

# **THE WORD OF GOD on Human Sexuality**

**Beauty & Joy, Sorrow & Pain, Confusion and Clarity**

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# Human Sexuality

## Beauty & Joy, Sorrow & Pain, Confusion and Clarity

### Chapter 1

#### Purpose in Writing and Secular Worldview

It is my hope in writing this piece to capture the attention of those who are sincerely engaged in a desire to live in a society that establishes righteous sexual mores and standards by which all may live in peace and fulfillment. In so doing, it's my intent to honor our Creator, support sincere faith, hope and love, and make a worthy contribution to the dialogue taking place in our culture right now.

Allow me to be perfectly candid, human sexuality and its connection with our identity and relationships has to be considered as one of life's major issues. Sexual drive and passion may be the most difficult part of our human nature to govern and to make and keep righteous. It's a part of our humanity that can bring great intimacy, joy and fulfillment and also cause great pain and sorrow. Human sexuality is constantly exploited in movies, books & magazines, advertisements, news reports, clothing and education.

When it comes to right and wrong, good and bad, people have a myriad of perspectives on this subject. Laws have been written (overturned and rewritten) in attempts to establish mores for society (or reflect what is predominant). There are a lot of double standards as well as mixed and confusing signals in our culture. We have a culture that cries out for all kinds of human rights and dignity, yet we dignify what was, up until recently, considered abhorrent in our society. We have social agencies that have become big government business in promoting the breakdown of the family, sexual freedom and terminating unborn babies rendering their body parts for sale. On the one hand, we have a legal pornographic industry cranking out volumes of propaganda with their views on sexual behavior and practice. Then, on the other hand, we have political groups and the media condemning certain individuals or groups because they were found to be practicing some of these behaviors that pornography promotes, while they glorify others. Some are incarcerated or defamed while others are promoted to positions of influence and power because of their sexual practice and identification. Public education and higher education seems to be more consumed with teaching things that elevate certain sexual practices than it is in educating our children and young people in skills and understanding that will serve them well as productive members and leaders in our nation's communities.

So we must question, what really constitutes sexual morality and what is the true definition of sexual IMMORALITY? Where do we draw the line? Is there a right and wrong when it comes to sexual conduct? Where do we get our views and standards of sexual morality and righteous behavior from? Who is qualified to decide? I've heard a lot of different opinions over the years, here are a few:

- If it feels good, do it.
- Everyone else is doing it so it must be all right.
- The majority rules and decides.
- Whoever is in power has the right to determine what's best and good for the rest.
- The Courts and Judges should decide.
- Each one should do what he thinks is right.
- Social Scientists should decide.
- Let your conscience be your guide.
- As long as you're not hurting anyone else, you may do what you please.

Each one of these opinions has some real troubling problems, especially when it comes to adopting a universal standard! I'd be glad to point them out for anyone that may not be able to recognize them. I do address many of them here, but you must read the entire piece to find them. If you take some time to really think about each one, I'm sure you can find the errors and troubles with these philosophies. As you think about it consider these questions:

- What if it feels good to someone else but not to me?
- What if it's not really true that EVERYONE ELSE is doing it?

- What if the majority is 51% and you aren't in the majority?
- What if whoever is in power has no consideration for your values?
- What if the courts and judges are corrupt and base their judgments on what's best for them?
- What if your motives are good and pure, but another person's are not?
- What if your conscience has been desensitized to things that really matter?
- What if you THINK you're not hurting anyone, but you really are?
- What if the majority is wrong?

**Questions:**

**Why do you think we were created male and female?**

**Why do you think we were created with the ability to experience sexual pleasure?**

**What may we learn about our Creator from this part of our creation?**

## **Chapter 2 Christian Worldview**

CHRISTIAN influence has faced some heavy criticism in our culture on this topic. Some in the media and many politicians frequently vilify, scorn and snub those who adhere to a different standard because of their faith in Christ. Allow me to continue to be perfectly candid when it comes to this topic and the CHRISTIAN. Among those who claim to be followers of and believers in Christ Jesus we are also finding differing perspectives. This too is creating confusion for those who are growing up in Christian communities and it is also perplexing to a watching world. What is right and wrong, good and bad, true and false? Is there such a thing as sexual SIN and immorality and, if so, WHAT IS IT and HOW SERIOUS is it? Where do we draw the line and who decides these matters for the Christian? What really constitutes "Christian" morality and practice? Where do Christians get THEIR views and standards of sexual morality and righteous behavior from? Where SHOULD they get them from and WHO should decide this? Again, there are a number of answers we might hear if we were to poll those who identify themselves as Christian. Here are a few possibilities:

- The church denominational leaders?
- The pastors, priests and elders of their church?
- Each one decides for himself/herself?
- Parents and families?
- The acceptable standard of the world and culture around us?
- The doctrinal and discipline publications of their church?
- The Bible?

When these questions are settled, some others need to be answered: How ought Christians to represent this morality – both in their homes, their Christian Communities, the culture we live in and to the watching world? Ought we to keep these things to ourselves and not promote them in the society in which we live? We might also ask, what if these standards of morality conflict with the laws and the culture in which we live?

- Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?

## **Chapter 3 The Life Mat**

As a sixteen year old teenager, enjoying an outing with my high school varsity club, I experienced a hard life lesson when I nearly drowned. Although I was a pretty good athlete at the time, I did not know how to swim. The reasons why are for another story. For the sake of brevity, let me explain that it was a cold windy rainy spring day on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1970 as Mike, Al and I paddled a canoe on the white capped waves of Oquaga Lake, near Binghamton, NY. Having significantly distanced ourselves from shore by at least half a football field, Mike suddenly shared with us that he was going for a swim. Without further notice, he leapt from the front of our canoe. The force of his departure rolled the boat

dramatically to one side and dumped Al, sitting in the back, into the lake. Since I was seated in the middle and pretty agile, I managed to right the canoe but it was filled with water. My lack of boating knowledge and fear for the worst led me to believe that the boat was going to sink and I didn't want to be in it when it did. A life mat floated up from the bottom of the canoe. I grabbed it and jumped clear.

A life mat is a precious and valuable resource in crisis – if you know how to use it! If you don't know how, it can be a source of frustration and maybe even a nuisance, at least that's the way I found it to be. As I was trying to figure out how I was supposed to use it, many thoughts were rushing through my brain. I thought about those who had been in desperate situations like mine and how they learned how to swim when they had to. Those thoughts gave me courage to try the same thing and strike out on my own – swimming. I tossed the life mat aside and bravely stroked through the water. I was tense, determined and.... stupid. I faced several serious challenges in those moments. For one, I had just run over 5 miles around the lake and was not fully recovered. Two, the waves were high and strong against me! Three, we were a considerable distance from shore for an amateur swimmer. Four, I had left behind all the resources that could buoy me up and provide security in this crisis I had helped to create.

I'll get back to my story shortly, but I want to explain that it is my intent in writing to communicate that there are wonderful, convicting, rewarding, edifying, fulfilling, rational and worthy answers to all these questions about human sexuality to be found in the Bible. My life lesson caused me to reflect on the symbolism of the canoe and the life mat. The canoe may be likened to Christ and the life mat compared with the Bible – the Word of God! Perhaps you've tried believing in Christ and you started to travel in that canoe of faith in Him. Then, others in your life created some disturbance and took some actions that disrupted that journey and caused a crisis that made you question whether or not Christ was sufficient to save you and keep you afloat.

The life mat (the Bible) that goes with the canoe of faith in Christ, is available to you, but you don't know how to use it. So you've thrown it aside, believing that it's more of a hindrance than a help and you can make it better on your own. If this is you, I want to convince you that it is a shorter distance back to the boat and to the life mat than it is to shore! I want to convince you that God's Word is our precious and valuable resource in times of crisis. Indeed it is our ONLY source of instruction and counsel, providing everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3,4). I also want to convince you that the Lord Jesus Christ is more than able to save us and keep us from drowning in our sin and despair if we will turn back to Him and give Him the chance to do just that. He is a canoe that will not sink!

- Are you someone who believes you can do better without Christ and the Bible?

## **Chapter 4**

### **Two Basic Camps**

I recognize the challenge in reaching and convincing skeptics and unbelievers. I also recognize the difficulty in reaching those that are convinced that they really don't need the Bible or Christ and they believe that they are quite capable on their own. There are others who may find my appeal unacceptable because they don't like me or care to associate with what I stand for and believe in. Still others may have emotional or relational attachments that are so strong that nothing I say could sway them from their persuasion. Nonetheless, I throw out this life line from the Word and the Spirit of Truth. Although this is a serious piece about a serious matter, I would urge you to keep it in context and not miss the Good News of Salvation and grace that is at the heart of it. You could miss it if you just read parts and fail to keep it in the light and context of God's love in Christ Jesus!

