

219 Persons matter

After my run-in with Revelation 1–3, I got very vehement last time^[218] about our willingness, as a church, to metanoia, i.e. to change our minds and turn back to our first love, to reject the wrong teaching that we've been fed, and: *Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and metanoia. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief...*^{Rev 3:3}

By 'remember what you have received and heard' I take it to mean **what the Bible actually teaches**. However, what I've said repeatedly is that to understand it and to apply it, we have to (a) check the context into which it was spoken, (b) (for the OT) ask how Jesus interpreted it, and (c) be willing to correct our misinterpretations in the light of new knowledge.

But our overriding hermeneutic (method of interpretation) has to be to follow Jesus in seeking that which builds up our relationships of love – with God and with one another.

To make this more personal, I would ask you to register that, of the 40 people who receive an email each time I write another article, two (statistically speaking) will have a same-sex orientation, through no fault of their own. Let's call them Anna and Brian (being alphabetic).

So, not wanting to offend them, I'll tell you what I **used** to think and feel about gay sex – with no thought of whether Anna or Brian are celibate or not.

Feel? Let's just say, 'not positive', and leave it at that. **Think?** The Bible teaching is pretty clear – you can't argue with 'abomination' and 'perversion'. And knowing that some Christians are 'reinterpreting' those passages, clearly (I thought) people are justifying what they **want** to believe, albeit with good motives: to make the church seem less antediluvian, and to help Anna and Brian to feel better about themselves.

Had I looked at what the Bible teaches? Well, yes, I'd read Leviticus 18 + 20, Romans 1, 1 Cor 6 and 1 Tim 1, but I hadn't actually looked at any of the counter arguments to my view. What would be the point? The church's teaching has been clear on this for centuries.

I know, too, that some Christians think the devil is blinding people's minds, in order to maybe split the church, but certainly to make the church compromise biblical truth.

Now, as I was thinking about the devil's activities, this verse came to mind: *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*^{2 Cor 4:4}

And it occurred to me that 'blinding the minds' refers to encouraging people not to even **consider** that their view might be wrong.

While I don't claim that my view is now 'right', I have thought through the issues via David Gushee's book, *Changing our mind*, and, having changed my mind, I have to be very sure not to judge those Christians with whom I disagree.

Paul Bev. 26.11.22