

HELP!

**MY TEEN STRUGGLES
WITH SAME-SEX
ATTRACTIONS**



ben marshall

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INTRODUCTION

The only time Jon could remember feeling like this was when he learned that his younger brother had died in a tragic bike accident. Memories flooded his mind, making him realize that the future was going to be very different from now on. He felt anger at not being able to do anything to change the situation; anger at wishing he had stepped in to prevent this from happening when he saw the early signs. All this and more swept through his mind, creating the feeling that he was under water, watching the surface slip further and further away.

Jon's conversation with his son Matt had started so innocently. He remembered that Matt had approached him earlier in the week and, with a sheepish look on his face, had asked Jon if he could talk to him about something. Jon thought for sure it was about dating, girls, and everything else that went along with Matt's season of life. Matt was thirteen

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years old and going through puberty. Jon decided that he was going to take Matt out for a burger and fries so they could be alone and have the talk that Jon had dreamed about. He could not have imagined a better scenario as he unwrapped his burger and watched Matt dip his fries into the ketchup.

It wasn't until Matt had talked at length about his health class at school and the biology of sex, the lesson in Sunday-school class about Billy who had two dads, and the sleepover he had had at Doug's house, that reality came crashing in. Jon heard very little after the phrase, "Dad, I think I'm gay." Jon tried to grasp what was going on, but it was too much to handle. He had no idea what to do or where to turn.

Can you identify with Jon? If you can, believe me, you are not alone. This mini-book is designed to be a guide for any Christian parent whose son or daughter reveals that he or she is struggling with same-sex attractions. I hope that it will answer some of your questions about what to do in a situation such as this. However, more than simply find answers to questions, it is my earnest desire that you will receive real hope that leads to real change.

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The Magnitude of the Problem: What We're up Against

Try as we might, it is almost impossible to escape from the impact that homosexuality has had on life in the twenty-first century. “Gay marriage,” “life partner,” “alternative lifestyle,” “gay pride”—these phrases are all commonplace in today’s culture. The subject of homosexuality is perhaps one of the most hotly debated today, both in the secular world and within Christian circles.

The world has offered many different explanations for homosexuality, all sounding as though they have good scientific proof. At the forefront of this debate is the argument that people are born or created with a tendency to be attracted to the same sex instead of to the opposite sex. This can lead to a great deal of frustration for the parent of a teenager who claims that he or she is struggling with homosexual thoughts and desires. If the world’s explanation is

true, there is no need to dig into the Scriptures to see what God has to say about this topic. However, if that explanation is false, and man is not created with homosexual tendencies, there is great reason to search through the Scriptures, not only to see what is said about this issue, but also to find out how to help those who are toying with this sin as well as those who have already fallen prey to its temptations.

Homosexuality has traditionally been viewed by Christians as an abomination in the sight of God. This understanding goes back to the first chapters of Scripture, from the account of God's wrath poured upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as judgment for their sin (Genesis 18–19). Today, however, those in a church who fall into this sin are usually treated in one of two ways: either the church excommunicates the one caught up in the sin without going through the proper steps of discipline described in Matthew 18:15–21, or the sin is overlooked and hidden so that the mainstream congregation is kept away from it. Thus the sin of homosexuality is usually not spoken of or handled biblically, and parents are left in the dark as to what to do if their child expresses to them that he or she is dealing with homosexual thoughts and desires. God's Word does not exhort the church to excommunicate the homosexual

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sinner immediately or call for the sin to be hidden; but neither does it condone homosexual behavior. Romans 1:18–32 clearly states that homosexuality is the result of mankind exchanging the worship of God the Creator for the worship of the creation.

Through many different avenues, the sin of homosexuality has not only become ordinary and normal, it has also become a widely accepted practice in the world today. For parents like Jon in the Introduction, the amount of scientific and psychological “evidence” that is available through the Web, textbooks, TV shows, and a whole host of other media seems overwhelmingly to paint the picture that people cannot help whether or not they are homosexual.¹ This push for acceptance is perhaps most obvious through our culture’s attempt to make homosexuality an issue of biology.

- 1 In addition to an attempt to explain away homosexual behavior by biology, there has been a concerted effort by psychologists to make homosexuality appear to be normal behavior. A look through the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* from 1973 onwards will reveal the progression of homosexuality from abnormal deviant behavior to something that is no longer mentioned.

