

## **LGBTQ+: some of the Passages and a few additional Resources**

This packet was prepared to provide information and resources for an upcoming LGBTQ+ discussion.

**At a minimum, please read each of the Bible passages (pages 3 – 9).** These passages will be discussed, but we won't fully read each passage in our discussion.

### **Want to dig deeper?**

We can take a Theological approach....or Biblical Scholar approach

#### **Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church** (pages 10 and 11 of this packet)

*Finding the best contributors for a volume like this is no easy task. The criteria are manifold. Every author needs to be an accomplished scholar in their field of theology or biblical studies, demonstrated through published books and peer-reviewed articles. They must be able to communicate to a fairly broad audience (not just pastors or scholars) and model constructive and humble dialogue with their fellow contributors. Moreover, for this present volume, we made sure we found contributors who don't see homosexuality as a scholarly battle to be fought and won, but understand the personal impact their views have on real people.*

We can take a more pastoral approach (Shepherds, Ministers, other Counselors)

#### **Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White (Thoughts on Religion, Morality, and Politics)** <pages 12, 13, and 14 of this packet>

*In both faith and politics, Hamilton is seeking to forge a new path that transcends the extremes of our polarized and paralyzed political culture and our divided church. In this book, she writes of combining "a passionate evangelistic zeal coupled with a belief that the gospel had to be lived in a social ministry to a broken world." The people I meet across the country are yearning for what I call a "moral center" to our public life and political discourse, with a fundamental emphasis on the common good. But this is not just another argument for more centrist politics, so much in vogue these days. The mushy political middle isn't the answer and a vague and compromising centrism that merely splits the difference on whatever the current political spectrum happens to be at the moment isn't particularly attractive.*

Possible Bible Class discussion materials (Point and Counterpoint format)

- **Can You Hold a Biblical View in Support of Homosexuality and Gay Marriage?** by Brian McLaren and Giles Parker ([pdf available here](#))

Compared to

- **Why Evangelicals Should Ignore Brian McLaren: How the New Testament Requires Evangelicals to Render a Judgement on the Moral Status of Homosexuality** (by Denny Burk) ([pdf available here](#))

Another option for discussion (Point and Counterpoint format as well)

- **God and The Gay Christian** (by Matthew Vines)<pages 15 and 16 of this packet>
- **Bible Thinker..... [biblethinker.org](http://biblethinker.org)** <pages 17 and 18 of this packet>  
*Helping You Learn to Think Biblically About Everything*  
Pastor Mike Winger

**Catholic Church (1997 information)** (page 19 of this packet)

***For the Bible Tells Me So*** is a 2007 American documentary film (pages 20 and 21)

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (page 22)

Let's finish with some **Jesus** passages that I believe are worthy of discussion and study and reflection (pages 22 – 25)

## Genesis 38 (NIV) Judah and Tamar

**38** At that time, Judah left his brothers and went down to stay with a man of Adullam named Hirah. <sup>2</sup> There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married her and made love to her; <sup>3</sup> she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was named Er. <sup>4</sup> She conceived again and gave birth to a son and named him Onan. <sup>5</sup> She gave birth to still another son and named him Shelah. It was at Kezib that she gave birth to him.

<sup>6</sup> Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. <sup>7</sup> But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death.

<sup>8</sup> Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother-in-law to raise up offspring for your brother." <sup>9</sup> But Onan knew that the child would not be his; so whenever he slept with his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to keep from providing offspring for his brother. <sup>10</sup> What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death also.

<sup>11</sup> Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He may die too, just like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's household.

<sup>12</sup> After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When Judah had recovered from his grief, he went up to Timnah, to the men who were shearing his sheep, and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went with him.

<sup>13</sup> When Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep," <sup>14</sup> she took off her widow's clothes, covered herself with a veil to disguise herself, and then sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had now grown up, she had not been given to him as his wife.

<sup>15</sup> When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face. <sup>16</sup> Not realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he went over to her by the roadside and said, "Come now, let me sleep with you."

"And what will you give me to sleep with you?" she asked.

