

1 May, 2022

Human Sexuality, Gender, and the Gospel Forestgate Presbyterian Church

Lesson 7: LGB- Behavior, Desires, and Identity in Christ

Goal for this class: *To understand the issues, categories, and response for Christians who experience same-sex attraction.*

1. Resources:

- The Alisa Childers Podcast, “#148: Side B Christianity and the Revoice Conference, with Christopher Yuan,” April 10, 2022.
- Appendix 2 from Kevin DeYoung’s *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*
- Christopher Yuan’s *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God’s Grand Story*.

2. **Big Q:** How do we understand and respond to Christians who experience same-sex attraction?

- a. “we” = those with SSA, their friends, family, local church, and the church writ large
- b. Celibate gay Christian? Celibate gay pastor?
- c. Revoice Conference?

Revoice exists to support and encourage Christians who are sexual minorities that they can flourish in historic Christian traditions.

3. **Review: Homosexual Behavior** – clarity from Scripture

What is the real problem they face?

- Christopher Yuan: “in light of their newfound faith, [my parents] knew my biggest sin wasn’t same sex behavior; my biggest sin was unbelief.” (Yuan, 2)
- Rosaria Butterfield: The pastor in her story did not combat her lesbian identity or lifestyle. Rather, he addressed her *spiritual lostness* with hospitality, love, God’s Word, and the gospel.

4. **What about homosexual desire, attraction, orientation, temptation?**

Now when ... temptation comes from without, it is unto the soul an indifferent thing, neither good nor evil, unless it be consented unto; but the very proposal from within, it being the soul’s own act, it is sin.

John Owen, *The Nature and Power of Indwelling Sin*. Works Vol. 6 194.

5. How have those with same-sex attraction (SSA) found support and solidarity?

(Note: these are not perfect labels, and there are grey areas in these categories)

Traditional	Progressive	Radical
“Non-affirming” “Side B” Conservative	“Affirming” “Side A” Revisionist	Liberal
Believes God declares same-sex practices/behaviors (lust, physical acts, marriage) to be against his will and sinful.	Believes God declares monogamous same-sex marriage to be permissible and a blessing to the church.	Believes all forms of sexual practices/behavior are permissible, so long as there is <i>consent</i> .
...but lots of discussion about desires, orientation, identity.	...but some debate about other forms of sexuality.	...but they have their limits when pushed, e.g., bestiality.

Note: Side B Christians often refer to “spiritual friendship” and vows of “celibacy,” which are not biblical concepts or terms but rather come from the Roman Catholic Church tradition.

6. Rather, what do we commend to those with SSA?

Holiness

- Remember the chart on Romans 1 from Lesson 2?
 - *Implication*: Affections/desires are not morally neutral.
 - Many other ways to make this point (e.g. Sermon on the Mount)
- “The moral value of any desire is determined by whether its ‘end’ transgresses or conforms to God’s standard... all desire is teleological.” (Yuan, 61)
 - “Holy sexuality—faithfulness in marriage and chastity in singleness—is the only correct end for desire.” (Yuan, 66)
- God calls all of us to mortify our sins of the flesh *and our unholy desires*.
 - Wrongly ordered desire is lust/coveting (Yuan, 61).
- “Be holy for I am holy” (1 Pet 1:16, quoting Leviticus)

The Gospel

- For their justification or their sanctification, whatever the case may be.
- Don’t make your conversation all about their sexuality, consider their lostness.
- Don’t let them be like the rich young ruler: “Will following Jesus mean I have to give up...?” Bring them back to the joy of following Jesus, wherever that leads.

Identity in Christ

- PCA Committee Report on Human Sexuality
 - “We affirm that the believer’s most important identity is found in Christ (Rom. 8:38-39; 12 Eph. 1:4, 7). Christians ought to understand themselves, define themselves, and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and their identity as regenerate, justified, holy children of God (Rom. 6:5-11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Eph. 2:1-10).”
- How do you introduce yourself?
 - Consider how Paul introduces himself in Rom 1, “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God...to all those in Rome who are loved by God.”
- True versus false identity
 - To identify with Christ is to align with *reality*—we are the creation of our Creator, designed for a purpose, and redeemed by our Savior—that is our *true* identity.
- How does a Christian talk about identity in a fundamentally different way than the world does today?
 - We derive identity from outside of ourselves.
 - First, it is given to us from our Creator—*imago Dei*.
 - Second, we must acknowledge our sinful nature, which is common to all humans since Adam.
 - Third, through faith (“and this is not of yourselves” Eph 2:8), we see our identity in Christ as redeemed children of God. Thus, “*I am* a sinner saved by grace.”
- Expressing oneself versus changing oneself (to an external standard)
 - “Be transformed” (Rom. 12:2), “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29), and Paul’s frequent calls to *imitation* of himself and Christ (1 Cor. 4:16-17, 11:1, Phil. 3:17, 4:9, 1 Thes. 1:5-6, 2:14, 2 Thes. 3:7-9, Heb. 6:12, 13:17).
- Heidelberg Catechism Q#1
 - What is your only comfort in life and in death? ...that I am not my own but belong, with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful savior Jesus Christ”
 - We are not our own. Our fundamental identity is not our own.
- From last week’s sermon – Is. 44:5

This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s,’
another will call on the name of Jacob,
and another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’
and name himself by the name of Israel.”