“Why Don’t You Just Let Homosexuals Live and Let Live?”

I find that you are very passionate about your thoughts and personal beliefs. At the same time, I think that the Bible also shares a very clear message that we are not God, and therefore should do as we believe God wants us to do. God never once asked us to become Gods; therefore we should not pass judgments on to others regarding their life styles, or beliefs. We get it, being gay is a sin, but all sin is on the same level. Killing a child and saying a curse word falls into one group of sin, one no greater than the other.

If you want to start a movement, how about protecting those that can not protect themselves? Children are being abandoned by their parents left and right… and even worse neglected, raped and molested. Adults choosing to be homosexual is just that, a choice. Live and let live, go after the helpless and innocent, they need passionate leader to protect them and their rights.

Thank you for writing. I appreciate your compassion for the hurting and those who need a voice. Bless you!

The reason we address the subject of homosexuality is that God does. He knows it is not His intention for the people He made and dearly loves. He knows that homosexual activity is destructive and hurtful. Yes, choosing to act on one’s same-sex feelings is, indeed, a choice, but it is not a choice like deciding between chocolate or vanilla ice cream. It is more like a choice between drinking grape juice, or Kool-Aid laced with poison. But the message of our culture about homosexuality is that there is no difference because there is no poison.

But God knows there is.

And the loving thing to do is to take a stand for truth, which we can know because of what God says.

I would respectfully disagree that all sin is equal. While all sin separates us from God, and all sin requires the death of His Son in our place, the *consequences* of our sin vary hugely. It is a sin for me to have an uncharitable thought about someone; it is a very different sin for me to pull out a gun and shoot them. If you really believe that no sin is greater than another, do you really not care whether someone thinks critically of your driving, or if they run you off the road into a ditch? Maybe that idea works better in concept than reality.

We aren't interested in starting a movement. We just want to speak the truth in love, as God calls us to. And sometimes that involves judging that some beliefs and lifestyles are dangerous and destructive and hurtful, and pointing that there is another way to live. (May I respectfully point out the irony that of the fact that in writing your email, you are judging our beliefs?)

One final comment. What I think and write about homosexuality is not mere opinion or philosophy. My passion for this issue is fueled by the pain experienced by people I love who "drank the Kool-Aid" and entered into various kinds of gay relationships, and are now experiencing the hurtful consequences in their hearts and, in some case, their bodies. It is fueled by compassion for the hurting family members of those currently living in a way contrary to God's intention for them. This is more than personal beliefs; this is taking a stand for what God says is right so that others can avoid needless pain, and standing in compassion and understanding (and prayer) for those now in that pain.

I hope this helps you better understand where we're coming

from.

Sue Bohlin

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"My Son Came Out As Gay"

My son has told me he is a homosexual, which I believe is not true. He went to a Gay Pride parade this past weekend. I'm asking for your prayers because I don't know how to deal with it. I've put up barriers between us, which I shouldn't because he's my son. I ask God to help me with this but I don't know where to even begin or how to talk to Him.

I am so glad you wrote! For the past 8 or so years, I have been working with a ministry (Living Hope Ministries in Arlington TX) that helps people deal with unwanted homosexuality and the family members of those who identify as gay. I do send this with a prayer that you will allow this trauma to drive you closer to God and closer to your son, who desperately needs your respect, your attention, your affection, and your affirmation. He needs to know his dad loves him and wants to be a part of his life. Putting up barriers is the exact opposite of what will help your son. Invite him places. . . invest in what is important to him. . . ask him about himself. . . spend time just being WITH him so he gets the all-important message "my dad cares about me. I'm important to him."

There is a free, anonymous, confidential, online support group for strugglers and family members like yourself at www.livehope.org. In the "Family and Friends" support group, the executive director of Living Hope and I collaborated on a

welcoming post called “So Your Loved One Just Came Out to You.” I hope you find it helpful.

Sue Bohlin

Welcome to the Family and Friends forum. We are so glad you’re here. . . and we’re so sorry you have to be here at all. The Lord has been gracious in bringing you to this place of acceptance, warmth, understanding and prayer support. You are now a part of “The Fellowship of the Broken.” That’s why we’re all here.

So now you know your loved one experiences same sex attraction (SSA). It’s usually a horrible shock. You may feel like Alice, having just arrived at the bottom of the White Rabbit’s chute. . . but this isn’t Wonderland, is it? You’d prefer to be anywhere but this new reality that’s been forced on you.

Most people, arriving in this place, have two questions: How can I fix my loved one? And, how do I get my old life back, before the disclosure?

Second question first: “How do I get my old life back?” Well, welcome to your “new normal.” We are so sorry—but you can’t go back to the place of not knowing. Praise God, though: He lavishes grace on us in times of transition, even (and perhaps especially) this adjustment to your new, post-disclosure world. We pray for you to experience “acceptance grace,” that you may receive His empowering to live in this new and unwelcome reality.

Back to the first question: “How can I fix my loved one?” (Or a variation of this question: “Where can I send my loved one to be fixed?”) You can’t. Only God can. And He usually works on a timetable and with a methodology that is different from ours. Your loved one is not a broken car that you send to the shop, and he or she will resent being viewed as a problem or a

project.

The best thing you can do is entrust your loved one into God's hands and leave them there. What you CAN do is wear out your knees in intercessory prayer. The most effective prayers are scripture prayers. May we suggest reading through Paul's epistles and writing down his prayers for his beloved friends, which you then adjust on behalf of your loved one? For example, we have learned that grasping how much God loves us is a huge part of emotional healing, because God's love is the healing agent no matter what plagues us. Consider praying Ephesians 3:17-19 (NLT) on behalf of your loved one:

> And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in his/her heart as s/he trusts in him. May his/her roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love. And may s/he have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. May s/he experience the love of Christ, though it is so great s/he will never fully understand it. Then s/he will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

That's #1. But in our ministry, we have learned over the years that when family members come for support and assistance, the greatest need they have is to work on their own "stuff." Every one of us has garbage and scars from living in a fallen world. Every one of us grew up with imperfect parents in an imperfect family. Every one of us has been the recipient of countless "fiery darts" of the Enemy in spiritual warfare. And we all tend to hide our baggage and our scars, all the dark and hurting places of our souls. One wise counselor calls this "Christian denial," and defines it as "denying God access to those places He wants to heal for His glory, and our benefit."

God has brought you to this place in your life where you are ripe for God to do some wonderful, amazing work in your heart. Your loved one's homosexuality is the method He used to invite

you to this place, but it’s not the issue He wants to deal with in you. He wants your heart; He wants your vulnerability; He wants YOU.

So what do you do next?

Give God permission to work. Open your heart to Him: “Lord, what do you want to do in ME? What do you want me to know about my own heart, my own stuff, that I have been avoiding?” It will be tempting to keep your focus on your loved one—it’s much less threatening!—but you need to keep your focus on Jesus. Expect Him to show you things you’ve been in denial about, but also expect that He will lavish His grace on you to see what He wants to show you. He will never expose the dark and hurting places of your heart to you but that He’s not holding those places in His own loving and safe hands.

Spend daily time in the Word, expecting God to meet you there and speak to You through His Word. You may find the Psalms especially meaningful because they are so comforting.

