

# Starting to Heal

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Lecture Outline

Part 3 of 3

## Introduction

How can we step into the lives of people who are dealing with same-sex attraction and minister to them? We want people to understand that we're not just against something; we're for something. We want them to understand the beauty of marriage and sexual intimacy, and the reason why everything outside of that is against God's standards. And we all struggle—all of us are broken, and all of us can respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are just one beggar trying to tell another beggar where to get some food.

## IV. Call to Action

### A. Develop orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

1. *"We have too many Christians out there who are strong on convictions but embarrass the name of Christ in how they relate to the world around them. At the same time, we have too many Christians who are remarkably civil, but you would have no idea what convictions they hold."* – Richard Mouw and Martin Marty, *Convicted Civility*
2. As Ephesians 4:15 puts it, we must speak the truth in love. It's not an either-or proposition. We must have an understanding of God's truth, but speak it with compassion, with love for the person we're speaking to.
3. Example: Chick-Fil-A president and CEO Dan Cathy was asked about his personal views on homosexuality. When he shared his opinion that homosexual relationships are not what God wants, it didn't sit well with the culture at large, and a boycott was raised in response, led mainly by a man named Shane Windmeyer, director of a gay and lesbian organization. Other people rallied the troops to support their local Chick-Fil-A. Dan Cathy privately emailed Shane Windmeyer, the director that led the boycott, and invited him to get together and talk. After the meeting, Shane Windmeyer wrote about the experience in the *Huffington Post*:

*Through all this, Dan and I shared respectful, enduring communication and built trust. His demeanor has always been one of kindness and openness. Even when I continued to directly question his public actions and the funding decisions, Dan embraced the opportunity to have dialogue and hear my perspective. He and I were committed to a better understanding of one another. Our mutual hope was to find common ground if possible, and to build respect no matter what. We learned about each other as people with opposing views, not as opposing people . . .*

*Throughout the conversations Dan expressed a sincere interest in my life, wanting to get to know me on a personal level. He wanted to know about where I grew up, my faith, my family, even my husband, Tommy. In return, I learned about his wife and kids and gained an appreciation for his devout belief in Jesus Christ and his commitment to being “a follower of Christ” more than a “Christian.” Dan expressed regret and genuine sadness when he heard of people being treated unkindly in the name of Chick-fil-a — but he offered no apologies for his genuine beliefs about marriage . . .*

*Dan, in his heart, is driven by his desire to minister to others and had to choose to continue our relationship throughout this controversy. He had to both hold to his beliefs and welcome me into them. He had to face the issue of respecting my viewpoints and life even while not being able to reconcile them with his belief system. He defined this to me as “the blessing of growth.” He expanded his world without abandoning it . . .*

*In the end, it is not about eating (or eating a certain chicken sandwich). It is about sitting down at a table together and sharing our views as human beings, engaged in real, respectful, civil dialogue. Dan would probably call this act the biblical definition of hospitality. I would call it human decency. So long as we are all at the same table and talking, does it matter what we call it or what we eat?*

#### **B. Understand the conflict.**

1. The person is struggling with their faith AND their feelings of homosexual attraction. In my experience, most of these people have a deep, abiding love for Jesus Christ—AND they struggle with same-sex attraction.
2. Many Christians who don’t struggle with this assume these people’s lives are in shambles: they’re not in fellowship with Christians, not reading their Bibles, etc. I have to remind them, “Do you struggle with lust or pride or gluttony? Is your life in shambles?” We all have struggles in the Christian life—areas that are still being sanctified. There are people in our communities and churches who love Jesus Christ but are struggling with same-sex attraction—not because they are in direct rebellion, but because they’re struggling.
3. “Struggling” implies wanting to do the right thing. Others fully adopt the homosexual identity and behavior and say, “I am gay.” These aren’t the people I’m talking about.
4. It is our job to find out where they are on the spectrum. It is unfair to assume that just because someone is struggling with same-sex attraction and homosexual temptation, they’re fully embracing it. “Struggling” is the operative word.

#### **C. Understand the developmental reality.**

1. What point are they at?

- a. Dilemma: attractions, affections, confusion (this often happens around puberty)
  - i. At this point, we can enter into the struggle and help them understand, “You’re not defined by your behavior—even if you’ve fallen into temptation.” We can’t assume they’ve taken on the whole identity. At this stage, more often than not, they’re trying to understand how their feelings conflict with God’s Word says.
- b. Development: actions, behavior, disclosure
- c. Decision: acceptance, identity, or celibacy
  - ii. When they get to the point of decision, we need to challenge them as it relates to God’s Word.

**D. Acknowledge the “scripts.”**

Mainstream Gay Culture / Gay Sexual Identity Script	Average Evangelical Church Christian Sexual Identity Script
You were born this way	Silence
This is who you are	Heterosexual sex is yucky, dirty, and gross—and save it for the one you love
It’s normal	Procreation (Gen. 1) and recreation (1 Cor. 7)
Attractions indicate identity	Homosexual sex is an abomination and you need to just stop it! (Shame)
You are accepted and loved	You are accepted and loved

- 1. I will ask the young person:
  - a. How have you been encouraged to adopt a same-sex relationship?
  - b. How have you been discouraged? What have you been taught about sex, sexuality, and who you are as a man or woman?
- 2. I am trying to find out—and show them—how they have been influenced. This takes more than ten minutes—it is trying to find out their history.

