

Answering the Gay Question

Defining both sides of the debate

Is it a question of traditional values or civil rights? Or both? Defining gay rights is possibly the key issue of our day and deserves attention to both sides of the argument, in order to rightly examine and define who we are as a people and what is acceptable to us as a society.

The United States of America's Declaration of Independence, proclaims, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness." Our government acknowledges God-given rights and even urges us to our duty to declare independence from any government that takes away from these fundamental rights. However, seeking freedom does not justify infringing upon another's freedoms. How we define ourselves will determine whose rights are being infringed upon, when answering the questions that must be raised in this debate. As marriage is at the center of the argument (but assumed in reference to either group), for purposes of this article, I will refer to one side as gay (marriage) activists and the other side as traditional (marriage) advocates. I will present the argument of the activists first, as they are the proponents for proposing changes.

The first question: what is marriage? Gay activists argue that marriage should be defined to include unions between persons of the same sex. Their claim essentially is that marriage is simply a government institution where a document issued will legally recognize the union of two individuals. They acknowledge that traditionally these unions have been between a man and a woman, but do not see the purpose behind such a precedent (as gay unions aren't then given the added government benefits extended to married couples). Traditional marriage advocates value the original definition as much more. They see it as the forming of a family—the basic unit of society—and maintain that broadening the scope of a societal definition will undermine the original sacred purpose, which societies have historically been upheld by. (Government benefits are just considered added perks to these unions but not a necessary part of marriage or the basis of their formations).

Both sides recognize that the definition of family is changing according to usage, but neither side would claim that broken families becoming the norm is a good change. Available studies prove traditional families—where loving parents raise children together—are the best environments for children to grow up in. Nonetheless, gay activists suggest they be given more of a chance to prove equally capable of raising children, but naturally they have to depend on the trend of broken families to perpetuate offspring for that experiment to even take place. Instead of perpetuating the problem, traditional advocates request that we consider what the children—who granted, are the future of our society—deserve, and then work toward providing it for them at the outset.

Regardless, gay activists argue that marriage is a right that gays are entitled to. Their argument is that society is already broken and needs to be redefined. But again, another

definition beyond that is being called into question here. Is marriage a right or a privilege? Many persons, who are not married (singles—which by the way, already accept gays as a part of that group, if they choose not to reject this class), consider themselves as having all unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but they either choose not to be married (as it is defined with the opposite sex) or someone else (of the opposite sex) chooses not to marry them.

But gay activists go a step further and argue that the freedom of choice of whether to get married or not is directly being taken away from them. Traditional marriage advocates claim that whether marriage is a right or a privilege doesn't matter when it comes to freedom of choice, as marriage is not being withheld from anyone under the traditional definition anyway. In other words, if you don't want a union with someone of the opposite sex, then you are not seeking marriage as it has typically been defined, but you are seeking something entirely different, and you just want to call it marriage for your convenience.

Now this finally brings us to the real question: the reason gay activists want to redefine marriage and redefine family and redefine rights and redefine freedom of choice and basically redefine society, is because current definitions don't fit how they define themselves. As a result they either have to redefine their own definition of themselves or redefine everyone else. The real question is whether or not you or they have the choice to be who we are. I choose who I am. But are gays born gay? At the core of any question of discrimination, is always whether or not the people themselves are being discriminated against for who they are, or for what they choose to be. Blacks (for the color of their skin, which they were obviously born with and did not choose) and women (for their gender, which they were obviously born with and did not choose) are good examples of groups who were being discriminated against for things out of their control. So that is what this debate boils down to as well.

But it is not even clear what defines a person as gay. There's so much variation in what is considered gay, but it is important in order to determine if it is an innate trait from birth or not. Some argue that simply an attraction towards the same sex means a person is gay, but people are inclined to think things although that doesn't necessarily mean they were born to act according to those inclinations. Some examples of this are all proven by behavioral choices: such as a liar, a thief, a cheat, and a murderer or on the other hand, an honest person, a caregiver, or a model citizen. Persons who fit any of these descriptions may have been inclined to be what they are, but until they actually act on it, they really aren't considered any of these titles. Considering that gay activists would like marriage to encompass the most extreme behavior and examples of being gay, that's the definition that needs to be considered. In other words, unless gay activists can prove that gays from birth have no choice but to act on sexual inclinations they say they have toward persons of the same sex, it can't be said that that is who they really are, and then these activists of change really have no argument left for change.

Until then, sexual preference is exactly that—it is a choice. So far, gay activists are unable to provide any conclusive evidence to the contrary. Science will never state that a

person is born without the ability to choose whom they will have sex with. And as long as it is a choice to be different than society, it is also a choice made to have different standards associated with those choices. While the color of your skin, your gender, or your race set you apart as a different class, choice (the key word here) does not grant you your own class. Everyone has the freedom of choice in this life, but there are consequences to every choice. While society may tolerate people making choices they themselves would not make, they do not have to deem others choices as acceptable as the choices they themselves do make.