

Isn't it unnatural?

Many have used the Bible to claim that LGBTQ+ people are "disordered," "mentally unwell," or "living in sin." Discussions of what the Bible consider "natural" or "unnatural" must consider centuries-old perspectives and cultural norms on the matter, which would not have relied on modern scientific perspectives on human sexuality or gender.

The broad spectrums of sexuality and gender are instead important markers of human diversity that serve as a living witness to the deep beauty of God's creation. They are cause for wonder and celebration - not for cure.



We're here to help.

Visit our website, send us an email, or give us a call for resources that can help you or your church through the process of becoming Welcoming and Affirming.

awab.org

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QUEER AND CHRISTIAN?



Questions people ask about LGBTQ+ people and Christian Faith



But the Bible says...

The Bible doesn't definitively say anything about homosexuality. The handful of scriptures that have been traditionally used to condemn LGBTQ+ people have also been used to justify many types of oppression - sexism, racism, nationalism, slavery, etc. Sacred texts can be used to inspire great acts of peace and justice as well as heinous acts of hatred and violence.

While some may claim that the Bible is clear about LGBTQ+ people:

- Statements about what the Bible means are interpretive statements.
- The way we interpret scripture is deeply shaped by our experience. Readings of sacred texts experience change over time and are informed by our privilege and interpretive tradition.
- Our Bibles are also shaped by the cultural norms of their translators, editors, and publishers, traditionally working in contexts that are hostile to LGBTQ+ people.
- Nobody reads scripture literally. **Nobody.**

Why do affirming churches exist?

A growing number of churches have come to a place of welcome and affirmation for LGBTQ+ people, repenting a Christian history of anti-LGBTQ+ injustice and violence. These churches recognize that queer-and-faithful people are vital witnesses to the beauty of God's creation and are prophets of peace and justice from which we all can learn a great deal about what it means to be a Christian.

While many LGBTQ+ people justifiably choose never to enter the doors of a church again, many others find their faith an essential part of their identity and seek out a community of faith that not only tolerates, but celebrates.

Affirming churches exist as communities of belonging. Whether you are deconstructing your faith, or putting the pieces back together, affirming churches seek to be safe places of worship and witness to the good news of Jesus: We are the beloved, and we all belong.

What can I do?

1. **If you're an LGBTQ+ person** looking for a faith community that affirms you, talk with the person who handed you this brochure, or visit the website on the back to connect with one of the growing number of welcoming and affirming congregations near you.
2. **If you're a straight person** desiring to be faithful in the work of justice for LGBTQ+ people, start conversations in your church, and facilitate healthy dialogue on the intersections of sexual orientation, gender identity, and Christian faith.
3. **If you're in a church that is seeking to become welcoming and affirming**, we're here to help. Visit the back of this brochure for more information about the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists.

