to identify themselves as homosexual, bi-sexual or transgender-especially if they are under 25's. Those are the years when people are trying to figure out who they are. Kind of like trying on hats to see which one fits best.

We all have done that. Tried on different roles and relationships and identities to see which one fits best...which one gives us what every heart has longed for from the dawn of history...love and acceptance. And even a bit of attention.

Something that makes us feel like we belong.

We all want that. We all need that. **God created us to crave love and acceptance. But it's a longing that only He can fill.**

Until we figure that out, we just keep searching.

Some, binding their breasts. Others, hiding behind their insecurities. Some, seeking love through sex. Others drinking, drugging, or whatever might feed the craving of their hearts.

All the while, the voices that keep filling your head with lies and fear are keeping you from becoming all God created you to be. I don't want to see you miss that. **I don't want to see you miss the YOU that God created you to be.**

You're beautiful. Significant. And the plan God has for you won't leave you confused – it will ground you with a powerful, unshakeable confidence in who you are.

God's Word says that you are, "fearfully and wonderfully made." ([Psalm 139:14](#))

Nothing about you is a mistake. Not one of your two X chromosomes is a mistake.

So, maybe you're wondering why you are struggling and how to overcome those struggles you're having.

I don't know for sure, but see if any of these sound familiar:

Maybe you've been sexually or physically abused and that caused heartache and confusion you're not sure how to get past. Many who struggle with sexual attraction and gender identity have been sexually or physically abused. You're not alone. Abuse can either cause you to clam up or to start living out what you learned. Many women can't get past their fear of men. Some who were abused by women have a skewed view of female friendships and are attracted women because they feel like that's the way things are supposed to be.

Don't let them win. Jesus can bring healing to your heart and mend the broken pieces of your life. I know. I suffered through a decade of sexual abuse and, while sexual identity

wasn't my scar – promiscuity was. Jesus has truly made beauty out of ashes. Give Him a chance to do that for you too.

Maybe because you're a tomboy, you feel like something's wrong with you – Okay... so, there are a lot girls who like sports, don't like lace or ruffles, would rather play football with the guys than cheer with the girls, and who would rather build a doll house with her bare hands than play with dolls in one. That's not a struggle with your sexual or gender identity. That's just learning how to navigate who you are well in your own *girl* skin. You don't have to be a girly, girl to be a girl. I'm not. But I'm a girl through and through. And so are you!

Perhaps you struggle with feeling lost, insignificant, ugly or insecure – You're not alone. We all struggle with a little bit of all of those things. But you were created in God's image and your value isn't found in what others think of you. It's found in what God knows about you. And He thinks you're so amazing! That's why He sent His Son to die for you.

Maybe you've been attracted to the same sex and you aren't sure how to handle it – Here's the 4.1.1. that no-one wants to tell you. During your teen years, your body is going through a lot of changes. Hormones rage. Sex becomes more than a talk about the birds and the bees. Your body experiences feelings you've never had before. And your emotions run up and down more than a roller coaster ride.

Processing everything that's going on physically and emotionally is challenging. Some young people decide to experiment. Others embrace a friendship with someone of the same sex and sometimes allow it to morph into something unhealthy, unwholesome, and ungodly.

Same sex attraction during your young years can be overcome. Breathe deep in this brief moment of time and choose God's best. Don't yield briefly to something that might steal your life forever.

So, did you know your brain still growing? – Scientifically speaking, our brains don't start processing life clearly until we are about 25. (*It's true! Look it up!*) That might even explain the TV show Jacka**.

Today's struggles will soon become tomorrow's memories. Hang on! It won't be long before you look back and wonder why it was so hard. And it's definitely hard – the whole teenager/ twenty-something thing. But when you get to the other side, your struggles won't look anything like they do right now.

Maybe you saw a little of yourself in some of the reasons above. **But what you really need to know is that someone cares that your heart is hurting.** I know I do. More importantly, God does. And while you're trying to figure it all out, please ignore the culture's cries for you to embrace a lifestyle that will derail you from your God-given destiny.

Don't let anyone cause you to miss the life that you were uniquely created for. And I'm not sure if anyone has told you this, but being a girl rocks! It really rocks!

So, be strong. Be brave. Be bold. Be courageous. Be tough. Be cool. Be powerful. Be intelligent. Be wise. Be beautiful. But be a girl. God made you that way for a reason. And it's not only okay... it's good. Very good! God said so! (Genesis 1:31)

But also know...

That Jesus died for that sin... and for all sin...and every person who has ever lived is in the same sinner's boat. We all need of a Savior.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23

That what we deserve for our sin is death.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

That God's love for us is so relentless and so amazing that He made a way for our ultimate forgiveness.

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

That all we have to do is be willing to trust Him with our souls... to surrender all we are to all He is.

"9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:9-11

That God has a plan for your life... and it is good.

