

Same-Sex Attraction: Biblical Study

Detailed Outline

Part 1 of 2

I. Genesis 2

A. Genesis is the creation account of not just the world but mankind and marriage. We need to start at the beginning of this whole relationship.

1. When God created man and woman, he created a union that was unique from anything else at that time. And he wants that union to be the foundation for how we understand relationships since then.
2. We need to look at the complementarian nature of sexuality as seen in both Adam and Eve.
3. After God created all the wonderful things in our universe, he created man, different from anything else he created. Man was created in God's image.

B. Adam was alone, and this was not good.

1. God first brought all the animals to him for Adam to name them, but Adam realized that there was nothing in the created order that was suitable for him.
2. God then created a woman and presented her to Adam.

Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Gen. 2:23 ESV)

Adam finally has a suitable helper.

C. "They shall become one."

1. Moses makes this comment in verse 24:
Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen. 2:24)
2. There are spiritual and emotional realities to the phrase, "They shall become one."
3. There is also the physical reality – the complementarian nature of a man and woman coming together.
4. God started sexuality with this joyous reality. They were naked and not ashamed. Sin had not yet polluted this beautiful relationship that God had created.

D. We need to help people understand that Genesis 2 shows a clear picture of what God intended for human sexuality.

1. Many will look at this passage and other parts of the Old Testament and say that many men of God had many wives.
2. Just because there is such abuse, that doesn't mean God is endorsing those abuses.
3. Genesis 2 is the normative function for human sexuality.

II. Genesis 19

A. Many see this as a clear passage on how God responds to homosexual behavior.

1. As the angels come to Lot's home, the men of the city find out and come to Lot's home demanding to have relations with the men.
2. Lot and his family escape the city and God rains judgment on the city.

B. Those who support homosexuality would say that this is not dealing with homosexual behavior.

1. At least, it is not dealing with monogamous, same-sex, consensual relationships.
2. Some would say that this deals with gang rape or abusive sexual relationships, not with caring and loving relationships.
3. They would say that the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is about those who are abusing each other.

C. These people may look at other passages in the Old Testament like Ezekiel 16 and argue that the real sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is not gross sexual immorality but inhospitality.

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. (Ezek. 16:49)

1. Those who advocate for homosexuality say that the real sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is not homosexuality but inhospitality as it says in that verse.
2. By no means are we discounting that.

D. We need to let all of Scripture interpret Scripture.

1. There is more to be said in Ezekiel 16 as well, that there was this sexual immorality happening in Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. In the New Testament in Jude 7, he uses the example of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of unbridled sexual immorality.
3. What we can say about Genesis 19 is that there was such sin of sexual immorality that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

III. Leviticus

A. The Mosaic or Levitical law helps us see how God views the sexual relationship. He is setting a standard of how he wants his covenant people to act.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. (Lev. 18:22)

In Leviticus 20:13, the same ethic is brought up.

B. Those who advocate for homosexual relationships say we are picking and choosing.

They say, if you use this verse to say that homosexuality is wrong, it is curious that you eat shellfish or pork or shave your beard, which are all spoken against in the Levitical code.

C. How do we advocate for some laws and not others?

1. The new covenant that Christ inaugurates in the New Testament gives us help in how to understand the Old Testament.
 - a) The Ten Commandments: except for the Sabbath command, are all reiterated in the New Testament and commanded of the believers in the New Testament.
 - b) When it comes to sexual behavior, we have clear instances of the norm (man and woman for life) and what is outside of the norm (homosexual behavior—Romans and Corinthians).
 - c) Even with things like dietary restrictions, we clearly have an indication in the book of Acts with Peter's vision with the sheet coming out of heaven.
 - 1) While this vision was speaking about the gospel and the Gentiles, God clearly says what was once unclean is now clean in regard to food.
 - 2) God is helping us understand the laws and restrictions of the Old Testament.
2. What we need to take from Leviticus is that God has a clear prohibition against certain types of sexual relationships. We see this reiterated in the New Testament specifically in Romans and 1&2 Corinthians.

D. We can say to those who advocate homosexuality that they themselves pick and choose from Old Testament laws.

1. Do they support incest?
 - a) Most likely, they do not.
 - b) Yet that is clearly a law from the Old Testament, but they agree still applies today.
2. We can help them understand that there is a clear ethic that we as God's people are held to in how we understand the Old Testament applied to the New Testament.
3. God has standards he has relayed to his people as it relates to sexual understandings.