Let me continue to be frank and candid. For those who believe that all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are God-breathed and are to be used in teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that those who belong to Christ may be equipped for God's work (1 Timothy 3:16), these questions are not a problem. They find ALL their answers in the Bible. Such persons have concluded that our sexual conduct and identity ought to be derived from transcendent authority – God. They recognize the clarity and consistency of Scriptures on these matters and receive them as God's revelation and final authority, not to be changed by adding to or taking away (Revelation 22:18,19). Despite what they may feel, they allow the Bible to teach, reprove, correct and train them in what is right.

For those who believe that these same Scriptures are just a collection of Judeo Christian folklore and parables, the answers may not come quite so easily and may be more emotionally derived than accepted from a given written standard. Such persons are more influenced by friends, family and the existing predominant values and mores of the community and culture around them. I confess that these people confuse me. Do they have a new revelation from God superior to the Scriptures? They seem to hold some high value and regard for the Bible but are uninfluenced by the clear precepts, requirements and commands found in its pages, when they conflict with the dominant view and prevailing winds of the culture around them. In this condition, I have to conclude that they will never allow the Bible to teach, rebuke, correct or train them. They will never enter the Kingdom nor submit to God's authority in these matters. Their faith and religious practice is not based upon the revelation of God in Scripture, but is man-made. It is to such persons that Jesus said, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46).

I'm aware that there are many more camps when it comes to beliefs about the Bible. However, these two that I've mentioned pretty well define the conflict and confusion that I recognize as we represent our Christian faith to the world today. Either we will believe the Scriptures and use them for our practice of faith in regards to faith and sexuality or, we will reject belief in them as the authority for our practice.

- Do you demonstrate that Jesus is your Lord by doing what He says – even when your nature and desires are in conflict with what He says?

## **Chapter 5**

### **DEEP Trouble, Consequences and God's Will**

There are hundreds of Biblical passages that address our human sexuality and relationships. There are many examples of those who got it right and those who didn't! Those who hold to the authority of the Bible as God's Word of Truth and Light to us WILL be influenced by and submit to these many passages that consistently and clearly define what OUGHT to be the sexual identity and practice of true and sincere believers. Those who do not hold to this authority will come up with their own standards. Those who live by and submit to God's Word will reap the benefits and blessings that God has promised and established in creation for those who believe. Those who reject God's Word and establish their own standards and morality will reap the consequences that come with resisting the laws of nature and nature's God! If you jump out of an airplane without a parachute, there are severe consequences. If you try to swim to shore on a stormy sea not knowing how to swim, there are severe consequences!

That's exactly what I was doing that day. It wasn't very long before I felt the defeat of trying to swim against the white cap waves. In my ignorant self-confidence I devised a second approach to saving myself. I decided that I would try swimming UNDERWATER so that I wouldn't have to fight the surface waves! High School French class had prepared me well for this next foolish experiment! My pal, Tom, and I sat up front next to the clock in French class. We used to try to make class time go more quickly by holding competitions to see who could hold his breath the longest! Mrs. Miller would have been very upset if she knew how we desecrated her teaching time – and she probably would have had a better understanding as to why these two very bright boys didn't do as well as they might have in her class! Back and forth we would go to see who could hold it longer. I recall that I set the record one day at 2 minutes and 40 seconds! So, with this kind of training and accomplishment securely under my belt, I boldly and confidently struck out on initiating my next plan to save myself.

As I stroked away beneath the surface of the waves, my foolish thoughts were, "Let me try to find the bottom where I can stand up and walk the rest of the way in." I was already accounting for the fact that I was not an accomplished enough SWIMMER to make it, but I had confidence in my WALKING ability. Had only I known that the lake was very, very deep in spots and that there were some very strong undercurrents, I may not have calculated things quite this way. Trying to find bottom, I swam deeper – and got myself in DEEPER TROUBLE! Can anyone relate yet? I was now running out of oxygen as well as strength. I could barely make another stroke when suddenly I saw movement over my head. It was Mike! Remember the guy that jumped out of the canoe? He had seen the plight I was in and was trying to rescue me. Hallelujah! As I saw him swimming down to me, my heart rejoiced. This seemed so like God's timing to rescue me

when I was at the bottom and could not save myself. I was at the end of my strength and ability, and at just the right time He sent a savior to rescue me from a watery grave!

I remember using my last ounce of strength to reach up toward Mike's outstretched hand. That picture is still so vivid in my memory forty five years later. But then, all of a sudden something happened that made my heart sink back to the bottom of the lake. Mike couldn't make it all the way down to me. I saw him turn back around and swim to the top. I knew it was over. I had already depleted my oxygen. I couldn't move. I began to resign to death and my thoughts were turned to family and friends who would be shocked by my loss. I prayed for THEIR COMFORT. I prayed for MY PAIN! By now I was in very intense pain. I was down about seventeen feet and, without oxygen I felt every heartbeat exploding like a canon shot through my head! My endurance had long since hit its climax. I prayed, "Lord, get me out of here quickly or let me die. I cannot take it any longer!"

If God is the creator of all things, and if the Bible is His revelation of truth and righteousness, then the Bible has the right to interrogate our lives and our culture, and not the other way around. When you find yourself in a dilemma, you don't tell God what to do, you listen to Him! In those moments when hope is gone, your strength has ebbed away, and your last source of help has swum away to the surface, in your helpless estate you must allow God to do whatever He wills. We need to come to this place in order to really experience His salvation! I don't think it needs to be a crisis that brings us here, but we need to conclude that the One who made us loves us most and knows what's best for us. To arrive at the place where we trust His love, His plans and His will supremely, then we will know Him and His salvation. May His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- Do you allow the Bible to speak conviction, correction and righteous behavior into your life?

## Chapter 6 - The Value of a Soul

When we examine the Scriptures, it becomes clear that sexual relationships and practices outside of God's plan for marriage between one man and one woman are sins against God, self and others. It's very difficult to miss this truth. We are inspired by the Bible to treat each and every individual as a sacred trust in the ways we relate with them. Don't damage the goods! We should never do anything that would bring harm to their relationship with God or violate that sacred trust. Only God knows the vast numbers of children, teenagers and adults alike that have been sexually violated or seduced by those who were driven by their own lusts and passions without consideration of the sacred trust they will be held accountable for. *"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral."* (Hebrews 13:4).

So, there I was, on the bottom of Oquaga lake – or so I thought! Actually the bottom was far deeper than the seventeen feet I was under. Everything went dark as I blacked out. An adventure that had started out so exciting and fun, had turned dramatically painful and distressing. This was not the way a pleasure outing was supposed to go. In my pain I began to anticipate that the end would break away into a new beginning. I believed in a place called heaven, which God has prepared for those who love Him. What would it be like to see Jesus and this glorious eternal abode? Even so, I had determined that, inasmuch as relied upon my ability, nothing was going to come in and nothing was going out. I was keenly aware that as soon as I started taking in water that I was certainly finished. Anyway, the pain began to subside a little. What I wasn't aware of was that another boat (rowboat) was passing over where I was down. A ninety-eight pound wrestler named Dan was in the boat.

Looking down through the water, Dan was convinced that what he saw looked like a person and he quickly went into action to see if that soul might be rescued. He dove deep and lost his glasses. He couldn't quite make it on the first dive. He resurfaced and tried again, this time reaching close enough to grab the hair of my head. He pulled himself down and kicked off the bottom where I had been lying just two feet over a ledge that dropped off steeply to nothingness. Having pulled me to the surface, the others helped him put me into the rowboat (which tipped over). They struggled and got me and the boat back to shore where they would call for more help. Dan and his companions represent those who truly demonstrate that people matter and life is precious. He took initiative, gave value to my personhood, risked himself and pulled me from a watery grave! This is exactly what God has done for souls like yours

and mine. He placed high value on every single one of us in sending His only begotten Son to save us from our sins and the error of our ways. Every life is precious to God. He is not willing that any one of us should perish, but that all of us would come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9).

- Do you believe that your soul is precious to God? Do you believe that other souls are also precious to Him?

## **Chapter 7**

### **Clearing Up Confusion**

Perhaps you're wondering at this point if I made it. There's much more to my story, but a young man who had just completed his life saving and CPR certification just happened to be close by when the call for help went out. I shall ever be grateful to all those who played a role in my rescue and salvation. This young man went immediately to work on me. His first challenge was to get my mouth opened. Nothing had made its way in and nothing had gone out! I had learned to keep my mouth shut – at least for that occasion. He finally was able to force my mouth open and gave me mouth to mouth resuscitation. This was apparently when I was beginning to feel less pain. I heard someone say, "I think he's going to make it!" Another voice said, "David, don't you know where you are?" (Actually that person asked, "Don't you know where you're at?" – that's the way we spoke in the hills). I was beginning to wonder what heaven was going to be like and I wished that my vision would hurry up and clear so that I could really see. There are so many things that keep our cultural vision blurry and I wish that we could all see clearly.

My vision DID start to clear as I saw concerned faces of my fellow team mates and classmates spiraling around above me. It began to register with me that I was still alive. I WAS STILL ALIVE! I couldn't believe it. How was this possible? I had two powerful emotions surge through my being almost simultaneously. The first was, WOW, I'm really alive. This is a miracle! That's just not possible but it is real. I could have leapt for joy over the sapling I saw next to me on the ground. But, immediately on the heels of that emotion was a sense of depression. As great as it was to be alive, I was expecting to awaken in heaven. Now I was left here on earth to deal with all of these confusing and challenging life issues and relationships. I was going to have to face more trials, tests and temptations and still learn how to get it right – WHEN I COULD HAVE BEEN IN HEAVEN and be done with all that. Why did you leave me here, Lord? Why am I still alive? Perhaps the answer is, "for such a time as this." Perhaps I may be one of those people like Dan or the young man who knew how to save lives! *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise."* (Proverbs 11:30).

- What is your world view? Where did you come from? Why are you here? Where are you going?
- Who or what has influenced your perspective on sexual behavior the most?

## **Chapter 8**

### **Unanticipated Consequences**

This life lesson and experience that I share may well describe many experiments in sexual relationships and intimacy that I've witnessed over the years. Souls have started out on an exciting and fun recreational adventure only to discover that there was much more to this thing of relationships and sexual pleasure than they expected. There were unanticipated consequences of emotional, psychological, spiritual intimacy that were now binding them together with that person. In some cases, this relationship was meant just to be a one night stand or short term experience, only to discover that it meant much more than that to at least one in the relationship. Hearts are broken that take years to get over – if ever! Sometimes pregnancy occurs and then this recreational adventure goes into deep crisis because now, a third life must be considered with all of its ramifications. Unwanted pregnancies create an inconvenient accountability to what these people thought was just fun and satisfaction for themselves. In attempts to keep it simple, many have gone the route of abortion and eliminated the little life they created before it is born. This decision only adds to the damage and, instead of creating greater intimacy bonding and appreciation for life, it proves to be destructive to each of those things.

Oh that we would welcome the wise instruction of the Book of books at an early age, before we begin to make foolish and destructive decisions. Don't throw away the LIFE MAT! Learn how to use it while you are young. No person ever has to learn the hard way that you don't go out on the highway and lay down to see if it hurts when a truck runs you over. *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching."* (Proverbs 1:7,8).

- Do you recognize the consequences for sinful choices and behavior?

## **TRAINING FOR LIFE/SOUL SAVING**

If it's your desire to hang onto the Life Mat and learn how to use it, especially as it relates to this topic, I've included a study of some of the other key scriptural passages that can serve to give godly counsel, wisdom and understanding in our intimate sexual relationships in the following sections. I encourage you to read the entire Scripture reference as you study. If at all possible, do the study with someone else or in a group setting with a good Bible teacher.

John 18:37-38

"I went out to go knit today, but after a deep conversation, I can't think except for on Truth.

We all hate Truth, all of us, for it exposes us as we are, at our worst. Which is why Jesus is hated most of all.

When we accept Truth we are set free. Yet without it, anything standing in Truth is a threat. So we destroy all that threatens: the Truth we hate.

But freedom is right there for those who ask! He always is. And I will sing this truth forever."

- Nicole Ganger



## #1

# DON'T BE DECEIVED!

I was deceived into thinking that the canoe was going to sink; that it was not capable of keeping me safe. I was deceived into thinking that I knew better how to save myself than making use of the life mat. I was deceived into believing I could make it on my own. Oh, how I wish that someone had shouted, "The boat is NOT going to sink, David!" How I wish someone had shouted, "Don't throw away the Life Mat, David!" But no one did, and I foolishly abandoned both things that had the power to save me!

We live in a culture that has been deceived into thinking that the Gospel of Christ has no value for our times. It has been deceived into thinking that we know better how to save ourselves than anything that the Bible can provide. It has been deceived into thinking that the Bible is outdated, that faith in Christ is not relevant and cannot stay afloat in this day and age. Let me be a voice crying out in the wilderness of this culture, "The boat is not going to sink!" "Don't throw away the Life Mat!"

Don't be deceived. Faith still comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The Bible is God's Word and God's Word is true. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's Word will NEVER pass away! The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to Christians at the church in Corinth. These people saw no problem with promiscuous sexual relationships outside of the marriage of one man and one woman. He is shouting out to the people, "The boat is not going to sink!" "Don't throw away the life mat!"

Do you believe that God cares about our sexual desires and relationships?

1 Corinthians 6:9-20 – Gives a picture of moral deception before believing in Christ. It answers several questions: What is sexual sin? Is sexual sin really serious? Why? How may this sin be made right?

- Sexual sins identified here are: fornication, adultery, prostitution (specifically male), homosexuality and sodomy.
- The Apostle equates sexual sin with wickedness.
- He gives a list of some of the wickedness that sexual sin is equated with: idolatry, stealing, greed/covetousness, drunkenness, slander and swindling/extortion.
- Do you think that the Apostle thinks that sexual sin is serious?
- Are there any Christians who used to fit those categories of wickedness?
- What happened that allowed those who were previously barred from the kingdom of God to now be a part of it?
  - They were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God.
  - Their sins were forgiven and cleansed by Christ Jesus.
  - They did not justify themselves, they were justified by faith in the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.
- So, some of these persons have used philosophical quotes from their culture to boast of their rights and justify their sexual sin.
- "Everything is permissible for me."
  - I have my rights to the pursuit of my happiness.
  - I'm free to do whatever I feel like doing.
- Response: Ah, but NOT EVERYTHING IS BENEFICIAL.
  - In fact, some things are downright destructive.
  - Some things will keep you from the kingdom.
- The argument is presented again, "Everything is permissible for me."
  - Perhaps the emphasis is on "Everything" or "Permissible" or "Me."
  - Wherever you place the emphasis it declares that I have permission – a license to do whatever I wish.
- A second response: Ah, but I WILL NOT BE MASTERED BY ANYTHING.
  - There are some things that one might choose that will enslave and create dependency.
  - Sexual immorality is one of those slave masters!

- Another argument is presented, “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food.”
  - My sexual appetite is just like my appetite for food.
  - Eating and digesting has no bearing on one’s inner spiritual life.
  - My body was made for both.
  - So, the physical act of promiscuous sexual activity does not affect one’s spiritual life.
- Response: BUT, GOD WILL DESTROY THEM BOTH.
  - There is coming a time when both appetites will be done away with.
  - Food was made for the belly and the belly was made for food, but the body was made for the Lord – NOT SEXUAL IMMORALITY.
- Sexual sin is sin against the body.
- It becomes a sin of identity (fornicator, adulterer, prostitute, homosexual, etc.)!
  - Such sin unites the body, creates a union and becomes one with that which is against the nature of God.
  - This is not what the body was meant for.
- The body is meant for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.
  - The identity of the true believer is in his union with the Lord Jesus (Christian)!
  - Our bodies are members of Christ Himself.
  - Our body is meant to bring honor and pleasure to the one to whom it belongs.
  - Should I prostitute, or give to a prostitute, that which belongs to Christ?
  - Answer: A resounding NO!!!!
- Believers are to “flee” from sexual immorality.
  - Remember Joseph and Potiphar’s wife. Run away!
  - Do not pursue or embrace its seductive advances and wiles.
  - Sexual immorality is sin against our own body.
- We have to understand some things:
  - Our conversion is not just out of sexual immorality into sexual morality.
  - Our conversion is out of unbelief into belief.
  - Our conversion is out of SELF and into CHRIST JESUS.
  - We believe that we were bought with a great and precious price.
  - We believe that the great price paid for us represents the high value He placed in our body.
  - He bought our body as the place of His own abode.
  - Our body is the TEMPLE in which the Holy Spirit dwells.
- This is why we honor God with our body and don’t do anything that would harm our relationship with Him.
- It’s also why we honor every other person’s body.
- We don’t do anything that would harm their relationship with God!

## #2

# SEXUAL SIN IS A HEART PROBLEM

God did not create us for sexual immorality

### Mathew 15:1-20 –

Jesus taught the crowd that Sexual Immorality indicates a heart problem! It shows that we have the seed of sin planted in our hearts. Sexual Immorality is not what God plants in our hearts nor is it His creation. We cannot blame God for making us to be sexually immoral.

In this passage, Jesus addresses a question posed by the Pharisees who wanted to know why His disciples didn't honor the traditions and customs established by the elders. They didn't wash their hands before they ate. Jesus answered their question with one of His own. "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

- Are laws, traditions and customs of government or religious officials more important than the commands of God?

Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah who said, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

- If someone sings, "God bless America," and, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," and prays, but then ignores and disobeys God's commands, has not their worship been in vain?
- What if these same persons create rules and laws that legitimize and make legal their sexual immorality?
- Do their laws that appease their own hearts nullify God's law?
- Do they not honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him?
- Such persons are "Blind Guides."
- What happens when a blind man leads another blind man?

Jesus clarified that eating with unwashed hands is not the problem. The Pharisees washed their hands, but they had a heart problem! A man is corrupted and contaminated by the actions he takes because of what is in his heart.

- For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander...
- These are what make a person filthy.
- So, if sexual immorality is a heart problem, how is this problem solved?

### Mark 7:14-23 – A repeat of Matthew 15:1-20. When something is repeated, we should pay attention!

- Evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly are all evils that come from inside the heart.
- They did not come from God.
- These are seeds of the world, the flesh and the devil.
- So, if sexual immorality comes from the heart, how is the heart made pure and righteous?

Matthew 5:27,28 – Jesus makes it plain that sexual immorality is a heart problem. What we all need is a NEW heart!

- Adultery is plainly SIN!
- In these short words, Christ exposes our hearts.
- We may never commit the physical act of adultery, yet be just as guilty because we have a lustful, unfaithful heart.
- The heart is the problem. We need a heart transplant to gain a heart that is pure and undivided.

Ezekiel 11:19,20 - *I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.*

### #3

## **WE CHOOSE OUR SEXUAL BEHAVIORS!**

### Acts 15:19-21 –

This passage recognizes that we **CHOOSE** our sexual behaviors. It is **NOT A DIFFICULT THING** to expect Christians to abstain from sexual immorality! If we do not have the power of choice when it comes to our sexual behavior, then it **WOULD BE A DIFFICULT THING**. Attempting to keep things simple and **NOT DIFFICULT**, sexual immorality was one of only four things Gentile converts were expected to abstain from. These requirements would keep them from compromising their faith in the living God with the pagan world they have come out of and guard them from blending those two world views.

Food specifically dedicated to idol worship and prepared for that purpose was a serious part of paganism. To partake in it would create a compromise of faith. Abstaining from food dedicated in idol worship will keep them from falling back into things that faith in Christ had saved them from.

Abstinence from the meat of strangled animals and from blood would keep them mindful of God's ordinances in Genesis 9 when He gave permission to eat meat without the lifeblood in it. Some pagan rituals included drinking blood, a direct affront to God's clear command.

Sexual immorality was as rampant among the Gentiles as it is among Americans today. There was great license to do whatever they pleased sexually. It was even expected in pagan worship rituals. Could they be expected to abstain from sexual immorality in such a culture? **OF COURSE THEY COULD!** Although they are part of this world and culture, they are now living in God's kingdom, aligning their hearts and their relationships with the plans and purposes of the One who created them and gave His life for them.

Human sexuality is God's creation. He didn't have to create us with this capacity for relationship, but He did. He had a perfect plan for our blessing, joy and fulfillment when He created us this way.

Sexual immorality is defined by those sexual expressions and relations that deviate from His plan and purpose. Sexual immorality is a corruption or perversion of the glorious purpose for which God created us as male and female.

These four simple expectations and requirements, given to the Gentile believers, honor God's Word and were not excessive burdens for anyone to bear.

### **WE MUST CHOOSE OUR SEXUAL BEHAVIORS!**

### Acts 15:24-29 –

You will **DO WELL** to avoid sexual immorality. Abstaining from sexual practices that are sinful is **EXPECTED** of Christians. It's not an option. Believers are **EXPECTED** to **DO WELL**. Therefore it is imperative that we **CHOOSE** to behave in a way that honors God and His purposes regarding our sexuality.

One of the challenges for the early Gentile believers was the pressure from Jewish Christians to be circumcised, thereby demonstrating that they had left Paganism and were submitting to God's laws.

The law of circumcision was powerless to change behavioral choices. However, identification with Christ and the presence of His Spirit in our lives empowers us to want to do things **HIS WAY**. That means **INTENTIONALLY CHOOSING** to **AVOID** sexual immorality.

## #4

### SEXUAL SIN IS ESPECIALLY GRIEVOUS TO GOD AND DAMAGING TO PEOPLE!

#### Romans 1:18-32 –

Sexual immorality is not godly! It suppresses truth, exchanges the truth of God for a lie, and it leads to depravity, lust, indecency, perversion and unnatural relationships. It also leads to arrogance and unbelief that incurs God's judgment and wrath. God's wrath is not a pretty picture! People will suffer in Hell – not just because they were sexually immoral, but because they were proud, rebellious and unrepentant! Our sexuality cannot be taken lightly. It means something when we give ourselves to another person in sexual intimacy. We are not created for casual recreational, promiscuous, perverted, lewd and immoral sex. No healthy relationship can endure these and certainly no Christ-centered relationship can continue to exist amidst these practices! Such things are destructive to relationships, devalue the soul, and corrupt the mind.

A truly healthy relationship retains the knowledge of God and puts that knowledge into practice. It remembers that each person has been made in God's own image and likeness, and that he/she is a sacred and precious eternal soul.

According to this passage in Romans:

- (vs. 18) What do people do with the truth? How?
- (vs. 20) How have God's invisible qualities been made known to everyone?
- (vs. 21-23) Although they know the truth about God, what did they do with that knowledge?
- (vs. 24) What does God do with such people?
- What is the description of how people behave sexually when they reject the knowledge of God?
- (vs. 25) As a result, what do people do with the truth of God?
- (vs. 26,27) What "shameful lusts" and "perversions" are people in this condition given over to?
- (vs. 28) What is a "depraved" or "reprobate" mind?
- (vs. 29,30) How do people who have a depraved mind behave?
- (vs. 30) What is their attitude toward God?
- How is this reflected in their relationships with people?

Sexual sin is especially grievous to God and damaging to people! The truth of God is exchanged for a lie. The knowledge of God is discarded as worthless leading to degradation and shameful behaviors. Homosexuality is one of the products of all this. It grieves God and damages people's relationships with Him.

When the knowledge of God is left out of our equation we set ourselves up for depravity and low living. Exchanging the truth of God for any other truth claim (which is a lie) will produce a standard of living and relationships far beneath those intended by our Creator.

We repeat: A truly healthy relationship retains the knowledge of God and puts that knowledge into practice. It remembers that each person has been made in God's own image and likeness, and that he/she is a sacred and precious eternal soul. True love does not damage another's relationship with God.

## #5

### LOVE DOES NOT DAMAGE ANOTHER PERSON'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD! SINFUL & UNHOLY SEXUAL CONDUCT DOES! IF WE TRULY LOVE A PERSON WE'LL RELATE GOD'S WAY!

#### Romans 13:1-14 –

Authority is God's establishment in creation. Submission to Authority is the norm for the believer! Rebels may expect judgment. We are to follow the way of Love and Light. Decent behavior demands that we reject sexual immorality and the desires of the sinful nature, while we embrace the righteous expectations and requirements of Christ Jesus. We may expect judgment from His authority when we rebel against His laws. This is also true of those in places of authority. They are accountable for ruling and governing in harmony with God's righteous authority and laws. They are God's servants!

#### According to this passage:

- What is the Christian view of paying state and federal taxes?
- What is the Christian view of paying bills?
- What is the Christian view of income taxes?
- What is the Christian view of paying respect and honor?
- What is the Christian view of indebtedness?
- What debt does the Christian maintain?
- If the Christian keeps paying on this debt of love, will he/she:
  - Commit adultery?
  - Murder?
  - Steal?
  - Covet?
  - Harm a neighbor?
  - Behave indecently?
  - Participate in orgies and drunkenness?
  - Practice sexual immorality and debauchery?
  - Promote dissension and jealousy?
  - Clothe themselves with the Lord Jesus Christ?
  - Ponder how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature?

## #6

### WHAT IF OUR FAITH VALUES CONFLICT WITH THE LAWS OF THE LAND?

It is better to obey God and His requirements than to uphold the laws of society when the two are in conflict.

We live in a time when the laws of the land have turned against Biblical Christian values. This creates a great conflict for the Christian who has been taught by the Scriptures to respect and obey authority. There are Biblical examples of early believers who had to face this same conflict.

When Peter and John were arrested for practicing their faith and told by those in authority that they could not do so any more, how did they deal with it?

**Acts 4:19,20** - *But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."*

## #7

### WE ARE EXPECTED TO PASS JUDGMENT REGARDING SEXUAL MORALITY!

Whatever may be happening in the culture around us, it is shameful to elevate the status of sexual immorality in the community of believers. Sexual immorality has no place in the Christian community. The Church is responsible to JUDGE unrepentant sexually immoral people in its fellowship and expel them. It's a serious matter!

