

Dealing with Homosexuality & Sexual Identity Chats

This is a sensitive and hotly-debated subject. Over the past several decades, secular media has normalized this behavior. Groundwire can be a safe place for people to have open and honest questions regarding sexuality. Scripture clearly teaches that this is sinful behavior and not what God intended. A typical question in this arena is, "Can God love me if I am gay?" The answer to that is clear and strong, "YES!" If you struggle with giving that answer for any reason please talk to the Director of Coaching about your concerns.

What types of chatters do we encounter?

1. **A person questioning their sexual orientation.** Usually a young person. They may be having urges and thoughts but have not acted on them. They may be facing confusing physical and emotional changes that usually pass in time. It is not a sin to be tempted or have unusual thoughts pop into one's head. Reassure this person that simply because they have these thoughts from time to time does not make them gay, bisexual, or misgendered.
2. **A person actively involved in an LGBTQ relationship and wanting to become free.** They may feel that this is the way that they are wired and it is impossible to change. Generally, they are unhappy living this way but feel powerless to do anything about it. Also, they may be fearful of having an open conversation on this topic.
3. **An openly LGBTQ person intent on arguing or proving Christians wrong on this topic.** They may already have their heels dug in before any meaningful dialogue can happen. Unfortunately, these conversations tend to become debates and are not helpful. It is important that coaches not allow ourselves to be led into an argumentative situation. Remain calm and express patience as Christ would. Keep in mind that when a person does not first love Jesus it is illogical for them to see a reason to follow His ways. Leading them to Christ and beginning to obey Him out of love is always the first step to anyone leaving their sin.

Why are they logging on? Many of these chatters sincerely desire a relationship with God. They may come here expecting condemnation and intolerance. They often have received or perceived judgment from Christians. This only makes them feel alienated from God and other believers. Most Christians truly do not understand where the LGBTQ community is coming from. It is important to try and understand their perspective.

The word, "Homosexual" is actually offensive; they find that term only being used in a derogatory biblical sense. LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Androgynous) or just LGBTQ is the correct lingo. The gay community adheres to many different sexual identities that are self-determined, and within each identity, the specific person

may have variance on what they mean by identifying this way. You do not need to be an expert on all these, but consider that using their language can communicate respect for an individual and open them up to genuinely hearing you. The proper way to ask someone is, “How do you identify?”

Another offensive phrase is “Love the sinner, hate the sin.” Although this is true, it comes across as trite and simplistic.

Who are these chatters? In society today, LGBTQ people are defined by their sexuality. Heterosexuals are not. Sexual orientation is only a part of who I am. I may be a husband, father, grandfather, avid reader, minister, and classic car enthusiast, among other things.

Once a person “comes out,” this becomes the core of who they are. Any other attributes, talents, and characteristics are rejected. Unfortunately, this is the view of much of the Christian community and an invisible divide is created.

What responses have they encountered from Christians in the past? Because most Christians are not prepared to have these types of conversations, the normal response is to quote scripture. God’s Word is indeed our guide and the ultimate source of truth. Our responsibility is to help them understand scripture but more importantly, teach them how to apply it to their lives. Simply quoting scripture and telling them to obey is not enough.

What should our approach be? Our goal is not to change sexual behavior but to help this person experience a genuine relationship with Christ. We are not going to “fix” anyone. We are not going to make anyone “straight”. We can only introduce them to Jesus and respond to them as Jesus would.

We all came to know Christ while we were in sin and brokenness. He accepted us as we were. It was when we allowed Him into our life that the internal change began.

Overall, we must be intentional in answering questions directly and with great compassion. When asked, they want your clear response. Most people are offended when people are evasive and non-committal.

Commonly Asked Questions:

Why did God make me this way? They may explain that this is not a choice and that they were born this way. They may say that they can’t help their feelings. One response may be that everyone has thoughts and temptations, sexual and otherwise. Jesus was tempted. We choose to act on them.

Is being gay a sin? The Bible clearly states that it is, much like envy, pride, theft, lying, and adultery. Sin is sin. Sin is anything that creates a wedge between us and God. Unfortunately, Christians have elevated homosexuality to a higher level. The Bible teaches that God forgives all sin - 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." Period.

Are LGBTQ people going to hell? An effective response has been to explain the only thing that sends a person to hell, is the rejection of God's free gift of salvation. Unfortunately, many times people who struggle with their sexuality view the only choice to be, "Be gay or go to heaven." They feel that they are already doomed. What a great opportunity to offer a clear Gospel presentation and what the Bible actually says about salvation.

The most effective chats occur when the coach is patient, truly listens, and is intent on demonstrating God's love. Stand on the authority of the Word of God, there is no compromise there. Looking past the stereotypes and looking at the person, hurting and in need of a Savior will help this chatter see Jesus through you.