

# EBF Statement on Homosexuality and Marriage

Ratified by the Elders of EBF, August 2015

In view of the recent rulings by the Supreme Court of the United States in regard to Sodomy laws and same-gender “marriage”, and the controversies regarding the active participation in homosexual behavior among members and clergy of historically Christian churches, it is important for Emerald Bible Fellowship to state its position, as established by the Word of God and recognized by the team of Elders.

We believe that all persons are created and crowned by God with glory and honor (Gen 1:27; Ps 8:5) as His image-bearers individually and should be accorded all human dignity and respect (Jam 3:9-10). We, therefore, believe that hateful, fearful, unconcerned, and calloused harassment of those who have same-gender desires should be repudiated as evil and opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ, who died for sinners (Gal 6:10; 1 Thess 5:15). We believe that respect and dignity for those with same-gender desires involves honest, reasoned, non-violent sharing of Truth (Eph 4:15; 1 Jn 3:18) concerning God’s revelation of the immorality and liability of homosexual behavior (Lev 18:22; 20:13; 1 Cor 6:9) and the hope of redemption given to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:3-7). In the same way, endorsing and approving behavior which the Scriptures have condemned endangers persons and dishonors God (1 Cor 5; Jude 1:23; 1 Pet 1:14-16; 2:11).

We believe that same-gender desires are a result of the fall of humanity into the sinful condition which pervades every person (Rom 1:18-2:4). Whatever biological or relational causes of homosexuality may be discovered, we do not believe that these would sanction or excuse homosexual behavior (Gal 5:21; Rom 1:32), though they would certainly deepen our compassion and patience for those struggling to be free from sexual temptation and loneliness.

We believe that there is hope for the person with same-gender desires: Jesus Christ offers the flourishing of life where the power of sin is broken and the person is freed to know and experience his or her true identity in Christ Jesus and in the fellowship of the redeemed, the Church, and to walk in newness through joyful submission to Him (Rom 6:4; Titus 2:14; John 10:27-28; Acts 13:38-39; Rom 6).

We believe that this freedom is attained in the same manner as with every other deeply rooted sin, through the process of turning from trusting one’s own assessments and wisdom regarding sexual propriety, a recognition of homosexual behavior as sin as revealed by God, renouncing the practice of it for the sake of God, rediscovering healthy non-sexual friendships with those of the same gender,

embracing a lifestyle of submission to God's Word and its all-encompassing morality, and in the age to come, rising up to Christ with a body free from every sinful impulse. This process parallels the process for every sexual sin, heterosexual, homosexual, identified, or otherwise. We believe the power for this transformation comes by reliance upon Jesus Christ and in submission to Him, who gave His life for us, and by the power of His Spirit (Rom 15:13; Eph 2:1-8; 3:14-19; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Tim 1:7).

We believe that marriage is a divinely ordained institution given at the creation of humanity for the purpose of reflecting the character and works of God, for procreation and fruitfulness of humanity, for providing the human ideal of both-gendered parents under which children flourish, and to reflect in a mysterious way the gospel of Jesus Christ itself as union between Jesus and the Church, united but distinct (Gen 1:27; Hosea; Eph 5:22-33).

We believe that God created humanity male and female in His image, and as such, marriage is an icon of that two-gendered image, and by necessity it is an icon dependent upon two-genders, namely male and female (Gen 1:27; 2:22-25; Matt 19:1-12). A union which consists of a single gender, be it male or female, is not marriage as instituted by God and does not reflect the image which He ordained at the beginning, nor the gospel of the union of His Son and the Church from Ephesians 5. Just as we reject a church of a single gender, a community of a single gender, so we reject a marriage of a single gender as dishonoring to and completely unlike God. In the light of the gospel, we cannot solemnize a union that is outside of the revealed will of God for humanity and for its flourishing. Therefore, we will not perform, host, or recognize a so-called marriage between two persons of the same gender.

We believe that heterosexuality is God's revealed will for human sexuality, and its exercise within the covenant bond of marriage, being between one man and one woman, and since God is loving, it is a chaste and faithful expression of His image which marriage is ordained to reflect.

We believe that the Church should reach out in love and truth to minister to those enslaved by same-sex desires, and that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptations and want to fight against it for the sake of Christ, should be patiently assisted and encouraged in their battle, not ostracized or disdained. We believe that both heterosexual and homosexual persons ought to fight against sinful expressions of sexuality (all improper sexual thoughts and behaviors) for the glory of Christ Jesus who redeemed us to present us to Himself holy, blameless, and beyond blame (Titus 2:14; Col 1:22; Eph 5:27).