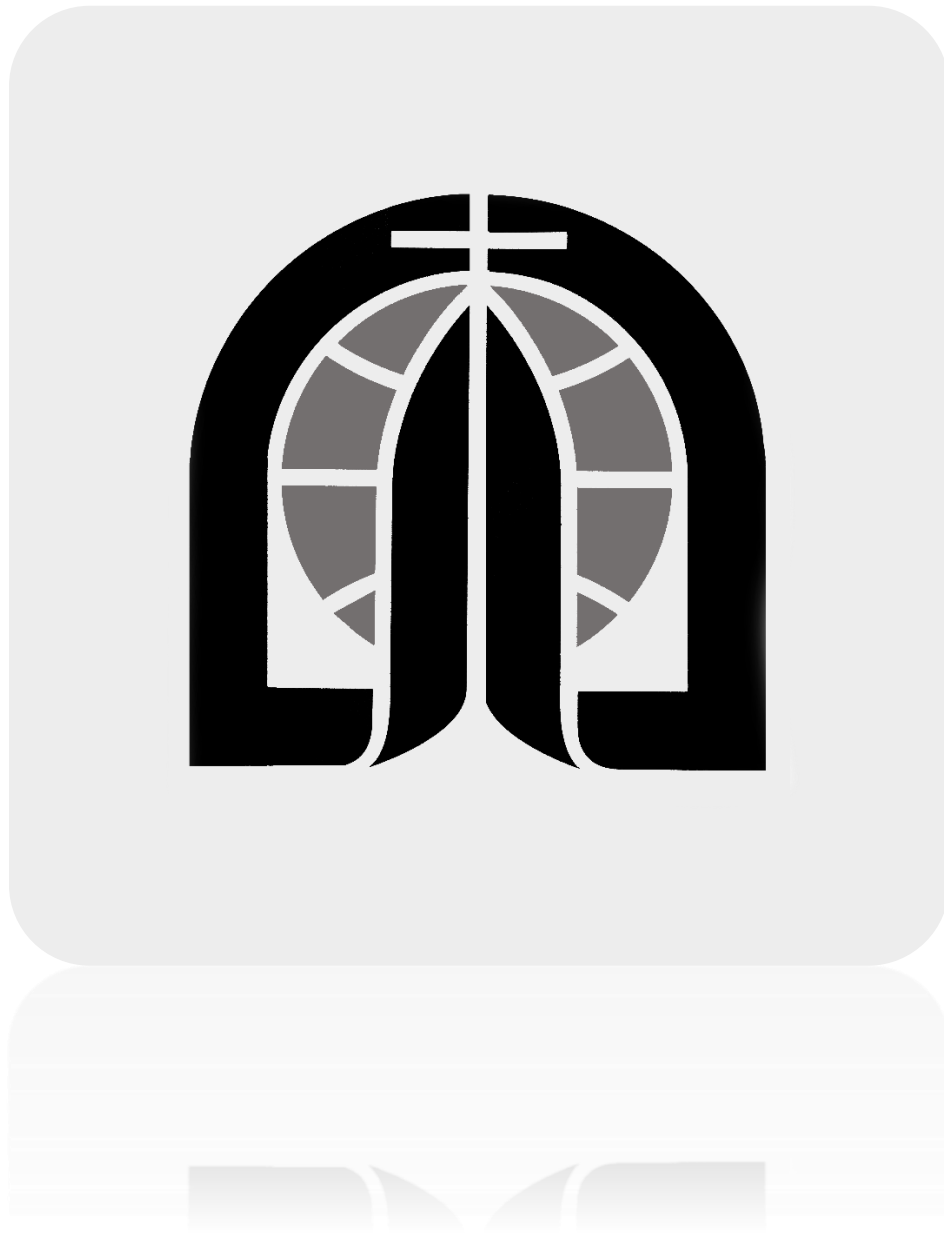


A Small Group Discussion Guide
For the PCA's Ad Interim Study on
Human Sexuality



Emboldened, italicized, parenthetical comments, and all questions are from Rev. Joshua M. Knott (cornerstonesc.org) as part of an e-news series for the saints at Cornerstone Church in Irmo, SC.

