

# Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

## Loving The Homosexual

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Homosexuality has become a major issue shaping culture in this era, and for the most part the church has done a terrible job of showing gays and lesbians what it means to be loved by God. Whereas in previous generations, gays and lesbians basically kept their preferences and lifestyles quietly hidden away, today there are gay parades, gay magazines, gay sensitivity training in schools and businesses, and policies governing how gays are to be treated in the military.

Historically, most churches stayed as far away as possible from the subject of homosexuality. For example, my father was a pastor, and I've been a pastor for 35 years. In my lifetime, I've never heard of a single pastor who preached a sermon on the subject of homosexuality. The most I've ever heard from the pulpit is a very rare, glancing reference to the subject.

Homosexuality is an issue that forces the church to address its primary role. Is the church primarily called to care for and minister to those outside the "fold?" Or is the church primarily called to organize against those outside the "fold" and thereby force outsiders to at least behave as if they're insiders? When Christ taught his followers to be "salt and light," did he mean his followers were to influence public policy to create laws limiting the influence of homosexuality in culture? Can the church do both ministry and public policy work ~ can it have its cake and eat it too ~ or is the church limited to one or the other approach?

Homosexuality is now such an "in-your-face" cultural issue that churches cannot ignore it ~ although most still try. What follows is a Cliff Notes course on the role of the Christ-follower in regard to the homosexual (gay or lesbian) person.

### What Does The Bible Say?

The Bible doesn't actually say much specifically about homosexuality, but when the issue is addressed the Bible calls it "sin." In the Old Testament law, homosexual behavior was condemned and the practice of it called for death by stoning.<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament it is mentioned four times and each time it is again correlated with sin.<sup>2</sup> So for the average person in the pew the issue seems pretty simple: Homosexuality is sin, it is condemned by God to the point that it called for the death penalty. The Apostle Paul depicts it as part of the process of cultural deterioration, and states clearly that practicing homosexuals will not be allowed into heaven. Boom. Done.

What makes the discussion a bit less cut and dry is that the Bible basically makes the same statements about adultery,<sup>3</sup> including the death penalty. Then Christ took the discussion of sin in general to a new level by saying that if a heterosexual person even *looks* with lust at someone else, they've sinned.<sup>4</sup> Taking the discussion even farther, scripture teaches that if a person sins in even *one* area of their life, it's the same as if they'd broken *all* of God's laws.<sup>5</sup> So the person who gossips is just as guilty in God's eyes as the murderer.

Making things even less palatable to the average religious person, when Christ was confronted by the most raw, flagrant rebellious sinners of his day, he forgave them and restored their lives.<sup>6</sup> That is generally not the practice of most religious types. Most religious types tend to withdraw as far as they may from others whom they consider to be rank sinners, and then from a safe distance these folks tend to whisper behind their hands about the sinful practices of those "other people." Yet Christ not only forgave sinners, he pursued them and chose to hang out with them in direct opposition to the social mores of his culture.<sup>7</sup> Worse yet, he made it very clear that he had not come in order to stroke the egos of religious types, but rather had come to rescue sinners!<sup>8</sup>

One can only imagine the red hot rage flowing from the volcanic eruption of the self-righteous nice people ~ "*You mean to say you actually prefer spending time with those nasty whores and queers over us?!"* So the nice religious people did what nice religious people do when their self-righteousness is questioned: They lost complete emotional control, and murdered him.

Here's where so many religious types get lost ~ they begin to believe in their own press releases ~ they believe they are truly good people and by contrast with *real* sinners such as gays, lesbians, hookers, drug dealers, and people who torture children and puppies, they're good and righteous. Few would go as far as to say that God "owes" them anything due to their goodness and righteousness, but there is a quiet assumption that they are among the Chosen who will enjoy eternity in heaven with Christ. Amen. Oh, and all those *real* sinners won't be in heaven.

