

Homosexuality

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Same sex attraction has existed since the earliest days of man, with the Bible giving reference to the subject in the Old Testament. In the past, and again over the last few decades, there has been an increasing acceptance of homosexual practices, to the point of calling it an *alternative lifestyle*. Furthermore, many have advocated that a homosexual lifestyle is impossible for some to avoid given their DNA make-up and therefore advocate same-sex marriages. In opposition, there are many who support a constitutional amendment that would define legal marriage to be between a man and a woman.

Acting on Same Gender Attraction is the Sin

Same-gender attraction, when acted out in sexual behavior, is a serious sin and violates the law of chastity. Furthermore, homosexual acts are in opposition to the purposes of human sexuality. Paul in his letter to the Romans wrote, "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:27). Homosexuality fundamentally alters the loving relationships that God intended between a man and a woman and inhibits the blessings that can be obtained through family life and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Homosexuality is an Abnormal Lifestyle

Much of the world today would have society believe that homosexuality is a natural and acceptable alternative lifestyle for the human race. God and his prophets reject this notion. In his book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, the prophet Spencer W. Kimball writes, "homosexuality is an ugly sin, repugnant to those who find no temptation in it, as well as to many past offenders who are seeking a way out of its clutches. ... All such deviations from normal, proper heterosexual relationships are not merely unnatural but wrong in the sight of God" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 77-78). There is no multiplying and replenishing the earth through homosexual relationships, therefore a predominance of such relationships would doom the human race and make void God's plan for his children.

Understanding More Fully Same Gender Attraction

Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has written and spoken extensively on the subject of same-gender attraction and offers a number of key points with respect to this difficult and challenging condition in his article, "Same-Gender Attraction," from the *Liahona* in March of 1996. Those points include:

- Distinguishing between thoughts and feelings of same-gender attraction, and homosexual behavior itself. One leads to sin (thoughts and feelings), while the other is a sin (homosexual acts).
- While environment and physical characteristics may play a role in creating susceptibilities to same-gender attraction (as well as other such abnormalities), we are held accountable for how we react and respond to those susceptibilities.
- Most humans are born with thorns in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7) in varying degrees of seriousness; however, we are given power from God to overcome these thorns, including our thoughts and actions.

- Although heredity can play a role in our inheriting, or becoming more susceptible to, certain traits and diseases, we must distinguish between that which is inevitable and that which is probable, understanding there are other actions and factors that can increase or decrease the likelihood of inheritance.
- If an individual is in a state of transgression, including breaking the law of chastity (heterosexual or homosexual), Church leaders as shepherds of the flock of Jesus Christ have a responsibility to call the offending individual to repentance, and if necessary to administer disciplinary action.
- Because of the sinful nature of homosexual relations, those who commit such acts should feel guilt as a result of separating themselves from God through breaking His commandments.

Homosexual or Heterosexual—breaking the Law of Chastity is a sin

There are a large number of articles and talks written and delivered by Christian leaders on the subject of same-gender attraction and the admonishment of church members on how best to encourage and help individuals suffering from such “thorns in the flesh.” It is sound doctrine and practice to apply the same consequences of breaking the law of chastity to homosexuals and heterosexuals alike—having sex outside of marriage is morally wrong and a serious sin no matter what the sexual orientation, and declaring a “marriage” between people of the same sex does not a marriage make.

There are individuals from practically every sect of Christianity that suffer from same-gender attraction. As long as these individuals live the law of chastity they should be able to remain in good standing and enjoy the blessings of full membership. Once the law of chastity is broken, whether it is heterosexual or homosexual sex, the offender should be subject to Church discipline, even excommunicated if they do not cease such activity. In both cases the law of chastity is being broken and the consequences can be loss of church membership.

Breaking the Bonds of Same Gender Attraction

Elder Oaks offers hope to those struggling with same-gender attraction through the gospel of Jesus Christ: “Through Christ and his church, those who struggle can obtain help. This help comes through fasting and prayer, through the truths of the gospel, through church attendance and service, through the counsel of inspired leaders, and, where necessary, through professional assistance with problems that require such help. We are promised: There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13). (Dallin H. Oaks, “Same-Gender Attraction,” *Liahona*, Mar 1996, 14.).

