Pure - Gay & Christian?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 December 2010

Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0:00] It's on page 1147. Okay, 1 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 9 to 13.

I have written to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters.
In that case, you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother, but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler.
With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside.
Expel the wicked man from among you. Let me go down to chapter 6. I'll start at verse 9, 9 to 13.
Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?
[1:20] Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanders, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, and you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God.
Sexual immorality Everything is permissible for me, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food, but God will destroy them both.
The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Amen. Thanks very much, Ian.
Well, I encourage you to take notes. If you've got your new sheet, there's a space on the back. If not, there should be another sheet that was handed around, or a pen at the front. Feel free to get it, and to get yourself a Bible if you haven't got one.
[2:30] There's plenty at the back, and you can follow through. Before we start this morning, I want to say a couple of things.

First, that I'm aware when dealing with the subject of homosexuality, there are a variety of views and experiences. So, you may find that as we go through this morning's talk, there will be times you may agree, and there may be times you disagree.
And so, I'm just saying that up front. So, if you've got questions afterwards, to come and talk to me, and to encourage you to come to our follow-up discussion this evening.
The second thing that I want to say is that I am a learner. I don't know all the answers, and nor do I pretend to. Trying to understand our sexuality is a very complex matter.
And I speak to you not as a physician, or as a psychologist, but simply as a learner and teacher of God's Word. And that is where we want to base our thinking and our study this morning.
[3:51] That as we come together, we want to hear what God has to say about ourselves, how He has made us, and how we are called to live in His world.

So, let's pray as we ask for God's help. Our Father God, we thank you so much that you have given to us your Word, so that we know how to live, and how we have been made.
That we are not just placed here on earth, trying to make it up, and trying to figure it out by ourselves. But you have shown us very clearly.
And we ask, Father, that by your Holy Spirit, that you would help us to understand, and to apply it to our lives, and to our thinking.
If we come with any thoughts and any views, that we would submit them right now to your Word. That you would shape our minds, and our thinking, so that we become more and more like Christ.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24

[5:13] Loving one another, caring for one another, and serious with the issues that you are serious with. So please help us, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, over the last 20 years, Ireland has changed from a conservative religious culture to a more liberal, irreligious culture.
The bedrock of Irish society, the heterosexual marriage, is no longer foundational. Increasingly, we meet people who are living together with the same sex, and hardly a week goes by without some big-named celebrity coming out.
But with all the changes in our culture, there still seems to be a lot of confusion about homosexuality. Last year, I had to attend the funeral of my aunt.
And as with most funerals, it's the opportunity to meet relatives and friends that you haven't seen in years. And at this funeral, I was looking forward to meeting my cousin.
[6:29] As far as I remember, I had only ever met him once. Of course, we had had many family gatherings in the past, and everybody had always been invited, except John was always absent.

Leading up to the funeral, we were told that John was gay, and was living with his partner for the last 20 years, and they were now happily married. Now, the question I had was this.
Why did nobody know? Why was it all kept a secret for so long? You see, with all the changes in society, it seems that people still don't know how to handle homosexuality.
Those within the gay community very often fear rejection and isolation, and have to deal with being ostracized and marginalized. Those outside the gay community, it seems, are uneducated in their understanding.
And they often appear homophobic in their attitudes, and in the jokes that they share. But that's my experience.
[7:42] Let me try and make it a little bit more personal for us. What would you say, or what would you do, if your son came home one day from school to tell you that he was more attracted to the other boys in his class than the girls?

What would you do if a woman and her gay partner arrived in church saying, they follow Jesus, they love reading their Bible, and they would love to be involved here?
What would you do? You see, these are no longer questions for others in another place. These are questions for us. And so we come this morning to hear what the Bible has to say about homosexuality.
Well, I think there are three broad responses that the church gives to the change in our culture.
Firstly, there are those in the church who will say, condemnation.
Read your Bible, they say, and they'll quote verses like Romans 1, verse 24. God gave them over in their sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity. Men committed indecent acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.
[9:00] Homosexuality, they say, is God's judgment. Such people need to be put out of the church. They need to be reminded of how they have violated God's commands. Second, and in response to that attitude, there are those in the church who will say, acceptance.