<sup>17</sup> "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," he said.

“Will you give me something as a pledge until you send it?” she asked.

<sup>18</sup> He said, “What pledge should I give you?”

“Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your hand,” she answered. So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she became pregnant by him. <sup>19</sup> After she left, she took off her veil and put on her widow’s clothes again.

<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get his pledge back from the woman, but he did not find her. <sup>21</sup> He asked the men who lived there, “Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim?”

“There hasn’t been any shrine prostitute here,” they said.

<sup>22</sup> So he went back to Judah and said, “I didn’t find her. Besides, the men who lived there said, ‘There hasn’t been any shrine prostitute here.’”

<sup>23</sup> Then Judah said, “Let her keep what she has, or we will become a laughingstock. After all, I did send her this young goat, but you didn’t find her.”

<sup>24</sup> About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant.”

Judah said, “Bring her out and have her burned to death!”

<sup>25</sup> As she was being brought out, she sent a message to her father-in-law. “I am pregnant by the man who owns these,” she said. And she added, “See if you recognize whose seal and cord and staff these are.”

<sup>26</sup> Judah recognized them and said, “She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn’t give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not sleep with her again.

<sup>27</sup> When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>28</sup> As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his wrist and said, “This one came out first.” <sup>29</sup> But when he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, “So this is how you have broken out!” And he was named Perez.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>30</sup> Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah.<sup>[b]</sup>

## Genesis 19:1-11 (NIV)

**19** *The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. <sup>2</sup> “My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.”*

*“No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”*

<sup>3</sup> *But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. <sup>4</sup> Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”*

<sup>6</sup> *Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him <sup>7</sup> and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. <sup>8</sup> Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”*

<sup>9</sup> *“Get out of our way,” they replied. “This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.*

<sup>10</sup> *But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. <sup>11</sup> Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.*

**Leviticus 11:10 (NIV)**

*<sup>10</sup> But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to regard as unclean.*

**Leviticus 18:22 (NIV)**

*<sup>22</sup> Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.*

**Leviticus 19:19, 26, 28 (NIV)**

*<sup>19</sup> Keep my decrees.*

*Do not mate different kinds of animals.*

*Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.*

*Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.*

*<sup>26</sup> Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.*

*<sup>28</sup> Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.*

**Leviticus 20:13 (NIV)**

*<sup>13</sup> If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.*

## New Testament

### Romans 1:26-32 (NIV)

<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup> they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. <sup>32</sup> Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

### 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men <sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. 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.

### 1 Timothy 1:8-11 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. <sup>9</sup> We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine <sup>11</sup> that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

## Celibacy

### 1 Corinthians 7:32-35 (NIV)

<sup>32</sup> *I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—<sup>34</sup> and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. <sup>35</sup> I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.*

### Matthew 19:10-11(NIV)

<sup>10</sup> *The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."*

<sup>11</sup> *Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.*



**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)**

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (The Message)**

*There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.*

# Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church (Counterpoints: Bible and Theology)

by Zondervan (Author), Preston Sprinkle (Editor), Stanley N. Gundry (Series Editor), [William Loader](#) (Contributor), [Megan K. DeFranza](#) (Contributor), Wesley Hill (Contributor), Stephen R. Holmes (Contributor)

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**Unique among most debates on homosexuality, this book presents a constructive dialogue between people who disagree on significant ethical and theological matters, and yet maintain a respectful and humanizing posture toward one another.**

Few topics are more divisive today than homosexuality. *Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church* brings a fresh perspective to a well-worn debate. While Christian debates about homosexuality are most often dominated by biblical exegesis, this book seeks to give much-needed attention to the rich history of received Christian tradition, bringing the Bible into conversation with historical and systematic theology.

To that end, both theologians and biblical scholars--well accomplished in their fields and conversant in issues of sexuality and gender--articulate and defend each of the two views:

- Affirming – represented by William Loader and Megan K. DeFranza
- Traditional – represented by Wesley Hill and Stephen R. Holmes

The main essays are followed by insightful responses that interact with their fellow essayists with civility. Holding to a high view of Scripture, a commitment to the gospel and the church, and a love for people--especially those most affected by this topic--the contributors wrestle deeply with the Bible and theology, especially the prohibition texts, the role of procreation, gender complementarity, and pastoral accommodation.