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IV. 2 Samuel 1

A. This is a passage that deals with the lives of David and his best friend, Jonathan.

1. There are many details regarding David and Jonathan's relationship, but advocates for homosexuality focus on one phrase in 2 Samuel 1:26:
I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. (2 Sam. 1:26 ESV)
2. Those who advocate for homosexuality say this is an example of a homosexual relationship—a loving, caring, monogamous, same-sex relationship.
3. That one man would say to another man, “Your love is better than that of a woman” to many is proof of a same-sex relationship—so assert advocates of homosexuality.

B. We always have to be careful of reading our own cultural perspective and bias back into the texts of Scripture.

1. I think this is what's happening with this interpretation. They are reading this text and this phrase as a homosexual relationship, rather than understanding Middle Eastern culture of this time.
 - a) In fact, if you go to the Middle East today and even some places in Asia, you will see men holding hands as they walk along the street.
 - b) You'll see men sitting close together, or embracing each other arm-to-arm.
 - c) From our Western cultural perspective, we assume that those men are in a homosexual relationship.
 - d) The truth is quite far from that. In fact, if you were to say that to someone in a Middle Eastern or Asian culture, they would be very offended.
 - e) In those cultures, it is quite normal for men to show their love and affection in a physical way, yet without any sexual connotation whatsoever.
2. An example I often use is from the book of Song of Solomon.
 - a) The writer is referring to the Shulamite woman, and the relationship that is there between them.
 - b) In one of his references to her, he says, “I wish that you were my brother so that I might embrace you” (Song of Sol. 8:1).
 - c) Within our Western culture, we think it odd for siblings to display affection that way, but it is perfectly normal in that culture. Family members show their love and affection in very physical ways without it being at all sexual.
3. I think that's what we have here in the 2 Samuel passage. The love and care that David and Jonathan had for each other was real, deep, and intimate. But for us to read into it a sexual relationship is misunderstanding the cultural reality of that day

V. The Gospels

We have to understand that, while we look at the Old Testament, we are people of the New Testament. We look to the New Testament for guidance and direction for our lives.

A. Those who advocate same-sex relationships will first go to the Gospels and to the life and teaching of Jesus.

1. They will say that you don't find anything in Jesus' teaching against homosexuality.
2. Therefore, they say, it is not against God's standard to have a caring, monogamous, same-sex relationship.
3. This is a logical fallacy, an argument from silence.
 - a) It says that, since Jesus our Lord said nothing on the subject, therefore he must be OK with it.
 - b) The problem with this type of reasoning is, where do you stop? Jesus said nothing about slavery. Does that mean we should endorse slavery? Of course not! Jesus said nothing about computer pornography, but does that mean he supports computer pornography? No.

B. While Jesus did not make any specific mention of homosexuality, we have to realize that he did make specific mention of marriage.

1. In fact, in Matthew, when he's asked about the subject of divorce and remarriage, Jesus goes all the way back to the creation account in Genesis 2 and reminds them of the original design: one man and one woman for life.
2. So instead of trying to argue from silence, we can say that Jesus affirmed what was taught in the Old Testament, that marriage is a covenant relationship between one man and one woman.
3. If we press the issue even further, we'd have to expect that Jesus accepted the prevailing Jewish convictions of his day. Homosexuality was not accepted as normative in Jewish culture of that day, and Jesus accepted that norm of their culture.

VI. Romans 1:18

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Rom. 1:18)

A. We see this spiral of mankind into sin, where they were claiming to be wise but became fools.

1. They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for those of mortal beings or animals.
2. It goes on to say how God gave them up to the lusts of their flesh, to the degrading of their bodies, "because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:24–25).
3. We see that God gave them up even further down in the spiral, where women exchanged their natural functions (with men) for unnatural ones (with other women), and men giving up natural intercourse with women and were consumed with passion for one another (Rom. 1:26–27).

B. This is one of the clearest passages we have regarding God's standard of what is the normative way and what is the immoral way for sexuality.

1. God's standard for sexuality is one man and one woman for life.
2. But when man is left to his own devices and in his own sin, we see the downward spiral of how he starts worshiping God's creation rather than God. In fact, one of the greatest sins that we can commit is to worship ourselves. According to the passage, this progresses to where men desire other men and women begin to desire women.

C. Some who contend that homosexuality is legitimate say this passage is not talking about caring, monogamous, loving relationships.

