

# // HOW YOU CAN RESPOND

## // PRAY

- Pray for those who struggle with same-sex attraction, that they would know freedom from bondage to sin through Jesus Christ.
- Pray for boldness, wisdom, and humility for those who minister to homosexuals.

## // ACT

- Recognize that homosexuality is a sin in God's eyes, but not beyond His forgiveness.
- Examine your attitude and actions toward those in the homosexual lifestyle. Know that God loves them and wants them to know the liberating truth that is Jesus Christ.
- Seek out opportunities to witness the Gospel in love and support ministries to those who struggle.

## // BE TRANSFORMED

- In a day and time when wrong is often cast as right and absolute truth is mocked, there is One who never changes and is able to break us free from whatever sin has trapped us.

## // HOW CAN YOU KNOW JESUS CHRIST?

- Realize you are not in control of your future. Admit that you are a sinner (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:23).
- Understand that God loves us, even in our sinful state (Rom. 5:8). He desires we turn away from our sin (Mark 1:15).
- Believe that Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10, 13). Eternal life is a gift; we cannot earn it (Eph. 2:8-9). Know that once you trust in Jesus, nothing can break your relationship with Him (John 10:28-29).

*Faith & Family Impact Bulletin Insert* is a publication of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, 901 Commerce Street #550, Nashville, TN 37203. © 2011 Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

The ministry of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (SBC) is made possible by the sacrificial gifts of Southern Baptists to the Cooperative Program. We are grateful for the Cooperative Program and the prayerful support of Southern Baptists around the world.

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***“Give grace to  
those who hear.”***

*Ephesians 4:29*

**impact**  
Living Your Values Out Loud

# BEING THE CHURCH

Christians often tell me they don't know how to relate to homosexuals, but over the years I've heard many strugglers say some variation of this simple message: "Encourage churches to be the church."

One man said the members of the church he attended when he first came to Christ didn't have any special knowledge about homosexuality. But the men were not afraid to hug him, to invite him to their activities and homes. The pastor took him to lunch and called just to see how he was doing.

There are broken people all around us, and they desperately need a touch from Jesus. Too often we are either repulsed by their sin or we look the other way.

When I first became involved in this ministry, the director of a local group told me to just show up and love people. Frankly, I wanted a more detailed job description. I didn't know anything about ministering

to those who struggle with same-sex attraction, but I took his advice: I showed up and loved people.

I saw God take those loaves and fish and bring healing nourishment to His children. I discovered that in ministry to broken people, *being* is often more important than *doing*. I was both amazed and humbled that it wasn't my pastoral experience, my education, or my hours of study that made the most impact. It was simply coming alongside, listening, loving, and walking together toward Jesus.

I'll admit, however, that homosexuality is a complex issue. It is also one of the greatest challenges facing the church

today. We should make every effort to understand its roots and causes. We should gain more than a surface knowledge of the genetic vs. choice arguments. We must understand more of the overall biblical teaching on homosexuality than the passages in Leviticus and Romans.

Let's commit ourselves to being the church, to being the light that pierces the darkness. Let's work together to make our churches places of refuge and healing.

*Bob Stith is a former pastor and currently serves as the national strategist for gender issues for the Southern Baptist Convention. For more information about the Southern Baptist Task Force on Ministry to Homosexuals, visit [sbcthewayout.com](http://sbcthewayout.com).*

## Why seek change?

*Ninety-eight people seeking help for same-sex attraction named one or more of these reasons as "very important."*

Personal conscience	71
Teaching of the Bible	70
Feel homosexuality is unnatural	59
Feel very unhappy as a homosexual	47
Wanting to be married and have children	36
Unhappy with gay lifestyle	36
Disapproval of the church	24
Peer group disapproval	23
Fear of AIDS	15
Concern over societal disapproval	13
Job discrimination against homosexuals	7

*Ex-gays? By Jones and Yarhouse, InterVarsity Press, 2007*

## "Love the sinner, but hate the sin!"

This much-overused Christian phrase simply does not compute for homosexuals. All they hear is the word "hate" because their behavior is indistinguishable from their identity. When a gay person makes the decision to come out of homosexuality, it can feel like he (or she) is losing his very essence. As people leave homosexuality, they must lay their gay identity at the altar of Christ and accept the new identity He has for them. This can be an incredibly difficult struggle. In most cases you're asking them to abandon the one thing that finally gave them a sense of who they are. And they are well aware that a conversion to Christ will mean leaving a vast support system behind. They face being treated as traitors to the very people who loved and accepted them. Will the person's new identity take root and flourish in the community of believers? Or will he (or she) feel both abandoned by his old friends in the gay world and rejected and misunderstood by the new brothers and sisters in Christ? The healthiness and openness of the person's new Christian community is an important factor of just how successful any "change" will be.



*Adapted from "Is Change Possible?" in *God's Grace and the Homosexual Next Door* (Harvest House, 2006).*