The book concludes with reflections from general editor Preston Sprinkle on the future of discussions on faith and sexuality.

**The *Counterpoints* series presents a comparison and critique of scholarly views on topics important to Christians that are both fair-minded and respectful of the biblical text. Each volume is a one-stop reference that allows readers to evaluate the different positions on a specific issue and form their own, educated opinion.**

CONTRIBUTORS

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TWO  
VIEWS  
ON

# HOMOSEXUALITY, THE BIBLE, AND THE CHURCH



Stanley N. Gundry, series editor  
Preston Sprinkle, general editor

COUNTERPOINTS  
BIBLE & THEOLOGY

# Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White: Thoughts on Religion, Morality, and Politics Paperback – July 1, 2012

by [Adam Hamilton](#) (Author), [Jim Wallis](#) (Foreword)

Everyone agrees that America is polarized, with ever-hardening positions held by people less and less willing to listen to one another. No one agrees on what to do about it.

One solution that hasn't yet been tried, says Adam Hamilton, is for thinking persons of faith to model for the rest of the country a richer, more thoughtful conversation on the political, moral, and religious issues that divide us. Hamilton rejects the easy assumptions and sloppy analysis of black and white thinking, seeking instead the truth that resides on all sides of the issues, and offering a faithful and compassionate way forward.

He writes, "I don't expect you to agree with everything I've written. I expect that in the future even I won't agree with everything I've written here. The point is not to get you to agree with me, but to encourage you to think about what you believe. In the end I will be inviting those of you who find this book resonates with what you feel is true, to join the movement to pursue a middle way between the left and the right - to make your voices heard - and to model for our nation and for the church, how we can listen, learn, see truth as multi-sided, and love those with whom we disagree."

## Chapter 19: Homosexuality at the Center

FOREWORD BY JIM WALLIS, AUTHOR OF GOD'S POLITICS

Adam Hamilton

Seeing  
**Gray**

**in a World of  
Black and White**

*Thoughts on Religion,  
Morality, and Politics*

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The Biblical Case in  
Support of Same-Sex  
Relationships

# GOD AND THE GAY CHRISTIAN

*“This book is a game changer...*

*Every page is brought to life by the author’s clear*

*love for Scripture and deep, persistent faith.”*

—RACHEL HELD EVANS, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*

MATTHEW VINES

## God and The Gay Christian

As a young Christian man, Matthew Vines harbored the same basic hopes of most young people: to someday share his life with someone, to build a family of his own, to give and receive love. But when he realized he was gay, those hopes were called into question. The Bible, he'd been taught, condemned gay relationships.

Feeling the tension between his understanding of the Bible and the reality of his same-sex orientation, Vines devoted years of intensive research into what the Bible says about homosexuality. With care and precision, Vines asked questions such as:

- Do biblical teachings on the marriage covenant preclude same-sex marriage or not?
- How should we apply the teachings of Jesus to the gay debate?
- What does the story of Sodom and Gomorrah really say about human relationships?
- Can celibacy be a calling when it is mandated, not chosen?
- What did Paul have in mind when he warned against same-sex relations?

Unique in its affirmation of both an orthodox faith and sexual diversity, *God and the Gay Christian* is likely to spark heated debate, sincere soul searching, even widespread cultural change. Not only is it a compelling interpretation of key biblical texts about same-sex relations, it is also the story of a young man navigating relationships with his family, his hometown church, and the Christian church at large as he expresses what it means to be a faithful gay Christian.



