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LOVE is LOVE
 Thinking well **Or is it?**
 about Sex, Gender,
 Love, & the Good






"We've made our Union a little more perfect...[those who fought for same-sex marriage] slowly made an entire country realize that love is love."
- President Obama

affirm

verb | af-firm | \ə-'fərm\


- ▶ **a:** validate, confirm
- ▶ **b:** to state positively <he affirmed his innocence>
- ▶ to assert (as a judgment or decree) as valid or confirmed
- ▶ to express dedication to <affirm life>



"...UNCG's Safe Zone [is] a campus group of student, faculty, and staff allies that support gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual individuals.... [Who] promote understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of our LGBTQ students."
- UNCG Office of Multicultural Affairs

"LGBT students need to know who on campus is safe and supportive."
- Campus Pride

"[Open House is] a safe space...[for] generating interest in a celebration of queer life from the social to the political to the academic."
- Wesleyan University in Connecticut

Who's right? How can we know?

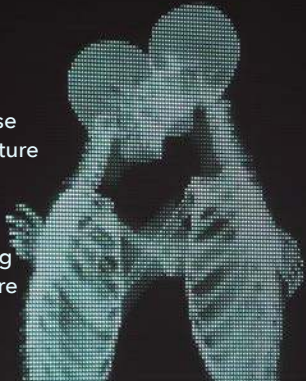
We can challenge the misguided understanding of love and hate behind such slogans as "love is love" and "love wins" by examining three critical questions:

1. What is good?
2. What is love?
3. What now?

What is GOOD?

Good

- ▶ That which fulfills the end/purpose of some thing according to its nature (i.e. *what it is*)
- ▶ A thing is good insofar as it is in being; it exists as the kind of thing it should be according to its nature (ex. our eyes)



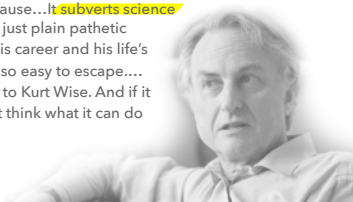
Moral Goodness?

- ▶ We all pursue what we take to be good
- ▶ Reason tells us what is actually good
- ▶ Therefore, the rational/moral person will pursue what is actually good for them
- ▶ Why should we be rational, and thus moral? TRUTH & GOODNESS!



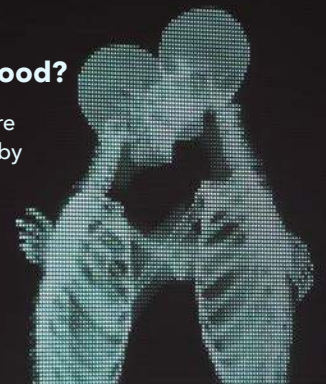
"In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication [just electrons and selfish genes], some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference....DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music." - Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*

"...I am hostile to fundamentalist religion because...It **subverts science** and **saps the intellect**...the Kurt Wise story is just plain pathetic -**pathetic and contemptible**. The wound, to his career and his life's **happiness**, was self-inflicted, so unnecessary, so easy to escape.... I am hostile to religion because of what it did to Kurt Wise. And if it did that to a Harvard-educated geologist, just think what it can do to others less gifted and less well armed."
- Dawkins, *The God Delusion*



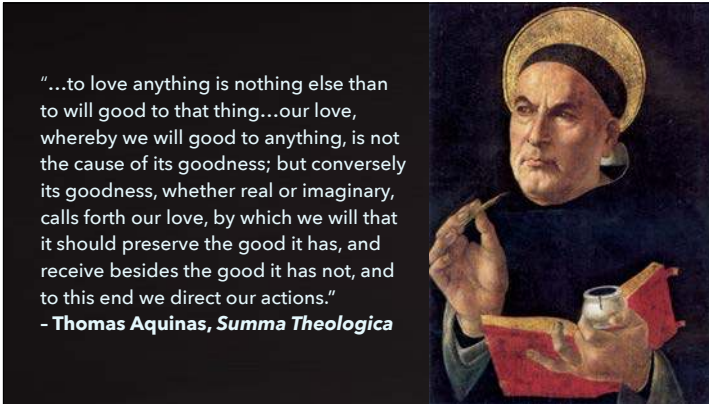
Is homosexual behavior, gender fluidity, or SSM good?

- ▶ It follows that these behaviors are contrary to the goods set for us by our *human nature*
- ▶ Contrary to reality and the procreative/unitive ends of sex
- ▶ So are such behaviors good?

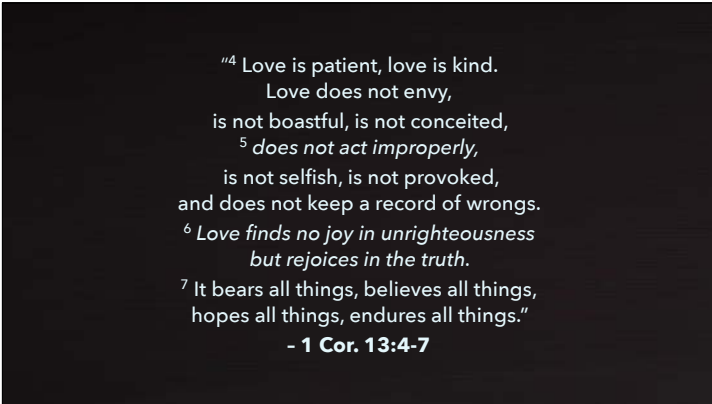




"At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." - Justice Kennedy, 1992 ruling in *Planned Parenthood v Casey*