It will be helpful for you to journal this “adventure with God.” Many people have reported that it is far more satisfying and helpful to use an actual book (or at least paper) journal instead of a computer. The multi-sensory experience of handling paper—seeing it, hearing it rustle, feeling it in your hands, smelling its fragrance—makes a stronger impression on your brain. Write what’s happening and how you feel about what’s happening. Write what God is showing you in your time with Him, both in His Word and in prayer. Many people find that they are better able to process what God is doing internally through journaling than any other method, because wrapping words around thoughts and feelings helps us to sort through our jumbled confusion.

Remember and practice Psalm 46:10—”Be still and know that I am God.” God wants to soothe and comfort you, but you have to be quiet and still for Him to do that. You may find that

listening to praise music may be helpful at times, but there is a time to turn off the music and the TV and the mp3 player and just be still before your God. Let Him love you in those moments.

We tell the SSA (same-sex attracted) strugglers who come to our ministry that the way God will bring healing and change to them is through intimacy with Christ. Many of them learn to also enjoy intimacy with their heavenly Father. That's the goal of all discipleship, which is what God invites you to as well. We're really a discipleship ministry, and whether people are here as overcomers, as strugglers, as family members of strugglers, or those with a passion for those in the struggle, God has the same goal for all of us: spiritual maturity. Abiding in Him is the way to grow more like Jesus, no matter which door into this place of growth and healing you came through—even a rabbit hole.

We are glad you're here, and we pray that you will allow God to do such a deep work in you that at some point, you will be able to look back at this time and say, "It was horrible, it was incredibly painful. . . and it was the best thing that ever happened to me."

With prayer for rich blessings in your journey,

Sue Bohlin (Living Hope Board Member)

From Ricky Chelette, Executive Director of Living Hope Ministries:

I AMEN to all that my wise sister has shared. I see so many parents, particularly of teens and young adults, that look at this struggle like a bad case of acne. They often think, "Well, this is a phase and after a bit of counseling, some more Bible study and rededication to Jesus, maybe even a conference or two, my kid is going to be fine." I wish it were

that easy but you have to remember that we are dealing with relational brokenness. This is not making a bad decision to stay out past curfew, this is thinking the wrong things about who you are and believing those wrong things as truth.

As a result, God has to do some major work in the heart and life of those who struggle. You are not God. Therefore YOU can't do anything but love and encourage your son/daughter to seek wise counsel, Godly advice, and more of Jesus. I really wish this didn't sound as "churchy" of an answer as it does, but the fact remains that we are broken and once broken, we forever carry the scars of that brokenness in our lives. Yes, Jesus does bring healing, that is His promise to us on Calvary, but the process of sanctification and total relational healing will likely not happen until He comes again to redeem and reclaim His creation at the end of time.

St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria in 297 wrote, "That which Jesus has not assumed (or taken upon himself), He cannot heal."

He assumes our sins as WE are willing to confess our sins and bring them to Him. We can not confess sins for others, only for ourselves. Your son/daughter has to get to that place and what it might take to get them there is only God's knowledge. You cannot create contrition. That is the work of God's Spirit.

Also please understand that the problem your child has is not homosexuality (though that is what we label it), it is sin. Sin is sin and it always deceives, kills and destroys. It does that in your life, my life and it does it in your child's life as well. They have to grasp the sin problem and the ONLY one who can convict us of sin is the Holy Spirit (notice mom, that I've said that twice! <smile>). Therefore, pray that God would use His Holy Spirit to convict and convince the heart and mind of your son/daughter so that they might see the error of their way and return to living for the Lord.

Despite what I sometimes hear from evangelical Christians, homosexuality does NOT keep a person from heaven any more than cheating, stealing, or telling "white lies." All those things are sin and all are bad and separate us from God, but they are also all covered by the blood of Christ on the cross. Granted, as humans, we tend to categorize sin and make some much worse than others. God doesn't do that. He says that what keeps us out of the Kingdom of heaven is not trusting in Him with our whole heart as our Savior and Lord. A person who thinks he/she is gay can be a Christian. They won't be a happy Christian, or truly intimately related to Christ, but they can be a Christian. I believe that God, in His incredible mercy and grace, will continue to reach out to them, woo them to Himself and draw them until that day when He calls them home. So never ever, ever give up! God will hear your prayers for He fights for the souls of those who have "wandered from the way" (Matt. 18:12-13). God loves them more than you do—so wow, that's a lot!!

Keep in mind too that your task is not to "save your kid," but to show Jesus to them in everything you do. That is such a hard order for everyone and especially if your child has a partner. Do you allow the partner to come to your house, participate in your family activities, hang out with the rest of the family? Of course this is a very personal choice and one that you need to make with lots of prayer and discussion with your spouse. That being said, the question remains: How do you show Jesus to your child and their partner? Is kicking them out of family gatherings the way to do that? Personally, I don't think so, but maybe others here will feel differently. Remember, however, that your child loves this person and rejecting the partner will be akin to rejecting the child even though that is NOT what you are trying to communicate. I DO think it is perfectly reasonable to ask them NOT to show public displays of affection, not to sleep in the same room/bed, etc. Those are things that you would ask your child to do if they were in a heterosexual relationship and you were

trying to uphold Biblical standards in your home. If there are small children around, you might have to think about the implications of that as well and if/how you want to talk to the children about it. I use to think that it was not good to expose them to such things, but with the popularity of homosexuality in our culture and media (need I say, “Brokeback Mountain” or “Will and Grace”), I think it might be best for them to hear the TRUTH from you rather than an interpretation of truth they would get in the streets.

We all know that this journey can be overwhelming, confusing and at times, even debilitating. Do not allow the devil to steal from you the hope that is in Christ Jesus. Do not be worn down by the familiarity and insistence of your child that this is “normal” so that you redefine Truth. Come here and post your frustrations, concerns, joys and victories. We have seen many make it out, hundreds of thousands in fact, and we have seen God do amazing things in the lives of the struggler as well as their family members. If you will allow it, this can be the greatest thing that has happened in your family. I am convinced that God wants to use it for good if you will let Him.

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“Is There a Genetic Component to Homosexuality?”

Dear Dr. Bohlin,

I noticed that you have some background in genetics. I am writing an article involving homosexuality for my own website. Many homosexuals want to say they are “born” that way, or that

God made them homosexual. However, the evidence so far is unconvincing.

I am a student of science and scientific knowledge and have some background in science as well. I believe that there may be a genetic component to what some homosexuals experience.

Also, I've been thinking that some homosexuals may have a genetic defect somewhere that we may discover. They may not want to hear or believe this, but I think it is a possibility. They don't seem to realize that just because they may be "born" homosexual does not mean that they were meant to be homosexual. For example, some are born with sickle-cell anemia, but we know that this is due to a genetic defect and that this is abnormal for red blood cells. This is a problem that needs to be fixed. I think we may find in the genetic code a defect that leads some to homosexuality. I purposely used the word "some" in my statements because I think it is pretty well established by now that homosexuality is not a monolith and that some of them do choose this lifestyle deliberately. So what do you think?

No one has identified any gene that has been linked to homosexuality. Dean Hamer reportedly found a chromosomal region that was prevalent in male homosexuals but his work was unrepeatable and has been largely discarded.

It certainly is possible that there may be a gene or sets of genes that predispose someone to homosexuality. But you correctly surmise that this in no way would determine homosexual behavior. We all probably have genetic predispositions of one sort or another that make it easier for us to sin in some areas than in others. This could be similar to suspected predispositions for some to alcoholism (as found in some races and ethnic groups). This does not mean their alcoholism is excused or acceptable. The same would be true of any predisposition to homosexuality.

