

Wellspring

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All things are possible with God

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Has Homosexuality Changed?

By Bob Van Domelen

April 2004

[Continuing to celebrate our 20th Anniversary as a ministry, I am reprinting this 2004 lead article. I hope that you will be blessed by it.]

³God wants you to be holy, so don't be immoral in matters of sex. ⁴Respect and honor your wife (body). ⁵Don't be a slave of your desires or live like people who don't know God (1 Thess.4:3-5 CEV).

In 1970, Lawrence Hatterer wrote a simple and I think usable definition of homosexuality in *Changing Homosexuality in the Male*. He wrote:

"One who is motivated, in adult life, by a definite preferential erotic attraction to members of the same sex and who usually, but not necessarily, engages in overt sexual relations with them."

Somehow I think the definition has been changed to one of fewer words and more accessibility for those looking to justify a behavior. I would offer the following:

"One who feels a strong attraction to a member of the same sex."

If that sounds a little too loose and oversimplified, I would agree. Yet it is a definition that sure seems to fit what is happening in today's culture. Children in elementary schools who profess such an attraction are encouraged to believe that at the tender age of ten they are gay or lesbian.

When I was a boy, there was always a bit of emotional connection I felt when attracted to some classmate of the same gender. Sometimes it was hero worship for an athlete, a top scholar, or a good looking individual. Ironically, I never considered such attractions as being homosexual at all. For me, homosexuality came down to one major component—sex.

Not all relationships had that sexual component, though. As a matter of fact, the ones that meant the most to me demanded that sex would not ever be an issue. I wanted to be with Mark, for example, because I felt good hanging out with him. If he ever thought I might be attracted to him in a sexual way, he didn't let on. And I was glad that he didn't.

If I could be ten years old again and starting over, there are a number of things I would want to be different. I would like to have been more in touch with my dad. I would have liked to feel comfortable talking about any issue on my mind with either of my parents. I would certainly have liked to have been taught about sex in healthy, wholesome ways rather than relying on the half-truths friends and classmates shared in casual speculation. Being sexually active with

other guys as early as ten, however, would not even have been a consideration.

That isn't saying that I would have rejected all same-sex activities that occur in the lives of many boys; just that I would have understood the behavior for what it was—behavior. It was not a matter of orientation.

I believe we are all born genetically male or female although there are occasional abnormalities. I believe orientation is the manner in which we learn to relate to those of the same gender as well as those of the opposite gender.

I believe that there is a transitional phase for boys, especially where sexual curiosity will take on a same-sex component. But this transition is short-lived in a healthy environment. Finally, I believe orientation is preference learned by repetitive choice—a choice that eventually feels natural and indeed preferential.

God wants you to be holy

At the very heart of the same-sex marriage conflict lays this truth for those on both sides of the issue. On one hand are those who condemn gays for committing behaviors called abomination in God's word. On the other are gays who argue God created them gay with physical intimacy being a manifestation of God's love in their relationships.

But there is another voice. It is the voice of those men and women who have same gender attractions, yet at the core of their spiritual lives want to be holy as God is holy. They have not been told change is possible, or if they have don't believe it to be true. They've spent a lifetime with this struggle and wonder why they should believe it would ever be different for them.

The religious will rise up and shout, "You can't be holy as God is holy until you turn your back on your homosexual thinking!" Yet these same religious individuals shouting words of condemnation do not lift a finger to lighten the burden or offer to be supportive to those who want support. It is enough, they think, to shout.

Don't be immoral in matters of sex

Sex. Now that's a word that seems to be interestingly absent in most of the current debates. The gay argument is about equal rights. It's about health insurance. It's about being able to participate in medical decisions that heterosexual couples take for granted. It's about love and commitment. Hard to refute.

I have spoken with a lot of people who know gays and lesbians, who consider them good and God-loving people. Why shouldn't gays and lesbians be good people? Putting

a face on this debate, however, is what makes the debate such a difficult thing.

Many in this country cringed when the Texas Supreme Court struck down the sodomy laws—not so much for the laws themselves but for the mere fact that this particular behavior was even mentioned in public. I heard one pro-gay radio commentator recently state something to the effect that sodomy was not what most people thought it was. Sodomy was really about sex between a man and a boy. Talk about distancing.

