

# Some New Questions for Evangelicals Opposing Marriage Equality

Nigel Chapman, M.Div.

4 July 2015

## Abstract

After recently replying to Kevin DeYoung in "Forty-Five Questions for Evangelicals Supporting Marriage Equality", I naturally thought, What are the questions I would ask the vast majority of Evangelicals opposing it? I'm aiming to ask these from a constructively Evangelical viewpoint, but one which supports marriage equality. The questions themselves will give some indication of why I think that is a valid Evangelical view. Some of these are new, so far as I have seen. Your critiques are invited.

Copyright ©2015 Nigel Chapman <nigel@chapman.id.au<sup>1</sup>>. License: Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License<sup>2</sup> (BY-SA, same as Wikipedia). Published by The 180 Project<sup>3</sup>. Available as Markdown<sup>4</sup> (the source text), HTML<sup>5</sup> (add comments and critiques here!), Wide Margins PDF<sup>6</sup> for review, and Compact PDF<sup>7</sup> for the creation. 5,100 words.

---

<sup>1</sup><mailto:nigel@chapman.id.au>

<sup>2</sup><http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/au/>

<sup>3</sup><http://180.org.au>

<sup>4</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality\\_20150704.txt](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality_20150704.txt)

<sup>5</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality\\_20150704.html](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality_20150704.html)

<sup>6</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality\\_20150704.pdf](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality_20150704.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality\\_20150704.compact.pdf](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-opposing-marriage-equality_20150704.compact.pdf)

## **Contents**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                 | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>See Also</b>                                     | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Understanding Orientation</b>                    | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Politics and Discrimination</b>                  | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Christian Scripture and Same-sex Orientation</b> | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Christian Scripture and Same-sex Intercourse</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Christian Scripture and Same-sex Marriage</b>    | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Tying it All Together</b>                        | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Some Practical Questions in Closing</b>          | <b>12</b> |

## Introduction

After recently replying to Kevin DeYoung in *Forty-Five Questions for Evangelicals Supporting Marriage Equality*<sup>8</sup>, I naturally thought, What are the questions I would ask the vast majority of Evangelicals opposing it? I'm aiming to ask these from a constructively Evangelical viewpoint, but one which supports marriage equality. The questions themselves will give some indication of why I think that is a valid Evangelical view. Some of these are new, so far as I have seen. Your critiques are invited.

## See Also

My recent answers to Kevin DeYoung's five and forty questions, respectively:

- *Forty-Five Questions for Evangelicals Supporting Marriage Equality*<sup>9</sup>.

The questions I ask in reply are discussed in more detail in my articles on [180.org.au](http://180.org.au)<sup>10</sup>:

- *Some Practical Scenarios for Discussion*<sup>11</sup>.
- *Probably the Shortest Working Argument for Evangelical Same-sex Marriage*<sup>12</sup>  
... Basically an accessible introduction to the following papers:
- *Evangelical Churches and Same-sex Orientation*<sup>13</sup>.
- *Romans 1 and Evangelical Same-sex Marriage*<sup>14</sup>.

## Understanding Orientation

1. Would you agree that plenty of people experience *permanent, involuntary and exclusive* attraction to others of the same sex, and this is *both sexual and romantic* in nature? Would it be reasonable to call that "same-sex orientation" for all practical purposes, and say that this "really exists"?
  - If not, have you read a representative account, such as Wesley Hill's *Washed and Waiting* or Justin Lee's *Torn*? Hill advocates celibacy, Lee advocates relationships, both communicate the experience exceptionally well. Is there something they are they getting wrong about their personal experience of growing up Christian and gay? Or is their experience unrepresentative in your view?
  - If still no, then consider this set of questions a 'what-if': What, hypothetically, would it mean for Evangelical theology if they really did exist? And I'll come back to this at the end.