Keep in mind also that many who desire to leave the homosexual lifestyle can and do, and many have successfully worked to change their romantic and sexual attractions. If it were in any way genetically determined, this would not be possible. It would be like choosing to have genetically blue eyes and blonde hair (hair coloring and colored contact lenses aside).

Also, many in the gay community are distancing themselves from any genetic component to homosexuality because that would mean a genetic test could eventually be developed for it. They know full well that many parents would likely choose to have any embryo/fetus testing positive for homosexuality to be aborted or simply not implanted in the case of IVF.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD
Probe Ministries

2005 Probe Ministries

"I'm a Compulsive Masturbator!"

I hate it that I am overpowered by an addiction to porn and compulsive masturbation. I don't understand why I just can't stop it. I really loathe that part of myself. It disgusts me. Can you help?

You and millions of other people, millions MORE now that the internet has invaded our lives!

I serve on the board of Living Hope Ministries, a Christ-centered outreach to those wanting to leave homosexuality. I

asked Ricky Chelette, a pastor of First Baptist Church of Arlington (TX) and Executive Director of Living Hope, to share his highly understandable explanation of what happens in an addictive cycle, in a way that has also helped many people dealing with their various besetting sins. He graciously gave me permission to offer his material to answer your question. I hope it helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Understanding The Cycle of Sin

This is the cycle of sin that I often share with folks that meet with me. Though I designed this visual image for overcomers with same gender attraction (SGA), I have used it with my single adult group as a whole, for I feel the concepts are universal though the vehicles we use to accomplish our end result might be somewhat different.

Take a look at this diagram.

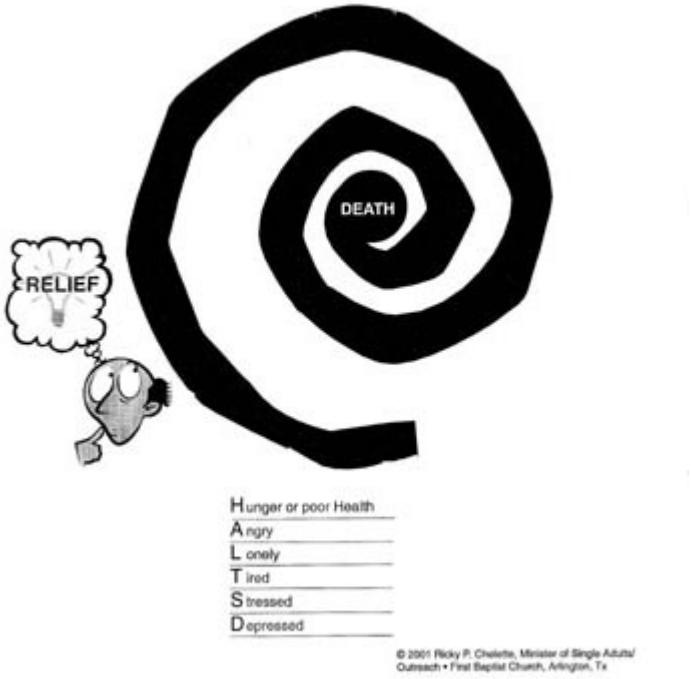


You begin the cycle of sin at the bottom of the page where you see the letters and blank lines.

Though many of you think that what triggers you is the sight of a good looking man/woman, I think something much deeper is taking place. Most of our triggers fall into one of these broad categories:

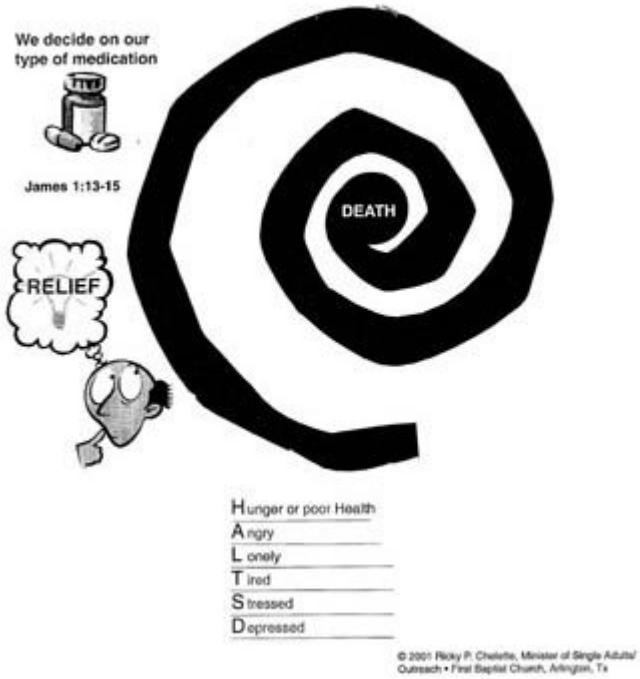
- **Health**
  I am talking about bad health. When you are sick you are open to temptation.
- **Hunger**
  When we are hungry we can feel temptation.
- **Angry**
- **Lonely**
  Need I say more…
- **Tired**
- **Stressed**
- **Depressed**

Whenever we feel one of these feelings or something closely related to one or more of them, we have the thought of RELIEF. We all want relief from the pain, hurt and stresses of our lives.

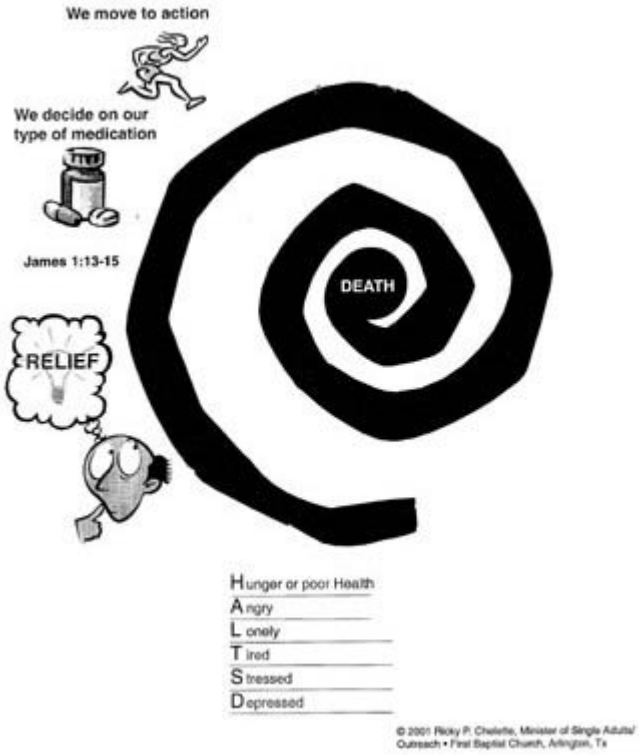


The way that we find relief is to seek some form of

medication. This does not have to be actual medication, though it can be and this is how people get addicted to drugs, but it is medication all the same. It is something that causes us to experience pleasure and relief.



