Is it possible to be Christian and gay?

Christian Living · https://thebiblicalroots.org/answers/is-it-possible-to-be-christian-and-gay/

If you mean, *can someone trust in Jesus Christ and also experience same-sex attraction*, the answer is yes. But following Jesus means that our identity is ultimately defined by Him, not by our desires, and that we submit every area of life—including our sexuality—to His lordship (Luke 9:23). The New Testament consistently teaches that sexual activity is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman, and that all believers—regardless of their particular struggles—are called to live in repentance and faith.

To answer this carefully, we need to distinguish between temptation, attraction, identity, and behavior. Scripture acknowledges that all believers experience disordered desires as part of our fallen condition (Rom. 7:15–20). Same-sex attraction, in that sense, is not uniquely disqualifying—it belongs to the broader category of human brokenness. The question is not what a person *feels*, but how they *respond to those desires* in relation to Christ.

The New Testament places our primary identity not in our desires but in our union with Christ. Paul writes that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17). That identity reorients every other aspect of life. This is why many Christians are cautious about adopting identity labels that elevate particular desires to defining status (cf. 1 Cor. 6:9–11). The early church consistently framed identity in covenantal and Christological terms, not psychological or experiential ones.

At the same time, Scripture is clear that sexual ethics are not negotiable within Christian discipleship. Both Old and New Testaments present a consistent sexual ethic grounded in creation (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4–6). The apostolic witness includes same-sex sexual behavior among the broader category of sexual immorality (Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Cor. 6:9–11). Importantly, these passages do not single out one group for condemnation—they place *all* sexual sin under the same call to repentance and transformation.

Historically, the church has held this position across traditions, though modern denominations sometimes differ in how they interpret and apply these texts. Some affirm same-sex relationships as compatible with Christian faith, which is a deviation from biblical truth. The majority maintain that while same-sex attraction may be experienced, it is not to be acted upon.

The pastoral implication is significant: the church is not a community of the morally perfect, but of forgiven sinners. Every believer is called to deny self, take up the cross, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). That call looks different for each person, but it is universal in its demand.

Key Scriptures to Study

Core teaching passages

- Genesis 2:24 — Marriage is defined as the union of male and female
- Matthew 19:4–6 — Jesus affirms the creation design for marriage
- Romans 1:26–27 — Same-sex behavior described within fallen humanity
- 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 — Transformation of identity through Christ

Supporting theological framework

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 — Identity rooted in being a new creation in Christ
- Romans 7:15–20 — Ongoing struggle with sinful desires in believers
- Galatians 5:16–24 — Call to walk by the Spirit over the flesh

Clarifying or balancing passages

- Luke 9:23 — Discipleship involves self-denial for all believers
- John 8:11 — Jesus combines grace with the call to "sin no more"

Objections & Misconceptions

Common Objection: "If someone is born with these desires, how can it be wrong?"
Response: Scripture locates the problem not in whether a desire feels natural, but whether it aligns with God's design. All of us were born with desires that arise from our fallen nature (Rom. 8:7). The call of the gospel is not to affirm every desire, but to bring them under Christ's lordship.

Common Objection: "Isn't this singling out one group unfairly?"
Response: No. The New Testament consistently applies the same standard to all people: sexual activity belongs within marriage as defined by God (Heb. 13:4). Heterosexual sin (e.g., adultery, sex before marriage, pornography) is equally addressed and condemned. The playing field is level at the foot of the cross.

Common Objection: "Does this mean someone with same-sex attraction cannot be a Christian?"

Response: Not at all! Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8–9), not by moral perfection. The issue is not the presence of temptation, but the posture of repentance and obedience.

Why This Matters

This question touches on identity, discipleship, and the authority of Scripture. If our identity is grounded in Christ, then no desire—however strong—has the final word over who we are. At the same time, the call to follow Jesus is comprehensive; it involves real sacrifice. The church must therefore hold together truth and compassion: speaking clearly about God's design while walking patiently with those who struggle. This is not about exclusion, but about transformation through the gospel.

Recommended Resources

- *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* by Rosario Butterfield— Rosaria Butterfield was once a tenured professor of English who identified as a lesbian and worked to advance the cause of LGBT equality. After her conversion to Christ in 1999, she came to see the sinfulness of having any identity apart from Him.
- *Is God Anti-Gay?* by Sam Allberry — Accessible biblical overview with pastoral sensitivity
- *Homosexuality and the Bible* by Dan O. Via & Robert A. J. Gagnon — Scholarly dialogue presenting contrasting interpretations