A Study of the PCA's Report on Human Sexuality

The goal of missions is to see the nations know, trust, worship, love, and follow Christ as a disciple-making disciples. Part of discipleship includes learning to follow Christ with our biology, our sexuality, our identity, our, well...everything. So, it's actually a natural connection from mission to unpacking our denomination's excellent summary of what the Bible teaches on sexuality. The more God blesses our efforts to reach our community with the good news, the more we will be discipling people in *these* areas and not just the doctrines of grace.

Our approach in this study is to quote portions of our denomination's summary and add a few questions at the end of each section. Of course, you can read the whole thing by yourself, and you can [watch two of the lead authors \(Tim Keller and Kevin DeYoung\)](#) discuss and read it to you, but my goal is to break it into bite-sized, memorable portions for understanding and discussion.

With love,

Rev. Joshua M. Knott

SESSION 1 - THE PREFACE

After outlining the report then explaining that at the heart of it are 12 statements followed by essays, it says this:

...Amidst all these statements and essays we discern two overarching concerns—concerns which may be expressed as two important tasks for the Church in our time and two competing sets of fears.

The two tasks could be called the “pastoral task” and the “apologetic task.” On the one hand, [our denomination] asks that the Report “help pastors and sessions shepherd congregants who are dealing with same-sex attraction.” On the other hand, it asks for “suggested ways to articulate and defend a Biblical understanding of homosexuality, same-sex attraction, and transgenderism in the context of a culture that denies that understanding.” There is no reason why these two tasks need to be pitted against each other, although they often seem to be. One reason they seem at loggerheads is that attached to each undertaking is a set of fears.

One set of fears is that we will be harsh and unfeeling toward people who have been wounded and deeply hurt—and often by the Church. A hard-sounding stance toward them at this moment may only make it easier to discredit the Church in people's minds. As a consequence, many are afraid that the Church will speak in ways that only support the powerful cultural narrative that orthodox Christian belief is toxic for hurting and struggling people.

Another set of fears, however, is that we will compromise at the very place where the world is attacking the Church in our culture. We see many professing Christians and whole denominations surrendering to the sexual revolution. We do not want to be one of them, nor even now in subtle ways to sow the seeds for some future capitulation. As the natural family is a fundamental unit of human society and is the normal means of care and nurture, all sins which threaten, undermine, or marginalize it are both spiritually dangerous and detrimental to human flourishing.

Part of the problem with regard to addressing these issues is that many of us are far more gripped with one set of fears than the other. But because both of these tasks—the pastoral and the apologetic—are required, we should give each of them strong attention.

Sinclair Ferguson, in his book *The Whole Christ*, reminds us that the two main ways that the gospel is compromised are through legalism on the one hand and antinomianism on the other. He then says that it is common to fall into “the mistake of prescribing a dose of antinomianism to heal legalism, and vice-versa, rather than the gospel antidote of our grace-union with Christ.” He goes on to argue that the Church must present to the world the whole Christ, “clothed in his gospel.” Jesus is both the Holy One and the merciful one. He cleanses the temple yet eats with sinners. He gives Martha teaching on truth (John 11:25-26) yet he gives Mary only tears (John 11:35) even though they had both said the same thing to him about their grief (John 11:21, 32). He gives each of them what they most need at the moment. On the cross Jesus fulfills both the unyielding demands of the Law yet also the most wonderful purposes of God’s love. And so we must present “the whole Christ” when we both pastor individuals and speak to the world about sexuality and gender today.

Jesus is full of grace and truth. In pastoral care we must not apply the truth so harshly as to be callously alienating or so indirectly that the truth is never clearly grasped. The very form of the following Twelve Statements seeks to capture this “grace and truth” wholeness as we address the issues. Each statement is dual, an associating of one truth with a concomitant truth or teaching. The aim is not to achieve some kind of abstract intellectual balance or “third way,” but rather to show the path of theologically rich pastoring. The paired truths help the pastor avoid the opposite errors of either speaking the truth without love or trying to love someone without speaking the truth.

The “grace and truth” path to which we point the church in this Report is not an easy one. Speaking the truth yet doing it in love is nearly always harder than separating these needed aspects of the whole gospel into two alternatives. Speaking with grace and truth, in the process of our work together this year, we on your Ad-Interim Committee have been delighted to find a greater spirit and degree of oneness amongst ourselves than we would have expected. Our prayer is that our entire church may increasingly find that same “unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3)."

