



## THE WIN

The group member will reflect on their own belief in the authority of Scripture and determine appropriate responses to relevant issues present in American culture by responding to case studies and choosing responses that reflect the love of Christ.

### **SERMON RECAP:** WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The message this week addressed many issues within the homosexuality conversation currently alive in American culture. The Scriptures are clear that homosexual relationships/lifestyle is against God's design for humankind. An examination of Genesis 1:27-28 reveals specific instructions to man and woman. God tasked them to fill the earth together and steward the earth together. Man and woman formed a relationship that would carry out God's desire for the world he created.

## WARM UP

- Is participating in the homosexual conversation easy or difficult for you? Why?
- What is your greatest hope for the homosexual conversation in culture today? Your greatest fear? Why? What will happen if it were to come true?

### **THE TEXT:** WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

- In the cultural conversation of homosexuality, how much value do you think is placed on the church's historical-modern position on homosexuality? If none, why do you think culture has cast aside this position?
- How a person decides to live their life romantically is at the forefront of the cultural conversation today. In your view, what is the root issue of the homosexual conversation?
- How does what you perceive to be the root issue of the homosexual conversation fit with the teaching of Scripture? Is there tension? If so, who yields? Is there alignment?
- Is participating in the homosexual conversation easy or difficult for you? Why?
- What is your greatest hope for the homosexual conversation in culture today? Your greatest fear? Why? What will happen if it were to come true?

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Take 30 seconds and take turns sharing with the group how you believe the church should interact with homosexual individuals who love God and believe in Jesus?

Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-12

- In this passage, Paul is correcting Corinth because they have misunderstood Paul's teaching from a previous letter. What was their misunderstanding?
- Why would Paul want the Corinthians to associate with the 'immoral people of this world'?
- What do you think 'associate' means? (hint: look at v.11b-do life with)
- In the broader context of the passage, Paul is addressing immorality within the church body, and then specifically addresses their misunderstanding. Paul could have not addressed their misunderstanding and simply addressed the immorality within the church. But he didn't. How is the gospel implied in this passage?

Reread 1 Corinthians 5:11 (for context read 1 Cor. 5:1-5)

- What is Paul teaching against in this verse?
- In verse 11 Paul is exhorting the Corinthian church to serious action. Who is this action aimed at (hint: those supposedly who call themselves Christians)?

**LOOK UP:**

Covetous  
Idolater  
Reviler  
Drunkard  
Swindler  
Arrogant

Immoral outsiders >>>>> Associate with the for the purpose of the Gospel (see Matt 28:18-20)

Immoral insiders >>>>> Do not associate with for the purpose pursuing righteousness (Dt.13:5,1Cor. 5:2)

- How does Paul's teaching challenge your view on engaging those who are 'immoral'? (for a brief list of what Paul considers immoral see Romans 1:24-32)
- In your past, how have you seen the tags listed above affect the church?

As a group, what would your response be?

**Case Study #1**

Hello there. I want to get something off my chest. I'm not upset but rather I'm wanting my voice to be heard. I am a proud homosexual Christian. I grew up in a Christian home and when I entered my 20s I became increasingly attracted to the same sex. I found tremendous happiness in the warm embrace of the homosexual community! I'm also a devout Christ-follower. I've been walking with Jesus for some time now and know the theological argument. How can I follow Jesus fully if I'm 'living in sin'? Well, to respond, how can you follow Jesus fully if you 'live in sin' but of a different stripe? I may be 'living in sin' because I enjoy the full benefits of homosexual relationships but I've seen heterosexual Christians at restaurants daily held captive by the sin of gluttony. I've seen them succumb to the crushing weight of greed and the debilitating effects of lust at sports events, bars, and the workplace. When in the boardroom listening to presentations at my job I've seen Christians routinely stretch the lie in order to give the appearance of strong performance. On Friday nights I go out with friends and see Christians I know personally (many on a weekly basis) unwind by humiliating themselves and their families by having too much to drink. Now,

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are these Christians not 'living in sin'? I guess I just want a level playing field theologically. We are not called to follow Jesus *when we want*, we are called to follow Jesus *in everything*. Now, I'm still a work in progress and will yield to the Spirit as He refines me into the image of Jesus. But as long as I see heterosexual Christians 'living in sin' the correction they send my way will fall on deaf ears. Now that I've sent this email I wonder if anything will change?

