

“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

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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.

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The Gender Spectrum

When I use the term “gender spectrum,” you might think in terms of masculinity on one end and femininity on the other. We hear men being prompted to “get in touch with your feminine side.” (For some reason, women never



seem to be exhorted to “get in touch with your masculine side.” Huh.)

But I don't think that's the way it works.

In Genesis 1, we are told that “God created them male and female” (Genesis 1:27). I think, rather, that there is one spectrum of masculinity and another spectrum of femininity. I also think that God is the one who chooses where on the spectrum babies are born, according to His design and for His pleasure and glory.

The Femininity Spectrum

I suggest that little girls come into the world at some point on a femininity spectrum. On one end is the girly-girl who comes out of the womb asking for the little flower headband to wear in the hospital nursery, and she keeps on running toward all things frilly and girly. She loves pink, loves to wear dresses and twirl around to “be pretty,” wants to wear nail polish and makeup just like Mommy (or like the other ladies she sees on TV).



Femininity
Spectrum



Girly-girl.....Tomboy



On the other end of the spectrum is the tomboy jockette, who can't stand wearing dresses, wants to climb trees and play tackle football with the boys. These girls are often gifted athletically and many are natural leaders. When these little girls' type of femininity is supported and encouraged, they are comfortable in their skin just the way God made them. Wise parents also make sure they wear dresses and "act like a lady" when it's time to do that—with the promise that when they get home, they can put their jeans or sweats back on and be comfortable.

Sometimes, though, girly-girl types can morph into "mean girls" and inform the jockettes that they're not good enough as girls, and they can receive the message that it's not okay to be the kind of girl they are, the kind of girl God chose for them to be because He has a good plan for them. They can grow up not feeling secure in their femininity.

The Masculinity Spectrum

On one end is the rough-and-tumble boy—athletic, noisy, enjoys getting dirty. He bonds to other boys shoulder-to-shoulder, engaging in common activities or tasks, and tends to find face-to-face interaction intimidating.



Masculinity Spectrum



Rough-and-tumble. Sensitive/creative



On the other end of the spectrum from the *athletic* boy is the *aesthetic* boy: emotionally sensitive, gifted in art, music, theater, dance, or some other kind of art. He usually avoids athletics, getting dirty, and anything having to do with balls coming at him. He bonds eyeball-to-eyeball, connecting to others' hearts through their eyes the way most girls do, but they are not girls. And then, of course, there is everything in between.

In our culture, we tend to define masculinity in terms of the rough-and-tumble type ONLY, but I don't think God agrees, since He delights to create so many sensitive boys and those who are a balance between the two. In fact, even as toddlers, they can reveal themselves by responding to another child's upset by dropping what they're doing and going over to pat them, soothe them, and attempt to comfort them: "You okay? It's okay." This sensitivity is a beautiful thing to behold, but it can get a little boy in trouble. Since we define masculinity so narrowly, it is easy to marginalize and shame the masculinity of the sensitive boy. Especially if his daddy is a rough-and-tumble sort of man who is flummoxed by a little boy who would rather Daddy read to him than throw a football.

If the sensitive boy is affirmed in his type of masculinity, he can grow up to be a phenomenal husband, father, pastor, counselor, artist, musician, dancer—the list goes on. When tomboy girls are loved and accepted by their parents just the way they are, they can grow up to be great moms and teachers and scout leaders, especially of boys. If, however, they are ostracized for the way they are designed, they can burn with the indignity of being “other than.”

It's these sensitive, gifted boys that are most at risk for embracing a gay identity, especially when others wound them by slapping false labels on them, even from a young age: gay, queer, homo, fag. Tomboy girls, especially the ones gifted athletically, are quickly tagged with ugly false labels as well: lez, queer, gay. They can easily think, “What do others know that I don't know? If they say it, it must be true.”

But it's *not* true. They're not gay, they're gifted. If only they could be helped to see themselves that way!

Our goal as adults should be to help all children grow into gender-secure, emotionally healthy kids who are glad God made them a boy or a girl, and are comfortable in their own skins just the way God made them. I think it starts with affirming the different kinds of masculinity and femininity. It's ALL good!

