

Helping Teens Understand Homosexuality – Facts to Help Youth Withstand the Current Culture

Sue Bohlin provides practical ways to communicate with teens about common misunderstandings and the truth concerning homosexuality. Recognizing that teens deal with peer pressure to experiment and feelings of same sex attraction, she provides real ways to help teens make their way through this maze of contradiction and confusion.

In this article we look at ways to communicate the truth about homosexuality to teens. We examine the lies they are told and the sexual pressure they are under. We also look at ways to help kids process their gender confusion, as well as address helpful ways to encourage teens who already identify themselves as gay or lesbian. And finally, we provide perspective on how to treat those who struggle with same-sex attraction in a compassionate and godly way. By looking at this topic, from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective, we can communicate the depth of God's love and His desire for us to experience the best life possible.



The Lies They Hear

In many schools and in the rest of the culture today, only one perspective is allowed to be heard. Consider four lies that are very familiar to teens today:

First, *"Homosexuality is normal and healthy."* It's neither. The fact that it simply occurs (in about 2% of the population) doesn't make it normal. When we look at the way males and

females were designed to complement each other both emotionally and sexually, that tells us something about the nature of homosexuality, that something has gone wrong somewhere. This is not judging the people who experience same-sex attraction; it's like a red light on the dashboard of a car, denoting that something needs attention.

Acting physically on same-sex attractions is certainly not healthy. Those who do are at far greater risk for sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS; alcoholism and drug abuse; depression; emotionally exhausting relationships; and a shortened lifespan.^{1} Please see the "Facts About Youth" website from the American College of Pediatricians, especially this article: [Health Risks of the Homosexual Lifestyle](#).

Lie #2: *"If you're attracted to someone of the same sex, that means you're gay or lesbian."* Not so. It really means that there are unmet, God-given needs for love and attention that were supposed to be met earlier in life. Having crushes on other people, of both sexes, is also a normal part of adolescent development. It means teens are transitioning emotionally from child to adult.

The third lie is, *"Since you were born that way, you can't change."* First, there is no scientific evidence that anyone is born gay. It's a myth that has been repeated so often that people believe it. Second, thousands of people who were once gay have experienced significant changes in their attractions and behavior.^{2} Change is possible.

The fourth lie is, *"Embrace and celebrate your gay identity, because gay life is cool."* Those in ministry to those dealing with unwanted homosexuality have heard many heartbreaking stories of the truth: a dark side of intense and difficult relationships, relational patterns of disillusionment and breakups, physical and emotional unhealthiness.

Countless people have said they wished they never entered the

gay community in the first place, but it's hard to leave.

Teens and Sexual Pressure

Adolescents are under an extraordinary amount of sexual pressure. They live in a sex-saturated culture, and the messages they receive from the media and, unfortunately, in school, clearly communicate an expectation that sex is just part of having a social life. Rarely do they hear about the heart-wrenching consequences of being sexually active, both physically and emotionally. The agenda pushing sexual freedom is also engaged in trying to normalize homosexuality as well.

Teens are pushed to decide early if they are gay, straight, or bisexual, as young as elementary school. But kids in their early teens, much less even younger than that, are no more equipped to "decide" their sexual orientation than they are to choose a college major and career track. A landmark study done by the University of Minnesota determined that at age twelve, one fourth of the students were unsure of their sexual orientation. Their bodies were just beginning to experience the changes that would turn them from children into adults, and they were being asked if they were gay, straight, or bisexual. No wonder so many were confused! But by age seventeen, that number of kids unsure of their sexual orientation had dropped to 5%.[\[3\]](#)

And psychiatrist Dr. Jeffrey Satinover says, "[W]ithout any intervention whatsoever, three out of four boys who think they're gay at age 16 aren't by 25. So if we're going to treat homosexuality as a state, 75% of 'gays' become 'non-gay' spontaneously. That's a statement which I consider ludicrous, but if you accept this tacit proposition—that being gay is an actual state, like being short or being tall, black or white—then in three out of four people that condition changes itself spontaneously. . . That's with no outside intervention, just the natural processes of development."[\[4\]](#)

We need to tell teens, “It’s too soon to ‘declare a major’ in your sexuality.”

Teens are also pressured to experiment with both sexes as the only way they can know their sexual orientation. It’s presented as nonchalantly as our cruise ship table partner suggesting we try escargot—“Hey, how can you know if you like it unless you try it out?”

Teenage sexual behavior can have lifelong consequences, but they are not in a position to recognize that. Their brains don’t finish developing until age twenty-five, and they tend to make decisions out of the region of the brain that controls emotion. So they are easily swayed to make dangerous and irresponsible choices, like engaging in any kind of sexual behavior.

Teens need to be encouraged to face the sexual pressures and stand against them.

Gender Insecurity

At a conference I attended, author and ministry leader Andy Comiskey^[5] shared a painful experience in junior high where one day, out of the blue, the whole school was abuzz with the rumor that Andy was gay. There was even graffiti about it on the wall. He struggled with his sexual identity, but he had never acted out. He walked into a classroom on an errand and on his way out, two boys called “Faggot!” He was crushed and humiliated. Later on, he made it into a self-fulfilling prophecy and immersed himself in the gay lifestyle.

I went up to him and asked, “If you could rewrite the script of that incident, knowing what you do today, what would it look like?” He said, “Oh, I wish there had been some sensitive adults, especially in the church, to talk freely with me and other kids about ‘gender insecurity.’ They wouldn’t even have to talk about homosexuality or use the word—many kids can

relate to the idea of 'gender insecurity.' It would have been so freeing for me to have someone acknowledge that it's a real thing, but it didn't mean I was gay. I wish there were people who could have spoken truth into my life at that point."

One kind of truth that kids should hear is that around age ten, attraction for the same sex begins. This attraction is emotional, non-sexual, and involuntary. It doesn't mean teens are gay or lesbian; it means they are transitioning through normal adolescent development. We have to learn to attach to people of our same sex before we can learn to attach to people of the opposite sex. But most teens don't know this.

Some kids don't feel secure in their masculinity or femininity for a variety of reasons, usually having to do with not being affirmed by parents and peers. God gives each of us [needs for attention, approval and affection](#). When those needs are not met, the onset of hormones can sexualize this "hole in the heart." Some teens can find themselves longing for the attention, approval and affection of people of their same gender. When others put on them the false and hurtful labels of "homo," "fag," or "lez," they can easily find themselves believing the lies.

When teens are not secure in their gender, they *don't* need to be pointed to gay groups at school. They need to be affirmed and encouraged to develop their innate, God-given [masculinity or femininity](#), to see their gender as good. They need to have other kids reach out to make them feel "one of the guys" or "one of the girls." They need time to finish growing up.

Teens Who Identify as Gay or Lesbian

Growing numbers of teens are self-identifying as gay or lesbian. In many circles, being gay—or claiming to be gay—is now considered cool, especially among girls.

Teenagers experiment with same-sex relationships for a variety

of reasons. Some experience normal crushes on same-sex peers and think this means they are gay—or their friends *inform* them that's what it means. What it really means is that they are learning to form deep and intense attachments which is a necessary precursor to maintaining long-term adult relationships like marriage.

Others experiment with same-sex relationships out of a legitimate need to belong. Some kids are simply curious; they just want to try it out like a new shade of lipstick.

Some teens experiment with same-sex relationships because others have labeled them gay or lesbian, and they wonder, "Am I? Do they know something I don't know? Maybe I am and I need to go in that direction." This is one reason it's so important to impress on all kids the absolute unacceptability of name-calling and other cruelties. It's not only bullying behavior, it can have terrible emotional consequences.

Some adolescents pursue same-sex relationships because they are anxious about growing into adolescence and the responsibilities of adulthood. So they hide behind immature and emotionally volatile same-sex feelings and behaviors.

Often, what teens are attracted to in same-sex peers are the characteristics they wish they had in themselves: popularity, good looks, a winsome personality, a strong physique. This kind of jealousy doesn't mean they are gay or lesbian; it means there is an area they need to build confidence in!

Most girls who get involved in same-sex relationships start out in friendships that grow increasingly controlling and needy. In these emotionally dependent relationships, girls can get so enmeshed with each other that their relationship turns physical.

Many people who later identify as gay or lesbian report feeling different from others, feeling like they don't fit in or belong. Girls can feel like they don't belong to the world

of girls, and guys almost always feel like they can't measure up in the world of males. This is gender insecurity, not homosexuality, but teens usually don't hear this message. They need to.