Questions for understanding:

What are the two important tasks of the church?

What are the two sets of competing fears?

What is meant by the phrase "The Whole Christ"?

Questions for discussion:

Which of those two sets of fears are you most afraid of and why?

Which of those two tasks is easiest for you, which is harder, and why?

How does the phrase "the Whole Christ" help us hold these tasks together?

PASTOR'S PREFACE TO THE 12 STATEMENTS

As we move into the statements themselves, a word of explanation about the "12 statements" our denomination has embraced: God's Word (not man's) is our ultimate authority in faith and life, which is why you'll find Scripture references throughout the 12 statements.

Also, our denomination embraces (in a distant second place) a group of documents called the Westminster Standards as the best man-made summary of what Scripture teaches (about sex, politics, salvation, etc.). Those documents are abbreviated when they are cited. So, the Westminster Confession of Faith is WCF. WLC stands for the Westminster Larger Catechism, and WSC for the Shorter Catechism.

While members in the PCA are **not** required to know or affirm the Westminster Standards, those in spiritual leadership (pastors/elders and deacons) are. Our agreement that the Westminster Standards are the best man-made summary of Scripture is what holds our denomination together as a denomination (as well as love and mutual submission!).

So, each of the 12 statements could lead you to untold riches as you look up the Scripture passages references and then what the Standards say in summary. Every one of the 12 statements is a Bible study or a whole small group meeting in a paragraph. Since you're able to look up Scripture but might not have access to the Standards, I've tried to create links when the Standards are cited.

Here's are the statements broken into the apologetic task (first paragraph) and pastoral task (second paragraph), followed by questions for personal or small group study. Feel free to do the entire study at once, or take one statement a week for personal or small group study.

STATEMENT 1: MARRIAGE

The apologetic task:

“We affirm that marriage is to be between one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6; [WCF 24.1](#)). Sexual intimacy is a gift from God to be cherished and is reserved for the marriage relationship between one man and one woman (Prov. 5:18-19). Marriage was instituted by God for the mutual help and blessing of husband and wife, for procreation and the raising together of godly children, and to prevent sexual immorality (Gen. 1:28; 2:18; Mal. 2:14-15; 1 Cor. 7:2, 9; [WCF 24.2](#)). Marriage is also a God-ordained picture of the differentiated relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:6-10). All other forms of sexual intimacy, including all forms of lust and same-sex sexual activity of any kind, are sinful (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10; Jude 7; [WLC 139](#)).”

The pastoral task:

“Nevertheless, we do not believe that sexual intimacy in marriage automatically eliminates unwanted sexual desires, nor that all sex within marriage is sinless ([WCF 6.5](#)). We all stand in need of God's grace for sexual sin and temptation, whether married or not. Moreover, sexual immorality is not an unpardonable sin. There is no sin so small it does not deserve damnation, and no sin so big it cannot be forgiven ([WCF 15.4](#)). There is hope and forgiveness for all who repent of their sin and put their trust in Christ (Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:35, 37; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31).”

Questions for understanding:

What are some of the purposes of marriage according to Scripture?

How should we respond to sexual immorality in and out of marriage?

Questions for discussion

How does sexual immorality (same or different sex, married or single) distort the picture of the gospel in marriage?

How could we respond to a married man/woman battling lust?

What could we tell an engaged couple who believes that "if we just get married, we won't deal with temptation to sexual immorality anymore?"

Without being graphic, what do you think the authors had in mind when they say that, "...nor that all sex within marriage is sinless" ?

When talking about issues of human sexuality, why do you think the authors wisely chose to begin with marriage (and the gift of sex) and focusing on "sexual immorality" as opposed to same sex attraction or homosexuality?

STATEMENT 2: IMAGE OF GOD

The apologetic task:

"We affirm that God created human beings in his image as male and female (Gen. 1:26-27). Likewise, we recognize the goodness of the human body (Gen. 1:31; John 1:14) and the call to glorify God with our bodies (1 Cor. 6:12-20). As a God of order and design, God opposes the confusion of man as woman and woman as man (1 Cor. 11:14-15). While situations involving such confusion can be heartbreaking and complex, men and women should be helped to live in accordance with their biological sex."

