

Dishonorable Passions

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Date: 20 July 2014

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[0 : 00] So you guys stand up.

We're going to read Romans chapter 1, just two verses this morning, verses 26 and 27. The Apostle Paul writes, For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions.

For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature. And the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another.

Men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Let's pray. Father, we are grateful that your word does not leave us in the dark regarding issues that are hot button issues today.

But that it speaks with clarity and authority. I pray though this morning as we meditate on your word here, that our goal would not to be simply glean information that we could use in an argument.

[1 : 18] But that our goal would be to see Christ honored and revealed and lifted up in this text and in our lives as a response to your word. So help us to gain a right understanding.

Let your spirit who inspired the apostle to write these words also awaken our minds so that we can rightly understand them in our hearts so that we can sing and praise to you because of them.

Do not let us go astray in our interpretation or in our application of these words. But let us think and act in a way that is pleasing to you and honoring to Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. You guys take a seat. I took our boys. I took Nate and Calvin and Eli just the other day.

We went down to Galveston to Moody Gardens. I don't know how many of you have been to Moody Gardens. We've been there a few times. We have season passes that expire at the end of this week. And so we're trying to use them up.

[2 : 21] We're going to try to go again before they expire. And we're trying to make the most use out of them. That's what you do towards the end of something, right? You really press it to try to get the most out of it. So I went down, just myself and the three boys.

Allie was working. Heather had Piper. And so it was just the boys and I. And we spent probably more time at the water park than anywhere else, which was fun because Eli last month took swimming lessons, actually from Becky.

He took swimming lessons. And so every time we get in the swimming pool or go anywhere where we're in the water, he's excited to demonstrate his new swimming skills to me. He's better now than he's ever been.

And so he always wants me to distance myself, not too far, just maybe six to eight feet away from him. And then he's got to swim to me and show me how fast he can do it and how well he can do it. And so we were doing that.

We did that in the wave pool between the waves. When they would turn the waves off, he would have me scoot back and he would swim to me and it was exciting. And I'd throw a party every time he made it to me. But then he decided he wanted to try it in the lazy river.

[3 : 21] And he said, just go right there and go ahead of me a little bit and I'll swim to you, which I thought was funny. And so I went ahead of him a little bit and he went under and he started swimming and he swam as hard as he could and he popped up and he's the same distance from me as when he started.

He couldn't figure it out. I can do it, Dad. I can do it. I know you can. So he went under and he tried it again and he probably did it, I don't know, half a dozen times before finally I was slightly merciful and I said, let's trade positions, buddy, and see what happens then.

And then he made it to me and it was exciting. All right. But I feel like when we come to the topic that the Scriptures are dealing with today, I feel like this is one of those instances where we, as Bible-believing Christians, are swimming against the tide of our culture.

The currents of our culture are moving in one direction. And because of what the Scriptures say, we are forced to plant our feet firmly and stand in place against the onslaught of that current.

And it can be difficult at times. Because the currents now, in regard to the issue of homosexuality, are moving very quickly. Moving so rapidly, in fact, that if you guys remember, in 2008 when then-Senator Barack Obama was running for the office of president and his stance on gay marriage was that he was not in support of it.

[4 : 39] He was against it. And then, just four years later, he had reversed course and he was for it. And now, here we are, two years removed from that election, and you have another leader in the same party, Hillary Clinton, who's the presumed nominee.

For most people think she'll be the nominee in the next election. And it's not enough now that she supports that. But now, the problem is that she's being accused of not supporting it early enough or strongly enough.

So, in the course of six years, within one political party, you move from the point to where you can oppose something, to where you must support it, to now, you're criticized for not having supported it early enough or strongly enough.

Those are quickly shifting and changing currents, and they're moving rapidly in our day. And what the Apostle Paul says here is not popular. It makes many people uncomfortable.

And so, many people simply avoid it. But we don't have that option because we're moving through this book. And we don't have that option because we've acknowledged that in the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul systematically lays out the Gospel for us.

