

HOPE: THE PLAUSIBILITY OF PURITY

The Church and Same-Sex Attraction

Why the Discussion?

- Cultural movement¹
- Personal Relationships
- Practical Implications²
- Christian Confusion
- Gospel Power

Definitions

- **Same-sex attraction (SSA):** (n) “Sexual, romantic, and deep emotional _____ to people of the same sex.”³
- **Same-sex attracted (a):** (adj.) Used to describe someone who has “sexual, romantic, and deep emotional attractions to people of the same sex.”
- **Homosexual:** (n) Someone who chooses to _____ with and _____ upon their sexual, romantic, and deep emotional attractions to people of the same sex.
- **Gay:** (n) Ambiguous. Some use it simply to denote their same-sex attraction.⁴ Others, use it to denote someone’s embrace of a homosexual lifestyle, especially men. Others use it to refer exclusively to male homosexual identity.

“Why is homosexuality _____ to begin with?”

Homosexuality is outside of the design of the good, gracious, and kind Creator.

- a. **Foundation:** God is _____ pleasure; sexual pleasure is for _____ (Gen 1:28; 2:24; Matt. 19:6).
- b. Sexuality expressed is _____, good, and beautiful in this context. Marriage reflects the unity of the triune God’s character (Dt. 6:4; Gen 2:24).

¹ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1651/gay-lesbian-rights.aspx> and <http://www.gallup.com/poll/108115/americans-evenly-divided-morality-homosexuality.aspx>

² “An estimated 19 million Americans (8.2%) report that they have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior and nearly 25.6 million Americans (11%) acknowledge at least some same-sex sexual attraction.” (Gary Gates, *How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender?* The Williams Institute. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Gates-How-Many-People-LGBT-Apr-2011.pdf>. April 2011.

³ Sam Allberry, Addressing the Church of England General Synod, <https://youtu.be/mCLms7I84IY>.

⁴ Some Christians who battle SSA choose to call themselves gay Christians. I don’t prefer this terminology; if sexual orientation is not a believer’s true identity, but Christ is, why make sexual orientation part of our identifying labels? Sam Allberry describes himself publicly as “same-sex attracted... I choose to describe myself this way because sexuality is not a matter of identity for me. And that has become good news. My primary sense of worth and fulfillment as a human being is not contingent on being romantically or sexually fulfilled and this is liberating” (Sam Allberry, Addressing the Church of England General Synod, <https://youtu.be/mCLms7I84IY>).

- c. The one-flesh union was designed to be the way in which Adam and Eve fulfilled God's command to be _____ and multiply (Gen. 1:28)
- d. The man and woman in marriage reflects the _____ that God in Christ shows to the church (Eph. 5:31-32).

The Bible clearly forbids homosexuality.

- a. Lev. 18:22; 20:13⁵ — Sexual relations between a man and a man, or a woman and a woman is abhorrent/detestable⁶ to God, and under the Mosaic Law, was punishable by death (as was adultery, rebellion against parents, and cursing of parents. See Lev. 20:9-10, Deut. 21:18-21). Notice that the act itself is called an abomination, not the participants.
- b. Romans 1:18-32 — Homosexuality is unnatural, against God's design. It is one evidence that God has given _____ men over to sin (compare with the heathen in Rom. 1, the hypocrites in Rom. 2, and all of us, Rom. 3).
- c. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 — Unrepentant homosexual activity is one _____ of an unregenerate heart (as is unrepentant idolatry, adultery, stealing, greed, drunkenness, slander, swindling). Sin, all sin, is a matter of life and death. Sin, all sin, is escapable by the grace of God in the gospel.
- d. 1 Timothy 1:8-11 — Homosexuality is "_____ to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel" and has no part in our new identity in Christ.

Common Objections⁷

"Surely a same-sex partnership is ok if it is committed, faithful, and loyal, right?"

- Wrong standard of _____: "Faithfulness within a relationship is what determines its moral goodness."⁸ Are we willing to measure incestuous relationships, pedophilia, and bestiality by such a standard?

