**God's Plan And LGBTQ2SA+ Individuals**

***Our Biological State Is God-Given***

The LGBTQ2SA+ acronym refers to persons who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, Two-Spirit Asexual, Agender, Genderqueer, Bigender, Intersex, Pansexual etc. The plus sign (+) is used to recognize that there are more sexual orientations and gender expressions than are or can be captured in designations and acronyms.

It is no secret that some if not many Christians earlier on rejected these identities, believing them to be biblically unacceptable. Is there a problem with that stance? It seems there may be. It is one thing to reject something for oneself; but quite another to judge others by our beliefs. The main problem with a judging attitude is that it puts humans as equal to the Holy Spirit Who has the responsibility to convict. Indeed it seems like when the problem involves sexual matters some people including Christians appear to be especially riled up. Such Christians tend to use the Bible as both an offensive weapon against “immorality” and a defensive shield to stop pushback. Therefore it is appropriate to wonder why some are very passionate and unyielding in prosecuting others on matters of sexual non-conformity. It is all the more curious why violating God’s Word in other matters does not bring up such, if any, condemnation. For example it is probably true that most of those offended by LGBTQ2SA+ have undeclared tolerance, if not outright acceptance, of “small” tax fraud, or the Canadian governments’ discriminatory inferior funding of First Nation schools, of the plight of people who went through the Residential School system or of lying and misconduct, especially by politicians.

In fact, on the matter of gender, let’s remember that for all humans shortly after fertilization there is no gender. In simple terms, as the embryo develops the gender becomes differentiated as a result of a very complex series of changes that arise from genetic and hormonal activity. From this background, being male or female may depend on whether or not male-oriented androgens like testosterone suppress female-oriented estrogens. During this process of cell division and assignment however, a range or spectrum of gender characteristics is possible. A clearly male or female individual could emerge with all aspects of human expression aligned with that gender. For example a male, would look definitively male (as we have come to expect), act sexually and otherwise as a male and as well feel and accept being that way. On the other hand however, many individuals who clearly identify as ‘male’ or ‘female’ and pass as such through their life, turn out to have genetic karyotypes that are at odds with that ‘identity’ (e.g XX males or XY females), due to variation in gene content or gene function. Such variation in the biological outcomes of gender and gender identification would also include cases of individuals with non-binary characteristics. All human development seems to undergo a degree of diversification; and in other biological areas such as overall physical growth, a range of heights is the end-product.

Be that as it may, when one is not looking at the LBGTQ2SA+ issue from a judgmental standpoint, in connection with sexual differences, one could conclude that conceivably, non-heterosexuality may simply represent a variation from the norm of the majority of humanity. We know that sometimes changes occur in the pattern of cell division, signaled by the DNA in the genes that are on the chromosomes, which, from the very earliest stage of development dictate the message, as to how every fetus will develop. This may be said for example of people with Down’s syndrome, twins, Little People and people born with exceptional qualities; so why not LGBTQ2SA+?

***God Made Us All Different***

We cannot presume to know why God allows variations nor should we write off certain conditions of life as unacceptable to us, and therefore, unthinkably, must be purged or stamped out. Everyone has a divine purpose! For example, it is conceivable that the community of asexual and aromantic or non-romantic people was meant to provide priests and others who would be best suited to celibacy-desirable professions. Nowadays however, the general attitude in some churches appears to have come around to a change of heart. Today the view seems to be dawning that it is possible to see LGBTQ2SA+ as participants in God’s Plan of Salvation even if their sexual identity continues to be bothersome in certain quarters.

The Bible however is all-inclusive. In a well-known passage in the Book of John the Evangelist we are told that God’s Salvation Plan includes all of us because Jesus came to die for us all:

“*… God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*” (John chapter 3:16)

The Greek word John uses for “world” (*kosmos*) means the whole created world. Both the rest of the Bible and Jesus’ own behavior certainly affirm an all-inclusive Salvation. And let’s not forget Jesus was God’s accredited Representative while He was on this planet. So whenever He spoke it was God speaking!

In the time of Jesus, moral sin did not revolve around a social controversy about sexual identity or orientation but based on the Mosaic Law and indisputably, prostitution and adultery were front and centre. So how do the Bible and Jesus “judge” people with this lifestyle that was considered as socially and religiously objectionable? Let’s see.

A prostitute named Rahab is acknowledged in several places in the Bible because she totally believed in God and is listed among the Who’s Who of the faithful people of God, moral fault and all! (Hebrews chapter 11) God does not reject her because of her character; instead He celebrates her faith. She is listed in the genealogy of Jesus. The linage of our Savior, the Son of God includes a prostitute! So on what grounds then should we, His creatures, reject people who are labeled LGBTQ2SA+?  Here is another report that shows God is non-judgmental.

