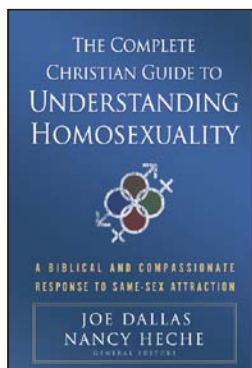


Gays, God and Grace: A Christians Compassionate Response to Controversial Same-Sex Issues



Los Angeles, CA: Few issues have continued to stir emotions and divide opinions in the secular and religious community as the controversial topic of homosexuality. Should homosexuals be given the same rights as heterosexuals when it comes to health care, marriage or adoption? Should homosexuals be permitted to teach in schools, run for political office or serve in the military? Should gay education be taught in schools? Have Christians and the church adopted a biblical attitude, manner and approach to the gay community?

Joe Dallas, a counselor and past president of Exodus International, and **Dr. Nancy Heche**, a counselor, have both personally experienced compassion and criticism from people on polarizing sides of the same-sex issue.

Dallas and Heche address some of the most controversial topics involving homosexuality and faith in the release, ***The Complete Christian Guide to Understanding Homosexuality: A Biblical and Compassionate Response to Same-Sex Attraction*** (Harvest House Publishers) including the following:

- **The Spouse's Dilemma:** Most homosexual spouses have felt marriage was their only option and hoped it would resolve their inner sexual attraction conflict and subdue an erotic preference for the same sex, even though they emotionally love the spouse they are married to. The future of the marriage is determined by the willingness of both partners to rebuild or enhance their relationship.
- **The Parents Dilemma:** Parents should strive to love their children, pray for their children and preserve the relationship as much as possible, without compromising their own integrity. Parents of underage children who proclaim to be homosexual must set terms as to what activities their child may participate in and who their child may socialize with. Forcing a child to get counseling is not advisable unless they are displaying severe emotional problems or self-destructive behavior. Parents and adult children need to discuss boundaries on maintaining their relationship and remember that endless debates and arguments do more harm than good.
- **Gay Teens:** The conflicted teen deals with serious anxiety from disapproval they will face from all areas of life. Many teens who have a same-sex experience incorrectly conclude they are gay. Gay teens are at higher risk for suicide attempts, drug abuse and other emotional and behavioral problems. The church has a responsibility to educate parents on how to speak truth and love to their child and how to counsel gay teens in their congregation, in addition to teaching children how to love, respect and be kind to their gay peers.
- **Gay in the Military:** Gay military men and women are capable of all military responsibilities. Reasons for considering a lift on the ban include strong public support for overturning DADT, other countries that have done so and report no or few ill effects; and the high cost of investigating and discharging homosexual personnel. Reasons for keeping the ban in place include discomfort for other military personnel; to preserve troop cohesion, and the majority military personnel favor the ban.

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- **Pro-Gay Education in Schools:** One common argument in favor of pro-gay education is that homosexual students are at high risk for suicide, violence, or academic and social difficulties. The success of the gay-rights movement in influencing public educators and administrations is undeniable, beginning as young as kindergarteners.
- **The Church in Crisis:** Before the church can effectively address immorality in the culture, it must first address its own immorality, even if the church has a divine mandate to be controversial at times for the sake of the truth.
- **Counseling Men and Women:** The Christian counselor has a responsibility to be informed, hold a biblically-based worldview while respecting those with other perspectives, be clear about prognosis and approach and provide a place for safety, education and exploration.

The Complete Christian Guide to Understanding Homosexuality also includes the history of the gay rights movement, understanding and rebutting pro-gay theology, homosexuality and American Psychiatry, principles for professional Christian counselors or therapists, and sexual addiction.

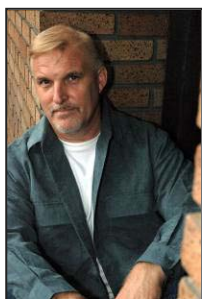
“Saying a behavior is wrong is a far cry from also expressing undisguised contempt for the people who practice it. Moral pronouncements that are long on passion but short on humility make Christians sound more like Pharisees than disciples,” says Dallas. “Contempt, not just conviction, has too often poisoned our messages to and about homosexuals.”