It is in the instant of self-comparison that the nice folks of the world face damnation. Christ was extraordinarily firm when he spoke about comparing one's own virtue with that of others. Basically, it's called "judgmentalism." *I'm better than Julie Smith because I never starred in a porno flick. I'm better than Michael Vick because I never tortured dogs.* It's actually the act of comparison that destroys our virtue, because our virtue is not found in and of ourselves. It's found in Christ and his sacrifice for our sin. So the second we begin even thinking about how good we are in comparison to anyone else, we're going light on ourselves, and we're judging others ~ and that brings God's wrath.<sup>9</sup>

## So Do We Just Give Homosexuals A Free Pass?

To understand how Christ-followers are called to relate to gays and lesbians, one must only look at how Christ handled sinners like ourselves. Christ never actually used the word "homosexual" in any of his ministry. Nor did he ever teach on, or even refer to the subject. Nor did he go around confronting homosexuals. Nor did he organize his culture to resist homosexuals. Some might argue that no gay person ever got in his face about the subject, and that's more than likely true. However, it's a moot point, because Christ never got in the face of *any* person in regard to

*any* sin subject, except that of self-righteousness. On *that* subject, he publicly spanked the nice religious types of his day.<sup>10</sup>

But when he was with sinners of any other kind, he touched their lives in a way that transformed them to reflect his own character. One of the most interesting songs ever written in regard to a person touched by Christ, comes from the play, "Jesus Christ Superstar." The song is performed by a woman coming out of prostitution. Here are the lyrics.

I don't know how to love him.  
What to do, how to move him.  
I've been changed, yes really changed.  
In these past few days, when I've seen myself,  
I seem like someone else.

I don't know how to take this.  
I don't see why he moves me.  
He's a man. He's just a man.  
And I've had so many men before,  
In very many ways,  
He's just one more.

Should I bring him down?  
Should I scream and shout?  
Should I speak of love,  
Let my feelings out?  
I never thought I'd come to this.  
What's it all about?

Don't you think it's rather funny,  
I should be in this position.  
I'm the one who's always been  
So calm, so cool, no lover's fool,  
Running every show.  
He scares me so.

I never thought I'd come to this.  
What's it all about?  
Yet, if he said he loved me,  
I'd be lost. I'd be frightened.  
I couldn't cope, just couldn't cope.  
I'd turn my head. I'd back away.  
I wouldn't want to know.  
He scares me so.  
I want him so.  
I love him so.

This section's heading asked, "So do we just give homosexuals a free pass?" The question was purposely phrased in that manner in order to point out that it's entirely the wrong question to even ask. The question is based upon a false superiority, as if "I" am so above sin as to be able to "give" some other sinful person a "free pass." Can you see the judgmentalism in the question as it was phrased? Is judgement what Christians are called to do? In answering that question, there is one situation in which Christians are indeed called to judge. We'll deal with that situation later in this booklet. But for now the answer is that Christians are called to demonstrate Christ's love, especially to the "unlovely" sometimes described as "lost sheep."

### Research Regarding Gays

This being so, let's pause for a moment and look at some of the ugly facts that surround the homosexual lifestyle. The term "gay" is a misnomer if there ever was one. What follows is research on five separate aspects of the homosexual world. As you read this, ask yourself if those in that world are better served by condemnation, or by prayer.

#### 1) Higher Depression And Suicidality In Gay Community

There is more depression in the gay community than among straight people. In one study, Australian gay men were found to have higher rates of depression than straight men.<sup>11</sup> In another study, the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States found that gay and bisexual men were three times more likely to meet criteria for major depression, as compared with heterosexual men.<sup>12</sup>

Accompanying depression one often finds suicidality. Several studies confirm this tendency.

