

# It's Not Rubbing the Genie's Magic Lamp

*Oct. 25, 2011*

Recently I heard a young man share his story of battling his unwanted same-sex attractions. Though Ben's dad loved him very much, he felt like he was everyone else's dad and *then* his dad. He also didn't connect with the masculine that his dad represented. He ended up with longings for deep connection with males. What helped him turn the corner was when he found people with whom he could be completely honest about his shameful desires and feelings, who also helped him develop his relationship with God.

He shared that he slowly realized his heart was looking for three things in other men. First, he longed for someone who was unquestionably a "Capital M-A-N" who made that intangible connection with him that his father didn't make, leaving him with a father-shaped hole in his soul. And he realized that he was also looking for a rescuer, to pull him out of his own wretchedness. And finally, he wanted to be comforted by someone, he said, "who's there when I come back down, when I'm lost, when I'm troubled; I would fantasize about a guy who could just say the right things, do the right things, and comfort me any time I needed it."

Optimally, he told us, it would really great if he could find someone who would be all three of those things at one time, wrapped up in one person. That would be the "Mr. Right" he longed to find and be loved by.

The major "lightbulb moment" of his journey came when he realized that what he longed for was a Father, a Savior, and a Comforter. . . and that perfectly describes who God is—three in one, Father, Son and Spirit. And because he had trusted in

Christ at an early age, that very God was already indwelling him! He realized that the triune God was everything his heart was longing for but he had been too blind to see. God, in giving Himself to His beloved son, was ready to meet Ben's heart's needs and longings, but would not force Himself on him. When Ben opened his heart to receive the Fathering, the Saving, and the Comforting of the God who loved him, everything shifted inside.

God connected some dots for *me* when hours later, our pastor observed that Psalm 37:4 is one of the first Bible verses that people memorize. . . and one of the most misunderstood.

*Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.*

Sounds like a magic formula, right? Delight yourself in the Lord, and you get what you want? Just a religious-sounding way of rubbing the genie's magic lamp to get your wishes granted? But that's not what it means.

When we delight ourselves in the Lord, He gives us Himself, and *He* is what our hearts desire. Uncover all the surface, temporary things we think we want, and underneath are the true desires of our heart: to be loved, to be known, to be valued, to be safe, to *matter*.

And as Ben showed us, to be fathered, to be rescued, to be comforted.

Yes, we want all those things—and our marvelous God delights to give them to us as He gives us Himself.

He is so good!

This blog post originally appeared at  
[blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue\\_bohlin/its\\_not\\_rubbing\\_the\\_genies\\_magic\\_lamp](https://blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/its_not_rubbing_the_genies_magic_lamp)

---

# Helping Homosexuals Change? Yeah, Right.

ABC News recently did a story on presidential candidate Michele Bachmann's family business, a Christian counseling center run by her husband, Dr. Marcus Bachmann. The focus of the story was a biased, "can you believe this?" exposé of the fact that the counselors help people who don't want to be gay, address their unwanted homosexuality.

They interviewed two people, a man whose mother had taken him to the clinic when he came out as homosexual, and an undercover reporter who brought two recording devices into the sessions with him. Neither man believed their homosexuality was changeable—and when it comes to the counseling office, if your mind is made up that something cannot be changed, guess what? It won't be.

The reporter used the now-familiar phrase "pray away the gay," which is an effective and condescending dismissal of what actually happens when people do successfully shift their sexual orientation. (And I personally know a number of people who have experienced significant and lasting change in their orientation.) Some do successfully engage in reparative therapy, which addresses the emotional deficits in those who find themselves attracted to the same sex using purely psychological methods. But what is more effective is the transforming power of the gospel in the life of a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. And, like all discipline of radical discipleship, which means saying "no" to our flesh and "yes" to the flow of Jesus' resurrection power in our lives, it takes hard work over a period of years. There is no easy, 1-2-3 magic prayer to change the way we think and feel.

Sanctification is a long process of cooperation with the Spirit of God.

The message our media pumps out today is that sexuality is fluid—except for homosexuality, which is fixed and can't be changed. This means it's okay to give into your secret cravings and come out as gay, in which case folks like Oprah will celebrate you embracing your “authentic self,” but it's not okay to say, “God didn't make me gay, and I choose to accept the identity HE gives me instead.” It's not okay to say, “I used to be gay and now I'm not.”

Which explains why there was an explosion of rage when Dr. Robert Spitzer, eminent professor of psychiatry at Columbia University, released the results of his [landmark 2001 study](#) that showed that change is possible in highly motivated individuals: rare, in his estimation, but possible. (Dr. Spitzer had been the pro-gay lobby's hero since he spearheaded the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality from the DSM-IV manual, which is the psychiatrists' bible of mental disorders. That decision was the result of caving into political pressure, not the result of any research.)

The idea that people can experience change not only in their behavior but in their hearts is threatening to those committed to the idea of homosexuality as a fixed and unchangeable truth. (I personally believe the reason for their insistence is an understandable defensive reaction to trying to change their orientation on their own unsuccessfully, including attempting to “pray away the gay,” which doesn't work. I have written about why that is, [here](#).)

Many of the loud voices insisting that homosexuality is not changeable hold to an unrealistic standard, that only a complete shift from 100% homosexual to 100% heterosexual constitutes change. I suggest that nowhere else do we hold to that standard: would we denounce a former alcoholic who has

successfully lived for years in freedom from the destruction of alcohol, as not really changed if he thinks that a cold beer on a hot day still sounds good?

Dr. Spitzer's findings back up the message of the New Testament: that Jesus Christ changes the lives and thus the behavior of people caught in all kinds of sin. Remember this list of changed people in the church of Corinth?

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

*Change is possible.* That is part of the good news of the gospel. And, for the believer in Jesus, change is a normal and expected part of being a follower of Christ.

Even if the world laughs at the notion with a "can you believe this?" contempt. Can homosexuals change? It's not "Yeah, right." It's "Yes! Amen!"

This blog post was originally published at [blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/helping\\_homosexuals\\_change\\_yeah\\_right](http://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/helping_homosexuals_change_yeah_right) on July 19, 2011.