The pastoral task:

"Nevertheless, we ought to minister compassionately to those who are sincerely confused and disturbed by their internal sense of gender identity (Gal. 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-26). We recognize that the effects of the Fall extend to the corruption of our whole nature ([WSC 18](#)), which may include how we think of our own gender and sexuality. Moreover, some persons, in rare instances, may possess an objective medical condition in which their anatomical development may be ambiguous or does not match their genetic chromosomal sex. Such persons are also made in the image of God and should live out their biological sex, insofar as it can be known."

[This statement includes a footnote which might be too much information for some. However, if you're aware of the push to re-interpret Scripture on the level of the Greek terms you can look up the [Ad-Interim Report](#) footnote 4 for yourself]

Questions for Understanding:

Why does God oppose the confusion of men and women?

When we make disciples, what should we teach them in terms of their body?

When we make disciples, what should we teach them in terms of their gender?

Questions for Discussion:

Granted that cultural opinions on what's "masculine" and what's "feminine" change, what steps can we take in our own cultural moment to make it clear we are "living according to our biology?"

How does remembering that our LGBTQ+ friends are still "made in God's image," help us speak truth in love to them?

Since calling someone by their preferred pronouns (or their opposite gender name) would not help them live according to their biological sex, how *should* we respond if someone asks us to call them by a different pronoun or name than their biology?

STATEMENT 3: ORIGINAL SIN

The apologetic task:

“We affirm that from the sin of our first parents we have received an inherited guilt and an inherited depravity (Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3). From this original corruption—which is itself sinful and for which we are culpable—proceed all actual transgressions. All the outworkings of our corrupted nature (a corruption which remains, in part, even after regeneration) are truly and properly called sin ([WCF 6.1-5](#)). Every sin, original and actual, deserves death and renders us liable to the wrath of God (Rom. 3:23; James 2:10; [WCF 6.6](#)). We must repent of our sin in general and our particular sins, particularly ([WCF 15.5](#)). That is, we ought to grieve for our sin, hate our sin, turn from our sin unto God, and endeavor to walk with God in obedience to his commandments ([WCF 15.2](#)).”

The pastoral task:

“Nevertheless, God does not wish for believers to live in perpetual misery for their sins, each of which are pardoned and mortified in Christ ([WCF 6.5](#)). By the Spirit of Christ, we are able to make spiritual progress and to do good works, not perfectly, but truly ([WCF 16.3](#)). Even our imperfect works are made acceptable through Christ, and God is pleased to accept and reward them as pleasing in his sight ([WCF 16.6](#)).”

Questions for understanding:

What do our "first parents" have to do with our personal sin and guilt?

What does all sin deserve?

What should we do with our sin?

Questions for discussion:

How does understanding the sources and depths of our sin help us speak truth in love to those struggling with sexual sin in particular?

Why do you think we're called to repent of sin "in general" and particular sins particularly? What's helpful about that council?

If God enables and desires and commands us to make progress and do good works,...how would you respond to someone who said "I'm a Christian but I'm at peace with my sexual struggles"? Or "God made me this way, there's no point in denying who I am?"

STATEMENT 4: DESIRE

The apologetic task:

"We affirm not only that our inclination toward sin is a result of the Fall, but that our fallen desires are in themselves sinful (Rom 6:11-12; 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11). The desire for an illicit end—whether in sexual desire for a person of the same sex or in sexual desire disconnected from the context of Biblical marriage—is itself an illicit desire. Therefore, the experience of same-sex attraction is not morally neutral; the attraction is an expression of original or indwelling sin that must be repented of and put to death (Rom. 8:13)."

The pastoral task:

"Nevertheless, we must celebrate that, despite the continuing presence of sinful desires (and even, at times, egregious sinful behavior), repentant, justified, and adopted believers are free from condemnation through the imputed righteousness of Christ (Rom. 8:1; 2 Cor. 5:21) and are able to please God by walking in the Spirit (Rom. 8:3-6)."

Questions for understanding:

Is same-sex attraction morally neutral? Why/Why not?

Is there hope for those who continue to find sinful desires within themselves? Why/Why not?

Questions for discussion:

What are the consequences if we assume or talk as if same-sex attraction is a *natural* desire?

How would you speak truth in love to someone who says, "God made me gay?" i.e. someone who claims that same-sex desire is as divinely authored as opposite-sex attraction and morally neutral?

