

What About... A Believer's Response to an Invitation to a LGBTQ Wedding

By Daran Armstrong



Alistair Begg, the Senior Pastor of Parkside Church in Cleveland, OH, recently started an internet firestorm with his advice to a grandmother. Pastor Begg has been the Pastor at Parkside for 40 years and is very well respected in the evangelical community. He is also the host of a radio program, "Truth for Life." It came out during his radio program that a grandmother asked him if she should attend her granddaughter's marriage to a transgender partner. Pastor Begg advised the grandmother that she should attend the wedding and bring a gift. [youtube.com/watch?v=onuKqWyHWo] He was making the argument that you go out of compassion rather than condemnation. You go to show love to them as a means to reach them. Even though many theologians have questioned his stance, Pastor Begg has not changed his stance.

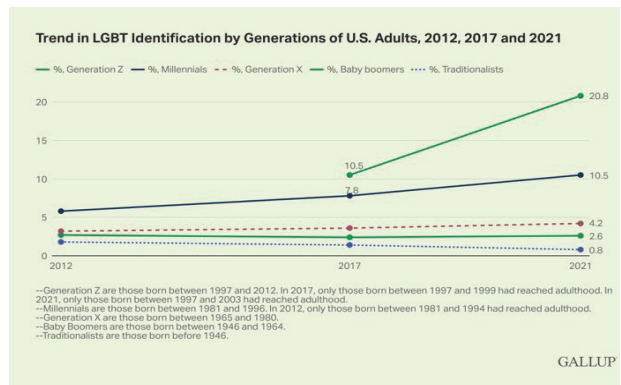
Other evangelicals, including John MacArthur, John Piper, and Justin Peters, disagree with Pastor Begg and dispute his premise that one should attend an LGBTQ wedding out of compassion and love. They contend that it is not loving to attend a transgender wedding, and one should not attend if invited. John MacArthur, Chancellor Emeritus of Master's University in Santa Clara, stated that a believer should not go to a homosexual/transgender wedding for a lot of reasons, and the most loving thing you could possibly do would be not to go and to condemn the relationship. That is loving. [twitter.com/terrireenusa/status/1760019619870388680?s=42&t=if2WjAJAqb4ehyrAs_Lsvg]

John Piper, Chancellor at Bethlehem College and Seminary, said he would not go because an LGBTQ wedding is not a wedding by any Biblical definition, and he would not be part of that lie. Marriage is made in heaven. Jesus said, "...*what God has brought together, let no man separate*" (Matthew 19:6). To celebrate this lifestyle is to celebrate the destruction of God's model for marriage. [youtube.com/watch?v=UousPa1ks0w] Furthermore, Justin Peters, of Justin Peters Ministries, says that Alistair Begg's advice was terrible! He goes on to say that homosexual/transgender marriage is not marriage—God gets to define what marriage is and no one else. If we go to a transgender/homosexual wedding and give a gift (like Pastor Begg suggests), we are honoring something that makes a mockery of God. [youtube.com/watch?v=As7zQMbcefA] There are more pastors and theologians that disagree with Pastor Begg, but you get the idea.

All of the above are correct in their arguments for why we should not attend a transgender/homosexual wedding and give very good reasons for that assertion. Their responses are Biblically sound, and I completely agree with them. However, they are leaving something out. They are correct about what we should not do, but they do not deal with what we should do. When someone invites you to a LGBTQ wedding, they are unwittingly asking you to make a moral decision. They are asking you to get rid of your morality and to accept theirs. This dilemma may not have affected many people up to this point, but in the next few years, it is going to be something many people must deal with. A recent poll from Gallup found that the number of people who identify as LGBTQ has gone from 3.5% of the population in 2012 and 7.1% of the population in 2021.



Another poll from Gallup shows that 20 percent of Gen-Zers now identify as LGBTQ.



Whether you believe the accuracy of these polls or not, in the next few years, most people will be confronted with this issue. So what should we do? It is imperative that we, as believers in Jesus Christ, when responding to questions of morality, are prepared to give an account for the hope that is in us.

Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep

a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong (1 Peter 3:13-17).

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO JUST RSVP THAT WE CANNOT ATTEND Most people who take the Bible literally would agree that we should not attend if we get invited to a transgender/homosexual wedding. Maybe that is the correct response, if you are the “plus one” on an invite and you do not really know the wedding participants. However, if one of the participants is someone you care about, that changes things. If the participants are in your sphere of influence (family or friends), your response should be verbal, in person or over the phone—not a text or an email. The person who invited us has unknowingly thrown us into a moral dilemma, and based on 1 Peter 3, we should take a stand, and humbly make a defense, and give an account for the hope that is within us. Many people are saying why we should not attend, but as far as I know, no one is dealing with how we should proactively respond. We need to call and ask the person who invited us, or the wedding participant, or both, if they would like to discuss our reasons for not attending.

