CHRIST CENTERED COMMUNITY (C3) HOMEWORK

“Edifying the body by embracing the grace of the Spirit to live out the love of the Son in fellowship that glorifies the Father”

Red Text = Tips and guides to help use the questions

Blue Text = Sample Answers

Green Text = Additional questions to ask

WARM UP

1. What is your favorite verse in the Bible? Why?

DIGGING DEEPER

2. Did you struggle with anything that was said on Sunday? And if so, what truths about God do you need to remind yourself of to help trust His Word?

3. Read 1 Cor 6:9-11. Does Paul indicate that there are sins in this list that are more serious than others?

* No. There is no indication that any of these sinful practices or lifestyles are more serious than the others. The end result is the same. Rom 6:20-23 “The end of those things is death…For the wages of sin is death.”

a) What does that mean for homosexuality?

* Homosexual sinning, like all other sinning, is an echo of exchanging the glory of God for other things. All sin is infinitely serious as an exchange of the infinitely valuable glory of God for other things (Rom 1:23 & Rom 3:23). Homosexual and transgender practices are not *more* than other sins but they are not *less* either. Like all sin, it deserves the wrath of Almighty God.

b) What is at stake for those who practice these sins?

* By saying the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God, Paul is stating that the wicked are not children of God, nor are they heirs of eternal life (Romans 8:17). This does not mean that anybody who has ever committed one of these sins will be denied entrance to heaven. What differentiates a Christian’s life from that of a non-Christian is the struggle against sin and the ability to overcome it. A true Christian will always repent, will always eventually return to God, and will always resume the struggle against sin. But the Bible gives no support for the idea that a person who perpetually and unrepentantly engages in sin can indeed be a Christian. The 1 Corinthians passage lists sins that, if indulged in continuously, identify a person as not being redeemed by Christ. Knowing and enjoying God is at stake!

c) What is the only hope for sinners in these lifestyles?

* Jesus! The only hope for deliverance from any sin is the gospel. Jesus purchase our cleansing of sin and the power for us to live righteous lives. Through the power of the cross, we can have the Spirit of God within us to help us be holy (sanctified) in the way we live our lives. On top of that, Paul says "and such *were* some of you," indicating that there is freedom and healing from homosexuality and all these other sins.

4. Case Study: Joe and John are a homosexual couple that have been living together for 2 years. From all appearances, they seem to be nice people who have a happy relationship. Though they are unashamed about practicing their homosexual lifestyle, they are generally respectful and maintain that they were both born with same-sex attraction. On top of that, Joe is actively involved in a progressive Christian church, one that supports and celebrates his lifestyle. He readily tells people that he is a Christian, and that his love for John reflects God's love. He loves to ask, "How could homosexuality be wrong if God made me this way?" At the encouragement of his church, Joe proposes to John, and they decide to get married. Since Joe is your cousin, he invites you to the wedding.

a) Would you attend Joe's wedding? Why or why not?

* Watch this 4 minutes video to get an excellent summary on this:  <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/would-you-attend-a-gay-wedding>
* As Christians we should not attend a homosexual wedding for at least these four reasons:
  1. It is not a wedding because it is not actually a "marriage". There is no such thing as “same-sex marriage” in God’s eyes. (Gen 2:24/Mark 10:6-7) God has defined marriage as a conventional union for life between a man and a woman as husband and wife.
  2. This "marriage" is not joined in heaven. The power of marriage is that it is forged in heaven. Jesus says God joins a man and a woman together in marriage (Mark 10:9/Matt 19:6), that is why weddings are awesome.
  3. To approve of this even would be hateful not loving. The reason we attend wedding is to condone what is happening, be a witness of the covenant, and agree to hold them accountable. But this "union" according to God's word, means these two people will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). So to celebrate this lifestyle is to celebrate the destruction of human beings, and that is hateful.
  4. Four, this ceremony will defile the drama of Christ and the church. God designed marriage to display Christ’s covenant to his bride, the church. To celebrate a brideless union as marriage is to distort and deface the parable of the most beautiful act in the world.

b) Knowing that Joe claims to be a believer, would you approach him about the wedding or his lifestyle? Why or why not?

* If you love Christ and you love Joe, you must talk to him. By claiming to be a follower of Christ, Joe represents God's character and glory to those around him in a unique way. But if he is engaged in a sinful lifestyle, he is tarnishing the reputation of Jesus. That is a very serious thing if you love Christ and if you are concerned for Joe's eternal joy in Him. You should confront *anyone* who claims to follow Christ but lives in continual sin. Paul says do not even eat with a person like that in 1 Cor 5! And 1 Cor 6:9-11 makes it clear that Joe's eternal life is at stake!

c) What passages of scripture could you use when talking to Joe?

