

[How Should We Respond to Homosexuality? Part 2](#)

Speaker: Joe Dallas, Focus on the Family.org, March 18, 2008

(Full Transcript Below)

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You know, to hear some of us talk, you'd think it was more important to politically defeat lesbians and gays than it is to see them won into the kingdom of God. So long as we are more concerned to win a political victory over these people than we are to see them born again into the Kingdom for eternity then our priorities are skewed. And we must repent. And I say that as someone who is politically active. My wife and I walk precincts for godly candidates. We are a part of the system. We are, unapologetically, a part of that "vast right-wing conspiracy," and we'll continue to be so. But I must remember, when I am tempted towards real hostility towards lesbians and gays, who protest conferences like this and say how hateful and bigoted we are, when I am tempted to pull out all the stops to steamroll them as they try to steamroll us, I am reminded Jesus said, "My Kingdom is not of this world." There are more important things than temporal victories. The eternal souls of the people we oppose are certainly more important than any sociological victory we can attain.

When we talk as though homosexuality is the preeminent, most heinous sin in the scripture, and while it is clear that both Testaments unequivocally condemn homosexuality in any form— and any attempt to get around that is wildly self-serving and deceptive— it is also true that you will find more about pride, idolatry and gossip in the Bible than you'll find about homosexuality. It would be a wonderful day when we would start having conferences on how to overcome gossip, how to find the roots and causes of gossip, how to learn to stop killing each other with our big mouths... "The Silence Won Out" conferences.

When we lose a biblically balanced approach to sin and show a sort of selective outrage over the sins that we don't relate to, and thereby condemn the hardest, what we have is hostility to repentance. So, I believe the Church would be called today to repent of hostility towards homosexuals and recommit ourselves to bold love. Now, bold love seeks to serve without compromising. It doesn't wimp out. Bold love seeks to serve the objects of its love without compromising its position— a tricky, tightrope walk, to be

sure, but one that can be done.

There was a conservative pastor who used to be a member of the "moral majority" who took it on himself to begin to visit AIDS patients just out of a personal burden he had for them. So he began going to his local hospital and befriending AIDS patients— most of them young, gay men— and just developing a relationship with them, listening to them, talking to them, praying with them...when allowed, but basically just wanting to be there for them. And a local gay radio station found out what he was doing, contacted him and said, "Pastor, we hear that you are ministering to AIDS patients. What is your position on homosexuality?" He said, "Well, I believe it's a sin." And they said, "Well we don't like that, but we like you. Would you like to be a guest on our program and talk about what you've are doing?" And so, shortly, this middle-aged, former member of the moral majority found himself across the microphone from the gay host of the local gay radio program talking about his ministry to AIDS patients. And at the end of the show, he was asked to give the name of his church and its location. And sure enough, within weeks, blatantly gay people started coming to his church, not necessarily to repent but just to hear what this compassionate man had to say. The congregation got nervous. They said, "Pastor, the homosexuals are coming. They're coming down the aisles, They're coming by twos. They're sitting right next to us. What are we gonna do about that?" He said, "Well, I guess they can take a seat next to the gossips and the idolaters, and the lustful, and the people who commit adultery in their hearts. It's a big church...lots of room for us sinners." Now he said from the pulpit, "When I teach on sexual ethics, I will condemn what the Bible condemns, and condone what the Bible condones. If you are involved in sex outside of marriage, if you are involved in homosexuality, or the use of pornography, I will not offer you a position in this church, nor will I bless or condone your relationship. But, if you are a lesbian or a gay person, we are so glad you are here. We want to know you. We want you to know us. And more than that, we want you to know Jesus Christ. That's real love, serving without compromising.

Now, it's hard to argue with Mother Theresa. Some ten or eleven years ago when she spoke to the Washington D.C. prayer breakfast and stood up in front of God, Congress, Bill Clinton, and everybody and said, "No nation that calls itself a Christian nation can continue murdering the unborn. If you do not want your children, stop killing them. Give them to me." You think anybody argued? Why? What made Mother Theresa so impressive— this

frail, soft-spoken, little woman? The credibility of service. She proved herself to be a woman who cared about humanity and her care translated into practical, verifiable good deeds. So, wherever she went, she carried the mantle of the credibility of service. So that when she spoke on a moral issue, people listened. Why? She'd proven herself to be a champion for humanity. She cared, and she showed her caring in practical ways. If we are going to continue to use that cliché, "We hate the sin, but we love the sinner" then the burden of proof is on us to provide verifiable evidence of both our hatred, and our love: our hatred of the sin of homosexuality and our love for the homosexual person. If we say we hate the sin but love the sinner, the burden of proof is on us.