The story of a “Woman Caught in the Act of Adultery”, as evident in this title, is not about a reported case or about a self-styled adulterous individual. The story is about someone who was arrested while actually engaged in the act, which indicates there was no fine point from which to see her as not guilty and not deserving of being executed by stoning, which the Mosaic Law required. The religious leaders, completely clad with Scripture and strong public support, brought her to Jesus thinking they had Jesus cornered. The safest choice would have been for Jesus to condemn the woman. Who would fault Him for that? Of course the religious leaders had a plan to denounce Jesus whether or not He condemned her. In His challenge to the leaders and a crowd, super eager for His judgment, Jesus tells us how we need to examine ourselves before we judge others. Here, in part, is the Bible description of how their confrontation of Jesus played out (in John Chapter 8:2-11):

*… When they kept on questioning him* [Jesus] (or: When they kept insisting on a response)*, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

*At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”*

*“No one, sir,” she said.*

*“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”*

***We All Live in Glass Houses***

Jesus’ approach was to question the moral authority on which the others were judging her; and if they did not have it, there was no basis on which to apply such an extreme penalty or any penalty, for that matter. The religious leaders would like to think they knew what their Bible said, but they certainly lacked the wisdom of when or how to apply the biblical passage. Being human and guilty of violating some rule or principle in one way or the other we have no legitimacy to judge anyone on moral grounds, regardless of whether or not we believe Scripture is on the side of rejecting the action we criticize. It’s just not our role.

Moreover under God everyone is allowed to choose how to live. Indeed every choice has consequences and in the end God will be the Judge. Meanwhile as Christians we are required to stop judging and accept everyone. In the Bible, it is only on the basis of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior that God will accept us close to Him as His children. The Laws in Leviticus where some people go to condemn LGBTQ2SA+ have been subject to Jesus’ expanded application of those Laws. They were the only means of relating with God in those days, before Jesus came and clarified the focus and intention of God’s word.

Since Jesus’ coming we are now governed by a “new” Command: “Love one another” (John 13:34). This Expectation or Command originated in the OT, where it says: “*… love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.*” (Leviticus 19:18) Do you notice? This passage is from the same Book of Leviticus from which some people have selected a reason to hate or reject LGBTQ2SA+ individuals! Interestingly it seems that the *love your neighbor* passage is written in a way to emphasize there is to be no doubt about the requirement to abide by this very important Rule; so it ends with: “Signed, God”. Again Jesus expands on this OT Law when a legal expert asked Him: “Who is my neighbor?” How Jesus replied is instructive. Here’s what I mean:

“*What is written in the Law?” he* [Jesus] *replied. “How do you read it?*” (Luke 10:26)

In other words Jesus asked for the letter of the Law and then He asked the expert (according to the Greek) what he knew for certain about that law. The Teaching by Jesus that followed remains a lasting legacy to Christians. It is conveyed in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke chapter 10:25-37). We find out Jesus is not asking us to be kind-hearted to only the person living next door. More than that, when He tells us: “*Love thy neighbor as thyself*” He means that Christian love must include action: where ever we are, we must accept everyone we encounter the way they are, even people others hate or discriminate against, and be willing to provide what that person needs, to the extent of our ability (in this story the Samaritan offered the Jew peace of mind and body by paying for his care).

***God’s Teaching on the Book of Leviticus***

Very important in this discussion are God’s words written by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:15:

*“He abolished the Jewish law with its commandments and rules, in order to create out of the two races one new people in union with Himself, in this way making peace.”*

The Israelites were originally governed by the OT rules from which gentiles (all other nationalities) were excluded because the Jews alone were God’s people. By His coming and dying on the cross however, Christ abolished (put out of use, rendered inoperative) those restrictions and divisions, such as in Leviticus. Now we are all united under one rule through Christ: the rule of God’s limitless love, which brings uniting peace.

So how do you, fellow Christian, see LGBTQ2SA+ people? Do you see them as a problem, as evil or as just other people? God’s creatures like us are expected to love and demonstrate love to others, whether they are non-Christians or are brothers and sisters, regardless of their origins. We are to love everyone, LGBTQ2SA+ included, as ourselves according to Jesus. The Apostle Peter echoes this truth when God confronted him with a challenge to his previously held prejudice against non-Jews. He had to accept that:

“*It makes no difference who you are or where you're from - if you want God and are ready to do as he says, the door is open*” (Acts 10:35; the Message Version).

*In other words, we are all in God’s Plan!*

God’s acceptance of believers is universal and His Grace extends across all nationalities comprising all gender types, racial and linguistic groups, represented in the vast and diverse heavenly multitude described in the Book of the Revelation from Jesus Christ, that:

“… *great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:9).

Christian friend, if you agree, go out and do likewise as Jesus told the lawyer. You will be making the world a better place and pleasing the Lord. Jesus Himself gave the Golden Rule as the summation of everything the bible has to say about living with love and kindness to others:

“*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*” (Matthew 7:12)

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