---

<sup>8</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-supporting-marriage-equality\\_20150704.html](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-supporting-marriage-equality_20150704.html)

<sup>9</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-supporting-marriage-equality\\_20150704.html](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-supporting-marriage-equality_20150704.html)

<sup>10</sup><http://180.org.au>

<sup>11</sup>[http://180.org.au/some-practical-scenarios-for-discussion\\_20140906.html](http://180.org.au/some-practical-scenarios-for-discussion_20140906.html)

<sup>12</sup>[http://180.org.au/probably-the-shortest-working-argument-for-evangelical-same-sex-marriage\\_20150210.html](http://180.org.au/probably-the-shortest-working-argument-for-evangelical-same-sex-marriage_20150210.html)

<sup>13</sup>[http://180.org.au/evangelical-churches-and-same-sex-orientation\\_20140906.html](http://180.org.au/evangelical-churches-and-same-sex-orientation_20140906.html)

<sup>14</sup>[http://180.org.au/romans-1-and-evangelical-same-sex-marriage\\_20140906.html](http://180.org.au/romans-1-and-evangelical-same-sex-marriage_20140906.html)

2. This does not cover everyone's experience, as some adjust with apparent satisfaction to heterosexual marriages, or report differing degrees of change or fluidity or bisexuality in their sexual attraction. But would you agree that "orientation" in this sense does cover the people who have presented the most challenges for Evangelicals on our own terms (pastorally and missionally, for instance), and so represents the cases on which we most need to focus?
3. What proportion of the population are same-sex oriented? Would you say that the usual conservative figure of 1-2% is broadly reasonable?
4. Note that this ratio represents more than 100 million people in the world, something like the world's 12th largest country in 2015. If your youth group, church, bible college, last pastors convention, and entire denomination were representative of humanity in general, then what number of same-sex oriented people ought to be present in each?
5. Is this proportion of people visibly present in those groups, or present at all, to your knowledge? If not, how would you explain the discrepancy? Is there something wrong with my calculations, or is there another problem of some kind?
6. Is the incidence of orientation reasonably random? That is to say, is it the case that any one of us or any one of our friends or children could have been gay or lesbian, with more-or-less the same probability?
7. Statistics from a large Australian study (WTI3) showed that 60 percent of "same-sex attracted and gender questioning" adolescents were aware of their attraction by the age of 13. If your son is same-sex oriented, and becomes aware of this from the age of 13, what does it mean to you that therapy rarely shows results? What are the odds that he will find romantic fulfilment in his lifetime? Would you tell him that?
  - If you believe that therapy is actually quite effective, could you provide me with some sources for that claim. I consider the studies by Spitzer and by Jones and Yarhouse in [this paper](#)<sup>15</sup>. If you believe that any lack of results is simply a consequence of others lacking faith, then please ask around and let me know of any reasonably well documented results from people you think do have some.
8. Would you agree that living with no hope of sexual or romantic relationships from early adolescence onward is, for most people and for obvious reasons, soul-destroying? And, without prejudicing other questions, do you think this is likely why neither Jesus nor Paul countenanced mandatory celibacy in general?
9. Has your church or denomination suppressed the discussion of these questions? If so, how and for what reasons? Were problems thereby caused that might have been resolved through a more open discussion?
10. How in future will you interact with people who had to fight religious misunderstandings of orientation in order to be free from laws, punishments and intended therapies that no Evangelical would now endorse? Could you reconcile with them without a substantial and public apology?
11. If this is the experience of same-sex orientation – that it is not chosen and is typically not changeable once realised – then does it make any practical difference whether or not some underlying explanation can be found for why it is experienced by some and not by others?

---

<sup>15</sup>[http://180.org.au/evangelical-churches-and-same-sex-orientation\\_20140906.html](http://180.org.au/evangelical-churches-and-same-sex-orientation_20140906.html)

