

# Palisades Community Bible Church

## Online Sunday School

### Is There A Sin So Great That It Blocks The Gospel?

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**Illustration:** Is there a crime so BAD that officials dare not investigate or prosecute? Is there an act so terrible that it cannot even be acknowledged? Are the repercussions of calling such an act a crime so devastating that NOBODY will even look at it? Is there a crime so great that it blocks the justice process?

In my lifetime, starting with Marylyn Monroe, all the way up to the 2020 elections, I've witnessed corruption and criminality in high places that have been so terrible and egregious that NOBODY would touch them! We have an FBI, a CIA and a Legislature who will walk right past it and never say a thing.

Good people across the nation have been throwing their diet sodas at the TV in disgust as they've watched these events unfold. Even the good guys seem to say; "OOPS! Nothing to see here. Just keep your head down, mouth shut, and don't look around."

What does such avoidance produce? Has it controlled, or halted, crimes in government?

#### **So, What Does This Have To Do With Sharing The Gospel?**

Is there a personal sin that is so great that it actually blocks the spreading of the Gospel? Is there so sensitive a sin that a Christian cannot even discuss Jesus? Is there so great a personal issue that Christians prefer to walk past it; "...just keep your head down and move on."?

Doing good, or doing evil, produces the same consequence, so DO NOTHING!

Everyday, we come in contact with people who need Jesus. They are in our families, at our workplaces, at gatherings, at school and in the public. God's Word does not label one sin more serious than the next.

**James 2: 10 "For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws."**

Yet, there is one issue that we cannot touch. If that person is “X” they are off limits! Don’t go there! Nope! Nada!

You just filled in the “X”, didn’t you? You just answered the question. It’s as plain as dog pooh on a white rug, and nobody will go near it.

Why? Why is “X” so toxic? Why can we not talk salvation with an “X”? What makes it so prickly? It’s like an electric fence; touch it once, and never again.

### **What Has Created The Force Field Around “X”?**

Is there a way to express in one word what it is when people attach their personal feelings to a sin? This attachment makes them very vehement about defending it because they consider it an extension of their PERSON. People attach their feelings to something and then feel personally attacked when opposing views arise. Is there a label for that?

Yes: “**Proprietarism.**” It’s base is “Proprietary,” which means ‘one that owns, possesses or holds exclusive rights to something. Proprietarism is the deep personal ownership of something.

An “X” takes on personal ownership, and exclusive rights, to “X” and will defend it as a mother bear protects her cubs.

Any attempt at addressing “X” as something that is unrighteous is tantamount to discrediting a hero. In fact, our society (for most of my 64 years) has been re-defining the sin of “X” to the pinnacle of hero status.

Websters; Hero: ‘A person admired for achievements and noble qualities. One who shows great courage.’

Society’s forces have indoctrinated “Xs” from childhood, through our school systems, through media, and through association with peers, that “X” is noble. “X” is an achievement. “X” demonstrates great courage! And, all of society is onboard with it.

So, the force field is up, surrounding “Xs” and we approach under the threat of terrible results.

Not only might you be rebuffed by the “X”, you could be accosted by other social, employment, etc., sources.

You know someone, perhaps a Christian, with a loved one who is “X”. You know their heart is broken over it, and they dare not say anything for fear of losing that loved one.

The threat of driving a loved one away, or being driven away by a loved one, is scary. That’s a biggie! And, it’s the ever-present threat of “X”, isn’t it? Anything that even looks a little like disapproval of “X” is regarded as all out hatred for the person.... not “X”. The repercussions are immeasurably bad!

Oh, by the way, that dynamic is called “terrorism.” When a person uses the threat of violence to instill great fear as a weapon of intimidation or coercion, it’s called “terrorism.” Severing a relationship, or threatening to, is a form of violence (whether familial, in the workplace, or wherever).

Every element of our society has accepted “X” as, not only normal, but heroic: government, sports, industry, education, etc., have all fully embraced “X”. If an “X” shows up on a TV talk show, or on a concert stage, and announces they are “X” the crowd goes wild with approval. There is hardly a movie, kid’s program, or sitcom without the ever-present “X”.

An increasing number of corporations are embracing “X” and spending tons of money on indoctrinating their employees to revere, respect and accommodate “X”. It has far surpassed tolerance. It’s now full-on acceptance and respect, or “you’re outta here!” Terrorism?

Outliers are heavily terrorized and intimidated on a regular basis. And, none is so brutally criticized like the Christian church, if it dares to read from the Bible about “X”.

### **“X” In The Pulpit**

Even many of those identifying themselves as Christian churches have been making the move to embrace “X”. It started with performing “X” ceremonies and has transitioned into administrations and paid clergy who are, themselves “X”. The Jewish community is also leading the way, here. Those embracing “X” in God’s name are promoting it, as the public schools do, to ever younger audiences.