⁵ Believers, we must not use a verse like this to justify statements similar to "We ought to round up all the homosexuals and kill them off. Society would be a lot better." That is an inappropriate, ungodly mentality in the age of grace through Jesus Christ. For an evaluation of this verse in light of the New Testament, see chapter 3 in Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?*

⁶ "We cannot reduce *to'ebah* [the Hebrew word for abomination] to a mere social taboo or ritual uncleanness. The word generally signifies something the Lord despises. "There are six things the LORD hates," Proverbs declares, "seven that are an abomination to him" (6: 16; cf. Deut. 12: 31). As revisionist authors are quick to point out, all the sexual sins in Leviticus 18 are lumped together under the term "abominations" (vv. 26– 27, 29– 30), but only male-with-male sex is singled out by itself as an abomination. In fact, it is the only forbidden act given this label in the entire Holiness Code" (DeYoung, Kevin (2015-04-16). *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* (pp. 44-45). Crossway. Kindle Edition.).

⁷ These objections and answers are taken from the vividly clear and concise book, "Is God Anti-gay?" by Sam Allberry, available for purchase at the book table in the foyer.

⁸⁸ Allberry, 39. The word refers to "various kinds of 'unsanctioned[/unlawful] sexual intercourse'" (William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 854.)

- 1 Cor. 5:1-13 — Paul’s judgment of an illicit sexual relationship between a man and his stepmother doesn’t rest upon the presence or lack of commitment and faithfulness to each other, but rather, upon the standard of God’s Word.

“But Jesus never mentions homosexuality, so how can it be wrong?”

- Argument from _____: Jesus doesn’t mention child-sacrifice, cannibalism, bestiality, by name, either.
- Mark 7:20-23 — Jesus uses the term *porneia* a catch-all term for any sexual perversion from the design of God. The term includes homosexuality and every heterosexual act outside of the marriage covenant.

“But aren’t people born homosexual? How can it be wrong?”

Every single human inherits a corrupt and sinful nature, without ever having actively _____ sin (Rom. 5). It is this sin nature that then drives our sinful choices. We believe in total depravity; that is, every _____ of mankind has been corrupted by sin (mind, will, emotions, body).

In a fallen world, every single human being who has achieved puberty is a sexual sinner. Every single one of us has a pattern of sexual attraction, arousal, and interest that we cannot truly say we ourselves have chosen.... **the fall has so impacted human existence that every single one of us has, to one degree or another, a fallen sexual orientation.** Most Christians testify that their fallen sexual orientation is directed toward the opposite sex. Still, no Christian with a heterosexual pattern of sexual interest is free from sin or free from uninvited erotic impulses, interests, and thoughts.⁹

“Won’t this remove personal responsibility for sin from the equation?”

“The Bible makes clear that we are always responsible for our sinful acts, even condemning us for our sinful thoughts. This is exactly what Jesus did in the Sermon on the Mount, moving beyond the Old Testament’s declaration that adultery is sin to condemn even lust as adultery already committed in the heart. We are not, therefore, minimizing our accountability for our sinful acts and for the allowance of sinful thoughts. **We sin against homosexuals when we minimize their personal responsibility for sexual sin and misrepresent their particular pattern of sexual interest as something they have chosen freely and can thus freely surrender.**¹⁰

⁹ Albert Mohler, *We Cannot Be Silent*, 173.

¹⁰ Albert Mohler, *We Cannot Be Silent*, 174.

Every single one of us is born with inclinations towards certain sins. Some are more inclined to lie, some are more inclined to drunkenness, some are more inclined to heterosexual lust, some are more inclined to pride, or to anxiety. That inclination is evidence of our sin nature; we will be held liable and guilty for our sin nature and our sinful choices. **We were all born with a sin nature; therefore, even if a study comes out showing that homosexuality is indeed a matter of genetics or inclinations, this will not excuse the individual from obeying the commands of God; nor does it excuse the individual from being held responsible before God for their choices.** Bible-believing Christians do not need to fear scientific studies along these lines.