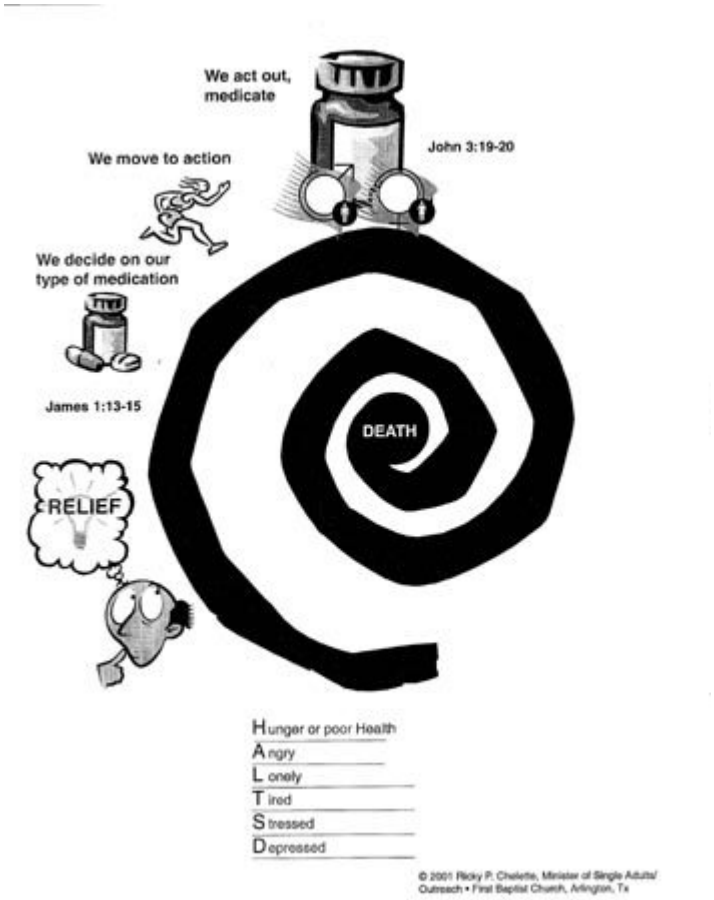
So we move from the bottom of the diagram to the thought for relief (the man and the bubble) to the thought of what we will do to medicate our pain and find relief (bottle of pills). When we decide to medicate our pain we go through some action (the runner) before we actually get to the medication.



Oddly enough, even the action toward the intended medication, is somewhat medicinal itself. For example: If you are going to do the big M (masturbation) for your medication you might get undressed and lay in bed, or jump in a warm shower. If you are going to cruise P (internet Porn) on the internet you might get into something more comfortable and begin the search process. If you are going to act out with another or "cruise," you might get cleaned up and put on some alluring clothing or other articles that would give clues to your intent. Basically, you go through some sort of ritual of preparation. It just doesn't "happen." However, we have done this ritual so many times that it feels quite automatic—we may not even realize that we are doing it. It is at this stage that most people tell me that they feel as though they really can't help themselves—"it is like another person has taken over my body and I am just on autopilot." In many ways, they really are.

I am convinced that once you move from thought to action, it is very difficult if not nearly impossible to stop the ultimate medication/action from taking place. Yes, of course God could intervene, but He has created us with free will and He rarely interferes with our willful decisions. During this phase of the cycle you are also likely to be producing

adrenalin; a very strong chemical that makes a person’s heart rate increase, increases their blood pressure, and gives them a sense of invincibility.

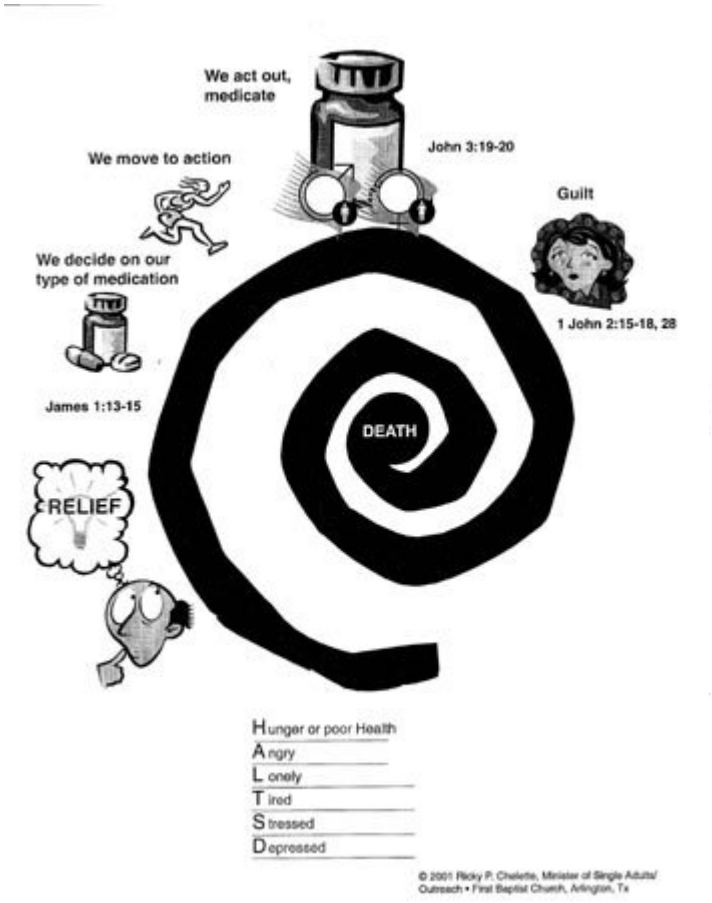


Finally, you carry out your medicative fix by doing the big M or having sex and achieving an orgasm in some way. When you do this, your brain produces a chemical called endorphin. This chemical is extremely strong, some say even ten times stronger than cocaine.

Every time you achieve an orgasm or act out in some way to achieve your medication, endorphins are produced and your body responds in a very predictable way. This is why you get that feeling of pleasure, euphoria, or peace when you orgasm (medicate). There are actually chemicals being produced in your brain that make you feel good. The preparation for the orgasm also can produce these chemicals (remember Pavlov’s salivating dogs?!) but not in the same quantity or intensity as the orgasm itself. (Now you are at the top of our diagram—medicine bottle)

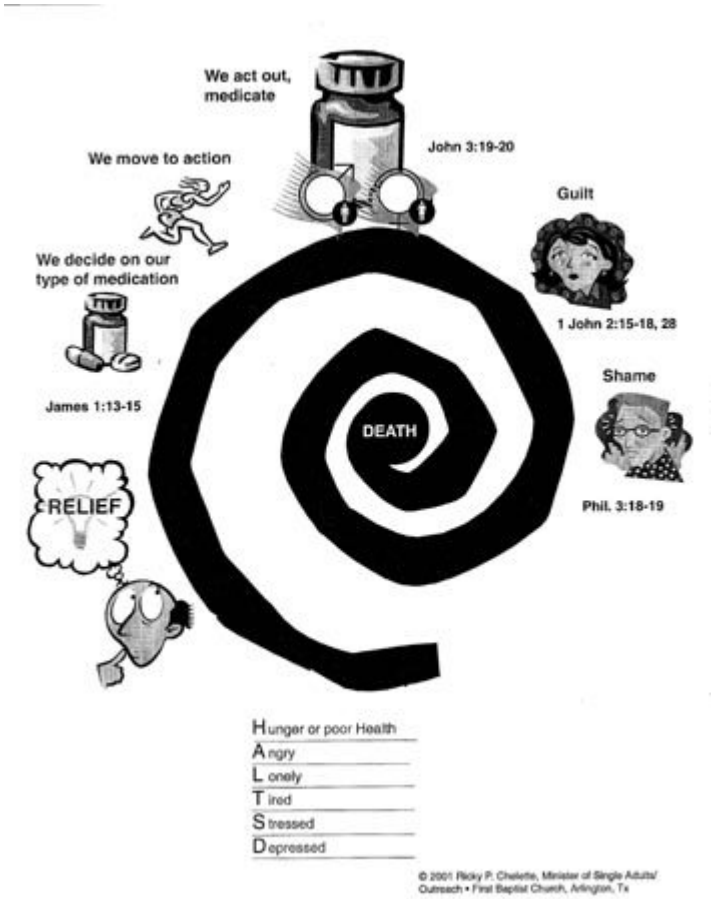
I want you to think of your brain as a CD. Each time endorphins are produced, you burn another track on that CD. If you keep playing the same tune (producing the same chemical) over a period of months/years, you burn a rut in your CD and it is very, VERY difficult to get out of that rut. It is a universal, psychologically proven fact. We establish pathways in our brain that demand that we do certain things and get our fix. Thus, we continue to the cycle of medicating our hurts. . .

