HOMEWORD
ENCOURAGING PARENTS, BUILDING FAMILIES

Answers to Parents Questions About Homosexuality
By Jim Burns

Over the years, parents have written to Jim Burns and HomeWord with questions about homosexuality and gender identity issues.

Here are a couple of the more compelling questions we have received and our responses...

Q. Our 16 year old son shows absolutely no interest in girls. My wife says it's no big deal, but I'm concerned he might be gay. Am I paranoid or do I have reason to be concerned?

A. No concern about a child is a bad concern unless it becomes totally obsessive compulsive. There could be a hundred reasons why your son does not have an interest in girls, yet that does not make him a homosexual. In fact, studies still show that a large percentage of students do not have a serious dating relationship while in high school. Your son could be a "late bloomer." Some very healthy, normal kids just don't seem to be as interested in the opposite sex until later in the teen years. Some kids are just so involved with other activities that they don't have as much involvement with the opposite sex. Or your son could be interested but he just isn't telling you.

If we were sitting together over a cup of coffee I would love to hear why you think he could possibly be gay. It is true that approximately 10% of today's adolescent population do struggle with gender identity issues some time in the teen years. Again this does not mean that they are homosexual but rather that there is some confusion about their sexual identity. I use a simple list to help recognize early signs or predictors of a young person struggling with gender identity. This list is by no means all inclusive. Just because a child may possess one of these traits it does not mean they are homosexual. These questions are simply a way to begin thinking about possible gender identity confusion.

1. Is your child a sensitive child who gets mocked and down graded by others and forced to feel different?

2. Did your son "hang out" almost exclusively with girls when he was young? Did he have a history of again almost exclusively playing with girls instead of guys prior to puberty?

3. Does your son have extremely effeminate behavior or appearance? For girls the question would be do they have extreme mannish or "butch" posturing? (This is not to be confused with simply being athletic).

4. Does your son (or daughter) have a much older same sex friend that causes you any concern?

5. Is your child frail, "slow," or have a disability? Is your child an "outcast?" Is his (or her) physical appearance not socially acceptable? (Again, please understand that because a child has a disability it does not mean they are homosexual).

6. Does your child offer comments like, “I must be gay or I must be bi-sexual”?

7. Is your child an extreme loner and preoccupied with self?

8. Was there an exaggerated rejection by same sex peers or a same sex parent?

If after reading this list you have some concerns, then I would suggest that you go to a Biblical Christian counselor who deals with gender identity confusion.

Q. I have a 16 year old daughter who has told me she is gay. How should I handle things like overnights with friends since I don't know if they are just friends or if there is a physical attraction.

A. Thank you for contacting us. You are facing a huge issue! There are a number of things you ought to do as soon as possible.

First, I would suggest that you find a professional Christian counselor for your daughter. There is research that indicates that many teens who experiment with a homosexual lifestyle really don't commit to the lifestyle until late teens or early 20's. So, it's possible that peer influence or an "experience" that she's had has caused some gender confustion. Consequently, she (and you) need to get to the bottom of it.

Second, affirm your love for her but, make sure you communicate that homosexual behavior and a gay lifestyle is contrary to God's plan for our sexuality. As much as she is dealing with confusion, she also needs to know the truth. A lot of Christians, including myself, believe that homosexual behaviors are preventable and treatable. Many people who experiment with homosexual behaviors are simply confused. Although the issues can be complicated, young people who struggle with homosexuality can move on to a healthy heterosexual marriage with the help of good Christian counseling.

Lastly, I would encourage you to do some research of your own on this issue. I would suggest that you get a copy of Don Schmierer's book, "An Ounce of Prevention" that addresses how parents can help kids who struggle with homosexuality.

One thing we know about those who struggle with this issue is, the earlier they can get help, the easier it is to live a lifestyle that is glorifying to God. Please know it is never too late to get help and never too early to make wise and godly decisions about our sexuality. I commend you for caring for your daughter in such a sensitive way and I'll pray that God will enrich and guide your steps.

To read more questions and answers on this topic, go to HomeWord.com and visit the “Real Life Answers” section of our website.

HomeWord
800.397.9725
www.homeword.com