



CWRm
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“Should I attend my gay daughter’s wedding?”

Q Pastor Greg, please advise me. My daughter has always been gay. I had to deal with this all her life. She had a little girl and left her with me to raise. We don’t live in the same state because of the life she has chosen, but I still love and support her and I have always been there for her. Now she is getting married and cries to me to be there for her. She knows I don’t approve of this. But I told her she will need to deal with God about it. I feel so sad that I pray it won’t happen. I don’t want to let her down with the love I have for her, because I love God more than anything. Please advise me, my heart is broken again.

A Having advised parents, and having advised gay people regarding their relationships with their parents and extended family, I have some idea of the depth of pain and sorrow and sense of loss that this kind of situation brings. Allow me to offer a few thoughts for your consideration—thoughts I believe to be Christ-centered:

How you as a parent feel about your daughter being gay—and how your daughter feels about what she thinks you think of her—is a complex situation. We do not arrive at the feelings we have about homosexuality in a vacuum. Society at large influences all of us to feel or not feel a particular way.

Within Christendom, many

proclaim what they feel is right and appropriate, and that influence is also felt—both by those with gay family members and also those who are gay but want some attachment to an established form of Christendom.

Outside Christendom, movies, television and the media at large bombard us with other and opposite messages.

Strong feelings exist on both sides of this issue: feelings of guilt, of shame, of aversion and dislike—feeling hated because they are gay or feeling betrayed because a family member is gay, etc. Most of these feelings are not formed independently—we are being influenced to feel particular ways.

For us, as Christ-followers, the operative question is how Jesus lives in us. How does he empower us to think, act and react? Some say Jesus condemns gays—and that’s all there is to it.

The opposite view is also proclaimed—that in Jesus’ love, he would never disapprove of anyone or condemn any behavior.

As a Christ-follower, I believe there is middle ground. Here are some thoughts in that regard:

1. God loves the entire world—ALL of us. That does not mean he condones all behavior, but he loves all despite our behavior, and not because of what God considers to be “good” behavior.

2. God allows all of us choices. The evil we see and the problems

we face happen because God allows real human choices. I am not speaking of homosexuality as evil here; I am talking about mass murder, torture, sexual abuse of children, etc.

God could stop wrong choices by simply forcing each of us to behave a particular way. But he doesn’t—and never has. But again, despite the choices we all make, **God loves ALL of us.**

This is not to say God agrees with all our choices—many of our choices grieve him, but God still loves us.

3. You say you love and support your daughter and have always been there for her. Wonderful! As a Christ-follower it seems **you are loving her**, even though you disagree with the type of life she embraces.

4. Yes, your daughter will have to “deal with God”—but then **ALL of us have to “deal with God,”** don’t we? *None of us are righteous, and his grace is sufficient for ALL of us.* God has enough grace and love to “deal with” your daughter. And if I read my Bible correctly and have some sense of God’s nature, he will lovingly reach out to her and touch her life in his time and way. You can rest in Christ, knowing that **your daughter is in good hands**—her heavenly Father’s hands.

5. You did not specifically ask, but in context, your remarks seem to focus on her marriage, and her request that you be there for her.

Some within Christendom say that family, friends and even parents should boycott marriages when they do not approve. The option to boycott has often been applied to same-sex marriages, but also for inter-racial marriages, inter-faith marriages and re-marriages of divorced people. According to some churches, re-marriage of divorcees is adultery—a perpetual state of living in sin.

But how exactly are we, as friends and family of the couple, *helping* or *loving* them by boycotting a marriage we don't condone or agree with? Some respond, "Well, if we attend, they might think we approve." Really? Jesus attended plenty of events—he even visited sinful and spiritually toxic places, but never seemed to be concerned about whether people thought he was condoning their sin by being with them, reaching out to them and making his care and love known.

I know parents of adult children who did not agree—and still don't—with the same-sex marriage of their child. Before attending or not attending the wedding, they talked to their adult child, expressed their misgivings without degenerating into a shouting match, and then either attended or refused to attend, out of love.

Both parties knew how each other felt, and both parties knew the parent's attendance or lack thereof was not a matter of hatred, but a disagreement with their choice. But most of all—the parents made it clear that their love would not change. They communicated that they loved their child despite the choice.

In many cases, parents decided to attend the wedding, even with grave misgivings, because most of all, they wanted their child to know and never doubt their love. I also know gay individuals whose parents did such a thing—and my sense is that there is generally no confusion between the parents and the child—everyone knows how everyone feels. However,

the bond of parent-child was preserved through the willingness of the parent to reach past their absolute disagreement and demonstrate their love.

I do not know all your circumstances—your remarks are brief and I can only speak in broad generalities, based on what I understand of the love and grace of God. I am not telling you how to act or feel, or suggesting that God will not be pleased with you if you do not act or react in a particular way. God knows your grief—he knows the dilemma you feel. I believe from the bottom of my heart that he will empower you, by his grace and through Jesus who lives within you, to come to a decision that you feel is best. And **God will support you.** We are not talking

absolute right and wrong or about whether you decide to attend the wedding or not—we are talking about God's love for you, no matter what—in a similar way that we are talking about your love, given to you by God, for your daughter, no matter what. □

Hello Pastor Greg! Thank you so much for your advice. I know that Jesus loves us all, no matter what we do. I know it is all about Jesus' love and God sent his only Son to give us eternal life. That is the most powerful love.

Your advice took so much weight off my shoulders! I don't understand my doubt. It could

be the negative situations surrounding me. I know I am going to be alright and I know that I will spread the love of Jesus Christ, louder and louder. Thank you so much from the bottom of my heart!

I am so proud to be part of CWR/PTM ministries and so proud to have you as my pastor. Thank you again! God and Jesus Christ is what matters most in my life. Without your ministries, I would truly be one lost soul here on earth. My gift from God was to find out the truth and love of Jesus Christ through this ministry. Thank you. I smile with tears.

"Let us not love with words or speech but in deed and truth." —1 John 3:18 □