Can't we just ignore this and focus on what is so explicit and clear in Scripture? Can't we just agree to disagree with folks?

God created men and women were created equal, but _____ (Gen. 1:26-27) for a purpose far greater than marriage itself.

God created the two sexes... [to] help us understand the power of his love for us in the here and now, and the pleasure that will be ours when we live with him in his new heaven and new earth... [The] bookends of the Bible help establish this point: the whole thing starts with the marriage of a man and a woman and its consummation (Genesis 1—2), and its great narrative ends with the marriage of a groom to his bride and its consummation (Revelations 21-22). The very first human marriage (and all those that follow) are there to point us to how things will end: with the eternal marriage of the divine bridegroom (God in Christ) to his chosen human bride (God's people). All of human history is just the journey up the aisle.¹¹

If we allow others to undermine marriage, we are undermining the _____.

So, change its constituent parts (a man and a woman), and you are interfering with where God has said his world is heading—to the unity in difference of the heavenly marriage of the divine and human.¹²

This unity in Christ only comes about as individuals trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, repenting of their sins. God consequently places them within the Church, adopting them as his children, and the Trinity begins the process of cleaning the Church up to be a spotless and beautiful bride for the Son (Eph. 5:25-32; 2 Cor. 11:2; Col. 1:22-23). **If we don't speak up about the nature of homosexuality, we are not loving.** Unrepentant homosexuality condemns individuals to eternal death (1 Cor. 6:9). We must be willing to speak the truth, and in so doing, truly love individuals. Keeping quiet is akin to signing death warrants for those who have been deceived by Satan (Eph. 2:1-3), following their own depravity into lives of sinfulness.

The gospel is good news for homosexual sinners and heterosexual sinners.

¹¹ Ed Shaw, *Same-sex Attraction and the Church*, 87-88.

¹² Ed Shaw, *Same-sex Attraction and the Church*, 90.

The one and only God, who is Holy, made us in his image to know him [Gen. 1:26-28]. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him [Gen. 3; Rom. 3:23]. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him [Mark 10:45; John 1:14; Heb. 7:26; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:12-21]. He rose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted [Acts 2:24, Rom. 4:25]. He now calls us to repent of our sins and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness [Acts 17:30, John 1:12]. If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God [John 3:16].¹³

Result: God, through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is forming individual believers into the image of Jesus Christ. This process, called sanctification, is God restoring in man the _____ of God, which was corrupted by the fall (Gen. 3). In sanctification, believers are made to become more like Jesus Christ; this occurs through their grace-enabled cooperation with the Spirit's ongoing work of transformation in their lives (2 Cor 3:18; Phil 2:12-13; Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Pet 1:14-16). While believers will never reach perfection in this life, nevertheless, we are enabled, commanded, and motivated by God's grace and gifts to pursue lives of _____ now (2 Peter 1:1-11; 1 Pet. 1:15; Phil. 2:12). Believers have the blessed promise that God will complete our sanctification at the moment we see Jesus (1 John 3:2). This is the "_____" towards which God is working all things for those who love him (Rom. 8:28-30); further, we know that God who began our salvation will bring it to completion through glorification (Rom. 8:28-30; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13). Ultimately in his/her glorification, Christlikeness will be manifest in every area of the believer, not just in matters of sexuality.

"What does this have to do with me?"

If you are a believer who has or is currently experiencing SSA:

- **Take** _____ (2 Peter 1:1-11).
- **Talk to God** (James 1:5; Matt. 6:3; Heb. 4:15; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32; 51).
- **Cultivate your** _____ **in God and His Word** (Ps. 119, especially 9-11; Ps. 119:24; Job 23:12).
- **Know you are among, not just friends, but** _____.
- **Work up the courage to** _____ **someone you trust.**
- **Patiently** _____ **the temptations to sin, for God has scheduled your glorification after he has sanctified you.**

How can the believers at Lakewood help our believing brothers and sisters who battle SSA, and how can we reach the homosexual community intentionally?