Labels such as "gay" and "lesbian" and "homo" and "dyke" are incredibly hurtful, and it is easy for those who are slapped with those labels to believe them. But God doesn't call anyone homosexual or lesbian; those labels are man's invention, not biblical truth. It's essential for teens to know who they are in God's sight—beloved, precious, and stamped with the imprint of His acceptance and delight.

When Teens Struggle with Same-Sex Attraction

If you know teens who are struggling with feelings of same-sex attraction, or who seem to be experiencing gender insecurity, let me make some suggestions on how to minister to them.

First, don't address the issue of homosexuality head-on. Same-sex strugglers are always wrestling with feelings of inferiority, rejection, shame and fear, so it's extremely uncomfortable for anyone to bring up the subject. The heart of the issue for kids who find themselves attracted to others of the same sex are these dark and negative feelings. It's much better to ask indirect questions that encourage them to talk about the underlying feelings of disconnection with a parent, or the ridicule of their peers, or depression and sadness.

Second, don't use any labels. Teens who struggle with their gender identity already have a huge struggle with feeling that the rest of the world has put an unwelcome label on them. The false, man-made labels of "gay" and "lesbian" are hurtful, false, and restricting.

Consider what it would be like if we created a label such as "angro" for people who are easily ticked off and walk around

in a continual low-level state of hostility. What if people went around saying, "I'm an angry person. That's just the way I am—that's WHO I am. I'm an angro." They might believe they were born angry, that they have an "angro gene." Not only is the label of "angro" false and misleading, but it can lead people to believe the lie that it is a permanent state or condition rather than a description of one's current feelings.

That's what happened with the relatively recent labels of "gay" and "lesbian." They can become like jail cells, making people feel hopelessly trapped in a state or condition. It's much better to help teens deal with the fact that they are experiencing some attractions to their same gender, and those feelings are like the red light on the dashboard of a car. They mean there's something going on inside that needs some attention. And that's literally true: God creates all of us with the need for attention, affection and approval, and those are the things adolescents are craving when they have feelings for people of the same sex. The needs are legitimate; we need to help them be met in healthy ways. This is where the church and other Christian youth organizations can make all the difference in the world.

Third, communicate to kids who struggle that God did not make them gay. God doesn't make anyone gay, and there is no scientific evidence that there is a biological basis for homosexual feelings or behavior. Even if they feel that they were born gay, this is the result of being told a fairy tale. Were American kids born English speakers? That's all they ever knew, right? No, they weren't *born* English speakers, they were born *language* speakers. Which language they speak is a matter of the shaping influences of their upbringing. Kids who experience same-sex attraction were born to be relational creatures, but how those relationships shape their souls is a function of their temperaments, their home life, and how they relate to other kids.

Fourth, give them a safe place to process their feelings

without being shamed or condemned. For many teens, this unfortunately rules out their home, school, or church. I'm sure it grieves God's heart that for many people, church is the most unsafe place on the planet for those who struggle with various life-controlling sins and urges. But there is a great free, online support group for struggling youth, moderated by an experienced and understanding youth pastor, at www.livehope.org. Kids can safely talk to others like themselves and learn how intimacy with Jesus Christ brings healing and change to broken and wounded hearts.

Fifth, many students who experience same sex attraction often feel fake if they don't choose to identify with or act on their feelings. They have believed the lie that gay or lesbian is what they are. They want to be real. But getting real is becoming who God created them to be, despite their feelings of what those around them might say.^[6] Finding out who God says they are is the true path to being real and not fake.

The Call to Understanding and Compassion

Many teens feel, "I just don't get this whole gay/lesbian thing." That's perfectly understandable. Only 2-3% of the population deals with same gender attraction. The fact that it's such a huge issue in our culture is completely out of proportion to the actual number of people experiencing it.

Kids need to know a few things about those who do struggle with same-sex attractions and feelings. First, they didn't choose it. It's something people *discover*, not something they *decide on*. And almost every single person who discovers they have strong feelings and fantasies about the same sex is horrified and terrified by this discovery. It's a very painful part of their life, so it's important for others to be respectful and kind.

Second, having crushes and strong feelings for friends and teachers of the same sex is a normal part of adolescent

development. It doesn't mean a teen is gay or lesbian. When other kids assure them that it does, it is slapping a false and hurtful label on them that they may find almost impossible to take off. If someone walked up to you and put a "Hi, My Name Is" nametag on you that had someone else's name on it, you probably wouldn't have any trouble taking it off and saying, "There's a mistake here—that's not who I am." But when kids do the same thing with the "nametag" of "gay" or "lesbian," they usually put it on kids who don't have the security and self-confidence to realize that's not who they are, and they can go through the rest of their lives believing a lie.

Third, be compassionate. People don't know who around them is struggling, either with their own same-sex desires and attractions, or the painful burden of knowing a family member or loved one has them. They only have to show contempt once for those who experience same-sex feelings to show that they're not a safe person.

Fourth, be respectful. That means cutting phrases like "Oh, that's so gay" out of their vocabulary. It means not throwing around words like "homo" or "fag" or "queer." Every gay joke or insult is like sticking a dagger in the heart of those who carry a painful secret.

The bottom line for helping teens understand homosexuality is to call them to see God's design as good, and show grace and compassion to those who don't see it. Be "Jesus with skin on" in both His holiness *and* His kindness.

Notes

1. Peter Freiberg, "Study: Alcohol Use More Prevalent for Lesbians," *The Washington Blade*, January 12, 2001, p. 21. Karen Paige Erickson, Karen F. Trocki, "Sex, Alcohol and Sexually Transmitted Diseases: A National Survey," *Family Planning Perspectives* 26 (December 1994): 261. Robert S. Hogg

et al., "Modeling the Impact of HIV Disease on Mortality in Gay and Bisexual Men," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 26 (1997): 657. Also note this article by Dr. John R. Diggs, Jr.: [The Health Risks of Gay Sex \(catholiceducation.org\)](http://catholiceducation.org).

2. Read a few of the testimonies at the Living Hope Ministries website, www.livehope.org.

3. www.freetobeme.com/yw_minn.htm

4. Homosexuality and Teens: An Interview with Dr. Jeffrey Satinover, Massachusetts Family Institute.

www.mafamily.org/Marriage%20Hearing%202003/satinover2.htm

5. Founder and Director of Desert Stream Ministries, author of *Pursuing Sexual Wholeness and Strength in Weakness*.

6. www.becomingreal.org

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See also: answers to many questions in ["Probe Answers Our E-Mail: Homosexuality"](#)

"I'm Looking for a Way to Deprogram Homosexuality"

I'm a licensed counselor looking for ways to de-program homosexuality.

I'm afraid we don't know any formulaic means for de-programming homosexuality. And neither Probe nor Living Hope Ministries (a ministry that helps people with unwanted homosexuality) does "conversion therapy." In my 20+ years with LHM, the only method I have seen that makes a difference is the time-honored process of Christian discipleship, where we point people to Jesus and walk with them in submitting to Him

and His word, cooperating with the Holy Spirit in facing the wounds and hurts of the past and grieving them, forgiving those who hurt us, and obeying God's commands because they are given to protect and bless us. The fruit of this process is transformation from the inside out (Romans 12:2), because Jesus doesn't make things better, He makes things new.

What I have personally witnessed over and over is that God helps the person reframe their understanding of their lives, especially the hurts of the past (and there is always pain in the past) and their sinful responses to those hurts. This is true of any believer, not just those dealing with homosexuality. As the person invites Jesus to be Lord over more and more internal real estate, He brings change and understanding. For example, I keep seeing that men reframe their craving to connect with other men sexually as their heart's cry for healthy attention, affirmation and affection from other men, either (or both) a father figure, or a best-friend kind of relationship. In women, I see that women reframe their craving to intensely connect with another woman, as their heart's cry for those same 3 As from a mother or a best friend. When those legitimate needs are met in healthy relationships with other believers, the craving subsides. One of my closest friends, who spent 25 years as a lesbian activist before becoming a Christ follower, says that what used to be screaming in front of her face (her same sex attraction), is now white noise in the background of her life. It's not totally gone, and she can feed it when she's stressed which means additional temptations, but its control over her life has been replaced by intimacy with Jesus and with healthy relationships with women.

