

Time of Grace Ministry  
**I Have a Friend: Who Tells Me He Is Gay**  
1 Corinthians 6:1-11  
September 24, 2017

*Pastor Michael Novotny*

Welcome to Time of Grace; I'm Pastor Mike Novotny. "I'm gay." What do you say if you hear those words? If it's a family dinner and your granddaughter is home from college and she says, "I'm gay." If your brother wants to have dinner with just the two of you and for the first time in your lives together, he says, "I'm gay." If your roommate or your best friend wants to tell you something – perhaps that they've told no one else in the world – and they say, "I'm gay," what then?

How should Christians react? With open arms? With stern warnings? With Bible passages? With congratulations? The truth is, so many people answer those questions in such radically different ways but what does God say? What does he want his people to say when those that we love and care about express differences in their sexuality?

Today, Pastor Mark Jeske is going to try to answer those delicate questions. He's going to open God's word to allow us to see with our own eyes and hearts and ears what our heavenly Father thinks about sexuality in our modern world. What should we do? What should we say? We're going to find those answers today in God's word.

*Pastor Mark Jeske*

Same gender sexual attraction is not just something that sort of erupted within your lifetime. This has been going on forever. It is simply part of the brokenness that has exhibited itself among human behaviors as soon as there were more than two people. Today, in our country as Christianity and the Christian Bible explicitly has less and less influence on our public policy, it's not that whole new categories of sins are arising; it's just coming above ground because it was always there.

There are differing estimates as to the percentage of the population that has a similar sex attraction and there are some people that honestly can swing both ways. I guess that's the "B" in LGBT. The only thing to argue or debate about is how big a portion of the population is it. The gay right's advocates would like to have you believe that 10 percent of people are naturally inclined to be attracted to people of a similar gender. I have read some studies that it's fewer than five percent in actuality; that the 10 percent is kind of inflated. But if you put together all the people who not only live that lifestyle but also have it on their mind and would like to do it, or maybe don't do it but they're okay with it, or would do it if they found the right person, that number could be substantial.

So here it is: Now is this a hill to die on or not? Should we Christians back off of this the way we backed off of the opposition you may have heard of in this very church 75 years ago - that

interracial marriages were evil and not God's intent? Or is this a hill to die on and say, "No, God has spoken," we can go no further. Let's listen to God.

1 Corinthians Chapter 6 and its sister chapter right next door in Chapter 7 have some of the most profound insights into human sexuality in all of the Bible. 1 Corinthians 6 helps Christians find their way in a culture that was going crazy. Christians were the counterculture in the Roman Empire, in a place with no rules, no moral rules; where sexual immorality was everywhere. Christians – the longer I live, the more I realize we're becoming a counterculture again – where the majority of the herd is not interested in what God says; they're interested in what they want. There isn't even a unified Christian witness; half the Christian church even thinks that these words in the Scripture no longer apply.

What words are those? Glad you asked. Chapter 6 begins with a rebuke against this congregation because they were suing each other in court and Paul said how shameful that is. Christian congregations are supposed to be a place of peace, of love, of support for one another. You're supposed to walk in and suddenly feel a vibe where you can let your guard down, where nobody's going to hustle you, take advantage of you, push you around, or try in some way to use you or manipulate you into being somebody you're not. But it's a place of affirmation, a place of healing, a place of forgiveness, a place where you can get a new charge of hope to go at living your life again. And if people perceive that your congregation is full of fighting and enmity, you're going to drive people away instead of welcome them in. So the first two paragraphs are quite a stern scolding about their impetuosity and running into court and suing each other.

There's a very powerful sentence starting in the third paragraph: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?" Wicked – the Greek word for wicked, *adikoi*, means people who are not right with God. They don't have his righteousness. They're at odds with God; they're on the outside looking in. In other words, our goal is not just to try to be busybodies and snoop and get into people's business and try to mess with their lives by making them shamed or feeling bad about themselves. Our goal is to stop people from committing spiritual suicide because if you are disconnected from God, you're disconnected from life itself. You are never going to have a happy life right now in time because God will not let you be happy. Guilt will hang over you that you cannot get rid of by any effort of your own and just doing whatever pleases you or what you feel like is not going to make you feel better. You will know in your heart it's wrong.

Secondly, you will be miserable in eternity for the Day of Judgment is coming and people, you and I, will be held accountable for what we believe and how we've lived. So this is a big deal. Don't be deceived; Satan will use every human desire and every human appetite and try to turn it against you and manipulate you into pandering to your appetites no matter what the damage to other people and to you. Don't be deceived.