1. **Individually, stop playing the** _____ **; start living (acting, thinking, praying) as an exile (Heb. 11:13; 1 Peter 1:1; 17; 2:11; John 15:18; c.f. John 15:23-25).** Believers, this present world, under the deception and authority of Satan and filled with totally-depraved and unregenerate humans, will rarely be a friend to anything God calls good, beautiful, and true. It is time we started living out our calling as chosen exiles (Heb. 11:13; 1 Peter 1:1; 17; 2:11; John 15:18; c.f. John 15:23-25). The world doesn't need your Facebook rant about

¹³ Mark Dever, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, 43.

homosexuality. It needs your undivided loyalty to God through Jesus, that will evidence it self in hating sin and loving sinners.

2. **Individually, stop judging homosexual sins as “_____” than heterosexual sins (Romans 1:28-2:11).** The consequences may be greater and the bondage may be more intense than other sins. But your sins as a heterosexual required no less grace on God’s part to save you out of them. Christ death was required for you and for any rebellious sinner intent on going his or her own way to have any relationship with God whatsoever, homosexuality notwithstanding.

If salvation really is all of grace, then our obedience to God’s moral law [regarding sexuality as heterosexual individuals] is likewise a matter of grace. This is not to minimize the reality of sin, but rather, in every way, to remind ourselves that **our own sin is just as heinous, just as horrifying, and just as deadly as homosexual sin.**¹⁴

In a fallen world, every single human being who has achieved puberty is a sexual sinner. Every single one of us has a pattern of sexual attraction, arousal, and interest that we cannot truly say we ourselves have chosen... **Every single one of us has, to one degree or another, a fallen sexual orientation.** Most Christians testify that their fallen sexual orientation is directed toward the opposite sex. Still, no Christian with a heterosexual pattern of sexual interest is free from sin or free from uninvited erotic impulses, interests, and thoughts.¹⁵

3. **Individually, start talking about sin biblically-informed; stop talking about sin politically-motivated (1 Cor. 6:9; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).** The worst implication for the homosexual agenda has nothing to do with our feeling of revulsion when we see a homosexual couple kissing in downtown Milwaukee nor is it seeing rainbow flags flying. **The worst implication for the homosexual agenda is that tens of thousands of men and women are being deceived, confirmed in their own sinful desires, and condemned to eternity in the Lake of Fire, separated from the God they have rejected (1 Cor. 6:9; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).** That ought to break our hearts, motivate our wills, and open our mouths to talk about sin in the context of a holy God, just punishment, and the glorious gospel.
4. **Individually, start differentiating in your mind and in conversations between the homosexual agenda and _____ homosexuals (John 1:8-13; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Cor. 6:8-11).** The homosexual agenda is part of a world at enmity against God and it should not surprise us; we do not live in a Christian nation. We live in a post-Christian, postmodern nation. Individual homosexuals are at enmity against God, and Jesus Christ died so that converted homosexuals could worship him for all of eternity (1 Cor. 6:8-11). God delights to turn rebellious enemies into adoring sons and daughters (John 1:8-13; Eph. 1:3-14). Do you believe that?
5. **Individually, start being careful how you _____ about the issues (Ephesians 4:29).** In some cases, your kids are listening. If you are cracking jokes about homosexuals, using “gay” as an adjective to describe something you think is weird or odd, making comments about what you would like to see happen to all the homosexuals, you are destroying any platform you might have to reach the homosexual community for the glory of God.
6. **Individually, if someone opens up to you about their struggle with SSA:** Don’t assume that every person who is same-sex attracted is attracted to _____ member of their same sex, any

¹⁴ Mohler, *We Cannot Be Silent*, 172.

¹⁵ Mohler, *We Cannot Be Silent*, 173.

more than every opposite-sex attracted individual is attracted to every member of the opposite sex. See Appendix 2 for the very first steps to take if someone opens up to you.