Homosexuality is just as much a part of society as heterosexuality. So we need to grow up and we need to get on with it. Lisa Miller, who is a theologian and a commentator said, speaking about the Bible, a mature view of scriptural authority requires us, as we have in the past, to move beyond literalism.
The Bible was written for a world so unknown to our own, it's impossible to apply its rules at face value to ours. In other words, it's saying we can't take the likes of Romans seriously.
Those texts were for another age. They don't apply to us anymore. Well, I don't know about you, but neither of those views settle with me.
I don't think either of those views are an option. Both are a distortion of Scripture and both misunderstand how we handle Scripture. So we need a third way. And the third way I'm going to call a gospel way.
[10:27] And we're going to look under it in two ways. First, God's good design and then God's great hope. So we start with God's good design, who we are.

First of all, we must see ourselves as human beings created in God's image. Back in Genesis 1, verses 26 to 27, it says this, Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.
So God created man in his own image. And in the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. You see, all too often, we are grouped or categorized according to our sexual

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24

orientation.
On the one hand, there is the gay community and people get lumped there. And then there are others who are in the straight community and they get lumped there. We find our identity in a group and with people who we perceive to be like us.
But that's unhelpful because we first need to see ourselves, not how we see ourselves or how other people might see us, but how God sees us.
[11:45] You see, we were created by God in his likeness. We are his image bearers. So no matter who we are, what background we come from, we are his image bearers, every single human being.

Now as we'll see in a minute, that image has become distorted by our choices and the choices of others. And it is God's purpose and plan that that image is restored fully in us.
But as one writer helpfully put it, God's primary desire is not that we should become heterosexual, but that we would become more like Christ.
We were created like God, we are to become like God, So it's only by looking to God and seeing who he is that I can really understand who I am.
So God views us and God sees us as unique individuals, people who are made in his image, in his likeness, who are equally loved, and we must be treated as such.
[12:55] Our first identity is that we are made in his image. So that's who we are. And second, well how should we live?

Well God has shown us how we should live in relationship with each other. Because we are made in God's image, we are relational beings. God is a relational being.
The Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are at one together, they relate together. And we were made for the same intimacy, primarily with the triune God.
But also, with each other. And we are told how that should be expressed. And we've been looking at that over the last few weeks in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, as we've been looking at marriage and singleness.
And in 1 Corinthians 7, we see God's purpose very clearly. That marriage is always between a man and a woman in an exclusive, committed relationship.
[13:55] friendship. And sexual intimacy is part of God's good design for marriage. And one of the primary reasons for that is procreation.

God has designed the man and the woman so that they can have children. Children who can work together to grow up to serve and love God and live under God. Man and another man and a woman with another woman can't have children.
It's not part of God's design. So marriage is very clearly a part of his creation order. Singleness, on the other hand, is also encouraged, as we saw that in chapter 7, but without sexual intimacy.
Relationships between single people are to be encouraged and to be encouraged across the sexes, but without engaging in sexual activity. to unite yourself with someone sexually outside of marriage is to be going against God's good design.
So God, again, has not only shown us who we are made in his image, he has shown us how we should live in relationship with each other and how we should live in his world.
[15:12] So for all of us, whoever we are, there is either marriage, which is always heterosexual, always between a man and a woman. Or, there is singleness, which is either heterosexual, you stay in your own, or homosexual.