The gay issue IS about sex for most of us. It's not about orientation. Scripture doesn't condemn a homosexual orientation. It condemns homosexual behavior. Orientation is a preference, not a mandate in terms of how we are to respond to that preference.

Politically the gay issue is shown to be about a same-gender orientation that is pronounced fixed for a lifetime with all of the people-friendly characteristics and needs I mentioned earlier. At the same time, supporters of the popular show, "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," offer the show as evidence of how enlightened and diversified we have all become. Yet there is a collective wink at the innuendo that flows freely throughout the show about implied behaviors and relationships.

Don't be a slave of your desires or live like people who don't know God

Again, I think there are good people who have accepted homosexuality as what and who they are, have developed loving relationships based on their understandings of orientation, and now find themselves on the short side of rights offered to their heterosexual counterparts.

There are also people who have decided that neither God nor God's people can make a difference in their orientation. Life for them is better lived without the rules Christians are encouraged to obey.

Opponents of their pro-gay agenda are described as bigoted, homophobic, uninformed, or insensitive. These terms all pretty much are a not-so-polite way of saying, "You don't agree with me." And the truth of the matter is I don't.

Homosexuality *has* changed and pro-gays would argue that the change is for the better. I think it is they, however, who have redefined same-gender attraction by forcing a level of societal tolerance or acceptance. That the attitudes have been changing is not proof, however, that the condition itself was ever or should ever be considered an acceptable alternative.

I don't think we'll wake up one morning with everything looking as we think it should look. No one repents without some small reservation about saying no to self and yes to God. And in some ways we might be like the rich young man who went away saddened after Jesus told him to give away his wealth. Our behaviors can become old friends, comfortable short-term decisions that fit a need.

Homosexuality *has* changed and there seems to be no universal position taken by the church. Many churches have chosen to do nothing, to celebrate same-sex marriages, and to avoid any evidence of self-discipline in this area of life.

As awkward as it sometimes can be, I believe we are called to stand firm on a Biblical position toward homosexuality. Such a position does not mean we love those with same-gender attraction less. It means we love them more. □

Broken Yoke Ministries is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) corporation and operates *solely* on the contributions of people such as you. All donations to this ministry are tax deductible and will be recognized. While there is no charge for this newsletter, it can only be published if there are funds available to make that possible.

Send your donations to:

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Meetings:

Support Group (weekly)
Tuesday, 7:00PM

Website:

<http://www.brokenyoke.org>

Newsletter:

Wellspring (published bimonthly)

Note: This newsletter and some back issues are available in pdf format on our website. If you don't have Adobe Acrobat Reader, there are links that allow you to download that program free.



Redeemed Ministries

A support system for women
Support Group (bi-weekly)
Call 414-607-1935 for info

Reclamation Resources

P.O. Box 1062
Oshkosh, WI 54902
920-303-1041
<http://www.reclamationrc.org>



Our Prayer Corner

Because we care about one another, we pray . . .

- For all those who struggle with same-gender attractions, that they accept the identity God had in mind for them from the beginning.
- For professional therapists, that they remain willing to address same-gender attractions/behavior in a manner consistent with those who seek freedom from those attractions and behaviors.
- For those who are thinking about attending the Exodus International Regional Freedom conference at Osceola, that they consider the blessings they will receive.
- For those involved in the planning of our regional, that their efforts be blessed.
- For those suffering with HIV or AIDS, that they see God's loving and healing presence in their daily lives, especially evidenced in the hearts of those here on earth who serve them.

- For our teens, that they not be overwhelmed by the “born that way” message and instead actively question those who preach such a message.
- For families, that love is seen as strong in character yet compassionate in presence.
- For Bob, that his daily walk reflects God’s loving and healing strength in his ministry and in his personal life.
- For Broken Yoke Ministries, that its ongoing financial needs will be met through the generosity and prayer support of the readers of this newsletter.

Exodus Regional Conference 2007

Join us as we consider
Revolution: Church, Family, and Self
 October 19-21, 2007
 The Associated Retreat Center
 Osceola, WI

Are we getting healthier or just hanging on?
 Creating a Place within the Church
 Families and Those We Care About
 Moving Forward, Falling Behind, or Standing Still

Lots of wonderful fellowship
 Lots of praise and worship
 Time to step back from the world



What’s a Regional really like?

