

Speaking the Truth in Love, The Dangers of Homosexuality – Dan Hitz

In the October 2004 newsletter, I presented a Biblical response to the gay affirming church. This article is intended to be a follow up to the October article and presents some of the secular research that shows that homosexual activity is a harmful behavior with physical, emotional, and relational consequences. Both articles are intended to merely scratch the surface of these issues and present a brief overview. References will be presented throughout the article and at the conclusion for those who would like more information.

When God ordained sexuality specifically within the context of the heterosexual marriage bed between one man and one woman, he did so because He created us as heterosexual, monogamous beings. He knows how we function best – body, soul, and spirit. Secular research on sexuality in general shows that sexually active teenagers are significantly more likely to feel depressed and to attempt suicide than non-sexual active teens.¹ According to one study, teen females who were sexually active felt “depressed all, most, or a lot of the time” compared to 7.7 percent of the non-sexually active girls. For teen boys, the percentages were 8.3% for sexually active, compared to 3.4% for non-sexually active boys.² These and other studies back up the message that it is better to wait until marriage to have sex. Further studies show that there are significant health risks associated with homosexual activities.

According to the Center for Disease Control, smokers can expect to live approximately 7 years less than non-smokers. This has caused the government to order strict warning labels on cigarette packages and advertisement. However, the decrease in life expectancy for gay and bisexual men is much higher. “Life expectancy at age 20 years for gay and bisexual men is 8 to 20 years less than for all men.”³ In a household survey of unmarried men 18 through 29 years of age, 328 homosexual men, 20.1% tested positive for HIV⁴, yet many men continue to practice unprotected sex with multiple partners. In addition to HIV/AIDS, there are many extreme health risks associated with homosexual activities including hepatitis A, B, and C; increased risk of anal cancer (4000%), HPV, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disease, and a multitude of other sexual transmitted diseases. (For a more complete explanation of the physical risks of male homosexual behavior, see the Christian Medical and Dental Associations’ Homosexuality Statement. This is an excellent compilation of data from many published secular studies complete with references.⁵)

Embracing the homosexual lifestyle also takes a heavy emotional toll. According to a study published in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* (December 2003), there are higher incidences of illegal drug usage, alcoholism, psychological problems, and violence in the gay community than in the general population. “Gay men and lesbians reported more psychological distress than heterosexual women, despite similar levels of social support and quality of physical health”. (p.556)⁶ The pro-gay community would be quick to reply that these situations are caused by harassment, intolerance, and homophobia; however, these figures are also reflected in studies conducted in the Netherlands where homosexuality is much more accepted than in the US.⁷ “A Dutch study of 5998 heterosexual and homosexual men and women showed that ‘psychiatric disorders were more prevalent among homosexually active people compared with heterosexually active people... On a lifetime basis, homosexual women had a significantly higher prevalence of general mood disorders and major depression than did heterosexual women... Lifetime prevalence of both alcohol and other drug dependence was also significantly higher in homosexual women than in heterosexual women.’”⁵

What about committed relationships between two individuals of the same sex? Wouldn’t they have less risk factors than promiscuous individuals? The reality is that even among same-sex couples that say that they are in a committed relationship, there are very few truly monogamous relationships. In *Male and Female Homosexuality*, the authors found that the average live-in relationship lasts between two and three years.⁸ In *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, Jeffrey Satinover writes “a study conducted by a homosexual couple found that out of 156 same-sex couples ‘only seven had maintained sexual fidelity; of the hundred couples that had been together for more than five years, none had been able to maintain sexual fidelity. The authors noted that the expectation for outside sexual activity was the rule for male couples and the exception for heterosexuals.’”⁵ Many in the homosexual community will point out the high divorce rate in the heterosexual community and claim that the infidelity rate is also bad for heterosexual marriage. I agree that many heterosexual marriages are also in need of repair, but the statistics of monogamy are still much higher. “In *Sex in America*, called by the New York Times ‘the most important study of American sexual behavior since the

Kinsey reports,' Robert T. Michael et al. report that 90 percent of wives and 75 percent of husbands claim never to have had extramarital sex." ⁹