---

**"I'm 15 and I'm Afraid I'm**

# Gay”

Dear Mrs. Bohlin,

I really need your help, I am 15 and frightened of being homosexual. About one and a half years ago I was at an all-girls summer camp where a girl told me she had decided to become bisexual. I didn't know why but this upset me a lot. I had two weeks of camp left, and I was terrified that everyone was gay, finally I became scared that I was gay. I hadn't really thought that I was attracted to girls before, but I used to be a tomboy and envied all the “girly-girls”. Ever since I went to camp and that happened my fear has gotten worse and worse, I haven't told anyone for fear of being told that I was. I heard about the “ex-gays” and read a few articles of yours. I don't know what to do. Please help me I'm very scared, all I want is to live again normally. I've been raised Christian and my parents are divorced. I'm sorry to bother you, but I need your advice. God bless you.

\_\_\_\_\_, I'm so glad you wrote to me!

When God made you a female, He made you more emotional than analytical, more intuitive to other people than most males, and very relational. This means you are open to being influenced by other people, especially when you were only 13. For someone to tell you she had decided to label herself as bisexual at the very beginning of puberty, when you both have a LOT of growing, maturing, and learning about yourselves ahead of you, no wonder you were upset! That's way too much pressure to process information and label oneself at the beginning of adolescence. Which is a time of intense confusion to begin with, totally apart from the whole sexuality issue!

It makes sense you'd be scared that you were gay, for the same reason that when people take health or medical classes that cover different kinds of illnesses, it's typical to think

they're experiencing the symptoms of a bunch of them. It's typical to be susceptible to ideas, especially at a time in your life where you "try on" all kinds of identities and values and beliefs to see if they fit.

If you were a tomboy, it's because God loves tomboys and that's why He makes you that way! It's our culture that incorrectly limits femininity to only the "girly-girl" end of the [femininity spectrum](#). Femininity also looks like jeans and t-shirts, tree-climbing, sports- and outdoor-loving girls. It makes sense for you to envy girly-girls because they are a different kind of girl than you are, but they aren't a BETTER kind of girl than you are! It makes sense because of the false message that tomboys are inferior to girly-girls. Nope! If God won't agree with it, it's not true!

Now for another part of the equation: what we know from talking to literally thousands of gay-identifying folks over the years is that envy drives a lot (if not most) of same-sex attraction. Both guys and girls are drawn to whatever they feel they lack. Instead of saying, "This means I'm gay," it would be far wiser, and true to God's design, to say instead, "Hmmm. I see where I need to work on myself so I become the kind of person I admire, or to develop the kind of attributes I admire."

I was teaching at Probe's [Mind Games conference](#) for high school juniors and seniors when I said that many people who are afraid they're gay, or who think they might be, need to give themselves grace to finish growing up. Being attracted to same-sex peers is part of normal adolescent development, complete with intense crushes, but all we hear in the culture is, "If you like other girls (or boys), it means you're gay." No, it doesn't. It means you haven't finished growing up yet. One of the students came back the following year as an alumnus and come up to me in private to tell me, "When you said this last year, it was the first time I'd ever heard it. I was able to relax and just give myself permission to finish growing up."

And you know what? In the past year, I have! I find myself attracted to girls now, instead of being so stuck on my attractions to other guys. Thanks for speaking truth to us.”

Let me encourage you to bundle up your fears and your feelings and hand them to Jesus, who loves you more than you can possibly imagine, and He will help you sort through them. In fact, the more you concentrate on your relationship with Him, the better every other part of your life will become. In fact, I respectfully urge you to pray every day, “Jesus, show me how You love me,” and then pay attention to the little intimate ways in which He says, “I sure do love you, \_\_\_\_\_!” When you know God loves you, that gives you a confidence in yourself that nothing else can even come close to. And it helps you sort out the rest of life, and put people in their proper perspective.

Relax and give yourself time to finish growing up without the unnecessary complication of being paralyzed by fear that you’re gay. God doesn’t make anyone gay; He DOES make people to be relational, and the more we do life in community, with friends who will love and accept just as we are, we can grow into emotionally healthy adults.

So. . . how does this hit your heart? Does it make sense?

Warmly,

Sue

© 2011 Probe Ministries

---

# **“Why Doesn’t God Answer**



# Prayers to Take Away Gay Feelings?"

I was reading your [article](#) about Gay Teen Suicides and Bullying, about how some people pray and pray for God to take away their gay feelings and there is a reason that he doesn't that they don't know about. I'd like to know what that reason is. My best friend committed suicide when we were both 18 because he couldn't accept that he was gay. I learned to accept it and now I'm 36 and quite happy. Luckily, I have found a church that accepts me for who I am and I know that God loves me as does Jesus but I am always curious to hear the ideas and opinions of Christians on what the supposed cure for this condition might be.

First of all, \_\_\_\_\_, I am so very sorry to hear of your best friend's suicide. I'm sure that has left a wound on your soul that troubles you to this day.

I want to VERY respectfully suggest that "accepting one's gayness" is not the best solution to the grief and sadness that comes bound up in realizing one has same-sex desires. That would be like seeing the "check engine" light on your car and deciding to learn to live with it. I know the culture's pro-gay message is that there's nothing wrong with homosexuality so just accept it, but that's not God's position. Which leads me to answer your question: why would God not take away someone's gay feelings?

First, because everyone has an area of weakness that makes it easier for us to recognize our need for God and depend on Him more fully, which is His design and intent for us. Some people have physical trials; others struggle with a weakness for alcohol, drugs, or other forms of self-medication. Some struggle with same-sex attractions. Whatever our area of weakness, this is the very avenue by which God can reveal

Himself to be strong, to be *enough* for us. And it is the best way for God to develop us into the people He made us to be, permeated with Christ like character and maturity.

So often, people pray and ask God to relieve their symptoms and make their lives easier (and this, of course, goes way beyond asking God to take away gay feelings. It's something we all do). Being broken and fallen people, when we pray for that, what we're really asking is, "I want You to make me comfortable so I won't need You." But Jesus doesn't answer this prayer because there is something so much bigger than our comfort at stake; He wants our hearts. He wants our dependent trust. He wants us to repent of the sin and separation from Himself that results in our brokenness. He wants to heal the real brokenness, not just the *symptom* of the brokenness. True brokenness is our broken relationship with God.

