
FAQ

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Egalitarianism, Leads to an Acceptance of Homosexuality

J.K. McKee revised 12 August, 2019

Does acceptance of an egalitarian ideology for men and women as co-leaders, inevitably lead to an acceptance of homosexuality and gay marriage?

While many complementarians would voice considerable disapproval of egalitarians, who believe that in principle females can be ordained leaders and teachers in the Body of Messiah alongside of men, and that husbands and wives should be co-leaders of the family—many would recognize that a leveling of the field for both men and women does not at all open the door to, or for that matter require, an acceptance of homosexual practice and gay marriage. There are many egalitarians, who would argue that while in the post-resurrection era, an equality lost in Eden (Genesis 3:16) has been restored by the work of Yeshua (Galatians 3:28), and that some traditional interpretations of passages designed to limit women should be reevaluated (1 Timothy 2:11-15), that the Apostolic Scriptures **absolutely prohibit homosexual practice** (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10; cf. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13), contrary to various liberal interpretations today.

Complications have erupted since the legalization of homosexual marriage in the United States in 2015, particularly among Christian people who went through a process of transitioning from some form of complementarian to an egalitarian position regarding men and women, to then being challenged to “go further” and accept the legitimacy of homosexual marriage. More often than not, this has been spurred among those from the Millennial generation, and not older evangelical Christian egalitarians. Complementarian critics of men and women serving together as leaders in the Body of Messiah, while recognizing that there might indeed be egalitarians who oppose homosexuality, have observed how “we have not seen a substantial presence of young egalitarians speak against same-sex marriage.”¹ And indeed, to some extent, such complementarians would be correct, as egalitarian voices do not tend *to unite* in order to oppose the homosexual agenda.² Instead, what seems to be found is that (older) conservative theologians and scholars who are egalitarian, are usually known for their opposition to homosexual practice (among other sins) based on how they approach and disagree with liberal handlings of Romans 1:26-27 or 1 Corinthians 6:9, which would often argue in favor of both passages speaking of either homosexual prostitution or pedastry.³ The egalitarian organization Christians for Biblical Equality (<http://cbeinternational.org>), is clear to emphasize in their Statement of Faith: “We believe in the family, celibate singleness,

¹ Owen Strachan. (2015). *City Church and the Affirmation-only Gospel. The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Retrieved 28 October, 2015, from <<http://cbmw.org>>.

² The only major resource I have seemingly found by egalitarians directly addressing whether an acceptance of females as leaders and teachers within the assembly, will inevitably facilitate homosexual acceptance, is: Catherine Clark Koreger. “Does Belief in Women’s Equality Lead to an Acceptance of Homosexual Practice?” *Priscilla Papers* Vol. 18, No. 2, Spring 2004.

³ Consult the FAQ entries, “Romans 1:26-27” and “1 Corinthians 6:9.”

and faithful **heterosexual marriage** as God's design." Yet, there are (mainly) younger people who have been involved with CBE, who have later capitulated to the homosexual agenda.

Why have there been various egalitarian people, favoring females as ordained leaders and teachers, who have later embraced homosexual intercourse as not being prohibited by the Scriptures, and gay marriage? Much of this is likely contingent on life circumstances which have affected each individual. Many younger Christian people from the Millennial generation, who have embraced homosexual legitimacy (although themselves being heterosexual), were not raised in liberal and permissive homes. Many of these young people were actually raised in fundamentalist and rather strict Christian homes, where complementarianism was enforced, the men were superior to the women, and the women were demeaned as inferiors.⁴ Seeing a number of significant flaws, and perhaps even abuses at play, with women not being too encouraged to exercise their spiritual or intellectual gifts, once out of the home, such persons were naturally very open to evangelical egalitarian viewpoints of mutuality (cf. Ephesians 5:21ff) and examples of females in leadership in the Holy Scriptures. When these people embrace the concept of men and women being equals as leaders and teachers in assembly, they tend to face a great deal of rejection, particularly from various complementarian denominations and institutions. It is usually from such rejection and dismissal that people can later go from being egalitarian in terms of men and women in the Body of Messiah, *to then* feeling enabled to consider liberal theological perspectives on homosexuality in the Bible.

Many people, such as Messianic Apologetics editor J.K. McKee, have had various experiences force them to question some of the more customary interpretations of passages that seemingly prohibit wives from being co-leaders of the family and females from being teachers and leaders in the assembly. *As egalitarians, they have come to hold to a different trajectory regarding men and women in the Bible, than complementarians.* But they also draw a red line at the legitimacy of homosexual intercourse and gay marriage. They are understandably perturbed and aggravated when egalitarians cross that red line and embrace the homosexual agenda.

It is hard to ignore the fact that while complementarianism has been the majority ideology regarding men and women in the broad Messianic movement into the 2010s, that there is a growing egalitarianism. This needs to be an egalitarianism which emphasizes a gifts-based service ethos for the Body of Messiah, and the universal availability of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17-18). While an emerging Messianic egalitarian ideology might stir some controversy, persons such as this writer are only moving slightly beyond what is summarized by Michael L. Brown, who is seemingly a soft complementarian, who does make a rightful contrast between females being lauded in the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament, and the uniform condemnation of homosexual practice:

"...while it is clear that there was not total social equality between men and women in biblical days, including during the time of the New Testament, it is equally clear that women could be raised up by God as leaders, that women were to be highly respected and regarded by their husbands, that women played a prominent role in the ministry of Jesus and the early church, and that the gospel message itself is liberating for women...[I]t is only by a misuse of the Scriptures that the church could oppress women and treat them like second-class citizens.

"This is in stark contrast to the Bible's description of homosexual practice, which...is always seen as contrary to God's established order, while it is heterosexual practice and male-female unions that are the only option. And while liberation from slavery is pointed to as a positive ideal in the Scriptures, and while the Word has much to say that is positive about women, there is not a single positive statement about homosexuality in the Bible. In fact, every time it is mentioned, it is condemned in the clearest of terms."⁵

⁴ Some of this is detailed, in various degrees, in Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood: How a Liberated Woman Found Herself Sitting on Her Roof, Covering Her Head, and Calling Her Husband "Master"* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012).

⁵ Michael L. Brown, *Can You Be Gay and Christian?* (Lake Mary, FL: FrontLine, 2014), 75.

I regard Brown as a soft complementarian, as previously in Ibid., 74 he speaks in terms of, "husbands are called to be heads of their homes, but the biblical model is one of responsibility and care, not oppression or abuse."

I consider the term *kephalē* (κεφαλῆ) to involve "source, origin" (BibleWorks 9.0: LSJM Lexicon (Unabridged)), and not the more customary framework of it being "leader" or "authority." Consult the FAQ, "Male Headship."