

Trusting God in the Bizarre

I have tongue cancer. Bizarre, right? I'm not male, nor do I engage in the particularly bad combination of both smoking and drinking, which are the big markers for this nasty invasion. In two weeks I am scheduled for surgery to remove the cancer by cutting out a big chunk of my tongue—which is a particular challenge and sadness for a professional speaker.

One of the things I have discovered is that, even without any drugs, the weight of this diagnosis and the upcoming difficult surgery and recovery has consumed a lot of my mental and emotional energy. Everything in my life has taken a back seat to this crisis.

Let me share some observations from my “Cancer Journey” journal, in no thought-through order because . . . see the above paragraph.

The oral surgeon who biopsied my tongue is a dear believer from church. When he delivered the bad news to me with amazing tenderness and gentleness, he was “Jesus with skin on” to me. I truly sensed the Lord was telling me through my doctor-now-friend that He was allowing this challenge that was going to be hard, and a lot of work, but He is with me. I was so blessed to be able to freely respond by asking, “Would you please pray for me?” And he did. The first of many, many prayers I have received.

Years ago, when an older friend got breast cancer, I asked her if she struggled with anger at God for letting this bad thing happen to her. She said, “Oh no! God has been so faithful and so good to me all these years of walking with Him, I know that He is allowing this for a reason. I trust Him.” And that’s why she didn’t ask the “Why me?” question, either: living in a fallen world, why NOT her? At that time, I prayed, “Lord, I will continue to ask that You spare me from cancer, but if You

don't, I am pre-deciding to respond the way Delores did." So I didn't have to work out my response when the diagnosis came.

My primary care doctor told me a long time ago to stop diagnosing myself; I'm never right. (And not to consult with Dr. Google either.) But that's what I had done concerning the soreness on the side of my tongue that has lingered for months. Two dentists advised me to see an oral surgeon and possibly get it biopsied, but I was so *sure* it couldn't be cancer that I dragged my feet following through. I am fully repenting of "leaning on my own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5) and diagnosing myself. And I now have a fuller understanding of why self-sufficiency is a sin . . . and I'm repenting of that too.

Early in this cancer journey, Jesus spoke to my heart through Revelation 2:10—"Do not fear what you are about to suffer." I know He was addressing the church in Smyrna with that verse, but He pretty much burned it into MY heart when I read it one morning. He knew that, being a pain weenie, I was going to struggle with fear. I have to keep reminding myself of what to do with my fear: Psalm 53:6 says, "When I am afraid, I will trust in You." And in these days of Advent, I get to be reminded frequently through Christmas music that Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us." I need to trust Him; I need to trust IN Him; I need to recall Isaiah 43:1-5, where He says, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you." Just like I used to soothe my frightened children when they were small with, "It's OK, it's OK, Mommy's with you."

One night as I prepared for bed and took my evening medication and supplements, I realized that taking oral pain meds post-surgery is going to be a challenge with a crippled tongue. Then I realized that I am going to be losing a body part, and I need to grieve that. The next morning, on the phone with our church's women's pastor who was checking on me, I shared about this realization. As she prayed for me, choked up with compassion, my tears started to fall. The moment I hung up,

great heaving sobs overtook me. And I grieved.

(As hard as it was on me, losing a body part because of disease, I also cried out of anger that the enemy has deceived so many people, especially young people, into thinking that they would be happy if they would just have perfectly healthy body parts amputated. I cried out of compassion for their inevitable double grief of not only losing a *healthy* body part, but the eventual realization that they were lied to about what would fix everything in their thoughts and feelings. And that evil spirits laugh at their pain.)

Instead of a women's Christmas Coffee at church, we were blessed to have 25 hostesses open their homes in multiple cities and multiple zip codes for 25 teachers to share the same basic message that each of us made our own. In my final point, about abiding in Christ, I was able to hold up an IV bag and tubing to illustrate what abiding is like: Jesus said He is the vine, we are the branches. Our job as branches is to stay connected so His "supernatural sap" can flow into us. Just like when we're hooked up to an IV, our job is to stay connected. I asked my hostess's husband to record that part of my message as well as my application about abiding in Christ as I wrestle with this cancer. I was able to edit it down to 6 minutes and post it on Facebook with a request for prayer.

<https://www.facebook.com/559034244/videos/703017111419005/>

Now on my own Facebook feed, I see a very limited number of people's posts. But somehow (cue God to show up) my post made it to hundreds of people's feeds, and 400+ comments and over 3600 views of the video later, I am being prayed for-a LOT! Thank You Lord!

