

Condemnation or Compassion

By Barrington H. Brennen, July 24, 2003

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing parents, church, community, or government leaders is how to balance condemnation with compassion, or justice with mercy. The discussion continues to rage regarding homosexuality. In the heat of the discussion, when most voices are condemning the homosexual lifestyle, we are not hearing much about compassion, grace, or mercy. When one criticizes, one should also provide some solution to the problem. When one condemns, one should provide compassion and grace. If not, one will make enemies.

CONDEMNING HOMOSEXUALITY

My own personal conviction and Judeo-Christian beliefs propel my view that the homosexual lifestyle is not acceptable in God's sight, and that one can be redeemed from it. On the other hand, the very beliefs that undergird my stance against homosexuality also **demand** that I accept the homosexual as a person who is covered by the grace of a loving, understanding, and compassionate God. It is also true to say that to condemn is human but to love and forgive is divine.

Our society will not find healing if we allow ourselves to get enraged about evils in our society but do provide a measure of hope to those who are destroying themselves, committing crimes, or living inordinate lifestyles.

THE DILEMMA

The truth is that some who are reading this article will call me a pro-gay activist because I am talking about compassion and grace toward the homosexual. On the other hand some will call me homophobic simply because I believe that the homosexual lifestyle is wrong. I've been writing about this subject for more than ten years, and I've noticed that this dilemma exists also among homosexuals themselves.

Those homosexuals who are seeking change, recovery, or inner peace, find my articles to be compassionate, understanding, and helpful. Recently I received an email from a Christian living in Texas who came across my articles on homosexuality on my web site (www.soencouragement.org). Read her own words:

"It is surely the Lord that brought me to your website! I'm a 25-year-old woman, raised in a cloistered, strict Baptist household with little contact with the opposite sex. Because of this, I have felt for many years that I could be bisexual, or even homosexual. I know that the acting out of these impulses would definitely be sin, but I felt that even my tendency towards it was despicable. In desperation, I typed in "overcoming your homosexuality" on google.com, and I got your wonderful article on "Overcoming the Homosexual Lifestyle." I can't tell you how much the Lord opened my eyes and blessed me through that article! You dealt with the issue in a loving, encouraging, logical way without compromising what the Bible says. You didn't just preach, you gave reasoning, verses, and active steps for me to work on the issue. I feel empowered! I give you my heartiest thanks, and I want to let you know how much Jesus Christ is seen in your counsel."

A few months ago I had a three-day video series on the homosexual lifestyle, roots, and recovery. In response to my advertisement about the event I got a few emails and calls from persons who

identified themselves as homosexual Christians, but who really were really hurting inside and were seeking help for years. Their only problem was they were afraid to come to the video showings because they did not want to be ridiculed.

Yes, there are homosexuals who want to change, and they can only be changed by love, not condemnation.

THE SAD TRUTH WE MUST ACCEPT

Not only do I have many favorable responses to my articles from homosexuals, I also get a few unfavorable responses from “contended homosexuals” who do not want to change their lifestyles. One leader in the Bahamian gay community responded to my article entitled “Homosexual Recovery” with the question: “Why do you believe that homosexuals want to recover?” He said that they are happy with their lifestyle and do not want to change. His response is mixed with truth and error. He is correct, that there are homosexuals who are very happy with their choice of lifestyle and feel that it is a “natural,” God-given gift. On the other hand, there are countless homosexuals who are unhappy and confused from the turmoil within their minds and bodies. They want a change. They want freedom. They want peace. This is seen by the hundreds who join each year organizations like Exodus International and Homosexual Anonymous—successful Christian ministries designed to help those who want to recover from the homosexual lifestyle. There are hundreds of lesbians and homosexuals who have successfully exited that lifestyle and are living contended, productive heterosexual lives.

The truth is, as a Christian and a psychologist, I must accept the fact that God has given each person the freedom to choose whatever lifestyle he or she wants, even if that lifestyle is non-productive or anti God. That right to choose does not mean that one must be granted the legal privilege to practice all facets of that lifestyle. A person has a right to engage in devil worship, but the government will not give the right to perform human sacrifices. That will be murder.

THE CHRISTIAN’S DUTY

The Christian’s duty is to provide an avenue for healing to those homosexuals who want a change in their lives, and to present a compassionate, respectful attitude toward those who choose not to change. We can love the homosexual and disagree with the homosexual lifestyle. We can condemn the sin, but show compassion to the erring ones. Let’s create a balance between condemnation and compassion. Call 393 2818 for more information.