7. **Corporately, start _____ for believers in our church who may be battling SSA (James 5:16).**
8. **Corporately, start treating all sin as exceedingly _____.** The white lies, heterosexual lust, greed, anxiety, pride, intake of sexual content online or in your favorite TV series—all revolting to God. And all have happened in the context of Lakewood this week. Individually, we must hate sin, and corporately, we must continue to deal with sin biblically (Matthew 18:15-20; Rom. 13:12).
9. **Corporately, refuse to preach _____; unashamedly and joyfully preach the gospel.** God alone can change the sinner's hardened heart of rebellion against God via the gospel of Jesus Christ. *"Moralism is one of the greatest enemies of the gospel. It represents the false hope of salvation through right behavior and moral reformation rather than by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus."* (Mohler, 171) You are not more godly because you are a heterosexual, OSA Christian; further, we have accomplished nothing if homosexuals just all go "back into the closet" to appease us. That would not be a God-glorifying win.
10. **Corporately, intentionally make SSA easy to talk about.** Be appropriately transparent about your weaknesses struggles, worries, doubts, fears and pain in conversation before/after church and when getting together for coffee or lunch. Being willing to speak up and admit you are a sinner. Ask tough questions of each other geared towards accountability. Be faithful to a Community Group.
11. **Corporately, intentionally make the practical implications of the Biblical sexual ethic _____ for singles.¹⁶**
 - a. **Don't give in to the "your identity is your sexuality" trap.** Labels matter define yourself and other believers as the New Testament defines you: a child of God with all of the theological and practical implications of being in Christ (Ephesians 1, Colossians 1).
 - b. **Don't define the _____ simply as mom + dad + children.** Define your family as Jesus defines his family: "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Matt. 12:46-50). Then choose to interact with one another as a true family. Consider "adopting" a single into your family, welcoming them into your home any time for meals, fellowship, family gatherings, holidays, etc. Provide the family environment God has not chosen to give them through marriage at this stage. Is there time in your *biological* family schedule to be the *spiritual* family with brothers and sisters in Christ?
 - c. **Don't believe the lie that true _____ can be found only in sexual activity.** Consider the relationship between David and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:26). If we limit intimacy to sexuality, then we are requiring single young men and women, regardless of their attraction, to a life of zero intimacy and unbearable loneliness. **Godly friendships are vital among the family of God (Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:5-6, 9-10; Gal. 6:1-2).** Men, work to develop godly and deep male friendship. Ladies, work to develop godly and deep female friendships. This requires making time for people, persevering, being a good listener, and

¹⁶ This section follows Ed Shaw, *Same-Sex Attraction and the Church: The Surprising Plausibility of the Celibate Life*.

personally opening up about your worries, doubts, fears, and pain. Community Groups are an excellent place to develop these friendships.

- d. **Don't equate _____ with heterosexuality.** If godliness is heterosexuality, than the biggest change needed in someone who battles SSA or homosexuality is for them to become OSA or heterosexual. But that is not the change they need. Homosexuals need to be changed into the image of Jesus Christ. The moment-by-moment pursuit of that change into Christlikeness by the means God has provided (the Word of God and prayer), allowing the Holy Spirit to develop the character of Jesus Christ into the individual, is the measure of godliness. *This means that for the SSA believer and the OSA believer, the measure of godliness and holiness in sexuality is saying no to acting upon any sexual desires outside of marriage.*
- e. **Embrace _____ and celibacy as an honorable calling, rather than a second-class state.** Stop assuming every single young person ought to get married and will be incomplete until marriage. Singleness is honored in Scripture (1 Cor. 7; Matthew 19:12); it needs to be honored in the church. *If Jesus Christ, our Savior, can live a perfectly fulfilled and satisfied life while bringing God glory, then marriage is not a requirement for fulfillment of purpose or satisfaction in this life.*¹⁷
- f. **Recognize that _____ and self-denial is part of the Christian life (Mark. 8:34-37; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12).**