[5 : 47] And so, to ignore anything in this book is to ignore something that has some sort of connection to the Gospel itself. And we don't want to miss that in any way.

And so, I'll remind you of the context here before we jump into these two verses. Paul, in verse 18, began to discuss the sinfulness of humanity. And he tells us in verse 18 that the wrath of God is being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

And that wrath we observed a few weeks ago is a wrath that is currently, presently being revealed against humanity. It's not simply future wrath that's going to happen someday.

It's presently, right now, being revealed. And we said that it's being revealed in that God is allowing us to go our own sinful ways at times.

And the more we sin, the more we, according to chapter 2, the more we store up wrath for ourselves on the day of God's wrath. So, God's wrath is presently being revealed now as we are allowed to continue in sin at times.

[6 : 54] And that sin piles up more wrath for us for the day of wrath. And in fact, if you look in verse 24, Paul talks about the consequences of this continuous sin, of this continuing in unrighteousness.

He says that, Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.

God gave them. What? Gave humanity. Gave people up to the dishonoring of their bodies. Why? Because according to verse 25, we have refused to worship God.

We have refused to submit to the truth of God. And instead, we have chosen to worship the creature rather than the Creator. And that sin of idolatry has led God to hand us over, humanity over, to sinful, degrading desires.

We have rejected the truth that God has revealed about Himself through the creation. And we have rejected our duty to render to Him, the Creator, all honor and glory and worship.

[8 : 08] Therefore, God gave them up, or literally handed them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. And if you ask, what do you mean by that, Paul?

What do you mean by the dishonoring of their bodies? In what sense are human beings dishonoring their bodies? He gives us a clear example.

It's not the only example that He could have given us, but it's a clear example. In fact, I want you to notice all the connections between verse 26 and verse 24.

For instance, verse 26 begins with the words, for this reason. For what reason? For the reason stated in verse 25. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator.

But notice verse 25 begins with the word, because. God handed them over to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves because they exchanged the truth. And for the reason of exchanging the truth, now we are told He hands us over again.

[9 : 15] So the reason lying behind the action of verse 24 in the action of verse 26 is verse 25. Refusing to worship God and acknowledge the truth that God has revealed about Himself in the created order.

That's one connection. But of course, you can see clearly another connection because the same words are used. In both verses, we are told that God gave them up or God handed them over.

We are told in verse 26 they exchanged. And then in verse 25, there's another exchange. And then of course, you read of dishonorable behavior in both verses.

Verse 24, there is the dishonoring of their bodies. And in verse 26, it is the dishonorable passions. So verses 26 and 27 give us an illustration of the kinds of dishonoring of our bodies that he mentions in verse 24.

And he's very clear about what this means. Notice what he says. I'm going to give you a slightly more literal translation here. He says, For this reason, God handed them over to dishonorable passions.

[10 : 30] For their females exchanged! The natural use for those that are contrary to nature. And the males likewise gave up the natural use of the females and were consumed with passion for one another.

Males committing shameless acts with males and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. I translate it that way because I want you to notice that the actual words used here in the Greek text are not the normal words that we see for men and women throughout the New Testament.

They are, in fact, the words that are normally translated male and female. And I point that out to you because I think that the Apostle Paul intends for us to recall to our minds the most well-known passage in the Old Testament that uses these two terms together.

Genesis chapter 1 in God's account of the creation of humanity. It tells us that God created us in His image and it says, male and female, He created them.

Same words in the Greek translation of the Old Testament that Paul and the Roman Christians to whom he is writing would have been familiar. And those words held together in these verses would have immediately recalled that passage in their minds.

[11 : 46] And it ought to do that for us as well. When we see this language of female and male, we should immediately go to the original created purposes and designs of God. That's the intention of the Apostle Paul.

Because what he's describing here goes against his original created purpose for people created both male and female in His image.

