

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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CELEBRATING A SINFUL LIFESTYLE

by Ken Weliever

"I stand before my family, friends and graduating class today to say that I am proud to be a gay son of God," announced Matthew Easton in his valedictorian speech at Brigham Young University last Friday night.

The "coming out" announcement which came as a surprise to the majority of the 10,000 in attendance, including some family members, was received with cheers and applause that echoed through the Marriott Center.

Easton smiled, paused, and waited for the applause to subside. Later he said. "Four years ago, it would have been impossible for me to imagine that I would come out to my entire college. It is a phenomenal feeling. And it is a victory for me in and of itself."

Ironically the church of which he is a member, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and BYU consider same-sex marriage to be a "serious transgression." Until recently Mormons involved in homosexual unions were treated as apostates and subject to excommunication from the church. Easton, however, considers himself a Christian. "I am not broken," he declared. "I am loved and important to the plan of our great creator. Each of us are."

In an interview with The Washington Post, Easton said he had been inspired by Pete Buttigieg, the Democratic mayor of South Bend, Ind., who announced his candidacy for president. The mayor, an openly practicing homosexual and married to a man, has repeatedly spoken of his faith and believes there is nothing contradictory about being a Christian and engaging in homosexual relationships.

Buttigieg recently spoke to the LGBTQ Victory Fund, in which he condemned Vice President, Mike Pence on his views regarding morality.

"That's the thing I wish the Mike Pences of the world would understand: That if you have a problem with who I am, your quarrel is not with me," Buttigieg said. "Your quarrel, sir, is with my creator."

A reporter's observation on Easton's speech wrote, "A private conquest, the speech also marked a notable chapter in a searching public debate about faith, sexuality and generational change."

"My generation, and even more so the generation after me, we're changing the way we talk about our identity and who we are," Easton said. "But the more that I've understood my relationship with God, the more authentic I've been able to be and the more true to myself I've felt."

Stories like Matthew Easton's are becoming more frequent. And, as is always the case, the liberal new media celebrates and applauds the "courage" of those admitting their homosexuality.

Yes, times are changing. 50 years ago everyone knew homosexuality was a sin. Society and the media regarded it as the perversion that it is. For 5,000 years the Judeo-Christian ethic of marriage between one man and one woman was largely accepted.

Now, we come to the point where homosexuality and same-sex marriage is not only accepted but celebrated. It reminds me of the culture in the prophet Jeremiah's day. *"Were they ashamed when they had committed an abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; Nor did they know how to blush" (Jer 6:15).*

What has changed in our world?

Surely not the Bible, nor God's description of sin. While Easton, Buttigieg, and others in the LGBTQ community presume to know God's view of homosexuality, they

are mistaken.

In an era when our public schools, universities, the mass media and the cultural elite are celebrating sinful lifestyles, we need to be reminded of what God has revealed to us about morality and marriage.

The New Testament not only condemns homosexuality but speaks of it as being a perversion. When Paul recounted the Gentiles' rejection of God, he described it in these words:

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.
(Romans 1:24-27)

Sexual impurity. Degrading. Shameful. Unnatural. Indecent. Perversion. I think these words pretty much describe God's view of homosexual relations. Instead of trying to be true to ourselves and whatever confused and perverted feelings we possess, this generation needs to be true to God. To His Word. And His commands.

To say, "I'm proud to be a gay son of god" is a gross misrepresentation. One might as well say, "I'm proud to be a fornicating son of god" Or an "idolatrous son of god." Or a "stealing son of god." Or a "cheating son of god." What's the difference? All of these sins and more are listed along with homosexuality in **1 Cor. 6:9-11**. Unrepented sins will exclude the sinner from the Kingdom of God.

Friends and brethren, let us not applaud what God disapproves. Nor celebrate what the Bible condemns.

I have included the following article from Rachel Gilson with this caveat. I do not know her or her biblical background. What I do recommend is consideration of her attitude toward same sex attraction as something to consider as we face any and all temptation. She offers a biblically sound method for avoiding succumbing to temptation.
Editor.

My Same Sex Attraction Has an Answer

Rachel Gilson

When I wrote my first article on being a same-sex-attracted Christian, what surprised me most were the emails I started receiving from straight men. The notes often came from men my parents' age, the same message nestled again and again into my inbox: "I never expected this to help me."

People attracted to the opposite sex read about same-sex attraction for many reasons. Sometimes a pastor wants to disciple a young man who experiences same-sex attraction. Sometimes a woman wants to know how to love a sister who identifies as lesbian and has left the church. Still others simply want to think biblically about trends they see in the culture around them. But what they don't usually expect, it seems, is commentary that helps them in their own fight for the obedience of faith.

My latest book, *Born Again This Way: Coming Out, Coming to Faith, and What Comes Next*, is meant to help same-sex-attracted Christians thrive in Jesus and also help others come alongside us in our journeys. But Christians who experience same-sex attraction are asking questions that tap into some very universal streams. God has made all of us embodied desirers, and as sinners who fall short of his glory (**Rom. 3:23**), we have similar challenges spring-loaded into our systems.