However, like every high, it is followed by an equally powerful low. The low begins as the chemicals in our brain are absorbed and assimilated into our bodies. We first begin to feel guilty (the lady that is crying on the diagram).

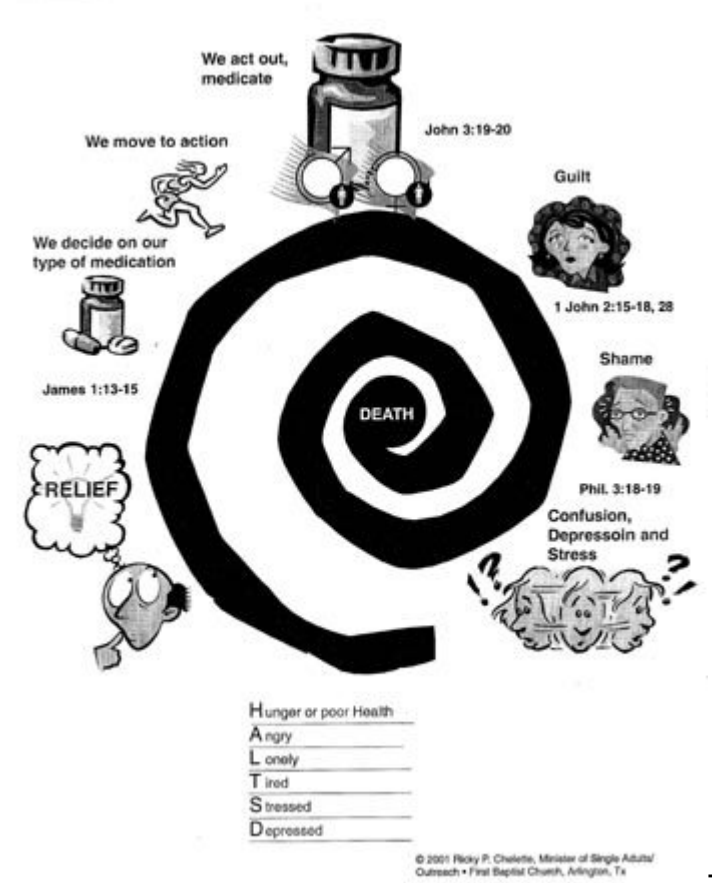


I believe that guilt and conviction are really good things. I see them as a way that the Spirit of God brings correction and discipline to our lives. However, many times we feel guilt, but we don’t confess and repent. We simply feel guilty. We do this because we think that God will not hear our prayers. .

.again, for the thing that we seem to keep doing over and over. As a result, not too long after we feel guilt, Satan comes in and uses our sense of guilt to make us feel shame (the man that looks perplexed).



Shame, I believe, is of the devil. The difference between guilt and shame is that guilt is over our actions—things we do. Shame is feeling bad about who we are—our sense of self. Shame causes us to review the lies of Satan and our old tapes that tell us that, “I am worthless. God doesn’t really love me. I am a loser. No one will ever love me. I will never be rid of this sin. I am gay. Etc., etc.”



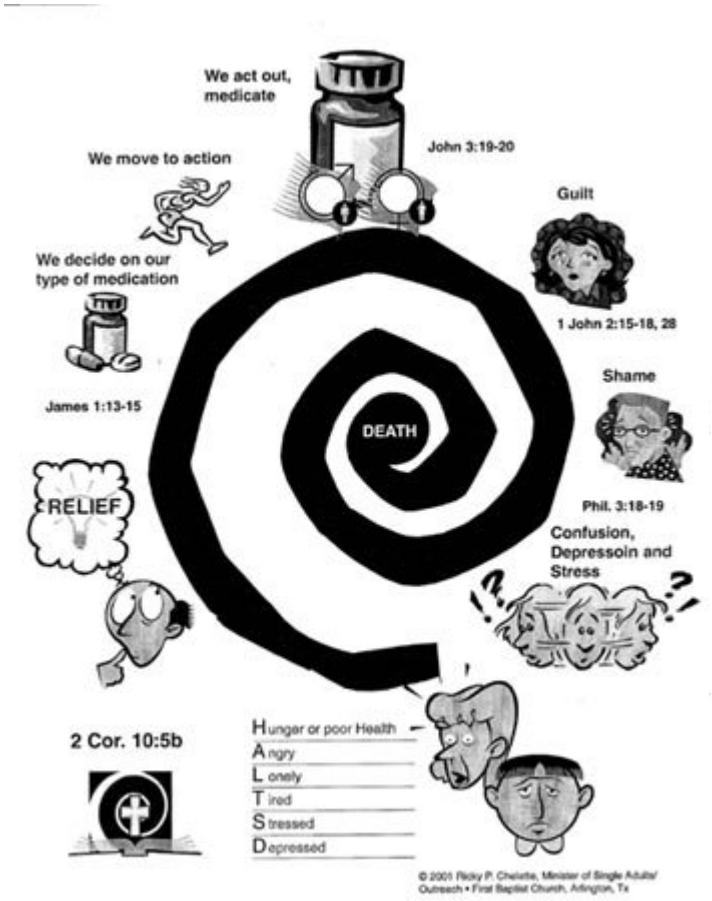
These self-loathing statements do nothing but drag us further down the cycle so that we become confused, stressed, angry, lonely, etc. (the confused triple-headed person). And where does that lead us?

Back at the beginning of the cycle to keep repeating our sin again and again..

You should also notice that this spiral makes an inward progression that ends at a black hole. You see, what happens with our desire to medicate is that each time we do it, it takes a bit more stimulation to get us to the place that we have the same medicative results. We constantly need more. That is why the spiral is a spiral and not just a circle. It draws us in, deeper and deeper, until we reach the black hole—DEATH. James 1 says when sin is complete it will brings forth death: spiritual death, emotional death, and even physical death. The process is gradual most of the time, but it is guaranteed.

Take for example the person who starts out just looking at a

“Men’s Health” magazine. Nothing wrong with that really. But there are some buff men that have their shirts off. They get excited about that, do a little lusting and masturbate and then they decide to find some porn on the internet. At first it is “mild porn” and then they have a need to find more explicitly sexual pornography, etc. Before you know it that is not enough for them and they search for chat rooms. They start chatting dirty and eventually they decide to call and talk with someone. They won’t meet. At least not this time….. But sooner or later chatting is not enough and they meet… and they have sex…. and you know the rest of the story….