- Gay men are at elevated risk for suicide attempts.<sup>13</sup>
- Research by the National Health & Nutrition Examination Survey III finds that 19% of men who have sex with men, had attempted suicide. This is in comparison with 3.6% of men who had sex only with female partners, and 0.5% of men who had not had sexual intercourse at all.<sup>14</sup> (That's nearly one in five gay men!)
- Other researchers found that found that homosexual and bisexual males are 13.9 times more at risk for a serious suicide attempts.<sup>15</sup>
- In another study homosexual males accounted for 62.5% of suicide attempts. Homosexual people in general were found to be at a substantially higher risk for suicidality, major depression, and anxiety disorder.<sup>16</sup>
- One study found that 49% of lesbians dealt with depression, and 27% had attempted suicide.<sup>17</sup> (That's more than one in four lesbian women.)
- Another study found that over a third of the lesbian, gay and bisexual youths in their research project, reported a past suicide attempt.<sup>18</sup> (That's one in three.)

Indeed, homosexual people die much earlier than the general population. "The only epidemiological study to date on the life span of gay men concluded that gay and bisexual men lose up to 20 years of life expectancy."<sup>19</sup> When Christ told the Pharisees to go and think about his statement, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice,"<sup>20</sup> he was addressing their ice cold hearts. He completed his statement by saying, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." What emotion did *you* experience as you read about the depression and suicidality of the "gay"

community? Were you thinking, “Serves them right?” or did you feel sadness for them? What does your emotional reaction tell you about your faith?

### 2) Higher Substance Abuse In Gay Community

When people struggle emotionally, there are almost always symptoms. One of the most prevalent and obvious symptoms of major emotional struggle, whether in the “gay” or “straight” community, is substance abuse. Here are several research examples drawn from the homosexual community.

- Both heavy drinking and use of drugs other than alcohol appear to be prevalent among young lesbians and gay men.<sup>21</sup>
- Research conducted at the University of Illinois, Chicago, found substantially higher alcohol and drug use among homosexual men and women.<sup>22</sup>
- The *Journal of Women's Health*. Researchers published findings that 39% of lesbians reported having alcohol or drug problems.<sup>23</sup>
- Another study found that lesbians were significantly more likely than heterosexual women to drink heavily.<sup>24</sup>
- One researcher wrote, “Recent studies show homosexuals have a substantially greater risk of suffering from a psychiatric problems than do heterosexuals. We see higher rates of suicide, depression, bulimia, antisocial personality disorder, and substance abuse.”<sup>25</sup>
- A New Zealand source, *LifeSiteNews.com*, posts research from Massey University stating their findings that the rate of substance abuse is markedly higher in the gay community.<sup>26</sup>

When you think about Christ’s parable of the lost sheep, what comes to mind? A nice fuzzy white lamb that got its foot stuck somewhere? Or do you think of actual people who have lost their way and are so bummed out about it that they are medicating their pain by drugs or booze? It’s always nicer to think about lambs, but the reality of that parable leads one to lives that are mucked up, perhaps don’t even know they’re mucked up, and don’t want to believe they’re mucked up.

### 3) Shorter Relationships; Greater Infidelity

It is likely that the bottom line basic need of human life, is attachment. That word, “attachment,” implies being linked to someone else who knows you and loves you. In good homes, children are attached to their mother and father. In healthy marriages, husbands and wives are attached. Without attachment, human beings fall off into a myriad of mental disorders. Simon and Garfunkle’s song, “I am a Rock,” spoke of the emptiness of heart in a person who is unattached.

A winter's day in a deep and dark December; I am alone, gazing from my window  
to the streets below on a freshly fallen silent shroud of snow.

I've built walls, a fortress deep and mighty, that none may penetrate.  
I have no need of friendship; friendship causes pain. It's laughter and it's loving I  
disdain.

Don't talk of love, I've heard the words before; they're sleeping in my memory.  
I won't disturb the slumber of feelings that have died. If I never loved I never  
would have cried.

I have my books and my poetry to protect me; I am shielded in my armor,  
Hiding in my room, safe within my womb. I touch no one and no one touches  
me. I am a rock, I am an island.