If you were the devil or you were on Satan's sale staff and you got a big sales meeting coming and you have to show how many people you have – whose lives you've messed up – and so you know you've got your quota, what tools would you use to go at people to corrupt them and make them act crazy and go against God? Where would you attack? I think I know where I would. What are the things where Satan gets his wedge in? Sexual temptation, always a winner, an old

standby. In fact, if I were Satan, I would start with that. I wouldn't waste time dinking around; I'd go straight for that and try that first and see what I could work. Making people miserable where they're at so they'll cheat to try to get what they want. Unfulfilled in marriage? Have an affair. Single but wishing you had somebody? Have your boyfriend stay over and pretend to be married for a while. Don't have the patience and he won't propose yet? So what? Bring him in. Take the shortcut.

I'd start at sexual temptation. If that wasn't working right away – money, money, money, money always gets people's attention. Wave some money under people's noses and get them hooked and drag them off. I'd work at people's mouths; you can do so much damage with your mouth. And actually the biggest of them all is I'd get them to pay no attention to God. I would disconnect people from God's word and I would put substitutes in their place for them to worship and chase that will promise to be much more fulfilling. It worked with Eve and so that's exactly what we've got.

But the dirty 10, the terrible 10 attitudes – now, this is not an exhaustive complete list of all human sin – but these are 10 examples of lifestyles, not just sins, but lifestyles, ways of living, that without repentance will kill you spiritually. These are all suicidal and not just for unbelievers; they live in this because they don't know any better. But Paul was writing to Christians because these 10 things were making inroads into their congregations. These are temptations and troubles for you and me, too.

Now as we take a look at this terrible 10, be careful of your pointing finger and I'll be careful of pointing mine, too. This pointing finger makes it seem like I'm up here and you're down there. Everybody's broken and the brokenness that's going to be listed here are examples of brokenness in you, too. We're born broken. We're born disconnected from God. We have to be reconnected and that is the Spirit's mission to make you a connector to help other people.

Here are 10 that without repentance will give you an unhappy life and a miserable eternity. Four sexual, three money, two mouth-related, and one – the biggest of them all, in fact – is idolatry, which is actually the first commandment. God really only needed one commandment because if you got something else on the throne of your life, all the other stuff just kind of flows out of that. It's really the original sin.

“Don't be deceived,” now here come ten: “Neither the sexually immoral,” the Greek word *pornoi* means people who have sexual activity outside of marriage in any one of its many ways; so just a generic word for non-marital sexuality. Let's just say any kind of sexual activity outside of marriage is something that puts you in this category. And don't shoot the messenger, by the way. These are not my rules for you; this is your Creator's rules for your life.

“Sexual immorality.” “Idolaters,” I mentioned already. “Nor adulterers,” now that's hard to figure out in English. There are not good exact English words for what is said in the original Greek; *moichoi* in Greek means adultery in the sense that it's a marriage-wrecking activity, as well. In other words, a single woman who has an affair with a married guy, they're not only sinning against each other and against their own bodies, they're also sinning against that guy's wife because they're wrecking her life, too. He's betraying her and she is stealing what does not

belong to her like David stole Bathsheba away from Uriah. So this is sexual immorality with victims besides just the two of them.

The next two words relate to male-to-male sexual activity and here are two words that do not have exact English equivalents. Depends on which translation you have; I'm using the NIV here. My older NIV that I have right here says "male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders." Neither of those is a good translation. The newer 2011 version of the NIV says, "Men who have sex with men." That's actually a lot closer; although there are two different types of activity described. One of them, malakoi, the first word that's on the bad 10, are the soft boys. In other words, the receivers in sexual activity. People who participate in the homosexual activity, man to man, where it is done to you. The other word, arsenokoitai, means a man who has sex with another man. It's not offenders or criminals, it's not as though rapists are being condemned here; just the very activity itself. The doer and the do-ee, as it were. Does that make sense? We've got kids here; I can't get too much more specific than that. Nod if you get my drift. I'm serious. Make a motion with your head if you follow me. Okay, thank you. Alright.

That's bad. It's on God's list. That as a lifestyle without repentance is spiritual suicide. This is a hill to die on, yes it is. Let's finish the list and it's not just that God is picking on people with that particular vulnerability. "Thieves and the greedy." If you have an appetite for money more than God, you're committing suicide, as well. Money lust is a form of idolatry and if you want it bad enough to take it from somebody else, without repentance, you're living in spiritual death. In fact, you're not living at all. It needs to be recognized, repented of, and rebuked.

Now two things having to do with the mouth: "Drunkards." If you pour too much alcohol down your throat to the point where you lose control of your life or you become addicted to it, that also is a form of spiritual suicide. Now drunkard is like a mocking word; we don't use that word too much today anymore. It was more popular, I'd say, a hundred years ago. Today we'd say an alcoholic and today alcoholics often are viewed as victims or like it's a disease, like it just came over you. But there's no way out of alcohol abuse unless the individual chooses to hold himself or herself responsible for her actions and believe that with help, you can change your attitudes and behaviors.