And I need the prayers. I think the cancer is spiritual warfare that God is allowing for His glory and my good. And for other people's good as well, though I may never see it on this side of eternity. One of my friends said, "You are

outspoken and the enemy wants to silence you. What better way than to go after your tongue?" On top of the attack on my body, I've also wrestled at times with fear about the pain. I think it's a spirit of fear. (I've been here before: see my blog post "[I'm Scared, Lord.](#)")

But God . . . because He loves me . . . just gave me a connection on Facebook with a young lady who is not only recovering from the same tongue cancer surgery, it was done by the same surgeon as mine! She has encouraged and reassured me about the pain management. We look forward to meeting face to face soon. That is a Christmas gift from the Lord, and it's part of His answer to the prayers of many people.

I have been in this place of experiencing peace from the prayers of God's people before. My last trip to Belarus, before I lost the ability to walk, I posted a request for people to pray daily for me for "stair grace." There are few elevators in Belarus, and the building where we were staying and teaching had two flights of stairs I had to climb several times a day. I asked for 10 people to pray, and 70 promised they would support me through prayer. And boy did they ever. It was amazing how easy it was to go up and down stairs for almost two weeks.

Until the last day, on my last stair climb, when I sensed the Lord telling me, "I have been answering your friends' prayers for stair grace all this trip. Now I'm going to remove the grace so you can experience what it would have been like without the enabling grace." And. It. Was. HARD!!! I was sore, I was out of breath, my polio leg yelled at me. So I know the huge difference prayer makes, and I am so grateful for the prayer support I've already received. I am desperate for the prayers of God's people!

[The story continues . . .](#) in God's loving hands. . . as I continue to trust Him in the bizarre.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/trusting-god-in-the-bizarre/ on December 20, 2022.

Probe Live: Truth Decay



Kerby Anderson, host of nationally broadcast radio show Point of View and president of Probe Ministries, will discuss how these ideas have infiltrated the church.

THURSDAY DEC 1, 7PM
THE HOPE CENTER
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Join us for the next Probe Live event

Thursday, December 1, 2022

7:00 p.m.

The Hope Center, Plano TX

We encounter postmodern thinking when we share the gospel and then hear, "That's your truth, but it's not my truth." Moral relativism surfaces when someone says, "That may be your morality, but it's not my morality," or "Who are you to say abortion or homosexuality is wrong?" And progressive Christians deny absolute moral truth and therefore question the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

Probe Ministries President Kerby Anderson will provide an overview of these faulty ways of thinking and answer questions from the audience.

We will record this message but not live stream it.

Learning to Lean Hard—AGAIN

Walking with God. The scriptures talk a lot about how we walk, which is biblical language for how we live. But walking itself, beyond the analogies, has a special meaning to me.

As an infant, polio paralyzed me from the waist down, but little baby helper nerve cells sprouted up and gave me some use of my leg back. I needed a full-length brace to be able to stand and walk at all for my first years. And every step of my life has been a rather noticeable limp. So to me, walking = limping.

So when I hear words of wisdom like, “Don’t trust any leader who doesn’t walk with a limp” (meaning, a leader who hides their brokenness and need for Jesus), I’m all over that. I’ve got that “walk with a limp” thing DOWN!

My limp was the cause of great shame for decades. I have always avoided looking in mirrors and plate-glass windows, anything that would remind me of what I look like when I walk. I didn’t need reflective surfaces, though, to be reminded of my limp; the stares of people, especially children, did that, making my soul burn with embarrassment. Every single day.

And when I was 35, a physical therapist instructed me to start using a cane. It helped with stability and relieving some of the stress on my polio leg. As long as I was going to use a cane, I thought, I may as well *enjoy* it by using fun and pretty canes (thanks to FashionableCanes.com!)

And then bad arthritis hit both my hips, and the pain escalated to the point where I literally could not walk or stand for a year and a half. My mobility scooter became my legs 24/7.

I wasn’t limping anymore. Because I wasn’t walking anymore, with or without a cane.

By God’s grace, particularly through Medicare, once I hit 65 I was able to have both hips replaced. The arthritis went into the medical waste bin along with my natural hip joints. I have had no pain since 2018, a daily source of gratitude for me.

And the ability to walk and stand was restored to me. What a blessing!

One day I realized that yes, I was limping again, because *I was walking again!* That put a whole new spin on seeing limping as a *privilege*!