Now, let me try and explain that a little bit more as we think of homosexual behavior and homosexual orientation. You can just go back one, that's all right, saviour.
You mightn't have this on your notes, it's just an extra homosexual behavior and homosexual orientation. We've got to distinguish between the two.
Homosexual orientation is to be attracted to someone of the same sex. Homosexual behavior is to be sexually active with someone of the same sex.
Now, as we have seen, sexual intimacy is only to be expressed within the context of God's design for marriage. So the Bible, we discover, is always negative to homosexual behavior, but it never condemns or judges homosexual orientation.
[16:36] Because the issue in Scripture is not homosexuality, but purity. The Bible does not say straight sex is good, but gay sex is bad.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24

It doesn't say that. Now, what the Bible says is, in Ephesians 5, verse 3, there must not be a hint of sexual immorality.
You see, whatever our orientation, we are all called to purity. So if you are married, listen to this from Hebrews 13, verse 4.
Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and the sexually immoral.
If you are single, whatever your orientation, listen to this from 1 Timothy 5. Treat younger men as brothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.
[17:43] You see, to be made in God's image is to reflect God's heart for purity. Behavior is what the Bible talks about, not orientation.

So we've got to be very clear about the differences there. But let's move on as to why we struggle. struggle. And that's a sensible question to ask.
Why do we struggle with our sexuality? Christians who have a homosexual orientation often talk about unwanted desires and share of their struggles to remain sexually pure.
Richard Kirker, who was part of the gay and lesbian Christian movement in Britain, he said this, it would be very cavalier and capricious of God who created people in a certain way and then instructed them that they are forbidden from fulfilling all the potential they have been given.
In other words, he was saying, if God made me this way with homosexual feelings, then I must be able to express it sexually. Well, I don't think God has made us that way.
[18:58] apart from scripture, scientific and medical research has shown that homosexuality is not genetically or biologically determined.

You see, we all live in a fallen world and as a result, all of our sexuality, whoever we are, is all flawed. None of us relate to each other the way that we ought to, we don't live the way God intends, and we don't behave according to God's word.
The Bible is crystal clear that while we have all been made in the image of God, that image has been distorted. And a distorted sexuality can be put down to, very simply, our wrong choices on our own part, but equally, our sexuality can be distorted because of another person's wrong choice towards us.
So if people have suffered sexual abuse, it is going to have an effect on their behavior and their outlook on their relationships. It's also true that for those who have grown up within a family where there has been one parent or there's been people coming in and out of the relationship, that that also creates behavior.
Contrary to common thought, there is not a gay gene. Homosexuality is a choice within our control or it's a learned behavior outside of our immediate control.
[20:36] I have a book here and as we are stuck for time, we could take a long time to look at those issues. This one is called Walking with Gay Friends and there's a very helpful chapter on here called Nature.

Nature. Or nurture which will take that whole issue through a little bit more. Did God make me this way or is it because of outside influences and experiences that makes me the way that I am?
So I just hold that up as something that you want to have a read of. So I think this will help us better understand homosexuality, who we are, we're made in God's image, how we live, the relationships that he has given us, but why we struggle.
We live in a fallen and broken world, and we make choices ourselves, but because of others' choices towards us, it can have an effect on our behavior and our thinking.
So what is God's great hope? Well, I think there are three ways that we can respond equally to this. things. And the first is this.
[21:47] First, we are not called to stamp out homosexual behavior. We are called to preach Christ. Paul has made it very clear that it is God's business to judge those who are outside the church.

Have a look at 1 Corinthians chapter 5, verses 9 to 10. Chapter 5 starts out where it says in verse 1, it's actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you.
And we continue in verse 9. He says, I have written to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral.
In other words, not meaning those who are not Christians, or the greedy, or swindlers, or idolaters. In that case, you would have to leave this world.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24

Verse 12, what business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? You see, it is not our calling as Christians to enforce a certain moral behavior and to remove ourselves from people who engage in immoral practices.
[23:14] If that were the case, he is saying, we would just have to leave the planet. We'd have to go and live on planet Mars or something. Rather, what our concern should be as Christians is not the behavior of those who are not Christians, but the behavior of those who are Christians.