1. They argue that what Paul is against in Romans 1 is a form of pedistry—an older man having a relationship with a younger boy, particularly in the case that the older man exploits his power and domineers over the younger man in an abusive sexual relationship.
2. They say this has nothing to do with caring, loving, monogamous, same-sex relationships.
3. In the book of Romans, Paul is not discussing a *type* of homosexuality. He is saying that this type of behavior is *wrong*.
 - a) He isn't distinguishing between abusive homosexuality and caring homosexuality. He's simply saying that homosexuality is wrong.
 - b) Rather than reading into what type he's saying is wrong, we need to let the text argue for itself, that the actions between these individuals—men with men and women with women—is wrong.
 - c) We need to help people understand that this is God's clear judgment against people when he gives them over to their sin. It is not something that God wants or blesses, but he will give them over to their sinful passions if they reject him.
 - d) We don't have the time to go through the original language of this text or a thorough exegesis of the passage. Look at the Resource section to dig deeper into these truths.

VII. 1 Corinthians 6:9–10

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9–10)

A. In this passage, Paul lists people who will not enter the kingdom of God: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, those homosexual or effeminate.

1. We will center on those words used for the effeminate or homosexual.
2. Paul is teaching that those who practice such things, who live in this way, cannot inherit the kingdom of God.
3. This is a clear passage indicating the heart of God and his designed sexual ethic.
4. We need to help people understand that what Paul is saying in this passage is not what type of same-sex relationship but that he is against same-sex relationships altogether.
5. The behavior of men with men and women with women is something God is against.

B. Those who advocate for same-sex relationships will say that God can't be against loving, caring, same-sex relationships. Therefore, these passages (1 Cor. 6 and also Rom. 1) must not be either.

1. I remind them that there are no passages that affirm caring, loving, monogamous, same-sex relationships.
2. We say this not to shame people or guilt them, but to help them understand what the rest of 1 Corinthians 6 says.

C. After Paul lists all these sins, here is what he says: "And this is what some of you were."

And such were some of you. 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. 6:11)

1. This is the power of the gospel, what Christ came to die for. All of us are sinners and were lost. Jesus came to die for us!
2. Now in Christ, because of the gospel, you are different!
 - a) You no longer have to live according to the lusts and passions of the former life.
 - b) We can see this theme throughout the New Testament.
 - c) We can help people know this powerful message of the gospel!

VIII. Conclusion

A. We must affirm the sexual ethic given to us by God at the beginning of creation:

1. One man and one woman
2. For life
3. For his glory
4. For our enjoyment
5. For the benefit of our community

B. I encourage you to study these passages, both in the Old and New Testament.

C. We must stand firm on what God affirms.

1. We need to say that homosexuality is sin, but at the same time present the gospel that is able to save people from that lifestyle.
2. We have the truth of God's Word. We need to know it, stand for it, and live for his glory.

Same-Sex Attraction: Pastoral Care

Detailed Outline *Part 1 of 4*

Introduction

D. Defining marriage

1. Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman that includes a spiritual, emotional, and physical union that is recognized by God and our fellow mankind, for life, for the glory of God. (Gen. 2:24, 25; Matt. 19:3–9; Eph. 5:22–33)
2. Marriage (as defined above) is the only context by which we should enjoy the blessings of sexual intimacy. (Gen. 2:24, 25; Mal. 2:14–16; 1 Cor. 7:1–5)
3. Therefore, any sexual intimacy outside of marriage is a sin against a holy God, a separation from his joy, a barrier to fellowship, and a tragedy to our community.
 - a) I believe this is what Paul was saying when he wrote his letters to the Corinthians and the Ephesians (1 Cor. 6:12–20; 2 Cor. 12:21; Eph. 5:3). Paul had heard the concerns of the sexual immorality that was taking place.
 - b) This is not only against God's standards but against the gospel!
4. We are all born with sexual desires. This is not a mistake—these are God-given. But we also need to realize that we are born into sexual brokenness. We want the gospel to inform us as to how we can redeem sexuality for the glory of God.

E. How do we minister to those who struggle with same-sex attractions and have a deep faith commitment to Jesus Christ and the Christian life?