Is there hope for sexually broken people? What exactly is the hope for those who struggle with any kind of attraction towards an illicit end (SSA, same-sex attraction, or lust)?

STATEMENT 5: CONCUPISCENCE

The apologetic task:

"We affirm that impure thoughts and desires arising in us prior to and apart from a conscious act of the will are still sin. We reject the Roman Catholic understanding of concupiscence whereby disordered desires that afflict us due to the Fall do not become sin without a consenting act of the will. These desires within us are not mere weaknesses or inclinations to sin but are themselves idolatrous and sinful."

The pastoral task:

"Nevertheless, we recognize that many persons who experience same-sex attraction describe their desires as arising in them unbidden and unwanted. We also recognize that the presence of same-sex attraction is often owing to many factors, which always include our own sin nature and may include being sinned against in the past. As with any sinful pattern or propensity—which may include disordered desires, extramarital lust, pornographic addictions, and all abusive sexual behavior—the actions of others, though never finally determinative, can be significant and influential. This should move us to compassion and understanding. Moreover, it is true for all of us that sin can be both unchosen bondage and idolatrous rebellion at the same time. We all experience sin, at times, as a kind of voluntary servitude (Romans 7:13-20)."

Questions for understanding:

Where do our thoughts and desires come from?

What ought to help us have compassion for our friends that have same-sex attraction or act contrary to their biology?

Questions for discussion:

This statement gets a bit technical, but it is crucial. Are we responsible for our desires or not? That's the question. How would you answer that question in the past and would your answer be in line with this statement or not?

If we are responsible for our desires, then how would we respond to someone who says "I deal with same-sex attraction, but I don't act on it, so I'm OK"?

How does this statement give us a more nuanced and helpful answer than the crass and unhelpful "pray the gay away"?

STATEMENT 6: TEMPTATION

The apologetic task:

“We affirm that Scripture speaks of temptation in different ways. There are some temptations God gives us in the form of morally neutral trials, and other temptations God never gives us because they arise from within as morally illicit desires (James 1:2, 13-14). When temptations come from without, the temptation itself is not sin, unless we enter into the temptation. But when the temptation arises from within, it is our own act and is rightly called sin.”

The pastoral task:

“Nevertheless, there is an important degree of moral difference between temptation to sin and giving in to sin, even when the temptation is itself an expressing of indwelling sin. While our goal is the weakening and lessening of internal temptations to sin, Christians should feel their greatest responsibility not for the fact that such temptations occur but for thoroughly and immediately fleeing and resisting the temptations when they arise. We can avoid “entering into” temptation by refusing to internally ponder and entertain the proposal and desire to actual sin. Without some distinction between (1) the illicit temptations that arise in us due to original sin and (2) the willful giving over to actual sin, Christians will be too discouraged to “make every effort” at growth in godliness and will feel like failures in their necessary efforts to be holy as God is holy (2 Peter 1:5-7; 1 Peter 1:14-16). God is pleased with our sincere obedience, even though it may be accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections [\(WCF 16.6\)](#).”

Questions for understanding:

What is the difference between temptations "from without" and "from within"?

How does James 1 help us understand the relationship between temptation and sin?

What ought all of us do in the face of temptation?

Questions for discussion:

How does a Biblical understanding of temptation help us all from being overly discouraged?

How would you respond to someone who claims Christ but says they struggle with unwanted same-sex attraction?

How would you respond to someone who claims Christ but says they *don't* struggle with same-sex attraction because "I will always have these desires, I just won't act on them"?

STATEMENT 7: SANCTIFICATION

The apologetic task:

“We affirm that Christians should flee immoral behavior and not yield to temptation. By the power of the Holy Spirit working through the ordinary means of grace, Christians should seek to wither, weaken, and put to death the underlying idolatries and sinful desires that lead to sinful behavior. The goal is not just consistent fleeing from, and regular resistance to, temptation, but the diminishment and even the end of the occurrences of sinful desires through the reordering of the loves of one’s heart toward Christ. Through the virtue of Christ’s death and resurrection, we can make substantial progress in the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Rom. 6:14-19; Heb. 12:14; 1 John 4:4; [WCF 13.1](#)).”