He uses this word nature or natural twice in this passage. Verse 26, their women exchanged natural relations.

Verse 27, the men gave up natural relations. The word natural is significant here because it can refer at times to the way that we are from birth.

It can mean that. It means in its most basic meaning it means something in its original state. And so, for instance, in the passage that Andy read earlier from Ephesians chapter 2 where Paul says that we were by nature children of wrath, in that instance it means from birth.

[12 : 54] In that instance the word by nature children of wrath indicates to us that from the time that we were born, we were rightly because of our sin inherited from Adam, we were rightly children of wrath.

But here it doesn't refer to birth. Here it refers to God's original created design for humanity. It is natural for men and women to couple up together.

It's natural. That's the way that God has designed us. We are not the same. We are different. Men and women are quite different from each other despite all of our attempts to level out those differences, they still remain.

We are both literally and figuratively, we are like puzzle pieces that fit together and that is according to God's created design for humanity. And now God says as a consequence of our idolatrous ways of our rejecting Him as the Creator, we have now also rejected His intentions for us in creation as male and female.

And He says that we have now gone against nature, against His original created purposes. And He describes the activities that ensue from that. He describes them as dishonorable and shameful.

[14 : 17] The men likewise gave up natural relations with the women and were consumed with passion for one another. Men committing shameless acts. The Bible's language on this is shocking against the backdrop of the way that our culture talks about this issue.

It's almost surprising when we hear this kind of language. And yet, for Paul, this was the normal way to speak of these things.

This was the normal way to talk about these things. It is, in every way, homosexual behavior is against the created design.

It is against God's design for humanity. And He says that as a consequence of us pursuing sin to the extent that we deny His obvious created ordinance for us, the consequence is that He says that we receive in themselves the due penalty for their error.

There's been a lot of debate over what exactly that phrase means. Does it mean that right now in the present in some way those who participate in these things are being punished right now?

[15 : 43] Some would defend that interpretation. That's possible. Of course, some, I think, take that too far and they point to things like the AIDS epidemic and say, well, that's it. That's the receiving of the due penalty of their error.

But that could not possibly have been in the apostle's mind when he wrote this since that disease, as far as we know, didn't exist and certainly wasn't associated with homosexual behavior in the first century.

So that couldn't be what Paul means, but it could be some reference to some present, current receiving of the due penalty of their error. Or it could be simply a reference to the piling up of wrath on the day of wrath that we've already seen highlighted.

I'm not really sure exactly what the phrase means, but I do know what the word error means. And we should key in on that term because it demonstrates for us that the participating in homosexual behavior or even the approving of it is, in fact, an error.

It is wrong. It is contrary to God's truth. In fact, most of the time that this particular word is used throughout the New Testament, it is contrasted with the truth of God.

[16 : 53] It is an error. It is at odds with what God has revealed in His Word about Himself and indeed about us. It's an error.

So that even for those who do not participate in these activities, nevertheless, still, those who argue for them and in favor of them being accepted are guilty of committing an error.

I think that's what Paul means when he says at the end in verse 32, though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

So we need to not only beware of falling into the trap of giving in to certain temptations that would lead us to commit homosexual acts. We also need to be aware of attempting ourselves to participate in the normalizing of what God says is against nature.

It's an error. And God looks in much the same way upon those who defend and approve of error as He does upon those who commit the same error.

[18 : 07] He doesn't make a large distinction between the two of them. He's concerned with those who give approval as well as with those who participate. I'm not sure that this text could be much clearer than it is about this particular issue.

The language itself, as I said, is almost shocking in the backdrop of our culture. And Paul would be hard pressed to find language that would express in a more obvious fashion the condemnation of homosexual behavior that he expresses here.

And yet, despite what I think is the obvious meaning of the text here, we are many times confronted with attempts to downplay this text or to dismiss this text and get it out of the way.

It is not difficult for people to dismiss the text in the book of Leviticus that deal with homosexual behavior. All they have to do is say, well, we don't live under the law anymore. And then, in many people's minds, the texts from Leviticus are dismissed.

