

**Summerner Four:
How Can We Respond Well As Christians to the Matter of Same Sex Attraction?**

A Scripture: Colossians 4:5-6

1. See the other person as both precious to God (made in his image) and in need of the saving grace of Christ. Remember your own need of grace.
2. Accept the challenge of speaking the truth in love.
 - Refuse to identify with hate-mongers or act out of fear or prejudice
 - Recognize the intense pressure to accommodate (difficulty of standing alone, research of Solomon Asch 1951-56 on social conformity—37% agreement with wrong answer, 75% at least once; with one person giving the right answer down to 6%¹).
 - Make the distinction between what is legal and what is moral (Pilgrims—Founder’s Monument in Plymouth).
 - Seek wisdom in both the timing and the tone of conversations.
3. Promote the positive portrait of human sexuality and marriage in Scripture as God’s design for human health and happiness.
 - Marriage as a covenant of companionship, male and female, instituted in creation and intended for the human race (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-24)
 - Affirmed by Jesus as God’s intention when asked about divorce (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9)
 - According to the Apostle Paul, tied to Christ and the church (Eph. 5:31)
 - The sexual relationship as important in marriage, neither the basis of human identity nor something to be debased or disregarded in marriage
4. Recognize that Scripture consistently disapproves of same sex relationships—as it does of all other violations of God’s order.²
 - Genesis 19 (Sodom and Gomorrah) and Judges 19 (man of Gibeah)—homosexual rape, stemming from moral climate (not just violation of hospitality)
 - Lev. 18:22; 20:13—harsh, not just purity laws for tabernacle but holiness code for people
 - Romans 1:18-23, especially vv. 26-27—not simply violation of one’s own nature but of the order of things
 - 1 Cor. 6:9-11—not just against exploitation or abuse, but homosexual practice (see ESV footnote)
 - 1 Tim. 1:8-10
5. Look beyond careless statistics, unsubstantiated claims, careless arguments, and emotional appeals.
 - e.g. percentage of homosexual people—10% flawed research in Kinsey (1948), cf. Harvard Alumni, “am gay” 1% (1996) or CDC 1.6% gay or lesbian, 6.7% bisexual (2014); Gallup, 52% of Americans believe that 25% of the population is gay or lesbian; only 4% believe that is less than 5%³
 - e.g. counseling for change does harm⁴

- e.g. God made me this way, so it must be OK
- e.g. like the abolitionist cause

6. Expect the truth of the gospel to change hearts and lives.⁵
7. Create the kind of Christian community and friendship that can help people who struggle with sexual issues and want to follow Christ.⁶

¹ From notes taken at a Pastor's Forum with Dr. Gordon Hugenberger at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary on October 28, 2014.

² A fine and fair-minded book length treatment of the biblical data and the issues is Thomas E. Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow: Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1995).

³ Also from Hugenberger.

⁴ See Tim Stafford, "The Best Research Yet," *Christianity Today*, October 2007, 52-54 and Schmidt, 153-159. Also see Stanton L. Jones, "Loving the Opposition," *Christianity Today*, July 19, 1993, 19-25.

⁵ Rosaria Champagne Butterfield, "My Train Wreck Conversion," *Christianity Today*, January-February 2013, 111-112, and *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant, 2012), or testimonies by Dennis Jernigan www.dennisjernigan.com and Ben Henson www.leadthemhome.org. For the testimony and biblical analysis of someone who was unable to change orientation but chooses to live celibately in obedience to Christ, see Wesley Hill, *Washed and Waiting: Reflections on Christian Faithfulness and Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

⁶ See the Baptist General Conference Resolution, "Beliefs about Homosexual Behavior and Ministering to Homosexual Persons" (adopted 1992) and the pamphlet by Mark Strauss and Peter Vogt, "Homosexuality: A Biblical Perspective" published by Bethel University, 2006.