The pastoral task:

“Nevertheless, this process of sanctification—even when the Christian is diligent and fervent in the application of the means of grace—will always be accompanied by many weaknesses and imperfections ([WCF 16.5, 6](#)), with the Spirit and the flesh warring against one another until final glorification ([WCF 13.2](#)). The believer who struggles with same-sex attraction should expect to see the regenerate nature increasingly overcome the remaining corruption of the flesh, but this progress will often be slow and uneven. Moreover, the process of mortification and vivification involves the whole person, not simply unwanted sexual desires. The aim of sanctification in one’s sexual life cannot be reduced to attraction to persons of the opposite sex (though some persons may experience movement in this direction), but rather involves growing in grace and perfecting holiness in the fear of God ([WCF 13.3](#)).”

Questions for understanding:

What kind of progress should we expect, pray for, and work towards when it comes to our own holiness?

Why is it important to clarify that this process involves "the whole person" not just sexual desires?

Questions for discussion:

How does one "reorder" the "loves of one's heart"?

"Ideas have consequences. Bad ideas have victims." What are some possible outcomes if we fail to expect ourselves and others to become more and more like Jesus?

What difference does a resurrected Savior make in our struggle against sin? (Read Romans 6 for some answers!)

STATEMENT 8: IMPECCABILITY

The apologetic task:

We affirm the impeccability of Christ. The incarnate Son of God neither sinned (in thought, word, deed, or desire) nor had the possibility of sinning. Christ experienced temptation passively, in the form of trials and the devil's entreaties, not actively, in the form of disordered desires. Christ had only the suffering part of temptation, where we also have the sinning part. Christ had no inward disposition or inclination unto the least evil, being perfect in all graces and all their operations at all times.

The pastoral task:

Nevertheless, Christ endured, from without, real soul-wrenching temptations which qualified him to be our sympathetic high priest (Heb. 2:18; 4:15). Christ assumed a human nature that was susceptible to suffering and death. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3).

Questions for understanding:

What does impeccability mean?

What's the difference between temptation to sin and desiring to sin?

In what way can Jesus sympathize with us in our temptations?

Questions for discussion:

Could you tell someone struggling with same-sex attraction, "Jesus understands what you're going through"? Why/Why not?

Why could it be helpful to let those struggling with sinful desires know that Jesus experienced sorrow and grief as they do?

STATEMENT 9: IDENTITY

The apologetic task:

We affirm that the believer's most important identity is found in Christ (Rom. 8:38-39; Eph. 1:4, 7). Christians ought to understand themselves, define themselves, and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and their identity as regenerate, justified, holy children of God (Rom. 6:5-11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Eph. 2:1-10). To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term 'Christian' is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

The pastoral task:

Nevertheless, being honest about our sin struggles is important. While Christians should not identify with their sin so as to embrace it or seek to base their identity on it, Christians ought to acknowledge their sin in an effort to overcome it. There is a difference between speaking about a phenomenological facet of a person's sin-stained reality and employing the language of sinful desires as a personal identity marker. That is, we name our sins, but are not named by them. Moreover, we recognize that there are some secondary identities, when not rooted in sinful desires or struggles against the flesh, that can be legitimately affirmed along with our primary identity as Christians. For example, the distinctions between male and female, or between various nationalities and people groups, are not eradicated in becoming Christians, but serve to magnify the glory of God in his plan of salvation (Gen. 1:27; 1 Peter 3:7; 28 Rev. 5:9; 7:9-10).

Questions for understanding:

We should _____ ourselves, _____ ourselves, _____ ourselves in light of our union with Christ.

What does "union with Christ" mean? (for help, or for more information, here are links to two interviews connected to one of Pastor Joshua's favorite recent books on Union with Christ: [one in CT](#), [one in byFaith](#))

Why should we not understand, define, or describe ourselves in terms of our sinful desires?

Questions for discussion:

In what ways does pairing our struggle with our identity distort what's true about us in Christ? (for example, "I'm a gay Christian," or "I'm a lustful Christian," "I'm a gluttonous Christian," "I'm an angry Christian," etc.

Since confession is commanded to be given to God, and confession is encouraged to be given to one another (James 5), why aren't we most honest and forthcoming in disclosing our sins to the Lord and one another?

In what ways would better understanding our union with Christ help us and our brothers and sisters with sinful desires?

