

Probe Live – Thinking Clearly About Gender Confusion



Probe Live – November 18, 2021



God's good gift of gender—male and female—has never been more broken or confused. Sue Bohlin brings the clarity of biblical worldview thinking to this issue with grace and truth.

There was a problem with part of the audio recording on the video, but here is the back-up **audio recording**:

www.ministeriosprobe.org/mp3s/GenderConfusion_11-18-21.mp3

Powerpoint Slides:

PDF form: app.box.com/s/iv7z9jlao9thnn2syfwrajh94pjrxxm

PPT form: app.box.com/s/iv7z9jlao9thnn2syfwrajh94pjrxxm

How Bad is This Conversion Therapy Thing?

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

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



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

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

What is Conversion Therapy?

Conversion Therapy is usually defined as therapy designed to change a person's sexual orientation. But is that what it really is? Therapy is a shortened form of the word "psychotherapy," which means the treatment given by a licensed mental health professional such as a psychologist or psychiatrist, a social worker, or a licensed counselor. So Conversion Therapy isn't therapy without a professional

counselor of some kind, with the goal of changing someone's sexual orientation.[{1}](#) But do a Google search for organizations being labelled as doing (or even promoting) Conversion Therapy—which will include a number of churches—and you'll find neither element happening.

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

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

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

Helping Those Who *Want* the Help

A number of ministries and churches actively seek to help those who don't want their same-sex feelings or their

discomfort with their gender. Or, even if they don't fight against their feelings, they want to live lives honoring to God despite their desires, which means not giving into them. These ministries and organizations neither offer nor promise conversion of homosexual attractions into heterosexual ones. That would be like offering to make someone stop loving chocolate and start loving kale. Not gonna happen, right?

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

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

But Is Change Even Possible?

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

way to obey and honor God, is a difficult one, and it takes community. It takes the support of other Christ-followers to walk alongside us, pray for us, speak God's truth to us, encourage us, challenge us, restore us when we stumble and fall, and help us keep going.

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

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

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

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

2.

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

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

on February 19, 2019.

“What’s God’s Plan for Sex in Marriage?”

I’m wondering if the bible addresses the issue of sexuality after marriage. Is sex only for pleasure acceptable once a couple is married? If so are there certain ways married couples can have sex? I.e., different positions that are appropriate and others that are not?

I look forward to the day when I have a wife and can enjoy these gifts, but I want to make sure that I’m doing it in a God honoring way.

It sure does! A whole book about sexuality after marriage! The Song of Solomon is extremely erotic, but it’s written in symbolism so a lot of people miss it if they’re looking for only the literal. For instance, the use of “fruit” usually refers to the husband’s genitals, and “garden” to the wife’s. God’s word on sex after marriage is “Eat, O friends, and drink; drink your fill, O lovers.” (SoS 5:1)

Jody and Linda Dillow have written two excellent books on God’s view of sex; Jody wrote *Solomon on Sex* (which is out of print, but you can find it used online), and Linda co-wrote (along with Lorraine Pintus) the book *Intimate Issues*. They offer three guidelines for discerning what God permits in sexual expression:

1. Is it prohibited in God’s word?
2. Is it beneficial? (In other words, does it harm people or hinder the sexual relationship?)
3. Does it involve anyone else?

Here’s their list of what God prohibits in His Word:

Fornication (immoral sex, which is any sex outside of marriage)
Adultery
Homosexuality
Impurity
Orgies
Prostitution
Lustful passions
Sodomy
Bestiality
Incest
Obscenity and coarse jokes

There is more freedom than there are restrictions for married couples. If God doesn't prohibit something, and it doesn't involve anyone else (whether through video, the internet, print media or in the flesh), and it's acceptable to both people, then God gives a green light and says, "Enjoy!"

The Dillows also provide six reasons God gave the gift of sex:

1. To create life
2. For intimate oneness
3. Knowledge
4. Pleasure
5. Defense against temptation
6. Comfort

As you can see, only one is procreation!

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

“Help! My Boyfriend’s Not a Virgin and It’s Killing Me!”

Dear Dr. Bohlin,

I read [your article regarding sexual purity](#), and I am forever grateful to God that He has given me strength to resist the temptation for 27 years of my life. Boyfriends come and go, yet I still manage to keep that area pure. I am now in a very serious relationship with a guy that I have known for a long time. He is a great person, very smart, and an active member of church. As we discussed the subject of sex, I recently learned that he’s not a virgin, as I had suspected from the tears in his eyes. He told me that he had to come clean before we go further in our relationship. It was his biggest mistake that he gave in to temptation, and he withdrew from all church activities and didn’t take the holy communion until he felt that God has forgiven him.

The thing is, the fact really tore my heart. I told him that I needed time to get used to this, to re-think about the whole relationship, and to pray to God for strength. I love him very much, and he loves me.

