

# The New Sexual Challenge for Pastors to Address

## Polyamory

Polyamory - the Greek *poly*, meaning “many,” and the Latin *amor*, meaning “love”—refers to “the practice of, or desire for, intimate relationships with more than one partner, with the consent of all partners involved.” While these intimate relationships between three or more people are typically sexual, they don’t need to be. And they can take many different forms.<sup>1</sup>

For many this is a simple issue but it is becoming one of those variations that is surprisingly growing among Christians. In simple terms it is helpful to get ahead of the curve rather than reacting to the issue when it blindsides us when we are not looking.

Unfortunately, when we see something that we intuitively believe is unbiblical we declare it so and that is the end of the conversation. However, we also know that sometimes it is important to have conversations with our people because black and white answers are not always persuasive, especially these days. Christians seem to be engaged in very creative hermeneutics to justify alternative behavior that traditionally has a simple response. If engaging people in redemptive discussions is part of your philosophy of ministry, then we have to navigate it differently. One of my fundamental, philosophical guidelines is 2 Timothy 2:24-26 –

*And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

All discipling and counseling and coaching is grounded on this biblical framework, at least for me. There are challenges in embodying these qualities in the face of raw, sensitive issues but this approach has never failed me. It may not be the only principle that guides my discussion, but I never want to step off this foundation.

The Bible teaches us to love, encourage and support one another, but it does draw some clear boundaries when it comes to intimacy both physically and emotionally. I encourage you to read the article in CT to capture one perspective in this journey to begin thinking through this new cultural paradigm. These authors do a good job of recognizing some issues that overlap and how we can be supportive of those elements in any context of the Body of Christ, but there are some clear boundaries in Scripture being crossed with this concept of polyamory.

Overall, this may be nothing new to you if you are in pastoral ministry. You may just see it as another twisted version of the same problem we have been dealing with since Adam and Eve. But it is a cultural trend that is surfacing in our faith communities. It is not like we need more issues to deal with during our season of pandemics, economic fluctuations and a strongly shifting political landscape... but I guess we will not run out of things to do as we serve the Savior. We live in a broken world and it is impacting us as much as we hope we are impacting our culture.

In His grace,

*Brad Little, Interim Director, CBNC*

---

<sup>1</sup> Parler, Preston Sprinkle and Branson. 2020. "Discipleship ." *Christianity Today* . September 14. Accessed September 2020 . <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2019/fall/polyamory-next-sexual-frontier.html>.