“Compassion doesn't mince words about sin, but it puts the sin in its perspective, as Jesus did...He was compassionate without compromise. May the churches compassion be clear, but their message and standards be equally so, balancing truth and grace,” says Dallas. “The churches response should be to teach the gospel, to make disciples, to establish and strengthen community within the church body and to be a tangible witness of God's nature, standards, and truths by our good words, our lives, and our clear voice.”

Dallas, Heche and other contributing authors hope readers will have a greater understanding of a God-honoring response to those who support or participate in the homosexual lifestyle moving readers from compromise to consistency, from contempt to compassion, from confusion to clarity and from concession to courage.

The Complete Christian Guide to Understanding Homosexuality is a valuable resource for families, church workers, counselors, pastors, schools, and those who struggle with same-sex attraction.

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Joe Dallas' Story: Joe Dallas experienced several years of gender attraction confusion as a boy, beginning with molestation by a stranger in a movie theater, which led to experimentation with both sexes in high school. In 1971, Joe became a Christian, but a few years later he began to struggle with pornography, drinking, and had an affair with a married woman and a relationship with a man, which eventually led him to become involved with the pro-gay church. “After six years of unsuccessfully trying to convince myself that the Bible condoned homosexuality, I woke up to my brokenness, repented, and headed for home.” In 1984, Joe returned to his faith through counseling and a Bible-based church. Dallas, past president of Exodus International, lectures extensively at churches and seminars and directs a biblical counseling practice in Tustin, California. He is the author of *Desires in Conflict*; *The Gay Gospel?*; and *When Homosexuality Hits Home*. His articles have been featured in *Christianity Today*, *Christian Research Journal*, and the *Journal of the Christian Association of Psychological Studies*.

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Nancy Heche's Story: Nancy Heche's story includes a 25-year marriage to a man, who lived a secret life as a homosexual. It wasn't until two weeks before his death to AIDS that Nancy discovered the truth. Years later her daughter, actress Anne Heche was involved in a highly publicized affair with Ellen DeGeneres. As a result of the shock and hurt from her personal experiences, Nancy became angry toward the homosexual community. "I felt the gay community ruined my marriage, broke up my home, and left me in despair. I needed to move out of my fear and anger and confusion into a place of love and respect where God's truth and grace could overcome my bitterness." Dr. Heche holds a master's degree and doctorate degree in pastoral counseling and is the author of *The Truth Comes Out*. Dr. Heche lives in Naples, Florida.

Suggested Interview Questions for Joe Dallas and Nancy Heche

1. What are some controversial issues you discuss in *The Complete Christian Guide to Understanding Homosexuality*?
2. What motivated you to write this book? Why is the church still in crisis over this topic? Should the church invite homosexuals into their congregation?
3. What is your message to the religious sector that sometimes confuses demonstrating love to a person or group as offering acceptance to a lifestyle they may not agree with?
4. What are the elements of pro-gay theology? What should be the Christian's response to pro-gay theology?
5. What is the responsibility of every Christian counselor when counseling men and women struggling with same-sex issues?
6. What is your advice to parents who have teen or adult children proclaiming to be gay? How can parents voice their concerns without making their child feel like an outcast or a disappointment? Should a parent welcome in their adult child's partner into their home or family?
7. What about a marriage that is impacted by a spouse who struggles with homosexuality or a spouse who admits they're a homosexual? Should the couple remain married? Should their children be aware of this situation?
8. What has been your personal experience with counseling the homosexual community? What have you learned personally when helping those who struggle with homosexuality?
9. Joe, what are the views that support or oppose gays in the military? Should sexual preference of those serving in the military be as big of an issue as it is in our country?
10. Christians have predominately been portrayed as hateful or angry toward the same-sex community. Do you think it is possible for the faith community to ever be perceived as loving and caring by those who support homosexual rights and lifestyle?
11. What are some ministries you currently participate in? What is your hope for those who are involved in or know people in the homosexual community?