Even though now the sting doesn’t hurt me like in the beginning, sometimes my own imagination still tortures me. I never asked him if he slept with anybody else beside that one person. Part of me wants to know more details about his sexual past (all these times, I assume he only slept with one woman), but the other part of me is afraid of the consequences from knowing more details. What should I do? How much details should I know? He has assured me that we will put God first in this relationship, and we will help strengthen and guard each other as we grow closer in the relationship to resist sexual temptations. So far, we’ve been doing very well.

He's not a player type, everybody knows that. But why did he fall into temptation. . . somehow I don't understand the contradiction. He's not the type that would do such a thing, he even told me that, but somehow, it was like being hypnotized, he gave in to sin. *sigh* Tonight, my imagination is running wild again, the thought of him sharing his body and soul with someone really hurt me. So I decided to write you for advice. Please help me.

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing and I hope I can be of some help to you. I will comment on your situation from a man's perspective, since you are wondering how such a godly man could fall into such a sin. I have asked my wife Sue (below) to comment on your particular predicament dealing with lingering questions and suspicion.

Unfortunately, especially for young men, sexual temptation is very strong. You made no comment about the nature of the relationship that led him onto sin but I would imagine that the woman was not exactly coerced and probably was the instigator of the sexual relationship. Men in general, and introverted men in particular, can be very susceptible to sin if the woman is the one pursuing or pushing it. The physical attraction for sex is much stronger for men than for women. Women are usually searching for greater personal intimacy while men can be very focused on the physical. If the woman is bypassing the personal intimacy for the sexual, the male finds it very difficult to resist. I have thanked the Lord many times that I have never been pursued sexually. In my younger days this would have been an extreme temptation.

Your boyfriend sounds like a wonderful young man who has sinned, repented and seeks to go on with his life. You can help him greatly by truly forgiving him and deciding to trust him. Everything else you told me makes him sound like a very trustworthy man who fell as we all do. Sue has more to say

about your turmoil below.

Dr. Ray Bohlin

Dear _____,

Ray asked for my input as well to give you the fullest answer possible.

I think the enemy is using your boyfriend's fall to torture you, and he's winning. I also think that knowing more details will only make it worse for you because it will fuel your imagination, not bring healing. You are being tempted to obsess over his sin as if you have never sinned . . . and the only person who has a right to do that is Jesus, and He doesn't even think about it! He paid for your boyfriend's sin, and it cost him not only His life but tremendous torture and suffering first. Since your boyfriend has repented and received forgiveness, for you to hold him and yourself in bondage over this incident is elevating yourself above God. I'm sure you don't mean to do that!

There is a difference between goals and desires, and great trouble happens when we confuse them. We can set goals that we have control over, like graduating from college or learning to rollerblade, but we can't set goals for other people's behavior . . . like a future mate keeping their virginity. It sounds to me like you might have made your future husband's virginity a goal instead of a desire. And when we can't have what we desire, the appropriate response is sadness and then forgiveness, not obsession and anger.

That being said, you have a decision to make. Is marrying a virgin a non-negotiable for you? Is it the most important asset in a potential spouse? Is it so important that you would let go of a long list of positive qualities because they don't count as much as virginity? If so, then stop your relationship right now and acknowledge what it is you want, and tell your boyfriend he can never be good enough for you because he

sinned.

On the other hand, if you recognize that you are a sinner as well and you have no right to demand perfection from a husband because you cannot be a perfect wife, then choose to let go of his sin and bury it. And promise both him and yourself to never bring it up again. If you need help forgiving him (and believe me, you haven't forgiven him or you wouldn't be tortured by this), then get Chuck Lynch's excellent book *I Should Forgive, But...* His chapter "I'm Living With the Memories" will help you, but I can tell you right now that the main point is that you can't change what happened, but you can choose how you will live with what happened:

- Bitterness and bondage (being out of control)

-or-

- Forgiveness and freedom (being under control)

In order to truly forgive, we need to choose to accept what happened instead of fighting it.

It sounds like this is a wonderful, godly man who fell into temptation and has resolved not to ever do it again. The fact that he was deeply wounded by his sin and has learned from it makes him an even better man. If you are a woman who deserves him, you will take the hurt over his sin to Jesus and turn it over to Him and promise never to take it back so that you can move forward.

As I read back over what I wrote, I realize it sounds waaaaay stronger than I would ordinarily be with someone I don't know and whose trust I haven't earned, but I did sense the Lord leading me as I wrote this answer. I sure wouldn't want you trashing a great relationship because of some perceived notion that you are better than him. Virginity is a wonderful gift to give, but it's only one of many blessings that people can give each other in marriage. A wise woman concentrates on what she has instead of what she doesn't have. . . and I do hope you are a wise woman! <gentle smile>

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin