



What does God's Word say about homosexuality?

by Rev. John Heckmann

Part 2

How Do We Respond in Christian Love?

Introduction

Pause for a moment to think about the following statement: Although a sin is a sin, homosexuality is different because it is the only sin that is celebrated and has a movement around it.

With that in mind, we begin this study by asking: How do we in Christian love respond to those who say that homosexuals are born that way — in effect, that God made them that way and so it is OK, and they should be celebrated for their courage to live homosexually?

Pastor Michael Goeke, the man who wrote the opening words of this study, sharing with us his story, answers the "born this way" arguments like this: "Our fallen nature compels us to many things that God's Word calls sin, and our environment can cause our natural sin tendency to go in all sorts of directions. If we trust that He knows best what is good for our lives and that He will both empower obedience and give us joy in the process, we will gladly surrender to Him all that compels us."

So, how do we in Christian love respond to those who try to justify their homosexual lifestyle by saying things like, "How can loving someone be wrong?" or "Doesn't every one deserve to be happy and to be in a loving relationship?" _____

Do you ever feel like the apostle Paul in **Romans 7:15–25**? What does he say there? _____

Share with each other where you have seen this very thing taking place in your life. _____

What is the bottom line? Read again **James 1:13–15**. _____

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, as I study the verses and thoughts in this lesson, help me to be able to formulate biblical, loving responses to those who are living with or struggling with the desire to live homosexually. Then, when You give me the opportunity to speak about the truth of Your Word, especially in regard to this sin, give me the courage to boldly and lovingly proclaim Your will for the lives of all men and women, boys and girls. In the merciful name of Jesus I pray. Amen.

A personal story about this

Last fall the exterminator was at the church, and we were talking about how many crickets were coming into the buildings. If you have any experience with crickets, you know that when they die they stink, as we sometimes say in the south, "to high heaven." I told him there was probably nothing he could do about that, and he said there was. There was a product they have just started using, appropriately named, "Intice." The way I understand it, he puts it around the buildings on the outside. The crickets are "inticed" to eat it and as soon as they do they die, outside the buildings. That is the nice thing about "Intice." The apostle Paul said the same thing about the temptations we must deal with. We are tempted, lured, and enticed. Desire gives birth to sin, and sin to death. And, if we may continue to use the cricket picture, if we die without saving faith in Jesus Christ, we perish outside of heaven, living for all eternity separated from almighty God in hell. What "news" do we share with any person caught in sin?

What happens when they or we fall into the same sin again?

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Doesn't that cheapen God's grace? _____ Shouldn't they have to pay for their sin, especially a sin like homosexuality? See **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**. _____

Should we really speak up on this topic of homosexuality, or gay marriage, or abortion or any of those topics that many in the church and world will tell us to keep quiet about because they want us to believe that they are "political issues"? _____

Is it safe to speak up about these issues when we will be labeled with names (right wing nut, homophobe, etc.)? Read **Ezekiel 33:1-9** to hear what our heavenly Father says. _____

Do people caught in sin want to hear the call to repentance? Read **2 Corinthians 2:15-17**. _____

How do we respond to those who say we need to tolerate this lifestyle? _____

How do we respond when we think in our hearts along these lines: "I don't agree with what that person is doing, and I know it is wrong, but the safest thing is to just say nothing, looking the other way, for what they choose to do is their own business"? See **Galatians 6:1-3**. _____

As we plant the seeds of God's Word in the lives of others, calling them to repentance so that we can share the Good News of the Gospel with them, whose work is the harvest (the change)? See **1 Corinthians 3:5-9**. _____

How do we respond to family, friends, or co-workers who are gay? _____

What kind of Christian witness can we share with them in a loving way? _____

How do we respond when they say, "Don't ask, don't tell;" or "Don't pry into my business;" or "What is done behind closed doors among consenting adults is none of your business;" or "If it is not hurting anyone, what does it matter?"?

For help in answering these questions consider: **James 5:19-20**, **Luke 17:3**, and **Matthew 18:15**. _____

What does God have to say about the often-made statement, "My body is my own, and I can do with it whatever I would like," especially in regard to homosexual sins? See **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**. _____

How do we and the church respond to those who say that we "should leave the homosexual person alone because Jesus loved everybody"? _____

What is our response as a brother or sister in Christ to the person caught in homosexual sins? See **1 Corinthians 6:9-11** and **Matthew 7:3-5**. What is the bottom line once again in our response? _____

How do you respond to people who would say, "Why does the church have to get involved in this? Why can't we just continue to look the other way and not bring it up?" _____

How do **Genesis 2:20-24**, **Genesis 5:2**, and **Matthew 19:4-6** inform and shape our response as the Body of Christ? _____

How do the church and we — as either family members or friends — minister to the families of those who are acting on their homosexuality? _____