First, we all need to test our desires against the same target: Christ. In the book, I wrestle in public with a very private experience: Many of us who love Jesus cannot shake romantic and sexual desire for those of our same gender. That desire is so potent that it can look and feel like our rightful master, and we wonder if we should bow down and serve.

But doesn't that same siren call reach for all of us, in some way or another? Whether our desires are targeted at the same sex or the opposite sex, we're easily controlled by ungodly desire, especially in the sexual realm. That's why the words "*You shall not commit adultery*" and "*You shall not covet your neighbor's wife*" (**Ex. 20:14, 17**) both get prime real estate in the Ten Commandments. That's also why the New Testament warns us against sexual licentiousness (**1 Thess. 4:3; Eph. 5:3**).

Both the world and the church have various coping mechanisms for the strength and persistence of desire, but rarely are they particularly Christian. We see heaps of shipwrecks all around us, brought down by the twin monsters of repression and indulgence, like the sea creatures Scylla and Charybdis from Greek mythology. We see no other option but to crash into one or both of them.

But God as the first desirer offers us another way. At the very best, our yearnings can be a picture of his yearnings, which pulse with goodness, energy, and even holiness. His desire gives us a compass and sets

the course for our desires (yes, even our sexual ones). That means part of Christian discipline is learning to see him as he really is, in his beauty and worth. There is a narrow pathway between indulgence and repression, but it involves carefully testing every desire against God and looking to him for direction over and over.

Second, we're all called to transparency. Unlike me, most of my Christian friends who experience same-sex attraction grew up in the church. One of the most unifying themes I hear from them is the ragged fear that tore at their hearts. They were terrified that someone would discover their attractions. They spent years praying for God to take the feelings away and decades policing their mannerisms in order to stay hidden. (Of course, they had good reason. Many Christians and Christian churches have demonized same-sex attraction, and some movements wrongly believe freedom in Christ is only found in becoming straight.) This same sequestering happens for those who experience attraction to the opposite sex. For example, Christians are often scared to confess their strong desire to look at pornography, even though they know it's wrong. Others feel harassed by the challenge of keeping their thoughts in check around desirable people of the other sex. I've talked to several women who are embarrassed to discuss the strength of their sexual urges, because it feels like good Christians just shouldn't struggle with that. In each of these scenarios, people build walls of silence to protect themselves. But these walls slowly transfigure into prisons.

In the end, we all need the same exact thing that my friends needed years ago and the same thing that I need now: space to speak about what we really feel. The purpose of transparency is not to glory in our struggle but to find support in our quest for costly obedience. I have to know that my desire for women doesn't put me beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit and that right in the midst of it, he can bless me. That's true for each of us. Only when we're honest about our sexual struggles can we hear this message: The Lord wants more for us. He wants our allegiance. He wants our holiness.

Finally, we're all invited to the joy of obedience. Paul begins the fifth chapter of Galatians by saying *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"* (Gal. 5:1). He argues that trying to achieve salvation by works of the law is in fact slavery. We are children of the free woman (Gal. 4:31), born to be free. But then his word of caution comes: *"Only do not use your freedom to indulge in the flesh"* (Gal. 5:13). In other words, true freedom only comes through obedience to God's commands, including the commands about our bodies.

For people like me who experience same-sex attraction, the world begs us to believe that our authentic selves are only found in giving in. It promises

hero status if we submit to our attractions. Our desires whisper, like a serpent in a garden, that there is no death in going against God's Word. This serpentine tongue drawing us toward sin speaks a native language to each one of us and offers each a tailored temptation—maybe a neighbor, an office mate, or a friend's wife.

But there is good news. Jesus really is more beautiful, more worthy, and more satisfying than anything else. Same-sex-attracted believers, assaulted as we are from right and from left, need to taste and see that the Lord is good. We must experience this never-ending person who delights in us and delights in our righteousness.

The same is true for every believer. Obedience was never meant as a bargaining chip to force God into blessing us—it was always meant to be the bountiful and delicious fruit of a life in relationship with our Creator and Savior. He has joy in store for us, which we can only fully find when we pursue the obedience of faith with transparency, honesty, and hope. No matter our temptations, no matter our patterns of desire, we press on to make this joy our own, because Christ Jesus has made us his own.

*Rachel Gilson serves on Cru's leadership team for theological development and culture. Her latest book is *Born Again This Way: Coming Out, Coming to Faith, and What Comes Next* (The Good Book Company, March 2020). Find more at rachelgilson.com or on Twitter @RachelGilson.*

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We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Examining things commonly believed but that are not biblical.

Does the Bible teach we can please God by worshiping any way we choose?

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:23–24)

"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. (John 17:17)

Our worship then, must be authorized by God, the source of all truth. The Bible is His word.

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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Wednesday Evening

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Bill Miller

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Newly Created by God



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10