

FAQ ON HOMOSEXUALITY

The Big Five Questions:

1. Are gays and lesbians born that way?

This subject is not addressed directly in Scripture. Studies show there are a variety of factors, some known and some yet unknown, that can lead to same-sex attraction. Christian psychologist Dr. Stanton L. Jones observes: “The research points to a clear contribution of biological factors to sexual orientation.” While homosexual desires may seem to come naturally to an individual, when a person chooses to act on those desires in thought or deed, a sin is committed (Jas 1:14-15). We are all born with a sinful nature and struggle to follow God in those areas of our lives where we experience temptation to sin (Rom 7:15-20).

2. Is homosexual behaviour¹ a sin?

Yes. We believe the Bible teaches that engaging in homosexual behaviour is sinful (Deut 22:5; Rom 1:26-28; 1 Cor 6:9-11; and 1 Tim 1:10). While homosexual behaviour is sinful, the attraction, desire or temptation to act (in thought or deed) on such behaviour is not necessarily sinful (Jas 1:14-15).

3. Can a homosexual “change” their sexual orientation?

The Bible says all things are possible with God (Matt 19:26 and Phil 4:13). His grace is greater than all our sin. The Bible clearly teaches us that God gives us the grace to turn away from sinful behaviour (Rom 6:12-14). Therefore, as with any other sinful behaviour, it seems that changing from homosexuality may be possible (1 Cor 6:9-11). While some believers with same-sex attraction have experienced a full deliverance from these attractions, many others have committed to follow the Bible’s teaching on sexuality while continuing to struggle with the temptation of homosexual behaviour.

4. Can someone be a homosexual and a Christian?

A person’s status with God is solely based on whether or not they have personally accepted Jesus’ death and resurrection as payment for their sin. The Bible makes it clear that believers continue to sin and need to continually ask God to forgive those sins (1 John 1:9). Just as someone may be a liar, or an alcoholic, or greedy, and still be a Christian, one may have same-sex attraction and have committed sex outside of marriage between one man and one woman and still be a Christian, having been “washed... sanctified... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:9-11). What you can’t be is a practising unrepentant homosexual (or having unrepentant sex outside of marriage between one man and one woman) and be a Christian.

¹ By homosexual behaviour we mean homosexual intercourse, lust and/or cross dressing.

5. Are homosexuals going to hell?

People who have not personally accepted Jesus' death and resurrection as payment for their sin are going to hell. 1 Pet 3:18 says: "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God..." Accepting God's gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ is what prevents a person from going to hell. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). These scriptural truths apply to

all of us, regardless of the sins we struggle with – including homosexual behaviour¹. As Tim Keller says: "Heterosexuality does not get you to heaven. So, how in the world could homosexuality send you to Hell?"

Doctrinal Positions:

1. What is God's view about human sexuality?

The Word of God is the "supreme and final authority in faith and life" (2 Tim 3:16). It is therefore inerrant in the original manuscripts. It tells us that God created humankind in His own image. Our Creator's design for human sexuality is loving and life giving, a reflection of His glory and goodness. According to God's clear plan, the sexual relationship is a blessing exclusively given to one man and one woman in marriage. (Gen 1:27-28; 2:24; Isa 43:7; Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:25).

2. What does the Bible teach about same-sex attraction?

The Bible does not directly address the issue of same-sex attraction. It does clearly address the desires and temptations to sinful behaviour that we all struggle with. While homosexual behaviour is sinful, the attraction, desire, or temptation to act (in thought or deed) on such behaviour is not necessarily sinful (Jas 1:14-15). We are all born with a sinful nature and struggle to follow God in those areas of our lives where we experience temptation to sin (Rom 7:15-20).

3. What does the Bible teach about homosexual behaviour?

Both the Old and New Testaments address homosexual behaviour¹, in passages such as Deut 22:5; Lev 18:22, Lev 20:13; Matt 5:28; Rom 1:26-28; 1 Cor 6:9-11²; and 1 Tim 1:10. These passages clearly teach that homosexual behaviour is sinful and contrary to God's design for human sexuality (Gen 2:24 and Matt 19:4-6).

² *Malakoi* is the Greek translated "men who practice homosexuality". It means soft or delicate and in the context they are sinful. In the Greco-Roman context in which Paul is writing *malakoi* was commonly used to describe men who looked and acted like women or talked like women and wore perfume like women or they had sex like women. In other words, they fundamentally confused gender distinctions.



Some scholars attempt to reinterpret the biblical passages that speak against homosexuality, but their arguments are inconsistent with the inerrancy and authority of Scripture. In fact, some of the scholars who advocate a pro-gay Christian theology concede the clarity of the Bible on this issue. Eugene Rice, a Columbia University professor known for his gay and lesbian studies, noted: “The bad news from the Christian Bible is that it condemns same-sex desire and same-sex acts without qualification of age, gender, role, status, consent, or membership in an ethnic community.” The Gay Christian Network agrees: “There are only a handful of passages which mention same-gender sexual relationships, and all of them are negative.”³

4. What does the Bible teach about same-sex marriage?

It is homosexual behaviour and so is sinful and contrary to God’s design for marriage.