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Watching Transformation Happen

Last week I was privileged to attend the annual [Exodus Conference](#) along with a thousand people coming out of homosexuality, as well as some family members and people like myself who minister to them. Nothing has built my faith in the power and the loving heart of our life-changing God like my decade-long involvement in this kind of ministry.

I got to experience the power of answered prayer as I stood in worship with a divorced couple whom I have known online for several years but met at the conference. The husband had gone AWOL for the past year, choosing to pursue his feelings instead of his identity as a beloved child of His Father. He told me “something” kept drawing him back into the light: with a smile, I told him that Jesus has His hook in his heart because he belongs to Jesus! And there he was, reconnecting with his God and his wife in worship and the beauty of repentance.

I got to hear the testimony of a beloved young woman, deeply wounded, whom I have watched soften and become so much like her Jesus over the past several years. As we were singing the words “Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow,” she suddenly and violently experienced the memory of being a sexually abused five-year-old, sitting in the tub with blood everywhere. In the pain of that moment, the Father met her there with the same words He had spoken to [Sy Rogers](#), that evening’s speaker, about his sexual abuse: “Daddy sees, and Daddy’s sorry.” As His compassionate love washed over her, healing came.

And I got to see actual physical transformation in a dear lady with whom I have been walking out her repentance from lesbianism. As she has dared to believe that God really means

everything in His word, especially about His love for her and how He sees her as a precious, beautiful, beloved daughter, change has come. She has gone to great lengths to drink in her Abba's love in intimate ways (and has taught me what that can look like in the process). Halfway through the week, she caught a glimpse of herself in a plate glass window and was amazed to realize that her posture had changed: she was walking more upright and confidently, assured that she was "a real person" (her words). At the end of the week, she said she believed the change in her was permanent and lasting. She finally feels solid, not hollow. That's the power of God's healing love.

And that's why it is such a joyful privilege for me to serve people whose thorn in the flesh is unwanted same-sex attractions. As their SSA drives them to Jesus, transformation happens.

And it is beautiful.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/watching-transformation-happen/ on July 21, 2009.

When We Forget What is True

Sue Bohlin blogs about a conversation with a friend struggling with temptation because she had forgotten what is true.

Sunday morning as I was getting ready for church, the phone rang. It was one of the women from the online support group I help moderate for those struggling with same-sex attraction.

"Hi, Em."

"Sue, can you talk?"

"I have two minutes."

"OK, then in two minutes tell me again why homosexuality is wrong? I'm at an AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] retreat and there are so many women here I could really connect with and they keep turning out to be gay. And the leader is wonderful, but she's a former nun who is just so happy and content with her lesbian partner. I can't remember why I'm supposed to be fighting against what I want."

"Oh. Well, okay. . . [*Lord, help! Give me Your wisdom here!*] Homosexuality is wrong because it's not God's plan. Because He created man and woman to be complementary to each other. Because two women can have a wonderful friendship but were never meant to meet each other's needs in that way. Because lesbianism is about trying to fill your heart by drawing from another woman's heart, but that one's as needy and empty as yours. Because two people of the same sex cannot possibly reflect the 'unity with diversity' of the mystery of the union of Christ and the Church, where two very different, very other beings are somehow one. Because it's two of the same, not two who are different, coming together as one. Because homosexuality is idolatrous—remember, it puts the other person, or what they give you, or the relationship on a pedestal where only God should be. Because when you give yourself to what God has called sin, it costs you the intimacy with Jesus that your soul craves."

"Right. Right. . . . But Sue, it doesn't feel like it. The others here seem so happy and content, and I'm miserable."

"I'm so sorry, Em. Fighting our flesh will absolutely make us miserable. You're doing the right thing. Don't give in! Ask Jesus for help! Press *hard* into Him!"

As I turned on the water for the shower, a scripture sprang into my head, full and insistent. I called her back.

“Got a scripture verse for you, Em. I think God wants you to grab onto this for all it’s worth. ‘There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death.’ Proverbs 14:12. Got it?”