* You must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit leading in these situations. There is no cut and dry answers that can be given here. Jesus promises in Luke 12:12 that "the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."
* With that in mind, Here are some good things to keep in mind as you talk to Joe.
  + Stress to Joe God's love for Him and your love for him. (John 3:16/Rom 5:8)
  + Stress to Joe the sinfulness of his lifestyle (Rom 1:18-27/Lev 18:22-23)
  + Stress to Joe that the end of that sin (and every sin) is destruction (1 Cor 6:9-11/Rom 6:20-23/James 1:14)
  + Stress to Joe that there is hope only in the name of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 6:9-11/Rom 6:12-14)
  + Stress to Joe that only God can ever satisfy the desire he is trying to fill (Ps 16:11/John 6:35/Isa 55:1-3)
  + Stress to Joe that he is wrong but he is loved by God (Romans 5:8/1 Peter 3:18/Eph 2:1-7)
* Watch this short clip about how to help Joe:  <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-should-christian-friends-respond-to-a-friend-who-has-entered-a-homosexual-relationship-and-moved-to-a-church-that-accepts-it>

d) Several years later, Joe comes to you and tells you John left him. He is broken and has come to a place where he is deeply convicted about his sinful lifestyle. How do you counsel Joe?

* Watch this 5 minute clip about how to counsel Joe:  <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/how-can-we-help-christians-who-are-struggling-with-homosexual-desires>
* Joe needs Jesus! Jesus is the only source of Living Water and Bread of Life that will satisfy his soul. Joe needs to fall radically in love with Jesus so he can be free to pursue full and everlasting joy in God (Ps 16:11).
* **Biblical Counsel for Someone with Homosexual Desires**
  1. Acknowledge the presence and pain of a disordered sexuality, with all the ambiguity of where it came from — much like other disorders and disabilities — and do not define your God-given personhood by your disordered sexuality.
  2. Put your faith in Christ alone for the forgiveness of all your sins and for the gift of God’s righteousness and for the fulfillment of all his promises to you (Romans 1:16–17). The only sinner who can successfully battle his sins is a justified sinner. In other words, you fight against sexual sins from relationship, not for a relationship.
  3. Begin to reorder your entire life around the centrality of the glory of God as your highest treasure. Homosexual sinning, like all other sinning, is an echo of exchanging the glory of God for other things. So restore the sun of God’s glory to its place at the center of your soul and all the planets of your desires will begin to return to their God-given orbit.
  4. Resolve to live a chaste and, if necessary, celibate life by the power of God’s Spirit, with the confidence that if God does not heal now, he will in the age to come; and all the patience of purity of will be worth it (Romans 8:18).
  5. Seek wholesome friendships with both sexes, especially in groups. Here the burden lies heavily on the church to be a place where this can happen.
  6. Pursue Biblical and wise counsel from ministries or individuals that are equipped to specifically help those who struggle with same-sex attraction. Start by meeting with your pastor.
  7. Take a bold and compassionate stand for truth and hold up God’s purposes for human sexuality, namely, as an expression of Christ’s love for the Church dramatized in the covenant love of marriage between one man and one woman.

5. If a non-Christian, lesbian couple moved in next door to you and invited you to attend a party to celebrate their adoption of a little girl. Would you attend? Why or why not?

* There is a significant difference between this situation and the wedding of Joe and John. For one, this is not a marriage, and so your attendance is not necessarily a witness and approval of the event. Second, these women do not claim to know Christ. So they desperately need to hear the gospel above anything else. Here are some things to keep in mind as you answer this question:
  1. Read 1 Cor 5:9-12. Paul makes it clear that we are not supposed to remove ourselves from the world even though they are sinners. God will judge them. We are supposed to proclaim Christ to them. We cannot expect sinners to do anything apart from sinning. That's what it means to be a sinner.
  2. Jesus commands us to be salt and light in the world. Matt 5:13-16
  3. Jesus prays that God will keep us in the world not remove us from it, in order that we can be His witnesses in the world. John 17:15-19
  4. We are called not just to abstain from sin but to expose the works of darkness. Eph 5:8-13
  5. We are called to be God's ambassadors as though God were pleading through us to call sinners to be reunited with God. 2 Cor 5:20-21