Same-sex attraction does not mean sexual enslavement, as some homosexual advocates have angrily declared. Such behavior can be changed and is not genetic and irreversible. No behavior is genetic, only, perhaps, the inclination to engage in it. Anything else would be inconsistent with the doctrine and mercy of God from 1 Corinthians 10:13 regarding temptation.

Future Studies May Shed More Light on the Disorder

Homosexual sex (not homosexuality or same-sex attraction) is morally wrong and a sin, just as heterosexual sex outside of marriage is wrong and a sin of the same magnitude. Despite this unwavering stance, we must leave open the fact that scientific studies may someday help explain the thoughts and urges that lead to homosexual behavior and therefore may offer new insights into the condition and potential remedies.

Gay Marriage Has Far Reaching Consequences

Despite the 2008 passage of propositions in California, Florida, and Arizona that make gay marriage illegal, or define marriage as being between one man and one woman, gay advocates continue their vigorous fight to legalize and legitimize gay marriage. While some may feel such a ban is bigotry or discriminatory, one must consider the broader picture from a Christian societal standpoint.

The argument begins with the premise that a majority of self-described homosexuals freely admit if they could change their sexual orientation they would do so freely. Many homosexuals consider being gay a civil handicap. However, those same individuals desperately desire their lifestyle to be culturally legitimized for family, professional, and social reasons. Such desperation was demonstrated in the violence rendered against supporters of proposition 8 in California following its passage in 2008.

The historical fervor and passion of gay advocates would strongly suggest in those states where gay marriage is legalized there will be a robust push for gay marriage to be presented as a legitimate and equal marriage alternative in sex education classes. When this happens curriculum developers and teachers will be forced to present gay nuptials as a viable lifestyle option to unsuspecting students. In instances where youth are struggling with their own sexuality such validation of a gay lifestyle could cause some to dangerously give in to homosexuality as opposed to resisting the disorder, while introducing thoughts of homosexuality to some who would not have otherwise given such a lifestyle consideration.

Furthermore, under a bi-marriage legal environment religious organizations (Christian and others) who openly teach that marriage is exclusively between a man and a woman could be accused of “hate speech,” resulting in frivolous lawsuits and religious doctrinal intolerance.

The Gay Marriage Litmus Tests

For proponents of gay marriage who feel the legalization will be harmless to society and progressively correct we propose two litmus tests to be considered:

Test one—how will you answer the kid’s question?:

When a youth comes home after a sex education class and asks: “my teacher said I can marry someone of my own sex or someone of the opposite sex, which one should I choose?” Since being gay is a handicap according to many homosexuals, and an unacceptable lifestyle to ardent Christians, the most common answer will likely be “choose someone of the opposite sex” (a traditional marriage). Is this answer bigotry, hateful, or intolerant? On the contrary, the answer is rooted in a desire for the

child to have a normal and successful married life that includes children and freedom from social hindrances. Even the most zealous homosexuals, who happen to have children, are likely to desire their children to grow up to be straight and to marry into heterosexual relationships.

Test two—what if everyone decides to do it?:

Although most societies today have one or more forms of social diversity there are social attributes that strengthen a society and those that weaken a society. If everyone decided to have heterosexual marriages what would society be like? The answer is simple and points to our modern day, or perhaps more like the 1950’s when families were stronger and homosexuality less pronounced. Conversely, what would society be like with a predominance of homosexual marriages? The answer paints a gloomy picture of childless unions, disease, immorality, and volatile relationships. One need only look at homosexuality as one of the probable causes for the weakening of the Roman Empire to understand the danger of even a small percentage of homosexual unions in a society, let alone a large percentage of gay marriages.

Opposing gay marriage is not about bigotry, hatefulness, or intolerance. Those who fervently oppose gay marriage are doing so in an attempt to preserve wholesomeness in society; to strengthen the nation and its families in which they live; to keep children from wrongfully choosing a risky and unhealthy lifestyle; and to promote strong Christian values. Civil unions among gay couples provide an acceptable form of rights and privileges without validating a lifestyle that is potentially harmful to society.

Conclusion

While all of Christianity seeks to understand the disorder of homosexuality from both a clinical and spiritual standpoint, Christian churches must not go against the commandments of God in accepting homosexual activity, just as the Church must not advocate heterosexual activity outside of marriage—both are considered a serious sin. Furthermore, it is important that Christian churches vigorously oppose same-sex marriage on the grounds that such a practice threatens the core practice and doctrine of the family, not to mention the societal health of the entire nation.

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