**Same-Sex Marriage vs. the Real Thing: A Gay Man’s View of the Big Picture**

[Doug Mainwaring](http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/author/doug-mainwaring/), September 19th, 2016, Witherspoon Institute <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2016/09/17513/>

We are engaged in an epic spiritual battle.

*…The Heart of the Problem: Us What we now see is occurring because Christians have allowed our own minds to become dull, darkened, and depraved. We’ve allowed this to happen, not out of malice toward God or bad intentions, but because our passive minds have resulted in passive lives and a weakened, impotent, wandering, and often confusing and contradictory witness to the Gospel and the life of Christ within...*

[Print Friendly](http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2016/09/17513/)

Up until now, I’ve used only secular arguments involving logic, reason, and experience to address the issue of same-sex marriage. That’s how I first came to think about the issue. But [as I explained at *Public Discourse* last year](http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/03/14510/), once I began thinking, reasoning, and examining my life, an extraordinary thing happened: I couldn’t stop. Reason led me to acknowledge natural law, which led me to begin rejecting some of my former ways of thinking and acting. Reason then led me to recognize God.

I am now a Christian, and even though I am same-sex attracted—or, more likely, *because* I am same-sex attracted—I marvel at the extraordinary significance of marriage in God’s eternal plan. Marriage is under siege because it stands at the heart of the Good News of the Gospel.

I am neither a philosopher nor a theologian, and I possess no advanced degree, but I try to be an informed observer and reasoning contributor as best I can. As a former apologist for the sexual revolution, and as a gay man who once [promoted](http://voices.washingtonpost.com/local-opinions/2009/11/the_wrong_way_to_win_the_right.html) same-sex marriage, here's what I’ve concluded.

No matter what you read or hear, the heart of the battle over the redefinition of marriage and genderlessness in culture is not found in our courts, legislatures, ballot boxes, or media. This is not a tug of war between political parties, between left and right, conservative and liberal. Likewise, this is not a battle of “gay versus straight.” And while focusing on religious liberty is an absolutely necessary pursuit, if it stands by itself, it too misses the mark.

Taken as a whole, this is a war of one kingdom against another. At its heart, this is a spiritual battle.

Accepting this as a spiritual battle has profound personal ramifications. We must each examine and deal with our own spiritual passivity and culpability in casually embracing the ways of the world. Each of us bears responsibility. This battle hinges on one thing: the creation of a vibrant marriage culture based on the participation of millions of individuals who value and commit themselves to the spiritual truth about marriage. These people must commit themselves not only to the structural, traditional aspects of marriage, but also to its vitally important spiritual component. The future rests on our shoulders—yours and mine.

Many now chide those of us who oppose the notion of same-sex marriage, telling us, “The battle over marriage has been decided. Move on.” And for the time being, as a political reality, this may be true. However, there is a much larger, far more important reality that must be acknowledged: spiritual reality. While the political battle may be over for a brief time, the spiritual battle is just beginning.

**The Swift Shift from Equal Rights to Same-Sex Marriage**

It wasn’t so long ago that LGBT activists like me were fighting for “equal rights.” We only wanted the benefits that accrue to married couples to be available to us as well. But then suddenly, with what seemed like lightning speed, the discussion changed. The battle was no longer for rights and benefits, the battle was over a very familiar eight-letter word: “marriage.”

As recently as 2010, even the [*Washington Post*](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/20/AR2010012004178.html?tid=a_inl) was pushing for civil unions rather than marriage for same-sex couples:

Justice and simple decency require that same-sex couples be afforded the same legal protections and benefits of marriage that are now, with a few exceptions, reserved for heterosexual couples … . But the group [Equality Maryland] and its lawmaker allies are shortsighted to refuse to consider—let alone accept—anything short of full marriage equality. … Lawmakers who back this provision should at least consider whether domestic partnerships or civil unions might stand a better chance of passage.

There is a surprising element of tyranny to all this. Men and women who dare reveal their reservations about the notion of same-sex marriage are publicly chastised and dealt swift punishments. Even the most powerful, high-profile titans of technology, medicine, and Wall Street are not immune. And everyday main-street business owners—florists, bakers, photographers, and bed-and-breakfast proprietors—are being forced to relinquish their reason, their intellect, and their consciences in order to comply with the *new*, *superior* definition of marriage.

