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Homosexual Couples: The Alternative Family

In today’s world it seems that love is a thing of the past. Many people consider love a very superficial and a meaningless quip to say to someone that you feel close to. As we look back through our history, it is deep, unconditional love that has propelled us to where we are today. It takes a love like that to make families strong enough to withstand anything that comes their way. Today, the question of unconditional love has been expanded to whether or not homosexual couples can have that kind of deep love that traditionally heterosexual couples have. It is imperative that this question is answered. This question determines the future of our children. If homosexual couples do not have the kind of love that it takes to hold a family together and to raise children appropriately, it seems that an entire generation is at risk of losing out on a traditional, love-filled family life. With homosexual couples increasing at a very rapid rate, and the constitutionality of homosexual marriage being questioned, we are on the brink of same-sex couples and families all across America. But, do those couples have what it takes to raise a child, or more importantly, do they have the kind of love that is needed to create a strong family atmosphere? Homosexual couples do, in fact, have that kind of love; with the notion that same-sex couples could even be more beneficial to children, readings about unconditional love, and the thought that any family structure with compassion towards each other can thrive.

The norm of a family is typically seen as a mother, a father, and a couple of children. That is the ideal or picturesque family that we all seem to strive for. But now, that norm is being challenged and changed. The new norm promotes free-spiritedness and discovering who you truly are. People seem to be casting away stereotypes and religious ideals of what a family is. The new wave or movement concerning the family is homosexual couples as the center of the family. Many homosexual couples now want to adopt or have children by other means of conception. This boggles the notion of how a family should be. We no longer think of a family just as a mother and a father, we now take a step back and look that the full picture; the real family is now just two people that are deeply committed to each other in love, with possible children. We no longer have this close-minded view of families.

Along with that comes the question of whether or not homosexual couples would be beneficial or detrimental to a child’s growth and development. Having homosexual couples as the parents in a family seems to help in a family atmosphere. It opens and broadens the views that children have concerning family and prohibits them from having a closed-minded view of the family and how a family is composed. Accompanying that, children don’t become so reliant on the so-called “nuclear family,” and they can get support and love from individuals other than just mothers and fathers. This expands their view of how they can function and how they can trust others that don’t necessarily play a traditional role in the family.

I have a first-hand experience with this type of family environment. When I was 15 years old my mother left my father. On the surface, that sounds very normal and nothing too special about it, but, my mother left my father for another woman. My mother and her partner are now living together happily and my father has since remarried. I now have two households of which I call home. I have a bedroom at both of their homes and I truly feel a connection with all four of my parental figures. Of course, my mother and father will always be the ultimate authorities and the comforters in times of need, but my step-mom and my mother’s partner both play roles in my life. I feel like I can trust them both with anything I bring their way, and that just having them in my life has made me a better person. I especially feel that having my mother’s partner and their relationship has made me expand my views on the traditional family structure and has broken the mold of a traditional family that I kept for so long.

In “It Takes a Family,” Rick Santorum describes the family as “a mother and a father who have committed themselves to each other in lifelong marriage” (Santorum 92). Although Santorum is speaking of purely heterosexual couples in a relationship, it is important to note that he believes that having this everlasting love is important, no matter how the family is composed. It takes this kind of love, as Santorum notes, to have a deep and committed relationship with another person. That same love needs to be extended and applied to the rest of a family unit to achieve a true compassion for one another. The family cannot survive and handle the struggles of life without this kind of love. In addition to that, if Santorum’s definition of love omits the words “mother and father,” and just speaks of a marriage, or partnership, that have committed themselves to each other, it seems that his definition of marriage could apply to a non-traditional family unit. He understands that there must be a deep compassion for each other, but he neglects to tell how that compassion can be present in homosexual couples.

Reciprocally, in “What is Marriage?” Evan Wolfson argues that when there is love, there is family. Unlike Santorum, he is talking about a type of love that can be shared with heterosexual or homosexual couples. He says, “Love is a word that can be applied to [many things]… while marriage is an unequaled commitment” (Wolfson 101). He shows how it takes more than just love to say that you are a family. It takes a deep love that is unequaled and something that can barely be described. But he does not close the parameters on who can have this kind of love, as Santorum does. Wolfson is a strong proponent of homosexual partners and their role in society, and doesn’t exclude homosexual couples from his definitions of love. He feels that homosexual couples deserve rights and benefits that heterosexual couples get to enjoy because of the positive impact that same-sex couples can have on a family unit.

In addition to Wolfson arguing for the complete benefits of homosexual couples that heterosexual couples have, sociologist Murray Hausknecht argues that the denial of rights to homosexual couples could be compared to the denial of rights to African Americans. She says that the passage of some legislation that allows homosexual couples equal rights would be comparable to civil rights legislation. She goes on to articulate that by saying the laws on the books did not end racism, as homosexual couples rights laws would not end prejudice, but it did end social disapproval of the act of racism (Hausknecht 10). It seems that if there were some type of laws providing equal rights, it would help to show that even the government recognizes homosexually-led family units as legitimate and effective families.

Roger Jack briefly describes some of his family dynamics in his work “An Indian Story.” Roger is raised mainly by his aunt. She is the only guardian figure that he feels comfortable around and the only one that has truly gained his respect and admiration. A very interesting moment happens at the conclusion of his literary work; he receives a call from his father stating that his aunt has been admitted to the doctor and that she could have some complications. Roger is now off at college and is far away from being near his aunt. Instead of overreacting and feeling it necessary to be with his aunt during this time, he simply tells his father that she will be alright (Jack 60). He doesn’t worry because he knows of the unmatched love that the two of them have. He knows that he doesn’t have to be there for her to feel the love that he has for her. While this example does not include heterosexual or homosexual couples, it is important to see the alternative family structure and how it works for them. Roger does not have a mother and father nuclear family structure, but he does have an aunt that is there for him through thick and thin. His aunt has expanded his view of what a family is. That expansion of what a family is should be passed on from his story. It shows that it doesn’t take traditional heterosexual couples to effectively raise children.

It seems that the negative connotation and bad press for gay rights and homosexual marriage seems to have left a bad taste in the mouths of many Americans about what an effective family is. It also seems that the American public as a whole has a closed mind when it comes to how a family should be structured. I am a living testament to how homosexual couples can effectively raise children and how they can make a positive family atmosphere. Homosexual couples can, in fact, raise children effectively, they can, in fact, have a true love for each other, and more importantly, they can have a strong and dynamic family unit that can withstand the greatest storms of life.

Works Cited

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