

## Sermon Summary

Some issues are controversial and emotion-laden, issues about which people have strongly entrenched opinions. Given the current cultural climate, these are issues that many pastors won't address. My concern is not with how our culture views these issues, but rather what the Scriptures say. We live in a culture where "truth" is subjective and man-centered. But you cannot hold that relativistic position on truth, and be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Today I want to talk about the deeply-personal and painful area of same-sex attraction. A gay member of our church confessed to me recently, "Doug, it's painful to be gay in this world. This is not a struggle that I would have chosen for myself."

We all find ourselves attracted to things that God forbids—don't we? Sexual temptation is especially alluring—heterosexuals and homosexuals alike struggle with illicit temptation. What Christians must not do is to affirm as good what God declares to be evil. God in His love, grace and wisdom has defined the proper domain for sexual expression. Incest, adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bestiality, and necrophilia are all forms of sexual expression that fall outside of God's will for his people. Jesus reinforced the Old Testament's teaching in Matthew 19:4–6.

God is is pro-sex; it was His idea in the first place! God blesses us by insisting that sex be expressed only in the protective confines of marriage between a man and a woman. We don't expect non-Christians to accept and submit to the Bible's teaching on sexual ethics—but the world would be a better place if everyone lived by Biblical standards. How many marriages has adultery destroyed? How many children have been conceived and later aborted as a consequence of illicit sexual relations? How many families have been devastated by rape and children's lives have been altered through sexual abuse? How many people have been used and casually thrown away after giving themselves to someone sexually? Many of us bear the pain of these kinds of experiences.

As Christ's followers, how should we think about the struggle of same sex attraction? First, we must allow the Scriptures and not our culture to shape our views. We can no more change God's moral laws than we can the physical laws he has established to govern the universe. Disobeying God's moral laws often brings it own punishment; you surely reap what you've sown. We can freely choose our actions—but we cannot choose the consequences.

Our culture says that anything which occurs between two consenting adults is OK, but it is a dangerous thing to assume that we know better than God. It is a dangerous thing to allow our passions and desires to control us. This is especially true of our sexual passions, whether heterosexual or homosexual. Our culture's views are rooted in an atheistic mindset, not in a Christian one: it wrongly assumes that morality is relative, and subject to the will and desires of man, rather than the will of God, that there is no eternity or final judgment, and that we are answerable to no one but ourselves. This is atheistic, not biblical.

We are rapidly moving toward becoming an atheistic state, and our degrading national morality is a symptom of that philosophical shift. But know this, by choosing to stand with God against popular culture you will be opposed and you will be marginalized. The Bible forbids homosexual behavior. It is homosexual behavior, not the orientation that the Bible forbids. So in the end, the whole debate about whether homosexuality is something you are born with really doesn't matter. Even if you're genetically predisposed to some behavior doesn't mean that that behavior is morally right. The important thing is not the source of your temptation, but what you do with it.

There are six passages in the Bible that directly address homosexual behavior (Genesis 19; Leviticus 18:20; 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:10; Romans 1:24-28). Some people argue that Old Testament Laws are no longer in effect, but that argument is not valid because the New Testament reaffirms the ongoing validity of Old Testament laws forbidding homosexual practice. The Old Testament prohibitions against homosexuality were expressions of God's (everlasting) moral law, not (temporary) civil law.

Liberal scholars have done acrobatics trying to explain away the clear teaching of these verses. Some have said that they refer to pedophilia, others that they condemn heterosexuals who engage in homosexual acts, not homosexuals who do so. But the Scriptures condemn homosexual acts—whether committed by males or females, regardless of the orientation of the one committing them—and sees this behavior as evidence of a corrupted mind that has turned away from God and abandoned his design for sexuality.

Today many argue: "If God intended sex for marriage, why not just let homosexuals marry each other?" But God condemns homosexual sex and this view completely misunderstands God's intention for marriage—the bringing together of the two complementary genders into a "one flesh" union (Genesis 2:18; 21-25; Matthew 19:4-6). If you are struggling with same sex attraction, you are welcome here at TCC. Truth is, all of us here are sinners in desperate need of the forgiveness and power to change that Christ offers. At the foot of the cross, we are all equal. No matter what your struggle is, I want you to know that this is a safe place to grow and heal, and allow God to change you.