God has used this journey to teach me a number of lessons.

(Such as [“Lessons From a Hospital Bed”](#)) I recently learned a new one.

I often advise people to “lean hard on Jesus” regardless of the reason, but especially in times of trial and crisis. Sometimes they wonder, What does that look like? Legit question!

And one day as I was walking across my kitchen, leaning hard onto my cane, the Holy Spirit nudged me. As usual, without thinking about it, I was depending on my cane to provide stability and assistance and relieve some of the weight and pressure on my increasingly-weak leg. Then, when my cane struck some water on the floor I didn’t see, it slid as if I had been walking on ice. By God’s grace I did not fall, though I could easily have done so—and falling is baaaaaad for people with artificial hips. I suddenly had a new appreciation for how much I need my cane. And I need it to be firmly planted on non-slippery surfaces.

Just like I need Jesus, who is far more secure than my cane on a dry surface.

I need to lean hard on Him in grateful dependence, trusting Him to empower me, lead me, grow me, change me, provide for me. Just like I do my cane, a physical reminder of what “leaning hard” looks like.

But there was another lesson coming.

I don’t need my cane to walk like I used to need my scooter to move. But when I walk without it, my wonky polio limp is not only there, it’s even wonkier than it was before because my new hips changed my gait. Sometimes when I need to carry two items from one room into another, I hook my cane into the crook of my elbow so I have both hands free to carry stuff. When I do that, my walk—my limp—is almost bizarre.

It is not lost on me that when I hook my cane onto my arm like

a fashion accessory instead of leaning hard on it, my walk is wonky. And unnatural. And when I depend on myself, walking in self-sufficiency instead of leaning hard on Jesus, the walk of my life is at least equally wonky. And unnatural. And unattractive.

So yes, my cane is like Jesus. He wants us to lean hard on Him, to depend on Him, instead of treating Him like a fashion accessory. He actually said, “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for ***apart from Me you can do nothing.***” (John 15:5, emphasis mine)

The other day, as I entered the living room with both hands full, my husband said, “I would have been happy to help; you don’t need to wear Jesus on your arm.”

I laughed . . . and then the next time, instead of leaning on self-sufficiency I asked for help. Because leaning on Jesus means, among many other things, that He helps me spurn self-sufficiency and ask for help.

The lessons continue.

(I wrote a 2016 blog post ([Leaning Hard](#)) about my first set of lessons in learning to lean hard, which I had forgotten about until I went to upload this one. I will clearly need to keep learning the lesson.)

This blog post originally appeared at
blogs.bible.org/learning-to-lean-hard-again/ on November 16, 2022.

“How Is It Moral To Own People as Property?”

How is it moral to own people as property and pass them along to your heirs, Leviticus 25:44-46?

We wouldn't say it's moral, but it IS part of life in a fallen world deeply impacted by sin.

The Bible never condones slavery, but God does regulate it to protect people where slavery was part of an economic system.

Much of slavery in the ancient world was different from the heinous, inhuman, and degrading slavery of the past several hundred years (and unfortunately, continuing into today). People would choose to sell themselves into slavery as a way of managing debt and insufficient income to provide for themselves and their families.

Slavery has been and is part of a fallen world, but ultimately, when Jesus Christ sets everything right in the new heavens and the new earth, there will be no slavery. God does have a plan and a timeline for abolishing slavery altogether and forever.

Here's some helpful insight on the subject: www.gotquestions.org/Bible-slavery.html

Blessing you,

Sue Bohlin

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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 heartbreakng 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

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“How Could Jesus Take Our Sins on Himself If God Cannot Tolerate Sin?”

How was it that Jesus, considering He is fully God, and God is not able to have sin anywhere near Him, can take all of our sins on Himself? Having trouble wrapping my mind around this. I fully believe what Jesus did, however, this is a bit confusing for me.

Great question.

You are operating with a misunderstanding common to a LOT of people, that “God is not able to have sin anywhere near Him.” That’s not true. First, consider Job 1, where the Holy Spirit pulls back the curtain on heaven and we see Satan striding confidently into heaven’s throne room. God allowed the most evil of creatures access to Himself. Second, consider the incarnation, where the Son wrapped Himself in human flesh and

entered the sin-filled world where he was literally surrounded by nothing but sinful people His entire earthly existence.