But what do you do with this New Testament passage? What do you do with this passage if you want to defend homosexual behavior as being not against God's will?

[19 : 29] What do you do with this text? Well, some people simply deny the authority of the Apostle Paul. And when I say some people, I mean those who name the name of Christian, those who call themselves followers of Christ.

I'm not talking about those who simply say I'm not a Christian and would deny all of Scripture and deny the authority of Christ altogether. I'm just speaking of those who would claim the name of Christian and yet attempt in some way to downplay or dismiss this text as relevant for Christian morality.

Some would just deny the Apostle Paul's authority. Some do that on the basis of saying, well, I care greatly about what Jesus has to say about moral issues, but the Apostle Paul was at times simply blinded by his own cultural biases.

The Apostle Paul could not see beyond his immediate surroundings. He simply couldn't see beyond it. He couldn't see beyond his Jewish upbringing.

He couldn't see beyond his pharisaical background. And so, though in many ways the Apostle Paul was able to move beyond those sorts of things, in this instance, he was shackled by his own tradition and his own traditional ways of thinking, and he just could not move beyond that.

[20 : 41] To which I could simply respond by referring you back to the first sermon in this series, where we identified the Apostle Paul as the Apostle Paul, as he tells us.

And the Apostle Paul means that he comes with the very authority of Christ in his writings. He is an apostle of Christ Jesus, one sent out by Christ with the authority of Christ to proclaim the word of Christ to Christ's people.

He is not simply some man trapped in the first century. He speaks the word of Christ to God's people. That's his task as an Apostle. We could simply reply that way, but for many people that wouldn't be enough.

That's the very thing that they seek to deny. So what about this business of the Apostle Paul being blinded by his own biases?

Of him being a product of a Jewish upbringing and a pharisaical education? What of that? Well, Paul never appeals to any such thing.

[21 : 43] Paul does not appeal to the commands of Leviticus. Paul does not appeal to the teachings of the Pharisees in any way. He appeals to God's original created design as we've seen.

He goes back to Genesis chapter 1 as the grounds upon which he condemns this behavior. Those are the grounds upon which Paul says this is sinful.

Not simply because he has some teaching that he's received from his Pharisee teachers. Not simply because he's a Jew and he can't see beyond that. I mean, this is a man who has denied many of the things that he was taught growing up as a young Jewish scholar in training.

This is a man who has departed in vast ways from Judaism so that the gospel he preaches is not even recognizable to the Jewish leaders.

This is not a man enslaved to his Jewish ways and his Jewish past. This is a man enslaved to the Word of God. A man enslaved, as he tells us himself, to Christ.

[22 : 50] And he appeals not to the teachings of the rabbis. He appeals not even to the laws of Leviticus. He appeals to God's original created design.

He speaks with authority. Some people will attempt to dismiss the Apostle Paul's authority by simply stating that their experience trumps the Word of God.

In fact, I was surprised this week, I want to read you a quote because I was surprised this week to come across a particular New Testament scholar whom I've read before who has in the last few years changed his mind in regard to the issue of homosexuality.

But he has not changed his mind in regard to the interpretation of Scripture. He acknowledges that this passage along with many others are clear in their condemnation of homosexual behavior.

He acknowledges that and yet for some reason he has changed his stance. Let me read you just a bit of what he has to say. He says, the task of engaging with the scriptural arguments, the task demands intellectual honesty.

[24 : 05] He says, I have little patience with efforts to make Scripture say something other than what it says through appeals to linguistic or cultural subtleties. The exegetical situation is straightforward. We know what the text says.

In other words, he's not falling for those who would try to argue that Paul is not really saying what he appears to be saying here. He acknowledges what the text says on its surface.

He acknowledges it. And then he says later on, but what are we to do with what the text says? He says, we must state our grounds for standing in tension with the clear commands of Scripture and include in those grounds some basis in Scripture itself.