The struggle (against same-sex feelings) itself is not an evil. The struggle can be a holy instrument in God's hand if we let it. Please read through to the end of my answer for more on that.

Secondly, it's helpful to understand the bigger picture of why someone has attractions for someone of the same sex in the first place. No one is born gay; we are such complex creatures, being made in the image of God, that feelings, attitudes and beliefs are shaped over time by our life experiences, and filtered through our temperaments. This is complicated by the fact that we live in a fallen world that has been poisoned by sin, which is separation and independence from God. Fallen people love each other in fallen ways, or not at all.

The three-Personed God (One God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit), who have enjoyed love and fellowship with each other for all eternity, created us in Their image (Gen. 1:26). This means we are created for relationship: to connect and bond with others in ways that would make us feel loved and secure.

Living in a fallen world means that sometimes, we don't connect and bond with the people God intends to love and accept us, and there are serious repercussions from that.

After listening to people's stories in literally thousands of intake interviews, my friend Ricky Chelette of [Living Hope Ministries](#) has identified several common denominators that provide perspective to same-sex desires:

- Little boys are born at some point on a gender spectrum that ranges from the rough-and-tumble athletic boy to the emotionally sensitive, artistic and/or musical, aesthetically gifted boy. Little girls are born at some point on a feminine gender spectrum that ranges from the girly-girl to the tomboy jockette. Our spot on the gender spectrum is God's choice for His glory and our benefit. Most male same-sex strugglers are on the sensitive end of the spectrum.
- God's intention is for babies to bond first with Mom, then with Dad, then with same-sex peers, then with opposite-sex peers. Learning to exercise our "attachment muscles" is an essential part of becoming emotionally healthy. Most Moms don't have any trouble bonding with their babies. (But when something disrupts the process, it seriously messes people up.)
- When emotionally sensitive little boys are born into a family with a rough-and-tumble, emotionally insensitive Dad, the little boy can find himself more comfortable identifying with Mom and her emotionally sensitive femininity than with his Dad. It's as if Dad speaks Spanish and the little sensitive boy speaks Chinese. They may *want* to communicate with each other, but they don't speak the other's language. Unless the "Spanish-speaking" Dad purposes to learn Chinese to relate to his son on his level, there can be a disconnect between the two.
- There's a point in a toddler boy's development where he

should realize, "I'm a boy. I'm more like Dad than like Mom." When Dad involves his son in his world and communicates love and acceptance to his son, he comes to believe that he belongs in the world of males with his Dad.

- The wise author Toni Morrison says that a child knows he's loved when he walks in a room and his parent's eyes light up. All children are created with the need to receive "the three A's": attention, affection and affirmation. When a Dad pays loving attention to his son, when his eyes light up when his son enters the room, when Dad affirms his son for who he is and not just what he can do, a boy will probably feel secure in his Dad's love and acceptance. But if there is a disconnect between a Dad and his son, if the Dad thinks it's too much trouble to try and connect with a son in ways that the son can receive, there will be a father-shaped hole in the little boy's heart. A rough-and-tumble boy can try and fill that hole with all kinds of activities and risky behaviors to earn his Dad's attention, affection and affirmation. An emotionally sensitive boy can easily detach himself from Dad and connect himself more strongly with Mom, or detach from everyone. Both kinds of boys are at risk for trying to get a legitimate need met in unwise, illegitimate ways.

- Most little girls don't have trouble connecting with Mom, but if Mom is not warm and nurturing (or if something happens to disrupt the relationship), they can live with a mother-shaped hole in their heart. A Dad's role is to support and cherish his daughter's femininity, regardless of what form it takes. If he remains distant and unsupportive, or if he treats her like a son, she can have serious questions about her feminine identity: "If Dad doesn't think I'm okay, then I'm not." Or, if there is no Dad, she can be wracked with doubts about herself; a Dad's attention, affection and affirmation is huge in a little girl's life as well. Girls can have a father-shaped hole in their heart as well.

- From four to ten years old, the next stage of development is

for boys to learn to attach to other boys and girls to attach to other girls. Both sexes usually have intense “BFF” (best friends forever) friendships that are not romantic or erotic, they are just emotionally intense as they learn to exercise their friendship attachment muscles. If a boy doesn’t learn to make these connections with buddies, he will continue to walk around with a “buddy hole” in his heart. If a girl doesn’t learn to make these connections with other girls, she will walk around with a “girlfriend hole” in her heart. And since nature abhors a vacuum, and because we are all fallen creatures, we will try to stuff all kinds of things into the holes in our hearts.

- At puberty, sex hormones flood the body and hit the mother hole or father hole or friend hole in the heart. That aching desire to connect and attach, the painful longing to be nurtured and to bask in attention, affection and affirmation (“the three A’s”), then gets sexualized. If the adolescent boy or girl fantasizes about the object of their affections accompanied by masturbation and orgasm, brain chemicals get released that act like emotional super-glue. Physical (synaptic) connections are made between the object of affection and sexual pleasure, and then strengthened with repetition. When someone buys into the lie that “if I feel it, it must be true,” the end result can be a homosexual identity.

- (This last point is not limited to same-sex strugglers by any means.) When people experience the trauma of abuse or neglect, when they don’t get their God-given emotional needs met, they stop growing emotionally. They shut down inside. Their bodies keep growing but inside, they are still the emotional age of the point when they stopped growing. Although this sounds like an insult, it’s actually a simple descriptor: many people are emotionally four to ten years old. (Ever see road rage?) This is why wounded people tend to live lives driven by drama, self-centeredness, a lack of self-discipline, and emotional dependency (which is relational idolatry).

Why doesn't God take away homosexual feelings? Because they are not a separate part of the person like a nasal polyp or an infected appendix that can be cut out to restore health. Feelings are a part of us. They are the *product* of beliefs, actions, and the way one sees life and reality. Feelings are like the caboose on a train; they trail along at the end, pulled by the parts that do the work.