1. When we talk about those who struggle with same-sex attraction, we are talking about those who have certain attractions or sexual desires (men toward other men or women toward other women) but they know that they are not in keeping with biblical commands. They realize that the struggles they have should not be acted upon but they are plagued with trying to understand why they still struggle.
 - a) These could be young men and women within your youth group, who are trying to figure out these feelings and attractions as they are maturing into their sexual understanding. The world will tell them one thing, and we as Christians have to tell them the truth.
 - b) These could be men and women in your church, even those who are married, who may struggle with same-sex attraction.
2. We as the church want to be the place where they can come for help.
 - a) These people may not come openly to us, but hopefully, through fostering a community of care and compassion, they will be willing to come to us and communicate their struggle to us.
 - b) Then we can go through a systematic process of how we can respond to them, their family, and how the body of Christ can respond to help them.

3. Homosexuality is a big topic, and we need to talk about the biblical arguments (see the Biblical series). We are realizing there are many issues as relates to the biological and even political arguments, but we won't be getting into those discussions in this section (see the Resources series). This series focuses on the pastoral aspect of coming alongside those who struggle with same-sex attraction.

I. Develop Orthopraxy, Not Just Orthodoxy

A. As a community of believers we really want to minister to those who struggle with same-sex attraction. So what is the posture that we should have first?

1. Often within this discussion, there is much debate as to which side is right. One of the first things I would encourage us to realize is, not only do we have the truth, but we also have the heart.
2. What I mean by that is, we have a genuine love and concern for those people, not just to tell them what's right, but to show them. Another way of saying this is: While we need to develop orthodoxy (right teaching), we also need to develop orthopraxy (right living).

B. Luke 10:25–37 – The story of the Good Samaritan

1. People who knew the truth very well walked by the beaten man. People like the Pharisee and the Levite knew the truth but they had no compassion for the man who was beaten up. The Good Samaritan was the one who knew the truth and practiced it.
2. This is the attitude we should have within the Lord's church: We need to know the truth and have sound doctrine, but we also need to practice the truth. We need to be a community of care and compassion.
3. We need to have "convicted civility." We need to know the truth and have conviction, but we need to present it in a civil way.

"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, Martin Marty

C. Ephesians 4:15

"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ." (Eph. 4:15 ESV)

The first step in helping those who struggle with same-sex attraction is for us to adopt a heart of convicted civility, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, speaking the truth in love.

II. Understand the Conflict

A. These people that are coming to us with this struggle are within our body.

1. In our culture there are many who preach that homosexuality is legitimate and needs to be embraced by all.
2. But, I'm talking about someone within your local church, someone you may know from youth group or a small group, someone that loves Jesus Christ and has accepted the gospel but nevertheless struggles with same-sex attraction.

B. You need to help them understand the conflict between their faith and their feelings.

1. Their faith is clear and they understand what the Word of God says about sexual purity.
2. But the feelings that they are having are quite contrary to their faith.
3. They are trying to reconcile the two things together.

C. Help them understand that one does not negate the other: yes, you are a believer in Jesus Christ, and yes, you are struggling with these feelings.

1. In fact, as believers who live in a fallen world, we all struggle! For this specific individual, their struggle is with same-sex attraction.
2. Help the individual realize that this is not a loss of their faith or a loss of their salvation, but that this is a real struggle.

D. The ultimate conflict with those who struggle with same-sex attraction is how to reconcile the deep FAITH they have in Jesus Christ, and the very strong FEELINGS of same-sex attractions.

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III. Identify the Developmental Reality

After talking about the conflict between their faith and their feelings, you need to figure out where they are with their feelings of same-sex attraction.

A. The dilemma

1. The individual is coming to knowledge of the struggle of their same-sex attraction.
2. They are starting to feel attraction to someone of the same sex, but they know that these attractions are not in keeping with the biblical mandate.
3. This causes confusion.

B. The development

1. At this level, some individuals have already acted out their same-sex attraction or had same-sex relations.
2. They are struggling that they have gone into this area, and they are disclosing to you as the leader or individual within the church.

C. The decision

1. These are individuals who identify as a homosexual or gay, that this is the reality for them. This is not just what they do but who they are. This is the reality for some within our church as well, and you need to help them figure out where they are in this developmental reality.
2. There are many evangelicals that realize that they have these same-sex attractions and it's a reality that they struggle with it. So they have chosen a life of celibacy. The decision they have made is not to identify as a homosexual but lead a life of celibacy.

IV. Acknowledge the "Scripts"

A. Scripts are ideas that are written by someone else that the actor needs to perform.

1. In our culture, there are scripts given to us, whether we realize it or not.
2. We may not agree with them, but through media, politics, the local community, and even the local church, a script that we should live and act a certain way is being communicated to us.

