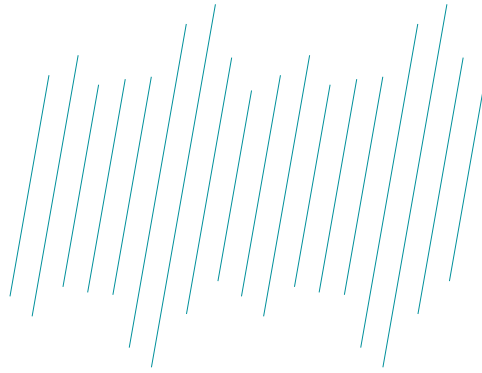




TOUGH TOPICS

Can a Person Be Gay and Christian?



About ReStory Ministries

ReStory Ministries is a nonprofit organization committed to resourcing churches to address homosexuality and gender identity. We are working to see every church equipped, every family prepared, and every believer informed by equipping pastors, missionaries, and ministry leaders to respond biblically to these issues and the people affected by them. Ultimately, we believe that when the Church is equipped, new stories of transformation are told!

ReStory Ministries is endorsed by the Assemblies of God. We are in agreement with the Assemblies of God core doctrines, position papers, and official statements. We do not make any official statements on behalf of the Assemblies of God.

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Joe Dallas has served on the Board of ReStory Ministries since 2016. Prior to his role with ReStory, Joe served as President of Exodus International, Program Director of the *Every Man's Battle* monthly conferences, and keynote speaker with the Focus on the Family *Love Won Out* conferences. He has authored nine books on human sexuality from a biblical perspective and has directed a biblical counseling ministry in Southern California since 1987. Joe has also served as an Elder with Mesa Church (AG) in Irvine, CA, and he frequently addresses churches and conferences nationally and internationally.

Joe and his wife Renee have been married since 1987 and are the proud parents of two grown sons.



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A New Coming Out

Growing numbers of people are not only coming out as gay, but also as “gay Christians.” Identifying themselves as followers of Christ, they claim God created them gay, and that the Bible condones homosexuality and same-sex unions. So as openly gay and lesbian Christians, they believe the Church should welcome them into membership and leadership. The church is thereby left to consider these claims, then respond to them with love and truth.

The Broader Questions

Scripture is the proper foundation for positions, and on this issue, Scripture is clear. Both the Old and the New Testament condemn homosexual behavior without contingency or ambiguity (Leviticus 18:23; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:9-10), so it can only be concluded that such behavior is one of many sexual sins.

Scripture is the proper foundation for positions, and on this issue, Scripture is clear.

If homosexual acts are clearly sinful, then the question “Can someone be gay and Christian?” is answered by raising, then answering, three other questions.

1. Can a Christian Practicing Sexual Sin Remain a Christian?

If a Christian gives in to sexual temptation, we don’t assume that Christian has automatically lost her or his salvation. Certainly, sexual sin is uniquely serious (1 Corinthians 6:18), calling for confession (1 John 1:9), repentance, and, if needed, church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1-5). But if he’s still positioned in Christ, he’s still a Christian.

He’s also a Christian in a very dangerous place.

Maybe he's deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3), or carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1-3), or backslidden (2 Peter 2:20), or all three. Yet his salvation may be intact, as evidenced in 1 Corinthians 5 in which Paul refers to a sexually sinning man as a "brother," or in the letters from Christ to His churches in which He identified them as His own, despite the serious sins they were committing (Revelation 2:4-5, 2:14-16, and 2:20-23).

Believers are therefore encouraged not to decide if and when a fellow believer has crossed the line from being "in danger" to being "lost." **It's possible that a believer practicing homosexuality may still be saved. But "saved" and "right" are two very different things**, as are the states of being within God's will versus being outside of it.

A believer practicing homosexuality may still be saved. But "saved" and "right" are two very different things.

2. At What Point Could a Christian Practicing Sexual Sin Lose Her or His Salvation?

ReStory does not hold to the "eternal security" position, which claims a Christian could never lose her or his salvation. So **we say, with tears, that a person can, through ongoing sin and a hardening of both heart and conscience, reach a point of being separated from the grace of God.**

3. How Do We Define the Terms "Gay," "Christian," and "Gay Christian"?

How we define these terms largely determines our answer to the question of whether or not someone can be both gay and Christian.

If "gay" only refers to internal attractions to the same sex, then yes, one can experience diverse temptations (homosexual temptations included) and remain a Christian.

Many believers wrestle on a daily basis with sexual temptations of all sorts. **Yet it is not the existence of temptation but rather how the believer responds to temptation that determines whether a person is right or wrong before God.**

That said, while we recognize believers may experience same-sex temptations, **we do not advocate the label "gay Christian."**¹ We believe such a label discounts our primary identification as Saints and Children of God. It also employs the positive term "gay" for feelings that cannot be viewed as positive from a biblical perspective and should not be celebrated with positive labels.

1 A growing number of Christians identifying as "gay Christians" do not affirm homosexual practice but identify themselves as gay because of their sexual feelings. These are distinct from the subject of this paper.

The term “Christian” means literally a “follower of Christ,” which doesn’t eliminate the possibility of falling into sin but gives us grace “to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,” accompanied by a growing desire to do what is good (Titus 2:11-14, NIV 2011).

The label “gay Christian” discounts our primary identification as Saints and Children of God.

But Can’t We All Just Get Along?

We believe **there are primary and secondary doctrinal issues**, so we can stay in fellowship with other believers despite differences over secondary issues. But **we can’t be in communion with believers living in open, deliberate violation of primary doctrinal commands**.

The command to abstain from overt sexual sin is one such command. Paul affirmed that abstinence from immorality is God’s will (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4) and that if someone within the church is practicing unrepentant sexual sin, that person must be disciplined (1 Corinthians 5:1-8) and, until she or he repents, that person’s communion with the Church at large is broken (1 Corinthians 5:11-13).

Therefore **we cannot view homosexual practice among Christians as a secondary issue to be ignored for the sake of fellowship**, any more than we can view a person’s immorality as a minor matter to be overlooked in the interest of getting along. Scripture draws clear lines regarding our relationship to believers who give themselves unrepentantly to forbidden behaviors, lines believers cannot cross, blur, or minimize.

So to those who identify as “gay Christians”—that is, those who condone homosexuality and engage in same-sex relationships while claiming a Christian identity—we conclude **they may be saved, but they are also definitely wrong and in serious danger**, both in this life and the next.

We would therefore encourage them, as we would any believer outside of God’s will, to re-examine themselves in light of Scripture, and submit themselves into the care and will of God.