I don't know how this happens outside of the grace and power of God in a believer's life and in the context of community, because we need each other.

I'm glad you asked. And by the way, I see from your email address that you utilize EMDR in your therapy. God bless you

for that! I am the beneficiary of its effectiveness as I have seen my husband healed of childhood traumas through EMDR. A number of the people at Living Hope—and friends from church as well—have found EMDR helpful in their counseling, which makes sense because trauma is part of so many people's stories who now deal with same-sex attraction.

Blessing you today,

Sue

Posted Sept. 2022

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“Our Granddaughter is Severely Confused About Her Gender Identity”

I just read an article by Sue Bohlin on [transgender](#) and God's view on it. We completely believe our granddaughter is severely confused and we believe her gender identity is being greatly influenced by the people she is hanging out with. She is almost 22, we have told we love her unconditionally but do not support her lifestyle as it goes against God's Word. She understands that we will not compromise our faith and what the Word of God says. But we have been reaching out to pastors and they have offered zero spiritual guidance. In fact they really do not want to discuss it. Our pastor told me to buy a secular book on homosexuality from Amazon. I told him I do not need or want the world's view on it, I need spiritual guidance. He had nothing. I'm reaching out because I agreed 100% with what Sue said and we still need spiritual guidance. We love our

granddaughter and pray for her all the time but we are struggling with how to deal with it.

I am so very, very sorry for the pain you are experiencing in this spiritual battle. The enemy has gone after your beloved granddaughter, deceiving her with lies and demonic schemes about her true identity. You are undoubtedly right about the influence of the people she's hanging out with, and that would extend to (and may even entirely consist of) the voices she is listening to on social media.

In terms of how to deal with it, let me encourage you that you are already doing the two most important things: loving her and praying for her. Your love will be a beacon for her to find her way out of spiritual darkness back to truth, and your prayers are powerful for the pulling down of strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-4). This is a battle that has to be fought on your knees, using the supernatural weapon of prayer. Trying to convince her out of her delusion won't work; it has to be God's power.

You will need encouragement from others who are also in the battle for their children and grandchildren. Let me suggest two places to find that. One is the Friends and Family forum at Living Hope Ministries. www.livehope.org. The other is to request access to the private group "CHANGED Movement" on Facebook, where you will find very encouraging testimonies from those who have come out of the LGBTQ community.

Let me close with a story I hope encourages you.

A couple were heartbroken that their daughter had jumped into the LGBT community and identity, and needed to know what to do about it. On the recommendation of a mutual friend the husband called me; as we talked, the Lord dropped an idea into my head, which he followed.

He took her out for a meal and said to her, "Sweetheart, I want to tell you something, and I'm only going to say this

once, so pay attention.

"Your mom and I see that because of your choices, it's like you're on the Titanic, and we know that eventually it's going down. But we're out here in a lifeboat, rowing around the ship, and we will never stop rowing. We'll be here to love you and pray for you, and we'll be here to help you when you realize you've got to get off a sinking ship." They were so faithful in daily praying for her.

Ten years later, their daughter showed up on their doorstep. When Dad opened the door, the daughter asked, "Are you still in the rowboat?"

That was *ten years later*.

And many many prayers later, they just celebrated the one-year anniversary of her repentance . . . of her recognizing the ship was sinking and she got in the lifeboat with her parents. This man said that in all his many years, he has never seen such a full and beautiful repentance as what his daughter exhibited.

Recently, in fact, he and his wife and their daughter stood in front of his Sunday School class to tell their story. For the first time, the daughter told her side; can you imagine what it was like for the parents to watch their beloved daughter give testimony to God's goodness and her parents' faithfulness in praying for her? In fact, she had sent an email at one point that said, "Mom and Dad, thanks for never giving up rowing."

The dad had also told his story to a men's conference, sharing the rowboat part, and said the other men, all fathers who would do anything for their children, were in tears. They all understand how hard it is, especially as men designed to "fix" things, not to be able to fix their children's hurt or destructive choices or the consequences of those choices. But the power of a praying parent can redeem the pain and the

choices and the consequences.

So. . . don't give up rowing!

And [please hear my voice being very very gentle here] let go of your expectations for God's timetable. He knows how long it will take for her to see the light, in a way that will bring the most glory to Him and the greatest benefit to your granddaughter.

I'm sending this with a prayer that God does amazing things in your family. Please remember—if it's not good yet, God's not done yet!

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

Posted Sept. 2022
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Grace and Truth About LGBT

Sue Bohlin provides a compassionate, biblically based look at what is happening as LGBT ideology has taken root in the culture.

What Does God Think About LGBT?

This article is about grace and truth in the context of LGBT, those who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender. What does God think about people for whom this is their primary (or even secret) identity?



After 20-plus years of walking with dear friends dealing with unwanted same-sex attraction, the very first thing that comes to my mind is the deep compassion and tenderness of our God toward wounded and deceived people that He loves very much. I am reminded of Isaiah's words (42:3), "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out."

People *discover* attractions toward those of the same sex. They don't initially choose them. These disordered feelings are like the warning lights on the dashboard of a car. They are saying, "Something's wrong under the hood; check it out!" So in the beginning, same-sex attractions constitute *temptation* rather than sin, but it easily crosses over to sin when people choose to feed and nurture thought patterns that God's word says are sin.

And God's word has always called sexual behavior outside of marriage between a man and woman, sin. That's because sex is deeply spiritual as well as physical, and He wants to protect us from the harmful consequences of sexual sin. His word will last forever, and it doesn't change. So I believe God is grieved when people reject His clear biblical statements about sexual sin, as is now happening in many churches and individuals.

God's word calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. An important part of the Kingdom message is that God changes believers more and more into the likeness of Jesus. That means that God endorses *change*, which makes sense since growth and change are an intrinsic part of life.

But the cultural narrative says that your sexuality can't be changed. If people don't want their broken same-sex attractions, and seek help recovering God's intended design for them, it is becoming illegal to do that. It's labeled as "conversion therapy." But if someone says they're transgender

and seeks to inject their healthy body with artificial hormones and mutilate it with surgery to pretend they are something they're not, that's called "gender affirmation." Yes, it's backward.

God addressed this backward thinking in Isaiah 5:20—"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

Back to the cultural narrative says that your sexuality can't be changed. That's not what some social scientists have found, which is that sexuality can be quite fluid and changeable.^{1} There is no magic switch to flip from homosexual to heterosexual; but when people invite God into the woundings and deficits of their earlier life and receive healing in their souls, some can develop attractions to the opposite sex. I have personally seen this happen multiple times. The problem is that people aren't telling their stories, or when they try, they aren't believed.

Disordered thinking and unnatural desires are not too hard for God to handle. Remember, He can raise the dead!

Cultural Lies vs. God's Truth

There is a massive clash between the lies of our sex-saturated culture, and the eternal truth of God's word.

CULTURE'S LIE: Who I am is a sexual being. Whether it's a culture or an individual, when God is left out of the equation, sex is elevated to the #1 most important spot because it's so powerful and a source of such intense pleasure (or can be). So people define themselves by their sexuality.

GOD'S TRUTH: Who I am is God's beloved creation. Made in the image of God, created for intimacy and fellowship with Him, my worth proven by what the Son was willing to pay for me: His

very life.

CULTURE'S LIE: Sex is a need and a right for everyone to experience. Many people believe it is on the same level of necessity as food, water and sleep.

GOD'S TRUTH: Sex is so powerful it is to be contained only within marriage between one man and one woman. The mingling of bodies and souls through sex is deeply spiritual as well as physical. God's prohibitions against sex outside of marriage are His gift to us, meant for our protection from the painful consequences of sexual sin. They are like guard rails on a treacherous mountain road, intended to keep us from going off the cliff to pain and destruction.

CULTURE'S LIE: I create my own identity depending on what I feel. Untethered from a connection to God as Creator, people live out the sad, repeated description of Israel in the book of Judges, where "all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." (Judges 17:6, for one).

GOD'S TRUTH: My identity is who my Creator says I am. All of us exist because God wanted us and hand-crafted each of us (Psalm 139). Feelings are real but they're not reliable. Jeremiah 17:9 instructs us on why our feelings can't be trusted: "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

CULTURE'S LIE: Gender is whatever we want it to be. Biological sex has been separated from gender (how one feels about maleness and femaleness). (Personally, this strikes me as illegitimate as proclaiming that the white keys on a piano are bad and the black keys are good.)

