**Sharing The Gospel with homosexual people**

Below are two articles, they have been written by Tim Wilkins, Cross Ministry and Frank Worthen, New Hope Ministries, both men are Christian Ministers. They have been gifted with wisdom and understanding on the subject of winning gay people to Jesus Christ.

**What About Gays Needs to Change? It may not be what you think!**

I am aware the question in this article’s title presupposes a change of some sort is necessary. My presupposition is grounded in the authority of God’s Word. Secondary to that—I am a Christian and a former homosexual. Having now used that inadequate and puzzling term former homosexual, let me try to decipher the lingo and properly answer the question.

**Moving the Fridge**

A story will help. A man glances out his home window and sees his neighbor. The neighbor has his pick-up truck backed to his side door, both the storm and main doors are propped open and a refrigerator blocks the doorway. Obviously the fridge is being moved and help is needed, so the friendly onlooker rushes to help his red-faced neighbor. “Need a hand with that refrigerator, Fred?” asks Steven as he throws himself into the task. “Sure do! This thing weighs more than I thought!”

Fred and Steven throw their muscular arms around the appliance. With sweat rolling down their faces, they grunt and strain as the fridge moves a quarter of an inch then stops. They reposition their arms. The fridge barely sways even though both men are winded. After wrestling with the stubborn refrigerator for a full ten minutes, Steven gasps, “Fred, I don’t believe we’re ever going to get this thing in the house.” “In the house!” exclaims Fred, “I trying to get it in the truck!” The point is apparent-without a clear and focused understating of what direction the homosexual needs to go, he will progress no further than the refrigerator.

**What Needs to Change?**

An illustration will help. Imagine a very thin lady seated at a dinner table. She fidgets with her food, spoons it from one side of her plate to the other, eats little if anything, and then excuses herself from the table. “How can a visibly gaunt woman eat so little or not at all?” we ask. Our observation could lead us to two premises-either she dislikes food or she is not hungry. If we accept the first premise-that she dislikes food—our sympathetic approach might include a variety of recommendations.

We inquire about the type of food she does like—maybe fast food, Mexican or Chinese. If not perhaps the immaculate look of a seven-course meal appeals to her appetite. Perchance she prefers her food prepared a certain way-broiled versus fried, rare versus well done. If none of these recommendations help, she could have sit phobia-a fear of food.

Let’s now assume the second premise—that she is not hungry. If this suspicion is true she may be suffering from a malfunctioning metabolism. We make a doctor’s appointment for her. The physician suspects a thyroid condition and orders blood work. And it’s possible she has hypotenuses-a diminished sense of taste. But as persistent as we’ve been, all approaches make little difference in this lady’s eating habits, or lack thereof. She eats very little and infrequently! Our methods have been genuine, compassionate, and justifiable. We have devoted considerable time in our quest to correct the dilemma, but to no avail.

**The Puzzle Comes Together**

However, if we learn this woman is anorexic, our approach changes dramatically and immediately. We realize our initial assumptions and strategies are ludicrous and laughable because they do not bear on the primary issue—a distorted self-image.

 When this self-starved lady looks in the mirror she sees an obese lady looking back and no amount of persuasion will convince her otherwise and when the primary issue of her food intake is addressed her eating increases. But take note-her increased eating is a byproduct of confronting the main issue-a distorted self-image. And I use the term image not only from a clinical perspective but a biblical one. Genesis 1:26-27 reads, “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’… So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” (Emphasis added)

**Now the Analogy**

How does this illustration apply to the homosexual condition? Just as it is absurd for the anorexic’s family and friends to focus on trying to make her eat, so it is absurd for churches to try and make the homosexual heterosexual.

Society in general and churches in particular mistakenly believe freedom from homosexuality is marrying, having 2.3 children and a dog in the back yard. A 2001 secular study on the possibility of change shows the depth of this ingrained ‘doctrine’. Dr Robert Spitzer, a Columbia University professor interviewed men and women who said they used to be homosexual; I was one of many he questioned. As beneficial as his study was and as much as I appreciate the visibility it gave to change, his study measured heterosexual function of the former homosexual—again missing the real issue.

“But” you ask, “don’t homosexuals need to become heterosexuals?” No! Scripture never states nor implies all people must be heterosexual; it does say explicitly, however, that we are to avoid all forms of sexual immorality, which includes homosexuality. With that in mind have we not at times given the impression that homosexuals must “convert” to heterosexuality? Jesus did not say “Go and make [heterosexuals]“; He said, “go and make disciples.”

