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What's Wrong With Homosexuality? (Philosophy In Action)



Synopsis

For the last twenty years, John Corvino--widely known as the author of the weekly column "The Gay Moralist"--has traversed the country responding to moral and religious arguments against same-sex relationships. In this timely book, he shares that experience--addressing the standard objections to homosexuality and offering insight into the culture wars more generally. Is homosexuality unnatural? Does the Bible condemn it? Are people born gay (and should it matter either way)? Corvino approaches such questions with precision, sensitivity, and good humor. In the process, he makes a fresh case for moral engagement, forcefully rejecting the idea that morality is a "private matter." This book appears at a time when same-sex marriage is being hotly debated across the U.S. Many people object to such marriage on the grounds that same-sex relationships are immoral, or at least, that they do not deserve the same social recognition as heterosexual relationships. Unfortunately, the traditional rhetoric of gay-rights advocates--which emphasizes privacy and tolerance--fails to meet this objection. Legally speaking, when it comes to marriage, "tolerance" might be enough, Corvino concedes, but socially speaking, marriage requires more. Marriage is more than just a relationship between two individuals, recognized by the state. It is also a relationship between those individuals and a larger community. The fight for same-sex marriage, ultimately, is a fight for full inclusion in the moral fabric. What is needed is a positive case for moral approval--which is what Corvino unabashedly offers here. Corvino blends a philosopher's precision with a light touch that is full of humanity and wit. This volume captures the voice of one of the most rational participants in a national debate noted for generating more heat than light.

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Customer Reviews

What's wrong with homosexuality? Read John Corvino's latest book by that title, and if you credit yourself an open, unbiased reader it's precisely the question you'll have at its conclusion. But it's much more than an apology for a certain sexual orientation, or gender difference; Corvino's book is a refutation of most of the high-level academic, religious and philosophical diatribes against being gay that have found their way into mainstream thought and research over the past several years. Corvino serves them up, then he teases them apart with such elegance, and even a kind of gentleness toward their purveyors that his style demands attention and respect. Beyond a simple study of sexual identity dialectics and politics, Corvino may have written the definitive treatise in the ongoing, and ever more visible issue of civil marriage equality in America. Though the book is couched and written as a clear-eyed view of LGBT entitlement to equal rights, it is also a remarkably deft insight into the fears and apprehensions of those who, for whatever reason, seek to deny those rights. This is not a rant; this book is beyond thoughtful, into the (almost too) academic in its breadth of discernment into homosexuality, its history, biology, cultural positioning and even philosophical underpinnings. Filled with focused and precise references to various legal cases and civil entitlement allusions, Corvino refuses to vilify opponents of so called same-sex marriage. Instead, he seeks--almost too eagerly at times, I thought--to understand the people who devote their lives to keeping 'one man; one woman' marriage a reality in this culture. At the end, there is much to be hopeful about, at least for those of us who support the idea of civil marriage equality.

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