To this day, the gay and lesbian community is looking to the Church for some verifiable evidence that we love them as we say that we do. We desperately need more people involved in AIDS ministry. We need more Christians involved in forms of practical services to gay people. We need more Christians fully equipped to dialogue with gay people. We need more Christians, who are willing to listen to their gay loved ones and friends, willing to show them the respect of being honestly interested in their lives, and responding to them respectfully without compromising, thus showing that we value them as people, not just as objects to be converted. And we, of all people, should be the first to speak out when an act of violence or cruelty is perpetrated against a lesbian woman or gay man. We of all people should be the champions of anyone victimized by any form of violence or rejection. When we respond accordingly, then we too begin carrying the mantle of the credibility of service, and when we speak on moral issues, they will hear us.

Now this is not to say there is no place for anger. To repent of hostility is not to abandon righteous anger. Paul said, "Be angry and sin not." Now hostility seeks to cripple and punish and harm another individual. Righteous anger seeks to correct a situation. And I dare say, if we are not angry at much of what we see today, there is something terribly wrong with our vision. There is much to be angry about. We need the anger without the sin, which means, of course, the Church must repent of hostility towards homosexuals, and recommit herself to bold love.

Finally, I believe that, if we are to respond effectively to this issue, the Church must repent of being intimidated by the gay rights movement. We must repent of being intimidated by the gay rights movement and recommit ourselves to our prophetic role. Martin Luther King said, "The Church must

be reminded that it is neither the master of the state nor the servant of the state, but rather it is the conscience of the state." A man without a conscience is that scariest of all horror figures: the sociopath-- a person with no conscience. The sociopath will do whatever is expedient to meet his personal goals. If it is expedient of the sociopath to be kind to you, he will be kind to you. If it expedient to him to murder you, he will murder you. It's all the same. He takes no pleasure in evil. He has no conscience or feeling either way. That is a man without a conscience. A sociopath.

Perhaps, the only thing more frightening than the concept of a man without a conscience is a state without a conscience-- a sociopathic state that will do whatever is expedient. A state that will, if it is expedient, murder its young, euthanize its elderly, do whatever is expedient for the "welfare of the state." A sociopathic state. A state without a conscience. That's a real Orwellian nightmare. That's a terrifying thought...terrifying. And yet, that Dr. King was right, and I believe he was, when he said that the Church is the conscience of the state. And if the conscience of the state can be silenced, which it can, then the prospect of a sociopathic state is not just terrifying, it's inevitable. Which brings up a two-fold problem, the first being that there are forces within the gay rights movement seeking to silence the conscience of the state, which brings us to the second problem, which is perhaps larger in that much of the Church has been all too willing to accommodate those forces by consenting to being silenced.

First, indeed, there are forces within the gay rights movement trying to silence the conscience of the state. Listen to Kirk and Madison, the two gay authors that were being quoted earlier in Dr. Carpenter's address on the promotion of gay ideology in the schools. From their book, "After the Ball", they have this to say, "In regard to those (you and me) who feel compelled to adhere to an authoritarian belief structure that condemns homosexuality, our primary objective is to silence them. We know exactly what we want. And we'll do whatever must be done to secure it."

I want to challenge you to do something. Examine what happens in any county, state, or nation, where gay ideology comes into ascendancy and check me on this and see if I am not correct. Whenever you see gay ideology— the normalization of homosexuality become prominent in a county state or nation, you will likewise see, simultaneously, more and more restrictions imposed on freedoms of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion. Where gay ascendancy exists, you will likewise see intolerance

for all opposing viewpoints. Look at the "slash and burn" tactics that are used in America against anyone who takes a public, conservative position on homosexuality— Dr. Laura Schlessinger, The Boys Scouts of America, any group or individual that takes the traditional position in the public arena. Look at what becomes of them, their careers and reputation and you will see something that you don't want to believe but that you are going to have to acknowledge, and that is that the gay rights movement is no longer just seeking freedom. It is seeking tyranny— the tyranny of leveraging any means to silence the conscience of the state! "We know exactly what we want. And we'll do whatever is necessary to secure it." Terrifying. And that is, to me, the scary part of the gay rights movement— not the normalization of homosexuality, but the almost rabid intolerance for anyone who opposes that normalization.

Which brings me to the second problem, and that is the Church's willingness, too often, to accommodate the gay rights movement in its attempts to silence the conscience of the state. Now, while it is true on the one hand, as Paul said, that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution, and we expect that, it is also true that there is nothing noble or biblical in participating in, or even inviting, our own persecution. I believe that many Christians have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the gay rights movement, not for fear of being stoned, spit on, or even murdered, but rather for fear of being humiliated. And so, the interesting forms of attack today-- intimidation by association, and the humiliation that accompanies it.

