

continuing the discussion on...

Homosexuality

A growing focus on homosexuality continues in our media, politics, schools and even the Church. Many are ambivalent as to why this change is occurring. Others are swayed by the transforming views on it. Taking the “politically correct” route may initially encounter the least conflict, however, we are wise to learn God’s perspective on this lifestyle and how to respond to those who live it out. The way we respond today will affect our world tomorrow.

Did you know – according to statistics, about two percent of our population, **INCLUDING SOME IN OUR CONGREGATION**, battle same-sex attractions? Most of these individuals struggle silently.

Did you know – many Christians **REFUSE TO EVEN TALK** about homosexuality or have anything to do with those involved in it? Their only response is to label it as “the worst of sins.”

Did you know – many churches have bought into the **WORLD’S BELIEF SYSTEM** regarding homosexuality, ignoring the behaviors and consequences that accompany it? Their response is, “God is love and these are merely consenting adults who love each other.”

Did you know – that a homosexual is often **REJECTED BY A CHURCH** and left with the impression that change isn’t possible?

Imagine the fear, shame and confusion you might feel from these contradicting messages. The truth is that same-sex attractions often develop out of childhood experiences. The attraction is merely a symptom of deeper issues needing attention. If we refuse to understand this, we lead those who want help to continue struggling silently.

We also cannot go to the other end of the spectrum, accepting the behavior of those who give in to the attractions. When you know the enormously destructive consequences of the homosexual lifestyle, you’ll understand this to be no more of a loving response than shaming people. We

do not care about individuals when we endorse or ignore a lifestyle that has such high percentages of depression, alcoholism, promiscuity, sexually-transmitted diseases and drug use. It makes no sense for a church to recognize pre-marital sex as unhealthy and sinful behavior and yet approve of homosexuality which very often involves tremendous promiscuity.

How can the Church offer a message of hope and truth to those who wish to break free from homosexuality? What would Christ offer them? In coming alongside many who struggle with homosexuality, we have discovered these important attitudes for the Church to embrace:

- **See those who struggle with homosexual attractions as people, not merely homosexuals.** We are all more than our behaviors. Each one is an individual who God loves and longs to see enter His Kingdom. Learn the truth about homosexuality and then love people enough to share that truth. Be sure that they first know you care about them. Don’t ignore the behavior, but get to know them beyond those choices.

- **Share Christ’s love.** Understand more about why a person may have entered this lifestyle. That means praying for them to allow God into the deepest core of who they are so He can uncover the pain or void that led them into homosexuality. Remember that Jesus wants to redeem the *whole* person, not just his or her actions.

Recall the woman at the well (John 4). Jesus went out of His way to speak to her. He knew her “history,” and respectfully asked her questions and really listened to her. He even stepped out of the “political correctness” of the day to do so. In addition, He spoke direct and honest truth. He did not ignore her sinful choices or avoid that subject because it might have made her uncomfortable. He called her sin a sin and directed her to walk away from it.

Perhaps because of His loving, authentic approach, she listened, gave Him her

attention and found healing in His words and respect toward her. In response, she enthusiastically went out to share with others what He had done for her.

Not everyone will respond to truth as this woman did. For some, it may take time for the truth to sink in. Still others may choose to continue destructive patterns, not willing to let God have control over those areas in their lives. We have no indication in Scripture that Christ wrung His hands in anxiety over those who did not accept the freedom He offered. There were many who continued in sin. It was clear that He understood His role as one who offered the truth and then left the response up to individuals.

Some in the gay lifestyle have learned the truth and chosen to remain in the lifestyle for a variety of reasons including pride, fear or lust. By God’s grace, there are others who will come to know the truth and find freedom as they allow Christ to heal the painful places inside. They often discover great peace in finally letting go of the double lives they have tried to keep up for so long.

We, too, can find great peace in following Christ’s example as we pray for loved ones who have chosen the road of homosexuality. Continue to pray, speak the truth in love, and leave the healing up to Christ. ☞