

## **Homosexuality**

The Wilmington Church of Christ considers the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and therefore our single guide in all matters of doctrine, including sex and marriage. Therefore, it is the stance of our church that homosexuality is a sin against God (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:18; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). We believe that God calls those engaged in homosexual behavior to repent of their sin. Christ said to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you; go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11). In the same way, Christ calls those engaged in homosexual sin to repent and accept Christ's love and forgiveness. Paul reminded the Corinthians that those engaged in certain behaviors, including "homosexual offenders," who refused to repent, would not inherit the Kingdom of God. But then he added, "such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 6:9-11). The wonderful message to the person engaging in homosexual behavior is that through the power of Christ, he or she can change. The temptation may remain, but the Holy Spirit can give you the power to overcome the temptation.

We are each and every one of us sinners. As such, we should show compassion to those who are caught up in sins and addictive behaviors so that we might hold for the light of Christ. If you were to discover that your child was addicted to drugs, the loving thing to do would be to express compassion and understanding and to help them overcome their addiction. The same should be our attitude when we discover that a loved one is addicted to a sexual sin, whether it be homosexuality, pornography or some other form of sin.

But please do not mistake our compassion for the sinner as condoning the sinful behavior. Without question, a person who will not turn from a life characterized by a sinful act will stand before God with no excuse but an unrepentant heart that refused to submit to the Lordship of Christ.

Those engaged in the homosexual lifestyle are welcome to attend services at the Wilmington Church of Christ, since every person here is a sinner as well. If a person expresses a desire to commit to Christ or become a member of the Church and is involved in an inappropriate sexual relationship--whether homosexuality, adultery, cohabiting without marriage, or other--he or she will be encouraged to commit to a life of sexual purity first. Hebrews 10:24-27 encourages all believers to continue meeting together but also starkly lays out that: "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of truth, no sacrifice for sins is left but only a fearful expectation of judgment."

Any person willing to make the commitment of placing Jesus as Lord over his or her life can be baptized and accepted into membership at the Wilmington Church of Christ. If a member is found to be engaged in sexual sin, he or she is asked to repent and commit to sexual purity. Those willing to repent are guided to counseling services and support groups that are available to



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help them overcome their temptations. Those unwilling to repent will be asked to withdraw their membership.

Just as a loving parent should extend mercy and truth to a child addicted to drugs, so we believe a loving church should extend both mercy and truth to those who have been engaged in homosexuality. Anyone struggling with this area of his or her life needs to know that Jesus Christ offers forgiveness and access to power through the Holy Spirit to live a life of freedom and sexual purity.