To avoid this task is to put ourselves in the very position that others insist we already occupy, that of liberal despisers of the tradition of the church's sacred writings, people who have no care for the shared symbols that define us as Christian.

If we see ourselves as liberal, he says, then we must be liberal in the name of the Gospel and not, as it has so often been the case, liberal despite the Gospel. This is telling, I think.

[25 : 10] He says that in order to trump the clear teaching of Scripture, you must appeal to Scripture. And yet, by his own admission, that's not what he does. He says, we appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience of thousands of others who have witnessed to, which tells us that to claim our own sexual orientation is in fact to accept the way in which God has created us.

By so doing, we explicitly reject as well the premises of the scriptural statements condemning homosexuality, namely that his advice freely shows a symptom of human corruption and disobedience to God's created order.

You hear what he's saying here? We appeal to the weight of our own experience and to the experience of others over the Scriptures. How can you, as an honest New Testament scholar who recognizes the plain teachings of Scripture, how can you reject those on the basis of his own experience?

What changed his mind? Some new insight into the cultural background of the New Testament? No. Some fresh study of the meanings of these particular words?

Nope. His daughter came out. And so he was in his own heart at odds with the Scriptures.

[26 : 34] And he chose his experience, he chose his feelings over what he recognizes as the clear teaching of God's Word, and thereby he dismisses the teachings of the Apostle Paul for a higher authority, his own experience.

That is a dangerous, dangerous road to begin to take. A dangerous road. You can outright deny the authority of the Apostle Paul, or you can, you can attempt to reinterpret this passage in such a way so that it does not say what it clearly says.

You can attempt to do that, and many have. I'll give you one example among many. Many people have looked at this passage and keyed in on the words natural, and they have said, well, what's natural for me, homosexual desires.

That's what's natural for me, and therefore for me to participate in this is not contrary to nature. So the Apostle Paul was not addressing a person like me who is in a consensual relationship with another adult.

The Apostle Paul was addressing people who do not have this particular orientation and yet participate in things that go against their nature. So for them, the word natural here simply refers to their own feelings the way that they feel that they have been constituted by God from birth.

[28 : 04] The context makes that impossible. Because as we've seen, Paul is not here concerned with how we personally feel. He uses the word natural coupled with the male-female language to remind us of God's original creative purposes for men and women, male and female.

This is not about, well, it's natural for me to do this, therefore it's okay for me to do this. This is about, this is God's design. God's design defines natural.

Anything contrary to His design is against nature. That's an example of those who would attempt to accept the authority of the possible and yet reinterpret him.

But as we've already seen, we have a New Testament scholar who denies what we're teaching here and what Paul's teaching here and yet he recognizes the surface clear meaning of the text.

It's not complicated. All attempts to reinterpret this passage founder against the actual context and the words that we find in the text itself.

[29 : 19] It won't work. You can deny the Apostle Paul. You can attempt to sort of reinterpret the Apostle. Or, and I think this is probably the most common, and it is tied to the first, to the denial of the Apostle's authority, and yet it's in a more subtle way.

Because the third way in which to get around a text like this is to appeal to the command to love your neighbor as yourself. This is by far, in the things that I have read from the other side, this is by far the most common appeal.

Jesus tells us that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor. The Apostle Paul himself tells us that to love one's neighbor is to have already fulfilled the entire law itself.

And so they will say that if we behave in ways that are loving, i.e. in ways that are accepting of homosexual behavior, then we have in essence fulfilled the commands, and none of those commands, even New Testament commands, against homosexual behavior need be paid any mind to.

They have now been trumped by the law of love itself. to which I would respond, how do you know what love is?

[30 : 46] How do you know what love is? It's obviously more than simply feeling certain feelings about things. Everybody recognizes that because all day long you can feel something about someone or something, and yet if you never express those feelings, if you ever do anything for them, we wouldn't say that you genuinely really love them, you just have some kind of feelings about someone or something.