No one can predict exactly what another person will experience when attending one of our regional conferences, but it is a pretty safe bet

that something will happen. And for those expecting God in a new, really personal way, that can happen—especially in a setting far from home and its routine day-to-day activities.

People who have attended other regionals walk in the door, scan the room, and soon find someone from a previous conference. For them, it is a reunion. For first-timers, there is often that “Should I really be here?” look on their faces mixed with uncertainty over coming to a place to discuss homosexuality and lesbianism. It doesn’t take long, though, for someone to extend a hand and a “First time?”

By the time we meet for the opening worship and general session, most have checked out their room, met room mates, and have begun to grow a little more comfortable about coming.

Our Friday evenings rarely vary. We have opening worship followed by a welcoming and introductory talk on the theme of the regional. Following that is pizza time! Years ago we might order seven or eight large pizzas to be brought in but now find that we manage to consume fourteen or fifteen of them. No one leaves hungry. As a matter of fact, good food is available the entire weekend.

Saturday is normally split into three segments. This year we have three general sessions, each covering one aspect of the revolution theme. From past experience we have learned that people want to talk about what they’ve just heard, so each session will have a small group breakout time for this purpose.

Saturday is also Pastor Day in that we offer a very low conference fee for pastors to attend anything they want. Over the years pastors have written after a conference how much they learned that would apply to their personal ministry, so we know this is a good thing.

Unlike some conferences, we don’t cram every minute with talks and official activity. Some who attend have left behind a very busy and often stress-filled life. We know how healing it can be to just relax with others in conversation, take a short hike around the beautiful conference area, or just find a place to be alone.

Part of our planning for conferences is to make sure that we have an adequate number of prayer partners available for those wanting prayer support. One thing is always true at our gatherings—God is in our midst and we make sure people are aware of that.

The conference closes on Sunday morning with a short worship service, a few closing comments, and a time to say goodbye to new friends.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in, visit <http://www.exodus.to/conferences> and select the link for the North Central Regional. You have an option to request an application form on the Exodus site or you can visit www.brokenyoke.org/Events.html and download a form from there. If all else fails, call Broken Yoke at 262-896-0841 and request one by leaving your name and address.

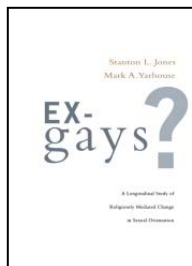
All registrations are being taken through the Exodus International offices, so please send your registrations to them. Their mailing address is

Exodus International
PO Box 540119
Orlando, FL 32854

Be sure to indicate your interest for the North Central Regional. See you there!

EX-gays? (Available October 1, 2007)

Stanton L. Jones and **Mark A. Yarhouse** present social science research on homosexuals designed to answer the questions:



Can persons who receive religiously informed psychotherapy experience a change in their sexual orientation?

Is it harmful for anyone to receive such a therapy?

The results show that outcomes for this kind of therapy are similar to outcomes of therapy for other psychological problems. Such therapy is not harmful to individuals.

This research will be of interest to all those who want to know the latest research on sexual orientation change and the effects of religiously based therapy on those who utilize it. Pre-order through the Exodus bookstore.

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Dated Material

A Little Humor

A man observed a woman in the grocery store with a three year old girl in her basket. As they passed the cookie section, the little girl asked for cookies and her mother told her, "No." The little girl immediately began to whine and fuss, and the mother said quietly, "Now Monica, we just have half of the aisles left to go through - don't be upset. It won't be long now."

Soon, they came to the candy aisle and the little girl began to shout for candy. When told she couldn't have any, she began to cry. The mother said, "There, there, Monica, don't cry - only two more aisles to go and then we'll be checking out."

When they got to the checkout stand, the little girl immediately began to clamor for gum and burst into a terrible tantrum upon discovering there'd be no gum purchased. The mother said serenely, "Monica, we'll be through this check out stand in 5 minutes and then you can go home and have a nice nap."

The man followed them out to the parking lot and stopped the woman to compliment her. "I couldn't help noticing how patient you were with little Monica," he began. The mother replied, "I'm Monica - my little girl's name is Tammy."