B. Help the individual recognize the scripts that are presented to them.

1. Mainstream gay culture (those that accept and affirm homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle): gay sexual identity script
 - a) You were born this way; it's part of your biology. Therefore, it's legitimate.
 - b) This is who you are; it's not about the actions you take; it's part of your identity.
 - c) It's normal.
 - d) Attractions indicate identity.

- e) Ultimately, the mainstream gay community communicates to those with same-sex attraction that they are accepted and loved.
 - f) While we as Christians can't accept them on the same basis, we need to also say we accept and love the individual who is struggling with same-sex attraction (not the actions).
2. Average evangelical church: Christian sexual identity script
- a) Silence
 - 1) We need to be honest that in some context, the evangelical community is simply silent regarding sexuality in general.
 - 2) Someone who is struggling with same-sex attraction may come to the church seeking help, but when they encounter complete silence on the topic, they will look for help elsewhere.
 - b) "Heterosexual sex is a necessary evil; it's yucky, dirty and gross, and don't talk about it too much . . . and save it for the one you love."
 - 1) This is more than silence, but from the perspective of someone struggling with same-sex attraction, this will also drive them away from seeking help. If even heterosexual sex is treated like a "necessary evil," what will that church say about same-sex attraction?
 - 2) We need to help the individual to understand that sex is the means for procreation (Gen. 1) but it is also recreation (1 Cor. 7)—a gift given for enjoyment between a man and a woman for life.
 - c) "Homosexual sex is an abomination and you need to just stop it."
 - 1) We do need to affirm that this is true—any type of sex outside of God's parameters is sin.
 - 2) The problem with saying "just stop it," is that it isn't that easy!
 - 3) We all struggle with different sins, and we know that it is not as simple as acknowledging it and stopping it.
 - 4) This attitude shames the individual struggling with same-sex attraction, and will drive them to seek help or acceptance elsewhere.
 - d) "You are accepted and loved."
 - 1) This is the one thing that the mainstream homosexual community has right. The best way you can help an individual struggling with same-sex attraction is to let them know that, even while they are struggling with this, they are loved and accepted.
 - 2) This is the body of Christ ministering to those who are struggling. We need to help them understand that there is a different script. They don't have to live the way the culture tells them to. We as the church need to let them know that, while we don't accept this lifestyle and believe it's against God's commands, we still love and accept them.

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Detailed Outline *Part 3 of 4*

V. Address the Questions

At this point, in working with an individual, there are questions that inevitably surface:

A. How did this come about? (Nature vs. nurture)

1. Was I born this way? Or did it develop because of my family or community?
2. Most of the research today is showing that we don't know. There are arguments for both sides.
3. It is not within the scope of this session to go into that debate, but look at our Resource section for more information on these researchers and research.

B. Why did this come about? Why did this happen to me?

1. This is an opportunity to go through the process, not just "fix" it.
2. Look at Genesis 1, where we see the creation account.
 - a) How long did it take for God to create the world? Six days. It took God TIME to create the world. He could have created everything with the snap of his fingers, but for some reason, he took his time.
 - b) When we get to the seventh day, it was a day of rest. God didn't need rest, but it created the precedent for us to take rest from our work. I believe the six days of work have the same idea. It is not that God needed six days to create the world, but God likes taking his time.
 - c) I think this is setting up a standard or principle for us. Maturity takes time and endurance.
3. Consider the example of the apostle Paul.
 - a) He struggled with a thorn in the flesh. We can help those struggling with same-sex attraction by reminding them that this may be their thorn in the flesh. It's not something they wanted or asked for, and like Paul, they may have asked God to remove it from them, but he has not.
 - b) If God has not removed it, this is an opportunity for them to grow in their Christ-likeness, and God's grace is sufficient in the midst of this too.

C. What is my worth? If I'm struggling with this, am I really that valuable?

Their worth is from God, not their struggles, see Psalm 139:13-16. Many will come to you with this question.

D. Am I the only one that struggles with this? Is it just me?

1. Affirming that there are others that struggle with same-sex attraction may not be the best way to answer this question.
2. If you yourself have not struggled with same-sex attraction, how do we relate to someone struggling with this?

- a) All of us have temptations we struggle with, that may be our thorn in the flesh. I am just one beggar trying to tell another beggar where to get some food. I'm no better than them. I'm just struggling to find the grace of God in my everyday life.
 - b) All of us struggle. So, no, you are not the only one!
3. If you can identify an individual within your local church who has struggled with this same issue and has found victory through Christ, you might try to connect these two people (with much compassion and confidentiality). It may encourage the struggling individual to talk to someone who has specifically struggled and had victory over their issue.