#### 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 –

- What is the case of sexual immorality addressed here?
- How does this compare with the immorality of the world?
- What is the attitude of the church?
- What should have been the attitude of the church? Why?
- What should they have done?
- Is this mean-spirited, or is it truly caring for a soul?
- Was embracing this behavior and boasting about this man's conduct a good thing?
- What baking illustration does the Apostle use to describe what is happening?
- Why do you think he chooses this illustration?
- What had Paul previously written about associating with sexually immoral people?
- Did that include the people outside of the church community? Why/Why not?
- Who is he specifically referring to?
- What does Paul say about fellowshiping with such a person?
- Is it the business of Christians to judge those outside the church?
- Is it the business of Christians to judge those INSIDE the church?
- Who will judge those OUTSIDE the church?
- What are Christians to do then with those inside the church who practice sexual immorality.

## #8

### SEXUAL IMMORALITY IS A SERIOUS FORM OF REBELLION AGAINST GOD!

#### 1 Corinthians 10:1-24 –

- Is sexual immorality a new or uncommon temptation?
- From early human history we have many biblical examples of rebellion against God and His design and purposes in the form of sexual immorality. This rebellion brought God's judgment. According to this passage, why are these things recorded in the Bible?
- If these things were recorded as examples for us to keep us from setting our hearts on the same wicked things they did, what should we do with them in order to benefit most?

Temptation is a common experience for all of us humans and sexual temptations can be powerfully strong. This scripture teaches us that God will not let you be tempted beyond what you can stand. He will provide a way out. He will give you the motives and power to resist! The Bible tells us that God watches over His own, and provides them with the very same Spirit that was in Christ Jesus at His temptation.

- What are some of the ways out of sexual temptation that God provides for His people?

God is calling us to so live and love that we would not desire anything for anyone that would separate them from God! We are implored to flee from such things. The Apostle concludes this thought with the statement, "Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others."

- How may we apply this admonition when it comes to sexual temptations and sin?

## #9

### WE CAN'T BYPASS REPENTANCE TO GET TO GOD'S GRACE!

#### 2 Corinthians 12:21 –

- What is the Apostle's concern in this verse? What is his expectation when it comes to those who had previously indulged in sexual sin?

He is afraid that the Spirit of God within him will cause him to break down and weep in front of them because so many have persisted in sexual immorality and have shown no intention of repenting.

- Does this sound like he is tolerant of sexual sin among believers, or that the church should make allowances for such practice?

Those who claim to be followers of Christ, yet persist in their sexual sin and impurity are grievous to the church. Such sin must be repented of and abandoned to the past.

## #10

### THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SINFUL NATURE CANNOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

#### Galatians 5:19-21 –

- What are the "obvious acts" of the sinful nature?
- What is the warning for those who live like this?
- What problem does this create for those who do not repent of sexual immorality?
- How does sexual immorality conflict with the Kingdom of God?

Those who are led down the road of the sinful nature will not end up in the Kingdom of God. That pathway just doesn't lead there! Sexual immorality is an **OBVIOUS ACT OF THE SINFUL NATURE**. Those who live like this **WILL NOT** inherit the kingdom of God. It's that serious!

## #11

### THE CHURCH IS RESPONSIBLE TO CLARIFY SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES!

#### Ephesians 5:1-20 –

Just as little children imitate their parents, Christians are taught to imitate God by living a life of love. In the same way that Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, we are to give ourselves to others in moral purity and sacrificial love.

Even a **HINT** of sexual immorality is improper for God's people. Immoral people have **NO INHERITANCE** in God's kingdom and we should not be partners with them. Such behaviors should be exposed and identified for their sinfulness.

- What "empty words" might potentially deceive Christians on this subject?
- What consequences for such things are taught in this passage?
- What directive is given to believers concerning their relationship with immoral, impure or greedy people?
- What reason is given for this directive?
- What is the product of those who live as children of light?
- What discovery are children of the light expected to make?
- How does the Apostle describe the deeds of darkness?
- What are believers **NOT** to do when it comes to these deeds of darkness?
- What does he instruct Christians to do instead? *Why?*
- What happens when things are exposed to the light?
- Christians are taught to live wisely and carefully so they may do what? *Why?*
- Wisdom would strive to do what?
- Instead of drunkenness that leads to low living, what is the instruction to the Christian?



**#12**  
**WE MUST NIP IN THE BUD**  
**ANY TENDANCY FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY**  
**IN OUR OWN LIVES!**

**Colossians 3:1-10** –

The Christian is to put to death whatever belongs to his/her earthly nature. This includes sexual immorality. Once again, these are things that will incur God's wrath and judgment, so believers are directed to get rid of these practices and desires.

- What is the meaning of being "raised with Christ?"
- What are we to set our hearts on?
- What are we to set our minds on?
- Why?
- What will happen when Christ, our life, comes again?
- What are we to do with the things that make up our earthly sinful nature? Why?
- What are those things?
- Are any of these a part of the way you used to behave?
- What are the things we must now get rid of?
- Do you think that these things in any way relate to sexual immorality? How?
- These are all things that are a part of our old self with its behaviors. How is the NEW SELF renewed and developed?
- Also read Colossians 3:11-17

**#13**  
**WE MUST BE PROACTIVE AND INTENTIONAL**  
**IN CONTROLLING OUR BODIES!**

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8** –

- What instruction had been given to Christians?
- What is the Apostle now asking and urging? How would one go about doing that?
- By what authority had the Apostle instructed them?
- What does he say is God's will?
- What clear responsibilities does the Christian have when it comes to this?
- What is the consequence for not heeding this instruction?
- Who will enforce the consequence?
- Why?
- Who is really being rejected if this instruction is rejected?
- Also read the rest of this chapter.

It is God's will that Christians should learn to control their bodies in ways that are holy and honorable. This is part of being sanctified. This means intentionally steering away from all sexual immorality and impurity.

## #14

### WATCH OUT FOR THOSE WHO CONFUSE LICENTIOUSNESS WITH LOVE!

There will always be those who slip into the fellowship of believers and seek to change what it means to love each other into a license for immorality. These are godless people who are on a path of destruction and judgment like unto Sodom and Gomorrah. They follow their natural instincts (sinful nature) and do not have the Holy Spirit. These people are divisive in the church.

Jude 3-19 –

- What did Jude really want to write about?
- What does he end up focusing on?
- Why?
- What does it mean to “contend for the faith?”
- Who is Jude concerned about?
- What do these people do?
- What does it mean to change the grace of God into a license for immorality?
- How does this deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign Lord?
- Who did the Lord deliver out of Egypt?
- What did the Lord do later?
- What did the Lord do with angels who did not keep their proper domain but abandoned their own home?
- What did Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns do?
- What do we learn from their example?
- What three things do these immoral people who have slipped into the church do?
- How did the archangel Michael deal with the devil?
- What can we learn from him?
- Yet how do these men speak and act? What will be the result
- What is the way of Cain? (1 Jn 3:12) What was Balaam’s error? (2 Pet. 2) What was Korah’s rebellion? (Nu. 16)
- In what five ways does Jude describe unrepentant sexually immoral people at the church love feasts? Think about this!
- What is Enoch’s prophecy?
- What was the apostle’s prophecy?
- What will these men who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit do to the church?
- Is the church divided today by such things?

## #15

### GOD WILL NOT GIVE HIS BLESSING TO THOSE WHO PRACTICE SEXUAL IMMORALITY!

Christ calls the church to REPENTANCE from sexual immorality. Otherwise, He will fight AGAINST us with His Holy Word. He will NOT fight FOR us!

Revelation 2:14-16 –

- What did Balaam teach?
- Is this teaching commended in the church?

The Nicolaitans were a heretical sect within the church that apparently compromised with the pagan society. They taught that spiritual freedom gave them a license to practice the idolatry and immorality that was popular in their culture.

- What does Christ tell them they must do? Why?
- What is the sword of His mouth?
- Does this sound like the Lord will bless those who practice sexual immorality?

## #16

### BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS, PREACHERS AND LEADERS!

There are charismatic and persuasive spiritual leaders and teachers who mislead Christians into sexual immorality. They have bought into and are promoting the deception that sexual practices which God's Word has defined as immoral are now okay. These leaders and teachers along with their followers are being given time to repent of their ways, or they will face intense suffering and judgment. Those who have not bought into these deceptive doctrines should keep the faith until Christ returns.

Revelation 2:20-25 –

- What does Christ have against this church?
- What does it mean to tolerate?
- What does Jezebel teach?
- What has Christ given time for her to do?
- Is this something that she is ready and willing to do?
- What is Christ's plan for her and those who commit adultery with her?
- What is the escape from this judgment that He offers?
- Will her offspring survive?
- What is the intended result of Christ's judgment against this immorality?
- What does He say about those who have not bought into Jezebel's teaching and Satan's deep secrets?

