

Challenging The Church¹

INTRODUCITON

[Jackie Hill-Perry video](#) “The biggest thing that Christian folks don’t get about LGBTQ+ people”,

Circle the words in the transcript of the video that coincide with the same things that Christian and LBGTQ+ people yearn for , and that coincide with God’s design for mankind.

I think in the LGBTQ (movement) community is everything. Honestly, I think they (Christians) don't get a lot of it. I don't think they understand how much your sexuality becomes who you are therefore even all of your experiences kinda in a sense are governed by it. So your friendships, your community, just your whole lens in a way is through sexual identity. And so I think that's why those in the LGBTQ community get so offended.

It's not just that it's sin because I mean we are offended by the gospel when someone says they're we're in sin and we need to repent, but also it's like you are coming against who I am. Like, you're attacking me, not something I do, but who I am. And so I think when we can understand that thinking then I think we'll be able to be a lot more gracious in our approach, a lot more empathetic even.

Yeah, I think even Christians fail to understand how communal the homosexual community is. To even say, you need to come out of this means that I need to remove myself from the place that I feel safe. And so even that, that's terrifying to a person to say, "Oh, so not only do I have to stop doing what I do, but I have to leave my friends and the people who make me feel happy or whole into a place or community that doesn't seem as safe as this one."

And so, yeah, it's pretty complicated. That's why I think Christians need to befriend more non-Christians and invite themselves into their circles, not necessarily go to a gay pride parade but befriend people that don't go to your church and don't look like you and don't have the same sexual preferences as you. And I think from that place we can both come to an understanding, which will make everything a lot more practical.

In previous lessons, we have talked about what our identity is and where it comes from. In this lesson we will take a look at the church as a community where we and LBGTQ+ people can find the relationships we were designed for.

¹ Based on the book *God and the Transgender Debate: What Does the Bible Actually Say About Gender Identity?* (2nd Edition) by Andrew T. Walker, 2022, The Good Book Company. (Chapter 10)

Read Mark 10:28-30

Peter says that “we have left everything and followed you.”

1. “We” refers to the disciples. What do you think the “everything” is that they left?
2. In the “leaving” there was a movement toward what?
3. What is it that the disciples will gain?
4. What do we call the place where they (and we) will find these things?

For each characteristic, place a check mark in the appropriate rating box for how you think an outsider who has attended our church for 3 months would rate our church. (see both sides of the page)

Characteristic	References	What it looks like	How I Rate Our Church				
			1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Great)
<p>COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy definition: empathy is our feeling of awareness toward other people's emotions and an attempt to understand how they feel. • Compassion definition: compassion is an emotional response to empathy or sympathy and creates a desire to help. 	<p>My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? (James 2: 1-5)</p>	<p>A church that does not treat people of different economic, social, race or spiritual maturity with partiality but welcomes and spends time with all those present in the community with the same love and care.</p>					
<p>LISTENING COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. (James 1: 19)</p> <p>"Just as love of God begins with listening to his word, so the beginning of love for our brothers and sisters is learning to listen to them" Dietrich Bonhoeffer</p>	<p>A church that does not assume any person conforms to a stereotype, but who takes the time to listen well to each person's story, with all humility and gentleness and patience, bearing with one another in love, and eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love (Eph 4:2-3) It is being able to reflect how this new person is handling life as a saint, a sinner and a sufferer.</p>					

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			1 (Poor)	2	3	4	5 (Great)
CONVICTIONAL COMMUNITIES	If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8: 31-32) 2 John 4-9	A church with a cause - a conviction that the God who has revealed himself in the Bible is what each inhabitant of this world was made for. A commitment to biblical truth.					
STEADFAST COMMUNITIES	We were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So , being affectionately desirous of you , we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. (1 Thessalonians 2: 7-8)	Loving one another through the hard times and for the long haul with gentleness. Embracing the annoyances and the interruptions that come with being a friend					
GRACIOUS COMMUNITIES	For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2: 8-10)	Showing God's overwhelming kindness to all who visit; grace that always welcomes in, always goes the extra mile, always forgives, and never says "enough".					

Tally the class results and discuss the 2 characteristics with the lowest scores

What is it we are doing or not doing that might improve this score?

Do you think our perception of how a 3 month guest would rate us and how we rated ourselves are similar? Different? In what ways?