God will not "zap" us because to do so would be to eradicate who we are. He will not remove feelings because feelings are part of the *imago Dei*, the image of God. He made us, He loves us just as we are, and He wants to work with us to transform our thinking and our understanding of who He is, who we are, how life works, and what is true. Romans 12:2 says, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." When we change the way we think and the way we do life, our feelings will eventually change. (Not necessarily 180 degrees, but some degree of transformation is part of the power of the Gospel!)

Homosexual feelings come from legitimate, unmet longings for connection, for the "three A's." God wants us to be connected to other people; He created us to function best in community. He wants us to experience His love, and the love of other people, in the context of relationship. God wants us in HIS community of believers, and the church is a second chance to be in a different family. He wants to meet our needs for connection and relationship through healthy God-honoring friendships. Many people testify that their same-sex longings decreased as their security as a man or as a woman grew because of belonging to the world of men or the world of women in God's family. As they took their place in the Body of Christ with their new (church) family and friends, the longings and desires shifted to age- and gender-appropriate feelings. They finished growing up.

But even in those who did not experience a shift in orientation, they still report having a home with God's people, with relationships that help fill the hole in their

hearts.

Let me suggest a related but less emotionally charged illustration. In his excellent book *Changes That Heal*, Dr. Henry Cloud writes,

*It is not unloving for God to say no, even to our healing. He knows that sometimes we need to work out our healing instead of his doing it for us. For example, if I am depressed because I don't bond with others, for God to "heal" my depression would prohibit me from learning how to bond and becoming loved. He may then say no to my prayer for healing from depression for my benefit. We like Job, must trust God's no and his timing. It does not mean that he doesn't love us. It may mean that he wants something better for us.*

I believe that God says "no" to zapping away homosexual feelings because He has something better. He is passionate about growing us up to maturity (Eph. 4:13-15). There is no shortcut to maturity; it means struggling through to connect, attach and bond with healthy people until we finish growing up.

Some years ago, someone sent this email about the value of struggling:

*A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.*

*Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther.*

*Then the man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, but it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.*

*The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected*

*that, at any moment the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.*

*Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of his life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings.*

*It was never able to fly.*

*What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening, were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.*

*Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been, and we could never fly.*

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2011 Probe Ministries

---

## **Prayer Notch-Bumpers**

This weekend my understanding of the power of prayer was bumped up a notch.

I was at a retreat that was being bathed in prayer; 50 young people, all battling unwanted same-sex attractions, gathered to find fellowship with each other and pursue greater intimacy



with Jesus. The fact that they were there at all is an evidence of the power of God and the fact that He answers the prayers of their loved ones. The fact that so many of them are experienced some degree of change in the way they think and act, with a resulting change in the intensity of their feelings, is also evidence of the power of God. Nothing builds my faith like seeing His love and grace and power released into the lives of precious people like these dear friends of mine.

But the “notch-bumper” came in the form of two incidents.

Several of the board members of this ministry, of which I am one, came to teach seminars. After we finished, I visited with two of them, both pastors. We were talking about how spiritual warfare rages in the weeks before, during and after our retreats. One pastor said, “I confessed to the Lord the other day, ‘I know You say to pray without ceasing, but I just don’t.’ He said, ‘If I let you see for just one second the battle that rages around you, you would never stop.’” Whoa. It was a good reminder to not remain content with simply looking at the physical, material world as if that were all that exists. There are angels and demons at work and at war all around us—all the time!

That night, while we were all singing worship songs, a young lady asked to speak to me outside in private. She asked permission to leave the building because she needed to be alone with God. I had a sense there might be something else going on even if I didn’t know what it was, but the Lord didn’t give me a “red light” in my spirit about letting her go. So we agreed that she would be back by 9:00.

By 9:10, she still hadn’t returned. I started praying that the Holy Spirit would draw her back to the rest of us. I envisioned a rope tied around her heart, and in my spirit I kept pulling on the rope. A few minutes later she walked in the door with a funny look on her face. I walked over and gave

her a long, warm hug, whispering, “I’m so glad you came back.”

The next day a group of us were talking with her about her time alone with God. Apparently, she was unhappy with Him and was arguing with Him about something. I told her about my prayer and my pulling on the rope, and her eyes grew big. “That was *you*??” she asked. “I didn’t want to go back, I had no intention of going back, but all of a sudden I found myself on my feet, and then I was walking back to the building where everyone was, and I was saying, ‘What’s going on? I don’t want to do this!’ But then I found myself in the room with everyone.”

It gave me spiritual goosebumps. When we abide in Jesus—the theme of the retreat—our prayers are His prayers, and He answers them. In ways that bring Him glory. . . and bring us goosebumps.

This blog post originally appeared at  
[blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/prayer\\_notch-bumpers](http://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/prayer_notch-bumpers) on  
March 1, 2011.

---

## **Gay Teen Suicide and Bullying: A Christian Response**

The rise in gay teen suicides is alarming and heartbreaking, whether it is an actual rise in suicides or a rise in the reporting and awareness of these needless deaths. Five teens killed themselves in a recent three-week period because of

bullying or “outing,” but no one knows for sure how many there are.

Teens who experience same-sex attractions are already stressed simply by the difficulties of adolescence. This is painfully exacerbated by the confusion that accompanies unwanted desires and feelings that make them feel “other than,” different, like they don’t belong. Many of those who struggle with gay and lesbian feelings are very emotionally sensitive, and they can feel their pain more deeply than many of their classmates. They can easily buy into the lies that life is too hard, the challenges too daunting, that the hopelessness is too overwhelming.

When one factors in the excruciating pain of being taunted and bullied for even being perceived as gay or lesbian, the shame can become too much. If one is overweight, there is a possibility of losing weight; if one is a poor student, there is a possibility of working hard and studying to do better. But if one feels disconnected from and unaccepted by their same-sex peers, and if they can’t explain and did not choose the attractions that plague them, then most students will despair, believing there is no hope of anything changing. This is especially true for those who have prayed—many of them every single day—for God to take away their feelings, and He doesn’t seem to answer. (There are [good reasons for this](#), but they don’t know that.) Gender identity is at the center of one’s identity; what do you do when you don’t feel comfortable in your own skin?

Given these stresses, Christians could and should be the first ones to reach out to the marginalized, the ostracized, and the bullied. Every single person is precious to God, made in His image, and deserving of dignity and respect.