E. There will be many questions. Seek to find the answers together. Do your research.

VI. Identify the Choices – What Can They Do from Here?

A. Sexual attractions – little to no choice.

This is how they feel and it's difficult to change those feelings. The Lord may remove those attractions, but he may not.

B. Sexual actions – you have a choice.

This is not just for those who struggle with same-sex attraction, but for everyone who struggles with sexual sins. You do have a choice when it comes to your actions.

C. Sexual acceptance – you have a choice.

They don't have to identify with being gay or lesbian. They have an opportunity to either take that identity or not.

D. You are more than your attractions.

- 1. Yes, our sexual desires are a part of us. But you are so much more!
 - a) First of all, you have your identity in Christ! Ephesians 1 tells us of the multiple blessings we have because of the finished work of Christ.
 - b) Beyond that, there are:
 - 1) Interests
 - 2) Hobbies
 - 3) Relationships
 - 4) Communities that they are involved in
- 2. The individual may not be able to change those attractions, but he or she does have choice in their actions.
- 3. They have a choice to live in a way that is honoring to God.
- 4. Help them understand that, first and foremost, their identity is in Christ and the work that he has done on their behalf.

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VII. Reach Out to the Family

A. The individual that you are working with has confided their struggles to you. At some point, the family needs to be involved as well.

1. This needs to be done with much care and consideration, and the struggling individual needs to do this with you.
2. Research has shown that when family members are willing to help and minister to their loved one, the help and the care is much more well-received.

B. The family will have many questions.

1. What caused this? Am I to blame?
 - a) Especially parents will wonder if they are to blame for this.
 - b) There is no definitive research showing that certain parenting styles make a child more inclined toward homosexuality.
 - c) We need to help them understand that there is nothing they did specifically as parents that caused them to be this way.
2. Can they change?
 - a) The family can definitely help!
 - b) Help the individual to understand who they are in Christ and the choices that they have.
 - c) Look to the future and help them see that, while their loved one struggles in this area, they can be a caring community and help them in this struggle.

VIII. Reach Up to God

A. There is hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ!

B. The example of Paul

The thorn in his flesh was a real problem, but he reached out to God. The answer God gave him is profound:

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Cor. 12:9 ESV)

C. We want to encourage people to realize that there is hope!

1. In 1 Corinthians Paul talks about those in the church that struggled with various issues. Some were adulterers, some were liars, some were homosexuals.
2. Paul says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed . . ." (1 Cor. 6:11). He talks about how the gospel came and saved them from their lives of sin and misery.
3. God is not leaving them alone! Their family and church can support them, but God is reaching out to them. When we feel weak, that's when God's power is displayed.

IX. Lay Out the Options – Where do we go from here?

A. Christ

1. Find your identity in him. This is the most important solution.
2. Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are his workmanship . . .”
3. Help the individual understand that the option they will always have is their identity in Christ.

B. Celibacy

1. For some, this will be an option.
2. Christianity is the only major religion that encourages celibacy.
3. Singleness is blessed by God. 1 Corinthians 7:8 – “I say to the unmarried, it is good . . .”
4. Some of those who struggle with same-sex attraction may need to choose this option.
5. As the body of Christ, we need to affirm that singleness is celebrated by God!

C. Change

1. Many people may say, “That’s the only option I want!”
2. But it may not happen for everyone, though it will happen for some.
3. Have faith that God can change you. God is in the business of changing people dramatically and wonderfully. God may powerfully take those attractions that you struggle with away.

D. Change is for some, celibacy is for some, but Christ is for all!

X. Be a Church that is Ready

A. Teach and model a curriculum of sexual stewardship

We need to develop an understanding of how God views sexuality.

B. Create a redemptive space

1. I took this term from another individual, but I think it epitomizes what we need to be doing as a body.
2. Are we, within our churches, redemptive spaces? Do we preach the gospel?
3. The gospel needs to characterize our churches—from the pulpit, from small groups, everywhere!

C. Reframe your discussions: not just more orthodoxy, but more orthopraxy

1. We want truth, but we also want love. We want to be a community of people that knows God’s Word and what it says about sexuality.
2. We also want to be a community that accepts and love those who struggle with same-sex attraction.
3. Are we willing to stand with the truth AND with those who struggle with same-sex attraction?
4. We need to be a place of redemption. Help them know that they can change, but ultimately that their identity is rooted in Christ!