

HOLY

Sexuality

WEEK 4 // SEPTEMBER 18, 2022

SERIES GUARDRAILS:

As this series delves into some topics that can be heavy, complex, and/or personal, we want to start by recapping the ground rules & acknowledgments Pastor Brannon gave us to start this series. These will help guide you and hopefully shape a safe environment for the Holy Spirit to move full of *grace and truth* (John 1).

1. Recognition #1: We recognize this is a deeply personal conversation.

- *Reminder: we may all have different ways that we relate to this conversation, but shaming someone who comes at it from a different viewpoint is **never** Jesus-centered. We see **individuals over issues, and people over policies.***

2. Recognition #2: We recognize this is a deceptively complex conversation.

- *Guidance: this guide may better be utilized for individual conversation. Where you are is where you are, and you may not be in a season where you can have the right conversation the right way with the people around you. That is okay. Don't force it. Fight against the enemy wanting to lead you into the sin of fighting, slandering, or hating one another.*

3. Recognition #3: We recognize this is a deep conversation.

- *Go slow. Don't rush. Don't stop listening. Don't stop learning. Don't stop loving. Don't stop praying. Don't stop seeking Jesus together - as long as it takes.*

4. Recognition #3: We recognize this can be a confusing conversation.

- *Listen well. As James says: "let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." [James 1:19]*

Before you continue, stop to pray for one another (or your personal posture) and that the Holy Spirit would lead your **conversations** and **listening**. Ask Jesus to be glorified in your time together.



SUNDAY TEACHING RECAP:

Week four helped us address what God's Word has to say about homosexuality and understand how to answer the question "Can you be gay and be a Christian" by having a deeper understanding of what someone means when they say "gay." As we examine God's Word, it is not as ammunition to sharpen swords, but to build muscle to equip us to faithfully follow in the way of Jesus - the way of grace and truth.

GROUP CHECK-IN:

If going through as a group, we moved this portion until after the guardrails and recap. This week, the question is: **"When I read this text and enter this conversation, is there anything that rises up in me that I need to give to Jesus?"**

Anger. Hatred. Fear. Shame. Doubt. ***It is okay to feel what you are feeling, but we need to then make appropriate space to look to Jesus with what we are feeling, not to fellow humans who either fuel hatred or speak false truth to cover shame.***

You may want to pause right here and just take the space to spend some time in prayer. Bring your anger, frustration, hurt, and pain individually to Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your group to see fellow brothers and sisters that God has and is drawing to Himself rightly - to not lose sight of the work of the Holy Spirit because you may only glimpse wilderness.

Guidelines: Jesus sees where each of us are. Jesus loves us in this. And Jesus is always working and calling to Himself. Whether angry or scared, frustrated or burdened - Jesus is big enough to handle and we can together move closer to Him as He is in the business of reconciling and restoring all things (including you and me!) to Himself.

CONVERSATION QUESTIONS:

- Pastor Brannon gave us helpful guidelines for examining God's Word - which also bears with it the assumption that *I am okay with the Bible as my authority*. We also recognized the tension that *using a wrong text to justify a right belief is an abuse of Scripture*. How have you/your group navigated this tension of reading God's Word as authoritative while also holding it rightly in its context? What is still confusing to you about understanding God's Word?
- ***Paul did not write Romans 1 as a condemnation of gay people but as a condemnation of all people.*** How does this reality help or challenge this conversation? Why is it important to see all sin rightly as God sees it?
 - You may need to pause and be honest about what you've grown up understanding and say "is this what God's Word actually says?" Not because you want it to say something on either end of truth or grace, but because we should and can ask this question and seek clarity. After all, clarity is kindness, and Jesus welcomes you to bring this question to Him.
- Pastor Brannon outlined how we can understand "I am gay" with the outline of Roles, Attraction, Orientation, Identity, Lust, and Behavior. What was helpful about this? What was confusing?
 - How can this lens help us identify our own broken tendencies that need to be surrendered daily to Jesus? You can even open up 1 Corinthians 6 or Galatians 5 and look through the lists. Which of those do you find as desires that, if acted upon, are sinning against God? How does this understanding help us have compassion or share the truth of the Gospel that Jesus gives us the strength to put to death daily even when we desire to _____?

FINAL THOUGHTS:

*We recognize this is a hard conversation. There are a lot of emotions. The enemy wants us to create distance and sow division. But just as we read a moment ago: **“And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” - Ephesians 2:17-18 ESV** We would encourage you to seek someone out who you trust that is in a different emotional space than you are (don't feed anger with anger, but seek wisdom from another Jesus follower who will be sure anger doesn't lead to sin. Don't feed hurt with hurt, but seek wisdom from another Jesus follower who will be sure hurt doesn't lead to gossip and slander against fellow followers of Jesus.)*

If you are reflecting individually, you can reach out to a Pastor to talk. Email matt@ncchapel.com and he can help set that up.