"Slanderers," are people who are verbally abusive. You use talk, you use your mouth, to beat other people down. You think, "Man, I've seen these other things that are sinful but man, just talk? That doesn't seem all that serious a business." Yes, it is.

Or "swindlers." In other words, this is white collar crime. Thieves is blue collar crime where you break into people's houses and steal stuff. Swindlers are when you embezzle money, when you falsify documents at your business or when you try to cheat the government out of what you legitimately owe or when you try to cheat a customer; it's called swindling. When you live that life without repentance, it is spiritual suicide and that's what some of you – it's a very powerful word right here; if you have your Bible open, check it out – and that is what some of you "were." Change is possible. "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

So one of the things we know is that it's not like there's all these regular sins and then being gay is like the nasty sin or the super bad sin; it's just one more way of being broken. And shaming and having contempt for people and scorning and shunning people who have sexual addictions or who are pointed in the wrong direction with their desires is not how to bring about that change. They are as worthy of being loved by Jesus as you and I are. You and I are as broken as anybody – when I'm saying you and I, I mean you and I who are more heterosexually oriented. I fully expect that there would be any number of people here today who feel a longing for same sex attraction and I'm not sure how you're doing in wrestling with that or how often you've caved into that temptation. I don't think any less of you for that as I wouldn't expect you to be overly judgmental of me for my many weaknesses. We're all broken. We're all desperately in need of Jesus' forgiveness but that needs an attitude of repentance on your knees to say, "I have sinned. Lord, by your standards, I need help. Help me. I've been washed. You washed me of my sins in my baptism. I've been justified. The blood of Jesus from the cross has pronounced a 'not guilty' on me so that my past and its horrible weight has been lifted from me and I don't have to be dragged down by my past. I don't have to let my past mistakes define who I am right now. When I have a relationship with Jesus, his grace is new every morning and I count on that restart. I'm going to restart today. And I'm not going to let my past define me any longer. I've been sanctified. I'm not just struggling on my own. I have the Holy Spirit, the Sanctus Spiritus, sanctus-ing me, sanctifying me. He lives within me to reload new software into my brain so I can think straight and to give me a spine injection so I become a vertebrae; that I've got an actual spine and can stand up for what I know to be right and that I can use my mouth to honor God and my hands and feet to take me to good places and to do what is right."

So I am not interested in heaping scorn on people's past and if you're a straight person and there's somebody in your family or one of your friends who has come out and said he or she is gay, shunning just does not work because all it does – if all the straight people shun all the gay folks – the only place they can go to find some kind of affirmation is deeper into the gay world where the words of Jesus are harder and harder to find. Unconditional love – also the same way that Jesus treats you – and what we're interested in is not manipulating other people to make ourselves feel better. I'm not worried about gay marriage, for instance, being a big assault on straight marriage, on heterosexual marriage.

Straight married people look at me right now: The biggest threat to your marriage isn't some gay guy. It's you. Straight people are the biggest risk to straight marriages and we're doing a terrible job of it. Let's just accept responsibility where it belongs and those of you who are married, take care of your marriages. We've got to be just as indignant about people who are not married living together; that's a problem, too. A man and a woman who are living together and sharing a bed without being married are sinning as much as any gay person is. Repent of that and take care of some business. Your greatest threat to your relationship with each other and with your God is you so it's time to repent. Those are hills to die on. That's a place to take a stand and we today – I'm inviting you to jam your flagpole in the sand right here and say, "Right here. This is where it stops." And even if we now once again become such a minority that we're a counterculture, so be it. It's a price worth paying because that is the place of spiritual health. That is the place to be relieved of our sinful guilt. This is the way not to jeopardize our everlasting inheritance in heaven for these 10 examples of unrepentant sin deny people the kingdom of God. And if you truly love somebody else, you're not going to let him or her

commit spiritual suicide. But let's do it humbly; not picking that particular sin out in any kind of way as though it's worse than anything else. Humbly accepting the rebuke of others where we are wrong and letting ourselves be corrected. Daily repentance to get back on that road that Satan tries to keep knocking us off of and luring us off of and in this way, we're showing that we're interested in God's opinion more than man's opinion. And our culture may or may not help us as Christians. Sometimes it does; increasingly it doesn't. We're not going to let our value system be shaped by what happens to be allowed on television. But we want to know, Lord God, how may I serve you with my life.

Make sense? Alright, we've got work to do.

### ***Pastor Michael Novotny***

A few years ago, I made a short video about the Bible's view of homosexuality. To be honest, I didn't say that much in the video. I didn't say whether it was right or wrong or good or bad, something that God would agree with or not. Instead in the video, I just asked people to open a Bible. So many churches and so many pastors and so many family members and friends have so many different views on the subject of sexuality. So in this video, I simply encouraged people to open a Bible; see for yourself. Study the teachings of Jesus; don't take someone else's word for it.