## **A rebuttal to *God and the Gay Christian* (18 different youtube videos)**

<https://biblethinker.org/homosexuality/>

Pastor Mike Winger is the featured teacher of BibleThinker online ministry. He graduated from the School of Ministry at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa and was ordained in 2006. He has since served in various ministries with a primary focus on being a pastor for the youth, up until a few years ago when the growth and the demands of his online ministry have significantly increased. Mike has since transitioned into laboring full time with BibleThinker to provide free teaching content worldwide. He is strongly committed to a careful and thoughtful study of the Bible with a view toward answering skeptics' challenges with reason and Scripture. He believes that God has called him to make disciples through this BibleThinker teaching ministry and is driven by great confidence in the sufficiency and truth of the Bible and the Christian worldview to not only inform us of the reality and truth of Jesus and the Bible, but to equip us to live all of life rightly and to worship God in truth.

[Homosexuality: The Old Testament Passages pt1](#)

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 1:13:44

[Homosexuality: The New Testament Passages pt2](#)

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 1:05:05

[Homosexuality: Born Gay? Theology and Science Speak pt3](#)

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 1:19:22

[Homosexuality: Refuting Slogans and A Secular Case Against pt4](#)

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 1:42:36

[You have NO RIGHT to tell two consenting adults what they can or can't do in the bedroom!](#)

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 2:58

## Homosexuality: “But they LOVE each other” REFUTED

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 8:13

## “Who are YOU to JUDGE?” REFUTED

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 10:32

## Homosexuality: “Two CONSENTING adults” REFUTED

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 3:36

## How to respond when you are called a bigot or homophobe

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 3:08

## Christians are why gays commit suicide? REFUTED

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 6:51

## Christians justify violence against gay people! REFUTED

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 2:08

## Is This Pro-Family or Racist!?

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 1:55

## The SECULAR case AGAINST homosexuality.

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 23:33

## This is What’s Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 12:31

## Brainwashed: how pro-gay media manipulated your emotions.

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 9:59

## Don’t act like we don’t know Jesus’ opinion of homosexuality!

Series : [Homosexuality](#) | Duration : 4:45

## Lauren Daigle and the Homosexuality Question

Series : [Past Livestreams & Misc. Topical Teachings](#) | Duration : 1:05:02

## Stealing Jesus for LGBT ideology.

Series : [Past Livestreams & Misc. Topical Teachings](#) | Duration : 5:24

## Catholic Church (1997)

### 1997 Dignity Convention

*Dignity* is a support group for gays and bisexuals. Their convention in Boston MA started on July 11, 1997. There were references to a softening of the Church's stance towards homosexuality:

- The *National Catholic Reporter*, conducted a poll in 1996 which revealed that most US Roman Catholics support full rights for homosexuals in the church, including the right to marry.
- Dignity members met regularly with Cardinal John J. O'Connor in New York, NY. One result of these meetings was a church decision to decrease the police protection at St. Patrick's Cathedral during New York's annual Gay Pride Parade. A second was an end to the church's opposition to a recent New York State bill dealing with hate crimes against homosexuals.

Dignity leaders expect to shift the emphasis of the group away from supporting gays and lesbians towards challenging the Church's treatment of homosexuals.

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### 1997 rewording of the Catechism:

On Sept 8, the CDF revised the 1992 Catechism from:

“They [homosexuals] do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial.” To:

“This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial.”

They seem to have changed their mind on the cause of sexual orientation at some time between 1992 and 1997.

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1997 letter from US Catholic Bishops

### **ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN** (pdf)

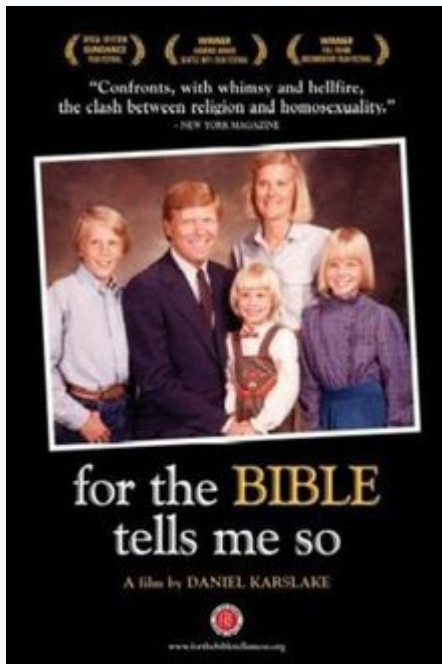
(a Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children and Suggestions for Pastoral Ministers)

