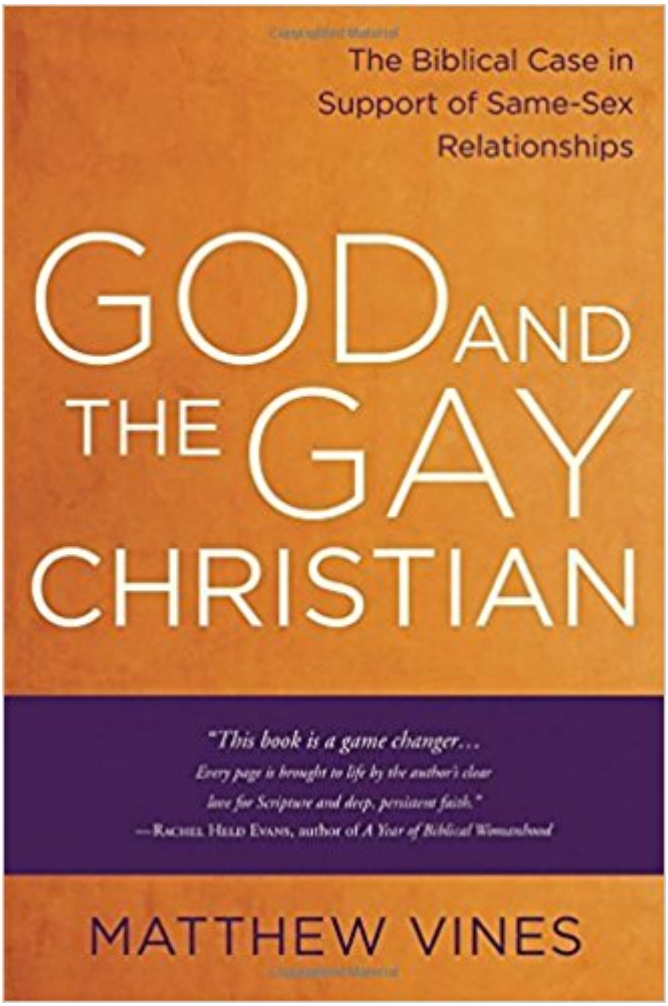
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God And The Gay Christian: The Biblical Case In Support Of Same-Sex Relationships



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Synopsis

The landmark book exploring what the Bible actually saysÃ¢â ¬â •and doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t sayÃ¢â ¬â •about same-sex relationships. Ã Â As a young Christian man, Matthew Vines harbored the same basic hopes of most young people: to some-day share his life with someone, to build a family of his own, to give and receive love. But when he realized he was gay, those hopes were called into question. The Bible, heÃ¢â ¬â„¢d been taught, condemned gay relationships. Ã Â Feeling the tension between his understanding of the Bible and the reality of his same-sex orientation, Vines devoted years of intensive research into what the Bible says about homosexuality. With care and precision, Vines asked questions such as: Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Â¢ Do biblical teachings on the marriage covenant preclude same-sex marriage or not? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ How should we apply the teachings of Jesus to the gay debate? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ Can celibacy be a calling when it is mandated, not chosen? Ã¢â ¬Â¢ What did Paul have in mind when he warned against same-sex relations? Ã Â Unique in its affirmation of both an orthodox faith and sexual diversity, God and the Gay Christian has sparked heated debate, sincere soul searchÃ Â-ing, and widespread cultural change on the issue of what it means to be a faithful gay Christian.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Q&A with author Matthew Vines Q. Briefly, what is the story of when you initially acknowledged to yourself that you are gay? A. I didnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t even let myself think about whether I might be gay until I was 19. The personal, familial, and spiritual consequences of understanding that about myself

before then would have been debilitating to me. But going away to an LGBT-friendly college gave me the space that I needed to start removing a lot of the psychological barriers IÃ¢â ¬â„¢d built up over the years. Once I finally let myself think about my sexual orientation more honestly, it was glaringly obvious to me. But while that was relieving in a sense, it was also terrifying in light of my family and church background. Q. As a devoted Christian, how are you able to reconcile your orientation with your faith? A. That was the question that loomed large for both me and my parents after I came out, and itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s what led me to take a leave of absence from school and undertake an intensive study of Scripture. IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve now dedicated four years of my life to researching the issue of same-sex relationships and the Bible, and IÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve come to believe that the Bible doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t address the issue of committed, monogamous same-sex relationships. And while itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s true that biblical silence doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t necessarily mean divine blessing, same-sex marriages are consistent with ScriptureÃ¢â ¬â„¢s core teachings about human sexuality, which is why I think God does bless them. Q. You say you hold a high view of Scripture. What does that mean? Why is it important? A. In denominational debates about this issue over the past several decades, the key fault line between Christians hasnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t actually been whether they support or oppose same-sex relationships. From the viewpoint of theologically conservative Christians, disagreements over this issue are merely symptomatic of a deeper disagreement: Is the Bible authoritative for Christians, or not? If you argue that we are free to agree or disagree with parts of the Bible we may not like, then supporting same-sex relationships is easy: just say that the biblical authors were wrong and move on. But that isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t how I see the Bible, and it isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t how most evangelicals see it either. When I say I have a high view of Scripture, what I mean is that I donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t feel free to set aside parts of the Bible that may make me uncomfortable. Instead, I have to seriously grapple with Scripture, daily striving to submit my will to the Bible rather than submitting the Bible to my will. For Christians who share that understanding of Scripture, biblical interpretation on same-sex relationships is far more consequential in determining our beliefs. Q. Why did you feel it was necessary to re-examine the Bible passages on same-sex relationships? A. Jesus indicates in the Sermon on the Mount that good teachings should bear good fruit. The consequences of the evangelical churchÃ¢â ¬â„¢s categorical rejection of same-sex relationships have been anything but good: higher likelihoods of depression, illegal drug use, relational brokenness, and suicide. Those are all red flags that opposing same-sex marriage isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t the best understanding of Scripture. That bad fruit was the main reason I felt I needed to take a closer look at the Bible on this subject. Q. What did you discover in your research that helped you and your family with accepting your orientation? A. The first thing I realized was simple