And a rock feels no pain; and an island never cries.

Research has repeatedly found that most people within the “gay” community (both males and females) have pretty tough clinical histories especially in their childhood homes. Not everyone, but most. Most gay guys have had tough (or absent) relationships with their dads. And most lesbians have had tough relationships with either mom or dad. While there are some homosexuals who had idyllic childhoods, the numbers are low.

This brings us back to the issue of attachment. Psychologists know that if a person struggles with attachment issues, that struggle is likely to take many forms as they search for the sense of being completely loved. Whether within heterosexual or homosexual relationships, people who have left childhood with attachment issues often continue searching for that “special someone” who will help them feel completely enveloped in acceptance and love. Unfortunately, finding that person is a temporary fix ~ until they don’t make you feel loved any longer. Then the hunt is on again. The pattern of *hunt, attempt to attach; hunt again, attempt to attach; hunt again...* is repeated over and over. The reason emotionally wounded people have difficulty in maintaining attachment, is that their “attachment mechanism” is broken ~ there really isn’t anyone “out there” who can love them enough to make them feel filled and whole. The soul pieces that are damaged need fixing first. Then, attachment may be possible.

Research consistently finds that people within the “gay” community are more emotionally wounded than those within the straight community. So one would expect there to be higher percentages of ongoing attachment issues within the former. Here’s research supporting that hypothesis.

Our first piece of research is taken verbatim from a “Special Report” put out by the *Traditional Values Coalition*.

“In 2004, a group of researchers at the University of Chicago published a study of homosexual sexual relationships in that city. The research was led by Sociology Professor Edward O. Laumann. His team of researchers studied the sex habits of homosexuals in Shoreland, a “gay center” in Chicago. Laumann found the following:

- 42.9% of homosexual men in Shoreland had more than 60 sexual partners;
- 18.4% had between 31 and 60 partners
- 61.3% of the area’s homosexual males had more than 30 partners
- 87.8% had more than 15.”<sup>27</sup>

Here are several other studies, reported in one article pertaining to the duration of homosexual “marriages.” Various studies of homosexual relationships show a picture of attachment problems.<sup>28</sup>



- The Gay/Lesbian Consumer Online Census of nearly eight thousand homosexuals found that only fifteen percent described their "current relationship" lasting twelve years or longer.<sup>29</sup>
- A study of homosexual men in the Netherlands published in the journal *AIDS* found that the "duration of steady partnerships" was one and a half years.<sup>30</sup>
- In a study of male homosexuality in reported in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, researchers found that "few homosexual relationships last longer than two years, with many men reporting hundreds of lifetime partners."<sup>31</sup>
- One study in the Netherlands, where homosexuality is openly accepted, found that "committed" homosexual couples have "an average of eight sexual partners – outside of the relationship – per year. The study found also that the average duration of a homosexual relationship was one-and-one-half years."<sup>32</sup>

Again, there are always exception to any research sample, but these findings from disparate sources confirm the pattern of "hunt, attempt to attach, hunt again, attempt again to attach...." As you read those research pieces, did you feel nauseated as you imagined homosexuals doing what homosexuals do? Or did you hear the cries of a lost lamb. Christ would have heard the lamb. In spite of the fact that large percentages of homosexuals are angry with God and angrier with churches, Christ would have heard the lamb.

#### 4) Higher STD Rates

One of the traits of adults struggling with attachment issues, is that they tend to sexualize their anxiety. It somehow feels less lonely to be naked and in bed with someone, doing sexual acts, than it feels when alone in one's own kitchen. Emotionally healthy people know the difference between alone-ness, and loneliness. Solid emotional/relational attachment remains in place even though a person may be alone, even for weeks or months. But loneliness is like hydrochloric acid burning through paper ~ it is intense, demanding, and often corrosive.