GOD'S TRUTH: God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created them. (Genesis 1:27) The first words in the room when a baby is born are still, "It's a girl!" or "It's a boy!" Gender is still binary because God still creates only male and female.

CULTURE'S LIE: I can create my own reality. For example, recently a man abandoned his wife and seven children, announcing his chosen identity of a 6-year-old girl.[{2}](#)



Another man, deciding his identity is a female dragon, cut off his ears and nose, dyed his eyes, and inserted horns in his forehead.[{3}](#)

GOD'S TRUTH: There is objective truth and objective reality because God is real and true. We do not have the freedom to dismiss what is objectively true and real; $2 + 2$ will always be 4, not 7 or 200, and gravity will always be operational on the planet. These things are real and true because a real and true God rooted His creation in His own nature.

CULTURE'S LIE: "Born this way." This lie has so much traction because it's repeated so often people assume it to be true.

GOD'S TRUTH: No Evidence. There is actually no scientific evidence of a gay gene or any other determiner of same-sex attraction. And in identical twins (who share the same DNA), when one identifies as gay or lesbian, the other one only identifies as gay or lesbian about 11% of the time. If homosexuality were a genetic issue, the correspondence would be 100%.

American culture continues to pump out the illusion—the fantasy, the myth—that sexuality is the most important thing about life and about us, and that sexual identity and

expression is where life is found.

Life is found in Jesus, and nowhere else.

Transgender: The Emperor's New Clothes

In the old story of the Emperor's New Clothes, scam artists appeal to the pride of a conceited emperor, claiming they can create a magical outfit for him that is invisible to anyone who is unfit for their position, stupid, or incompetent. He parades his new suit of clothes before his subjects, which of course no one can see because it's a scam. But no one will say they don't see it lest they be seen as stupid. Finally a little boy pipes up and blurts out the truth: "But he isn't wearing anything at all!"[\[4\]](#)

The transgender narrative is the equivalent of the Emperor's New Clothes. The objective truth is that there is no such thing as magical clothes, and there's no such thing as changing genders. People can only deceive themselves (and others), damage their bodies, and mutilate themselves—but our God-ordained maleness and femaleness, our biological sex, is stamped into every cell of our bodies.

It's especially alarming when parents, educators and other authorities feed a child's fantasy that they are the other gender. We would never do that if a child declared herself to be a cat or a unicorn; we would gently and lovingly correct her wrong thinking by speaking the truth to her. But if a boy insists he's a girl or vice versa, many progressive-minded adults are so proud of their "wokeness" that they rush to board the child on the transgender train.

Most often, children who reject their gender are reacting to gender stereotypes. Girls can think that boys get to do cooler stuff than girls, and sensitive boys who love pink and purple sparkly things can think it's better to be a girl. Both sexes who experience abuse can believe that it would be safer to be

the opposite sex.

Children never see the big picture—that's why God gives them parents to help them see their world more accurately. One little boy told his parents he wanted to be a girl but no one inquired why, they just jumped on the transgender bandwagon. Turns out that when his baby sister was born and consumed a lot of attention because she was very sick, he concluded that if he were a girl, he would get the same attention.

Transgender – Part 2

When a person experiences a conflict between their biological sex and their internal sense of whether they are male or female, that's called gender dysphoria. Various studies have shown that this very painful emotional state resolves itself about 85% of the time simply by going through puberty. It appears to reset things. So the best and wisest treatment is no treatment at all, but of course wise parents and other adults will continue to speak truth about a child's identity—especially the truth that God who is good, loving and wise chose their gender for them, so we need to receive it as His gift.

This whole transgender phenomenon has ignited where children have access to the internet on their smart phones. The illusion of transgender is easily spread by social contagion. Children and teens talk about their beliefs that they are transgender on social media, and their impressionable peers are influenced to start thinking and feeling the same way. The popularity of social media has sped up the spread of this fantasy, especially on the Tumblr platform. One academic who studied the reports of parents alarmed by sudden changes in their children coined the term “rapid onset gender dysphoria.” [\[5\]](#)

Anyone who has been around adolescents for any length of time doesn't need to be surprised by this dynamic. Teens copy each

other in all kinds of ways.

Many adolescents who identify as transgender suffer from anxiety, depression, and self-injury.[{6}](#) There is a whole constellation of painful mental health struggles all bound up together. We are also finding that a disproportionate number of teens who explore the transgender identity are on the autism spectrum.[{7}](#)

They already feel the shame of being different, of being “other than,” and it’s easy for them to mislabel themselves as transgender instead of just different.

One final note on transgender: we must not go along with the Emperor’s New Clothes story that athletes can compete as the opposite sex just by declaring themselves so. It’s not just heartbreaking, it’s *wrong* for teenage boys to rob girl athletes of scholarships[{8}](#), not to mention dignity, by unfairly competing against them and demanding to use their restrooms and locker rooms.[{9}](#)

Why Have So Many Christians and Entire Churches Become Pro-Gay?

More and more individuals and churches have come out in support of homosexuality and gay marriage. Why is that?

I think there are two big reasons so many confessing believers in Christ have allowed themselves to be more shaped by the culture than by the truth of God’s word, drifting into spiritual compromise and even into apostasy, which means abandoning the truth of one’s faith.

Reason One: Rejecting the Authority of God’s Word

The first reason is that millions of people are rejecting the authority of God’s word.

The bitter fruit of several decades of shallow preaching,

teaching and discipleship is that many believers have been especially vulnerable to Satan's deceptive question to Eve in the Garden of Eden: "Did God really say . . .?" When Christians ignore or flat-out reject the unmistakably clear biblical statements condemning homosexual behavior, they are playing into the enemy's temptation to justify disobedience by making feelings and perceptions more important than God's design and standards.

There are now two streams of thought on same-sex relationships and behavior: the Traditional, Biblical View and the Revisionist View.[{10}](#) The Revisionist View basically says, "It doesn't matter what the Bible actually says, it doesn't mean what 2000 years of church history has said it means, it means what we want it to say." And we want it to say that God endorses all relationships that invoke love."

Reason Two: Snagged by the Gay Agenda

When people don't submit themselves to the truth of the Word of God, they are easily shaped and swayed by the six points of a brilliantly designed "Gay Manifesto" spelled out in a book called *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s*.[{11}](#) This gay agenda has been executed perfectly in the United States. (Note: these are the authors' words, not mine.)

- 1. Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and often as possible.*
- 2. Portray members of the LGBTQ community as victims.*
Indoctrinate mainstream America that members of the LGBTQ community were "born this way."
- 3. Give protectors a just cause: anti-discrimination.*
- 4. The use of TV, music, film and social media to desensitize mainstream Americans to their plight as gay people.*

5. Portray Gays and Lesbians as pillars in society. Make gays look good.

6. Once homosexuals have begun to gain acceptance, anti-gay opponents must be vilified, causing them to be viewed as repulsive outcasts of society.

This is how I see how we got to this place where so many people have been deceived. They didn't anchor themselves to the Truth of the Word of God, and they opened themselves to the cultural brine of Kirk and Madsen's plan to overhaul straight America.

I will close with four personal observations about this situation:

1. Christians have bought into the culture's worship of feelings over God's unchanging revelation
2. People love how making themselves an ally and protector of the underdog makes them feel, despite God's design and standards for sexuality and marriage.
3. Not enough of us Christ-followers are living lives that demonstrate the beauty and satisfaction of abiding in Christ.
4. The church has been dismal at loving those who struggle with their sexuality and showing them the grace that is in God's heart toward them. It's essential to both speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and seek to show love filled with truth.

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How Should We Think About Pride Month?

How should Christ-followers think about Pride Month?

Well, first, in case you are not aware, Pride Month is a time of highlighting and celebrating everything LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender). You might have seen a few more letters tacked on—QQIAA (queer, questioning, intersex,

asexual, ally).

It's hard NOT to notice it's Pride Month when rainbows suddenly appear on all kinds of products and logos. Many cities have Pride marches, much of which is not safe to broadcast on the evening news because the behavior in these parades is definitely not family-friendly.

How should believers think about it all?

We need to pass our thoughts and judgments through the filter of God's word. What does God think about Pride Month?