## #17

### PRACTICE REPENTANCE!

God's Word constantly calls us to REPENT of sexual immorality. It's a serious offense to God! Here's another example:

Revelation 9:20,21 –

- Even though there has been great devastation linked to their wickedness and sexual immorality, does this move them to repentance?
- Does this word encourage us to be quick to repent or to persist in behavior that is contrary to God's commands, precepts, ordinances and statutes?

## #18

### Old Testament Law

In the Old Testament Laws God communicated to the world the importance of sexual behavior that coincides with His order and plan in creation. He declared to the Israelites very plainly what this was. Any diversion, perversion, corruption or deviation is a very serious matter and faced very serious judgment.

Leviticus 18:1-30 – **SEXUAL PRACTICES THAT DEFILE:**

- Who is speaking in this chapter?
- What does it mean to defile?

Commands are given about sexual behavior and relations so that God's people will not DEFILE THEMSELVES. Incest, homosexuality, bestiality and adultery are among these things that are DETESTABLE to God and He will cut off those who disregard and violate His commands concerning them. God's people are expected to seek first what pleases Him in the practice of our sexuality. We should understand that God cares about our sexuality and fulfillment – He created us with this in mind! Our maker knows what is good and what is not! Humans are NOT ANIMALS, yet may demean themselves and displease God by certain sexual conduct and behavior!

### Leviticus 20:7-26 – CLEAR CONSEQUENCES!

Consequences for sexual sin were clearly spelled out. These things are to remind God's people that they are to be holy unto Him, because He is holy, and He has set them apart from other people and nations.

- Who is speaking in this chapter?
- What are some of the consequences for particular sexual sins given under the Mosaic Law?
- What is the intent of these ordinances according to verse 26?

### Deuteronomy 27:15-26 – THE CURSE OF SEXUAL SIN!

Sexual relationships can be the source of great joy and blessing in the context of God's purposes and laws, or they can bring great sorrow, grief and a curse when pursued in opposition to the Law of God. The Law must be kept, otherwise the lawbreaker is cursed. Such a curse makes one unclean, unworthy, unwelcome, detestable and outcast from the community and family of God's children. The people agreed to these ordinances and voiced their acknowledgement of this righteous decree by giving their "Amen!" This asserts that they agreed to the covenant and its blessings and curses. (see blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28)

## #19

### REDEMPTION FROM THE CURSE! THERE IS HOPE!

As Christians, we are NOT LEGALISTS. We do not rely on keeping the Law of the Old Covenant for our salvation. The Law has revealed God's righteous standard and exposed our sinfulness. No one has kept the Law of God perfectly and as a result, we are all under a curse. All have sinned and are under the curse of the Law. But there is REDEMPTION! In Christ we are redeemed from the curse that was reserved for those who did not keep the Law of God's requirement. He became that curse for us! He redeemed us (bought us with His own blood) so that we might know the blessing of being godly offspring and being called the children of God! God's children inherit His Spirit who leads us from the bondage of sin to the freedom of righteousness.

Read Galatians 3:10-14 –

- According to verse 11, how must we live in order to be justified or become righteous?
- Who are the cursed ones according to this passage?
- Who became a curse that we might become righteous?
- How did He do that?
- How do Gentiles receive the same blessing given to Abraham?

Read Galatians 5:13-25

- Freedom from the Law does not mean what?
- What does this freedom mean?
- What results when we live by the Spirit?
- When are we NOT under the law?
- What are the obvious acts of the sinful nature?
- What is the fruit of the Spirit?
- How do those who belong to Christ deal with the sinful nature?
- How do those who live by the Spirit keep in step with the Spirit?

#### SOME STATEMENTS FOR MEDITATION:

- It is God's desire to BLESS and not CURSE!
- He cannot bless sin!
- He desires to save even those who have sinned and defiled themselves with sexual immorality!
- The Bible is our LIFE MAT! It is the Word that will save us if we'll believe!
- The internal operating system of the Bible is designed to transform our human nature.
- If God is the creator of all things, and if the Bible is His revelation of truth and righteousness, then the Bible has the right to interrogate our lives and our culture, and not the other way around.

- REPENTANCE is not just a conversion exercise. It is the LIFESTYLE of the Christian. . . . Repentance is agreeing with God and His Word – agreeing that He is right and we are not! Any time that we discover that our will is in conflict with God, it is turning from our will and ways to His! Any time our will conflicts with the His revelation to us in the Bible, WE REPENT.
- Jesus is our LIFEBOAT! If we trust in Him and His Words abide in us and we stick with Him, we will be saved from the death of sin!
- Christians are no longer sinners but are called saints in the Bible! That means that our identity is wrapped up in Christ Jesus!
- To wrap our identity with a particular sexual sin, is in and of itself a sin!
- Jesus met sinners at the table, but he did not join them or support them in their sins of choice. He sat with them and loved them, but He did not sin with them. He did not condemn them but forgave them and sent them forward into life to sin no more! We ought to expect the same example from Jesus today!

## #20

### OPEN DOOR TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**By His own body and blood sacrificed on the cross at Calvary, Christ Jesus has flung wide open the door to God’s kingdom to welcome ANY and ALL of us sinners who will come in! This includes sexual immorality of all kinds. By entering the door of His kingdom, we accept HIS robe of righteousness to cover the shameful nakedness of our unrighteousness – all may be forgiven. Entering His kingdom means we also accept HIM - as our KING – our Lord and Master. We let go of the master of sexual immorality in our lives so that we may have the privilege of feasting on the abundant life of our new Master. No one can serve TWO MASTERS and there’s only ONE KING in the kingdom of God!**

**John 6:35-40** - *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

- Do those who come to Christ need to worry that their desires won’t be fulfilled?
- Should those who belong to Christ worry about losing eternal life?

**John 10:7-10** - *Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."*

- What confidence may we have through faith in Christ?
- Should those who believe in Christ expect their life to be boring and unfulfilling?

**John 14:6** - *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

- Is there any other way to God except Jesus?

**Matthew 6:24** - *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

- Is it possible to love and serve God and sexual immorality at the same time?

## #21 NO CONDEMNATION

Perhaps, by this point in reading, some sincere people are deeply convicted and cut to the heart. They may raise the questions: What if I've failed to live up to Biblical standards and expectations? What if I keep failing in my efforts? Am I condemned? Am I even saved?

### Believing God's love in Christ frees from Condemnation

- GOD IS NOT OUR ENEMY – HE PROVED HIS LOVE FOR US IN CHRIST JESUS.
- HE SENT HIS SON TO SAVE US, NOT TO CONDEMN US.
- WE ARE SAVED THROUGH BELIEVING, WE ARE CONDEMNED BY UNBELIEF.
- IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF "COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET" OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY, IT'S A MATTER OF "COMING INTO THE LIGHT" OF TRUTH.
- THE LOVE OF DARKNESS KEEPS PEOPLE FROM COMING INTO THE LIGHT AND EXPOSING THEIR TRUE MOTIVES.
- THE LOVE OF TRUTH GIVES FREEDOM TO BE OPEN, HONEST AND ACCOUNTABLE.

**John 3:16-21** - *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For **God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."*

### Accept Mercy & Forgiveness, Then Lead a New Life

- THERE WILL ALWAYS BE THOSE WHO ARE QUICK TO CONDEMN OTHERS THAT THEY VIEW AS WORSE SINNERS AND MORE IMMORAL THAN THEMSELVES.
- SUCH PEOPLE WILL MAKE A PUBLIC EXAMPLE OF THOSE SINNERS AND SMEAR THEIR NAMES THROUGH THE HEADLINES.
- BUT WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? HE WOULD REMIND THOSE WHO CONDEMN THAT THEY ARE ALSO GUILTY OF SIN. THOSE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES OUGHT NOT TO THROW STONES!
- JESUS DIDN'T COME TO CONDEMN, HE CAME TO SAVE. What if all those who were participants in my rescue from a watery grave had said, "He was stupid for doing what he did. He shouldn't have been on the water if he didn't know how to swim. Anyone who doesn't know better than to jump out of a canoe and throw away the life mat, doesn't deserve to live." What would have been my story? They didn't condemn, didn't even give it a thought. They jumped to my salvation!
- IT IS NOT FOR THE RELIGIOUS RIGHTEOUS TO CONDEMN, BUT RATHER TO SEEK TO SAVE.
- OUR ONLY JUDGE IS CHRIST JESUS. IF HE DOESN'T CONDEMN US THEN THERE IS NO ONE WITH GREATER AUTHORITY LEFT WHO CAN CONDEMN US. We were playing ball with the young children at our family reunion. The adults were being very merciful and gracious in allowing all the youngsters to reach base and keep advancing to the next base with each subsequent hitter. Our four year old granddaughter was having a great time. She made it around the bases and finally crossed home plate three batters later. She stood off to the side near home plate next to a younger cousin watching as the next little tyke in line was batting. After a couple of pitches, Lydia suddenly burst into tears and just sobbed. When asked what was wrong, she replied, "Brinley said I was out." Now, Brinley was only two and a half, certainly not qualified to do the umpiring. Yet, Lydia had allowed Brinley's condemnation to totally ruin her joy and overrule the authority of the adults who had called her safe!
- DON'T FRET ABOUT WHAT OTHERS MAY THINK. THEY ARE NOT JESUS! MOVE ON IN THE CONFIDENCE THAT YOU ARE SAFE IN HIM, AND LEAVE SEXUAL IMMORALITY BEHIND.
- LEAVE THE DARKNESS AND FOLLOW THE LIGHT – THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