-Gay with a good argument

#### Case Study #2

Hi. I have a confession to make. I'm gay. Now, I'm not some new person who is searching for a church home and wondering if this church is right for my family. No, you see I have been attending here for many years. I attend every Sunday like clockwork. I attribute the upward mobility in my spiritual walk to the teaching I've listened to and experienced at this church and the great Pastors here. I'm gay and I am sitting next to you each and every week wanting to grow in my walk with God, just like you. I guess I should be ashamed that I've kept this secret from you for so long but it's hard for me. You see, the Christians that I have known in my adult life are great people! But I've been around them (its mostly the guys) when they have talked about gay people. I've sat and listened to Christians poke fun of how SOME gay people talk and dress. At first I was in shock, but as time went on I have grown used to the derogatory nature of their conversation. So, can you blame me for not telling you I'm gay? I hear the Pastor encourage the church to join a small group because we can't reach our full spiritual potential without the help of other people. I truly believe spiritual growth is a team sport. I want to reach my full spiritual more than anything, but I'm scared. I'm not sure that I will be encouraged and supported once you know who I am. There is a sadness that grips my heart when I think that I am a new creation in Christ, part of a new family, and a child of the King but cannot experience the blessings of community. Can I? Will you accept me?

-Scared sheep wanting go further

#### Case Study #3

Hey there. Let me just come right out and say it, I'm gay and I'm upset. I'm sorry to be abrupt but I cannot control the misunderstanding most Christians have about homosexuality. Here's my problem. The Christians I know are bull-headed, irrational, religious zealots because every time I try to share with them what I'm about to share with you I get shut down and ignored. It's hard for me to have any interest in their god, I'm mean why would I want to join their club and act like they do? I don't want to be out of touch with culture, prudish, and at times bigoted! Every time I muster the strength to reason with one of my Christian friends it's the same result, conflict. What I wish they would be willing to do is put a piece of tape over their mouth and listen to my heart. And my heart says homosexuality is not as easy an issue as they think. I'm gay and believe I was born attracted to the same sex. If they would just be quiet and listen to my past they would hear the stories of my being bullied in junior high because I wouldn't shower with the others, they would hear of the hazing through high school because of the way I wore my hair. They would hear the voices of Christians inviting my entire class to the church overnight arcade party but leaving me out because I'm 'different.' The abuse I have endured through school did, at times, drive me to almost end my life. As I got older, the Christians would hear my parents try every tactic they could think to convince me that I wasn't gay because I can simply choose not to be. I am not on speaking terms with my parents nowadays. It hurts me deep in my soul but that is a separate issue. How can you look at me with a straight face and tell me my body is lying to me? My question to my Christian 'friends' is this: Look at my past! Why would I ever choose to be gay if I knew that my upbringing would be a living hell and it would cause me to lose the love and acceptance of my parents? So, I'm left with the conclusion that I was born gay. In closing, the Christians I know won't stop talking about this Jesus guy who came to die for me. If he came to die for me, I wonder if he would listen to me? My Christian friends sure don't.

-Angry yet sad wanting to be heard

## CLOSING THOUGHT

We grow through relationship, as we all learn to offer our very selves to God to obey his Spirit's leading. Acceptance of people is not the same as agreement with their choices, beliefs, or behaviors. People will

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misunderstand acceptance as agreement. But it's still worth the risk. If God is willing to take that risk, shouldn't we be willing?

John Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed* (pgs. 100-101)