Intimidation by association. Remember Archie Bunker? He was conservative. He was against liberal politics, abortion, and feminism and he was an idiot! And he was brilliantly portrayed. The whole country knew who he was. And after constant exposure to a man who was conservative, opposed liberal politics, feminism and abortion, who was also an idiot, what was the message America swallowed? If you are conservative, oppose abortion, and feminism and liberal politics, you're an "Archie Bunker". And who, in their right mind, wanted to be associated with Archie Bunker? It was brilliant. Now fast forward 30-something odd years. Look at the image of the religious right in America. Look at your immediate visceral reaction to that term "religious right." Do you not become just a little bit defensive, Just a little aware of the need to distance yourself from the religious right, whatever it is? Ladies and gentlemen, whether we like it or not, we are the religious right. In the eyes of the culture and the world that's us! That the image of the religious right— opposed to abortion and homosexuality, and

unspeakably stupid, bigoted, unlikable in all ways— who wants to be associated with an image like that? So we must repent of being intimidated and recommit ourselves to our prophetic role. Now that role is two-fold. First, the role of relentlessly promoting the truth, and secondly, the role of building a place of safety.

First of all, the relentless promotion of the truth. The prophets' legacy in the scriptures is a legacy of promoting truth at any cost, by any means. John the Baptist promoted relentlessly the truth about King Herod at any cost and by any means. He used what he had, his voice. And said what, today, is wrong. He didn't put his finger in the wind to see who was going to be offended by this, or who was going to rabid, or who was going to be upset. [He just said] That is wrong. That is wrong. I may be in the minority. I may be seen as being insane, but, King, you are wrong. The marriage is wrong. That's immoral. The relentless promotion of truth at any cost, by any means. At any cost, at any means.

What can one person do? Anybody can write a letter to the editor when there is an article on homosexuality and respond to that with a Christian perspective. Anybody can do that. Anybody Christian can call her radio talk show to offer that commentary when the subject of homosexuality is being presented on the program. Any Christian can testify before a school board meeting when gay ideology is being promoted in their local school. Any Christian can take the difficult position in family conversations, private conversations and friendships with gay people. To refuse to do so is to refuse to fulfill our prophetic role. Fail to do so— fail to fulfill our prophetic role— and the Church will answer for her passivity.

But secondly, the prophetic role of the Church is to build a place of safety. Remember, Noah preached righteousness relentlessly, sounded insane, he talked about something nobody had ever seen before, rain. Relentlessly, at any cost, by any means. But simultaneously, what did he do? He built a place of safety. Why? When you hold up a standard, people will respond no matter how far towards evil the culture has tilted. Remember the remnant. The remnant has always existed. So long as there's the promotion of biblical standards, there will be people that God has placed His hand on, who will respond to the promotion of a standard of righteousness, the building of a place of safety. That is the prophetic responsibility of the Church, to do both: To be unsparing in presenting the standard of righteousness so that the remnant can hear the message and respond to it. How will they hear it unless

someone is sent to preach? But then having heard, when they respond, they must have a place to go, a place of safety, a place that is uncompromising in its conviction, and in its compassion, and that is a place that cannot be built too soon.

I bet you've heard of Sheila Walsh, author, Christian musician, entertainer. She used to co-host the 700 Club and she writes in one of her books about feeling led to pray one night for homosexual people. So on live television, she looked into the mike and said, "If you're gay, I want you to come to know Jesus Christ. Pray this prayer with me." And she prayed that "sinner's prayer" out loud. And then she said, "Now if you're gay, and you've prayed that prayer with me, I want you to do two things. First, I want you to go to the local church near you. Go to the pastor and tell him what you've done, and ask him what to do next. And then secondly, I want you to write to me and let me know how you're doing." Some time later, she got a letter from a young man, who said, "Sheila, I've been gay all my life, but I saw you on the 700 Club, and I prayed with you to receive Jesus Christ. Then I did what you said. I went to the local church and after the service, I went up to the pastor and I said to him, Sir, I have been gay, but I prayed with Sheila Walsh to receive Jesus Christ, and she said I should come to you and ask what I should do next. So here I am. What should I do next? And the pastor looked at me and said, 'Well. you know, there's no room for fags in this church.' And so, Sheila, it's not gonna work, they don't want me."

This is why a different voice has to go out from the body of Christ that is biblical in the truest sense. Because that will stop the gay rights movement in its tracks? I don't know, it could. But, more important than that, remember, you and I will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We will give an account for what we have done in this life. But by God's grace, may the time we've spent here today culminate in our ability to hear Him say to us, "Well done, my good, faithful servants."