The emphasis needs to be on “teen suicides,” not “gay suicides.” Any time a young person takes his or her own life it is horrific and unacceptable—and, may I repeat myself,

heartbreaking.

I am grateful for the way the media is highlighting the problem of bullying. This is a problem we can do something about—regardless of our particular beliefs about sexuality.

My friend Randy Thomas, executive vice-president of Exodus International, responded to the highly publicized suicide of Rutgers University student Tyler Clementi on the Exodus blog (Exodus is a ministry to those dealing with unwanted same-sex attractions):

Christians we need to speak out strongly against bullying and condemn vicious and violating behavior like this. God is the author of every breath. As long as there are Tylers in this world we have to defend their right to freedom and self-determination. We must afford them at least the very basics in human respect [and] dignity and defend them from those [who] would exploit and abuse them . . . . God is the author of every breath, and when we look into the face of another we are seeing a dim reflection of Him.

Whether they know Him or not.[{1}](#)

Christians should be at the forefront of the anti-bullying movement. Bullying is the opposite of the second greatest commandment, to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31). The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus standing up for the underdog; consider how He stood up to the religious bullies who had entrapped a woman caught in adultery (John 8). When it comes to bullies, what would Jesus do? Stand up to them. Defend the bullied. Communicate that they are precious, valued, and loved.

I have read a number of stories of people who were bullied when they were growing up. I can't imagine how difficult it is to live through the painful isolation and rejection, of feeling that no one cares and nothing can fix the problem (apart from the bullies disappearing). I can't imagine how

painful it is to see teachers, bus drivers, and other adults say nothing and do nothing to come to the defense of kids being picked on—for being different, for being new, for being “other than,” for no reason at all other than the arbitrary attack of someone who felt small, and who bullied someone else to feel “bigger than.”

To understand the problem of gay teen suicides, it's helpful understand the issues for gay teens (please see my article [“Helping Teens Understand Homosexuality.”](#)) We also need to understand more about bullying and what to do about it. The very wise and experienced Dr. Allan L. Beane offers “Tips for Parents, Assertiveness Skills for Students Who Are Bullied” and “Assertiveness Strategies for Siblings and Other Students (Bystanders)” on his web site.[\[2\]](#)

Parents, pastors, youth workers and students need to encourage one another to stand up against any bullying of any student. There is strength in numbers, especially when it comes to dealing with a bully, although it only takes one voice to say, “Stop it.” Experienced teachers say a no-tolerance policy toward bullying is essential to taking power away from bullies. The key is the community—the school, the church, the neighborhood, the youth group: when the community says nothing, bullying explodes. When the community refuses to allow bullies to exploit others' weaknesses, it is quenched.

At the same time, however, as we encourage teens to reach out to their marginalized peers by standing with them against their bullies, we don't want to be naïve. Although community pressure on bullies to stop often works, Scripture makes it clear that living like Jesus and standing up for the outcast will not be easy. Just as the Pharisees were upset by the way Jesus interfered with their social hierarchy, so too things will get sticky for those who upset those at the top of the social ladder. High school bullies are often at the top of the social food-chain. We need to prepare our students for the teasing and bullying they very likely will face for defending

the marginalized, reminding and encouraging them that being persecuted for doing the right thing is to be expected, and is part of what makes the hope we have in a world and a kingdom beyond this one so sweet.

Gay teen suicides happen when students feel alone and isolated, when they feel “other than” and feel judged for that other-ness. Many of those who find themselves attracted to other boys or other girls are already uncomfortable with their desires; most of them try to pray or wish them away, but that’s not how those feelings are changed into the God-given, normal attractions for the opposite sex.

We can do something to prevent more gay teen suicides. The most influential people in gay teens’ lives are their peers, whose affirmation or shaming holds extreme power. But teens need to be instructed in how to fulfill the second greatest commandment, in loving their neighbor. We can teach them that all young people need to be loved, to be accepted as people made in God’s image, to be valued. They all need the “three A’s”: attention, affirmation, and affection. If sexually confused or gender-insecure teens, who are often marginalized by the other students, experienced Christians reaching out to them in friendship, simply communicating the grace of acceptance and value, that could make a big difference. It can be choices as simple as inviting someone to sit with them at lunch, or telling others to “lay off” if they make insulting and negative comments about one of those marginalized students. They can even say affirming things to the bullies like, “Hey. You’re better than that, dude. Leave him alone.”

Jim Wallis recently wrote something stellar in a blog post on “Christians and Bullying”:

My mother used to give us kids two instructions:

1. If there is a kid on the playground that nobody else is playing with—you play with them.

2. If there is a bully picking on other kids—you be the one to stand up to him or her.<sup>{3}</sup>

Being “Jesus with skin on.” That’s how teen suicides, regardless of sexual identity, can be prevented. May God use His people to love these hurting young women and men whom He loves dearly.

## Notes

1. Thomas, Randy, “Step Up, Speak Out Against Bullying: The Tragic Case of Tyler Clementi,” Exodus International Blog, posted Oct. 1, 2010, accessed Nov. 11, 2010: [blog.exodusinternational.org/2010/10/01/step-up-speak-out-against-bullying-the-tragic-case-of-tyler-clementi](http://blog.exodusinternational.org/2010/10/01/step-up-speak-out-against-bullying-the-tragic-case-of-tyler-clementi).

2. Beane, Dr. Allan, Bully Free Program, “Tips for Parents” and other posts: [www.bullyfree.com/free-resources/tips-for-parents](http://www.bullyfree.com/free-resources/tips-for-parents) accessed Nov. 11, 2010.

3. Wallis, Jim, “Christians and Bullying: Standing with Gays and Lesbians,” God’s Politics blog: [blog.sojo.net/2010/10/21/christians-and-bullying-standing-with-gays-and-lesbians](http://blog.sojo.net/2010/10/21/christians-and-bullying-standing-with-gays-and-lesbians), accessed Nov. 11, 2010.

© 2010 Probe Ministries

---

## Ellen and Her “Wife”

Yesterday’s (November 10, 2009) Oprah featured Ellen DeGeneres and her “wife,” actress Portia di Rossi. I watched the show with the perspective of one who, for a decade, has helped women come out of the bondage of lesbian relationships. Let me share with you the meaning of what I saw and heard.