Following are two hypothetical conversations with family members or friends. In a very close relationship, the conversation should take place in person. Person 1: the participant in the transgender/homosexual wedding. Person 2: the invited family member or friend.

First Scenario: Close Family Member

Phone rings - Person 1: “Hello.”
Person 2: “Hey, Zach, it’s your Uncle Daran.” Person 1: “Hey, Uncle Daran. What’s going on?”
Person 2: “I just opened your wedding invite. Thanks for inviting me.” Person 1: “You gonna’ join us or what?”
Person 2: “I care a lot about you, Zach, but my short answer is ‘no.’ Would you like to discuss my reasons for not showing up?”
Person 1: “No thanks. I didn’t think you’d come, but we figured we’d invite you anyway.” Person 2: “Are you sure? I’d really like to talk to you about this.”
Person 1: “No thanks!”
Person 1: Hangs up the phone.
People like Zach have already made up their minds and decided they will not engage in any discussions. In this scenario, that is about all you can do—except pray that God will change their heart.

Second Scenario: Friends, Probably Millennials or Younger

Phone rings - Person 1: “Hello.” Person 2: “Hey, Zach, it’s Daran.”
Person 1: “Hey, Daran. What’s going on?”
Person 2: “I just opened your wedding invite. Thanks for inviting me.” Person 1: “You gonna’ join us or what?”
Person 2: “I care a lot about you, Zach, but my short answer is ‘no.’ Would you like to discuss my reasons for not showing up?”
Person 1: “I think I know what you’re going to say, but go ahead.”
Person 2: “This is harder than I thought, but I’ve wanted to talk to you for a while now. What you need to know is that I’m

not attending because of who God is and what He says. This is God’s idea, not mine. My faith is in the God of the Bible, and it’s Jesus who defines marriage as a union between a biological man and a biological woman. My standards are not the issue. You need to understand that you are disobeying the God of the Bible.”

Person 1: “So you’re saying God’s telling you not to attend. That’s kind of a cop-out, don’t you think?”
Person 2: “It’s the Bible that’s telling me not to attend, and if this was a cop-out, I wouldn’t be calling you—I’d just RSVP that I wouldn’t be there.”
Person 1: “So you’re just calling to make me feel bad?”
Person 2: “C’mon, Zach. You know me better than that. First of all, I love you like a brother, but I love God more, and that compels me to defend His Word, His character, and His holiness. It’s only God Who gets to define marriage. If I attend any marriage ceremony outside of that model, that will go against God’s Word, His character, and His holiness, thereby making a mockery of God. That’s something I do not want to do.”
Person 1: “You just told me you love me like a brother, right?”
Person 2: “Absolutely!”
Person 1: “You’re not coming to my wedding and say it’s mocking God. How in the world do you think that’s loving?”
Person 2: “It’s not loving for me to approve of or affirm anything and everything. Would I be loving if I gave an alcoholic a fifth of whiskey and let him drive my car?”
Person 1: “Of course not. Don’t be ridiculous!”
Person 2: “I’m not. But listen. Not only has God given us the model for marriage, but He’s also defined what love is through the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. You’ve heard these verses before, I’m sure. ‘Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous...’ But there is also this from verse 6. ‘Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth...’ So, it wouldn’t be loving for me to celebrate something that God defines as unrighteous.”
Person 1: “I appreciate what you’re saying, but I’m not sure I believe in a hell or in a God who would throw me into hell for loving someone else.”
Person 2: “Zach, not only is God loving, but He is completely just, and His justice demands judgment. I don’t want to be helping you celebrate your way into that judgment, and I don’t want to condemn myself for making a tacit approval (Romans 14:22) of a marriage which makes a mockery of God.”
Person 1: “Daran, I get where you’re coming from, and I appreciate the phone call, but I think I’ve heard about enough.”
Person 2: “Ok, Zach. If you ever want to talk about anything, I’m here for you. Thanks for listening.”
Person 1: “Bye.” Click

Conclusion

Although the advice of many evangelical leaders, like those mentioned above, is spot on and very important, it does not tell the believer what they should do. What is crucial, for those of us who want what God wants, is to make sure that it is communicated, in person or by phone, that our not attending a LGBTQ wedding is obeying the God of the Bible. A LGBTQ wedding violates what Jesus clearly states in Scripture. Conservatism, political views, or our own personal bias are not the reasons why we do not attend. Attending makes a mockery of God. Making a defense for the hope that is within us is a proactive response regardless of the acceptance or lack of acceptance it receives.