

have had to say, it is not right. No man is justified in breaking his marriage covenant on the ground of the quality of his love for another woman. Quality of love is not the only yardstick by which to measure what is good or right.

Similarly, I do not deny the claim that homosexual relationships can be loving (although a priori I do not see how they can attain the same richness as the heterosexual mutuality God has ordained). But their love-quality is not sufficient to justify them. Indeed, I have to add that they are incompatible with true love because they are incompatible with God's law. Love is concerned for the highest welfare of the beloved. And our highest human welfare is found in obedience to God's law and purpose, not in revolt against them.

4. The argument about acceptance and the gospel. Some argue that it is our duty to accept homosexual Christians. If God has welcomed somebody, who are we to pass judgment on him (Rom 14:1-4)? Pittenger goes further and declares that those who reject homosexual people "have utterly failed to understand the Christian gospel." We do not receive the grace of God because we are good and confess our sins; it is the other way around. He even quotes the hymn "Just As I Am, Without One Plea," and adds: "The whole point of the Christian gospel is that God loves and accepts us just as we are."

This is a very confused statement of the gospel, however, God does indeed accept us "just as we are," and we do not have to make ourselves good first--indeed we cannot. But his acceptance means that he fully and freely forgives all who repent and believe, not that he condones our continuance in sin. Again, it is true that we must accept one another, but only as fellow penitents and fellow pilgrims, not as fellow sinners who are resolved to persist in our sinning. No acceptance, either by God or by the church, is promised to us if we harden our hearts against God's Word and will--only judgment.

-- John Stott, Homosexual Partnerships? (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1985), pp.17-22.