And,

**Gay Catholics Respond to Bishops' Pastoral Letter to Parents of Homosexuals: Sign of Progress but more Needs to be Done** (pdf)

# For the Bible Tells Me So

## *For the Bible Tells Me So*



Promotional film poster

<b>Directed by</b>	Daniel G. Karslake
<b>Written by</b>	Daniel G. Karslake Nancy Kennedy
<b>Produced by</b>	Daniel G. Karslake
<b>Edited by</b>	Nancy Kennedy
<b>Music by</b>	Scott Anderson
<b>Distributed by</b>	<a href="#">First Run Features</a>
<b>Release date</b>	October 5, 2007
<b>Running time</b>	98 minutes

***For the Bible Tells Me So*** is a 2007 American [documentary film](#) directed by Daniel G. Karslake about [homosexuality](#) and its perceived conflict with [Christianity](#), as well as various interpretations of what the [Bible](#) says about [sexual orientation](#). The film premiered at the [2007 Sundance Film Festival](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

## Overview

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The film includes lengthy [interview](#) segments with several sets of religious parents (including former [House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt](#) and his wife, Jane, and the parents of Bishop [V. Gene Robinson](#)) regarding their personal experiences raising homosexual children, and also interviews with those (adult) children.

The film features an [animated](#) segment, "Is Homosexuality a Choice?", in which a summary of the then-current scientific theories about sexual orientation is given, such as [homosexual behavior in animals](#) and [sexual orientation being caused by genes](#). It is directed by [Powerhouse Animation Studios](#) and narrated by [Don LaFontaine](#) in one of his last non-trailer narration roles.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tvy5qzhQqPU&t=2552s>

# American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

[https://www.aamft.org/About\\_AAMFT/Pos\\_on\\_couples.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/About_AAMFT/Pos_on_couples.aspx)

## Reparative/Conversion Therapy

**Adopted by the Board of Directors at its March 25, 2009 Meeting in Alexandria, VA**

From time to time AAMFT receives questions about a practice known as reparative or conversion therapy, which is aimed at changing a person's sexual orientation. As stated in previous AAMFT policy, the association does not consider homosexuality a disorder that requires treatment, and as such, we see no basis for such therapy. AAMFT expects its members to practice based on the best research and clinical evidence available

## Jesus passages:

### Colossians 1:15-20 NIV

*<sup>15</sup> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

### Colossians 1:15-20 (The Message)

*<sup>15-18</sup> We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, he organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.*

*<sup>18-20</sup> He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end. From beginning to end he's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is he, so expansive, that everything of God finds its proper place in him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of his death, his blood that poured down from the cross.*

## Philippians 2 (NIV)

*2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. <sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:*

*<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God,*

*did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;*

*<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature<sup>[b]</sup> of a servant,*

*being made in human likeness.*

*<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,*

*he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

*<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place*

*and gave him the name that is above every name,*

*<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

*<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

## Philippians (The Message)

*2 <sup>1-4</sup> If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.*

*<sup>5-8</sup> Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion. <sup>9-11</sup> Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.*



## Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV)

*12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

## Hebrews 12:1-3 (The Message)

*12 <sup>1-3</sup> Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!*

## **1 John 5:1-5 (NIV)**

*5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. <sup>2</sup> This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. <sup>3</sup> In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, <sup>4</sup> for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. <sup>5</sup> Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

## **1 John 5:1-5 (The Message)**

**5** <sup>1-3</sup> Every person who believes that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah, is God-born. If we love the One who conceives the child, we'll surely love the child who was conceived. The reality test on whether or not we love God's children is this: Do we love God? Do we keep his commands? The proof that we love God comes when we keep his commandments and they are not at all troublesome.

<sup>4-5</sup> Every God-born person conquers the world's ways. The conquering power that brings the world to its knees is our faith. The person who wins out over the world's ways is simply the one who believes Jesus is the Son of God.