

Homosexuals- Do you love them?

I love homosexuals! I love them dearly. I have many very good friends who are homosexual. I find that people who have strong negative stances on homosexuality have not taken the time to get to know individual homosexuals and have not learned to love them deeply. I have spent much time with many friends who are homosexual. Because I dearly love them, I listen carefully. When I listen carefully and love deeply, I get the immense privilege to hear their heart, hear their fears, their desires and their yearnings.

Homosexuals are not a group to me; they are individuals whom we should love dearly just as Christ loves you and me.

This has become an incredibly deep subject in the Christian society today. Any time I try to dive into a deep subject that has the potential to offend people, hurt them, or divide and segregate God's people, I always imagine that I am dealing with myself or one of my children.

The sad thing about the subject of homosexuality is that it seems no matter how hard I try to communicate from what I pray is a pure heart and what I hope is the heart of God and His Word, someone will get incredibly offended. Anytime Jesus dealt with people, He always communicated truth and mercy equally. If you haven't realized this yet, the way Jesus deals with you on a daily basis is through equal truth and equal mercy; it's never 75% truth and 25% mercy, it's always 50/50.

If you choose to guess at what my heart is on this subject without reading the entirety of this handout, or you get upset because I didn't phrase something the right way, please look at the two scriptures below, then take the time to try and find God's heart on this sensitive subject.

James 1:19 Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to take offense.

Pro 18:13 Listen before you answer. If you don't, you are being stupid and insulting.

I find homosexuals to be very tender, sensitive people who have faced much rejection.

I realize that there are exceptions to all generalities. However, in general, I have found homosexuals to be very tender and sensitive people who have faced much rejection. I am not just talking about rejection after they began a homosexual lifestyle. I have found them to be people who faced rejection for a long time before they began to practice the homosexual lifestyle. Add that rejection to their sensitive nature, and it can pierce to a much deeper level.

I have also found some truth in the statement that some homosexuals who are sensitive, kind, and loyal, can also be sharp, bitter, and quickly agitated when they feel attacked. Don't be surprised by this, it happens to heterosexuals as well. "Hurting people, hurt people."

Is this a political problem for Christians?

When dealing with a sensitive subject like this, we must first dialogue about the culture we live in so that we can set a foundation that proves it is ok to communicate an autonomous opinion about homosexuality.

Do we live in a Theonomous culture? The answer to this is "no". A Theonomous culture is one in which the law of God rules. America is not a Theocracy; it is a Democracy. Our nation does not use the Bible as it's determining tool to adjust, create, or erase a law. Christians get so upset about America's laws vs. the Bible when we need to realize that we aren't going to be judged by God based on the Constitution of the United States. Politicians study and debate the Constitution when they deal with the laws of our nation, not the Bible. This should not surprise us. America is not a Christian nation; it's a nation with a lot of Christians living in it.

God is not going to judge me by the constitution; He is going to judge me based on His Word. As a Pastor God will not judge me based on how well I communicated His heart on the constitution, but on how well I communicated His heart on a subject from His Word.

Do we live in a Heteronymous culture? The answer to this is also “no”. A Heteronymous culture is when a group of people dictate to me how I should live my life. This is very similar to an Islamic nation in which the Mullahs, Sheikhs and Ayatollahs force the masses of people to pray and eat and wash their hands the way they dictate from the top.

Do we live in an Autonomous culture? The answer to this is, “yes”. We live in a culture in which each person dictates for himself his own moral prerogative. The beauty of this type of culture is that if you disagree with my answer, you cannot turn us into a heteronymous culture and dictate for me what I must believe. Each person has his or her own autonomy. We cannot force each other to believe the way we want someone to believe or live the way we want someone to live. This is why it is ignorant for a person to read a booklet like the one you are reading now, and then get upset, angry, and try to force your opinion down someone else’s throat. Doing that shows that you must want to change from an Autonomous culture to a Heteronymous culture. I hope this isn’t the case, or else trying to force me to believe like you opens the door for someone who isn’t as kind and loving as me to force you to believe like them. Having a free will is not only a gift from God, but it is also allowed in our great nation. As a Christian I am more concerned with America protecting my religious freedom than I am with America forcing its views onto my autonomous life.

As a side note, it is very interesting to me that I’ve never had a gay person get upset with me or offended at where my heart is on this subject. Most people who have not studied the Bible are the ones who get the most infuriated when I try to share God’s heart on a matter in which they disagree.

Have you loved a homosexual enough to listen?

When you really listen, and you really love homosexuals, you will find that almost every single one of them has times when they greatly wish that they were not in a homosexual lifestyle. This is not something that is shared often. It is a very painful and private thing for a person to admit. They must feel extremely loved and very safe before they admit it. It is also not something that they feel all the time.

- Some homosexuals in quiet reflective moments wish they had another choice.
- Some homosexuals wish every week that they had another choice in their lifestyle.
- Some homosexuals don’t ever wish for another choice.

When you truly love a homosexual, you will want them to have a choice about their lifestyle. You will not force any choice on them. However, you will be protective of them having a freedom of choice.