Our desire to medicate will take us further and further down this path of destruction. The results are guaranteed, but so is its destructive end.

So how do we break the cycle of sin in our lives?

I really think that there is only one opportunity for us to break the cycle. I think that we have to learn how to cope effectively and Biblically with our triggers.

If, when we realize that we are experiencing a trigger, we want relief (which we all do naturally) this is OK. However, this is where the discipline comes in. When we want relief we have to move from seeking to medicate our pain with acting out, to taking that need to medicate to the One who is the Great Physician—God. We have to go to Him, at this early stage, and tell Him what we are experiencing; what is going on with us; and ask Him for help. We have to do what 2 Cor. 10:5b says, "Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." Every thought… not just some, but especially those that seek relief.

If we do this, we are able to kick ourselves out of the cycle of sin and find victory and freedom in Christ.

Is it that easy? Absolutely not. It is hard work. Many of you have not yet learned how to identify the triggers and that will be your first step. But with God's help, it is doable.

Now, don't think that this is just a struggler thing. It is not.

Here's another example from my wife who does not struggle with SGA issues at all (thank God!). She is a nurse in ICU; a very stressful job. She is also a self-proclaimed chocoholic (any ladies relate to this?). Many times, when things are going bad at work (stress trigger), she says she can "hear" the candy machine calling her name (need for relief). She puts things in order with her patients (action/ritual) and sneaks out to the machine (more action) and eats a candy bar (medication). After she eats it she gets an insulin rush (sugar high) which makes

her feel all euphoric and wonderful only to be followed by a sugar low which makes her feel guilty and convicted because she knows that she shouldn't handle stress by eating. She then can easily slip into a shame cycle of self-loathing thinking that she is too fat (which she is not), out of control, etc. and the cycle begins again. [She told me I could share this as this diagram has helped her understand you and herself better.]

The same could be said of people who shop when they are triggered, spend money, drink coffee, become violent, use drugs or alcohol, etc. Same triggers, different courses of medication, different chemicals produced (sometimes), but all ending in the same results.

Well, I hope this makes some sense to you and is helpful to you in visualizing and getting a handle on what is taking place in your life. I would really encourage you to memorize the 2 Cor. 10:5b passage and the James 1:13-15 passage as these can help you in directing your thinking when you begin to think "RELIEF"—it will point you to Christ rather than to medication.

"You Promote Hate and Intolerance"

How can people who say they are God's children stand in judgment of others. . . only God can judge man! "He who is without sin cast the first stone." You promote hate and intolerance and I am quite sure that Jesus would be ashamed of your actions.

It would be helpful if we had any idea of what you had read on

our website. I'm curious where you saw hate; intolerance is another matter altogether since today's values, elevating a new kind of tolerance, say that everything is equally valid. I guess you don't believe that, or you would have a live and let live attitude toward our position.

What did you read?

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries Webservant

This was written by you Sue Bohlin …… http://www.******.com Regardless on how you feel about homosexuality and I am a straight female by the way your complete lack of compassion by showing a man with AIDS and how he looks before and after death is sick. I am a Christian and ashamed that there are so called "Christians" out there that can be so cruel that is not what Jesus preached when he walked this earth. Remember he died on the cross for all of our sins and no one is without sin even YOU. So before you start judging others start with yourself for not being able to show compassion and love something that Jesus preached over and over again.**

You have your right to disagree with homosexuality but it is the manner in which you choose to disagree that makes me sick. I wonder if you have ever met a homosexual, believe it or not they are no different than you and me. They are human beings and deserved to be loved and respected like everyone else.

I will pray for you and your "ministry" that you will come to find compassion for those who are different than you. Remember God loves us all …regardless….that is why his Son Jesus died on the cross.

Thank you for writing me back. I appreciate the time it took you to find the article you were referring to. I truly want to make sure that my heart for those dealing with homosexuality comes through, and if I have written something in a way that invites misunderstanding, I definitely want to fix it.

Which is why I was so puzzled by your reference to this: “by the way your complete lack of compassion by showing a man with AIDS and how he looks before and after death is sick.”

I am so glad you said you found my article on the *********.com website, which provided the key to the mystery. The people who have that website republished my article on Homosexual Myths from our Probe Ministries website, Probe.org (and actually didn’t even ask permission, as I recall). I am not connected with the *********.com people and didn’t even know what else was on the website. No wonder you thought I agreed with them! I am quite sure that Dr. Throckmorton, a good guy with a HUGELY compassionate heart, whose article follows mine on their website, would agree with me that we are distressed to be linked to such unloving, uncompassionate people.

I am glad to be able to reassure you that you and I are on the same page. I have a huge, joyful passion for those dealing with unwanted homosexuality, and in fact minister on a daily basis to women dealing with same-sex attraction. It is one of the highlights of my life to watch God change lives of the sexually broken through the power of Jesus Christ, and I tell my struggler friends all the time that they are my heroes.

In fact, if you’re interested, here’s a link to a number of my e-mail answers to homosexuality questions from real, hurting and questions people on the Probe website.

I am glad to be able to clear up this misunderstanding with one of my sisters in the Lord BEFORE we get to heaven! <smile>

The Lord bless you and keep you today!

Sue

“Can You Suggest Reasons Why I Am a Lesbian?”

I just read Kerby Anderson’s article on Homosexual Theology. Very well written, although I do disagree on some points. I consider myself homosexual. I am a 36 year-old female. As far back as I can remember, from the age of 2 or 3, I’ve have “felt” like a boy. This goes beyond just same-sex attractions. It goes into wanting to play army and trucks as a child, rather than play with dolls and, eventually, being sexually attracted to females (even in grade school), rather than males. For me, as I can only speak for myself, it is not all about sex. I would rather share my life with a female, even if we never had sex. I want the same thing I assume most heterosexuals want; a home, family, decent job, vacation time, and hope for a healthy, happy future.

I guess my question for you is, what do you think caused my homosexuality? I grew up in the “All-American Family.” Stay at home mom, dad who always worked, middle-class, church on Sundays. I am the youngest of three, and the only girl. I was always encouraged to act and dress like a female by my parents. I had no doubt about my parents love for me and felt very secure and safe in my environment. I grew up about as “normal” as anyone can in American. So, can you shed any light? Thanks, _____

Dear _____,

Kerby Anderson forwarded your e-mail to me because I am very familiar with the homosexuality issue.

The difficulty in trying to explain the foundations for another person’s same gender attraction is always increased when we are only given selective details. What you wrote to Kerby isn’t your whole story, and you couldn’t possibly be

able to GIVE your whole story, especially when the most important parts are what happened inside your head and heart.

One of the things we have discovered over the past several years is that the contributing factors to homosexuality include not only events (such as sexual abuse) and relationships (especially with parents), but how a child PERCEIVES events and relationships. For example, dads can show and tell their love in one way, but if his son or daughter doesn't hear it or see it, s/he can feel unloved even though the love was there. Parents can feel that they are accepting their children, but sometimes the kids don't feel that acceptance. And that makes sense, since we are all broken people living in a fallen world, and sometimes our "love receptors" are broken just like a radio can be broken and not receive the radio waves that would translate into sound if it weren't broken.

