

# **L.G.B.T.**

*(a lesson series on gender issues)*

## How to Use This Series

Discussions over homosexuality are all over the news and the internet. This series is an attempt to join the conversation, but in the context of small group interactions. The orientation of the lessons is unashamedly Christian and the author is totally unapologetic in the fact that he is writing as a Christian who is biblically convinced about the immorality of homosexuality.

Each lesson will have an introduction, points to talk about, and suggested questions for discussions. In each point in the lesson, the leader can choose from among the provided questions what to ask to the group for discussion. Because the Word section is geared toward being finished in 45 minutes, I suggest that only one question per point is dealt with. But of course, if there is enough time, the leader has the prerogative to ask more questions for discussion.

The monthly attendance sheet at the end will help the leaders monitor their small group/s. This will also help the leaders keep track of who are in need of encouragement and prayer. This series is written by Dick Eugenio © 2015. The views expressed here are the author's. He does not represent any organization or group.

# Lesson 1

## Love and Lust

*Bible reading:*

Matthew 22:37-40; 1 John 4:7-18

*Objective:*

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to understand what true love is in the Bible, particularly in relation to loving others.

### **Introduction**

One of the most abused words in the whole world is “love.” How is this word abused today? Can you think of life situations when love as a term can be used to take advantage over others?

### **I. Agape, Phileo, and Eros**

In English, we only use one term for love, but in Greek, there are three major Greek words that offer important differences. *Agape* is used to express the love of God to humanity and humanity’s love to God (John 3:16; 4:8;

10:17; 21:20; Rom 5:5; 2 Pet 1:17; Matt 22:37-39). It is the highest form of love. *Phileo* means brotherly or sisterly love. This is love shared by friends for one another, including in the church. *Eros* is love that is about sex; hence, the word “erotic.” There is nothing wrong with eros love, so long as it occurs between a man and a woman, and it is enacted within the confines of marriage.

- *Why is it important to distinguish between the three different kinds of love?*
- *In what ways can the three different kinds of love be confused with one another?*

## **II. Agape for not God: Idolatry**

For humans, to devote oneself in loving (agape) something that is not God is called idolatry. Basically, loving something so deeply which replaces God is idolatry. This is why the first command in the Ten Commandments is to not have other gods (Exo 20:3). God is a jealous God and He wants us to love Him as He loves us (Exo 20:3-5). When we are madly in love with something who is not God, that something becomes the object of our devotion and commitment. Such kind of love—agape—should only be directed toward God.

- *How do we recognize if we have agape love with something other than God?*
- *How can we make sure that it is only God who we have agape love for?*

### **III. Phileo for God: Not Good Enough**

After Jesus's resurrection, He had a conversation with Peter. He asked Peter three times: "Do you truly love me?" (John 21:15, 16, 17). In Greek, the conversation was like this:

Jesus: "Do you truly love (agape) me?"

Peter: "Yes, you know that I love (phileo) you."

Jesus: "Do you truly love (agape) me?"

Peter: "Yes Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you."

Jesus: "Peter, do you love (phileo) me?"

Peter: "Lord, you know that I love (phileo) you."

What Peter did not realize was that Jesus was asking Peter if he loved Him like how he should love God. Peter repeatedly affirmed that he loved Jesus like a brother. For Jesus, this is simply not enough. God wants us to love Him in an agape way.

- *Why is phileo love not good enough when we love God?*
- *What are evidences that our love for God is just phileo love?*

#### **IV. Eros for Brother/Sister: Perversion**

If *agape* is for God and *phileo* is for friends, *eros* is intended only for the opposite sex. To feel *eros* for God or for a brother or sister is a detestable perversion. In the same way as *agape* and *phileo* have their own appropriate recipients, so is *eros*. Romans 1:24-27 best illustrates the perversion of desires. Verses 24-25 deal with idolatry and verses 26-27 discuss “shameful lust” for and “unnatural relations” with members of the same gender.

- *Why does the Bible call sexual relationships between men and men and between women and women as “unnatural”?*
- *Is homosexuality an evidence of perverted eros love?*

## **Application**

How do we guard ourselves so that we are able to love God, others, and our romantic partners appropriately? How can we make sure that we do not go beyond our limits?

## **Homework**

In preparation for next week's meeting, read Romans 8:1-16.

## Lesson 2

# Genuine Freedom

*Bible reading:*  
Romans 8:1-6

*Objective:*

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to know what genuine freedom really means and how it is expressed in the Bible.

## Introduction

The LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) community are using the concept of freedom as a means to vindicate their choices. Their argument is simple:

We are created to be free to choose.

We choose to be what we are.

Therefore, we are just in exercising our freedom.

Since freedom is a universal value—held both in religious and non-religious societies—then to curtail

freedom is looked down upon. In this lesson, we are going to discuss what is true freedom.

## I. Limits and Standards

It is fascinating that the Bible uses many terms to explain what sin is (see *The Gift of Life*, page 18), but all of them can be placed under two categories only. Basically, to sin is (1) to fall short of the standard and (2) to go beyond a set limit. Therefore, even though we are created by God with freedom, it seems that such a freedom is not absolute. Rather, freedom must be exercised within the bounds of God's standard of human living. Thus, for example, although we are technically free to steal, we are prohibited to do so (Exo 20:15).