Is the pointing out and discipling over this sin and every other one a good thing when it causes feelings of guilt in the offender? Read **Hebrews 10:11-18**. _____

Another wonderful portion of Scripture to share would be **Isaiah 55:6-9**. What is our heavenly Father saying to us in this matter through these verbally inspired words of Isaiah the prophet? _____

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How should we as Christians respond to, react to, be proactive about, regarding the ever more vocal and "in your face" gay rights movement? _____

So then, what should be the church's response? _____

Why do some churches change over time what they teach about homosexuality and many other things? _____

What is the responsibility and response of the individual to the everyday encounters with people who are a part of the gay rights movement, who are practicing homosexuals, or who see nothing morally wrong with this lifestyle? _____

Where do we turn for education and guidance as we prepare to speak with our voices, with our actions, and with our votes? _____

Should the church and we, as members of the church, be involved in such discussions, or should we, as some would say to us, keep quiet because these are political issues and we should not be involved in them? _____

How do we know that the church and we as individuals cannot remain quiet, and how does this play out in our lives?

Matthew 5:13-16 _____

Titus 3:1 _____

1 Timothy 2:1-6 _____

What about the admonition we receive from God's Word that says we should not judge others? You have verses such as **James 4:11-12**, **Matthew 7:1-3**, and **Luke 6:37-38** that people will quote to tell you not to "judge," not even to speak about topics like homosexuality, same-sex marriages, abortion rights, pornography, and a host of other things. Consider also the words of **Ezekiel 33:1-9**. _____

If time permits

How did God deal with these well-known sinners? (To see how our Triune God deals with many more wayward Bible figures, as well as with us, check out the LWML Bible study resource, *Focus Lost — Focus Restored*.)

Adam and Eve

Genesis 3, especially verses 8-9, 14-24 _____

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11-12, especially verses 1, 13-14 _____

Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10 _____

The immoral woman at Simon the Pharisee's house

Luke 7:36-50 _____

The Woman at the Well

John 4, especially verses 7-15, 25-29 _____

The woman caught in adultery

John 8:2-11 _____

Peter

Mark 14:66-72 and **John 21:15-19** _____

Paul

Acts 9:1-19 _____

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In summary of how Jesus interacts with the folks we have just talked about, and how that serves as a model to us, listen again to Pastor Michael Goeke as he sums up these interactions very well. "As we consider how Jesus interacted with sinners, He stood up for the sinner against the self-righteous [woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11) and the immoral woman at Simon the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:36–50)]; Jesus loved people first [Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10)]; Jesus offered people something better than their sin since He didn't just give rules but gave life, calling them out of their sin [woman at the well (John 4:1–42)]."

Here is a parting word of comfort and encouragement as we realize this is God's work, working through us in the lives of others by the power of the Holy Spirit. Read **Isaiah 55:6–12**.

What assurance is ours that as we share God's Word with others in all the various circumstances in which we find ourselves, He will give us the Words to say? See **Exodus 4:10–12** and **Luke 12:11–12**.

As we conclude this study, I pray first of all that we know without a doubt that Jesus loves everybody no matter what their sin may be. I pray also that we know without a doubt that our Triune God is indeed a God of love (**John 3:16**), but He is not an enabling God. Our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit never encouraged, overlooked, ignored, disregarded, tolerated any sin or destructive behavior. In fact, our Savior called His followers to higher standards than the rest, and He does the same today with you and me. (For examples, read **Matthew 5** and **6**.) He calls us to live and operate on a higher plane, if you will, than those who do not yet know Him as their Brother, and Savior, and Friend. Once we become a child of God through Holy Spirit-given and -nourished faith in Jesus Christ, we are expected to leave all, to die to all, to endure all and to serve all. (See **Luke 18:18–30**.) Will we fail? Without a doubt! But our Father is always ready and willing to welcome us back with open arms as He offers us the forgiveness of sins and the opportunity to continue in His service (e.g., The Prodigal Son, **Luke 15:11–32**). Without a doubt, the calling of a disciple of Jesus Christ is a high one. To God be the glory as we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, strive to live that high calling as we serve one another. Amen!

Closing Prayer

Dear Father, thank You that in Your love for me and all people, You do not leave me wallowing in the pig pen of my sin but instead call me to repentance and to a renewed relationship with You through faith in Jesus Christ. Help me to love others in this same way and to care enough about their temporal and eternal welfare that I speak up and share with them the painful message of Your Law, and that I can also share with them the comforting, soothing message of the Gospel of sins forgiven and life restored in Jesus Christ. It is in His forgiving name that I pray this. Amen!

Closing Hymn

"Take My Life and Let It Be" (LSB #783/784; TLH #400)
or "Take My Life, O Lord, Renew" (LW #404)