but significant: The longest discussion of same-sex behavior in ScriptureÃ¢â ¬â •in PaulÃ¢â ¬â„¢s letter to the RomansÃ¢â ¬â •referred only to lustful behavior. The types of loving, committed gay marriages we see on a regular basis today are never discussed in the Bible. In fact, the entire understanding of same-sex orientation as an exclusive, permanent, and unchosen characteristic of some people is completely foreign to the world of the Bible, which helps explain why the BibleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s discussion of same-sex behavior looks quite different from our modern debate. Understanding those differences was crucial in bringing my parents to a place of affirming my sexual orientation. Q. How does the case you present in God and the Gay Christian change the conversation regarding the inclusion of LGBT Christians in the church? A. Given that the six references to same-sex behavior in Scripture are all negative, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s easy to see how the debate has unfolded in the way that it has. For a long time, itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s seemed like there have been two options: either accept ScriptureÃ¢â ¬â„¢s negative judgment on same-sex unions, or set aside certain passages from Scripture and accept same-sex unions. But as I argue in the book, that is a false choice. Through a careful study of the type of same-sex behavior describedÃ¢â ¬â •and condemnedÃ¢â ¬â •in Scripture, Christians can affirm committed, monogamous same-sex relationships and also affirm the full authority of the Bible. That understanding is critical to laying the groundwork for LGBT acceptance in conservative and evangelical churches. Q. What do you hope is the outcome from your book? A. My initial hope for the book is that it helps to finally open up the conversation on this issue in conservative churches, where there has been little to no theological debate so far. When I was trying to come out to my church a few years back, it was incredibly difficult even to start the dialogue with most people. When thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s the case, the strength of your arguments almost doesnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t matter, because if you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t get a hearing, nothing will change. If the book can help to start the dialogue in those churches, that would make a tremendous difference for the LGBT people who worship there. Beyond that, my longer-term goal is to help forge a world in which all Christians embrace and affirm their LGBT brothers and sisters as true equals. This kind of theological dialogue is indispensable in shaping that future. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Praise for God and the Gay ChristianÃ¢â ¬Å“For anyone whoÃ Â wants to know why some evangelicals find that the Bible does not condemn same-gender marriage, Matthew VinesÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book answers the question. Christians who oppose gay marriage should consider what he has to say.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Tony Campolo, professor emeritus, Eastern University; co-author of Red Letter ChristiansÃ¢â ¬Å“Many people believe you can either hold a high view of

Scripture or affirm gay relationships, but not both. Matthew Vines proves them wrong. Provocative and relentlessly Bible-focused, God and the Gay Christian offers hope and insight for Christians who have felt conflicted on matters of sexuality.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Justin Lee, author of Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians DebateÃ¢â ¬Å“A must-read for all Christians, but especially parents. Matthew Vines brings great insight and wisdom to the conversation so urgently needed by todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s church. God and the Gay Christian has the information I was searching for when my son, Tyler Clementi, came out to me. This book will have a great impact on families, freeing parents of misunderstandings about their LGBT children while letting them hold securely to their faith.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Jane Clementi, co-founder of The Tyler Clementi Foundation Ã¢â ¬Å“Matthew Vines has accomplished a rare feat in this book, combining a detailed mastery of a wide range of material from the ancient world and the Christian tradition, a clear and articulate writing style, a deep commitment to his Christian faith, and an incisive judgment that can cut through complex arguments and mountains of data, and identify the core issues and their implications for human life. This book makes significant contributions, not only to ongoing scholarly conversations but also to the average person who wants to probe more deeply how to think about God and the gay Christian. It is the breadth of his reach and the integrated character of his vision that makes this book particularly worth reading.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â • Dr. James Brownson, Reformed theologian and professor of New Testament; author of Bible, Gender, SexualityÃ¢â ¬Å“God and the Gay Christian is a game changer.Ã Â Winsome, accessible, and carefully researched, every page is brought to life by the authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s clear love for Scripture and deep, persistent faith.Ã Â With this book, Matthew Vines emerges as one of my generationÃ¢â ¬â„¢s most important Christian leaders, not only on matters of sexuality but also on what it means to follow Jesus with wisdom, humility, and grace.Ã Â Prepare to be challenged and enlightened, provoked and inspired. Read with an open heart and mind, and you are bound to be changed.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Rachel Held Evans, author of A Year of Biblical Womanhood and Faith Unraveled Ã¢â ¬Å“Few things in todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s world divide churches and Christian communities more deeply than the issue of homosexuality. What lies at the very heart of the matter is the Bible and its interpretation. The very few biblical verses that touch upon same-sex-related matters say nothing about love and enduring relationships between people of same sexÃ¢â ¬â •on the contrary, these texts condemn harshly the activities they describe, such as attempted rape, debauchery, or depriving a person of his male honor. This has led theologically conservative Christians to condemn altogether what is today called Ã¢â ¬Ëœhomosexuality.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ As the consequence of such an interpretation of the authoritative Scripture, hundreds of thousands of members of Christian