**John 8:1-12** - *But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

### **The Spirit of Life – Statements for meditation and understanding from Romans 8:1-17:**

- **THOSE WHO TRUST IN CHRIST ARE FREE FROM CONDEMNATION.**
- **ALTHOUGH THE LAW IS RIGHTEOUS AND GOOD, OUR SINFUL NATURE DOES NOT AGREE WITH IT, AND TAKES AWAY THE INCENTIVE TO KEEP IT.**
- **OUR SINFUL NATURE CONDEMNES THE LAW AND GIVES LICENSE TO OUR SIN.**
- **THE GOODNESS OF THE LAW IS NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO MAKE US SINNERS KEEP IT. IN FACT, WE WANT TO EXCHANGE GOD'S LAW FOR ONE OF OUR OWN.**
- **GOD DID WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO, BY SENDING HIS OWN SON TO BECOME ONE OF US HUMANS.**
- **AS ONE OF US, GOD'S SON LIVED A SINLESS LIFE, PERFECTLY FULFILLING THE LAW.**
- **IN HIS SINLESS PERFECTION HE WAS CRUCIFIED AS A SIN OFFERING ON OUR BEHALF.**
- **THIS ACTION CONDEMNED SIN AND AFFIRMED GOD'S RIGHTEOUS LAW.**
- **THIS ACTION PAVED THE WAY FOR US TO FULLY LIVE UP TO THE RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENTS OF THE LAW AS WE LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT.**
- **THOSE WHO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SINFUL NATURE ARE ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT HOW TO PLEASE THAT NATURE.**
- **THOSE WHO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT ARE ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT HOW TO PLEASE GOD.**
- **THE THINKING OF THE SINFUL MAN IS DESTRUCTIVE AND ABORTS LIFE. IN FACT, THE SINFUL MIND IS DEATH.**
- **THE MIND CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT IS LIFE AND PEACE. LIFE IS SACRED AND PRECIOUS.**
- **THE SINFUL MIND IS HOSTILE TO GOD. IT IS IN REBELLION AGAINST HIM AND HIS REQUIREMENTS. IT DOESN'T SUBMIT TO GOD'S LAW. GOD'S LAW IS NOT EVEN AN OPTION FOR THE SINFUL MIND. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO ARE CONTROLLED BY THE SIN NATURE TO PLEASE GOD.**
- **HOWEVER, IF THE SPIRIT OF GOD LIVES IN YOU, YOU ARE NOT CONTROLLED BY THE SIN NATURE. ON THE CONTRARY, YOU ARE CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT.**
- **IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE SPIRIT, YOU DON'T BELONG TO CHRIST. DON'T CALL YOURSELF CHRISTIAN IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE SPIRIT – YOU DON'T BELONG TO CHRIST!**
- **BUT IF CHRIST IS IN YOU, YOUR BODY ISN'T IN CHARGE TO LEAD YOU INTO SIN.**
- **IF CHRIST IS IN YOU, YOUR SPIRIT IS IN CHARGE TO LEAD YOU INTO RIGHTEOUSNESS.**
- **SO, IF THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD IS LIVING IN YOU, THEN HE WHO RAISED CHRIST FROM THE DEAD WILL ALSO GIVE LIFE TO YOUR MORTAL BODIES TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY.**
- **THE SAME POWER THAT RAISED CHRIST FROM THE GRAVE IS AT WORK IN US TO LIVE LIFE THE WAY GOD WOULD BE PLEASED. THE LETTER OF THE LAW KILLS, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE.**
- **SO, WE ARE NO LONGER OBLIGATED TO LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SINFUL NATURE. THAT WILL ONLY LEAD TO DEATH.**
- **OUR DUTY IS TO PUT TO DEATH THE MISDEEDS OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY WHICH IS WHAT THE SPIRIT WILL LEAD US TO DO.**
- **THOSE WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT ARE CHRISTIANS. INDEED, THEY ARE GOD'S CHILDREN.**
- **THE SPIRIT HIMSELF ASSURES OUR OWN SPIRIT THAT WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN.**
- **THAT SAME SPIRIT GIVES US FREEDOM TO ADDRESS GOD INTIMATELY AS OUR DEAR FATHER.**
- **THE SPIRIT CONFIRMS OUR INHERITANCE WITH CHRIST AS GOD'S CHILDREN.**
- **IF WE SHARE IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS BY DYING TO SELF AND OUR SINFUL NATURE SO THAT GOD'S WILL MAY BE DONE, THEN WE MAY EXPECT TO ALSO SHARE IN HIS GLORY.**

## #22 THE LAST WORD!

The reward of God's blessing is given to those who purify themselves from the immoral sexual practices and sins of the world we live in. Whoever – ANYONE who wants this blessing may come to Him and receive His FREE GIFT of ETERNAL LIFE! He warns of the wrath of His curse and loss of eternal life for those who add or take away from His Word!

### Revelation 22:12-19 – Final Words of Jesus

*"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*

### Read Matthew 10:32-39 – WE MUST ASK THE QUESTION, "AM I WORTHY OF CHRIST JESUS?"

- IF NOT OFFENDING OR PLEASING FAMILY OR FRIENDS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PLEASING CHRIST JESUS, WE ARE NOT WORTHY OF HIM.
- REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!
- IF WE ARE MORE WORRIED ABOUT ALIENATING OUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS THAN WE ARE ABOUT ALIENATING CHRIST, WE ARE NOT WORTHY OF HIM.
- IF WE DENY GOD'S WILL IN PREFERRING OUR OWN, WE ARE NOT WORTHY OF HIM.
- THOSE WORTHY OF CHRIST WILL DENY THEIR OWN WILL ANY TIME IT CONFLICTS WITH WHAT HE WANTS.

### THAT WHICH IS FLESH IS FLESH, THAT WHICH IS SPIRIT IS SPIRIT.

#### YOU MUST BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT!

#### Read John 3:1-8

- The Kingdom of God cannot be SEEN unless we are born again.
- The Kingdom of God cannot be ENTERED unless we are born of the Spirit.
- God's plan for sexual relations and morality CANNOT be seen (understood, appreciated, recognized) unless we are born of His Spirit.
- We will get all of our concepts of sexuality and moral values from our flesh unless we are born of the Spirit.
- God's plan for our sexuality CANNOT be entered (experienced, lived out, embraced) unless we are born of the Spirit.
- Our FLESH will dictate as our moral compass (and we will belong to the kingdom of the world, the flesh and the devil) if we are not born of the SPIRIT.

### Matthew 7:24-27 – WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE LIFE MAT?

- THERE IS A WISE CHOICE AND A FOOLISH CHOICE WHEN IT COMES TO ANSWERING THIS QUESTION.
- THE BIBLE IS OUR LIFE MAT. IT IS THE WORD OF CHRIST TO US.
- WE MUST TAKE TO HEART THE WORDS OF CHRIST AND PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE IF WE WOULD BE WISE.
- OR, YOU CAN BE FOOLISH, THROW AWAY AND IGNORE THE WORDS OF CHRIST, AND NEVER PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE.

*"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*



# Rending the Rainbow Veil: How to Make Your Church a Safe Space for Christians with Same-Sex Attraction

by Jean Lloyd

*within Marriage, Religion and the Public Square*

November 9th, 2015

Church communities should strive to be safe spaces where those with same-sex attraction can take refuge, openly sharing their experiences. We must affirm their dignity as children of God and lovingly refuse to encourage any behavior that is contrary to their good.

Recently, my dear friend Diane was lamenting the fact that there are few places for Christians who experience same-sex attraction and wish to be faithful to Christian teaching to deal openly and honestly with those issues. Our culture's sexual floodtide is breaching many individuals' and churches' fidelity to truth, and now, post-*Obergefell*, there is mounting pressure on any traditional morality "hold-outs" to give in and affirm all sexual acts as long as they are consensual. Thus "safe spaces" for Christians like Diane and me are fewer and farther between.