STATEMENT 10: LANGUAGE**The apologetic task:**

We affirm that those in our churches would be wise to avoid the term "gay Christian." Although the term "gay" may refer to more than being attracted to persons of the same sex, the term does not communicate less than that. For many people in our culture, to self-identify as "gay" suggests that one is engaged in homosexual practice. At the very least, the term normally communicates the presence and approval of same-sex sexual attraction as morally neutral or morally praiseworthy. Even if "gay," for some Christians, simply means "same-sex attraction," it is still inappropriate to juxtapose this sinful desire, or any other sinful desire, as an identity marker alongside our identity as new creations in Christ.

The pastoral task:

Nevertheless, we recognize that some Christians may use the term "gay" in an effort to be more readily understood by non-Christians. The word "gay" is common in our culture, and we do not think it wise for churches to police every use of the term. Our burden is that we do not justify our sin struggles by affixing them to our identity as Christians. Churches should be gentle, patient, and intentional with believers who call themselves "gay Christians," encouraging them, as part of the process of sanctification, to leave behind identification language rooted in sinful desires, to live chaste lives, to refrain from entering into temptation, and to mortify their sinful desires.

Questions for understanding:

What do some mean by the term "gay Christian"?

Why is it wise to avoid the term "gay Christian"?

Instead of policing language, what should our burden be for (and why?)

Questions for discussion:

Colossians 4:5-6 says, "Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person." How might you graciously respond to someone who calls themselves a "gay Christian"?

STATEMENT 11: FRIENDSHIP

The apologetic task:

We affirm that our contemporary ecclesiastical culture has an underdeveloped understanding of friendship and often does not honor singleness as it should. The church must work to see that all members, including believers who struggle with same-sex attraction, are valued members of the body of Christ and engaged in meaningful relationships through the blessings of the family of God. Likewise, we affirm the value of Christians who share common struggles gathering together for mutual accountability, exhortation, and encouragement.

The pastoral task:

Nevertheless, we do not support the formation of exclusive, contractual marriage-like friendships, nor do we support same-sex romantic behavior or the assumption that certain sensibilities and interests are

necessarily aspects of a gay identity. We do not consider same sex attraction a gift in itself, nor do we think this sin struggle, or any sin struggle, should be celebrated in the church.

Questions for discussion:

What would a church that honors singleness look like? Have you seen examples of that done well?

If same sex attraction should not be celebrated, how should Christians respond when they are invited to celebratory events (like gay civil unions)? How might you graciously decline such an invitation? What might you communicate if you participate in a celebratory event?

How should Christians respond to social media posts celebrating someone coming out or starting a same-sex relationship? If someone were to ask you, "why didn't you 'like' or 'heart' that post,"...what might you say?

If the root of some people's struggles is loneliness and desire for close friendships, how can we cultivate better friendships in our church? What steps can you personally take to cultivate friendships in our church?

STATEMENT 12: REPENTANCE AND HOPE

The apologetic task:

We affirm that the entire life of the believer is one of repentance. Where we have mistreated those who struggle with same-sex attraction, or with any other sinful desires, we call ourselves to repentance. Where we have nurtured or made peace with sinful thoughts, desires, words, or deeds, we call ourselves to repentance. Where we have heaped upon others misplaced shame or have not dealt well with necessary God-given shame, we call ourselves to repentance.

The pastoral task:

Nevertheless, as we call ourselves to the evangelical grace of repentance ([WCF 15.1](#)), we see many reasons for rejoicing (Phil. 4:1). We give thanks for penitent believers who, though they continue to struggle with same-sex attraction, are living lives of chastity and obedience. These brothers and sisters can serve as courageous examples of faith and faithfulness, as they pursue Christ with a long obedience in gospel dependence. We also give thanks for ministries and churches within our denomination that minister to sexual strugglers (of all kinds) with Biblical truth and grace. Most importantly, we give thanks for the gospel that can save and transform the worst of sinners—older brothers and younger brothers, tax collectors and Pharisees, insiders and outsiders. We rejoice in ten thousand spiritual blessings that are ours when we turn from sin by the power of the Spirit, trust in the promises of God, and rest upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life ([WCF 14.2](#))."

Final questions:

What has been the most helpful portion of this study for you and why?

What has been the most insightful portion of this study?

What has been the most confusing portion of this study?

What lingering questions do you have?