“But” you ask, “isn’t heterosexuality the opposite of homosexuality?” No! The opposite of homosexuality is holiness!

As I wrote earlier, the term former homosexual is inadequate if not inappropriate. We mistakenly think a person who has found freedom from same-sex attractions is now heterosexual. The former homosexual man or woman may now experience heterosexual feelings, but heterosexuality should never be his or the churches’ goal. Heterosexuality is in many cases, but not all, a byproduct of the homosexual’s dealing with the primary issues-a distorted self-image and faulty thinking-both of which Satan uses to “gain control.”

The church will do well to remember that singleness is not a sin, immorality is. What all this means is that most of churches’ advice to the homosexual misses the mark entirely!

**Advice Well-Meant, but Wrong**

Telling an adult gay son “you just need to date more; you haven’t met the right girl” is senseless. Suggesting your lesbian friend “marry, settle down and everything will work out” is imprudent. Many gay men and women have married, thinking marriage will “heal” them and in most cases the consequences have been disastrous.

Some, hopefully not Christians, suggest a gay man “find a woman who can make you a man.” While I ‘ve never heard a Christian give such advice, I did have a twenty-seven year old gay man share the following with me. He said he was fifteen when his “Christian” father learned of his homosexual struggle. To ‘help’ his son the father bought him a subscription to Playboy magazine. That’s equivalent to serving roast duck to the anorexic.

God does not heal one form of immorality with another form of immorality! How effective is a machine gun against a tidal wave? “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).

One married struggler told me his well-meaning pastor recommended he have more sex with his wife. Although the Bible does command conjugal rights (I Cor. 7:3-4), the pastor’s advice bypassed the real issue.

Another pastor prayed with an unusually handsome and struggling man, then told him “I’ve got a really nice girl in the church I want you to meet.”

A Christian friend who knows my testimony, met my wife Lisa and said “I can see why you left homosexuality; your wife is beautiful.” While he is correct that Lisa is beautiful his statement, like so many, represents a global ignorance on the subject. If attractive women were the remedy for male homosexuality, there would be no gay men.

Many gay men ask me how to cultivate a romantic/sexual attraction to women. I tell them that this is not the issue; the issue is a distorted/broken image. (I have often thought how devious our adversary is. He not only confuses men and women regarding their sexual identity, he also confuses them and the church as to what healing really is, thus compounding the problem.) By dealing with the primary issue, gay men begin to see themselves as masculine and lesbians begin to see themselves as feminine; the same-sex attractions diminish and in many cases opposite-sex attractions occur.

**Not a Means to an End**

During my own journey out of homosexuality I made a significant discovery—Jesus Christ is not a means to an end. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. I did not go to Christ to get something else, namely heterosexuality. I went to Christ to get HIM!

When we learn this truth, we will witness prison doors falling off their hinges and chains disintegrating.

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**Identity** *by* ***Frank Worthen***

Many of us have no idea how our identity was formed. Often we believe the message of the gay community that we were born gay. As we look back, it would seem that we were always gay. Most of us can remember same-sex attractions in our earliest years. If we are open to other viewpoints, we may find that these attractions were simply the longings of an isolated boy for friendship and not sexual at that point. There was a point in our life (puberty) that we became sexual individuals. What was the focus of our desires at that time became sexualised.

OPPOSITES ATTRACT:

Somehow, there is truth in this statement. We are attracted to people who are opposite or different from what we are. We attempt to fill in the missing pieces; what we don’t possess, we seek in others. The “normal” boy gets as much attention and affirmation from other boys as he needs, and he is not longing for additional male friendship. When puberty arrives, he desires what he has not had; that is, attention and affirmation from the opposite sex. To the isolated boy, his viewpoint is to some degree opposite. Insecure in his maleness, he idealizes other boys. He has fantasies about close relationships with the attractive boys at school. He wants to be like them, to be included in their circle of friends and to be affirmed by them. In his fantasy world this happens, but in the real world he is left out of the circle and feels rejected and unvalued. His own sex then remains that which is opposite.

**SHELTER AND DEFENSE:**

The gay lifestyle seemingly offers inclusion, shelter and defense. If someone declares himself gay, he will immediately have others who will affirm his decision and help him celebrate his new identity. In most schools there is a group of outcasts who find ways of affirming each other. Perhaps they meet in a theater class, or the library when others are on the playing field, but regardless of how they meet, they quickly recognize they have something in common. They are excluded.

