

# WHAT SHOULD CHRISTIANS THINK ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY?

## 1. WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TEACH ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY?

Our official position is that regardless of sexual preference, all persons possess \_\_\_\_\_ and are deserving of the ministry of the church.

“The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.”

Our statement is about **behavior** not attraction.

The United Methodist Church does not allow its pastors to marry gay couples and we don't allow self-avowed \_\_\_\_\_ homosexuals to serve as pastors.

## 2. WHAT WOULD I SAY TO A HOMOSEXUAL?

**A. God loves you and wants a \_\_\_\_\_ with you.**

What's most important about you and what defines you and determines your identity is not your sexual desires but God's desire to be in a personal relationship with you.

**B. We love you and you are \_\_\_\_\_ in this church just as you are.**

**C. It's my responsibility as a pastor and my calling as a Christian to love you and to tell you \_\_\_\_\_.**

I can love you a long time before I tell you the truth, but if I don't ever tell you the truth, then I don't really \_\_\_\_\_ you.

**D. There's nothing all that \_\_\_\_\_ about your sin.**

Your sin is not any more effective in making you guilty before God than greed, gossip or lying makes others of us guilty before God.

## 3. WHAT WOULD I SAY TO THE CHURCH?

**A. Your most important task is to \_\_\_\_\_ your neighbor and the homosexual person is your neighbor.**

**B. Heterosexual sin has done and is doing much greater \_\_\_\_\_ to the church, to families and to the cause of Christ than homosexual sin will ever do.**

**C. Homosexual sin is no \_\_\_\_\_ than our sins.**

**1 Corinthians 6.9-10:** Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

**D. We must not let our \_\_\_\_\_ convince us that what the Bible has revealed is outmoded or untrue.**

It is possible and necessary to be both “gracers” and “truthers” in relating to homosexual persons.

#### **4. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE?**

Not a lot, but its message is consistent.

**Leviticus 18.22:** Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

**Leviticus 20.13:** If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable.

**Romans 1.26-27:** Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

**1 Corinthians 6.9-11:** Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**1 Timothy 1.9-11:** We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and for those who practice homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God ...

Homosexual practice is not mentioned often in the Bible, but the message is consistent: nowhere is it promoted or condoned; in fact, every passage tells us that homosexual acts are not God’s will for us and are sinful.

#### **5. WHY DO SOME CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE IS NOT WRONG AND THAT BEING GAY IS A GIFT FROM GOD?**

**A. They believe the Bible does not address what we label as “homosexuality” today.**

They believe the passages in the Bible refer either to temple prostitution which was common in the tribes that surrounded Israel or to the practice of an older man using a \_\_\_\_\_ as an object of sexual satisfaction.

**B. They believe the Bible cannot always be \_\_\_\_\_ to give us moral or spiritual truth.**

There are different ways to approach the Bible.

- (1) One view believes that it is the inspired and authoritative word of God. What it teaches is the truth and is trustworthy.
- (2) Another view believes that the Bible gives us the best that men and women knew about God at the time, but we now know more.

And where our reason or our experiences or science tells us something different than what the Bible teaches, we can \_\_\_\_\_ these new beliefs.

**Tom Griffith:** Now it is our turn to get honest. Although the creeds of our denomination pay lip service to the idea that Scripture is “authoritative” and “sufficient for faith and practice,” many of us have moved far beyond that notion in our own theological thinking. We are only deceiving ourselves – and lying to our evangelical brothers and sisters – when we deny the shift we have made. ... We have moved far beyond the idea that the Bible is exclusively normative and literally authoritative for our faith. To my way of thinking that is good. What is bad is that we have tried to con ourselves and others by saying, “We haven’t changed our position.”

People who hold this view believe that the authors of the books of the Bible were so \_\_\_\_\_ by the time and the culture they lived in that their teachings are bound by that time and that culture and as knowledge progresses beyond what their culture knew, our theological beliefs should progress beyond what they wrote.

**Paul Morris:** If I were a Christian homosexual, I think this one question would disturb me most: Am I trying to interpret Scripture in the light of my proclivity; or should I interpret my proclivity in light of Scripture?

**C. They believe that we should \_\_\_\_\_ everyone the way Jesus did.**

Unfortunately, people who make this argument almost never give a \_\_\_\_\_ picture of Jesus.

He told people – the self-righteous and the powerful, as well as the mistreated and the marginalized – “Go and \_\_\_\_\_.”

Two views of helping persons engaging in homosexual behavior:

- (1) Love them and tell them their actions are fine.
- (2) Love them and tell them that God has a better way for them.

**D. They stress that \_\_\_\_\_ did not condemn homosexual behavior.**

Jesus is not on record condemning homosexual behavior – but neither is he on record condemning prostitution, incest, or bestiality.

But no one argues that Jesus accepted any of those behaviors.

If Jesus wanted to change the sexual ethic of the Old Testament, he would have done so directly, not by remaining \_\_\_\_\_ about it.

## 6. WHY THIS SIN?

**A. This is the \_\_\_\_\_ sin that the church is being asked to accept, affirm and celebrate.**

**B. The authority of the \_\_\_\_\_ is at stake.**

Once we decide the Bible cannot be trusted when it disagrees with what we want it to say, we don't have Christianity anymore, we have us-ianity.

