

Homosexuality: Grace & Truth

Jesus always embodied grace and truth when He interacted with people. Today, we want to consider what it looks like to be a church that is full of grace AND truth related to the issue of homosexuality. This topic was raised in our study of Romans 1 last week and since it is such a prominent topic in our culture, we are devoting a whole study on it. While there are only six passages in the Bible that specifically address the topic of homosexuality (Genesis 19:5; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; and 1 Timothy 1:10), there are many passages that address how we should think about such life-dominating issues. There are some foundational principles that inform how we approach a topic like this with grace and truth.

Steve said:

When people outside the church ask me what I think about homosexuality, I begin my answer by telling them **why** I have the views I do. . . . I tell them that my view on homosexuality is based on my understanding of Scripture; Christianity is a revealed faith, based on revelation. Christianity isn't irrational, but it's not based primarily on rational reasoning. In other words, we don't adopt a view about homosexuality (or any other issue) based on what makes the most sense to us. We take our doctrine and practice from Scripture.

1. What do you think of what Steve says here?

2. How can we avoid adopting a view about any area of life based on "what makes the most sense to us?"

Read Hebrews 4:15

3. What is the difference between temptation and sin? How does this distinction help as we seek to minister to those in the church who struggle with same sex attraction?

Read Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:2; James 5:16

4. What insights do these passages give us about what our responsibility is as a community of believers to those in the church who struggle with same-sex attraction? What kind support do these verses suggest we offer?

Steve quoted Wesley Hill (author of *Washed and Waiting*) who calls himself a “gay Christian”:

As a single person, I acutely need intimacy and loyalty from my friends. I’m eager for them to say to me, ‘We love you because you’re ours,’ without leaving an escape clause. Part of the reason I need that kind of friendship is because I don’t think marriage is in my future. I’m gay, and also committed to the traditional Christian view that marriage is the union of a man and a woman. When I contemplate a lifetime of celibacy, I know I want committed friends who will walk beside me on the journey. . . . I imagine a future in the church when the call to chastity would no longer sound like a dreary sentence to lifelong loneliness for a gay Christian like me.

5. What do you think? Are you ready to offer this kind of love to those in our church who might struggle with same sex attraction? Explain.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

6. What distinctions does Paul make regarding how we address sin in the church as opposed to sin outside the church?
7. What does Matthew 5:43-48 suggest is our responsibility to all who are outside the church, including those who are gay?
8. As a church (or just personally) how can we do a better job of relating to those outside the church who are gay with both grace and truth?

Book Recommendations:

Washed and Waiting, Wesley Hill

Homosexuality and the Christian, Mark Yarhouse