We should be concerned about the calling of the Christian. And the primary calling of the Christian is to reach out with the gospel. And Paul made it very clear in chapter 1 verse 17 that God had sent him primarily to preach the gospel.
That was why he was here. One writer put it like this, people need a reason to live a changed life, and we can give them that reason.
God has not called us to be the moral police for this world. He has called us to preach the good news about his son. The biggest problem that the non-Christian world has is the fact that they are not Christians.
Their behavior is a secondary issue. The real problem is that they don't know Jesus. Therefore, we can say, the gospel is central.
[24:34] so often, we can focus on the external. We can see people's behavior, and we want to change their behavior. We want to make them different kind of people.

But the real issue is the internal. It's the heart, and it's only the gospel that can penetrate deep into people's hearts and bring about the change. Unless people are changed on the inside, they're never going to change on the outside.
So our first response as Christians is always to be introducing people to Jesus. The second response, then, is this.
We are not called to ignore homosexual behavior. We are to seek ongoing transformation. Now, when Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth, and we must remember that this is a letter written to a church, to those who are Christians, and we see all the behavior that was going on, and he was aware as he wrote the letter that there was sexual immorality of all kinds that was going on at the church.
But look at the way in which he starts his letter. Go back to chapter one, verse two. You think of all the issues that we've looked at that were in the church, and all the problems, and this is how he starts in verse two.
[26:12] He says, to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.

I find it quite incredible that he doesn't just launch into a big tirade, condemning every immoral behavior. Instead, he starts off by reminding them of the gospel.
He starts off by reminding them of their life with Christ. He's telling them that you've been sanctified, which means you've been set apart for Christ. You belong to Christ.
You were called to be holy. you're different. In other words, because of who you are, because of what Christ has done in your life, this is how you should live.
And that's where he starts his letter. So when we get into the nitty-gritty of the issues in chapter 5, he gives very clear instructions that the Christian, the believer who persists in sexual immorality, the Christian who is unrepentant, that person should not be ignored.
[27:29] So in chapter 5, verse 11, he says, but now, well, let's pick it up from verse 9, just so you get the flow of thought again. He says, I have written to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral or the greedy, the swindlers or idolaters.

In that case, you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother, calls himself a Christian, but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler.
With such a person, do not even eat. Verse 13, God will judge those outside, expel the wicked man from among you.
In other words, you have a responsibility to the believer in the church who is unrepentant. And it's saying here, I think, in a wider context, that Christ is not content to leave us where we are.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24

We have to take our sins seriously, whatever that is, and we are to seek ongoing transformation. So with that in mind, grace is required.
[28:55] When we become Christians, our behavior doesn't change overnight. As soon as you turn to Christ, it doesn't mean to say that you are now a perfect person.

Our position before God changes. He now sees us as he sees Christ, blameless and holy in his sight. But the transformation of our lives is ongoing.
And so often we seem to get it round the wrong way. We say, change your behavior and then come to Christ. Get your life sorted and then you can come to Jesus.
That's wrong. It's terribly wrong. We come to Christ first as we are, whether we are homosexual or heterosexual. And God in his goodness will bring about the change in our lives.
We are all sinners. We all fail and we all fall. Therefore, we need to be able to extend God's grace to one another as we seek the transformation of our lives.
[30:01] So behavior doesn't change overnight. There is a process and therefore grace needs to be in operation. third then, we are not called to make homosexual behavior the worst of sins.

We are to welcome all sinners. Look at 1 Corinthians 6, verses 9 to 10. Let's read from there. chapter 6, verse 9. Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?
Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.
Now, can you see that list that is there before us? Homosexual behavior is just one in a list of sexually immoral sins. It's not the only one.
[31:20] And then when we look at the sexually immoral sins, that is in a broader list of other sins, of slanderers, of swindlers, and drunkards, and greedy.