Love requires giving people a choice!

If you love someone and want a romantic relationship with them, you hope and wish that they will want to love you.

- If you had the power, would you control their mind and force them to be attracted to you?
- Would you turn them into a mindless robot who has no choice but to be attracted to you?

Of course, you would not. If you forced them to be attracted to you and gave them no choice, that would not be love. If you truly love someone, you want to give them the free will of choice.

This is the entire message of Jesus. Because God LOVES us He sent Jesus to make sure that we have a choice. That is why John 3:16 is the most famous verse in the Bible. For God so loved the world...

Jesus offers to every person that He will come into our lives and change us from the inside out. Jesus offers us another choice because He loves us.

What about the aspect of “Feeling” homosexual?

Feeling strong urges does not mean that you are born with those urges. It also does not mean that you always have to feel those urges. Just because I have felt a certain way since as long as I can remember doesn't mean I was born that way, nor does it mean I will always be that way. Whether I was born selfish or began to feel selfishness in the early teens doesn't mean that I have no choice as to whether I'm going to continue to live selfishly.

I lived many years of my life as a lustful heterosexual. Lusting for someone whom I'm not married to is one of the toughest battles I've ever faced. No matter how much I would try to satisfy that lustful desire, it was never fully fulfilled. I wanted to change so badly. It took a lot of Jesus to bring me to the healthy place that I'm at now, a place where Jesus has filled that void. If I was still in my "lust bucket" phase of my life, and I came to you with the desire for God to change me, you wouldn't tell me that I was born this way and would never be able to change because I've always had those feelings.

Maybe you crave food, money, pornography, excitement, strife, etc. We all have a void in our hearts that only Jesus can fulfill. The important thing to remember is that we all have a free will. Please never take away someone's right to choose how he or she wants to live his or her life. When you love someone, you always give them a choice.

God allows us to have the free will to make whatever decision we want, but He doesn't give us the privilege of determining a different outcome to what the choice will entail. The consequences are bound to the choice. Having said that, if you choose to discriminate or act unloving against someone or a group of people, God will be the one to determine your outcome, not you. You and I get to choose how we live, but God will be our judge.

Change is not easy.

I have walked with many individuals through the extremely hard process of changing long term habits. I have cried with them, hurt with them, walked with them through the swamp of sorting truth from feelings, encouraged them, cheered for them and loved them. I am referring to lifelong friends whom I love. Whether they wanted to change or not, I still love them. Whether they succeeded in their change or not, I still love them. However, for those who did see permanent change, they learned the deep lesson that change is NOT easy. With major areas involving past pain and deeply seated habits, no one can change unless they have two assets.

1. You need God's help as the main asset.
2. You need loving, wise, experienced friends who will walk with you through the entire process.

Change is not easy. However, because I love these individuals, I want them to have freedom of choice.

Do you accept Homosexuals, or do you try to change them?

I have been asked this question many times. This question makes me want to laugh and cry. I cannot change anyone. I cannot even change myself. I was a selfish, arrogant, immoral person who blamed everyone else for all my problems.

I tried to change myself many times and failed miserably. When I let Jesus begin to change me, I discovered a whole new lifestyle of humility, kindness and love. I continue to ask Jesus to change me every day. I ask for more of His humility, kindness and love in my life. The beauty of allowing God to change me is that God even changed my DESIRES.

There were dreams and goals that I had in my heart for years, and after I began to walk with Jesus, He began to put desires in my heart that came directly from Him. It's so interesting to me that the new desires from God replaced the old desires that were obviously from my self and my own flesh.

Ps 37:4 Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you your heart's desire

I find it so funny that anyone would think that this pitiful weak person called “me” would try to change anyone. However, that level of misunderstanding also makes me so sad that I want to cry.

What does science say?

When someone says that people are born homosexual, they remove choice and tell a homosexual that they have no other option except to remain in a homosexual lifestyle. For me to bring balance to this booklet, let me also state that when someone says they’re born heterosexual and they have no other option except to remain heterosexual, then science is also taking away their free will.

This is a very extreme unscientific statement. This is also a very cruel statement to anyone who might not want to remain in a homosexual lifestyle. What is worse is that there is not one shred of scientific evidence to support this stance that someone is born homosexual.

In addition, there are tens of thousands of people who have left a homosexual lifestyle and lived a joyful heterosexual lifestyle for many years. If people were born homosexual, then it would be impossible for even one person to leave a homosexual lifestyle.

If someone really loved a homosexual, they would very carefully investigate this extremely radical theory that people are born homosexual. They would want scientific proof. They would want clear logic. They would not be eager to cruelly remove all options and all freedom of choice from the homosexual.

If you want to study what science says on this subject, I recommend a book by the world-renowned Harvard geneticist Dr. Jeffery Satinover. Dr. Satinover holds degrees from MIT, University of Texas and Harvard. He is a former Fellow in Psychiatry and Child Psychiatry at Yale University. His book is titled, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*.

Most of all I appeal to you to love homosexuals enough to give them freedom of choice.