First, every single person who is part of the LGBT community is a precious soul that He made in His image, for whom Christ died. And very few who identify as LGBT have not sustained some sort of soul wound, which makes this promise in Isaiah 42:3 even dearer: "A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice." So in terms of the individuals who participate in Pride Month, God knows each of them by name and He loves them, tenderly and great compassion.

God understands the heart cry of those in the LGBT community to belong, to be included and not excluded, to be visible and heard and understood and cared for, to hear that they matter. These are the heart desires of those who align under the Pride flag.

And God gets it, because those are legitimate desires that we all have because we're born that way. God made us that way, all of us, to long to be loved, accepted, and affirmed.

It means the world to those who have found community under the LGBT banner because they were "different," they were "other," so they often felt marginalized and ostracized from their families or school communities or religious communities.

So Pride Month is a call to love the people who celebrate it.

But that's not all.

God has also revealed His design and intention for human sexuality and gender identity, both in the Old Testament and, in the words of Jesus Himself, in the New Testament: "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" (Matthew 19:4-5)

God made human beings male and female. It really is that simple, regardless of how complicated people's feelings can be about gender.

And He intended sexual expression to be limited to husband and wife within marriage, which we see by the Bible's 44 references to sexual immorality (sex outside of marriage) as sin.

In view of the LGBT community's desire for not just legitimacy but commendation in any and all sexual expression, we need to remember that God specifically forbade same-sex behavior in Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable." In the New Testament, the apostle Paul expands this prohibition to include lesbianism in Romans 1:24-27:

Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. . . . Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men . . .

So how should Christians think about Pride Month? With discernment.

- Remembering that the people involved are precious to God, but the identity they are choosing falls short of the glory of God (the Bible's definition of sin, Romans 3:23) because it does not submit to and align with God's intention for human sexuality.
- Not being fooled by the slogan "Love is love," which is a slick gloss over the false declaration that calling something "love" automatically validates it. How about brother-sister incestuous "love"? How about adulterous "love"? How about polyamory (multiple partners in a relationship) "love"? And, especially since we have already started down the slippery slope, how long before there is a call to extend the sexual underpinnings of "love is love" to children and animals?
- Comparing one's view of all things LGBT to God's word. Those who identify as an Ally should ask themselves why they want to support behavior and an identity God calls sin.
- Taking seriously the sin of pride, holding two important ideas as equally important: Philippians 3:19 says those who "are proud of what they should be ashamed of" (such as those exhibiting their broken sexuality in Pride parades) are "enemies of the cross of Christ." But Proverbs 16:5 warns, "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD." So every single one of us needs to confess our sin of pride, of comparing ourselves to anyone else so we feel we are better than others. In fact, seeing the Pride flag during Pride Month would make a great reminder to examine ourselves to look for a prideful, judge-y heart, to confess it as sin and repent.

Many of those who have come out of homosexuality are deeply grieved by Pride Month because they know it encourages hurting, lonely, wounded people to try to find life where it can never be found. They know the truth of Jeremiah 2:13, where God says,

“For my people have done two evil things: They have abandoned me— the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!”

How should a Christian think about Pride Month? With compassion and prayer for those caught in it, that they will turn to Jesus as the fountain of living water. And with humility for ourselves, to repent of any pride that comes from comparing ourselves to those waving rainbow flags. As Billy Graham said, “Never take credit for not falling into a temptation that never tempted you in the first place.”

This blog post originally appeared at

blogs.bible.org/how-should-we-think-about-pride-month/ on June 15, 2021.

Heterosexual and Homosexual Marriages – Are Straight and Gay Marriages Identical?

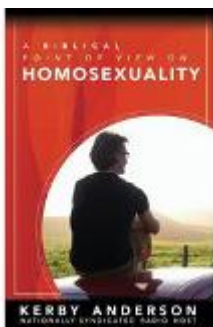
Although Kerby wrote this article before same-sex marriage was legalized, his assessment of homosexual relationships has not changed because the intrinsically disordered nature of same-sex relationships has not changed. He identifies the measurable benefits of heterosexual marriage over other types of family set ups. Then he considers the difficulties introduced by homosexual marriage in obtaining the same benefits. With the fundamental differences between them, considering them to be equivalent will not make it so.

Is there any difference between heterosexual marriage and homosexual marriage? We are told that there is essentially no difference between the two and thus marriage status should be granted to anyone of any sexual orientation. This is not true (as I discuss in more detail in my book *A Biblical Point of View on Homosexuality*[\[1\]](#)).



Traditional, Heterosexual Marriage

Let's begin by talking about the benefits of traditional marriage. Traditional marriage is the foundation of civilization. So before we even consider the impact of homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and other alternative lifestyles, we should consider the benefits of traditional marriage to society.



An excellent summary of the studies done on married people can be found in the book, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better off Financially* by Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher.[\[2\]](#) Here are just a few of the many findings from the research:

- Married people are much happier and likely to be less unhappy than any other group of people.
- Married people live up to eight years longer than divorced or never-married people.
- Married people suffer less from long-term illnesses than those who are unmarried.
- Married people are less likely to engage in unhealthy

behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse.

- Married people have twice the amount of sex as single people and report greater levels of satisfaction in the area of sexual intimacy.

A look at individual studies by social scientists also confirms these conclusions. For example, married men and women report greater satisfaction with family life.[{3}](#) Married couples report greater sexual satisfaction.[{4}](#) Married women report higher levels of physical and psychological health.[{5}](#) Married people experience less depression.[{6}](#)

Researchers at the Heritage Foundation have also compiled numerous statistics that also demonstrate the positive impact of marriage. Traditional marriages have higher incomes when compared to step families, cohabiting couples, or those who never married.[{7}](#) Traditional marriages also result in lower welfare costs to society when compared to divorced couples or out-of-wedlock births.[{8}](#) Married women are less likely to be victims of domestic violence, and married couples are more likely to be happy and less likely to attempt suicide.[{9}](#)

The studies compiled by the Heritage Foundation also found many positive effects on children.[{10}](#) For example, they found that:

- Children in married families are less likely to suffer serious child abuse.
- Children in married families are less likely to end up in jail as adults.
- Children in married families are less likely to be depressed as adolescents.
- Children in married families are less likely to be expelled from school.

- Children in married families are less likely to repeat a grade in school.
- Children in married families are less likely to have developmental problems.
- Children in married families are less likely to have behavioral problems.
- Children in married families are less likely to use drugs (marijuana, cocaine).
- Children in married families are less likely to be sexually active.

Children benefit from traditional marriage in the same way just as was previously mentioned adults. For example, they are better off financially. The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that child poverty dramatically increased outside of intact marriages.[{11}](#) Children in married homes are generally healthier physically and emotionally when they reach adulthood than children from other home situations.[{12}](#)

Although these are relatively recent studies, the conclusions have been known for much longer. In the 1930s, British anthropologist J.D. Unwin studied 86 cultures that stretched across 5,000 years. He found that when a society restricted sex to marriage, it thrived. However, he also found that when a society weakened the sexual ethic of marriage, it deteriorated and eventually disintegrated.[{13}](#)

Differences Between Heterosexual Marriages and Homosexual Marriages

Are heterosexual couples and homosexual couples different? The popular media treats heterosexual couples and homosexual couples as if they are no different. One headline proclaimed, "Married and Gay Couples Not All that Different," and

essentially said they were just like the couple next door.{14}

There is good reason to question that assumption. Dr. Timothy Dailey has compiled numerous statistics that demonstrate significant differences.{15} He shows that “committed” homosexual relationships are radically different from married couples in at least six ways: relationship duration, monogamy vs. promiscuity, relationship commitment, number of children being raised, health risks, and rates of intimate partner violence.