There is hope for men and women struggling with homosexuality. Thousands of men and women have found help in dealing with their unwanted same sex attractions through therapy, and/or faith based groups like Restored Hope Network. Joseph Nicolosi, president of the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, "surveyed 850 individuals and 200 therapists and counselors – specifically seeking out individuals who claim to have made a degree of change in sexual orientation. Before counseling or therapy, 68% of respondents perceived themselves as exclusively or almost entirely homosexual, with another 22% stating they were more homosexual than heterosexual. After treatment only 13% perceived themselves as exclusively or almost entirely homosexual, while 33% described themselves as either exclusively or almost entirely heterosexual, 99% of respondents said they now believe treatment to change homosexuality can be effective and valuable." ⁵ Other research also shows that individuals have changed their sexual orientation. Dr. Robert Spitzer, a historic champion of gay activism, played a major role in removing homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's manual of mental disorders.¹⁰ In Spitzer's 2001 study of 200 men and women, 29% of the male subjects and 63% of the female subjects reported "no or only minimal homosexual indicators".¹¹ The majority of those in the study reported a significant change in their orientation from "predominantly or exclusively homosexual before therapy, to predominantly or exclusively heterosexual after therapy. Also interesting to note, many pro-gay groups will report that people who attempt to change their sexual orientation will become depressed. Spitzer found the opposite to be true. Twelve months prior to their effort to change, 43% of the males and 47% of the females reported suffering from depression. After their effort to change, and in the twelve months prior to being interviewed, the percentage of people reporting depression dropped to 1% for men and 4% for women.¹¹ As with walking out of any sinful behavior, the temptation may return on occasion. For example, a former alcoholic may desire a drink after ten years of sobriety. We would certainly not encourage the alcoholic to "embrace his true self and live out his alcoholism". We would instead encourage him to resist the temptation and offer to walk alongside him to help him past the season of temptation. This is the function of the church, and the work of God's grace for all in the body of Christ.

This article has only begun to scratch the surface of this topic and to provide additional resources for further research. Remember, when talking with someone who embraces homosexuality, we must always speak the truth in love. Knowledge will do nothing to reach someone for Jesus Christ if it is not spoken with love. If you would like more information on this subject, please check out the following resources:

A Strong Delusion, Joe Dallas. Harvest House Publishers, 1996

Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth, Jeffrey Satinover, M.D. Baker Books, 1996.

Restored Hope Network has many resources available at www.restoredhopenetwork.org

National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality at www.narth.com

Focus on the Family at www.family.org

References

- 1 Sexually Active Teenagers Are More Likely to Be Depressed and to Attempt Suicide, Rector, Johnson, and Noyes. Center for Data Analysis Report #03—4 <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Family/cda0304.cfm>
- 2 National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, Wave II, 1996
- 3 Modeling the impact of HIV disease on mortality in gay and bisexual men. International Journal of Epidemiology. 26 (3): 657-661. Hogg, R.S. et al.
- 4 Osmond, D., Page, K., Wiley, J., Garrett, K., Sheppard, H., Moss, A., Schragar, K., Winkelstein, W., (1994) HIV infection in homosexual and bisexual men 18 to 29 years of age: The San Francisco young men's health study. American Journal of Public Health. 84, 12: 1933-1937.
- 5 *Homosexuality* Statement, Christian Medical and Dental Associations <http://www.cmdahome.org/index.cgi?BISKIT=2302340612&CONTEXT=art&art=2554>
- 6 Waller, Roy. New Study Indicates Gays and Lesbians Prone to Psychological Symptoms and Substance Abuse. NARTH. December 2003. <http://www.narth.com/docs/symptoms.html>
- 7 Sandfort, T.G., de Graaf, R., Bijl, R.V., Schnabel, P. (2001, January). Same-Sex Sexual Behavior and Psychiatric Disorders: findings from the Netherlands mental health survey and incidence study. (NEMESIS). Archives of General Psychiatry. 58: 85-91.
- 8 M. Saghir and E. Robins, Male and Female Homosexuality (Baltimore": Williams & Wilkins, 1973), p. 225; Dailey, T. Homosexual Parenting: Placing Children at Risk. (OrthodoxyToday.org September 29, 2004) p. 8.
- 9 Dailey, T. Homosexual Parenting: Placing Children at Risk. (OrthodoxyToday.org September 29, 2004) p. 8. <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articlesprint/DaileyGayAdoptP.htm>
- 10 Waller R. and Nicolosi, L. Spitzer Study Published: Evidence Found for Effectiveness of Reorientation Therapy. September 21, 2004. <http://www.narth.com/docs/evidencefound.html>
- 11 Research Summary: Robert L. Spitzer, Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation? 200 Participants Reporting a Change from Homosexual to Heterosexual Orientation. New Directions for Life 2003. <http://www.newdirection.ca/research/spitzer.htm>

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