“Got it.”

I am so proud of my friend for reaching out and asking to be reminded of what she knows is true but has forgotten why. What a great example of why we need community, why we need friends who also walk with Jesus, why God doesn’t want us to be “Lone Ranger Christians.” *Lord, help me continue to surround myself with people who will speak truth to me, especially when I am tempted to forget it!*

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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.”

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“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

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“I Believe Every Bad Thing I Hear”

I am the person who unfortunately believes the bad things anyone tells them. I am also the person who will take one minute detail and suddenly base that as evidence of something that I am.

This all started about 4 years ago during worship. The pastor was singing, “Who the Son sets free is free indeed,” instead I heard, “Who the devil sets free is free indeed.” I ignored it,

but then I started thinking, "You are hearing that because you were never a child of God." And I believed it. I believed that I was predestined for hell and that it must have been because I committed the sin of blasphemy. This took a lot of willpower to not let it take over my life. It came to the point of me only believing that I was only sincere in my life when it came to evil things, that that was who I really was and not a child of God. I am still unsure till this day which is true, and which is a lie.

Unfortunately I walked away from God, and now that I am trying to come back I feel like I can't. In school, I hang around with a lot of homosexual friends. I never thought anything of it until a friend of mine asked all of us who are straight, "Which of us do you think is gay?" and being the way I am, I immediately thought, "Am I?" And I am now battling over my sexuality. I know that it's wrong, and I never had any desire for a woman before, but after that conversation with those friends, I find myself attempting to think and act like a lesbian. It's horrible, but I don't know how to stop it.

Aside from the homosexuality feeling, I feel as though I am a phony, that my walk with God is fake. Everyone always says that "faith isn't mental, it's in your heart and what your spirit knows." But I feel like my heart is totally hard towards God and that no matter how many times I will say, "Lord make me believe, or Lord please deliver me of all of this garbage," that he will never listen because my heart is truly not in it. I don't know if it's a matter of faith or a matter of my emotions, but I don't know how to separate the two and just believe and believe that God can deliver me and forgive me for all of the sins that I've done. I try to pray and read the bible, but I go to sleep feeling worse off than I did before. I don't know how to fix it. I am in a depression that I'm honestly not sure I can get out of.

I don't know where to turn. I am trying to turn to God, but the whole issue of sincerity and insincerity is getting to me

and it's prohibiting me from allowing God to really save me. I don't want to be evil or unsaved or predestined for hell. But I don't know how to take myself out of the equation and focus on God and him healing me.

Why can't he just ignore all of my sins and my unbelief and my insincere feelings and just show me he is God and change me?!?!?

I am so glad you wrote to us! I am so sorry for this place you find yourself. It has to be really hard to be you, at least right now. But I do have an observation and a couple of suggestions I think may help.

The Bible says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). The beliefs you have about yourself and "the way you are," constitute a filter through which you interpret everything you see and hear. From what you describe, your "flesh filter" (flesh is the human part of us that operates apart from the Spirit of God; it's broken and unredeemable, which is why it needs to be crucified with Christ) is exceptionally susceptible to suggestion. You easily believe things whether they are true or not simply because the thought is in your head. It doesn't matter if it came from your own heart or from the outside as a spiritual attack, your filter tags all thoughts as valid and true. (Which is also a problem in college, where you hear things that are not true all the time but you don't know they're not true!)

Where does that come from?

From not being grounded in truth. You don't know what is true, so you can't identify what is a lie. Lots of people try to make faith a warm fuzzy emotion of the heart, but that's not the kind of biblical faith Jesus called us to. Faith is radical trust based on evidence that God is trustworthy. That's one reason Jesus calls us to love God with our minds: we need to actively engage with the evidence for His existence

and evidence of His love for us. And that's why your prayers, as well-intentioned as they are, aren't being answered. God doesn't want you to passively sit back and let Him do all the work, because He will not do for us what He calls us to do for ourselves. Asking Him to make you believe is like showing up on the _____ campus and expecting the school to educate you while you stay in your room without going to class or studying. Does that make sense?

