

Sin, temptation, sexual temptation, and personhood
With comments on the Christian view on homosexuality, and if and when it is sin.

“Sin” means to fall short of the mark. This mark would include having no desire for anything that is unclean, unlawful, or in any way not worthy of who God is. Therefore, all lust, and unlawful sexual desire, whether it is acted on or not, is sin.

Christianity is growth towards perfection - of knowledge, appetite and will. If any of these are short of the mark, it is sin. If we are humble and acknowledge that we fall short of the mark in many ways, and desire to change, we will be saved.

Certainly, acting upon a sinful inclination, whether by thought or action, is much worse for the soul than having the inclination, which is also sin.

We get better in stages. For example, a person may be prone to anger. When he becomes angry, he may curse, say unkind things, have hateful thoughts and be violent. If he can control any of these things, he will make progress. He may sometimes be able to bite his tongue or not curse. He may be able to cut off hateful thoughts. He may make amends for his outbursts, ask forgiveness, fast, and pray. Eventually, after great labor and humility, he will no longer have angry thoughts. This is the last thing to be cured in the soul.

This same process occurs in conquering sexual impurity. At the very least, a person must acknowledge that his thoughts and conduct from those thoughts is not God pleasing, and is destructive to his soul. He must struggle against the thoughts and arrange his life to avoid occasions of sin.

For instance, someone addicted to pornography and the unclean actions that usually result from the consumption of it should be sure to not possess any, and not join any pornography websites. A person with same sex attraction should not go to gay bars.

When there are sinful thoughts and actions which came from the thoughts, there must be active repentance. Confession is important, and also saying the “Prayers For Purity” (a book that I have handed out to many). If a person is not fasting, confessing, attending services, praying at home regularly, and reading the Scriptures, they are not being serious about their addiction to sin, and their tears are crocodile tears.

A serious problem in our society is that sexual sin is being referred to as orientation and completely natural and an expected part of full and normal human life. This is a lie. It is replacing an equally pernicious lie - that we either will not be forgiven of our sins or cannot change.

We can change. This is the Gospel message. Since the last thing to be healed in the soul is our thoughts, even unclean sexual orientation or any unclean sexual thoughts can be changed, after much labor and humility. One should not expect the total healing of thoughts to be a quick or easy thing, or even something that is completed in our earthly life. Therefore, for many God-fearing homosexuals, their orientation will never be completely expunged, but they will lead God pleasing lives and be saved, and have perfection in the next life.

Many misunderstand temptation. Christ was tempted - He was presented with things He could possibly do or think that would be sinful, but since He was not inclined towards these things (His appetites, knowledge and will were in perfect harmony), He freely chose not to do them. We may choose to not do something that we know is wrong, or choose to do right with difficulty, but we must often expend great effort because the three attributes of our soul are not in harmony.

Therefore, homosexual inclination, unlawful heterosexual desire and the inclination to be irritable, proud, lazy, dishonest, etc. - is sin. If we battle against these sins, we will be perfected, our sins will be remitted - not just forgiven, but banished from our souls, that is, we will no longer any fashion have any inclination towards a sin.

It is not technically accurate to say homosexual orientation is not sin, no matter what its genesis is, or whether or not it is innate. This is immaterial. We have many sinful inclinations that are innate, and we will triumph over these if we call sin "SIN" and struggle. Clearly, a person who struggles against his sin with faith will be saved.

It is also not technically accurate to link our sinful inclinations to our personhood. Christ came to heal our personhood, so that we would be as He is, with our soul's three attributes (knowledge, appetite and will) in perfect agreement with one another. It is common for homosexuals to link their sinful inclinations to their personhood, and this is understandable, since many or most have been degraded by others because of their orientation, but this is not accurate theologically. We are fully persons when we become like Christ - this is our goal. Until that blessed day, we should consider all of our sinful passions, whether they are innate or learned, to be things that obscure our true personhood.

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