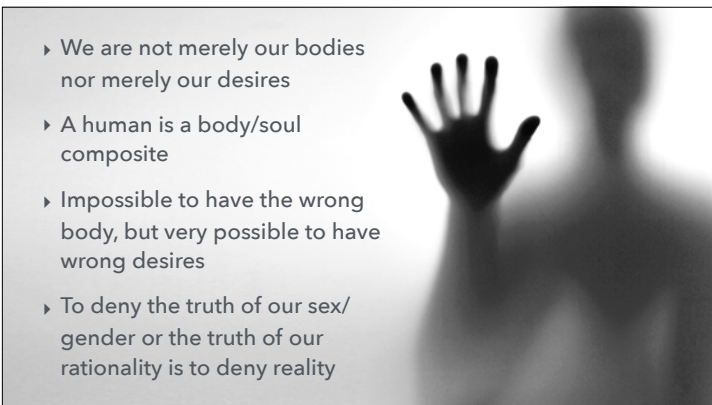
"...to love anything is nothing else than to will good to that thing...our love, whereby we will good to anything, is not the cause of its goodness; but conversely its goodness, whether real or imaginary, calls forth our love, by which we will that it should preserve the good it has, and receive besides the good it has not, and to this end we direct our actions."
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*



⁴ Love is patient, love is kind.
Love does not envy,
is not boastful, is not conceited,
⁵ does not act improperly,
is not selfish, is not provoked,
and does not keep a record of wrongs.
⁶ Love finds no joy in unrighteousness
but rejoices in the truth.
⁷ It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things."
- 1 Cor. 13:4-7




What about
Bruce Jenner?




- ▶ We are not merely our bodies nor merely our desires
- ▶ A human is a body/soul composite
- ▶ Impossible to have the wrong body, but very possible to have wrong desires
- ▶ To deny the truth of our sex/gender or the truth of our rationality is to deny reality

- ▶ Truly intersex conditions occur in approx. 0.018% of the population
- ▶ Valuable human beings who are genetically either male/female
- ▶ Presents an epistemological challenge
- ▶ Genetic disorders happen, but that doesn't change the good towards which we are directed



- ▶ Usually other factors co-occurring that would lead someone to harm themselves
- ▶ Dr. Paul McHugh, Psychiatrist-and-Chief at John Hopkins, stopped performing sex-change operations due to post-surgery findings
- ▶ We all have desires on which we ought not act

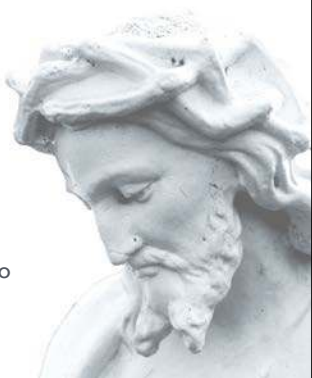


What NOW?



"Freedom is not the permission to do what you like, it's the power to do what you ought."
- Os Guinness

"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." - **Gal. 5:1**



How does morality depend on God?

- ▶ Like natural science, much of morality/ethics can be understood apart from an appeal to God
- ▶ Natural Law/morality is based on our essence
- ▶ Man is a combination of essence/existence and must receive his existence from something who's essence and existence are identical (i.e. God)
- ▶ God's intellect is the ultimate source of our essence
- ▶ Thus, God is the ultimate source of the Natural Law/morality



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graph TD
    EL[ETERNAL LAW] --> NL[NATURAL LAW]
    EL --> DL[DIVINE LAW]
    NL -.-> HL[HUMAN LAW]
    DL -.-> HL
  
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Adapted from J. Budziszewski's
Written on the Heart

The Euthyphro Dilemma

- ▶ Is something good because God commands it, or does God command it because it is good?
- ▶ A thing is good insofar as it is in being (it exists as the kind of thing it should be according to its nature); God is being itself; therefore, God is goodness itself

"The essence of God is one with His Being... God is ordered to no end, but all other things are ordered to Him as their final end. It is clear, therefore, that only God possesses all manner of perfection by His very essence. Thus He alone is good through His essence."
- Klubertanz & Holloway

"Now God, given the perfection of His intellect, can in principle only ever command in accordance with reason, and thus God could never command us to do what is bad for us... [Our essences which determine our good] pre-exist in the divine intellect as the ideas or archetypes by reference to which God creates." - **Edward Feser**

A short case for realism

- ▶ Nominalism cannot even be discussed without the universal concept
- ▶ Triangularity, and other universals, cannot be reduced to any particular thing
- ▶ Starting with thought prevents us from knowing if our thoughts correspond to anything external to our own minds

“The first step on the realist path is to recognize that one has always been a realist; the second is to recognize that. . . one will never manage to [think differently]; the third is to realize that those who claim they think differently, think as realists as soon as they forget to act a part.” – Étienne Gilson, “Methodical Realism”

How do we know the nature of things?

- ▶ Human knowledge begins in sense experience
 - ▶ From sense experience, man’s intellect abstracts the universal essence of the thing so that the thing exists in both reality and the intellect, though in two different ways
- “. . . we have to delve into its nature by finding out how it behaves, operates, functions, changes (if at all), what powers it has, what similarities or dissimilarities it bears to other things. . . [then] we are able to identify things. . . All we need to do is to grasp the fact that there is some portion of reality before us, some kind of being or other. . .” – David Oderberg

Will there be sex in heaven?

- ▶ Upon resurrection we will still be male and female (1 Cor. 13:12)
- ▶ But there will be no sexual intercourse (Matt. 22:30)
- ▶ Rather, our natural desires will be sublimed by something *supernatural* and fulfilled in an ultimate way (i.e. God)

“. . . in this life *Eros*, which seeks to be happy ever after, all too often leads to idolatry and despair. In the next it will be fulfilled beyond its wildest hopes – in seeing God face to face, and also in seeing the divine reflection in each other more clearly than we could have before.” – Edward Feser