



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



**E**lijah had just stood before the prophets of Baal and watched God rain down fire on Mt. Carmel. He had watched God do what the false god Baal could not do. He stood boldly as a warrior for God. But as most of us have discovered, often when we stand for God, there will be those who stand in opposition. One of those individuals was the wicked Queen Jezebel of Israel, who sought to take Elijah's life. And so Elijah found himself a fugitive.

During this time of stress, Elijah became fearful and distressed. In 1 Kings 19:14, feeling the weight of discouragement, he said to God, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." (NIV) But amidst Elijah's pity party, God responded and said, "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him." (NIV) In other words, God was saying to him, "Elijah, despite what you're going through, I still have seven thousand in Israel who will not bow to Baal." So many times we feel all alone. We feel like we are the only ones who are going through difficulty. Depression sets in and discouragement overtakes us. But when we look at the problems of others, we often find that our problems are not as bad as we thought them to be.

One doesn't have to be suffering to feel lonely. Sometimes we feel that we are alone in our stand for the Lord. We feel like we are the only ones who affirm the true message of the gospel. We don't have to look far to see that some teach a watered-down gospel that speaks of no wages for sin (Romans 6:23a). As Erwin Lutzer has stated, we

shower others with grace before we lead them to the point of understanding the conviction of their sin, which helps them to appreciate God's grace. There are even those whose message is no more than a motivational speech that leaves everyone feeling good afterwards, but lacking understanding of what it means to have a relationship with the Lord. Different scenario; same result: loneliness and discouragement.

In this small amount of space I have been allotted, I want to share a word of encouragement with you: no matter how you may feel about your struggles, God will always have somebody who stands for Him. The Word of encouragement that I leave with you this month is about the reality of the God we serve — the God who is talked about in Ephesians 3:20 is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us. No matter what you are going through, He is able to give victory in every situation.

We may weep today or tonight, but the psalmist reminds us in Psalm 30:5b that there is joy in the morning. It doesn't mean that our problems will disappear. It doesn't mean our jail cells will disappear. It does mean that we have a reason to rejoice, as one old jailbird said in Philippians 4:4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."

Dr. L.W. Edwards



**Q** Society has gradually changed its negative perception of homosexuality. Why are many Christians still opposed to homosexuality?

**A** First it is important that we make a distinction between homosexuality, or same-sex attraction, and the homosexual behavior God condemns. Homosexual attraction is like any other temptation which must be resisted. Temptation is not sin. It is a point of weakness against which we must guard our hearts and minds. God looks upon homosexual behavior, as well as the heart attitude which motivates it, as sin. (Mark 7:21-23)

Critics of Christians' opposition to homosexuality charge us with homophobia and bigotry, clinging to ancient church traditions in spite of cultural and scientific progress, basing our position upon weak texts which were relevant in a different time and place, being inconsistent in our interpretation and application of biblical commandments to social issues, and failing to adjust our understanding of what is sinful to our changing times.

Are the critics right? While we may sometimes be inconsistent in our understanding, interpretation, and application of biblical directives, we are clear on the character and absolute moral authority of God. His position on homosexuality holds greater weight than tradition, culture, science, popular opinion, and academia combined. As the Ruler and Creator of our universe, His Word stands, even when it loses favor with the majority.

So what is God's position on homosexual behavior? He calls it "an abomination" in Leviticus 18:22. According to a dictionary, this means God views the act as nothing less than disgusting, despicable, abhorrent, detestable, loathsome, shameful, and inciting of His hatred. Many civilizations have risen and fallen since God inspired Moses to write this verse, but it still stands as steadfast as His character.

*But isn't God a God of love?* you ask. Yes, He loves us; it's our rebellion and sin He hates. God does not label certain behaviors as sin because He wants to deprive us of happiness. As our Creator, He knows what is best for us. He gives us restrictions so we will experience the benefits of His best.

Romans 1:24-28 describes homosexual behavior and its consequences as the natural implications of rebellion against God. There comes a point when God allows men and women to choose their own way without restraint. The end result is one of pain and sorrow. It is much easier to trust and obey God than to experience the consequences of rejecting His plan for our lives.

God's opinion of the subject alone is a compelling case against homosexual behavior. For those who need a non-spiritual justification, William Lane Craig provides this in his article, "A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality." In the article, Craig cites research from Dr. Thomas Schmidt's book, *Straight and Narrow?* Reasons against supporting homosexual behavior include compulsive promiscuity among the homosexual population, wide-

spread drug use, an increase in mental disorders and suicidal tendencies among homosexuals, physical complications resulting from sexual behavior, increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and dramatically reduced life expectancy.

In spite of all the reasons why Christians are opposed to homosexuality, we are still to love and pray for homosexuals. We must remember God saw through our faults to our needs, saving us in spite of ourselves. His grace was strong enough to rescue us from our sins. He wants us to demonstrate its power before our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender friends. Let's build redemptive relationships with these people and point them to the cross, where they can find hope, healing, restoration, and renewed purpose. — Article by Cameron Edwards



Dr. Edwards is available to speak at churches and special events. Contact him if you would like to have him as your special guest.

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