So what is genuine love? How does a follower of Christ define love? How do we know what love is? We turn to the Word of God to find out what love is.

And if love in a biblical definition can sit right alongside a command not to do something, then you cannot cite love as a reason for denying that command.

The Apostle Paul, after all, says in 1 Corinthians 13, the great love chapter, that love rejoices in the truth. He tells us in Ephesians that we ought to speak the truth with love.

So truth revealed by God Himself throughout His Word is not contrary to the command to love in any sort of way. You cannot simply appeal to an amorphous concept of love.

[32 : 03] You cannot simply define love as acceptance. Surely a 21st century definition of love with no attachment to a historical Christian understanding of what love is.

The Bible tells us what love is. Christ because He loved us, gave Himself up for us.

Ephesians 5 tells us that He demonstrates His love for His bride, the church. How? By laying down His own life for His bride. Greater love has no been than this, Jesus says, that He lay down His life for His friends.

love for This same Jesus who calls us to love Him and tells us that to follow Him means not fulfill all your innate desires, but deny yourself.

Take up the cross and follow Me. Love is not affirming everything within the heart of a man or a woman. love is encouraging that man or woman to deny themselves and follow Christ in whom and through whom only will they find ultimate peace, rest, satisfaction, and happiness in the world.

[33 : 30] That's what love is. Love does not contradict commands. Love is expressed through commands as God protects us from things that would harm us and lead us away from Him, the only source of life and joy and peace that exists.

It will not work as an objection, ultimately. So, the question really becomes, since the teaching of Scripture is clear, and we've only looked at three objections, there are many others, but since the objections don't seem to hold enough water, what do we do practically with this truth?

How do you engage your co-worker who says that they live the homosexual lifestyle? How do you deal with your neighbor who comes out all of a sudden, or your cousin, or aunt, or your child who comes out and says that they're gay?

What do you do? How do you handle that? How are we supposed to engage? Because we are accused when we mention things like Romans 1, 26 and 27, we are said to be unloving and intolerant and hateful.

So how in the face of that pushback from the culture, how do you respond? What do you do? How should you approach people? Let me give you three suggestions here.

[35 : 02] Just three suggestions. First of all, I do not think that the pushback from the culture should lead us to abandon our use of the Scriptures as we try to share the truth with other people.

This is the source of truth for us. This is the foundation upon which we stand. And so we ought to boldly turn to Romans chapter 1. We ought to boldly turn to all of those places in the Scripture that deal not just with homosexuality but with righteousness and unrighteousness in a general fashion.

We ought to be willing to say that sin is regardless of the consequences regardless of the name calling. We should be willing to go to God's Word. This Word after all comes with power.

Your arguments no matter how persuasively you may be able to argue they do not come coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit. This Word does. Why would you back away from using the one source that God has absolutely promised He will use to bring conviction upon sinners.

We should not back away from using the Word of God. But secondly we should not use the Scriptures as a weapon with which to beat people and hurt people.

[36 : 22] We should approach this matter with love speaking the truth in love as we are told to do. We don't come at people angrily. We don't come at people because we are trying to win the cultural wars.

I don't care about the cultural wars. I care about people. I care about God's Word. I care about the glory of God. Let the culture do what it will. I'll preach the gospel and see what happens to the culture in light of the preaching of the gospel.

I am not first and foremost concerned! with those things. But I am concerned that as we engage those caught up in the currents of our culture.

I am concerned that we approach them with love. That you genuinely really care about your neighbor, about your cousin, about your child, about your co-worker who is involved in some sort of homosexual lifestyle.

That you love them and care about them genuinely. That you don't speak in an angry tone of voice. That you don't constantly feel the need to defend yourself when you are called intolerant or hateful.

[37 : 42] Your task is not to defend yourself. Your task is to love them with the gospel. And you can't do that if you feel the need to defend yourself. You will only become angry and bitter if your aim is to defend yourself and make yourself stand at the end of the day.