"Safe space" is a phrase typically used by the LGBT community to describe an area free from "judgment," "discrimination," or any negative evaluation of homosexuality or alternative gender expression. When I use the term "safe space," I too mean a space where people can openly share their experience of same-sex attraction, where others will affirm their dignity as children of God and accompany them in friendship. But I mean something very different as well. In my vision, those with same-sex attraction can take refuge in this space and trust they will be sheltered from harm precisely because there is a steadfast refusal to affirm falsehood or to encourage any behavior that is contrary to human good.

Diane and I have journeyed together for over twenty years. I remember well the summer we met as she passed through my college town for a week's stay with mutual friends. She wore a ball cap and had her girlfriend in tow, while I wore my hair buzzed in keeping with my masculine style. Both of us were confused, wondering whether we should continue to embrace our lesbian identity with abandon, give it up for our faith, or try to have it both ways by twisting the Scriptures and suppressing the voice of conscience.

## **illuminating Dangerous Waters**

Those were difficult times. That summer, I had gone to a well-known Christian professor on campus and begged her to tell me—as a Christian—her thoughts on homosexuality. In a reluctant voice, she said slowly, "Well, I can't see anything in Scripture that would condone it, but . . ." Her voice picked up speed as she listed disclaimers of how the prohibitions couldn't possibly apply to every situation, no one can judge, and so forth. As well-meaning as I'm sure my professor was that day, she did not have the fortitude to let God's "yes" be "yes" and "no" be "no."

I practically ran from her office, confused and desperately wanting someone to show me where the boundary line was. Greg, a classmate who was also a military chaplain, overheard the exchange and followed me out. As I wept, he grabbed my shoulders and commanded my attention: "Jean, Romans 3:4, let every man be found a liar, but God be true. You *know* the truth." I was in dangerous waters, and rather than being given consoling words as to why I shouldn't feel bad, I needed to be pointed to the shore. Despite all the "Safe Space" stickers decorating professors' offices on campus, it was Greg who provided one that day.

However, I not only needed to be pointed to shore, I also needed hands to pull me out of the water and help me learn to walk uprightly. A few years later, I moved to attend graduate school and found myself in the same city as Diane. I knew that Diane had found a strong church, one that was providing the safe space she needed to heal and grow. So I visited, and as is typical with such generous lovers of God, they made room for me as well.

These were rough and imperfect years for both Diane and me, but they were also deeply blessed. We had found hope. We became part of a group of Christians who were committed to truth and willing to honestly share the messiness of life as we all walked toward maturity and sought holiness together. These spiritual friends and mentors were a wonderful example of a welcoming and accompanying community who made us feel safe and protected us from harm. I am forever grateful to God for their life-changing love, prayers, counsel, and friendship.

## The Rainbow Veil

Over twenty years later, I am a teacher and married with children. Diane is an excellent businesswoman, lay missionary, and highly esteemed friend to many. She is still single. **Our individual fulfillment lies neither in our marital state nor in our sexuality, but in our surrender to our Creator's truth, love, and will for our lives.**

When the Supreme Court redefined marriage and everything from the White House to corporate logos turned rainbow, I recalled that year of monumental personal decision when I was struggling with my relationships with God, women, and myself. I remember digging out my Bible, which was dusty from disuse. I dared to look at the first chapter of Romans. The words blurred through my tears as I read. My mind was also blurry, for having opened a door to sin, I had opened a door to deception. I prayed, "If it's wrong, You'll have to show me another way, because I can't see it." I honestly couldn't see the truth—it was as if there was a veil over my eyes.

These days, when I see the multitude of profile pictures on Facebook bearing a rainbow filter, I think of that veil. The rainbow veil tints reality with false hues, blurs the vision, and prevents one from seeing clearly. But what is most distressing is seeing the rainbow veil over the faces of Christian friends and family.

Last year I wrote to Christian pastors about showing real love toward those dealing with homosexuality, and I've written about some of my personal experiences coming to terms with my sexual identity. Now, I sense an urgency to write again to pastors, theologians, and anyone who sincerely seeks to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. As Greg did for me so long ago, allow me to exhort you to let God be true. I implore you, by the mercies of God, to resist the rainbow veil and make yourself and your church a truly safe space for people like Diane, me, and countless others.

Here are some concrete steps toward this goal:

### 1) Recognize that you are under spiritual attack.

Most likely, you are among the vast majority (at least 89 percent) of people who do not personally deal with any degree of same-sex attraction. Nevertheless, you are under relentless assault. Over two decades ago, psychologist Marshall Kirk and marketer Hunter Madsen wrote [\*After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Loathing of Gays in the 90's\*](#). This book outlined a PR campaign strategy that has been so well-implemented and long-sustained in the media that its success is breathtaking. Kirk and Madsen advised desensitizing the American public to homosexuality through a constant shower of gay images so that they would "get used to being wet." Now, we are inundated to the point of drowning. This campaign is designed to make anyone who upholds traditional Christian teaching on sexuality look hateful and foolish. It seeks to "muddy the moral waters" by continually highlighting reports of Christian "epiphanies" about changing theological understandings. Through it all, the enemy of all souls wants to extinguish the light of God's truth in every quarter, including you and your church. You need prayer as much as I did, and do, to resist the spirits of deception. Our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities. Fight accordingly.

### 2) Do not enter into dialogue about things clearly revealed in both natural law and the Scriptures as if everything is revisable. Doing so opens the door to deception.

In these mendacious times, truth bears repeating. There exist moral absolutes that have not, cannot, and will not ever change, and that are not open for discussion. Human sexuality designed for complementary union between male and female is one of them.

Accompanying others and listening to their struggles with Christian teaching does not mean being open to all possible conversations. While the world calls you "closed-minded," to be open to all ideas is actually hubris and folly. Read Psalm 1 and ask: In whose counsel are you walking?

You must remain utterly clear and settled about where the boundary lines are regarding sexual activity. You cannot be a safe space if you are open to suddenly throwing us all back into the sea.

### 3) Remember that admonition of sinners is a spiritual work of mercy.

You are constantly being shamed and bullied by those claiming that you are being "unloving" or "hurting people" by holding firm to truth. Do not give in to this lie.

Years ago, the pastor of a large church that had embraced the LGBT social agenda was showing me the AIDS memorial wall they had for their members. He told me how proud he was that his church was on the front lines in serving the sick. On this wall, there was hardly a man memorialized who had reached fifty years of age. Most were between twenty and forty. While the church had provided very important corporal works of mercy, such as visiting the sick, it also approved of and encouraged the very behaviors that were robbing so many of its congregation of their health and very lives, some of more than half their life span. This is the type of “safe space” the world and now even some fellow Christians are demanding from you. Just as you cannot serve two masters, you must not accommodate these demands.

Repent for any indifference or hostility you have had to the gay community and then choose to love them with genuine love. You are commanded to care enough about your brothers and sisters to help them with both their physical needs and their spiritual lives, including addressing their faults and sins. Your motivation must be from love, and you must offer this correction gently and humbly. But you cannot provide guidance and safe harbor if you are never willing to correct at all.

#### **4). Contend for the power of reason and a sound mind.**

Much of this spiritual battle is directed at your mind and your powers of reason. Seek divine grace and pray for help to be discerning and wise. Follow premises to their logical ends.

While many around you have reinterpreted Scripture and claim that God’s moral boundaries are not those that the church has taught for millennia, recognize that human physiology has not changed. Ask questions regarding homosexual behavior: “If it is holy, why is it so unhealthy?” “Why do those Christians around me who support homosexuality now also support surgical mutilation as a triumph of truth and courage rather than a call to prayer for a confused and hurting man?”

Scripture offers stern warnings about immorality, the body as the temple of the Spirit of God, and any who would destroy that temple. It is neither loving nor safe to affirm behaviors that harm and destroy the body and wage war against the soul.

#### **5) Be consistent and witness to the fullness of God’s truth for sexuality.**

Don’t single homosexuality out, but don’t leave it out either. Instead, address the full breadth of sexual sin and brokenness. We live in a fallen world, our culture is in a post-sexual-revolution apocalypse, and all of us bear wounds and scars. Pornography, divorce, and heterosexual sex outside of marriage proportionally affect your members far more than homosexuality. Repent individually and as a church for *all* the ways you’ve fallen short in these areas and walk together toward health and submission to God’s will. Holding everyone to the same standard, with humility and openness about your own failings and struggles and with a resolute will to obey God, will make you safe.

You have everything you need to become a church like Diane’s and mine. We had no “experts” on sexuality. We had no special programs, though there are some I can highly recommend. We simply had mature Christians who—out of love for God and neighbor—were both unwilling to compromise on truth and willing to love, pray, suffer, and grow with us. Psalm 68:6 says “God sets the lonely in families.” A healthy church family is what every one of us needs to mature, not just those with same-sex attraction.

Pastors and Christian friends, this battle is not going away in our lifetime. It did not go away for Diane and me, yet we are still following and doing our best to take up the Cross of Christ daily.

Will you do the same?

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