There's a whole lot of behavior that is contrary to God's good design. Not being generous with your money is just the same as sleeping with someone of the opposite sex.
Speaking against somebody else's character is the same as looking at porn. God doesn't distinguish things here, and nor should we.
They are all grouped together. Cy Rogers, who is a Christian teacher, somebody who seeks to help and encourage those who struggle with homosexuality, he says this, it's not heterosexuality that gets us into heaven, it's a relationship with Jesus.
When we stand before God, he's not going to ask you, are you heterosexual, or are you homosexual? He's going to ask, do you love Jesus?
[32:33] So it's not about avoiding particular sins, it's about coming as sinners the way we are to Christ, which is what Paul seems to be applying in verse 11.

He says to them, of all the people that were made, this is what the church was made up of, all these kinds of people that we read in verse 9. And he says in verse 11, that is what some of you were. This is the way you used to live. But when you came to Christ, something happened. Finish off verse 11, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
You see, we are not told to come to Christ with our lives sorted out. We are to come to Christ so that our lives can be sorted out. And he explains how the gospel begins to take effect in people. He reminds them, he says, look, you were washed. In other words, you have been given a new purity. Christ has come to you, he has cleaned you, he forgives you of your sin, and in place of that, he gives you the purity of Christ.
[33:51] Our sexual impurity is replaced with Christ's purity. You are washed, you're clean. And then he tells them, you are sanctified.

We've been given a new purpose in life. Christ has come to you so that you can finish your old life and you can begin a new kind of life. We're set apart, that's what sanctified means.
You've got a new purpose in life. You now follow God's design for sexuality, sexuality, not your own. Now start living it. And he says you were justified.
In other words, we have a new position. Christ has come to us. He has exchanged places with us. He's taken on all our sexual immorality, every thought and every word and every deed, and he suffers the penalty that we deserve, and in its place, we are given a new standing before God.
We are not homosexual or heterosexual. We are children of God. That is our true identity, loved and treasured by him.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24

[35:02] So you can see here that he's reminding them that you are welcomed as sinners. You are welcomed with all your immoral behaviour. You were introduced to Jesus who gives you a new purity, a new purpose, and a new position in life.

That means that all hate-speak is out. We are not to be people who walk around with placards, as is seen on the news from time to time, shouting, God hates fags.
We are not to be people who look down and feel superior to those with a homosexual orientation. what about the jokes you make amongst your friends?
What about put-down comments that you may say to your classmate, you're gay? For the Christian community, that is unacceptable. There is no room to reject or isolate anyone.
We are called to welcome everyone, just as Christ has welcomed us. so I'd like us to think through a couple of things and I just leave these comments with you.
[36:25] What is there within your sexuality that you struggle with? Is there anybody that you know who is gay?

Do you know anybody who struggles with homosexuality? how do you relate to them? What do you say? How do you behave? Is there a different way in which you can approach the person?
How can you help them? Just as much as Christ has come to us to help us. May God help us to apply his word as we seek to live as his people in this world.
Let's pray together. We've been talking through a number of issues over these past weeks and so I just want to say if there is anybody here who wants to talk through further any of these issues in a more private manner either with myself or with Kirstie then please do speak to us and it will be held in complete confidentiality.
Our Father God we thank you so much that we are your creation. we are part of your wonderful design. We are your image bearers.
[38:14] We were made like God and it is your desire that we would become more and more like Christ and thank you that one day if our trust is in the Lord Jesus we will become like Christ we will be like him.

we will struggle no more. We won't struggle about our sin. We won't struggle with our sexuality. Everything will be put in order and your design will be stamped across our lives and across our world.
Please help us to live as your people. Help us to submit to the authority of your word. Help us to bring grace to one another.
Help us not to ignore the sin that we see around us. Help us to bring forgiveness. Help us to speak Christ into each other's lives.
To help each other to go on living the pure life that you have called us to live. And we pray that you would help us to be lights shining for you in what is still very much a homophobic culture and society.
[39:37] Help us to bring your love. Help us to bring Christ. Help us to be your people. In Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together our closing song.

It's in Christ alone my hope is found. That is where we all find our refuge. That's where we all find our peace. That is where we find our hope.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-10-11 18:27:24