Making
Your Faith
Your Own



TERESA TURNER
VINING

I want to recommend an excellent resource to you that will help build your faith by wrestling with the truth that will allow your faith to rest on the fact that it's TRUE and not some warm fuzzy feeling. Teresa Vining wrote *Making Your Faith Your Own* after having some similar struggles to yours while she was in college. www.ccel.us/makingyrfaitn.toc.html and www.amazon.com/Making-Your-Faith-Own-Guidebook/dp/0830823263/

Concerning your struggle with your sexual identity: it's important that you speak the truth to yourself. God made you a female, designed to connect meaningfully with both women and men in different ways. The erotic/romantic connection is intended to be strictly between men and women. You are not a lesbian, you are being tempted with same-sex feelings that are coming from outside you (spiritual warfare). They may be strong, but they are not true. Truth is reality as God sees it, and He made you a heterosexual woman. This is the same line of thinking (helping people see and commit to what is true rather than their feelings) that we teach in the [ministry](#) I serve with that helps same-sex-attracted people deal with unwanted homosexuality.

I hope you find this helpful. I send this with a prayer that you will know that God loves you, He is for you, and there is hope for getting out of this dark place as you walk into His light.

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

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“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. 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

Newsweek's Gay Marriage Propaganda Piece

The Dec. 15 (2008) issue of *Newsweek* features a breathtakingly biased essay called "The Religious Case for Gay Marriage." The author, Lisa Miller, has a high view of homosexuality and a low view of scripture—and an even lower view of those of us who dare trust in God's word. (Managing Editor Jon Meacham supports Ms. Miller's piece in his column: he says the "conservative resort to biblical authority is the worst kind of fundamentalism.")

Both Ms. Miller's logic and her understanding of scripture and theology are riddled with problems. Let's look at a few.

The biblical illustrations of marriage are so undesirable that no sensible person would want theirs to look like it. Abraham slept with his servant because his wife was infertile. Jacob fathered children by four mothers. Polygamy abounded in the patriarchs and the kings. Jesus and Paul were unmarried, Paul regarding "marriage as an act of last resort for those unable to contain their animal lusts."

People have been making this mistake for years, taking the narrative sections of scripture and inferring that this is what God says to do since "it's in the Bible." As my friend Dan Lacich put it, it is the mistake of taking the "descriptive" and making it "prescriptive." That would be like charging the editorial board of the *Dallas Morning News* with being pro-murder and pro-steroid abuse because it published news stories about those issues.

It's true that the Biblical account includes a stunning array of ways to mess up God's simple and beautiful plan for marriage. If we keep reading, it also includes the heartbreaking consequences of violating that plan. And, in the Song of Solomon, it also includes a lavish treatment of romantic love between a husband and a wife that illustrates how good it can be.

"[T]he Bible is a living document, powerful for more than 2000 years because its truths speak to us even as we change through history. In that light, Scripture gives us no good reason why gays and lesbians should not be (civilly and religiously) married—and a number of excellent reasons why they should."

It's clear Ms. Miller agrees with Bible scholar Alan Segal that "the Bible was written by men and not handed down in its leather bindings by God." (I've never come across a single individual who actually believed a physical book was plopped in anyone's lap from heaven, but we keep hearing this argument.) Robert Gagnon, professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, points out that while scripture has a human element, it is not *merely* the compilation of human ideas. The ideas behind the words written down by men come from the mind of the same God who created men and women, and who invented sex and marriage. Ms. Miller is wrong about gay marriage because she disregards the truth of God's word in favor of human philosophies, about which we are warned not to be taken captive (Col. 2:8).

"Most of us no longer heed Leviticus on haircuts or blood sacrifices. Why would we still accept its stance on homosexuality?"

Ms. Miller mentions the two proscriptions against homosexual behavior in Leviticus 18 and 20 as "throwaway lines in a peculiar text given over to codes for living in the ancient Jewish world." This is a common argument for dismissing the Bible's stance on same-sex behavior, but it's not that simple.