This River Is DEEP!

How, you may ask, can Christian and Jewish ministers who have high level religious degrees run so headlong into this?

I cannot possibly share all the material I've amassed on just this topic, but let me illustrate in this way. I've dramatically edited several articles in order to get to the point. Have a gander at the credentials of the authors that contributed to the material from which I pulled these writings. I've also commented a bit:

"X" in the ancient world was much different than the "X" we have now. Committed, consensual, adult, monogamous, lifelong relationships, today are more 'Biblical' than examples in the ancient world where they only wrote of "X" as forms of exploitation, domination or prostitution. The Bible uses only the "Bad" examples of "X".

Using the Bible to assert that "X" is forbidden by God is poor biblical scholarship and demonstrates a cultural bias that is read into the Bible.

Noah and Ham (Genesis 9:20–27),

Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1–11),

Levitical laws condemning "X" (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13),

Two New Testament vice lists (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:10),

Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 1:26–27):

These do not refer to "X" relationships between two free, adult, and loving individuals. They describe rape or attempted rape (Genesis 9:20–27, 19:1–11), cultic prostitution (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13), male prostitution and pederasty [child "X"] (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 1 Timothy 1:10), and the Isis cult in Rome (Romans 1:26–27).

The biblical authors assumed "X" was evil. We do not theologize off of their cultural assumptions, we theologize off of the texts we have in the canon.

Troubling the Waters of Exclusionary Interpretations....

For many evangelicals and other conservative Christians, the answer to the question of "X" as sin is 'yes'. Their interpretation is that "X" relationships are not able to reflect God's creative intent. Their reasoning includes, but is not limited to, 1) what they were always taught was an "unbiased" interpretation of the relevant passages and 2) a core belief that gender differentiation is an indispensable part of Christian marriage. (So, all you learned before these writers came along is now invalid.)

According to the New Testament, marriage is a primary symbol of the love between Christ and his beloved "bride," the church. To them, "X" couples (and single people for that matter) are uniquely excluded from participation in marriage on the basis of a

failure to perform one or more dimensions of an often-vague category referred to (by us) as ‘gender complementarity.’

The obvious exclusion of injustice and destructive outcomes of widely held beliefs (in the scriptures) should take Christians back to the text to consider a different perspective. Christians might better reflect the heart of God by recognizing that, in order for suffering to be Christ-like, it must be redemptive. Redemptive suffering does not uphold oppressive forces but always expresses resistance against them. For all of these reasons, and more, Christians have a moral imperative to reconsider their interpretation of what the Bible says about “X” identities.

What Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount about good trees bearing good fruit and bad trees bearing bad fruit (Matthew 7:17-18) indicates that (personal) experience should guide how we learn God’s truth. This was what allowed the first Christians to decide to include gentiles who were not keeping the Old Testament law in the early church (Acts 15:1-19). It also was the basis for the Christian arguments that put an end to slavery and has supported movements for women’s equality throughout church history as well. (So, if “X” does good works, “X” is good in God’s eyes.)

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Did you take notice of the pedigrees of the contributors of this material? Again, I've greatly condensed a series of writings that were repeating the same basic tenants. Are you still wondering how our pulpits have become filled with paid clergy who do not know how to minister to "X" people, or how to deal with it BIBLICALLY in our society? How many students of these people come out of divinity school with 'junk degrees'???

I tend to write letters to the paid clergy of churches and synagogues in our area. I like to ask simple questions, like; "During the celebration of Hannukah, the Jew seeks and gives forgiveness for sins against other people and God. To the Christian, confession of Sin to God and acceptance of Jesus as Messiah results in the gift of eternal life. What is the result of the Jew confessing sin?"

Three out of three Rabbis gave no response.

I did get a response to a different question from the head pastor of a "Christian" church in the center of Doylestown. On their website, I found the following, and made an inquiry:

**"We aim to be instruments of God's steadfast love, hope, peace, justice, and joy for all people."**

My question; "Your statement of belief includes being an 'instrument of God's justice.' How is God's 'justice' applied in light of 1Cor 6:9?"

The main part of the head Pastor's reply:

**I occasionally get that kind of question, and I understand the confusion. I grew up with the belief that "X" is a sin, plain and simple, because the Bible says so. (I made no mention of "X", he introduced it)**

**Over the years, however, like many faithful Christian pastors, Bible scholars, and church members, I've come to the conclusion that "X" is a natural sexual orientation.**

Our modern understanding of human sexuality is very different from the common understandings of “X” behavior described in scripture.