Consider the duration of a relationship. Gay activists often point to high divorce rates among married couples, suggesting that heterosexuals fare no better than homosexuals. Research shows, however, that male homosexual relationships last only a fraction of the length of most marriages. By contrast, the National Center for Health Statistics reported that 66% of first marriages last ten years or longer, with 50% lasting twenty years or longer.{16}

Various studies of homosexual relationships show a much different picture. For example, the Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census of nearly 8,000 homosexuals found that only 15% described their “current relationship” lasting twelve years or longer.{17} A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the “duration of steady partnerships” was one and a half years.{18} In a study of male homosexuality in reported in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, Pollak found that “few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners.”{19}

Another key difference is “monogamy versus promiscuity.” Married heterosexual couples are more monogamous than the popular culture and media would have you believe. A national survey published in the *Journal of Sex Research* found that 77% of married men and 88% of married women had remained faithful

to their marriage vows.{20} A national survey in *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* came to essentially the same conclusions (75% of husbands and 85% of wives).{21}

By contrast, homosexuals were much less monogamous and much more promiscuous. In the classic study by Bell and Weinberg, they found that 43% of white male homosexuals had sex with 500 or more partners, with 28% having 1,000 or more sex partners.{22} And a Dutch study of partnered homosexuals, published in the journal *AIDS*, found that men with a steady partner nevertheless had an average of eight sexual partners per year.{23}

The authors of *The Male Couple* reported that in their study of 156 males in homosexual relationships lasting from 1 to 37 years, "Only seven couples have a totally exclusive sexual relationship, and these men all have been together for less than five years. Stated another way, all couples with a relationship lasting more than five years have incorporated some provision for outside sexual activity in their relationships."{24} They also found that most homosexual men understood sexual relations outside the relationship to be the norm, and usually viewed standards of monogamy as an act of oppression.

A third difference between heterosexual and homosexual couples is "level of commitment." Timothy Dailey argues: "If homosexuals and lesbians truly desired the same kind of commitment signified by marriage, then one would expect them to take advantage of the opportunity to enter into civil unions or registered partnerships."{25} This would provide them with legal recognition as well as legal rights. However, it is clear that few homosexuals and lesbians have chosen to take advantage of these various unions (same-sex marriage, civil unions, domestic partnerships), suggesting a difference in commitment compared with married couples.

These three differences (along with others detailed by Timothy Dailey) demonstrate a significant difference between heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Gay and lesbian couples appear less likely to commit themselves to the type of monogamous relationship found in traditional marriage.

Is It Natural?

Many in the homosexual movement say that their feelings are natural. Often they even say that their feelings are God-given. So how could they be wrong? Years ago Debbie Boone sang a song with the lyrics, "How can it be so wrong when it feels so right?" That is the argument from many in the homosexual movement. It feels natural, so it must be natural.

But God's character as revealed in the Bible should be our standard. There are many sinful acts that feel natural, but that does not mean they are moral. Romans 1:26-27 makes it very clear that these passions are unnatural:

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Homosexual desires and temptations may feel natural to some people, but they are not what God intends for human beings. Any sexual encounter outside of marriage is immoral. The Bible refers to the sin of sexual immorality nearly four dozen times. Homosexuality, along with fornication and adultery, are all examples of sexual immorality.

Although God created a perfect world (Genesis 1-2), it was spoiled by sin. The effects of sin impact us physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Homosexual temptation, like

other sexual temptations, is a result of the fall (Genesis 3). When Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees, He reminded them that God “created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’” (Matthew 19:4-5).

Although there is a concerted effort to push for homosexual marriage within our society, we have seen in this article that there are fundamental differences between heterosexual marriage and homosexual marriage. For more information on this topic, visit the Probe website and read many of our other [articles on homosexuality](#). And you might pick up a copy of my book, *A Biblical Point of View on Homosexuality*.

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The Thought Police Are Here

Recently, in the same week, I watched two strikingly polar opposite events unfold on my Facebook feed. One was the long-awaited, long-prayed-for birth of a precious baby girl whose daddy had left homosexuality and repented of a gay identity as he pursued intimacy with Christ. After several years of sexual sobriety and spiritual growth, he was actually quite surprised to find himself starting to be attracted to girls. I remember him saying, "If you think puberty is rough the first time, you should try it at 28!" I was privileged to watch him weep with gratitude through his wedding to a beautiful lady, and pray for him as he became a pastor of an inner city church. And finally, after a failed pregnancy and several failed adoptions, God gave him and his wife the desires of their heart when their little one was born.

This happened the same week that Amazon banned a number of books offering hope for people struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions or gender confusion, people like my friend. A gay activist convinced Amazon that the books by a clinical psychologist who had successfully treated hundreds of men who did not want to be gay, and other books presenting a biblical

view of sexuality, are dangerous. He said they cause LGBT people to hate themselves and inflict grave psychological damage. Because no one should be able to say there's anything wrong with same-sex relationships and behavior.

It's really not any different than if a coalition of distilleries, vintners and brewing companies went after Alcoholics Anonymous to shut them down, proclaiming that it's dangerous and even wrong to support people who want to stop drinking. And there's something wrong with people not wanting alcohol to control or even destroy their lives, because drinkers are who they are and they need to embrace this reality.

Critics use the pejorative labels "gay cure" or "conversion therapy" to shut down the voices of those offering help to those who want it. No reputable therapist, counselor, or pastoral care person will attempt to force change on someone who doesn't want it, but what about those who *do* want help? What about another friend of mine, who sought help when he was deep in the weeds of his gay life? When I asked what made him reach out for help over 20 years ago, he answered, "God-induced misery. If the Holy Spirit truly lives within, there is no peace, there is no stability, there is no hiding. As James says, The double minded man is unstable in all his ways."

But technology has allowed "the Thought Police" to shut down the voices they don't like, like those of my friends. The stewards of high tech hold the power to decide what they want people to hear and see.

- John Stonestreet's recent Breakpoint commentary^{[\[1\]](#)} relates how Facebook deleted a pro-lifer's post quoting Saint Augustine, about focusing on the sins of others to avoid examining our own. Facebook says St. Augustine's comment violated community standards.

- YouTube has restricted a quarter of Dennis Prager's conservative videos, including one on the Ten Commandments (because it mentions murder).
- Smarter Every Day's resident engineer (and winsomely outspoken Christ-follower) Destin Sandlin created three powerful videos explaining how YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook are being manipulated to control what we see.[{2}](#)
- A single pro-LGBT activist convinced Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Google to remove the [Living Hope Ministries](#) app, grossly misrepresenting LHM's mission and activity as dangerous and even "life-threatening." The app was filled with expository teachings of various books of the Bible, weekly devotions, and personal testimonies of God's transformational work. The app had happily resided on all platforms for more than three years.

This app was removed for supposedly being life-threatening to LGBTQ youth, yet the same hosts offer more than a dozen pro-gay apps that are designed to encourage sexual exploration and provide a means for individuals to hook-up for anonymous sex—an activity that has proven to be dangerous and even life-threatening.[{3}](#)

These are examples of the Thought Police in action.

This is why it is more important than ever before for our thinking to be more shaped, more informed by the truth of the Word of God than by the gatekeepers of Big Tech.

For example, we need to embrace the truth of 1 Corinthians 6, describing the first century church that had former homosexuals in it:

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor

revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (vv. 9-11, emphasis mine)

I keep thinking about personal friends of mine, and their families, that the Thought Police don't want the world to know about: men and women who have turned from a gay identity to finding their identity in Christ, who have reconciled their faith and sexuality to honor and glorify God in it. Some have developed an attraction to their now-spouse, and are happily living faithful lives of service in their churches and in the world. Some report that their same-sex attractions haven't changed, but instead of a blaring, controlling force, they have retreated to white noise in the background of their lives. Their stories are real, and life-giving, and fulfilling.

But you won't know about it if the Thought Police have their way.

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This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/the_thought_police_are_here
on July 23, 2019.

How Bad is This Conversion Therapy Thing?

As pro-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) voices and values grow louder and more insistent in the culture, what about those people of faith who experience same-sex attraction and don't want it? What are they supposed to do with feelings and desires at odds with their faith? How are they supposed to learn to reconcile their faith and their sexuality?

The cultural narrative has become, "LGBT represents normal, healthy variations in human sexuality, so everyone should support and



celebrate all forms of sexual diversity. And if you don't, we're going to punish you, shame you, and squelch your voice."

Part of the punishing and shaming includes outrage over "Conversion Therapy." A growing number of states outlaw it. What makes it so bad and why are people so angry about it?

What is Conversion Therapy?

Conversion Therapy is usually defined as therapy designed to change a person's sexual orientation. But is that what it really is? Therapy is a shortened form of the word "psychotherapy," which means the treatment given by a licensed mental health professional such as a psychologist or psychiatrist, a social worker, or a licensed counselor. So Conversion Therapy isn't therapy without a professional counselor of some kind, with the goal of changing someone's sexual orientation.[\[1\]](#) But do a Google search for

organizations being labelled as doing (or even promoting) Conversion Therapy—which will include a number of churches—and you’ll find neither element happening.