Both chapters forbid child sacrifice, adultery, incest, bestiality, and homosexuality. Why wrench the one verse on homosexuality out of each chapter's context to throw away and keep all the surrounding prohibitions? We never hear this argument used to normalize having sex with one's child or one's father or one's dog. Nor should we. Ever.

Sexual issues are moral issues. They are not in the same category as laws for haircuts or blood sacrifices. We know this because sexual laws don't change over time, as did civil and ceremonial laws. Moral commands are rooted in the character of God, specifically His purity and holiness. His character does not change over time, and neither do His commands about how we are to express our sexuality.

“While the Bible and Jesus say many important things about love and family, neither explicitly defines marriage as between one man and one woman.”

If we're looking for an in-your-face 21st-century kind of Bible verse that says “Marriage is only between one man and one woman,” we won't find it. What we do find is an equally in-your-face first-century teaching about marriage from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself. In Matthew 19:4-5, He puts back to back two important verses from the foundational creation account of Genesis 1 and 2: “Male and female He created them (1:27) and said, ‘For this reason a man shall . . . be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh’ (2:24).” (Also found in Mark 10:6-8.) This was the creation. This was the original intent. All variations on this are corruptions of God's intent.

Jesus never mentioned homosexuality. . .

He didn't have to, for the same reason we have no record of Him denouncing nuclear war. It was unthinkable in the Jewish culture to which He spoke. If you look in the historical records of the time, references to homosexuality just aren't

there. Not that it didn't ever occur in private, but that it was off the "radar screen," so to speak. There were also no advocates for same-sex relationships in the Jewish culture. (But there were in the Gentile culture to which Paul was called as an apostle, which explains why *he* addresses homosexual behavior and calls it sin.)

Dr. Gagnon writes about Jesus,

"Telling his audience in first-century Palestine that men should stop having sex with other males would have been met with perplexity since the point was too well known, too foundational, and too strongly accepted to merit mention. I myself have never been in a church where the pastor explained why believers shouldn't be in a sexual relationship with their parent, child, or sibling or shouldn't enter a polyamorous relationship. I have never thought that the reason for this is that the minister was open to incest or polyamory of an adult-committed sort."

. . .But he roundly condemns divorce.

Again, Dr. Gagnon insightfully points out:

"Jesus takes time to condemn divorce/remarriage not because it is a more serious violation of God's sexual norms than homosexual practice—or than incest or bestiality, two other sexual offenses that Jesus also never explicitly mentions—but because it, along with lust of the heart, was a remaining loophole in the law of Moses that needed to be closed. The law already clearly closed off any option for engaging in homosexual practice, incest, bestiality, and adultery, whatever the excuse."

The *Newsweek* article closes with a quote from Ms. Miller's priest friend James Martin. "In his heart he believes that if Jesus were alive today, he would reach out especially to the

gays and lesbians among us, for 'Jesus does not want people to be lonely and sad.'" I couldn't agree more. I can easily picture the Lord walking into gay bars with a warm smile on His face and open arms, ready to look straight past the shame that holds so many same sex attracted people in its grip, and offer them the embrace of grace instead. But He wouldn't be officiating at any gay weddings. He would lovingly exhort them, one by one, as He did the woman caught in adultery: "Go and sin no more." It's true He doesn't want people to be lonely and sad. His intention is for the community of His body to provide the sense of legitimate belonging and significance that people are seeking in gay marriage. As is often the case, the joy He offers is so much more than our too-little dreams and hopes. But it's freely available.

I am grateful for the insights of two excellent commentaries on this issue:

Dan Lacich's blog, Provocative Christian Living,
<http://provocativechristian.wordpress.com/2008/12/12/newsweek-magazine-and-the-case-for-gay-marriage/>,

and

Dr. Robert Gagnon's article "More than 'Mutual Joy': Lisa Miller of *Newsweek* against Scripture and Jesus,"
<http://www.robagnon.net/NewsweekMillerHomosexResp.htm>

This commentary was originally published on [Tapestry](#), the Bible.org Women's blog, and is used by permission.