Where does this tyranny, this powerful fury, this fierce, unearthly will to enforce such a novel idea come from? Why is same-sex marriage appearing in our nation and, in fact, all around the world so suddenly? Just a few years ago it was a laughable, ludicrous idea. Why is this strange new trajectory gripping the planet, and at such a frenetic pace?

**The Heart of the Problem: Us**

What we now see is occurring because Christians have allowed our own minds to become dull, darkened, and depraved. We’ve allowed this to happen, not out of malice toward God or bad intentions, but because our passive minds have resulted in passive lives and a weakened, impotent, wandering, and often confusing and contradictory witness to the Gospel and the life of Christ within.

Simply put, the world has done a better job of evangelizing us to its ways than we have of evangelizing the world to the magnificent good news of the Gospel.

Upholding constitutional rights and the human dignity of those who are same-sex attracted is a matter of basic human decency. But same-sex marriage is something completely different. As a gay man, allow me to make what is perhaps a startling declaration: same-sex marriage is a great coup for the devil, far greater than individual homosexual acts or relationships ever were or ever could be. Same-sex marriage mocks Christ’s relationship with his Bride, the Church. That is the source of the fury being hurled at those who speak out against same-sex marriage.

Of course, only a very few are true believers in the quest to establish same-sex marriage. The vast majority of supporters are extremely passive. Most people would rather sidestep the issue completely, and—either through silence or misguided empathy—lend their weak support for something that deep in their guts they know is not right. But Satan is satisfied with our cooperation, whether it is *willful* or *passive*. He enlists men and woman to embrace a lie, fooling them into believing they are on a righteous quest to vindicate the “right side of history.”

It is impossible to grasp the significance of this battle unless it is viewed from a heavenly, not earthly, perspective. Marriage represents to humanity a taste of heaven, a blueprint of the eternity that awaits all who belong to Jesus Christ. Complementarity has never been incidental to God’s eternal plan. It is central, revealing the intentions of the heart of God. In fact, its existence informs us of God’s spousal love for His people.

With [complementarity](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_AhBdElcDhs&index=1&list=PLZF6OmdXSyh6JTMGALzs3MEuhpfW4p59b) evacuated from the language of our culture and expunged from our minds, it is almost impossible to perceive the fullness of God’s purposes.

**Passivity is Capitulation**

It is certainly not the intent of most gay men and lesbians who wed to mock Christ and his Church. They are merely passive participants in a larger plan they do not perceive. Self-identified gays and lesbians are simply fallen human beings—as we all are—pursuing what they believe to be the key to their own happiness, without understanding what darkness lies beneath the surface.

The last several decades demonstrate Satan’s tactics: easy divorce, cohabitation, premarital sex, extramarital sex, recreational sex, homosexuality, bisexuality, polygyny, polyandry, gender dysphoria, non-marital childbearing, contraception, abortion, pornography, and more. All of these work to eviscerate marriage by thoroughly undefining it through non-conjugal, non-complementary “marriage.”

Please familiarize yourself with the words of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, before he became Pope Francis, regarding the advancement of same-sex marriage in society:

Let’s not be naive, we’re not talking about a simple political battle; it is a destructive pretension against the plan of God. We are … talking about … a machination of the Father of Lies that seeks to confuse and deceive the children of God …

This is what we now witness. Every family, every marriage, every parent, and every child has a stake in this battle, a battle in which passivity must now be recognized as surrender.

**The Narrative Needs to Change: From Primarily Political to Spiritual**

Only love and truth can pry loose the ice-cold, pernicious death grip of the Sexual Revolution and begin to heal its [victims](http://www.ruthinstitute.org/)—as well as those of us who have been its perpetrators—of all its insidious consequences. And with regard to love, there is an important, substantial hierarchy:

*- Good*: spontaneous human love, which does indeed cover a multitude of sins.

*- Better*: love based on natural law, which provides a strong foundation for building a life and relationships.

*- Best*: Divine Love, the Love displayed in the life of the Holy Trinity: Power Infinite, Wisdom Incomprehensible, Love Unspeakable. This is the Love that beckons us all, the Love that inspires us to lay down our lives for one another.

Marriage—the real thing—is an inestimable gift from God, expressed and experienced in and through complementarity. Marriage is a bright ensign, beckoning us not only in this world, but preparing us for and ushering us toward the great eternal [wedding feast](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+19%3A6-9&version=ESV).

*Doug Mainwaring is a marriage and children’s rights activist. This article is adapted from the introduction to his forthcoming book,* Marriage, Ground Zero: The Real Battle Dawns.