## Politics and Discrimination

1. If some people were to experience permanent, involuntary and exclusive same-sex attraction over the whole course of their life, would it be fair to call this an innate quality? Or if not, why not?
2. If you look up the legal definition of discrimination in your jurisdiction, does it define this as, more or less, the act of treating otherwise similar people differently and to their detriment, because of an innate quality that they possess?
3. Setting aside the question of orientation, have you seen discrimination happen in a Christian context? Was this a sin? How was it addressed, or how did you think that it should have been addressed?
4. Have you met people who have suffered from LGBT discrimination? How do you empathise with them, and how do you distinguish yourself from the causes of their suffering?
  - For example, I can list friends of friends who have been arrested for advocacy in the 70s; received electroshock therapy in the 80s; committed suicide in church in the 90s; were hospitalised for months after a gay bashing or abandoned by professing Christian families in the 00s. These are not unusual stories to hear.
5. If you accept the existence of same-sex oriented people, then can you complete the following sentence in a way that you think would be publicly persuasive: “I believe that same-sex oriented people exist, and my view of them is not legally discriminatory because...”
6. Would you agree that Evangelicals should be able, in any matter, to either show that they are not discriminating, or demonstrate convincingly that there is an important moral reason to draw any distinctions that they draw? Do you feel that we have done so in the public debate over same-sex marriage?
7. Is it just “bullying” for evangelicals to be challenged about whether we are discriminating, or is it a very basic moral question that we will in any case have to account to God for? Should ‘Religious Freedom’ exempt us if we were discriminating?
8. Would you say that same-sex orientation is unfortunate and sad, but for a faithful Evangelical, that is just how it is, because same-sex marriage is simply a biblical impossibility? Say, that on the one hand it simply can’t be moral, and on the other hand it simply can’t be marriage in God’s sight, and that there’s just no honest way to claim otherwise?

## Christian Scripture and Same-sex Orientation

I’m going to turn now to a biblical consideration of three things: same-sex orientation, same-sex intercourse and same-sex marriage.

1. Have you ever read an Evangelical commentary on Romans that took serious account of orientation, as I have outlined it here?
  - That’s a serious question; I haven’t yet seen one; contact me if you can give an example.
2. Does Paul in Rom 1 (especially near the end) expect his judgements to be recognised by gentiles? That is to say, does he believe they do the things that he condemns in ignorance, or rather, in spite of knowing better? Even allowing for variously darkened minds and hardened hearts, are they

still culpable? If yes, do you believe that Evangelicals today share Paul's confidence about the world's moral sense in those matters? If no, how do you explain any discrepancy?

3. Do you believe that in Rom 1, Paul is aware of the existence of something analogous to same-sex orientation, and thus that it is highly significant that he appears to make no allowance for it, and thus that we should take the same approach despite being aware of it today? The following questions are for people who think so:
  - a. If Rom 1 covers the case of orientation, why does Paul address it as a characteristically gentile problem? Rom 1, you will perhaps agree, debunks Gentile self-righteousness, and Rom 2, Jewish self-righteousness, putting both the factions in the Roman church in their place. But same-sex orientation is not a characteristically gentile problem: it appears to occur just as frequently in any group of people, be they Jews or gentiles. And recall that Paul holds that the *desires* are shameful, not just the acts, which he would have to consider if he was referring to orientation (cf. Rom 1:26; I'll return to this in a moment).
  - b. If Rom 1 covers the case of orientation, why does Paul address it as a consequence of idolatry, something that is not true of orientation? Or even true of figurative "sexual idolatry," in the case of people growing up same-sex oriented in churches. (I'll comment on this more as well.)
  - c. If Rom 1 covers the case of orientation, why does Paul address the passions themselves as a *voluntary* "exchange", by people who should have known better? That is not true of orientation, which is not voluntarily chosen. Is Paul thinking rather of the sort of thing that we might call a "lifestyle choice"?
  - d. If Rom 1 covers the case of orientation, with the understanding that same-sex attraction is always to be understood as a temptation to immorality, then why did he describe the passions themselves as shameful or dishonourable (*pathe atimias*, v.26)? Evangelicals do not hold that temptation is a sin or otherwise a source of shame or dishonor before God. For a temptation to be a source of legitimate shame, it must have followed from prior moral compromise, while again, that is not true of orientation.
  - e. If Rom 1 covers the case of orientation, why does Paul address it as a progressive corruption of desire, something that is also not true of orientation, in which same-sex attraction is more-or-less constant over a person's life?
  - f. Would it seem clear then that Paul is not considering anything analogous to orientation, as we understand that, in Rom 1?
  - g. If it is manifestly clear from Rom 1 that Paul is not addressing orientation as we would understand it, does that simply nullify any arguments that he *must have* based upon a presumed knowledge of classical writers and culture?
  - h. If Paul is commentating on Lev 18 and 20 in Rom 1, yet writes in such a way that he is clearly not addressing orientation, does he understand Leviticus to be addressing orientation?
    - I suggest that his use of *arsenokoites* is most plausibly a Hellenistic-Jewish neologism deriving from the use of *arsenos* and *koites* in Lev 18:22 and 20:13, following the pattern of words like *metrokoites* or *doulokoites*, and that his quotes from Lev 18:5 (Rom 10:5) and Lev 19:18 (Rom 13:9) in the same letter indicate that these chapters sit prominently in his mind at the time of writing.

