



Answers for a Changing Culture

02 How Should Christians Love and Welcome LGBTQIA+ People?

Every person is made in God's image and should be treated with dignity, compassion, and love. Scripture also calls every person to submit sexuality, identity, and relationships to the lordship of Jesus.

EMBARK

The question, "How should Christians love and welcome LGBTQIA+ people?" is deeply personal. It involves family members, friendships, church relationships, painful experiences, and questions of identity and belonging.

For some, being welcomed means being treated with kindness, dignity, and genuine friendship. For others, welcome means complete affirmation of their identity, beliefs, relationships, and behavior. Those are not necessarily the same thing.

*The umbrella term **LGBTQIA+** also includes different experiences and issues that should not be carelessly treated as identical. Experiencing same-sex attraction is not the same as practicing sexual immorality. Wrestling with gender confusion is not the same as rejecting biblical teaching. We should listen carefully rather than reducing people to labels.*



Before we answer how Christians should welcome LGBTQIA+ people, we need to ask what biblical love requires, what Scripture teaches about sexuality, and what following Jesus demands from every professing believer.

1. When someone asks to be "welcomed" by a church, what might that person be asking for?

EXAMINE

READ Genesis 1:26-27 and James 3:9-10

2. What gives every person dignity and value?
3. What attitudes, words, or actions toward LGBTQIA+ people would contradict belief in the image of God?

READ Mark 2:13-17

4. What kind of people willingly came near Jesus?
5. How did Jesus' willingness to eat with sinners differ from approving their sin?
6. What does Jesus say he came to call sinners to do?

READ Genesis 2:18-25 and Matthew 19:4-6

7. How do these passages define God's design for marriage?
8. Why must Christians allow Scripture rather than personal desire or cultural opinion to define sexual faithfulness?

READ 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

9. What different forms of sinful behavior does Paul identify?
10. What hope does 1 Corinthians 6:11 offer to every kind of sinner?
11. According to 1 Thessalonians 4, who has authority over the believer's body and sexuality?
12. What is the difference between struggling against temptation and defending or continuing in sin?

READ 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

13. How does Paul distinguish between unbelievers in the world and someone who claims to be a Christian?
14. Why should an unbelieving guest and an unrepentant church member not be treated as though they are in the same spiritual position?
15. What responsibility does the church have when a professing believer openly persists in sexual immorality?

READ Mark 2:13-17

16. What should be the goal and attitude of biblical correction?
17. How can Christians maintain loving concern without pretending that serious disobedience does not matter?

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS:

Do I respond to LGBTQIA+ people with dignity and compassion or with fear and disgust?

Have I confused kindness with compromise—or conviction with cruelty?

Do I apply biblical sexual standards consistently to homosexual and heterosexual sin?

Do I distinguish between temptation, struggle, practice, and unrepentant rebellion?

Am I willing to maintain loving relationships without communicating moral approval?

If I profess Christ, have I submitted my sexuality, identity, body, and relationships to His authority?

Is our church prepared to provide meaningful friendship and belonging for people pursuing costly obedience?

EXPOSE

This question forces us to examine whether compassion and conviction are being shaped by Scripture or distorted by fear, personal experience, and family pressure.

We confuse welcome with affirmation

Biblical welcome includes dignity, hospitality, patience, listening, and genuine friendship. It does not require calling every identity, belief, relationship, or behavior morally good.

We may treat one kind of sexual sin as uniquely disgusting

Scripture condemns homosexual behavior, but it also condemns adultery, pornography, premarital sex, lust, abusive conduct, and every form of sexual immorality. Selective outrage is hypocrisy, not holiness.

We confuse temptation with rebellion

Experiencing an unwanted desire is not the same as embracing, practicing, or celebrating that desire. Faithful believers may experience persistent temptations while sincerely pursuing obedience to Christ.

We may offer prohibition without belonging

Calling someone to costly obedience while offering little friendship, family, hospitality, or spiritual support places burdens on people without helping to carry them.

We may avoid what discipleship requires

Jesus welcomes sinners, but He does not leave any disciple free to reserve sexuality, relationships, identity, or the body from His authority.

We allow either family affection or Christian conviction to erase the other

Love does not require disowning a family member. Neither does family loyalty require participating in, celebrating, or facilitating what Scripture calls sin.

ENGAGE

Step 1: Clarify

What is the difference between treating someone with dignity, welcoming someone as a guest, affirming someone as a church member, and approving someone's behavior?

Step 2: Connect

How do Jesus' welcome of sinners and His call to repentance belong together?

Step 3: Discern

How should our response differ toward:

- An unbelieving LGBTQIA+ guest?*
- A believer resisting same-sex attraction or gender confusion?*
- A professing Christian openly practicing and defending sexual sin?*
- An adult child or family member living contrary to Scripture?*

Step 4: Apply

How can our church become more welcoming and compassionate without becoming unclear about repentance, membership, and obedience to Christ?

MEMORIZE

1 Corinthians 6:11 CSB "And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Remember... *The question is not whether LGBTQIA+ people possess dignity, should be treated with kindness, or may come near to hear the gospel. Scripture answers **yes**.*

*The question is whether Christian love requires affirming what Scripture calls sin, or whether someone can follow Jesus while refusing His authority over sexuality, identity, and relationships. Scripture answers **no**.*

Jesus welcomes sinners, tells us the truth, offers forgiveness, and calls every one of us to repent and follow Him.

CHOOSE ONE CONCRETE STEP...

- *repent of a mocking, fearful, or self-righteous attitude*
- *invite an LGBTQIA+ family member or neighbor to share a meal*
- *listen carefully to someone's actual story before making assumptions*
- *explain biblical sexuality honestly and compassionately*
- *encourage a believer who is resisting sexual temptation*
- *establish loving but truthful boundaries in a family relationship*
- *seek pastoral help when a church member openly persists in sexual immorality*
- *help make the church genuine family for unmarried and celibate believers*