An increasingly certain result of sexualizing the anxiety of loneliness, is personal experience with the plague of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) that has hit our culture like a tsunami. Forty years ago there were two or three primary STDs: Syphilis, gonorrhea, and crabs. All were medically treatable. Today there are between 25-30 STDs. Some are incurable, and some are fatal. Here are just a couple of research pieces.

- Special Report - March 16, 2010 ~ A new analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that the rate of new HIV and syphilis diagnoses among homosexual and bisexual men is over 44 times higher than the rate among other men, and more than 40 times higher than the rate among women. The CDC estimates that men who have sex with men (MSM) account for about 4.0 percent of the overall U.S. male population (range: 2.8-5.3 percent).<sup>33</sup>
- Nearly one in five gay or bisexual men (19%) have HIV/AIDS, but only 44% are aware that they carry the disease. And younger men are less aware of their medical situation ~ 63% of the HIV-positive men in the 18-29 age bracket, were unaware of their infection.<sup>34</sup>

## Loving the Homosexual

Loneliness and the search for meaningful attachment becomes potentially deadly once sex is incorporated into the relationship. There's a ton of research on the subject of increased STD rates within the homosexual community. But if you think *that's* the issue on which Christ would have focused, you're wrong. He always focused on the soul. The exterior, as rough as it may have been, was just that ~ the exterior. We often hear folks paraphrasing Christ's teaching by saying, "Man looks on the outside, but God looks at the heart." Actually, Christ didn't say that, but it is biblical<sup>35</sup> and the principle is absolutely true.

If you're a Christ-follower, what do you tend to look at? The point of presenting these research pieces is not to give you an airtight case against homosexuality. Nor was the research presented to lead you toward approaching gay and lesbian people with wet eyes and pity. Rather, the research was presented to demonstrate that life in the "gay" community is anything but happy. People can always "put a good face on" even the most difficult circumstances ~ and if this is true in general it's far more true when trying to defend one's chosen lifestyle, especially when that lifestyle is counter-culture.

## Loving The Unlovely

As your mind turns on this subject, remember the woman at the well.<sup>36</sup> She was heterosexual, but she'd burned through five husbands and had finally given up on marriage, choosing to just live with some guy until that gig didn't work out and then, well, who knows.... When Jesus met her at the well, she didn't blurt out, "My life is in pieces and I'm just a piece of meat." No, she was coquettish, sill playing the man-game she had learned, probably as a young adolescent ~ even though that game had gotten her precisely nowhere. It was all she knew. It was "herself" in her most basic essence.

*That's* where to start "loving the unlovely." Christ didn't condemn her ~ he didn't use "evangelism 101" techniques on her in order to collect another scalp for his belt. He just talked about his thirst, her thirst, and water. He was thirsty, but as one reads the story and understands the context it becomes obvious that she was even more thirsty. And the encounter became so profound that by the end of the story, her own towns-folk said, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves."<sup>37</sup>

If you've ever lived in a small town, you understand what this woman had lived with for decades ~ whispers behind hands ~ quiet rejection by most of the men in town, except those who wanted to use her ~ scalding looks and hissed epithets from the "nice" women in town. *That* is the world of many gay people. Rejection by straight types, especially religious straight types. Quiet "knowing" looks among folks when the gay person enters a room. Some research has found that one of the driving dynamics behind the high rates of homosexual suicide, is rejection by the nice straight types of the world.

I've been a pastor all my life. In one church I pastored, a straight couple had been reaching out to a gay man for years. After many invitations, one day the gay man agreed to come to church with the straight couple. As the three people entered the church building, another church member saw the gay man. Knowing he was gay the church member approached him and said, "What are *you* doing here?" Needless to say, he never returned. As you read that story, who do



you think should have been asked to leave the church ~ the gay man, or the judgmental church member?

So how does one go about loving the unlovely. Well, you've first got to establish some sort of honest contact. There has to be some kind of bridge between you and them. Here are seven ways, but by the time you've read the first three, you'll get the picture that it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out how to build bridges. They're built out of bricks of kindness and mortar of caring.

