

Human Sexuality: A Biblical Perspective

First Presbyterian Church

Jackson, MS

First Pres Forum
Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III
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STATEMENT 9: IDENTITY

We affirm that the believer's most important identity is found in Christ (Rom. 8:38-39; Eph. 1:4, 7). Christians ought to understand themselves, define themselves, and describe themselves in light of their union with Christ and their identity as regenerate, justified, holy children of God (Rom. 6:5-11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Eph. 2:1-10). To juxtapose identities rooted in sinful desires alongside the term "Christian" is inconsistent with Biblical language and undermines the spiritual reality that we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

STATEMENT 9: IDENTITY

Nevertheless, being honest about our sin struggles is important. While Christians should not identify with their sin so as to embrace it or seek to base their identity on it, Christians ought to acknowledge their sin in an effort to overcome it. There is a difference between speaking about a phenomenological facet of a person's sin-stained reality and employing the language of sinful desires as a personal identity marker. That is, we name our sins, but are not named by them. Moreover, we recognize that there are some secondary identities, when not rooted in sinful desires or struggles against the flesh, that can be legitimately affirmed along with our primary identity as Christians. For example, the distinctions between male and female, or between various nationalities and people groups, are not eradicated in becoming Christians, but serve to magnify the glory of God in his plan of salvation (Gen. 1:27; 1 Peter 3:7; Rev. 5:9; 7:9-10).

STATEMENT 10: LANGUAGE

We affirm that those in our churches would be wise to avoid the term “gay Christian.”

Although the term “gay” may refer to more than being attracted to persons of the same sex, the term does not communicate less than that. For many people in our culture, to self-identify as “gay” suggests that one is engaged in homosexual practice. At the very least, the term normally communicates the presence and approval of same-sex sexual attraction as morally neutral or morally praiseworthy. Even if “gay,” for some Christians, simply means “same-sex attraction,” it is still inappropriate to juxtapose this sinful desire, or any other sinful desire, as an identity marker alongside our identity as new creations in Christ.

STATEMENT 10: LANGUAGE

Nevertheless, we recognize that some Christians may use the term “gay” in an effort to be more readily understood by non-Christians. The word “gay” is common in our culture, and we do not think it wise for churches to police every use of the term. Our burden is that we do not justify our sin struggles by affixing them to our identity as Christians. Churches should be gentle, patient, and intentional with believers who call themselves “gay Christians,” encouraging them, as part of the process of sanctification, to leave behind identification language rooted in sinful desires, to live chaste lives, to refrain from entering into temptation, and to mortify their sinful desires.

STATEMENT 11: FRIENDSHIP

We affirm that our contemporary ecclesiastical culture has an underdeveloped understanding of friendship and often does not honor singleness as it should. The church must work to see that all members, including believers who struggle with same-sex attraction, are valued members of the body of Christ and engaged in meaningful relationships through the blessings of the family of God. Likewise we affirm the value of Christians who share common struggles gathering together for mutual accountability, exhortation, and encouragement.

STATEMENT 11: FRIENDSHIP

Nevertheless, we do not support the formation of exclusive, contractual marriage-like friendships, nor do we support same-sex romantic behavior or the assumption that certain sensibilities and interests are necessarily aspects of a gay identity. We do not consider same-sex attraction a gift in itself, nor do we think this sin struggle, or any sin struggle, should be celebrated in the church.

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