

SAME-SEX ATTRACTION (HOMOSEXUALITY)

Same-Sex Attraction (SSA), or Homosexuality, is romantic attraction, sexual attraction or sexual activity between members of the same sex.

God deeply loves people with same-sex attraction. Sadly, many churches have ostracized gay-identified people. God doesn't see people with same-sex attraction as greater sinners than others. Every time the New Testament references homosexual practice as a sexual sin, it is within the context of other sins. He offers the same redemptive plan to *all* people. He discourages any sexual sin (regardless of gender attraction) outside of His plan for sexual expression because He loves us and sin is destructive.

Homosexual practice has been present throughout history. Thankfully, God's Word transcends time and culture to direct us towards life. To experience God's best with our sexuality, we must live by God's plan for sexuality, regardless of cultural acceptance or personal desires. *The Bible clearly defines homosexual practice as a sexual sin throughout both Old and New Testaments.* The only relationship where a sexual union is celebrated is within the confines of a monogamous heterosexual marriage between one man and one woman. All people are called to flee any sexual activity outside of this boundary.

Setting the Record Straight

- **God loves gay people:** God so loves the LGBTQ community and anyone with same-sex attraction, that He gave His only son to be crucified so that any may be redeemed and restored to an intimate relationship with Him (John 3:16). Christ gives new life to all who trust in him (1 Cor 6:9-11).
- **Christians can struggle with same-sex attraction:** Many Christians with SSA faithfully and joyfully surrender their sexuality to God's design along with other areas of life. (1 Cor 10:13, John 10:10)
- **If people are born with same-sex desires, it doesn't mean that same-sex love is God's design.** Because of Adam and Eve's sin, we've all inherited a rebellious nature with sinful desires leading to death (Romans 7:14-18). Intrinsic desires don't determine whether a longing is good or bad. God's word alone defines truth. Sexuality is determined by our Designer, not our desires. (Psalm 19:7-11)
- **The Bible doesn't affirm monogamous same-sex love.** Homosexual practice is designated as sin in both Old and New Testaments (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:21-32, 1 Tim 1:9-10). Jesus affirmed that God created man and woman in His image with distinct but complementary roles, and that marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman in monogamy. (Matthew 19:4-6)
- **Love can be wrong.** Just because there is love in a relationship, it doesn't mean that God approves of the relationship. Hearts can be deceptive (Jeremiah 17:9). In fact, no earthly love can fulfill our need for love. Only God's perfect love can fully satisfy our love needs. (Ecc 3:11, Psalm 90:14)
- **Desires do not determine identity.** We are not a sum of our attractions and desires. God created each of us for a purpose. He gives us a choice to live in his intended design for life or to go our own way. God gives those who turn to Christ, a new identity as children of God—forgiven, righteous and clean. Christ's blood preeminently determines the value and identity of a Christian. (1 Cor 6:9-11)
- **You are not denying your true identity if you follow God's plan instead of your same-sex desires.** Jesus' invitation to all is to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Luke 9:23-25). Following Christ often demands sacrifice in all areas of life (including sexuality), but also promises great eternal rewards. To answer Jesus' call is to accept an identity defined by God and to follow Christ fully.
- **God can change sexual desires, but He doesn't always change sexual desires.** God gives Christians the Holy Spirit to change them from the inside out (John 16:7-8). Sometimes, the Spirit takes away a person's desire for specific sins, other times, He does not. God calls us to follow Him regardless of sinful desires, or what culture says, in order to glorify Him and to enjoy His blessings.

More Biblical Insights

God loves you, and has your best interests in mind. You matter to God. He created you for purpose and set eternity in your heart. No marriage, no earthly relationship, no fulfilled sexual desire, will satisfy you—only God's perfect and true love satisfies. His instructions lead to life.

- *"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."* (Psalm 16:11)

Homosexual practice is condemned in Old and New Testaments. It is always listed amongst other sins. Sexual sins are some of the first to emerge when we turn from God. (Lev 20:13, 1 Cor 6:9-11, 1 Tim 1:9-10)

- *"You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination." (Leviticus 18:22)*
- *"... they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (Romans 1:25-27)*

Without Christ you're powerless to change, but Christ redefines and changes all who trust Him. Willpower won't overcome sin. Those who accept Christ receive a new Spirit and new identity defined by Christ's work on the cross. God may or may not remove a Christian's same-sex attraction, but the Holy Spirit will give him or her a supernatural ability to resist temptation and live joyfully in God's will.

- *"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out." (Romans 7:18)*
- *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)*

Self-denial of sexual desire is counter-cultural, but Christ says we must deny ourselves and follow Him in order to live. Culture tells us to transform our bodies and conform our minds to our sexual desires. Jesus calls us to follow Him, and let God transform our hearts/minds to conform every area of life to His will.

- *"...If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?" (Jesus Christ, Luke 9:23-25)*
- *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Jesus Christ, Matthew 11:28-29)*

It is loving, not hateful, to refrain from supporting sin and to kindly tell someone the truth about sin.

- *"[Love] does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth." (1 Corinthians 13:6)*

Next Steps

- God loves you and made you in His image. Ask Christ to heal you spiritually (Romans 10:13). If you do not yet have a personal relationship with Jesus, learn more at regenrecovery.org/freedom.
- Begin renewing your mind (Romans 12:1-2). Take a 30-day challenge: pray and read God's word daily (start with John), ask God to reveal His love for you, meditate on and memorize scripture (try Romans 13:14), change media intake (TV, radio, social media, websites, etc.) to that which honors Christ, limit time in relationships that pull you from God, attend a Bible-teaching church that doesn't fear people with SSA to receive sound teaching and to find healthy Christian community.
- Find a Christian group, like *re:generation*, where you are safe to be known, work through struggles, and discover who God designed you to be. (Titus 3:3-7)
- Begin to study God's design for sexuality and gender using the resources below.

Additional Resources

- For stories of hope, go to regenerationrecovery.org: Marisa, Michael, Wes
- Read Leonard's *re:generation* blog, *As a Gay Man, I Never Thought I Would Be Free to Marry*
- livingout.org, livehope.org, Real Truth Real Quick podcast: *Has the Church Failed the LGBTQ Community?, Should Christians Support Gay Conversion Therapy?*
- *Is God Anti-Gay?* - Sam Allberry, *Speaking of Homosexuality: Discussing the Issues with Kindness and Clarity* - Joe Dallas, *Dwelling in the Land: Bringing Same-Sex Attraction Under the Lordship of Christ* - Jeanette Howard, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* - Rosaria Butterfield