- *What are the God-given limits and guidelines about romantic and intimate relationships among humans?*
- *How does the LGBT community violate their God-given freedom?*

## II. Lawlessness

We cannot argue that because we are free, to do anything that we choose to do is right and moral. Self-control is as valuable as freedom (Gal 5:22-23; 2 Tim 1:7). As Paul said, “I have the right to do anything... but not everything is beneficial” (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23-33). We cannot argue that because we are free, we are not under moral law. We are not created to be lawless people. In fact, lawlessness is itself sin (Matt 13:41; 2 Cor 6:14; 2 Pet 2:8; 1 John 3:4). We must flee from the “secret power of lawlessness” that is already at work today (2 Thess 2:7). There are people who are like the Pharisees, crying justice and freedom outside, but inside are “full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt 23:27-28).

- *What does it mean to live as free, “not using [y]our freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God” (1 Pet 2:16)?*
- *How do we use our freedom not “as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Gal 5:13)?*

### III. Freedom and Nature

There is no such thing as absolute freedom. Freedom is always limited. In particular, our very nature as created beings imposes limitations to our freedom. For instance, a cow's freedom is limited by its nature as a cow. A cow cannot claim that it is free to fly, because by nature, it is created not to fly. Freedom is always attached to the limits of the nature of a thing.

Therefore, a woman who thinks that she is allowed to have sex with another woman because she is free is forgetting the fact that her nature as a woman created by God prohibits her from doing so.

- *Are there indications in the Bible that same-sex intimate relationships are part of humanity's God-given nature?*

### Application

How do we use our freedom so that it is not our selfish desires that we gratify? What are possible indications that we are already using our God-given freedom for our selfish desires or for our self-gratification? More than ever, we need accountability partners who can rebuke us and guide us back to the truth.

## **Homework**

In preparation for next week's lesson, read Genesis 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

## Lesson 3

# Becoming Me

*Bible reading:*

Genesis 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

*Objective:*

At the end of this lesson, members should be able to know the biblical teachings on identity and identity formation and transformation.

## Introduction

Do we have fixed identities? One of the primary arguments of the LGBT community is that they are born this way and not that way. Some even argue that homosexuality is genetic. Through this, they claim that they cannot change who they are because they are created in this or that way. In fact, to try to change will go against their nature. Similarly, for others to tell them that they need to change is a violation of their right to be who they are born to be. In this lesson, we are going to discuss the biblical principles of identity formation and transformation.

## I. Nature or Nurture

The debate whether we become what we are by nature or by nurture is an old one. Basically, are we who we are now because this is our genetic make-up and we cannot do anything about it? Or are we who we are now because of how we were raised by our environment? If we are who we are by nature, then being homosexual is normal and inevitable. But if it is nurture, then negative environment can lead to wrongly-formed identity and self-perception.

- *Are we like Kryptonians who are given an identity/destiny that we cannot overcome no matter what we do?*
- *Based on your personal experience, are you who you are now because of nature or nurture?*

## II. Three Identities

Crucial here are the differences between our God-intended identity, our fallen identity, and our redeemed identity. First, it is clear that God created and intended humanity to be male and female (Gen 1:26-27; Jer 1:5; Psa 8:5). No one can ever say they were intended by

God to be in-between. But this God-given identity is destroyed by sin (Rom 3:10-12, 23; Jer 17:9). This is why male-male and female-female relationships are called “unnatural” by Paul (Rom 1:27). The good news is that anything distorted by sin can be redeemed by God. We can be made new again (John 3:5-7; 2 Cor 5:17), and in God, our old sinful selves may be replaced by a new identity (Eh 4:22-24).

- *How can we say that homosexuality is not God’s intended identity, but is an evidence of sinful existence?*
- *What changes were required in who we were when we were in sin that were so difficult to abandon and change?*

### **III. Transformation**

No one is beyond transformation. In fact, change is ongoing. We can even say that we are created to be capable of transformation. In short, it is our nature to change! All created beings on earth experience changes in their bodies on a daily basis. The question, however, is whether the changes we want for ourselves are beneficial and are within the bounds of God’s intention for us. When we alter our bodies and “make

improvements,” we should be careful that we are not defying God’s image in us.

- *What changes are godly and are within God’s intention for humanity? What are not within God’s intention for us?*
- *If there is one thing that you want to change in your life, what would be it, and do you think God will be glorified if you do it?*

## **Application**

The problem and question of identity is rampant in our world today. For Christians, however, the issue is quite simple. We know we are created by God as male and female. We know God’s plans for us. The world may try to confuse us with different jargons and arguments grounded in the different sciences, but we must not be confused. God asks us not to be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Only when our thinking is transformed are we able to prove what God’s pleasing and perfect will is for us (Rom 12:2).

## Monthly Attendance

Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Members	Dates				
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<b>Visitors/Guests</b>					
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