- Shovel their sidewalk when it snows
- Bring a fresh hot loaf of bread to their home and say, "Hey, I have two of these and thought you might like one of them."
- Watch for when they rake their lawn, and show up with a rake, asking if you can help.
- Buy extra tomatoes and take three or four to them.
- Invite them over for a bar-b-que and a movie.
- Go out of your way to say "hi" when you see them ~ walk over and chat for a while.
- Buy two car-wash coupons – send one to them with a note that says, "Hope you're having a terrific day."

Bridges are built upon kindness and caring ~ it has to be genuine, not mealy-mouthed religious sugar. After that, pray a lot and keep pursuing them. Christ wasn't offended when the woman at the well said, "You don't have a bucket, and besides, why in the heck are you even talking to me? I'm a Samaritan and you're a Jew." If Christ isn't offended with *your* sin to the point that he treats you with emotional distance and quiet disdain, then don't you get uppity if the person you're pursuing is a bit cool toward you, suspecting your motives at the beginning of your efforts. Your objective is to help that person understand how it feels to be loved by God. You are His conduit ~ His vessel ~ as He pours His love through you, to them.

What's the end game? Is it to convert them to being a Presbyterian, or a Catholic, or a Baptist? No, the end-game is to be Jesus with skin. The end-game is to show them God's love by doing God's love. The end-game is for you to actually *be* a son or daughter of your Heavenly Father, rather than just talking a good game. If they ask why you're befriending them, tell them that everyone needs a friend – and you hope they'll be one of your friends.

If research were done on the subject, I fear it would be found that more people have been turned off than turned on, by aggressive Bible-thumping holier-than-thou types who are out to convert the world. Yet as Christ demonstrated at the well in Samaria, nobody turns away someone who genuinely cares about them, and simply wants to show them what it means to be loved by God. In the end, the Holy Spirit will open the conversation to spiritual things, when He knows that they are ready. And quite frankly, the more wounded a person is, often the more willing they are to turn to Christ when they finally see someone who represents him well. It just takes someone like Jesus with skin on, to walk with them for a while ~ in a way that honestly demonstrates kindness and caring.

## What To Do About Homosexuality In The Church

## Loving the Homosexual

From a theological perspective, I believe there is only one place in which confronting homosexuals is biblical, and that is within the church ~ more specifically, within church discipline involving church leadership (pastor, elder, deacon, teacher, etc.) of a particular church. In that venue, it would be inappropriate to have an actively homosexual person ~ as it would be also to have a person having an affair, a person hooked on porn, cheating on their taxes, or conducting any other form of flagrant sin. *But the church universal exists to draw sinners to Christ.* In fact, the Apostle Paul said:

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 Cor. 6:9-11)

As said earlier, there are four New Testament texts that deal with homosexuality. Romans chapter one is an historical review of the deterioration of a culture. Paul argues that part of cultural deterioration is reflected within homosexuality. 1 Cor. 6:9 is a reminder that evil people of many kinds will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, and it places homosexuality in the category of evil. 1 Tim. 1:8-11 is a review of the purpose of the law, part of which is to provide a standard against various evil behaviors, one of which is homosexuality. Jude 1:7 is an oblique reference to homosexuality as practiced in Sodom and Gomorrah (see Genesis 19).

However, in none of these situations, nor in the life of Christ, is homosexuality placed in a stand-alone category to be specifically identified and then fought against by the Body of Christ. And the New Testament was written in an era in which homosexuality was broadly practiced within Roman culture.

One might argue that the culture of Christ and Paul didn't face an organized homosexual movement whose purpose was to eradicate the influence of Christianity in that culture. True, but Christianity did face an organized State movement and an organized Jewish movement, both of which attempted to stamp out the faith. Yet Paul didn't write anti-Nero text, nor did he attempt to organize Christians to push back against the Jewish wing that followed him on his first missionary trip, poisoning the well at every whistle-stop, had him driven out of towns, stoned and left for dead.