In the ancient world the Bible sprang from, people had no concept of many scientific facts. The people who wrote everything included in the Bible had no modern understanding of germs, the weather, geological eras, or the orbits of planets. Although they were always seeking to faithfully record God’s story and intentions for humankind, they were creatures of their particular time and place. So, the Bible is not merely a collection of writings about God; it also reflects the cultural context in which it was written.

(So, this pastor nullified these, and many more similar Biblical texts:

2 Tim 3:16 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness”

2 Peter 1: 21 “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Peter 1: 21 “Holy Men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”)

One important scientific truth the Biblical authors were ignorant of, is that sexual orientation and gender identity are genetic traits, just like the color of your eyes. If sexual orientation is predetermined and not a choice, that means “X” people were created by God to be “X”. And if everything God creates is good, then it stands to reason that “X” people are good, (my eyes are watering!) worthy, and deserving of respect, dignity, acceptance, and love. Just like anyone.

For various cultural reasons, “X” behavior was frowned upon in Judaism, from which Christianity emerged. Those ancient cultural norms – which also included things like slavery and the subjugation of women – are no longer things we believe are consistent with God’s loving plan for humanity. There are many beliefs, customs, practices, and laws described in the Bible which we no longer think are relevant, so we don’t practice them. To continue to believe “X” is a sin is to be inconsistent with how we’ve otherwise adapted and evolved in our understanding of what it means to be human.

In fact, for every single reference to “X” in the Bible – both in the Old and New Testament – the overwhelming scholarly evidence points to an historically vast misreading of what the original texts were actually describing. For instance, the word

“abomination” is often used to describe a “X” act. Abomination is a technical term describing behavior that is not in keeping with Jewish purity laws. It is not a general term equivalent to a sin that carries any ethical or moral weight. Eating a cheeseburger would be classified as an abomination. It would also be an abomination to wear clothing made of blended fabrics, or to spend any time with or touch a woman who is menstruating. As a rule of thumb, we no longer abide by Jewish purity laws.

Over the years, a lot of “X” people have suffered mightily and unfairly due to these misunderstandings. That is a wrong – and an injustice - that our church and thousands of other churches are now seeking to correct. It’s why we welcome, accept, and love “X” folks just the same as “non X” folks. Through much careful Bible study, prayer, and by seeking God’s guidance, we believe it is God’s will and an important part of our calling as Christians.

My interpretation of this FOUR PAGE letter is that the word “justice” in the original question means; full acceptance and support for those who have been mischaracterized and treated wrongfully – those identifying as “X”. Those holding true to the Word of God are guilty of these mischaracterizations and wrongful treatment. “X” folks can find “justice” at that church.

I had a similar experience with another “Christian” Pastor, with similar results. What do you think God’s Word would have accomplished had we opened it and read the Bible together? These pastors have been programmed to interpret Scripture wrongly, while feeling right about it. This IS NOT the work of the Holy Spirit; it is the work of Satan....no other.

### **So, How Do We Witness To “X”?**

The short answer....the same way we witness to ANY unsaved person. First of all; there is no qualifier in the list of sins. One sin is as grievous as any other. Whether you’re relating to an addict, an unfaithful spouse, or simply one without Jesus, you lead with humanity’s need for a savior.

Most people without Christ have been heavily indoctrinated to own and claim exclusive right to their chosen lifestyle (proprietaryism). They aren’t non-religious; they are



extremely religious in the cult in which they live. It's HARD to get someone out of a cult because their thinking is owned by someone (something) else.

Our job isn't to stamp out "X", or any other sin. Our job is to share Christ. Our job isn't to get people 'saved.' Our job is to follow the example of the 'farmer' that Jesus gave, and expect similar results – it's up to the Holy Spirit to bring conviction. Sow the seeds.

**Matthew 13:3 "Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 Whoever has ears, let them hear."**

What about objections, hard challenges or wandering defenses? Follow Jesus' lead: how did Jesus respond to Satan during His forty-day trial in the Desert? Each challenge was met with His Father's Words:

**Matthew 42 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"**

**5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"**

**7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"**

**8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."**

**10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"**

**11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.**

Pray for them and share God's Word with them, for through these, the Holy Spirit moves the heart. If you're ever at a loss for words, use God's!!

Beyond that, share your understanding and compassion, but do not let that be confused with acceptance or support of a specific sin. All of us have sinned, and continue to sin. We have all fallen short of God's glory. God is not after perfection from us – who have been born with a sin nature. He is pleased with repentance and obedience. This is why we have the Word in our hearts and ready to share.

**John 3: 16 “For 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.**

**17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.**

**18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.**

Let not societies' force field prevent you from witnessing. It's an illusion. It's the work of Satan, when you feel intimidated. Lead with Christian love and Jesus' words. They are stronger than any sword!