12. **Corporately, recognize that the nature of progressive sanctification means we are all at different _____ and _____ of growth in Christ (Eph. 4).** This will help us to understand that those battling SSA may very well be in a life-long struggle with victories and losses, and we need to be there for both types of events:

A robust biblical theology should inform us to expect that those struggling with same-sex attraction who come to faith in Christ and repent of their sins will continue to struggle with some of those sins and impulses until Christ calls them home.¹⁸

May God allow Lakewood Baptist Church to be a place where sinners are welcomed, where sin is hated, where sinners are converted, where sinners are disciplined, where sinners are growing in Christlikeness through God's Word, and where converted sinners treat each other like family, to the praise of God's glorious grace.

¹⁷ "The most fully human and complete person who ever lived was Jesus Christ. He never married. He was never in a romantic relationship, and never had sex. If we say these things are intrinsic to human fulfillment, we are calling our Savior, sub-human" (Sam Allberry, Addressing the Church of England General Synod, <https://youtu.be/mCLms7J84IY>)

¹⁸ Mohler, 174-175.

*Appendix 1: What Should I do if a non-Christian friend has just told me they experience SSA or are identifying as a homosexual?*¹⁹

1. **Thank them.** Often, unless the individual is already a part of the LGBT community, it took much courage for them to be open with you.
2. If they seem fearful of being rejected by you, **let them know their fears are unfounded.** Let them know that as a Bible-believing Christian you have a much different take on matters of sexuality than the culture, but that you can chat about that at some time later. That may be the time, but it may not.
3. **Listen to them.** What made them realize this? What has their family and friend's reaction been? Has it been a difficult time for them? Listen for how to be a good friend to them.
4. **Pray for them.** They need Christ. Nothing else and no one else has the answer.
5. **If you are a young person or teen, tell your parents.** They need to know. God has placed them in your life to help you work through situations like this. They deserve to know, by God's sovereign providence. Then listen to them and follow their guidance.
6. **Seek counsel without breaking confidentiality.** We have a pastor that oversees counseling at Lakewood, and every pastor counsels to some degree. We want to equip you to minister in this area.

*Appendix 2: What Should I do if a Christian friend has just told me they experience SSA or are identifying as a homosexual?*²⁰

1. **Thank them.** *"That they have come this far and finally spoken of it—and done so to you—is not a small thing. You may be the first or one of only a handful of people to have been told this. Any time someone shares something deeply personal, it is a sign of enormous trust. Acknowledge that."*
2. **Listen to them.** *"If they are happy to talk, find out how they are. Ask them how long they've known; what it's been like; what moved them to tell you. This may take some time. But it will help you get a sense of where they are with the issue, how it affects them, and how they are responding to it as a Christian."* What made them realize this? What has their family and friend's reaction been? Has it been a difficult time for them? This is not the time to preach at them. This is the time to listen.
3. **Assure them of your support and desire to walk through this with them.** *"The Christian actively wrestling with these feelings, striving to flee from temptation, wanting to honor Christ and walk faithfully with him—they'll need encouragement, prayers and people to talk to from time to time."*
4. **If you feel ill-equipped to give long-term guidance, encourage them to tell one of us pastors.** If they seem fearful of being rejected by us or others, let them know their fears are unfounded.
5. **Let them know you will pray for them.** And then pray for them. Often.
6. **Seek counsel without breaking confidentiality.** We have a pastor that oversees counseling at Lakewood, and every pastor counsels to some degree. We want to equip you to minister in this area.
7. **Reach out to them soon after** via written note, thoughtful text, etc., discreetly thanking them again and affirming your thankfulness for your friendship.
8. **Be sure to greet them warmly and genuinely the next time you see them.** Prove that you haven't rejected them, that your relationship doesn't need to be awkward and that you love them as a brother or sister in Christ. If you cut off the relationship immediately, you are undermining the gospel you profess to believe.

Appendix 3: What if I find out my child is SSA?

