

Life Issues • *The powerful deception of gender confusion*

A series that investigates and offers insights regarding challenging life issues

- Ⓢ Your son breaks the news that he's been living a homosexual lifestyle and plans to move in with his lover.
- Ⓢ After being with your friend from high school and her friend, you wonder if their relationship is beyond just being "friends."
- Ⓢ You discover your husband has been viewing homosexually explicit websites.
- Ⓢ You have been burdened with guilt and shame over attractions you've experienced to those of the same gender.

If you've experienced a situation similar to any of these, you're not alone. "Satan has done a masterful job of shaming those who are caught in sexual strongholds into a continuous cycle of defeat. He seduces, then he shames, keeping his eye steadfastly on the goal of scandal."¹ While it is not a comfortable topic, scenarios such as these are becoming increasingly common and we as Christians must address the deception of gender confusion.

A GENDER-FREE SOCIETY?

"The tendency [in today's society] is to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of our maleness or femaleness."^{2a} "The consequence of this confusion is not a free and happy harmony among gender-free persons. The consequence rather is more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, more promiscuity, more social awkwardness, and more emotional distress and suicide that come with the loss of God-given identity."^{2b}

You may find homosexuality repulsive or just plain wrong. It is important to go beyond that response for at least three reasons:

- 1) We need to separate attractions which stem from childhood wounds from the sinful behavior of acting out on the attractions.
- 2) We will increasingly face situations that call us to present the truth about homosexuality.
- 3) Those caught in the trap of gender confusion often face depression, loneliness, profound insecurities, substance abuse and sexually transmitted diseases.

NEEDING THE LOVE OF JESUS

Those who struggle in this area deeply desire to find approval and affirmation from the same gender due to a disruption in the parenting of the same gender parent. He or she may then choose to seek the temporary gratification of sexual pleasure to fill this void. This craving for same-gender connectedness develops in the younger, formative years, but the line into sin is crossed when it is acted upon. The behavior may mask their pain in the same way drugs can, but by the time they discover the true void, they are merely addicted to the behavior and less content than ever. If the individual is a Christian, severe guilt and fear of being found out just adds to the despair. Truth be told, this is a population that desperately needs to experience the love of Jesus.

Beth Moore teaches God's Word in venues across the globe. In her experience traveling and meeting hurting people everywhere she has found that "homosexuality is one of Satan's primary

agendas in our society. Contrary to current propaganda, the same-sex 'monogamous' relationship is not 'just like the opposite-sex relationship.'" She says, "Every person liberated from the homosexual lifestyle I've ever talked to or read about has described it as obsessive, controlling, and increasingly absorbing. In a way only understood in the unseen world, a satanically induced web is associated with this particular yoke."⁴

SEARCHING FOR AFFIRMATION

The struggle with sexual identity for many began as a young child. It is not unusual for an individual who engages in the homosexual lifestyle to have been sexually, emotionally, physically or verbally abused as a child. The enemy may capitalize on this child's insecurities by introducing him or her to the world of sexual perversion at a young age. In their immaturity, they accept what appears to be a possible answer to their desperate need for love and approval.

For men, homosexual desires often surface out of an attempt to fill emotional needs all males naturally possess. If this deep need to relate to other males as a male isn't realized, a young person is vulnerable. Never having learned what it means to "be a man," he will often go in one of two directions. He may overcompensate by misusing women in an effort to prove his manhood, or he will look to gain the approval he never received from his father from other men. The need to be affirmed by men becomes so strong that an irresistible compulsiveness to migrate toward other males begins. He may misperceive this as sexual attraction, particularly if his searching takes place during the sexual development years. A pattern may begin where he sexualizes his need for male affirmation. While this pattern isn't exactly the same for everyone, it provides a common scenario of what can happen.

Women who struggle with gender confusion often fall into the trap of emotional dependency. This is a "state in which a woman feels totally reliant on another woman for safety and functioning."⁵ "She needs constant reassurance from the other woman, consistent displays of affection and large quantities of time with her. In short, emotional dependency is a bit like idolatry: another person, in this case a woman, has become sort of a god." "Unhealthy dependency in adulthood is often the consequence of early abandonment." Again, this may be a case of true abandonment, or a perception of unmet needs. In either case, "the child may physically grow into adulthood, but psychologically she remains a needy, love-hungry little girl."⁵

A FATHER'S ROLE IS KEY

Knowing all of this, it isn't hard to imagine how many who struggle with homosexuality had a difficult or distant relationship with their father. A father is the primary source of affirmation and approval for both sons and daughters. If that relationship is lacking, the child will search for other people to find approval.