Conversion Therapy is the current buzzword that instantly communicates something that smears hate, shame, judgment and probable suicidality in those who undergo it, forced or not. It is not acceptable to say there’s anything wrong or unhealthy about any form of “sexual diversity.” Those that do—for example, anyone who holds to a biblical, traditional view of marriage and sexuality—are labeled as haters, bigots, prudes, outdated . . . and wrong.

Anne Paulk, director of Restored Hope Network, describes it as “an ideological term used by the GLBTQ activist community and their supporters who seek to link compassionate spiritual care and talk therapy with horrible, clearly disreputable practices.” [\[2\]](#)

These “disreputable practices” include stories of some extremists who used torture, pain and punishment to try and exorcise homosexuality from people. Most notably and recently, the movie *Boy Erased* purports to show the true story of a teenage boy whose parents sent him to a strict camp that left heartbreaking wounds on his soul. (It should also be noted that the producers took a number of creative liberties to produce the most dramatic moments of the film, none of which actually happened per the book.) The cultural narrative lumps extremists with all those engaged in helping those with unwanted homosexuality, painting them all with a broad brush of condemnation.

Helping Those Who *Want* the Help

A number of ministries and churches actively seek to help those who don’t want their same-sex feelings or their discomfort with their gender. Or, even if they don’t fight against their feelings, they want to live lives honoring to

God despite their desires, which means not giving into them. These ministries and organizations neither offer nor promise conversion of homosexual attractions into heterosexual ones. That would be like offering to make someone stop loving chocolate and start loving kale. Not gonna happen, right?

But they can teach what God's word says about sexuality, discipleship, and living a life pleasing to God. They can help people (note: choose to, not be forced to) submit every area of their lives to the lordship of Jesus Christ, including sexuality. There are many who define and identify themselves by their sexuality; God's word calls us to define and identify ourselves by our relationship to Him.

Human sexuality is a complex, many-layered issue comprised of a lifetime of experiences, perceptions, habits, and ways of thinking. There's nothing simple about it. It has also, for every one of us, been impacted by the Fall and the pervading presence of sin.

But Is Change Even Possible?

Ever hear the pejoratively-used phrase "Pray away the gay"? That's as effective as praying away fat. A prayer like, "Please Jesus make me stop wanting people/things/food I shouldn't" has never worked because He doesn't have a magic wand. He says to all those who want to be His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). That means saying no to ourselves and to our flesh, the part of us that operates independently of God. The apostle Paul instructs us in Romans 12:2 to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind. . . ." Cooperating with God to renew our mind means submitting our thoughts and habits to Him, "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). The call to surrender every part of us, including our sexuality, as the way to obey and honor God, is a difficult one, and it takes community. It takes the support of other Christ-followers to

walk alongside us, pray for us, speak God's truth to us, encourage us, challenge us, restore us when we stumble and fall, and help us keep going.

Change is not only possible, it is the mark of things that are alive. And it is the fruit of the gospel. Lasting change comes not from human effort but from supernatural transformation as we surrender to the work of God in our lives. We experience change as we are transformed into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18). Christlikeness produces change in how we think, what we believe, how we see ourselves and others, our behavior, and finally—like the caboose on a train—our feelings. But there's no point in trying to change the feelings apart from the rest of the process.

Discipleship is often what's happening in ministries and churches that are smeared with the label of "Conversion Therapy," being lied about and attacked by people who can't abide any position other than their own.

Next time you see the term "Conversion Therapy," know that it's not about shutting down bad therapists. It's about shutting up people who agree with God about sexuality.

1. I am indebted to the amazing Joe Dallas for his crazy-great analysis and tender compassion concerning this issue, particularly this article: joedallas.com/2018/11/13/dances-with-snakes/

2.

www.wnd.com/2019/02/ex-gay-leader-jesus-still-transforms-lives/

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/how_bad_is_this_conversion_therapy_thing

on February 19, 2019.

Gay Men to Lead Boy Scouts: Gates' Failure to Render Genuine Leadership

This week the Boy Scouts of America have announced they will welcome transgendered youth into the program. This culture-following trend began when the BSA allowed gay scouts, then gay leaders. This shows a serious leadership gap, according to Eagle Scout, former Scout employee, and volunteer Byron Barlowe.

Boy Scouts will now be subject to gay adult leadership if BSA (Boy Scouts of America) president Robert Gates' advice is taken. Gates, who once held our military's top position as Secretary of Defense, declared the inevitability of ending the ban on openly gay Scout leaders while [addressing the BSA national annual meeting](#) in Atlanta Thursday, May 21, 2015.

Does anyone really doubt that Gates' position will be made official, especially given recent advances for gay rights at the states' level, with the Girl Scouts, in Ireland's national referendum vote three days later and most likely via the United States Supreme Court this June? I wager it'll be only a few months before it's official BSA policy.

The question for Mr. Gates: How does bowing to the rapidly changing poll numbers on this issue constitute leadership? Don't heroes often have to stand alone? Even if Gates holds convictions that would dictate openness in his personal dealings, his stated premise for lifting the long-time ban on gay Scout leaders that stands to affect tens of thousands of youth is flawed: that the proverbial train has left the station and the organization needs to cover its rear guard, to

go with the inevitable flow of gay rights, to kowtow to pressure from within and without. Pure pragmatism on parade. And entirely inappropriate and unrespectable.

Brave New World vs. “A Scout is Brave”

Part of the Scout Law every Boy Scout for 105 years has memorized and recited reads, “A Scout is trustworthy . . . brave . . . reverent. . . .” But the BSA has done a 180-degree flip on the topic of homosexuality, having won a Supreme Court case against a gay membership push as recently as 2000. [The Opinion of the Court in Dale v. Boy Scouts of America](#), written by Chief Justice Rehnquist, reads, “The Boy Scouts asserts that it ‘teach[es] that homosexual conduct is not morally straight’” in its defense of denying avowed homosexual and gay activist James Dale leadership privileges with a Scout troop.

Oh, what a difference fifteen years makes when one bases decisions on the swiveling wind vane of a degrading culture.

To his credit, Dr. Gates called for individual chartering organizations—representing 70 percent of Boy Scout Troops and Cub Packs—to decide for themselves how to implement such a policy. Yet, in the same speech, Gates cites the refusal of a New York Council to abide by current BSA policy in hiring gay leaders as a realistic reason to change the national policy. Which is it? Gay men get the right to lead, or troops and packs get to say no? We see where that is going in the courts and in culture with Christian photographers, bakers and T-shirt makers: inescapable pressure to succumb.

Live Up to High Standards of Scouting

I’m holding President Gates to a high standard here. Sure, he’s been pressured by his own big business (read: big donor) board members like Randall Stephenson of AT&T and James Turley of Ernst & Young to eradicate the BSA’s longstanding policies against gay participation at every level. Though it may not

compare to high stakes, national level non-profit boardroom politics, I lost my job as a BSA District Executive by holding to the principles of Scouting (and my biblical faith). When asked to misrepresent the number of Cub Scout Packs in local schools at a BSA Council in North Carolina, I refused. Threats didn't move me despite my 23-year-old, first-job fears. Call me naïve. Then explain that to a boy. It would be refreshing to see Mr. Gates stand up to power himself.

Even if I agreed with gay rights claims concerning the private youth training organization, I'd object to the hypocrisy of its leader. Gates' recent declaration, as with the BSA's 2013 decision to enroll openly gay Scouts, is modeling another dereliction of duty. Yet "duty to God," others and self has always formed the three-legged stool of values on which Scouting stood. God is not confused on this issue, nor was the Scouting program for a full century.

If This Goes, Scouting Will Forever Be Altered

I write "values on which Scouting stood" in past tense advisedly. As I was quoted via the *Los Angeles Times* syndicate while demonstrating against the policy change to allow openly gay Scouts in 2013, this is the end of Scouting as we have known it. Another prediction: A sharp decrease in numbers following that decision will be surpassed if the BSA allows admittedly gay leaders. As an Eagle Scout, father of an Eagle Scout, former volunteer Scouting leader and BSA local executive, I can no longer support in any way the Boy Scouts of America. I'll support other youth programs.