1. **Refuse to "freak out."** God in his goodness and grace has allowed a fact to be revealed to you that was true whether or not you found out about it. In that moment, communicate your love for them verbally. Thank them for being honest with you. Affirm your unconditional love for them as a person; affirm your intention to walk through this with them as far as you possibly can. Pray together.
2. **Embrace the grace of God personally and intentionally.** Avoid blaming yourself or your family

¹⁹ This information is adapted from Allberry, *Is God Anti-gay?*, 74-75

²⁰ This information is adapted from Allberry, *Is God Anti-gay?*, 84-85

circumstances for sinful behavior or sinful choices. Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think (Rom. 12:3). The context is spiritual gifts, but the principle of thinking soberly or accurately about oneself, resulting in appropriate humility (1 Peter 5:5), is applicable here.

3. **Delay judgement of your parenting skills until Jesus Christ judges (1 Cor. 4:3-5).** It is only the judgement of Christ that matters; it is only his perspective on your parenting that matters, not your own. Humbly admit that you were an imperfect parent because you are a fallen parent; then trust the Lord to supply what was lacking in your parenting as your adult child pursues his walk of faith.
4. **Love your child no matter what.** You have a remarkable opportunity to demonstrate the steadfast, covenantal, loyal, devoted love of your heavenly Father to your earthly child (Ps. 118 - "loving-kindness/steadfast, loyal love endures forever"). God has never given up on you; despite all your foibles and follies and falls and failures, his faithfulness remains. Love your child in the same way (Ps. 118; Ps. 32; Romans 5:8-11).
5. **Put your confidence where it needs to be: the grace of God (Phil. 1:3-6; Phil. 2:12-14; Rom. 8:28).** Recognize that God has your Christlikeness in mind, as well as the Christlikeness of your child, even as you grapple with the news you didn't expect.
6. **Put SSA in it's proper place.** Don't view SSA (homosexual lust) as worse than heterosexual lust. They are both sinfully sinful, disordered desires, and wicked in the eyes of God. Notice Paul's movement from describing those with a reprobate mind as given to homosexual sin as well as to covetousness, gossiping, pride, and disobedience to parents (Rom. 1:28ff)
7. **Align your expectations with reality.** Expect your son/daughter to battle this for a long time, understanding that sanctification is by nature progressive — gradual, irregular, highs and lows.
 - A. **Expectations for change:** Recognize that God has the capacity to change your child's desires instantly; rejoice that God will one day do so (1 John 3:2), but that he may not change your child's desires entirely in this life.
 - B. **Expectations for godliness:** Rejoice that your child can live a godly live by the grace of God, but biblically define what victory in the area of sexuality looks like: sexual freedom in obedience to God and glorifying God in the body (1 Cor. 6:11; 13-20; c.f. Matthew 19:12).
 - C. **Expectations for the future:**
 1. Embrace the fact that your child can live a satisfied, complete, and fulfilled life of purity by choosing celibacy if God chooses not to change those desires (Matthew 19:12). "The most fully human and complete person who ever lived was Jesus Christ. He never married. He was never in a romantic relationship, and never had sex. If we say these things are intrinsic to human fulfillment, we are calling our Savior, sub-human."²¹
 2. Give over your desire for a son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchildren to your good and perfect Heavenly Father (Rom. 8:31-38).
8. **Encourage your child to look to the right resources for living in daily sexual victory: spiritual disciplines (word of God and prayer - Jude 20-24; Psalm 119:9-11).** Heterosexual desires, marriage, meeting the right young man/young lady — these are not the solutions. God through the gospel is the solution.
9. **Expect God to teach you and change you through this experience.** We know according to Romans 8 that God is working all things together for good; that good is defined as being conformed to the image of Jesus. Parent, God is going to work this out for your Christlikeness, so be looking for how he wants to change you and grow you by his grace through this.
10. **Practically, allow your adult child to be defined by more than SSA.** Talk about more than SSA or your child's battle against it. He is still your son; she is still your daughter. He/she has a myriad of hopes, dreams, goals, disappointments beyond SSA.
11. **Seek godly support.** Undoubtedly there will be difficult days ahead. You need godly friends who will

²¹ Sam Allberry, Addressing the Church of England General Synod, <https://youtu.be/mCLms7J84Y>.

not only give counsel regarding your interactions with your child, but who will point you to your own application of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

12. **Allow yourself to grieve over what** God in his goodness and grace has allowed a fact to be revealed to you that was true whether or not you found out about it.

