

A REVIEW OF *QUEER EYE*, SEASON 5, EPISODE 1
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There are six things I would like to say about episode 1 of season 5 of the Netflix series *Queer Eye*, in which an ELCA pastor receives help in accepting his sexual identity.

First, I am very sorry that Pastor Noah Hepler grew up in a home and church environment that was so negative and repressive. I thank God for all the congregations that hold to traditional views not to repress people, but to help people develop a life-giving, faith relationship with Jesus.

Second, we have a stunning example of what is called “queer hermeneutics” in Pastor Hepler’s telling about the healing of the centurion’s servant, as recorded in Luke 7. Verse 2 says, “A centurion had a slave whom he valued highly, who was ill and close to death.” Following the principles of queer hermeneutics, Pastor Hepler interprets the verse as saying that the centurion and the servant were in a same-sex sexual relationship.

I cannot imagine that Jewish elders, who were steeped in the law, would advocate for an official of an occupying foreign army who was having a same-sex sexual relationship with a servant. Jesus clearly defined marriage as a relationship between one man and one woman (Matthew 19: 4-6). And though Jesus did get into trouble for breaking the sabbath, he never did cancel the Old Testament moral law, such as in Leviticus 18: 22 and 20: 13, which clearly forbid same-sex sexual behavior. It is preposterous to say that Jesus did not object to the same-sex sexual relationship between the centurion and his servant, but instead healed the servant. Therefore, Jesus must be okay with same-sex sexual relationships. Such a violation of the clear meaning of Scripture in order to promote one’s own agenda is unworthy for anyone who would claim the authority to teach the Bible.

Third, one of the Fab 5 tells how he had been hurt by and still has negative feelings about the church. People who hold to traditional views need to realize that many LGBTQ+ persons have been hurt by the church. We who hold to traditional views need to make sure that we do not come across as angry, judgmental, and/or afraid. LGBTQ+ people need to know that we are not against them. Instead they need to know our love for them.

Fourth, Pastor Hepler apologizes to the member of Fab 5 who has been hurt by the church’s refusing to be LGBTQ+ affirming. While we who hold to traditional views need to communicate our love for LGBTQ+ people, we also need to remember that the Bible will make us uncomfortable when it convicts us of sin. I cannot expect that God’s Word will never hurt. It is neither appropriate nor helpful for us to feel that we have to apologize every time God’s Word causes pain.

Fifth, I am concerned about the way in which – in the redesign of the church – rainbow lights are placed along the side aisles, to add color as well as to celebrate Pastor Hepler’s queerness. Also, the church is decorated with flowers in the colors of the rainbow flag on the altar. Decorations in the church are to bring glory to God, not to celebrate me. Anything placed on the altar should be

an expression of God's great love and gift of Himself to us. The altar and anything on the altar are not to promote a personal agenda or to point to me.

Sixth, I am also troubled by the wording of Pastor Hepler's sending at the end of the service. "Go in peace. Be fabulous in the Lord." The purpose of the sending is to give glory to God and to strengthen my commitment to service and ministry. It is not to focus on how fabulous I am. Whether it is the decorations in the sanctuary, the items on the altar, or the wording of the sending, making anything other than the Lord the focus is idolatry.