This conviction grieves me, but borrowing from the Christian reformer Martin Luther, here I stand and I can do no other. No, this episode does not rise to the level of religious reformation; however, the gravity of such social slides will change the cultural landscape for as long as our Republic

stands. The gay advocacy heavyweight Human Rights Campaign is right when it celebrates Gates' announcement as a huge victory in its drive for full acceptance of homosexuals across the culture, given that the BSA is "one of America's most storied institutions."

As SecDef, Gates ended the ambiguous "Don't ask, don't tell" doctrine, a decision that opened doors for openly gay service men and women to serve freely despite fears of sexual chaos. Our former CIA Director and, again, Secretary of Defense Gates now holds the top leadership post among a younger group of Americans. On this issue he has led neither members of the armed forces nor impressionable and sexually vulnerable adolescent Scouts.

Once again, Gates' ethics reek of pure pragmatism: "We must deal with the world as it is, not as we might wish it to be. The status quo in our movement's membership standards cannot be sustained," he said to the assembled Scouting leaders.

Never mind high ideals. The wind has blown, the ship has sailed and we must get on board or be left behind (or at least sued heavily). Oh, such bravery.

Posted May 2015 | Updated Jan 2017

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When a Church Tells a Member, "It's Not OK to be Gay"

Watermark Community Church in Dallas (where my husband and I are members) was recently dragged into the media when a former member published a letter to the church on the one-year

anniversary of his membership being revoked. After several years of fighting his unwanted same-sex attractions, the young man got weary of the battle and embraced a gay identity—and a boyfriend. The church pleaded with him to repent (turn 180 degrees) and submit to the Bible's commands to sexual purity, but he would not. So the church sent him a letter which the young man made public.

Within hours, a firestorm erupted on social media, TV media, and print media.

Predictably, the church's counter-cultural beliefs and stance were misrepresented out of people's inability (or refusal) to understand biblical values and truths. It would be easy to come away with a very skewed perception of this situation, which is why it's important to use discernment in reading or hearing anything about this controversial subject.

Recall the wisdom of Proverbs 18:17: "The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him." It's important to remember there's another side of every story, and to hold judgment until one's discernment kicks in.

It started when the former member's Facebook post was picked up by the *Dallas Morning News*. His title was "Watermark Church Dismissed Me for Being Gay," and the paper chose the title "[Watermark Asks Homosexual Member to Leave Church](#)." It sure sounds like the church kicked him out, doesn't it? But that's not what happened. The church responded, "Watermark makes a distinction between attending our church [*Sue's note: which the former member was welcome to do*] and being a formal member of our church. We don't remove someone's formal status as a member for struggling with sin—whether that sin is pride, materialism or sexual sin. Every member of Watermark needs God's grace to stand firm in the midst of temptation and His forgiveness for the times we fall short."

Jacqueline Floyd, a *Dallas Morning News* columnist, wrote a

scathing [column](#) criticizing Watermark.

Ms. Floyd:

"A lot of people are upset that an institution that professes love for all its members would exile someone because of his sexual orientation."

And they should be! But that's not what happened. Pastor Todd Wagner's [response](#):

"Following the example of Jesus, Watermark loves and welcomes people of all backgrounds, economic statuses, ethnicities and sexual struggles. Also following his example, we encourage people to turn away from sin and to follow Jesus. We have *many members* and *several staff* who struggle with same-sex attraction or for whom same-sex sexual activity is a part of their past. We count it a privilege to labor with them in their desire to resist temptation, and we rejoice with them as they experience forgiveness and new life in Christ. Their stories are powerful and serve as beautiful testimonies to the transforming power of Jesus Christ." [Emphasis his]

Ms. Floyd:

"He tried for years to conform to church requirements that he alter his essential nature, 'repent' his sexual orientation, undergo a form of 'conversion therapy' that research as well as mainstream psychology and counselors have denounced as harmful and pointless."

This makes sense if you believe the culture's sexual mythology that says being gay is one's "essential nature," as if a gay identity were the most important thing about an individual. (Consider how unbalanced it would be if we switched out the standard for how well someone can sing, declaring that one's "essential nature" was one's ability to carry a tune—or not. How awfully narrow and unnecessarily limiting that would be, as if every other aspect of one's giftings and temperament,

interests and abilities paled in comparison to their singing voice!)

The church does not require that anyone “alter their essential nature,” but it does align itself with scripture, acknowledging that we are all born sinful and broken, with a tendency to rebel and disobey against God:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;
there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.
All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.” (Romans 3:10b-12)

Our true “essential nature” is that we are both infinitely precious and valuable because we are made in God’s image, but also fallen and sinful. That “essential nature” can’t be altered by ourselves, but it can be transformed by God. That is the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I don’t know if anyone at Watermark mistakenly urged this brother to repent of his sexual orientation as if he had chosen to be same-sex attracted, but we certainly do exhort everyone to renounce and repent of all sexual sin (which means anything outside of marriage between one man and one woman). Concerning “conversion therapy,” Watermark doesn’t have that. What we do have is a call to discipleship, asking people to be “all in” with Jesus, obeying His word and pursuing intimacy with Christ. That intimacy usually produces heart change, which means transformation from the inside out, where therapy is an attempt to bring about change from the outside in.

Ms. Floyd:

“Trying to ‘change’ someone’s sexual orientation is about as useful as trying turn a turtle into a duck. When this witch-doctor alchemy predictably failed to work, the church blamed

him—and revoked his membership. Not in person. They mailed him a letter.”

Lots of people believe that sexual orientation is fixed and unchangeable. That’s because if a lie is repeated loud enough and long enough, people will accept it as truth. Change is possible, and feelings (because that’s what we’re talking about here) are fluid. We see change happening in the first-century church; 1 Corinthians 6:11 says to former homosexuals, “And such were some of you.” I have seen change happen before my own eyes, for 18 years of involvement at [Living Hope Ministries](#). And if that’s not enough, google “Lisa Diamond Sexual Fluidity” for some intriguing academic [research](#) that cites that change happens.

But then it sure sounds cold to mail someone a letter revoking his membership. And it would be—if it had happened like that. The letter was just the final formal communication, the period at the end of a series of anguished, face-to-face conversations.

See why it’s so important to remember that “The first to plead his case seems right, until another comes and examines him”?

The letter from our own former member needs to be read with discernment as well:

“I spent years battling against my own homosexuality. When I wasn’t able to change, you turned your back on me.”

I’m sure there were some people mistakenly thinking and hoping that his same-sex attractions were a matter of choice that could be changed on demand. “Everstraights,” especially men, have a hard time imagining what it’s like to be drawn to the same sex, and can easily burden those who are, with unrealistic expectations.

Battling one’s homosexuality is incredibly difficult, and I can appreciate that many, many people pray hundreds of times, “God, I beg You, take this away!” That prayer is like mine

growing up: “God, *please! [Heal me!](#)*” It’s like the apostle Paul’s prayer, recorded in 2 Corinthians 7b-9:

“I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

Paul pleaded with God to remove his thorn in the flesh, but God had something better. I pleaded with God to remove my thorn in the flesh, but He had [something better](#). My same-sex attracted brother, our former member, pleaded with God to remove his thorn in the flesh, and He had something better for him as well, but my brother decided to embrace his flesh instead. He wrote,

“I am who God made me to be. I cannot change my sexual orientation, and nor would I want to. I now have internal peace and happiness unlike ever before.”

No, God did not make anyone same-sex attracted. Based on the thousands of men who have come through Living Hope, I would say God probably made him to be sensitive, artistic, creative, relational, and gifted. But not gay.

It’s not surprising that he now senses “internal peace and happiness unlike ever before.” He quit battling his flesh, the part of us that lives independently from God. The relief that comes from giving into temptation can feel like peace and happiness, for a while. It can feel like freedom. But it comes at a cost. There is no true intimacy with Jesus when we are indulging our flesh. There can be a faux intimacy, the echoes of having walked with Him in obedience and abiding trust. But true intimacy can only happen in the light:

“God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the

darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:5-7)

So I pray for my brother, and I pray for all of us to develop discernment as we process the war of worldviews about sexual ethics. It won't be easy.

[Note: If you want a blessing and strong but grace-filled instruction about church discipline, please watch Todd Wagner's response to this issue from the Watermark platform, "Why Good Leaders Have Always Written Letters to the Church They Love": <http://www.watermark.org/plano/message/4320>]

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/when_a_church_tells_a_member_its_not_ok_to_be_gay
on October 18, 2016.