- i. Romans and Leviticus are the only passages on same-sex intercourse that come with substantial context for interpretation. All other references are in passing, for example in vice lists. If neither Romans nor in Paul's view Leviticus refer to orientation, is there any positive reason to suppose that other passages do? Would it be most reasonable to suppose that they also do not?
  - j. Is there then anything in scripture that you believe can be shown to definitely take account of orientation?
  - k. How should Evangelicals address moral questions that are not considered in scripture, or have only arisen in later time periods? I suggest that we do this by considering analogous cases and reapplying them to the new question. In this case, the new question results from same-sex orientation being understood and same-sex marriage being socially viable in western society.
4. Does anything in 1 Cor 6:9-11 suggest that someone who has been a "manbedder" (*arsenokoites* again) might require exhaustive years of unreliable therapy, in notable contrast to other people on that list – thieves, slanderers, swindlers, and drunkards? Isn't the natural reading that abandoning same-sex intercourse was, like those other matters, principally a change of the will when a person came to Christ? "Such were some of you!" 'Drunkards' might be an exception, but of course only a small proportion of them would be alcoholics as we would understand that. Why then do Evangelicals now think that complex, usually ineffective treatments spanning years, or mandatory life-long celibacy, are the norm, if orientation is something to which Paul is referring here?
- I suggest Paul is more likely speaking to the everyday reality of the Hellenistic world, where most of those engaging in same-sex intercourse were married heterosexuals living in a culture of considerable sexual indulgence, who should have simply redirected their attentions toward their wives.
5. Does any passage anywhere in scripture show empathy or compassion toward those who are the subject of its condemnations of same-sex intercourse? If not, why do Evangelical writers now strain to emphasise how much they empathise with the difficulties faced by same-sex oriented people, if they are in fact addressing the same situation as Paul?
- I'm not saying this is a bad thing, and especially commend Michael L. Brown's recent book for this emphasis. But if there is no indication that Paul thought he needed to do the same, then was he addressing the same concerns that we are?

## Christian Scripture and Same-sex Intercourse

Let me call the following set of actions List A:

- idolatry (or in some similar way suppressing knowledge about God)
- the perversion or progressive corruption of heterosexual desire
- unfaithfulness or promiscuity
- feminisation and grooming of young males
- prostitution
- abuse or exploitation (including pederasty or rape)
- sexual disease transmission
- the cultivation of compulsive or intemperate desire

And the following set of qualities, List B:

- unhealthiness or harmfulness (at an individual or social level)
- contrariness to God's design for marriage and family
- unnaturalness, in whichever of several ways that is understood
- abhorrence and shamefulness

I suggest that these twelve items, together, summarise the moral reasons for which scripture condemns same-sex intercourse (see here<sup>16</sup>). Some require a little extrapolation, but I'll grant that for brevity. In this section I want to ask how you think these might apply to the combined case of same-sex orientation and same-sex marriage. To my mind the test case that covers most others is when two same-sex oriented Evangelicals grow up in Evangelical churches and want to get same-sex married. So I want to ask how this case is condemned by those reasons.