This is not to say that we should not speak out about homosexuality. However, it is very much to say that Christ-followers will not serve the purposes of Christ well if we position ourselves in as being an "anti-homosexual organization." Most theologians agree that the dominant message of scripture is built upon Good's mercy and His grace. It is therefore completely appropriate for us to cite research regarding depression, suicide, mental pain, attachment issues, heightened drug abuse, STDs, etc., within the gay community. We need to help our fellow Christ-followers see all of that ugliness, as it represents clear vignettes of the meaning of what Paul meant when he said, "The wages of sin is death."<sup>38</sup>

However, the strong suit of the Body of Christ must always be that we hold out hope, healing, mercy, grace, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration ~ to all, including homosexuals. And if they persecute us for loving them in the name of Christ, so be it. And if they get laws passed that prohibit churches from preaching on the three N.T. texts cited above, so be it. The early Roman Empire wasn't exactly in favor of our faith either, yet somehow the Lord led early Christians to demonstrate the love of Christ to a hostile world, *and they changed that world!* Indeed, church historians know that the sword of persecution and the blood of martyrs grows the Body of Christ faster than any other dynamic.

Living in a hostile world shouldn't be strange to Christ-followers. To the contrary it should be more like "normal," but for the right reasons. Much of the active "push-back" against homosexuality is a quest to retain the comfort of a status quo that has rejected and whispered about "that nasty gay community." Hence, the bitterness aimed specifically toward Christ-followers ~ we've earned it. Now, we need to teach the church how to hunt for lost sheep ~ how to engage thirsty people in conversation ~ how to love people who don't fit our predispositions of what constitutes "nice people."

The singular place where boundaries are appropriate, is found within church leadership. Otherwise, Christ-followers are called to love the unlovely. Our literature and our efforts should reflect that activity ~ the activity of seeking the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son.<sup>39</sup> Our efforts at "pushing back" against homosexuality need to be reframed into the positive light of demonstrating Christ's love, demonstrating wholeness in relationships, demonstrating the harsh struggles of sin, and demonstrating the effects of God's grace when we have the opportunity.

## Final Thoughts

Loving the unlovely is initially a difficult thing for many. Perhaps the words of Mother Theresa may provide a mental picture to guide us. Someone once asked her how she could love, touch and minister to the lepers in Calcutta. Her response paints a clear picture for the Christ-follower. She said, "As I look at them, I see the face of Jesus in their faces, and then I do for them what I would do for him."

## References

1. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 specifically condemn homosexuality. The practice is also addressed in Genesis 19, followed by condemnation and heavenly destruction of the culture in which it thrived.
2. The Greek word used for "homosexual" is ἀρσενικοιτας (arsenokoitas ~ or plural, arsenokoitai). It is a compound word composed of "arse" or ass (buttocks), and "coitas" or intercourse. The word is used only twice in the New Testament (1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:10) and the practice is addressed in two other N.T. passages, Jude 1:7 and Romans 1:26-27. In the latter passage it is addressed as symptomatic of a morally deteriorating culture.
3. Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27; 15:19.
4. Matthew 5:28
5. James 2:10-11

6. a) Woman at the well ~ had five husbands ~ living with another man, John 4:1ff  
b) Woman caught in the act of adultery, John 8:1 ff  
c) Disreputable woman who crashed dinner party ~ Luke 7:36-48
7. Matthew 9:10; 11:19; Luke 15:1-2
8. Matthew 9:12-13; Mark 2:17; Luke 15:4-31
9. Matthew 6:12-15; 7:1-5; Luke 6:37
10. Matthew 23:1-36
11. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0PAU/is\\_3\\_6/ai\\_n21167503/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0PAU/is_3_6/ai_n21167503/)
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