In the same video, I also told people to love. God loves the whole world and every Christian should, too. The first reaction that people should feel, no matter what they believe and with whom they're in a relationship, should be love. Jesus said to his disciples, "This is how the world will know that you follow me, if you love one another." And that was the simple message of the video: Open a Bible and love people.

Well, they showed this video to a bunch of other people and there was a gay man who saw what I said. In his response, he started to tear up and he said, "I didn't know that Christians could speak like that." Think of that for a second. I didn't even take a stance on sexuality; I just said open a Bible and love people. And in this man's experience, God have mercy on us, he didn't even know Christians could do that.

We live at a time in our culture where it's so easy to jump to conclusions and jump to judgment. But what if the open door the church needs is just patience and love? The patience to open the book that God wrote and to love all the people that God made? And so, can I ask you - can I plead with you and beg you - to please, just do those two things? If you know someone who is gay, if someone confesses that deep, deep truth to you, would you simply be patient enough to open the book and kind enough to love? It's something so many people in our world have never experienced and maybe you will be the one to change their minds. Maybe you will be the one to show them what Jesus is really like: Full of truth and love.

So would you join me and pray?

Dear Father in Heaven, you love every person on planet earth, no matter to whom they are attracted, no matter what they believe, no matter how we behave. We thank you, God, for

unconditional love and for the grace that you have poured out upon the whole world. I pray, heavenly Father, for those of us who are hearing this message and who are battling same sex attraction. God, we hear so many messages and sometimes we are so confused about what you want us to do. So would you speak clearly in your word? And, more than anything, remind us that what you ask in our lives is always for our eternal good. Help us to trust you, especially those of us who have to bear a heavy cross. Bring forth Christian friends that can show us incredible companionship. Help us to remember that as much as we struggle that you are a God of mercy, a God of forgiveness, and a God who gives salvation freely.

Father, I also pray for those of us who know and love someone who is gay. I pray that you would give us your heart. I pray that you would give us your patience. I pray that you would give us the humility to apologize for things we said that we shouldn't have or the right things that we said in ways that were just wrong. God, give us the humility to open the doors that have been closed; that real conversations can happen, conversations that are immersed in love.

Finally, Father, help us to trust you. It's so difficult in these changing times to hold onto your promises and to believe it is best for your church. It seems so easy to change what you have always said, what we've always taught, what so many of us have always believed. Give us courage, God, and the kind of love that is willing to stand up for all the words you say but never at the expense of loving the people that you love.

God, it's so difficult for us in daily conversation to balance that truth and that love so we are asking you for your help. Send your Holy Spirit into our hearts, into our sermons, into our churches, into our schools, into our lives that we would overflow with the fruit of kindness and gentleness and self-control and peace. For all of us who are attracted to people of every different gender, heavenly Father, we need you that we can honor you with our bodies, our minds, our thoughts, and our hearts. We ask all these things though with courage and with eager expectation because we know that you love us as your own children; you're forgiven, cleansed children who are beautiful and delightful to you because we come to you all in Jesus' name. Amen.

With Time of Grace, I'm Pastor Mike Novotny, and it all starts now.



TIME OF GRACE

# Grace<sub>notes</sub>

guides for personal Bible study

## *I Have a Friend: Who Tells Me He's Gay*

**1 Corinthians 6:1-11:** “<sup>1</sup>If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people? <sup>2</sup>Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? <sup>3</sup>Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! <sup>4</sup>Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? <sup>5</sup>I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? <sup>6</sup>But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers! <sup>7</sup>The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? <sup>8</sup>Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. <sup>9</sup>Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men <sup>10</sup>nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup>And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

### *Points to Ponder*

1. Whose opinion counts when it comes to the issue of homosexuality and marriage or any sin for that matter?
2. In our world today, Christianity is becoming a counterculture. What does that mean?

3. What is our job then—to offer our opinions and to shame people or to connect them to what God says and keep them from spiritual suicide?
  
4. **Read 1 Corinthians 6:9,10.** Are these sins worse than any other sin? What is it though that these sins can lead to without repentance?
  
5. **Read 1 Corinthians 6:11.** This passage is speaking about all of us! We are all broken and need a Savior. Thank God that we have Jesus! This is a message we can't help but share with others!

The discussion around gay marriage is important, and it's not a matter of individuals putting their biases and prejudices on other people. The real issue is for us to dial into our God. This is a spiritual issue, and you don't truly love people who are committing spiritual suicide by letting them continue in what they are doing. Love demands that we represent what our Creator and Savior-God has revealed to us about his intent for the human race. Let's love people enough to tell the truth.

### *What else does God say?*

**Colossians 2:13:** When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

**James 5:19:** My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.