1. Have I missed anything that should appear on those lists?
2. Starting at the top: I have already mentioned idolatry. Does anyone growing up in our churches become same-sex oriented in consequence of literal or figurative idolatry? Of course, Paul has the literal idols of notably debauched deities in mind: Zeus, for example, raping a married woman while transformed into an animal form, to choose one of many examples. But even taking a figurative sense of idolatry, does sexual idolatry or spiritual adultery in society account for same-sex oriented youth growing up in Evangelical churches?
3. For Paul, I suggest that "suppressing the knowledge of God" was a normal part of the Jewish critique of pagan idolatry: though having a high and transcendent God, they worshipped unworthily small 'gods' instead. But again, even taking this mental suppression in isolation (or the direct equation of homosexuality with rebellion against God in some Evangelical writing, e.g. Kostenberger), does this offer any general explanation of same-sex oriented people growing up *within Evangelical churches*?
4. Does same-sex orientation, either in itself or as expressed in same-sex marriage, represent a progressive corruption of heterosexual desire?
  - Rom 1 certainly traces out such a pattern of progressive corruption – note the progression in vv.24,26,28 – but that appears inapplicable to same-sex orientation, experienced as a constant in a person's life.
5. Does same-sex orientation, expressed in a same-sex marriage, necessarily involve either unfaithfulness or promiscuity? Or, would an ostensibly Christian same-sex marriage involve either of these sins? And in that case, is there any risk of sexually transmitted diseases, which might be the allusion in Rom 1:26's "penalty" received "in/among themselves"?
6. Philo, amongst others – but I'll pick him as a Jewish-Hellenistic contemporary of Paul – documents the Hellenistic practice of choosing and grooming younger males as same-sex partners in his own comments on contemporary practices, and emphasises their deliberate feminisation (*Laws* III.37-40). This *may* be reflected in the term *malakos* in 1 Cor 6:9. If you will excuse a rather rhetorical question: Is this necessarily a feature of an ostensibly Evangelical same-sex marriage?
7. Similarly, and I'll group the next few items together... Does an ostensibly Evangelical same-sex marriage necessarily include prostitution (such as ANE temple prostitution), and abuse or exploitation (literal 'sodomy'), which are also prominent concerns in Philo, and which have some references or allusions in scripture?

---

<sup>16</sup>[http://180.org.au/romans-1-and-evangelical-same-sex-marriage\\_20140906.html](http://180.org.au/romans-1-and-evangelical-same-sex-marriage_20140906.html)



8. Would a same-sex marriage of any kind be necessarily characterised by compulsive or intemperate sexual desire (another of Philo's concerns; cf. "consumed with passion", Rom 1:27). And in any case, within an otherwise faithful marriage, would an excess of sexual passion actually be a sin of the severity envisaged by Paul's condemnations?
9. Would you then agree that the 'List A' sins, that I have by now covered, while they were certainly prominent features of Hellenistic and (some of them) Canaanite society, are not in fact committed in the case of a same-sex marriage between two same-sex oriented people?
10. Is it apparent, however, that the List A sins could be reasonably described as harmful, unnatural, disordered, and abhorrent? Would this in itself suffice to justify the use of those terms and concepts in scripture, whether or not there are other reasons to do so?
11. For Paul, does "contrary to nature" (*kata physis* Rom 1:27) mean being *harmful*, by falling outside of God's good design for our well-being? Is that present in any individual text, or is it rather inferred by systematisation? If not, is there some other biblical justification for the argument from individual or social harm regarding same-sex marriage?
12. Is there some general argument that harm arises from a same-sex marriage which would justify concern for individual and social well-being? Would you predict this to be more or less significant than the comparative statistical disadvantage children experience through single parenting, which we are not proposing to prohibit? Does this purported harm suffice to establish the biblical judgements of both immorality and abhorrence?
13. In the countries where same-sex parenting has been occurring for a generation, and legal for a decade (say, Canada and parts of Europe), has harm been apparent, and to a degree that would establish the biblical judgements of both immorality and abhorrence?
14. For Paul, does "contrary to nature" mean specifically *contrary to the created ideal of marriage*? Again, is that present in any individual text, or is it rather inferred by systematisation?
15. I suggest that Paul's question "Does not nature itself teach you that it is shameful for a man to have long hair" (1 Cor 11), which refers to cultural judgements, is not sufficient to overturn the obvious moral sense of *kata physis* in Rom 1. However: Does it demonstrate that, for Paul, a reference to nature is not in any necessary or automatic way a back-reference to Genesis 1-3?
16. For Paul, does "contrary to nature" simply mean perverting naturally heterosexual desire, with the various consequences listed above? I suggest that this is the one meaning decisively established in the text of Rom 1 itself. And, though I have asked this already: Does this progressive corruption actually occur in the case of same-sex orientation?
17. Is there any other meaning that "contrary to nature" carries which might justify the judgement of immorality and moral abhorrence?
18. For Paul, does "abhorrent", "shameful", "degrading", and any other relevant term, mean something other than *morally* abhorrent, shameful, degrading and so on? That is to say, does he think what he condemns is shameful *because it is morally wrong*, or for some other reason?
  - Note: I am, of course, understanding 'shameful' in 1 Cor 11 in the usual cultural sense that Evangelicals take it, and 'shameful' in Rom 1 as referring to genuine moral shame and guilt before God because of its obvious moral context.