"Contrary to its physical expression, [homosexuality] represents

"The Powerful Deception," continued on reverse side

“Gender Confusion” continued...

not a closeness to [the same gender], but a profound physical alienation rooted in the absence of fatherly affection and bonding. To recognize homosexuality as a spiritual illness—a sin—does not make [those who struggle with homosexuality] any worse than others in God’s sight.” The truth is, “it is not a sin to be born of a possessive mother and a distant father, nor to have consequent homosexual fantasies. It is a sin to refuse to surrender yourself to Jesus and let God begin to shape you into His image.”⁶

NO GREATER THAN OTHER SINS

All sins against our body and others grieve the Lord. The sins of adultery, premarital sex and pornography derive from the same sources of deception as homosexuality. When sexual relations are sought for purely self-gratifying purposes this is also sinful behavior. The Lord gave the gift of sexual relations to bond a man and women together in marriage as they desire what is best for one another, not to encourage a person to be self-focused. This helps us to see that “no one is exempt from sexual brokenness—no one is altogether whole in his capacity to love and be loved. Therefore, no one is exempt from the ever-deepening work of healing that Jesus wants to establish in the sexuality of His people.”⁷ The question isn’t *if* we are broken, but whether or not we choose to allow the Lord to work in that brokenness.

A LOVING, PRACTICAL RESPONSE TO THOSE WHO STRUGGLE

- ☉ Pray! This is an extremely deceptive and invasive stronghold. Only the power of God is strong enough to break it.
- ☉ Offer encouragement to those who struggle. Let them know you cannot condone this lifestyle, but that you love them and will be there for them as they seek healing through Christ.

STEPS TO SEEK PERSONAL HEALING

- ☉ Needing people is not a weakness. We were created to receive healthy encouragement and love from people. The source of gender-confusion often leads to a fear of vulnerability and self-disclosure. The unfortunate trap is that the energy needed to keep oneself walled off from others is more emotionally and physically draining than it would be to be open with others. This is the deception the enemy counts on in his schemes against any of us living with secrets and darkness in our lives.
- ☉ Seek professional help from a Christian counselor who has experience counseling those who struggle with homosexuality.
- ☉ Pray. Pray. Pray—not only to be rid of the behavior, but also ask God to address the core problems associated with it. Be open to the true identity He wants to draw out of you.
- ☉ Connect and socialize with others who do not struggle with homosexuality. Beware of the tendency to seek out friends with the same insecurities. It is important to develop friendships with those who have strong, healthy relationships. Since healing is nearly impossible without accountability, take steps to be completely open in some of these relationships and be accountable for the actions and decisions in your life.
- ☉ Even if you were a victim of others’ wrong/unhealthy actions (or lack of actions) as a child, you now have the power to

control your responses to those things in your life. It is never too late to seek change. Forgive those who have hurt you and consider those from whom you need to seek forgiveness.

- ☉ Forgive yourself and humbly accept the Lord’s forgiveness for past mistakes and sinful behavior. Letting go of guilt over those experiences is essential to fully heal and experience transformation. Recognize that feelings and behaviors are not a true test of your identity. Take the bold step of asking the Lord to reveal the truth about those experiences and your identity in Christ.
- ☉ Don’t let the enemy try to destroy the God-given attributes that make up your personality. Satan may tempt you to feel like leaving homosexuality behind means completely erasing who you are. This is untrue. For instance, if you’re a man who is blessed with a compassionate and sensitive heart, praise God and let Him use those wonderful gifts!
- ☉ Seek out the help of Christian ministries such as “Outpost,” “Eagles Wings” or “Exodus International.” Crystal Free Church offers the following ministries:
 - **HOPE Ministry** (*homosexual outreach, prayer and education*)
 - **Freedom Ministry** (*freedom from strongholds*)
 - **Theophostic Ministry** (*inner-healing prayer*)
 - **Assessment and Referral Counseling**
 - **Outstretched Arms** (*support group for family and friends*)

We are happy to offer confidential support to you and your family. Brochures on the ministries above are available in the CEFC Information Centers. Contact Katherine Bentley, Care Ministries, at **763-971-5123**. Pray for this ministry and consider joining us! Following are some additional resources:

“Pursuing Sexual Wholeness”

Andrew Comiskey

“Desires in Conflict”

Joe Dallas

“You Don’t Have to be Gay”

Jeff Konrad

“Praying God’s Word – Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds”

Beth Moore

“The Broken Image”

Leanne Payne

“Healing the Masculine Soul”

Gordon Dalbey

“What’s the Difference?”

Dr. John Piper

“Growth Into Manhood”

Alan Medinger

“Crisis in Masculinity”

Leanne Payne

Websites: www.exodusnorthamerica.org • www.ewm.org

¹Praying God’s Word; Beth Moore; ©2000 Broadman and Holman Publishers; pg. 273.

^{2a,b}What’s the Difference?; Dr. John Piper; ©1990 Crossway Books; Adapted 2001; pgs. 16-17.

³Praying God’s Word, Beth Moore; ©2000 Broadman and Holman Publishers; pgs. 280-281.

⁴Desires in Conflict, Joe Dallas; ©1991 Harvest House; pgs. 205-206.

⁵Healing the Masculine Soul, Gordon Dalbey; ©1988 Word Publishing; pg. 109.

⁶Pursuing Sexual Wholeness, Andrew Comiskey; ©1989 Creation House; pg. 192.

⁷Pursuing Sexual Wholeness, Andrew Comiskey; ©1989 Creation House; pg. 150. ☒

“I once thought that all of the trips I made to the altar crying out for God’s help were a waste of time. Then as I looked back on the situation, I came to realize that those trips to the altar were part of the reason for my deliverance! If you really want to be set free from [bondage] cry out to God daily. Those prayers will be heard!”

—Steve Gallagher, “Sexual Idolatry”
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