There is an intriguing detail you DID include, which was being sexually attracted to females, even in grade school. Emotionally healthy children do not experience sexual attraction until adolescence. (Kids sometimes develop crushes on other kids, but it's an intense emotional attraction, not a sexual attraction.) Becoming sexual at an early age isn't normal; all the examples I ever heard of were the result of sexual exposure (which is actually sexual abuse) at an early age.

So I would suggest there are parts to your story—your true relationship with your parents, possible experiences you don't mention—that are a big part of what you have experienced. Having boy-like interests at an early age, in and of itself, doesn't say that anything was wrong; there is a wide spectrum of what it means to be a female, just as there is a wide spectrum of what it means to be male. And that, I believe, is by divine design, because God is delighted to make people with great variety. But that doesn't mean He gave you same-gender attraction, and it doesn't mean He made you gay. It means

something happened, even if you don’t know what it is. Homosexuality is really about gender confusion, and something interfered with you embracing your femininity if you have closed yourself off from wanting intimate relationships with men.

I hope this helps.

Most respectfully,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help! I’m a Gay Christian”

Thanks for being willing to help me. Here’s the deal:

I’m 18 and I’ve known for a while now that I’m gay. Yep, GAY!!!!! But I’m also a Christian, and those two don’t usually mix well. I don’t have a boyfriend or anything. The problem is I don’t know whether I should accept my nature and try and be both a Christian devoted to others and God who just happens to like men, or to fight my nature and be alone for all my life.

What is your opinion on gay people? What do you think?

1. The world tells you that you have two choices: Accept that you’re gay and find a way to be a gay Christian even though the Bible says not to, or be alone and lonely forever. I would suggest those choices are a lie.

You can’t glorify God in gay relationships, especially sexual relationships. Sex was created (among other reasons) to show us what “unity within diversity” is, so we can see a physical demonstration of the unity of Christ and the church. Just as

Jesus is very different from us (the church) as His bride yet the two become one, God-glorifying sex can only be between two very different (i.e., male and female) people who become one. The very biology of sex shows us that sex was intended to be heterosexual.

2. If God's intention in His creation is holy heterosexuality, then all of us have the *capacity* for it. That's why there are people ministering to those with same gender attraction (SGA), showing them how to move out of what feels normal but isn't, into heterosexual attraction. It's not fast, it's not easy, but it IS possible. It's about finding ways to relate in a healthy, nonsexual way with other men, and doing it in the power of the Holy Spirit. Which He is happy to give as we abide in Christ. (That's the key, but it's easier to talk about than to live, moment by moment. Nonetheless, that's how others have moved from being strugglers to being overcomers.)

There are a number of websites where you can read stories and get real help, including online message boards for encouragement. Here's a good place to start: Living Hope Ministries. This one has a lot of other sites listed, as well as a web forum where you can find people to talk to. http://www.livehope.org

The bottom line is, THERE IS HOPE. You don't have to live with the false choice of either being separated from God because of your sexuality, or alone and lonely because of it.

3. In terms of my opinion of gay people? Well, God passionately loves gay people, so who am I to argue with that? :::smile::: He grieves when men are attracted to men and women are attracted to women, because it means that something went wrong somewhere, whether biology or psychology or whatever. But it doesn't make the PERSON bad!!! I think that the reason gay people are in so much pain isn't because the world hates gays and is homophobic, which is the politically correct explanation you get these days, but it's because something

went wrong and it’s painful not to be able to relate correctly and healthily to people of the opposite sex.

And God has power to help us with problems like that, even though it’s not easy—by ANY means—to change.

4. One last thing. Until their mid-20’s or so, some people’s sexuality is fluid. It’s changeable. Surging hormones can create some alarming and disturbing feelings. It doesn’t necessarily mean someone is hard-wired to be gay. That’s a good reason not to act on it, totally apart from the moral issue of being sexually active outside of marriage.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Can I Help My Gay Friend?”

I have a friend who confessed to me that she was gay. I was shocked…but yet…something inside of me knew that there was something different about her. I have been searching of ways to tell her about the truth. Please understand….it has been so easy for me to lead others to the truth…but with her…I’m baffled. I have been speaking to her over the Internet mostly. She has had close family members that have been diagnosed with cancer, etc. I’ve been helping her stand on the word by giving her Biblical scriptures on healing. I “gently” tell her in a roundabout way (when given the opportunity) about sins in our lives etc…etc…etc…

I’m trying to tell her that God loves her but not the way she’s living her life. As you can tell… I’m even having a hard

time explaining it to you. I wish I knew of a book that helps Christians talk to gays to lead them to the truth. She once told me that men were so iffy and that her girlfriends treated her better. I should have caught on then…but I didn't. I don't think she's ready to give up this lifestyle…but I can't go on acting as though it's not a problem. I try to stay away from talking about this issue with her. She has a girlfriend at this time and lives about 3 hours from where I live. I just thought you may know of something that may help me minister to her or help me to understand before I leap out there and push her further away from knowing the truth. She is always sending me thank you notes saying that she knows that there was a reason why we met and that she would not be where she is with God if we didn't meet. Honestly…I couldn't believe her attitude. She started going to a Christian church…joined a Bible study from Genesis to Revelation… stood in faith for a job (when she lost hers). It's like God is doing all He can to show her He's real, but deep down in my heart…I feel she's lost in another way. Before I keep going on….I'll close and ask again…. Do you know of anything that will help me to reach her God's way?

I am so glad to hear of your friendship with this dear lady who needs the freedom Jesus offers!! You should know that almost all the people involved in ministries to those with unwanted homosexuality (you can check out Restored Hope Network and Living Hope Ministries) did so because of friends and family who showed a willingness to BE THERE for them and love them through the process of change.

Yes, there is a book I would recommend for women, *Out of Egypt* by Jeanette Howard. May I suggest that a good way to offer it is to say, "If you ever get to the point where your life isn't working for you, you might want to read this book." It's not threatening, and it leaves the door open to pursue something different when the Lord reveals truth to her. And nothing will change apart from HIM allowing her to see the truth instead of

being deceived by the enemy. Which is why your prayers for her are of utmost importance.

If you want to educate yourself to better know how to minister to her, read *Someone I Love Is Gay* by Anita Worthen and Bob Davies. It's written for friends and family of those in the lifestyle.

I hope this helps; I know these resources have helped many, many other people in exactly your shoes.

In His grip,

Sue

"How Should We Deal With Gay Activist Groups?"

I have been reading your articles on homosexuality. But I still didn't see anything on how we are to follow Jesus' commandment about loving your neighbor regarding homosexuality in the "institutionalized" church, and homosexual weddings and pastors. I don't want to judge others, and I don't want to see homosexuality forced into public schools as a "normal" lifestyle. How do I have mercy AND stand up for what I believe in my heart to be wrong according to my interpretation of the Bible? Where does mercy end and judgment begin in dealing with activist groups?

I turned to two friends for help in answering your excellent question. One is the director of an outreach to those wanting to leave homosexuality, a man who is a former gay activist himself. The other is a pastor who was convicted of his judgmental attitude toward homosexuals, and sought the Lord's

heart by involving himself in Exodus International and a local ministry to those dealing with unwanted homosexuality. Both of them wrote such great answers that I'm just going to paste them in here.

