

More Light  on...

# Grace Notes on the Bible

by *The Reverend Dr. Eunice Blanchard Poethig*

*The Bible is full of good news for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people and their families, friends, and allies in spite of the use of the Bible by some to clobber LGBT people. The main theme of the Bible is the grace-filled love of our Creator and how we are to respond to that love by loving others. What follows are some of the biblical “Grace Notes” upon which we can build our lives.*

## **God’s Grace Revealed**

The Gospel of John and the letter of I John put God’s grace-filled love at the center of our relationship with God and with each other.

*The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. . . And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his [Jesus’] glory, . . . and received, grace upon grace. (John 1:9, 14, 16)*

*God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. . . Perfect love casts out fear. (I John 4:16b, 18b)*

## **Precious in God’s Sight**

Formed by God, called by name, we are precious in God’s sight:

*I have called you by name, you are mine. . . Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you, . . . I will say, . . .”Bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth— Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.” (Isaiah 43:1-7, selected verses)*

## **Claiming God’s love**

However, not everyone feels precious in God’s sight, especially if the surrounding community spews out hate. So the first step is to claim God’s freeing love for oneself:

*“And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt [read, “those who hate you”], to be their slaves no more; I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.” (Leviticus 26:12-13)*

*Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to*

*condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:17)*

## **The Commandment to Love God, Ourselves, and Others**

Our response to grace is love. Jesus’ Greatest Commandment comes from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, based on total love of God and love of yourself and neighbor. In Luke 10 the Greatest Command introduces the parable of the Good Samaritan. Neighbor also means those who may be neglected or targets of discrimination.

The main theme of the Bible is the grace-filled love of our Creator

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*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” [Luke 10:27; also Matthew 22:36-39)*

*And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

## **God’s Love of all Creation**

Laws in Deuteronomy 23 kept foreigners and eunuchs out of the temple. Isaiah proclaimed God’s new word that the temple was for everyone.

*“ the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths.. .and the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord. . .I will bring to my holy mountain. . .for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isaiah 56:1-8)*

The Apostle Peter had a vision of a sheet full of animals, clean and unclean, being lowered from heaven. A voice said, “Get up, Peter, kill and eat.” Peter replied, “I have never eaten anything profane or unclean.” The voice called out again,

*“What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” (Acts 10:15)*

## **For more information:**

Helminiak, Daniel A. *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*. 2000, Alamo Square Press.  
Wink, Walter. *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches*. 2003, Fortress Press.  
Wink, Walter. “Homosexuality and the Bible” (reprint of an article originally in *Christian Century Magazine*, 1979). *Fellowship Bookstore*, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960. 914-358-4601.

At the same time the Gentile Cornelius had a vision directing him to call Peter to his house though such contact was forbidden to Jews. Remembering his vision, Peter preached to Cornelius’ household and the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles.

*“God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. . .Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10: 28 and 47)*

## **The Fruit of Living by the Spirit is grace-filled Love**

“More Light Presbyterians envision that Christian sexual ethics marked by covenantal fidelity shall be the standard for all Presbyterians, irrespective of sexual orientation.” MLP Statement of Sexual Ethics

We are showered by grace-filled gifts when we respond to love by living in God’s Spirit.

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

(Biblical quotations are from the NRSV)