Appendix 4: Resources for Further Study²²

These resources are in order of what I found to be the most helpful in my personal study as I began interacting with the topics of SSA and homosexuality.

- **Book: *Is God anti-gay?*** by Sam Allberry. Allberry is a SSA pastor, committed to celibacy and a biblical understanding of marriage. A short 90 pages, this book is an excellent introduction, the most practically helpful book I have read on the subject, and an easy read from one on the frontline of the battle for purity.
- **Audio:** Peter Hubbard, Lectures given at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014: **“The Gospel, the Homosexual, and the Church”** (<http://www.dbts.edu/rice/#14>). This three-part audio series with a handout will challenge your thinking and encourage your soul. I highly recommend each mature man or woman to make time in your schedule to listen to this pastor walk through homosexuality and how it and related topics ought to be handled within the church.
- **Book: *We Cannot Be Silent: Speaking Truth to a Culture Redefining Sex, Marriage & the Very Meaning of Right & Wrong***, by Al Mohler. Mohler does an excellent job of tracing how we got in this morass of immorality within the United States, documenting the failure of the church in the past, and calling believers and gospel-preaching churches to take a stand for the truth of Scripture as it relates to sexuality. Listen to how a Princeton University (!) professor describes this book: “Albert Mohler is one of our nation’s most brilliant and courageous Evangelical Christian thinkers. In *We Cannot Be Silent*, he explains to Bible-believing Christians of all traditions why it is our duty to speak out in defense of biblical and natural-law principles of sexual morality and marriage.”
- **Book: *Same-sex Attraction & The Church: The Surprising Plausibility of the Celibate Life***, by Ed Shaw. Shaw is another pastor who has battled SSA for a long time. He writes pastorally, but frankly, about his struggles, as well as missteps the church has taken that has undermined the biblical solution for the SSA Christian. Some of his thoughts have been reproduced in the section on a biblical church response in this document.
- **Book: *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*** by Kevin DeYoung. DeYoung does an excellent job looking at the theological underpinnings of the Bible’s teaching on homosexuality. It is both theological and pastoral in it’s approach. An excellent resource for anyone’s personal library.
- **Book: *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*** by Rosario Champagne Butterfield. Butterfield was a leftist, feminist, anti-Christian lesbian. In this book she shares an amazing journey of God’s sovereignty and grace in calling and saving her. Her sexuality is addressed within the scope of God’s work in her life with very impactful insights.

In addition to these books, numerous articles on SSA and homosexuality can be found from a biblical perspective from the following websites:

- Biblical Counseling Coalition, biblicalcounselingcoalition.org
- Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation, ccef.org
- Desiring God, desiringgod.org
- Denny Burk, dennyburk.com
- Living Out, livingout.org. Living Out is co-ordinated by three Christian leaders who experience same sex attraction (Sam Allberry, Sean Doherty, Ed Shaw). Their mission: “To help Christian brothers and sisters who experience same-sex attraction stay faithful to Biblical teaching on sexual ethics and flourish at the same time... To help the Christian Church understand how they can better help those who experience same-sex attraction to flourish... To help the wider world hear and understand that there is more than just one viable script for those who are same-sex attracted.”

²² This goes without saying, but I will say it anyway. Simply because an article, book, author, or organization is listed here does not mean I personally or LBC corporately endorse everything that person or organization has ever said, written or stands for. Discerning Christians understand that we each have a responsibility to pursue truth and compare everything with Scripture. If you have a question about a resource or a statement that is unclear in any of these resources, come talk to one of the pastors at Lakewood. We desire to be transparent and approachable.