19. I suggest to you that these terms of disgust must presuppose a judgement of immorality. Can you establish one for the case of same-sex marriage between same-sex oriented people, using these twelve reasons given in scripture, or any others of which you are aware?
20. Setting aside for a moment the question of whether same-sex marriage could ever be considered *truly* marriage in God's sight, can you say whether same-sex intercourse in such a union would be biblically condemned as immoral by any of the twelve reasons given above?
21. If we knew that same-sex marriages caused harm, we could see them as morally suspect. And if we knew they were morally suspect, we might expect them to cause harm. But can either point be established on it's own?
22. If you thought that I missed anything that should have appeared on these lists, how does it affect your answers to the preceding questions?

## Christian Scripture and Same-sex Marriage

I understand the major aspects of the biblical ideal of marriage to be:

- Love
- Sexual and romantic intimacy and fulfilment
- Becoming “one flesh” or simply “one”
- Monogamy and exclusive commitment
- Lifelong faithfulness
- Mutuality and mutual responsibility
- Companionship and care
- Populating and stewarding the Earth
- Raising a godly family

1. Is anything missing from this list?

- I have omitted “reflecting the image of God in gendered complementarity” (or hierarchy), and “embodying the relationship between Christ and the church”, as I think these are difficult to argue biblically (this is partly discussed here<sup>17</sup>). The first point is either grasping at straws in the *imago dei* in Genesis, or it relies upon demonstrating an eternally hierarchical relationship within the Trinity that has historically met with few takers, while those who have resorted to it recently seem to have done so specifically in order to support a pattern of subordination between the sexes that has itself been facing some substantial challenges. And in the second point, marriage is only one partial metaphor amongst others, such as a vine or a body, for the relationship between Christ and the church, rather than its working definition. If you believe these are vitally important matters, however, I'll ask at the end how you think they would affect your answers.

2. If a person is same-sex oriented, would it be fair to describe any heterosexual marriage in which they found themselves as only “half-heterosexual”? Would such a marriage correspond to the biblical ideal? Which aspects would necessarily be absent? – and are these aspects essential or incidental?

- An optional essay question for those with the required historical knowledge: In antiquity, should a same-sex oriented person have nonetheless gotten heterosexually married? Why or why not? If you would say yes,

---

<sup>17</sup>[http://180.org.au/romans-1-and-evangelical-same-sex-marriage\\_20140906.html](http://180.org.au/romans-1-and-evangelical-same-sex-marriage_20140906.html)

do your reasons still apply today? If not, then at what point would they have ceased to apply? Does this suffice to resolve the theodicy created by the existence of same-sex orientation and the death penalty that is found in Lev 20:13?

