

Homosexuality

There was a lot of publicity a few years ago about studies indicating a "genetic predisposition" to homosexuality, but there has never been anything near proof that homosexuality cannot be helped and is genetic. If someone contends that it is genetically driven, the burden of proof is on the one making that contention. It cannot be proven. Some other thoughts:

1. Homosexuality is "conduct". We do not deny that someone may have homosexual thoughts or temptations. But what makes someone homosexual is committing homosexual acts. Most people confuse a "tendency" or a "temptation" with the act. I may be tempted to rob a bank, but that does not make me a bank robber. I am a bank robber only when I rob the bank. I would not dispute that someone may have "homosexual tendencies." That does not mean that they have no choice but to commit homosexual acts. People choose the kind of behavior they engage in. Someone with the temptation to commit homosexual acts must discipline themselves and work to overcome their temptation just as someone tempted to commit heterosexual fornication or someone tempted to steal.

2. The fact that a condition has a genetic background does not make it good. The very same genetic studies that have been used to justify homosexuality also produced information about a number of genetic defects such as Down's syndrome. If there were a way to prevent or correct that genetic defect, we would do it. Should we be looking for a way to prevent or correct the "genetic defect" which supposedly causes homosexuality?

3. We know that there are "genetic predispositions" to certain behaviors. For example, there is evidence of a genetic predisposition to alcoholism. If someone knows they have such a genetic predisposition, they would be wise to avoid the behavior (drinking alcoholic beverages) that can cause them a serious problem. Furthermore, they have that choice! That person is not forced to drink, or to become a drunkard. He may have "predisposition" to alcoholism, but whether he ever takes a drink is a matter of choice and behavior.

4. If the person with whom you are discussing has regard for the Bible, I would point out that passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 teach that homosexuals (as well as drunkards, thieves, adulterers and idolaters) learned to cease that behavior. If they could learn to cease it, it must have been something they originally learned to do. Nevertheless, whether it was learned or inherited behavior, they still could stop the behavior, and had to do so to be right with God.

- by Tom Moody

God-Consciousness

A truly godly man is one who lives with a constant realization of God's divine presence. He is God-conscious. When he awakes in the morning, there is God. As he dresses for work there is God. As he goes in to breakfast with his family, as he drives to work, as he works through the day, as he drives home, as he spends the evening hours, as he lies down on his bed at the close of the day, there is God.

Enoch was a man who was God-conscious, for he "walked with God" (Genesis 5:24). He enjoyed constant companionship with God. Wherever Enoch went, God went with him, and Enoch was always aware that He was there. He could not flee from God's presence (Psalm 139:7), nor did he seek to do so. He was a godly man.

How fortunate is that man who has developed within himself this God-consciousness. It is easy for him to pray, for God is to him a close, ever near, companion whose "ears are open unto his prayers" (1 Peter 3:12). His talking with God is as natural as his talking with any companion.

He does not fear, for he just places his hand in God's in his times of trouble. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear. ..." (Psalm 46:1, 2). Even when walking "through the valley of the shadow of death," he can "fear no evil," for God is with him.

The power of temptation is greatly reduced, for he never forgets that "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). His desire to please his ever present God is greater than the power of temptation.

He is thankful, recognizing God, with whom he walks, to be the source of "every good gift and every perfect gift" (James 1:17).

He loves God. He talks to God. He walks with God. He is always conscious of God's presence. He is never without God. Yet, this relationship never degenerates into a "buddy-buddy" relationship, for he reverences God; he recognizes His awesomeness; he gratefully acknowledges his own personal unworthiness of such a relationship with Almighty God.

This is the very essence of godliness. Someone, years ago, observing the similarity between "godliness" and "God-like-ness," assumed that the two words meant the same. That false assumption was passed on to others, and has now gained a strong foothold in the thinking of a great number of people. W. E. Vine says that godliness "denotes that piety which, characterized by a godward attitude, does that which is well pleasing to Him." A godly person, then, is one who has a godward attitude, and whose constant consciousness of God leads him to be obedient to Him.

While visiting in a hospital, recently, we observed this sign, "Have you said Thank you, God today?" A godly person probably would have done so. Have you said, "Thank you, God" today?

- by Bill Hall

Are You Upset & Concerned? Have Questions?

Do you wonder why things are done the way they are done? Do you have questions about the work, worship or operation of the congregation? Does it seem that there are things going on that you don't understand? Are there issues floating around that trouble you? Are there times when you don't really agree with the decisions that are being made?

If so, join the club! We all face the kind of questions and concerns that we've just described. The big question is not: Will such issues arise? The question is: How will YOU deal with these things when they happen?

Let us offer some do's and don'ts for handling these potentially difficult situations.

DON'T...

- Don't get angry and upset before you have gathered all the facts.
- Don't gossip or backbite. This doesn't help, and it is a sin (Proverbs 6:19).
- Don't complain if you don't intend to get busy correcting the problem. Typically, churches have way too many fault-finders, and not enough problem solvers.
- Don't immediately assume the worst about your brethren. Too often we hear harsh judgmental words about the elders, the preacher, or other member's before the facts have all been sorted out. True love demands better than this (2 Cor. 13:4-7).

DO...

- Ask for information. Very often any disagreement or controversy can be quickly cleared up this way.
- If there is a problem, go directly to the source. Speak to the one(s) involved and work for a solution.
- Pray for wisdom in dealing with the problem, asking for God's help to do and say the right things (Jas. 1:5).
- Maintaining sound doctrine is the highest priority (Gal 1:8,9), but maintaining peace must also be an important goal for every member (Eph. 4:1-3).

- by Greg Gwin