You make the gospel stand by loving proclamation. So that when you engage with someone in a conversation about this, you're careful about the tone that you use.

You're careful about the tone that you use. When you engage with someone in a conversation about this, you don't speak of it as just an abstract principle sort of out there. You recognize and realize that if what you're saying is true, this is painful for them.

Do you realize how difficult that you're overturning some of the most foundational things in their lives? You're turning them on your hands. This is painful for people.

And we should be able to weep with those who weep even if we don't like the reason for which they're weeping. We should care. We should love them deeply. We should not abandon them and run away from them and walk away from them.

[38 : 54] We should love them and love them with the gospel. And then the third thing that I would encourage you to do which is tied to the first two is that we ought to at all times, whether we're dealing with homosexuality or some other sin, we should always in discussing sin with people identify with them in our own sin.

We should always recognize that this is a sin problem and I am a participant in the sin problem. I'm a part of it.

It encapsulates me. I'm a sinner through and through. I'm not any better. I'm the same. So that when you're in a discussion and you come up against the argument, but this is the way that I was born.

I've always felt this way from the time that I was a small child until now. If I could wish away these desires, I would wish them away. What do you say? Oh, well, I guess it makes it okay.

No. Or do you say, you're a liar. You couldn't have had these desires from the time that you were born. You're a liar. That's not true. No, we don't say that. What do we say?

[40 : 10] We say, I'm with you in this because I too was sinful from the time that my mother conceived me.

I too came into this world dead in sin. I too inherited from Adam a sinful nature.

And I have felt it and known it and wished it away from my earliest days when I could see it and understand it. I would wish my sin away too.

I would change my desires that have not yet changed if only I could and yet I have not yet been able to change them. I'm with you in this. I'm a sinner too. Give concrete examples.

If you struggle, if you have a real, deep, lasting, abiding struggle with pride, tell them. Confess. I mean, they're confessing what they don't recognize the sin, but you do, to you, so confess back.

[41 : 11] Be willing to say, I'm sorry that you struggle with this. I'm struggling too because I am so prideful.

I've always been prideful. I've always struggled with it. I've always felt that rise up in me when someone opposes me or when someone insults me. I just feel like I really wrestle with that.

Or, if you have some other sexual temptation, you can identify with them in that. If you have any number of besetting sins, a history of alcoholism, there are a lot of ways that we can identify with people in their sin, be it this particular sin or some other.

And we ought to always at all times identify with them as a fellow fallen creature. Struggling with the same sorts of things and yet not in the midst of that struggle using our own sinful nature to justify our sinful actions.

That's the way of love and that's the way of truth. It acknowledges the truth of our own sinfulness and in love it identifies with them in that sinfulness.

[42 : 31] Because at the end of the day, the solution for your pride, the solution for your addiction to pornography, the solution for your addictive behavior is the same solution that exists for those who are caught up in homosexual behavior.

Let me read you one passage in 1 Corinthians that you may be familiar with. I want you to turn there. 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and we'll close with this. Paul says something that ties us back to Romans chapter 1.

Sounds familiar in verse 9. He says, Do you not know that the unrighteous, we've been concerned with the unrighteous since chapter 1 verse 18.

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, i.e. the wrath of God is revealed against them? Right? Do not be deceived, he says.

Neither the sexually immoral, which is honestly 90% of us, neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

[43 : 48] So there it is, right there, right in the midst of a list of sins. Right in the midst of it. They will not inherit the kingdom of God. And then, the gospel has its say in verse 11, 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 by the Spirit of our God.

The solution to the sin of homosexual behavior is the solution to the sin of adultery, is the solution to the sin of sexual immorality, of idolatry, of greed, of drunkenness, of swindlers.

The same solution applies to all of these. Forgiveness in the name of Christ and through the blood of Christ. You want to identify with people? You identify with them in having the same need and calling upon the same solution, which is the only hope for sinners.

Thank you.