Oprah is enthusiastically pro-gay, so I was not surprised that she oohed and aahed over her guests' romance and wedding, which we saw in video and gorgeous photography. And I wasn't surprised that Ellen and Portia said they were glad to be "married" because it gave validity and legitimacy to their relationship. That perspective is part of an agenda about normalizing homosexuality, not the one-flesh union of male and female God intends marriage to be.

In her excitement to embrace the unreality these two women have formed, Oprah could not see the threads of commonality that tie most lesbian relationships together:

**Hearts looking for their home.** Both Ellen and Portia spoke of how they had found their home in each other: a place of rest, of sensing that the search was over. Many women who long for same-sex relationships speak of the sense of a gaping hole in their hearts, looking for someone to make them complete. They are looking for continual reassurance and safety, the security of being loved forever. God's plan for baby girls is that they find this nurturing and reassurance in their mother's love and attention, with a strong connection with Mom that grounds them as human beings. All the lesbian women I know have sustained a life-altering "mother wound." Either their mothers weren't there for them, or something was broken in receiving their mothers' love. They are longing for the unconditional and all-consuming mother love they never felt when they were babies, and they try to find it in the hearts of other women (or girls: growing numbers of teens are struggling as well).

**Connection.** Both of Oprah's guests reported an immediate, electric connection to each other, even though it took some time for them to become a couple. (Interestingly, neither of them revealed during the interview that they were both in relationships with other women at the time, and they both dumped their respective relationships and moved in together. Abruptly leaving one girlfriend to hook up with a new one is typical.) In our [online discussions](#) of women dealing with



their unwanted homosexuality, the word *connection* probably shows up more often than any other. *Connection* defines life for them. God created women to be relational, so it's not surprising that connection would be so important, but there is an element of desperation to the connection that characterizes lesbian relationships.

**Intensity.** Intensity is a substitute for intimacy. Lesbian relationships are marked by intensity; one counselor calls it "emotional crack cocaine." Intensity plus connection feels so overwhelming, so powerful, so intoxicating, that it is like a life-controlling drug. But God never intended for us to have that kind of human relationship, because it is idolatrous. People can never fill a heart-hole that God designed to be filled by Himself. So the cycle of lesbian relationships is: *infatuation* (reveling in the intensity of connection), *disappointment* (realizing the relationship does not satisfy, because idols never do), *breakup* (since God never intended same-sex coupling, it can't work), and *heartache*. . . leading to looking for someone new to be infatuated with.

Lesbian relationship usually last only 3-4 years. (There are long-term relationships, but that's usually because the women don't know how to live without each other. It's not the same as a stable heterosexual marriage relationship.) And when the breakup comes, it's horrifically painful. I pray for Rosie O'Donnell and Kelli Carpenter, who have separated with 5 kids between them, to turn to the Lord for comfort and truth and peace.

And I pray for Ellen and Portia, when their ride is over as well. I pray for grace, and peace, for them to know Jesus. . . and for their eyes to be opened to why we use quotation marks for the word "wife."

This blog post originally appeared at  
[blogs.bible.org/engage/sue\\_bohlin/ellen\\_and\\_her\\_wife](https://blogs.bible.org/engage/sue_bohlin/ellen_and_her_wife)

---

# **“Is There a Demonic Spirit of Homosexuality?”**

**Could people who honestly believe they are gay, possibly be blinded by a demonic spirit of homosexuality? Or could they possibly have a demon of homosexuality in them? I am not saying all are demon possessed, but what is it that makes them truly, honestly believe that they are born this way?**

Having studied both spiritual warfare and the contributing factors to homosexuality, I do not think that a demonic spirit of homosexuality is the definitive explanation for believing one is gay. Yes, deception is an important component to a homosexual orientation; those who experience same-sex attraction unwittingly believe a number of lies about life, about themselves, about others, and often about God. And where sin and deception are, there is often a demonic presence or element.

In those who feel “different” from childhood, homosexuality comes from emotional and spiritual brokenness. There is a constellation of contributing factors to this brokenness: hurtful relationships with parents and peers, unmet emotional needs, emotional traumas due to abuse, wrong perceptions, warped gender identity. I believe that the enemy of our souls exploits this brokenness and whispers lies to broken people that are very easy to believe because they don’t know they’re lies. (Lies such as, “You make a lousy boy [or girl].” “You’re not like everybody else.” “Nobody will accept you.” “If you were a better boy/girl, your father/mother would love you more.” “The way to get love is through sex.” “God made you gay.” “You may not like being like this, but you can’t change.” “You don’t deserve anything better.”) So in this way,

there is probably a demonic element to the development of homosexuality.

In regard to those who experienced a normal heterosexual childhood: some people are so addicted to indulging their flesh that they turn to homosexual behavior in adulthood. In this case, sin grows up from within the darkened human heart, as described in James 1:14-15: "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." There's probably some demonic influence involved in this process as well.

Is there an actual demonic spirit of homosexuality? Probably so. I have heard a few (a very few, and I've been involved in homosexual ministry for 10 years) testimonies of people who experienced something like a net of same-sex lust being dropped on them, or out-of-the-blue, overwhelming homosexual desires coming upon them like a car wreck. I have also heard from people who report having experienced a spirit of sexual "strangeness" ever since early childhood. In those cases, eventually they recognized the demonic aspect and stood against it. Sometimes, people can dabble in homosexual behavior, and this sin opens the door to demonic oppression. Only repentance, renouncing the door-opening in Jesus' name, and trusting in Christ, makes the demons leave.

But on the other hand, many gay-identifying individuals have pursued deliverance ministry, seeking to have "the demon of homosexuality" cast out of them—and it didn't make any difference in their feelings or thoughts, because that wasn't the cause of their same-gender attraction in the first place. They were seeking an easy fix to a complex problem, but if it's not the cause of the problem, it won't work. Romans 12:2 directs us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, which means changing our beliefs and thoughts (which can result in a change of feeling), but this is the work of discipline. Again, no easy fix.