Sue Bohlin

The director:

Unfortunately for us, because it makes it more difficult, mercy and judgment go hand in hand. The challenge is to know where to apply them both in situations that require both. With judgment, the Bible clearly calls us to judge sinful behavior. Especially if we are judging the behavior of other Christians. It isn't an option according to Matthew 18, and the Lord has blessed us with a model of how to approach one who is in sin. What we cannot judge are the motivations of the heart or a person's worth to God. It is hard for modern Americans to see that calling something sinful is an act of mercy. God was very merciful to us to show us not only the good things of Himself, but also the things He will not accept—which is also good. Others use the same words to condemn, but if we are mindful of our own sin and the mercy extended to us, when we are called to speak the truth in a situation, it will be delivered with such compassion and mercy that it will be an effective witness. Judgment comes in the words; mercy comes in the delivery of the message.

Here's an example of how to communicate:

"According to my spiritual convictions, homosexuality is sinful. I don't know what it is like to be gay or to have the feelings you do but I do know the loving character of my God. If He says, which I believe He does, that a certain sexual activity is sinful, then I believe that He says so because He wants you to have the very best in life and will make a way to meet the deep cries of your heart. I know for myself and my struggles with different issues, that what seems impossible to

me is very possible for a holy and loving God.”

As far as institutionalized Christianity, I don’t know that any institution will change until the hearts of individuals change. Of course we must vote our conscience and speak what the Lord tells us to, but I think the main focus should be the person next to us. When we can look them in the face with love and compassion, nothing but positive change can occur. They may not like it at first, so we must be prepared to receive at least rejection and at most hostility—neither of which should move us past love.

With regard to activist groups, I don’t suggest dealing with them as a group is a good idea. To be an activist means you are sold out to whatever you are fighting for, and as a group I think it would take another group to deal with them. If one is dealing with an activist, don’t see them as an activist but as a saint of God in the making. Turn the other cheek, love them enough to hurt at the thought of their pain. I have learned that saying a small amount of appropriate truth and being a steadfast witness is the best way to witness to activists.

The Pastor:

I am assuming from the tone that the writer believes homosexual conduct to be sin. S/he also seems to fear that if we aren’t strong enough in our denunciation that gays will take over the public arena. If we show too much love and mercy it will be construed as acceptance. I understand that.

I just read a response J.P. Moreland made to Charles Templeton who was asserting that it is intellectually impossible to believe in God. Moreland pointed out that how the argument is framed is extremely important. If we accept a faulty premise we’ve already lost. This is what gay activists, with the collusion of much of the media, have done—for example, all those who do not accept homosexuality as normative are

“homophobic.” Of course this is linguistically and logically wrong. If you and I were homophobic we would never be around homosexuals willingly. But we also frame the argument incorrectly if we accept that.

So I would begin by saying that God showed me I wasn’t responsible for how the world viewed what I do and say as long as it squares with His Word. Of course going by that Word can be dangerous; it can get you crucified. People, even religious people, may misinterpret what you do and say. As a fundamentalist I was always bothered by Jesus telling His disciples that the world would know they belonged to Him by the way they loved each other. I’ve come to see that I can love people without condoning or approving their actions—or their positions. But if my loving them consists of telling them “I am speaking the truth in love” or something similar it will not ring true. We absolutely must learn to see gays—and all other people—as people whom Jesus loves dearly. He cries out for them to come to Him. He wants them to know that no matter how far they drift, He longs passionately for them to come to Him. So, I began by realizing how much Jesus loved homosexuals—including activists—and then because He was so pained by their sin and the cruelty of others, I found myself wanting to serve Him by helping to show them His love. I had to be Jesus in the flesh. I couldn’t do that if my “love” was a veneer or simply putting on an act so I might get them to listen to my arguments. I had to decide if I really believed what God says about people who are separated from Him. Are they really basically empty spiritually? Can they really find true Joy apart from Him? If I really accept that then I don’t have to argue with them that they really are or aren’t happy, etc. I can simply proceed with the assurance that it is the task of the Holy Spirit to do that. My job is to love and speak the truth—gently for the most part.

_____ (an outspoken gay activist) has been good for me in that regard. He has even asked me to appear with him at a

PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, a pro-gay support and activist group) meeting next year. He wants his side to see that someone can totally disagree with him (and them) and not be harsh or obnoxious. He and I have kind of a running joke that “I love _____ but we disagree totally on homosexuality.” I do love him. He is well aware that I oppose gay marriage or adoption and acceptance of what we believe to be sin by the culture at large. I grieve over his views on homosexuality. But I am encouraged that thru lots of conversations and e-mails with some of the ex-gay folks, he has for the most part let go of his anger and bitterness toward the church and indirectly toward God. He now once again identifies himself as a Christian. I still pray that one day he will see the whole truth. But I know he wouldn’t even be in a position to consider it if he had not seen God’s love in the flesh.

I have heard the same kind of testimony over and over since getting involved with Exodus. Many of the leaders in Exodus ministries came to Christ because some Christian loved them. Most had experienced a lot of anger and rejection from the church and were bitter and antagonistic. It is imperative that we not allow ourselves to put homosexuality into a separate category from other sins. If we slip into that it will show in the way we relate and those to whom we are trying to minister will know it. For instance, do we oppose adultery and adulterers in public life with the same standard we use for homosexuality? I think we think we do, but I haven’t seen consistency there. The bottom line is that we are in the business of reconciling ALL sinners to our Father. We must see ALL people as God sees them.

“Can’t Homosexuality Be Seen as Population Control?”

From an evolutionary perspective, wouldn’t homosexuality be seen as a population control? This would then make it useful, contradicting to your assumptions made in the obviously biased partial commentary.

Many evolutionary biologists have wrestled with the widespread presence of homosexuality in human populations. Essentially, their quandry is not that homosexuality is present in large numbers (2-3% at most in any population), but that it is found in virtually all cultures and societies at least to some degree. Evolutionarily, this implies that there is some evolutionary benefit and some genetic component, which usually means it contributes to survival and reproductive success in some way. But how can that be when homosexuals reproduce at a far lesser rate than heterosexuals? The original sociobiologist, E. O. Wilson, stated the problem this way: “The homosexual state itself results in inferior genetic fitness, because of course homosexual men marry much less frequently and have far fewer children than their unambiguously heterosexual counterparts.” (*Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, Belknap/Harvard, 1975, p. 555.) Evolutionary explanations require an immediate genetic benefit for the individual expressing the trait or behavior. Things such as “population control,” as you suggest, require a cooperative spirit (technically referred to as group selection) that is normally considered outside direct genetic influence and is therefore rejected by most evolutionary biologists.

Most evolutionary biologists have tried to deal with the problem by one of two suggestions. First, the genes involving homosexuality (if there are indeed any at all, but so far there is no evidence for any) could be advantageous somehow in the heterozygous state (individuals who have one copy of a

gene leading to homosexuality but not both and therefore not truly expressing the trait), and therefore the gene or genes are kept in the population that way even though when both copies are expressed in the same individual (homozygosity) reproduction is prevented. Second, some have suggested that homosexuals may gain a genetic fitness by being primarily helpers in raising offspring of their brothers and sisters, therefore preserving their own genes through aiding the survival of their nieces and nephews who carry about 1/8 of their own genes (technically referred to as kin selection). Aiding the survival of eight or more such nieces and nephews preserves a full complement of your genes into the next generation which is how natural selection supposedly works. Both of these options may at first sound reasonable but, neither of these options has a shred of evidence in support of it.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.
Probe Ministries