## Notes

## Three Cultural Tensions, Part 1

Same Sex Attraction: A Biblical Response

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# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and walk in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- **Why** do you think that the topic of homosexuality ("homophobia", same-sex "marriage", LGBT rights, etc.) is so prevalent in the news and in entertainment today?
- Read John 8:1-11. The Old Testament penalty for adultery and homosexuality were the same, so let's imagine for a moment that the issue was homosexuality instead. Do you think Jesus would have responded the same, or differently? **Why** do you think that? Try to support your answer biblically.

Now focus on v. 11. What do you think today's culture or media would say about Jesus' comment?

- Read Pastor Doug's article, *The Gay Lifestyle—The Untold Story*. If these **same** health and interpersonal risks resulted from, say, eating barbecue—literally **anything but** the homosexual lifestyle—how do you think the media and our culture would treat it? **Why** the difference?

**Why** do you think our culture and the media are **so supportive** of the homosexual lifestyle?

Is it **loving** to support homosexual **activity**?  
Define "love" **based upon** your answer.

How can we love those who are tempted by same-sex attraction, while remaining biblically faithful? How can we balance grace and truth?

GRACE — TRUTH



## Application-Challenge

God's purpose in regulating sexual activity is rooted in his desire to protect us and provide for us. So, as with every other sin, the Bible's solution to homosexuality is trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of sin and the power to change. Resist the temptation to rationalize by claiming, "God made me this way." Determine to keep yourself morally pure. I know it is difficult, but it is possible. Practice abstinence; carefully monitor your thought life; avoid pornography and fanaticizing; and please seek Christian counseling.

**What does God say about sex? Most people would assume that it's not very much. Let's see!**

From the following passages, write down what you learn about immorality—and how to overcome it. Then, decide one specific thing your should do as a result, and the steps you will take to obey. Since 1 Corinthians 6:18 commands us to **flee** immorality, keep a “Temptation Journal” for each day, which will help you be aware of, and stand against, Satan’s schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11; Ephesians 6:11).

**Monday**—Read Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; 2 Timothy 2:22; and Matthew 5:27-32.

My “Temptation Journal”:

- The time **when** I’m tempted was...
- The place **where** I was tempted was...
- The people **with whom** I was were...
- **What** was happening and what I was **thinking** and **doing before and during** the temptation was...
- What I did **during and after** the temptation was...

**Tuesday**—Read Jude 7-8; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Leviticus 20:13; Genesis 19:1-29; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; and Galatians 5:24.

My “Temptation Journal”:

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**Wednesday**—Read Romans 8:32, 37; Romans 6:1-23; Romans 7:1-27; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 10:13; and Proverbs 5:20-25.

My “Temptation Journal”:

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- The people **with whom** I was were...
- **What** was happening and what I was **thinking** and **doing before and during** the temptation was...
- What I did **during and after** the temptation was...

**Thursday**—Read Proverbs 13:20; Proverbs 17:14; Proverbs 18:10; Proverbs 19:3; and Proverbs 22:3, 24-25.

My “Temptation Journal”:

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- The place **where** I was tempted was...
- The people **with whom** I was were...
- **What** was happening and what I was **thinking** and **doing before and during** the temptation was...
- What I did **during and after** the temptation was...

**Friday**—Read Proverbs 23:20-21, 26-28; Proverbs 26:20-22; Proverbs 27; 12, 17; and Proverbs 29:3, 18.

My “Temptation Journal”:

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- The place **where** I was tempted was...
- The people **with whom** I was were...
- **What** was happening and what I was **thinking** and **doing before and during** the temptation was...
- What I did **during and after** the temptation was...

**Saturday**—Read Psalm 119:9-11; Acts 20:32; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:7-16; and Genesis 39:1-12.

My “Temptation Journal”:

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- The place **where** I was tempted was...
- The people **with whom** I was were...
- **What** was happening and what I was **thinking** and **doing before and during** the temptation was...
- What I did **during and after** the temptation was...