Is it possible for a homosexual to live a Christian life?

If you’re not gay, then you have no idea what it’s like to be gay. I can only imagine what it’s like to have homosexual feelings and desires based on my own personal feelings and desires in which I would probably be shunned and criticized if I shared with the world.

It’s so funny to me that if I said I was gay, it would cause such an uproar that I would probably have to go into hiding for a few years, but if I tell you the truth about my pride and selfishness, you wouldn’t think twice.

Henri Nouwen was a professor of Psychology at Harvard University many years ago. At one point in his early career, Henri visited St Petersburg in Russia and went on a tour at the Hermitage Museum. At this museum was the famous painting of Rembrandt entitled *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Henri told how that painting changed his life. He sat in that museum in the same spot for over three hours and could not move his eyes away from the painting. The painting changed his life.

When Henri returned to Harvard, he resigned and began working with the mentally retarded for the rest of his life. Henri disclosed in his book that he was dispositionally a homosexual, but never fulfilled that desire for the sake of Christ.

It has to be so unbelievably tough, but sometimes we renounce our disposition for the sake of Christ and pray for His sufficient grace in the meantime.

I can tell you personally that I have failed this test many times. I’ve passed this test many times, but I’ve also made choices based on what I want rather than what God wants.

One of the many men whom I admire and learn from in my life, announced many years ago, in front of his church of several thousand parishioners that he had been having an affair with the male youth Pastor. You can imagine what the congregation did after that announcement was made; I’m sure you can imagine how this man was treated. This Pastor is an incredible author and wonderful speaker. I’ve sat with him on several occasions. He stepped

down from ministry for a season and ended up starting a church in a different state. I admire this man. I also feel sorry for him. I don't know how he "feels" right now in his life, but I am betting that he is in a lot of pain although this incident took place years ago.

We never know what someone has gone through, or what they're going through, but we do know how much we love them and how we choose to treat them.

Do you think that God and the Bible want homosexuals to change?

The Bible says that EVERY person on the earth is separated from God and trapped in a life of selfishness. Whether it is complaining, lying, murdering, being opinionated, blaming others, self-pity, anger or laziness, we are all trapped in selfishness. Jesus loves us so much that He paid the ultimate price to offer us a choice of another lifestyle.

I want everyone including heterosexuals to know that they have a choice of changing their lifestyle. I also want to be such a humble, kind and loving representative of Jesus that they can see in my love, the love of Jesus and the offer of Jesus to give them a choice. I feel this way about every person who does not know the loving, life-changing power of Jesus Christ.

The temptation to imagine or act on a proclivity to go outside the boundaries of marriage, stalks every man on a daily basis. This temptation has nothing to do with how much a man loves his wife. The human body reacts to the sight and is entertained by the imagination and gives false hints that it's ok to express that disposition.

After God created Adam, He said that it was not good for man to be alone. This is so interesting to me because Adam wasn't alone; God was with him. Yet the creation of womankind was so remarkable and majestic that God made it possible for her to meet a need for Adam that God Himself put ONLY in her.

Whether you agree with me on all of these points or disagree, please hear my appeal. Please love homosexuals and every person enough to give them freedom of choice.

Will you pastor someone who is homosexual?

With each line of affiliation in our relational and even professional lives, we must add a greater level of accountability.

What does it take to be a Christian? Is the standard of joining a church and becoming a member of a fellowship higher than just becoming a Christian?

To become a professor at Harvard University a person would have to add even more accountability.

Can a homosexual be a Christian? Yes! Can a Pastor be a polygamist? Can a choir member be tone deaf? The point is that the line must be drawn somewhere. The character of God is diminished the further we draw the line away.

Biblically, God commands the people who cause continual strife without repentance, people who are openly sexually immoral with no desire to change (repent), and people who openly express that Jesus is not the Son of God cannot join a local body church, and therefore I cannot be their Pastor. However, it is our hope that any and all people regardless of what they believe, would enjoy attending our church, hear the Word of God, and then allow the Holy Spirit to minister to them.

Does the Bible say that the act of homosexuality is a sin?

The answer to that question is incredibly easy, in fact, it's so easy that I think you could spend less than 5 minutes researching the Bible and find the answer. If you were offered one million dollars to answer the question above with a Yes or No based only on the Bible, what would your answer be? The Bible says that when we even LOOK at a woman in lust, we are committing adultery.

The real question that needs to be answered is: How do we love people and bring them to Christ? How do we want people to love us and treat us? We ALL have sinned and come short of the Glory of God!

I LOVE to pastor people who desire for Jesus to change them from the inside out, to be more like Himself, regardless of what the outside looks like at this time. I also realize that each of us fail Him on a daily basis. The question I ask is: do you WANT Jesus to heal you more and more as you walk with Him, or do you WANT to live a life based on whatever feels good to your flesh right now? Do you want your kingdom to have dominion or do you want "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done?" I will never stop loving homosexuals, heterosexuals, white people, brown people, Christians and non-believers. I pray that you feel the same way.

SINCERELY,
Pastor JP