You ask why people honestly believe they are born homosexual. Well, for the same reason you could honestly believe you were born an English speaker. You've always spoken English, it's all you've ever known, it's the most natural thing in the world for you. The reality is that you, like all humans, were born a LANGUAGE speaker, but being an English speaker was shaped by thousands of interactions with your family and your culture. Homosexuals are shaped in similar ways that started at birth. All people are born to be relational, but some people are relationally broken because of thousands of interactions that are a result of living in a fallen world with fallen people. And different people express relational brokenness in different ways. I think of families where one sibling is gay and another deals with chronic rage or depression. Different kinds of brokenness, depending on the personality and perceptions of the individuals.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

© 2003 Probe Ministries, revised 03/10

---

## **“Homosexuals Are Going to Hell!”**

Dear Mrs. Sue,

I really enjoyed Blue School at Super Summer Arkansas and I had a blast. Unfortunately, I highly disagree with the answer you gave from the Ask Box question about if homosexuals are going to hell. From what I understood, you said that

homosexuality is not a heaven or hell issue, and that homosexuals proclaiming to be Christians will still go to heaven if they have a "relationship with God." The Bible says in Romans 1:26-27, "for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even the women did change the natural use that is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working with that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." And it goes on to say in verse 32, "who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." (KJV)

Would Jesus have sex with another man?

In the amplified version, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "Do you know that the unrighteous and wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats, nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foul mouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God."

You only get saved once, however, you can stray away into sin and lose your salvation, but you can gain it back by rededicating your life whole heartedly and I truly believe that if you are a homosexual, you are not truly saved.

I hope you don't hate me for my views because I don't mean to put you down or anything close, I was raised up different. I hope you understand where I'm coming from and I hope you don't take it wrong.

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I think there are two parts to your comments, one about if homosexuals can be saved, and the other about losing our

salvation.

First, about homosexuals. I am very glad we are having this conversation because at some point you will know someone who loves Jesus AND is attracted to people of the same sex. If you try to tell them they're going to hell because of their feelings, it will cut off all chances of having a relationship with them. People who are attracted to their same sex don't choose those feelings, they don't want them, and most of them pray and pray for the feelings to go away. When [God doesn't answer that prayer](#) (because He answers it in other but harder ways), they often either turn their back on God or they buy the lie that God must have made them that way.

Those who identify themselves as homosexuals embrace their feelings instead of their true identity. They are deceived and wounded. *All* of us are deceived by the enemy in one way or another. The problem is, we don't even know when we're being deceived, which is why it's so important to follow the Bible instead of our feelings. I know several people who identify themselves first as Christ-followers and secondly as gay; I pray for them, because they are swallowing a lie. They have truly put their trust in Jesus, but they are tired of fighting their feelings and tired of waiting for God to take their attractions away. The ones who are buying the lie also don't want to do the hard work of looking at the causes of their attractions and addressing the problems that caused them, grieving the pain of their wounds and forgiving those who hurt them in various ways. They want the easy way out, and God doesn't have an "easy button" like on the commercials.

One time a lady called me whose son had come out to her as a homosexual. She had said to her son, "I thought you were a Christian! I thought you prayed to receive Christ when you were a boy! You can't possibly be a Christian and gay!" He answered, "Mom, I AM a Christian. I'm a Christian with problems."

As am I.

As are you, sweet \_\_\_\_\_.

As are all of us Christ-followers.

It's not OK to act on homosexual feelings. God disciplines those He loves, Hebrews tells us. And those who pursue their feelings instead of who God says they are—His beloved child who needs to depend on Jesus for the strength to stand against their temptations—will experience the hard consequences of their sin. Some are HIV positive. Some are unable to have healthy friendships with others of the same sex because they haven't learned to depend on Christ for their deepest heart-needs, and insist on expecting others to be what only God can be for them. Some have lost their family relationships because of choosing their gay relationships over all others. God lets that kind of pain happen in order to discipline those He loves and draw them back to Himself.

Yes, Romans 1 really does say what it says. It describes the downward spiral into degradation when people refuse to accept God's right to rule in their lives. But there is a difference between those who identify with their sin, saying that "homosexual" is who and what they are, and those who identify with Christ but who still experience the strong pull toward sinful behaviors and relationships. In the [re:generation recovery ministry of our church](#), people say things like "I'm a believer who struggles with homosexuality" or "I'm a believer who struggles with anger and control" or "I'm a believer who struggles with alcohol" or "I'm a believer who struggles with perfectionism" or "I'm a believer who struggles with idolizing food." Their identity is that they are a Christ-follower, but they are also honest about their struggles. Some of them stumble and fall in the process of becoming like Jesus. I certainly stumble in my walk. The stumbles have become fewer over the years of walking with Jesus, but I still do stumble. And I will continue to stumble my way toward heaven, as do all

Christians.

Those who identify with their sin instead of identifying with Jesus are described in the 1 Corinthians 6 passage. But then, when we repent of identifying with our pet sins and identify with Jesus instead, as Paul says, "That is what some of you WERE."

I want you to consider the possibility that someone can be a Christian and still experience the same temptations that they had before becoming a Christian. That's what I'm talking about when I say that being a homosexual is not a heaven-or-hell issue. When someone puts their trust in Christ, they don't get a lobotomy—their brain and their history are not changed. They bring all their baggage with them into their relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit. And Jesus invites them to release their pieces of baggage into His hands one by one. Some refuse to relinquish their baggage, their sin habits, to Him until later when they experience His loving discipline. But it doesn't mean they're not a Christian. It means they are a Christian still in process.

As am I.

As are you. <gentle smile>

About the issue of losing your salvation, I invite you to look through some short articles on our website, starting here: [www.probe.org/articles-on-losing-salvation.htm](http://www.probe.org/articles-on-losing-salvation.htm). When Jesus said, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," (John 10:28-29) the "no one" includes us. We are secure in His hand; eternal life is forever, and it's permanent. We will not lose our salvation when we sin, but we *will* experience a loss of fellowship with God and He will discipline us because He wants what is best for us. In fact, I have heard a number of people



who gave up struggling against their homosexual feelings and dove headfirst into the gay lifestyle thinking it would give them life. . . but they came back saying, “It was death, not life. And I missed Jesus. He seemed very far away when I was pursuing my sin. I couldn’t live without Him. So here I am, ready to struggle again. But this time, in His strength and not my own.”