**C. The \_\_\_\_\_ ministry of the church is at stake.**

The church is called to be a healing community: and if we fail to offer healing because our messed up culture wants us to call brokenness “wholeness and freedom,” we \_\_\_\_\_ God and homosexuals.

## 7. ARE PEOPLE BORN GAY?

Bottom line, human behavior is much too \_\_\_\_\_ to be determined by a gene or even many genes.

Sexual identity and preference are not like eye color – they are created by an extremely complex interaction of biological and environmental factors.

Environmental factors include: one's relationships with one's parents and one's peers, one's role models, the culture one grows up in and its values, the sexual stimuli one experiences especially when he/she is young, including whether or not someone of the same gender initiates sexual activity with him/her, experiences of abuse, etc.

**Is being gay (being attracted to persons of the same gender) a choice?**

**Not for the vast majority, though some gays will tell you it is.**

**Cynthia Nixon:** I gave a speech recently ... and it included the line ‘I’ve been straight and I’ve been gay, and gay is better.’ And they tried to get me to change it, because they said it implies that homosexuality can be a choice. And for me, it is a choice. I understand that for many people it's not, but for me it's a choice, and you don't get to define my gayness for me.”

**Mother Jones:** Psychology professor Lisa Diamond may have the best reason of all for activists to shy away from arguing that homosexuality is inborn and immutable: It's not exactly true. She doesn't dispute the findings that show a biological role in sexual orientation, but she thinks far too much is made of them. “The notion that if something is biological, it is fixed – no biologist on the planet would make that sort of assumption” ...

**Dr. Douglas A. Abbot:** Even advocates for a genetic explanation of homosexuality such as Szuchman (2002), concluded that the scientific evidence for a biological cause of homosexual behavior is “remarkably flawed ... We still have no good evidence of biological influences on sexual preference or sexual orientation”. Gay advocates Parker and DeCecco (1995) conceded that “research into possible biological bases of sexual preference has failed to produce any conclusive evidence.”

Responsible biologists say almost no \_\_\_\_\_ is determined at the time of birth.

To be fair to the literature, some persons likely have a biological predisposition to same-sex behavior – but not a predetermination.

But not all homosexuals have that predisposition and not everyone with that predisposition develops same-sex attraction.

What other factors may play a role: one's relationships with one's parents, one's relationships with one's peers, one's role models, the culture you grow up in and its teachings, the sexual stimuli one experiences especially when he is young, including whether or not someone of the same gender initiates sexual activity with him, etc.

## **8. CAN HOMOSEXUALS CHANGE?**

The answer is: \_\_\_\_\_ do.

It's not easy and it's not the result of just deciding you don't want to be gay or saying a single prayer.

## **9. CAN PERSONS LIVE SEXUALLY PURE LIVES IN SPITE OF THEIR DESIRES – AND IS IT RIGHT TO ASK PEOPLE TO DO SO?**

**From an email I received:** You cannot tell homosexuals that they have sacred worth on one hand, and on the other hand tell them that acting on their God-given nature is wrong. Homosexuals cannot be expected to abstain from their very nature and at the same time be sexually whole.

I don't believe sexual wholeness requires being sexually \_\_\_\_\_.

A sex life that \_\_\_\_\_ is what determines whether or not we are sexually whole, not how often we engage in intercourse.

But, if forced to answer: Yes, we can ask people not to give into their nature in order to honor Christ.

As a matter of fact, that's a big portion of what the Christian life is: overcoming our \_\_\_\_\_ desires that put self first instead of God.

**Jesus:** If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Mark 8.34)

\_\_\_\_\_ our old nature is part of following Jesus.

## Resources for Further Study

The work of NARTH (National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality). A great site for many scholarly articles regarding past and present research ([www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com)).

**Mother Jones:** “Gay by Choice? The Science of Sexual Identity” (Google it.)

**Douglas A. Abbott:** “Myths and Misconceptions About Behavioral Genetics and Homosexuality” (Google it.)

**Thomas E. Schmidt:** “Straight & Narrow? Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate,” Inter-Varsity Press.

## YOU ASKED FOR IT!

Week 1: Is Christianity Arrogant?

Week 2: What about those who Never Hear the Gospel?

Week 3: What Should Christians Think about Homosexuality?

**Week 4: Why Are Women so Weird?**

Week 5: Why is it so Hard to Live a Christian Life?

Week 6: What’s Hell Like and Who Goes There?

Week 7: How Do I Balance Family, Work and Faith?

Week 8: Does God Predestine Some People to Heaven and Others to Hell?

## WAYS TO COMMUNICATE – PLEASE DON’T SEND ME EMAILS.

1. Write your thoughts, questions, tirades and invectives at: [QuestYouAskedForIt.com](http://QuestYouAskedForIt.com)
2. Come to breakfast on Wednesdays at the Waterway Marriott 6:30 – 8:00 am.

**KAIROS WEEKEND** – take part in a life-changing weekend (March 16-18), leading inmates in the Walls Unit in Huntsville to a closer relationship with Christ. The team training is just starting. To learn more, contact me at [rrenfroe@twumc.org](mailto:rrenfroe@twumc.org).