communities have faced the difficulty, if not impossibility, to live out their non-heterosexual orientation while maintaining their Christian identity. Matthew Vines dedicates his book to Ã¢â ¬Ëœall those who have suffered in silence for so long.Ã¢â ¬â„¢ He reads the Bible and biblical scholarship as an evangelical gay Christian, giving a voice both to the biblical texts and its readers. He takes seriously the biblical text which for him represents the authoritative word of God; historical scholarship that reads the biblical text against what can be known of its historical context; and the experiences of Christians who read the Bible today. Importantly, his own personal voice is to be heard throughout the book, which only adds to its credibility. A careful scrutiny of the six biblical passages that somehow address same-sex behavior leads Vines to make a compelling argument against mandatory celibacy for gay Christians. More than that, he argues that Christians who affirm the full authority of Scripture can also affirm committed, monogamous same-sex relationships. Matthew VinesÃ¢â ¬â„¢s well-read and well-argued book deserves to be read by all those who have suffered in silence, but also by members and ministers of Christian communities struggling with the recognition and appreciation of their gay members.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Martti Nissinen, professor of Old Testament Studies, University of Helsinki, author of Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical PerspectiveÃ¢â ¬Å“Matthew Vines lives at an intersection of identities: a committed, theologically conservative Christian who also happens to be an out gay man. In offering both a scholarly and profoundly personal reconciliation of a duality often depicted as hopelessly at odds, he performs a public service that is valiant, hopeful and long overdue. Ã Â He points the way forward for all those still stranded at the intersection.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Leonard Pitts, Jr., Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist; author of Freeman Ã¢â ¬Å“Matthew Vines brings within reach of non-specialists the rich store of scholarly work on what Scripture does and does not say about same-sex relationships. Coupled with his poignant descriptions of the damage done by traditional exclusionary interpretations, his book is an essential resource for all who seek to find their bearings in the current debate over the BibleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s teachings for gay people.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Dr. Mark Achtemeier, Presbyterian theologian; author of The BibleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Yes to Same-Sex MarriageÃ Â

I’m so impressed with Matthew Vines, What an awesome sole! I have read many many books on Homosexuality and Christianity but this one really is at the top of my list! Matthew has done such a fantastic job with not only real life experiences from himself but his family and others but he also provides some of the best research and truths that I have seen! I can’t recommend it enough for anyone to read especially fellow Christians and Clergy!

Outstanding parsing of the biblical text on same sex committed relationships. Truly thoughtful and biblically sound.

What a great book. Answers a lot of questions and does it with a lot of grace and sound exegetical arguments.

Matthew Vines writes with passion, determination and respect for an Christian audience on a very hot topic. Whether or not you agree with his premise or not, if you are involved with Christian ministry at any level this book should be on your reading list.

This book helped me to understand another interpretation of Scripture when it comes to my LGBT friends and loved ones. Thank you for your perspective. It has given me a lot to consider.

This is an excellent book that helps to correct some of the negative translations and inferences that hardline Christians use against gay people. The book clearly illustrates , as many bible scholars and theologians teach, that the bible as it pertains to homosexuality has been gravely misunderstood. I would recommend this book to anyone who has been hurt by hateful teachings or to anyone who seeks answers on this topic. This book helped restore my faith in Christianity in a world where hardline Christians so often turn to hate and malice to spread their messages.

The author did a fine job of chronicling the relationship between rigid, religious tenets and the life of the ordinary man. There are lots and lots citations and explanation! It is an easy read that you will enjoy reading and rereading!The prounounced strength is - THIS book will make you think about about what you believe and how you chose to believe it.Terrific resource text!

As a Progressive Gay Christian in his 60’s, I’ve gone through the struggles between the expectations of my fellow Christians and my own experience of a gay orientation. I finally came to embrace my wholeness and I’m in a Christ-Centered, committed relationship with my partner of 20 years. I was once in a very conservative evangelical/charismatic milieu, and with the grace of God found my way home to self-acceptance, and a much more open theology. This book is from a genuinely conservative evangelical perspective that takes Biblical Authority very seriously, and explores not only what the Bible does and does not say about committed same-sex relationships

while taking into account the very negative "fruits" of the practice of condemning all same-sex relationships as an "abomination

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