Perspectives on Homosexuality

1. Is homosexual behaviour¹ worse than other sins?

No. By identifying homosexual behaviour as sin, we are not saying it is any more or less offensive to God than any other sin. Sexual sins are listed in the Bible alongside sins like theft, greed, and drunkenness (1 Cor 6:9-11).

2. Doesn’t everybody sin?

Yes. The Bible makes it clear that everyone has sinned. Rom 3:23 says: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But God has also promised in 1 John 1:9, that “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

3. Can a Christian have a “gay identity?”

As believers, each of us should find our true and primary identity as a child of God, rather than an identity based on our sexual attraction. While acknowledging one’s areas of temptation can be helpful, this should not become a primary identity. We are not defined by our sin, or our temptation to sin.

4. Should a same-sex attracted believer “come out” to family and friends?

Whether a same-sex attracted person wishes to let their family and friends know about his or her attraction is up to them. We encourage a same-sex attracted person to confide in a respected spiritual leader (e.g. pastor, discipler, or Bible study leader) about their areas of

³ Eugene Rice, “Paul, St.,” *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture* (Chicago, Ill.: glbtq, Inc., 2004), Accessed April 6, 2014, www.glbtq.com/social---sciences/paul.html cited in The Navigators Response to the Challenging Issue of Homosexuality in the Context of Campus Ministry by Gary P. Cantwell



temptation, sexual and otherwise, for prayer, support and accountability.

Navigator Ministry:

1. Can people with same-sex attraction participate in Navigator Bible studies or activities?

Yes. Anyone is welcome to study God's Word with us. As stated in our Core Values, we value the dignity of every person and we desire to see love and grace expressed in Navigator communities. We welcome any who would desire to know, love and become like Jesus Christ and to experience the transforming power of the Gospel.

2. Should a Navigator person with same-sex attraction lead another person of the same sex in one-on-one discipleship?

In the same way that we don't encourage heterosexual leaders to engage in one-on-one discipleship with members of the opposite sex, we recommend that same-sex attracted leaders do not disciple members of the same sex one-on-one. In both cases we recommend small groups or if one-to-one discipleship is to occur it is done in a public place.

3. Can someone with same-sex attraction or orientation serve as a Navigator leader or on Navigator staff?

Yes, providing they agree with, and are convicted by, the Bible's teaching that homosexuality is a sin. Those who struggle with the temptation of same-sex attraction are welcome to serve as Navigator leaders or on Navigator staff, since we understand that all believers struggle with various temptations. Navigators should live out moral integrity and sexual purity, which includes the biblical understanding that the sexual relationship is a blessing exclusively given to a man and woman in marriage (Gen 2:24 and Matt 19:4-6).

4. Can a practicing homosexual serve as a Navigator leader or on Navigator staff?

No. Someone who is engaging in homosexual behaviour¹ would be acting in clear violation of the Bible's teaching on sexual immorality and consequently our policy manual, which includes refraining from acts of sexual intimacy outside the covenant of marriage – a covenant restricted to one man and one woman.

5. What would happen if a person confided their same-sex attraction to someone associated with The Navigators?

We should respond in love, offering a listening ear and biblical guidance. We know everyone struggles with sin of some kind and a fellowship of Navigators — on a Uni campus, in a neighbourhood, or on a military base — would be a safe place to talk about anything.

6. As a Navigator, how should I engage with LGBT students who don't know Christ?

The Creator made each of us and desires a relationship with all He has created. Therefore, our greatest desire is that all people come to know, and then have a growing relationship with Christ - not simply for them to be straight. When we have a relationship with Him, we have a fresh start. As Navigators we are called to “live and disciple among the lost,” which includes developing relationships with LGBT students, whom we will most certainly encounter within the University context. We may take guidance from Jesus’ response to those who complained that he was dining with “tax collectors and sinners.” Jesus replied, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Matt 9:9-13)

7. When developing a relationship with LGBT people who don't know Christ, how do I address their unbiblical views of sexuality?

We must be careful not to begin with sinful behaviour because this sends the message that their relationship with God is about being “good” – even though that is certainly not the message we are trying to communicate. Indeed, all people who do not know Christ will have various areas of sin and temptation in their lives. Just as we would not start with anger for an angry person, but with the gospel, then their view of Scripture (that it is all God’s word and needs to be obeyed), then what Scripture says about a range of character issues which at some point would include anger – we do the same sort of thing with LGBT behaviour. So we need to start with the gospel, consider how it is actually good news to an LGBT person and to express the gospel so it sounds like good news to an LGBT person. Our aim should be first to lead them to Jesus, then to walk with them as they submit all areas of their lives to the lordship of Christ. In that process, we should honestly and lovingly share the truth of Scripture as it affects all areas of their life (1 John 1:5-10).

8. How should Navigators handle the issue of same-sex attraction in discipleship?

As we walk with someone through the journey of discipleship, we should seek to lead him or her to submit all areas of their lives to the lordship of Christ. In that process, we should honestly and lovingly share the truth of Scripture as it affects all areas of their life (1 John 1:5-10), expecting that the Navigator will, under God, teach, rebuke, correct and train them in righteousness, equipping them for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17).