OK, I know that’s a *lot*. I hope your heart is open to what I have to say. I LOVED having you in Blue School this year and look forward to next year!

Hugs,

Mrs. Sue

© 2009 Probe Ministries

---

## **“How Do I Talk to My Friend About Her Son’s Homosexuality?”**

My very dear Jewish friend and mother has a gay son. She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual. She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful. How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?

I’m so glad you asked! I see several issues in your email.

*She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was*

*different and going to be homosexual.*

If she was sensitive to her children, it is not surprising that she noted he was different from very early in his childhood. There's nothing wrong with being different. But it's sad that she "knew" he was going to be homosexual because it didn't have to turn out that way.

I believe there is a [spectrum of masculinity](#) in boys, and they are born at whatever place on that spectrum that is God's choice, and gift, to them. On one end is the rough-and-tumble physical, athletic, emotionally insensitive boy. Our culture would deem him "classically masculine." He loves to play ball or engage in various sports, to get dirty, and to play with other boys. On the other end of the spectrum from the athletic boy is the aesthetic boy: gifted in music, art, poetry, performing, enjoying reading and other quiet activities, and emotionally sensitive. Songwriter and musician Dennis Jernigan, himself a former homosexual, calls these boys the "Davids" of the church.

Unfortunately, our culture has too narrowly defined masculinity, labeling the sensitive, artistic boy different and gay. One man I know, provided with this perspective, exclaimed, "If someone had explained to me when I was 17 that I wasn't gay, I was gifted, that would have changed everything!"

When a boy's father, especially, gives him warm attention, affection and affirmation, supporting whatever kind of boy he is, he usually grows up accepting and comfortable with his particular kind of masculinity. When a boy knows that his daddy believes in him and is his #1 cheerleader, he can connect with the world of males and continue to develop without incident. But when a boy doesn't receive the masculinity imprint from his father that makes him feel like he belongs in the world of boys and men, he can remain stuck

at that place. (If he DOES have a great relationship with his dad but doesn't make the connection with other boys, the arrested development can happen a few years later.)

How do I know this? From being in ministry to hundreds of men whose stories are heartbreakingly similar. There are a few wild cards, such as sexual abuse, that can produce same-sex attractions even when a boy has a great relationship with his dad and his peers, but most of the time it's a very similar story.

[Incidentally, I see a similar spectrum of femininity for girls, ranging from the foo-foo girly-girl on one end, to the tomboy jockette, allergic to dresses, on the other. Our culture also too narrowly defines femininity, just as it does masculinity.]

*She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful.*

Well, being homosexual is NOT genetic. There is not only no evidence for a genetic cause for same-sex attractions, there is strong evidence for certain pre-conditions that characterize the histories of those who eventually take on a gay identity: the sensitive temperament, a lack of warm, affirming connection with dad, a lack of affirming connection with other boys, and a resulting lack of self-confidence in being male.

And yet it can feel like people were born that way.

Maybe this analogy will help. My friend grew up in the south where everyone in his family was prejudiced. It was just the culture of his family and pretty much all the people his family ran with. As long as he can remember, he always hated and feared black people. Everyone he knew hated and feared black people. He didn't know there was any other way. But he wasn't born prejudiced. He was shaped that way because of

countless interactions and modeling. He told me, "You grow up being taught and thinking that black people are bad and evil and you believe that until the Lord reveals something else. Then you change and you were not what you once were—what felt 'normal' to you."

No one chooses the feelings of a lack of confidence in one's masculinity, of not belonging to the world of boys and men. Then, once the sex hormones start flooding his body in adolescence, no one chooses the resulting sexual/romantic attraction to a guy who possesses what a boy wishes he had or were. The feelings are not learned, but the resulting choices and behaviors are. The Bible, including the Old Testament passages, does not condemn the feelings, only the chosen behavior. (And sexual sin is always a choice.) So I would make a distinction between the feelings and the actions.

So homosexual feelings are not chosen, but acting on them is, and it's sinful. It's not a sin to be tempted (what same-sex feelings constitute), but it is a sin to step over the line and give in. You might mention to your friend something like the fact that it's not a sin to be tempted to shoplift, but it is a sin to give in and steal. I would imagine she could get that.

*How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?*

The first issue is to determine if they're even open to hearing another viewpoint. It's not a good idea to try and "correct" someone's values and beliefs when they are content in them, but Jesus told us to be salt and light. So we need to be careful with our words and offer another viewpoint with respect and gentleness, as Peter tells us (1 Pet. 3:7). You might say something like, "You know, there are lots of former homosexuals who see things very differently than what we usually hear in the media."

I would suggest simply stating what God has said in His word: that His plan for sexuality is within the bounds of marriage between one man and one woman. Anything outside of His intention is not only sinful, it's harmful, and that's why he tells us to avoid it. God's rules for sexuality are rooted in His love for us, and He knows that when we insist on doing things our own way, trying to meet legitimate needs in ungodly and illegitimate ways, we will suffer from negative consequences. We can point out that the biology of sex shows that God designed it for male-female coupling. (This argument holds true for an evolutionary perspective as well.) And when people who have been immersed in a culture of anything-goes sexuality insist that homosexuality is a viable option, gently ask what would happen if a group of gay-identifying people populated an uninhabited island. What would happen over time?

All you can do is respectfully offer God's truth as revealed in His word, and trust God with the results. We live in a culture that has been shaped by a definite agenda designed to normalize and legitimize homosexuality, and suggesting people think differently than the culture demands can be like asking a fish what it's like to be wet. A fish doesn't know the meaning of "wet" because it doesn't understand the concept of "dry." And people don't realize there's a legitimate, though politically incorrect alternative view.

And it's probably worthwhile to mention that someone whose child is gay can easily react very defensively to the offensive idea that homosexuality is preventable and changeable, because that would indicate they played a role in it. And that just hurts too much to consider. Parents usually beat ourselves up with guilt anyway; this issue can push the guilt factor to an unbearable weight. So I think it's wise to be aware of that dynamic.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