I think it's helpful to look at Habakkuk 1:13, where the prophet writes, "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing." This is Habakkuk's perspective on God, but it is not teaching doctrine. We know from Job 1 that while He is pure, it does not prevent Him from looking on evil. We also know that God is so longsuffering, He does tolerate wrongdoing. He just won't tolerate it forever.

Does this help remove the obstacle to acknowledging that the Holy One can take all our sin into and onto Himself while on the cross? Even without fully understanding what a deep mystery it is?

Blessing you,
Sue Bohlin

Thanks so much for getting back to me and yes that helped and yes it is very deep and mind boggling. And what is it that they say? To completely understand something like that we would then have the mind of God, right?

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“Can God Create a Rock Too Big for Him to Lift?”

I am a young adult who is just beginning to really dig deep into Christianity and what it truly is, and I was presented a statement from one of my past teachers that has haunted me ever since.

We were having a civil conversation about religion and other such topics until I revealed that I believed in God and Christianity. This was immediately (and somewhat sharply) met with a stymieing paradox that goes like this: If God is to be an all-powerful and omnipotent being, then clearly He must be able to do absolutely anything, such as create a rock that cannot be lifted by anyone in all of existence and so forth. But, if God can create an “un-liftable” rock, then that would technically rule out God Himself being able to lift that rock. Therefore, there is something God cannot do, and as a result He is not truly omnipotent.

Now of course I could not answer that question (as I am, as most young teens are, uneducated on answering mystifying questions such as those) and was left to a feeling of defeat and eventually that sinking feeling of having everything you believed in being disproved in one, simple statement.

Can you answer this question to calm those little poking words?

This question has been posed by many people attempting to stymie believers, and there are some really good answers. The bottom line is that God cannot do what is inherently impossible because it's illogical and irrational, such as make a square circle, or lie and deceive us because He is perfect and He is truth. The problem is not power. The problem is a category error.

I love how Dr. Sean McDowell answered this question:
youtu.be/iH4j_jikWXs

You may also enjoy how GotQuestions.org answered this question: www.gotquestions.org/God-rock-heavy-lift.html

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

“How Would You Respond When Someone Prefers to be Called by Their Opposite Gender?”

Sue, my friend texted me this:

“How would you respond (or how have you responded) when someone prefers to be called by their opposite gender? I had a man correct my daughter (she’s only two, almost three) today because she referred to him as ‘he.’ I told him out of deep love for him I could not in good conscience refer to him as ‘her’ but how do I explain that to an almost three-year-old?”

I answered, “Oh wow. That hasn’t happened to me yet. My big kids know and we said that sin clouds their judgment and how they see/feel so they think they will be happier living life as a different gender, but then we remind them that God doesn’t make mistakes and He chooses gender. He made us in His image (like Him) and His design is perfect . . . people mess it up, not Him.”

I tried, but would love to learn from your response also!

Sweet friend, LOVE your answer!! I would explain that sometimes people are confused in their thinking. God made that man a boy and so that is what we call him.

How do you lovingly respond to the gender confused person?

It depends on how the conversation goes, but I would remain

warm and cordial while not backing down by embracing a delusion.

Think “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” Just because everyone appears to be celebrating something that doesn’t make sense, doesn’t make it true. And just as the crowd shushed the little boy who piped up with what everyone could plainly see—the emperor didn’t have any clothes on at all—people are being shushed and canceled when they speak up about the transgender delusion.

One of the reasons the transgender folly continues is people going along with the game of pretend. (And when I say “transgender folly,” I am referring to the ideology, not the people caught up in it who need compassion, not judgment. I believe they are objects of spiritual warfare, being attacked by the enemy of our souls through an insidious lie. Just like in Genesis 3.)

When the man crossed the line to correct a stranger’s little girl, he escalated from confused soul to transgender activist. And activists want the whole world to agree with a delusion. A lie. And we need to push back.

If it were me, I would suggest saying to my child, with a kind voice, “This man is playing a game of pretend, but we’re not playing that game.” This of course would infuriate the man, but he is deliberately pushing an agenda of unreality on the world in general and my child in particular, and that’s not okay. It’s my responsibility to teach and defend truth to my children, and here’s a guy lying to my child and instructing her to participate in that lie.

It’s one thing to present oneself as the other sex, and quite another to cross the line into “incorrecting” a child who could see for herself that he was male! I would let my Mama Bear come out—with gentleness and respect, as 1 Peter 3:15 says—but firmly stating the truth in the face of an egregious

lie.

Blessing you,
Sue Bohlin

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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

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