3. Do you accept Mark 10 and Matt 19 as “lens” passages which, though addressing a question about divorce, nonetheless set Evangelical discussions of marriage in a framework that bookends Old Testament practices with substantially higher ideals? (Repeat after me: “I do.”)
4. Consider for a moment the polygamous marriages of Abraham, Moses and David. How many aspects of the overarching biblical ideal, such as appear on the list above, were violated by these relationships? Would you agree that monogamy or exclusivity, strict mutuality, and probably oneness, which seems to entail exclusivity, were absent? Were these men capable of “forsaking all others,” even though they did not do so? Were these individuals nonetheless married in God’s sight? If so, how was that possible, if their marriages did not actually fulfil the biblical ideal?
5. Setting aside for a moment the question of whether same-sex intercourse is biblically moral in a same-sex marriage, which aspects of the biblical ideal of marriage can be expressed in a same-sex marriage and which cannot? Which can only be expressed through modern means, such as medical technology?
6. In a same-sex marriage, and assume this to be between Evangelicals, does a same-sex oriented couple express every aspect of the biblical ideal that is *actually possible* for them?
7. Is a same-sex marriage therefore closer to the biblical ideal than the marriages of Abraham, Moses and David, who failed to fulfil this ideal, even though they were capable of having fulfilling it?
8. This is a somewhat rhetorical question, but which aspects of this ideal are fulfilled by mandatory lifelong celibacy?
9. Of these three options, (1) half-heterosexual marriage, (2) mandatory lifelong celibacy, and (3) same-sex marriage, which is closest to the biblical ideal, for a same-sex oriented person?
10. Is there any further option that should be considered here?

## Tying it All Together

1. Would you agree that everything that scripture did condemn in regard to same-sex intercourse remains condemned for us today?
2. But would you also agree that, for a same-sex oriented person, a same-sex marriage does not match any of the biblical reasons for condemning same-sex intercourse?
3. Does this mean that in both heterosexual and homosexual cases, marriage resolves all of the biblical reasons for condemning sex outside of marriage?
4. And would you also agree that, for a same-sex oriented person, a same-sex marriage fulfils every aspect of the biblical ideal of which they are actually capable of fulfilling?
5. Further, would you agree that, for a same-sex oriented person, a same-sex marriage is closer to the biblical ideal than either of the usual Evangelical alternatives, whether half-heterosexual marriage, or mandatory lifelong celibacy?

6. And finally, would you agree that, for a same-sex oriented person, a same-sex marriage is closer to the biblical ideal than some things God recognised as marriage in scripture, including patriarchal polygamy?
7. Would you then conclude that we should see these as true marriages in God's sight?
8. If these are true marriages in God's sight, would that imply that Jesus or Paul, had they considered same-sex marriage as a Christian response to same-sex orientation in modern society, would have not so much endorsed it as positively celebrated it in the same way as any other?
9. If that is so, would it follow that same-sex oriented Evangelicals should simply fall in love and marry, just like anybody else? And be positively encouraged in doing so? And that they should be welcomed and supported in Evangelical churches just the same as anybody else?
10. Does this then resolve the Evangelical churches' moral, biblical, relational, pastoral, missional and political deadlock over same-sex orientation and marriage? Does it both validate the biblical condemnations on their own terms, justify God's love and justice toward same-sex oriented people, and allow their orientation to be acknowledged in churches with neither biblical compromise nor unbiblical discrimination?
11. Are same-sex oriented people, then, a normal and vital part of the body of Christ?
12. If you don't actually accept the existence of same-sex oriented people, does this argument nonetheless suggest to you that there would be no biblical or theological compromise involved in doing so?

## Some Practical Questions in Closing

1. This is not enough questions, you say?
  - [Forty-Five Questions for Evangelicals Supporting Marriage Equality](#)<sup>18</sup>
2. Do you think that the argument presented through this series of questions is genuinely Evangelical, in terms of its sources, methods and presuppositions? If you would say no, then at what point does it depart from the Evangelical tradition of biblical interpretation, and in what ways?
  - Saying "It's not an Evangelical conclusion!" doesn't work if the argument itself is biblical.
3. If you are employed in Christian ministry or education, do you think that you would lose your job – and in some cases, your family would lose their housing – more or less immediately if you were seen to agree with this, absolutely regardless of whether it is a genuinely Evangelical argument or not, and regardless of whether it is correct?
  - If you happen to agree with this, or even think it merits some discussion, please think long and hard before doing anything that endangers your ministry or disadvantages your family.
4. What would it mean for your church, and your denomination, if this argument were correct?

---

<sup>18</sup>[http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-supporting-marriage-equality\\_20150704.html](http://180.org.au/questions-for-evangelicals-supporting-marriage-equality_20150704.html)