Attempt to Explain Homosexuality through Biology

While history indicates that homosexuality has been a major part of different societies, the sexual revolution that paved the road for today's homosexual movement can be traced back to a sex researcher in 1948. That researcher, Alfred Kinsey, studied sexual behavior in males by interviewing 5,300 men. Of these, 10 percent claimed to have been homosexual for at least three years.² From that point forward, scientists with a heavy evolutionary bent have spent large amounts of time and money attempting to prove that homosexuality is biological in nature and cannot be helped.

In 1991, Simon LeVay of the West Hollywood Institute for Gay and Lesbian Education in Los Angeles conducted a study aimed at proving that homosexuality is biological in origin. This study dealt specifically with the differences between the hypothalamus in homosexual men versus that in heterosexual men.³ While many cite this study

2 Alfred Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders Press, 1948), 625.

3 Simon LeVay, "A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men," in *Science*,

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as proof that homosexuality is indeed biological in nature, LeVay himself is quoted as saying, “It’s important to stress what I didn’t find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn’t show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work.”⁴ In the same year, Drs. Bailey and Pillard sought to prove through genetic reasoning that homosexuality had biological roots. Dr. Bailey’s report, however, showed that no such conclusion could be drawn.⁵ In 1993, another study dealing with genes and homosexuality was conducted by Dean Hamer. In order to prove the existence of a gay gene, he looked at two brothers who were practicing homosexuals. At best, this study could conclude only that the brothers were related.

As recently as 2005, further studies were conducted in an attempt to prove that the homosexual male’s brain responds more in line with a woman’s brain than with that of a heterosexual male. Researchers at the Karolinska

253, 1034–1037.

4 Simon LeVay, “Sex and the Brain,” in *Discover*, 15/3 (March 1994), 64.

5 Michael J. Bailey and D. S. Benishay, “Familial Aggregation of Female Sexual Orientation,” in *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 150, 272–277.

Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, published an article on May 10, 2005 in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* stating that the male homosexual's brain responded like the brain of a woman when he sniffed a chemical from the male hormone testosterone.⁶ The only outcome of this study was the conclusion that homosexual men seem to be attracted to the smells of men much like women are physically attracted to the smells of men. This merely reveals a connection between the things that women and homosexual men prefer to smell. These preferences could change with time and are not necessarily linked biologically. For instance, a person might enjoy the smell of hamburgers for a certain period of time. If, however, he or she were to become violently ill from hamburgers, that preference of smell might change.

Implications of Biological Explanations

The biological explanations seek to give the person with same-sex attractions viable reasons for why he or she is different from the heterosexual in sexual

6 Randolph E. Schmid, "Differing Brain Response Found in Homosexual, Heterosexual Men," Associated Press, May 10, 2005; available at: othersiderainbow.blogspot.com/.

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orientation. They seek to make the primary cause of homosexuality something that an individual is born with, thus releasing him or her from personal responsibility for such same-sex attraction. However, they do not explain why someone would choose to be homosexual, and they give virtually no hope for any change. Rather, the teenager who is struggling with homosexual thoughts and desires is given the hopeless answer that this is the way that he or she was created. If sexual preference is indeed predetermined at conception by the genes that are given to a person, then that person cannot possibly be at fault for any of the feelings and/or actions that he or she has or commits throughout his or her life. The logical conclusion from this implication is that such people must simply accept themselves for who they are, because they cannot change.

Additionally, the biological explanation attacks the very character of God. If the hypothesis is true, it means that a homosexual was created by God as such, making God the creator of homosexuality. This would make God extremely unfair and unjust when he then condemns the very thing that he has created a person to be. In addition, God would also be the creator of sin. James 1:13 clearly states that God does not tempt people to sin:

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

The conclusions that are reached in a biological explanation do not fit with Scripture. Thus they should not be considered viable reasons to allow homosexual thoughts, desires, or behaviors. While the biological explanation is not valid, it is appropriate to acknowledge that we do live in broken bodies due to the curse of sin. Due to this brokenness, someone may have the propensity to be attracted to the same sex. In cases where this may be true, the individual still has the responsibility and capability to resist those temptations and live the life that God has called him or her to live.

To say the least, it has become increasingly difficult for parents to raise their children in the fear of the Lord without being bombarded with pseudofacts from the scientific and psychological communities. However, the pressure to accept homosexuality comes not only from outside the church, but from inside religious communities as well.