**ABUSE:**

Most gay people have suffered rejection in the form of name calling. Probably some had no idea what the names meant at the time, but later learned they were being called gay. There are many emotions that rise to the surface when we are ridiculed. Along with anger there is deep humiliation. If we had low self-esteem before, it now has been verified. We begin to internalize the labels people place on us. If those who have so labeled us are the objects of our desires, or are people who are very significant in our lives (father, pastor, teachers etc.) we will come to believe that they are right, that they know what they are talking about. We must indeed be gay. At times, anger will cause us to flaunt our gayness by wearing clothes identified with the gay lifestyle or otherwise indicating our acceptance of the gay lifestyle.

**FALSE INCLUSION:**

The discovery of the gay lifestyle often brings great elation and enthusiasm. It can seem to someone that they have found their lost brotherhood and, more importantly, their identity. Here are people who understand the hurts and wounds of your past. Here are people who accept you, who include you. This euphoria lasts but a short time.

The reality is that the gay world is far more rejecting than the straight world. Most gays have very exacting standards for those they choose to relate to. If you do not measure up physically to these standards, you will be relegated to a life of being used for others’ pleasure. When you try to find equality with the users, you will be rebuffed and told you are not in their class. In time you will accept your station in life. Even if you do get accepted in the users group, your time will be limited and, as youth fades, so will your membership in the elite class.

**IS ALL GAY LIFE LIKE THIS?**

No, this doesn’t apply to everyone, but the chances are very likely that even if you have been in the lifestyle only a short time, you are already acquainted with rejection within the lifestyle. Gay to gay rejection is far more intense than straight to gay. The gay world needs to take its own medicine-sensitivity training.

**HONESTY:**

In our confusion over who we are, we often believe that to discontinue calling ourselves “gay” is to be dishonest. But is “gay” an identity? Are we not far more than just our sexual attraction? Labels are very significant, both the labels of others and our self-labels.

Karl Menninger had this to say about labels: “People can recover from the symptoms of mental illness, but they don’t recover from a label.” In Christ we can do all things and we certainly can overcome a label, but labels are extremely difficult to change; they have a way of sneaking back and challenging us. There are many arguments over the issue of identity but, to be sure, what we call ourselves means defining who we are, and this makes change very difficult. It is helpful to look at how God sees us. What is His label for us?

First, let’s look at a quote from “The Broken Image” (Leanne Payne): “The fallen self cannot know itself. As we have seen, we do not know who we are and will search for our identity in someone or something other than God until we find ourselves in Him. And it is only in Him that we become persons.” Somehow, someway, we must accept what God says about us; it is the way to a new life. The Bible confirms that we belong to Him: “The Spirit Himself thus testifies together with our own spirit, assuring us that we are children of God.” (Rom. 8:16)

The label “Christian” provides us with all we need as an identity. The world may be less accepting of “Christian” than it is of “gay,” but this label will bring us supernatural power to change our lives. You, therefore, are a Christian. A Christian with problems perhaps, but a Christian nevertheless. All Christians have problems; you may think your biggest problem is homosexuality, but that in reality may not be the case. Most people have a number one problem and it is being self-centered. “I am a Christian with a problem” is far more honest than saying “I am gay.”

There are many Scriptures that concern themselves with verbal expression. We know that salvation comes through confessing our faith verbally, but we also know that speaking can get us into a lot of trouble. “Do not allow your mouth to cause your body to sin” (Ecc. 5:6) and again in Matthew 12:37 “By your words you will be justified and acquitted and by your words you will be condemned and sentenced.” Words are powerful. They can establish our identity and can also block any change in that identity.

**GIVE GOD A CHANCE**:

God can do the impossible – we only have to believe that he can do it. Gay men and women are changing all the time; it is nothing new. Accept your new identity in Christ. Let go of old unrewarding identities. Become a new creation in Christ. “Know the truth (Christ) and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32)

**FEAR OF LOSS OF IDENTITY**:

The fear of losing your old identity is real. Most struggled long and hard before accepting the gay identity, and now fear losing the only identity they had. The gay life does not lead to eternal life, but life with Christ does. Establishing a new identity may be as difficult as accepting the gay identity was, but the new identity will bring eternal rewards. There is a peace and a joy being in the center of God’s will that defies description. God has a better plan for your life. Trust Him and you will never regret it!

“Do not remember the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it, and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18,19)

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