

## The Ambassadors | Declaring the Good News in Challenging Times

July 30 | The Orientations - grace, wisdom, and saving truth for those with same-sex attraction.

*Is God Anti-Gay?* by Sam Allberry ([thegoodbook.com](http://thegoodbook.com))

**Romans 12:1-2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

### Two Common Misunderstandings

- a. "There is no improper sexual orientation." (so everything is acceptable)
- b. "Only those who experience same-sex attractions have an improper sexual orientation."

Neither of those statements is true. We all have improper sexual orientations due to sin. Once we can see that "all alike are under sin" (Romans 3:8-9) and, therefore, no one group is better than any other, we can all come together to take a look at something like homosexuality, and what God wants to say to us about that. What I've noticed in my own life is that my sexual orientation is way off apart from the work of God's Spirit in me. My desires would carry me in a direction that is self-centered, lustful, and ungrateful. I still have to resist lustful thoughts. Even as a married man, my default orientation is to relate to my wife in a way that is self-centered. That also is an improper sexual orientation.

**Which one of these statements do you come the closest to believing? Why?**

### What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

**Leviticus 18:22** You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.

**Leviticus 20:13** If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

**Romans 1:26-32** 26...For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11** 9 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, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 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.

### 3 Aspects of Homosexuality

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|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Desire   | Romans 1:26        | "I experience same-sex attractions." |
| 2. Behavior | 1 Corinthians 6:9  | "I act upon same-sex attractions."   |
| 3. Identity | 1 Corinthians 6:11 | "I <i>am</i> gay."                   |

Without at least these three perspectives, we will oversimplify the issue:

- a. **"I didn't choose this."** (This reduces homosexuality to the level of desire).

- b. **"Homosexuality is a choice."** (This is true of behavior, but it more than likely misunderstands the way that sin shapes our desires.)
- c. **"This is just who I am."** (This fails to take into account our true identity as male and female image-bearers of God.)

### Which one of these statements (a,b, or c) do you hear the most?

#### Bringing the gospel to those with same-sex attraction.

Jesus was faithful to God *and* sensitive to people, God wants us to *challenge* people with the unyielding *demands* of discipleship while we *comfort* them with the incomparable *promises* of discipleship.

**Mark 8:34-35** [Jesus] said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

**Mark 10:28-30** Peter began to say to [Jesus], "See, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

*It is [Jesus'] promise that those who take up the hard demands of following him will be given a new community to support the consequences of the losses they endure. "Truly I tell you," Jesus said, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life." As they contemplate the relational "losses" that await them along a path of obedience to Jesus, his consolation to those who follow him is...a new [and] eternal spiritual family."*

Corey Widmer (East End Fellowship)

#### THE BIG DEAL:

*When our friends and family members who experience same-sex attractions, but who desire to follow Christ, look at the church, **will they find a group of people who confirm Jesus' promises to them or will they find a group of people who only confirm their greatest fears?***

### After honest reflection... which one best describes you, your Community, or RH?

#### Good Questions:

**"How should I respond if a friend or a family member tells me that he/she is gay?"** 1) listen to them, 2) ask them some questions, and 3) pray for them.

*It is good to ask people a bit about their experiences of homosexuality. How did they come to this realization about themselves? What kind of reactions have they had from other people--their friends and family? Has it been a hard time for them? Are they doing OK? We need to find out about their story and its ups and downs. (Allberry, p.74)*

**"What if I have already done the exact opposite of that?"** Go to them and apologize for the way that you responded, and ask them for their forgiveness. Let them know that your disagreement with their chosen lifestyle will never cause you to love them any less.

### How should I respond to the same-sex couple that either visits or regularly attends our church's gatherings?