**E. Address the questions.**

- 1. “How did I become this way?”
  - a. Many people who struggle with same-sex attraction would change it if they could.
- 2. Why did this come about?”
  - a. Nature vs. nurture

- b. Genesis 1 guides the discussion: a same-sex orientation is not just something to fix but an opportunity to grow.
- c. Genesis 1—the creation story—is more about the “why” of creation than the “how.” At the end of each day, God called what he made good, and then he rested—not because he needed time, but to teach us that he likes taking his time. We should be willing to go through the process of growth and development because God likes going through a process. We want to help people learn God’s grace through the struggle (sanctification), not just get them to the end of it (glorification).
- d. I want them to understand, “You aren’t some special sinner—some outsider. We are all in need of God’s grace.”

**A. Identify the choices.**

- 1. Sexual attractions: little to no choice
- 2. Sexual actions: you have a choice—contrary to the culture, having a same-sex attraction doesn’t mean you should embrace it.
- 3. Sexual acceptance: you have a choice. Your attractions are not your identity. You are more than your attractions:
  - a. Interests
  - b. Hobbies
  - c. Relationships

**B. Reach out to the family.**

- 1. Sharing the struggle with the family is the young person’s decision and responsibility, and we can help them do that.
- 2. Often the parents have questions, too:
  - a. “Is it something I did?”
  - b. “Can I change this?”
  - c. “Will I ever be a grandparent?”
- 3. I want to help the family understand it was most not likely something they did, and their support is very important in the journey.

**C. Reach up to God.**

- 1. Paul prayed for the thorn in the flesh to be removed, and God said, “No.”
- 2. For some people who struggle with same-sex attraction, it may be their thorn in the flesh, God’s grace—they get to see God through it. It helps them reach out to a God who seems far but is actually right there.

**D. Lay out the options.**

- 1. Christ: Find your identity in him (Eph. 2:10)
- 2. Celibacy: Singleness is blessed by God (1 Cor. 7:8)

3. Change: Have faith that God can change you (John 11:2)

**E. Be a church that is ready.**

1. Teach and model a curriculum of sexual stewardship.
2. “Churches should feel more like a waiting room for a doctor and less like a waiting room for a job interview.” – Tim Keller
  - a. “How are you feeling?” “I feel terrible—but I’m here to see the Great Physician.”
  - b. We are not a community of perfect people, but we know a perfect God who wants to step into the mess and provide health and hope in Christ.

# Books Dealing with Homosexual Issues

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## General Works

*A Strong Delusion: Confronting the "Gay Christian" Movement.* Joe Dallas. Harvest House Publishers

*Homosexuality & American Public Life.* Edited by Christopher Wolfe. Spence Publishing Company

*Homosexuality & the Politics of Truth.* Jeffrey Satinover. Baker Books

*Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends.* Mark A. Yarhouse, Bethany House Publisher

*Understanding Sexual Identity: A Resource for Youth Ministry.* Mark A. Yarhouse.

*Homosexuality.* James B. DeYoung. Kregel Publications

*Homosexuality: How Should Christians Respond?* Richard F. Lovelace. Wipf & Stock Publishers

\*\*\* *Homosexuality: The Use of Scientific Research in the Church's Moral Debate.* Stanton L. Jones & Mark A. Yarhouse. InterVarsity Press

*Legislating Immorality: The Homosexual Movement Comes Out of the Closet.* George Grant & Mark A. Horne. Moody Press

*Same Sex Partnerships: A Christian Perspective.* John Stott. Revell Publishing

\*\*\* *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics.* Robert A. J. Gagnon. Abingdon Press

*The Gospel & the Gay.* Kenneth Gangel. Thomas Nelson Publishers

*Understanding Sexual Identity: A Resource for Youth Ministry.* Mark A. Yarhouse.

*Welcoming But Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality.* Stanley J. Grenz. Westminster John Knox Press

## Books for Friends & Family Members of Homosexuals

*Someone I Love is Gay: How Friends and Family Can Respond.* Anita Worthen & Bob Davis. IV Press

*When Homosexuality Hits Home: What to Do When a Loved One Says They're Gay.* Joe Dallas. Harvest House Publishers

## Books for Men Struggling with Same-Sex Attractions

*Coming Out of Homosexuality: New Freedom for Men & Women.* Bob Davies & Lori Rentzel. IV Press

*Desires in Conflict: Hope for Men who Struggle with Sexual Identity.* Joe Dallas. Harvest House Publishers

*Growth into Manhood: Resuming the Journey.* Alan Medinger. Shaw Publishing

### **Books for Women Struggling with Same-Sex Attractions**

*Out of Egypt: One Woman's Journey out of Lesbianism.* Jeanette Howard. Kregal Publications

*Restoring Sexual Identity: Hope for Women who Struggle with Same-Sex Attractions.* Anne Paulk. Harvest House Publications

### **Websites**

National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality – [www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com)

Parents and Friends of ExGays & Gays – [www.pfox.org](http://www.pfox.org)

*For more teaching by Ben Mathew on this subject, go the BER webpage:  
[www.biblicaleldership.com/same-sex-attraction](http://www.biblicaleldership.com/same-sex-attraction)*