

Do Not Lie to One Another

by Tricia Berg

I saw a disturbing thing on Pinterest. I rarely look at it, but this pin immediately caught my eye. It said, "What if gays are a test from God to see if Christians will really love one another?"

Wow! Yet another tactic from the devil—get people to question whether God is unhappy with them for being honest. That is the same as saying, "What if God LIED when He said homosexuality is unnatural and He hates it." (And yes, He DID refer to it that way and say that's how He feels about it—and God NEVER lies. Heb. 6:18, Titus 1:2, Num. 23:19) He does NOT expect us to "pass a test" by coming to the conclusion that He lied to us. He isn't hoping that we'll accept anything He called sin on account of "love." We don't have to choose between truth and love.

This isn't about love. God doesn't have to love sin to love people (and neither do we). He doesn't have to hate people to hate sin (and neither do we). He hates homosexuality because it is not how He designed us to be. **He does not tempt anyone, nor can He be tempted.** The tests and trials we go through are passed by holding fast to Him and His words—not by giving in to pressure from anyone to "play God" by making adjustments to the Bible to "fit" the current times. He never changes. (Heb. 13:8, Mal. 3:6) He saves us just as we are, but that doesn't mean that He expects us to STAY that way. (Rom. 12:1-2, Rom. 5:6-8, 1John 4:10)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. James 1:12-16

It is not loving to lie to people and tell them that God made them that way, so their sin is "not sin." His objection to homosexuality is NOT merely about "consent" and/or "commitment." Again, it is about being against God's design. Sodom's sin was not merely being inhospitable. That was ONE of their sins. They also "pursued unnatural desire." This was elaborated upon in Romans 1.

*For this reason God gave them up to **dishonorable passions**. For their **women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature**; and the **men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing **shameless acts with men** and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, **God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done**. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give **approval to those who practice them**. Romans 1:26-32***

Someone might say they HAVE acknowledged God and so there would be no reason He would "give them up" and allow the evil that fills the heart of every single unsaved person, due to our fallen nature, to carry them away into depravity. (Matt. 15:18-19) Is it really acknowledging Him if we reinvent Him into how we want Him to be instead of how He said He is? And even apart from that point, the fact still remains that same-gender desire was described above as the result of a debased mind, something that is shameful and should NOT be done. There are many sinful things that people feel the urge to do, but having the urge is not an excuse to give in and do those things when we know that God said NOT to do them. Whoever teaches others to sin will regret it. (Matt. 18:5-7)

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Jude 1:5-7

Note that in the above passage, the angels who "left their proper dwelling" committed unnatural acts with human women. (Gen. 6:4) They were not created to procreate at all, whereas human men were created to ONLY procreate with human women and vice versa. (Luke 20:34-36, Gen. 2:24-25, Matt. 19:5, Eph. 5:31) God doesn't tolerate it when His creation decides for themselves what is acceptable for them to do after He has already made His intentions known. Adam and Eve had to leave the garden after they ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree. Cain was not killed for murdering Abel—he had never been told that it was forbidden (although it's obvious that God would never

approve of that). He was still punished even though he may not have "known better."

We can see by the comments of Adam, Eve and Cain that they had very little comprehension of God's omniscience. Adam almost seems to have blamed God that "the woman He gave him" enticed him to sin, and Eve of course blamed the serpent for deceiving her. (Gen. 3:8-13, Gen. 4:9) In this day, we have the entire Bible witnessing to us of God's greatness, including the fact that He knows what is in our very hearts and minds. (Psa. 139:1-4, Jer. 17:10, Psa. 44:20-21, Matt. 9:4, Rev. 2:23)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12-13

Jesus referred to a servant who didn't know better getting a lighter beating than the one who did in Luke 12:47-48. He talked about a "worthless" servant being thrown into "outer darkness." (Matt. 25:30) We can't be absolutely sure whether that is the same as the lake of fire (where hell will be thrown - Rev. 20:14-15), but we know He said there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in outer darkness (Matt. 8:12, Matt. 22:13, Matt. 25:30), where the hypocrites are (Matt. 24:51, Luke 13:28), and in the fiery furnace (Matt. 13:42, Matt. 13:50). So outside of the kingdom is not a nice place to end up—it's not where anyone wants to go! It's not what we are hoping for! (Rom. 8:16-17)

Remember, the list of ways to be kept out of the kingdom include ALL sexual immorality as well as a disturbing list of other common sins. Saying that God is going to let in the people who do those other things and so He has to let in homosexuals is incorrect. Nothing unclean will enter into the holy city, of which God and the Lamb are the temple. (Rev. 22-27) Jesus cleanses us and we are meant to remain clean by yielding to and relying on the strength and power of His Spirit in us to resist temptation and by seeking His glory over our own temporary pleasures. (1Thess. 4:1-8, 2Cor. 5:14-15) The warnings are for believers. If unbelievers could say themselves by obeying, then why would faith in Jesus be required? ONLY He saves and He OWNS those He redeemed. (1Cor. 6:18-20, Rev. 5:9-10)

When we fail, we REPENT and come to Him again for forgiveness and cleansing. He intercedes for us. (Heb. 7:25, Rom. 8:26-27) He knows we are weak. (Heb. 4:14-16) Slipping is understood and anticipated, willful defiance is not. The Bible refers to those who were sanctified by the blood of Jesus, but intentionally

sin without repenting, as “trampling the Son of God” and “outraging the Spirit of grace.” (Heb. 10:29) (No one who is unsaved has been sanctified by His blood or tasted of His Spirit. Heb. 6:4-8) We don’t live in fear of punishment, because we show our love for God by obeying Him. (1John 4:17-19, 1John 3:23-25 - don’t separate these passages from the rest of the book, including 1John 1:5-2:6, 1John 3:4-10 - God’s word is not “a la carte.”)

*And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who **overcomes** will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. **But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.**” Revelation 21:5-8*

*And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and **not shrink from him in shame at his coming**. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who **practices righteousness** has been **born of him**. 1 John 2:28-29*

Many lying teachers tell people that “overcoming” is merely professing belief, even if it is just empty words. They rely on 1John 5:1-5, taken out of the context of the rest of the book. The problem with that is it doesn’t go along with the rest of the Bible when they do that. Look at Hebrews 11:1-40. We have a whole list of “giants of the faith” being commended for what they did because of their faith. They are the “cloud of witnesses” before whom we are encouraged to “run the race with endurance” in Heb. 12:1-4. (How is saying a sinner’s prayer similar to “running a race”?) James used some of those same examples found in the Book of Hebrews when he explained that faith without works is DEAD and does NOT save. It’s not because works save—it’s because there doesn’t seem to be any faith to save if there’s no evidence of it.

Jesus has overcome this world, and we can too, by our faith in Him, because He dwells in those who believe. (John 16:33, John 14:22-24, John 15:11-14, Matt. 25:21) His joy is our joy and vice versa. Does anyone actually think that God won’t know if someone is only using the precious name of Jesus as a “get out of hell free card”? (Gal. 6:7-8) The beautiful promises are to those who love Him, and they are those who obey Him. (John 14:15-24, John 15:8-10, Jam. 1:12, Jam. 2:5, 1Cor. 2:9-10, Rom. 8:28) Jesus said whoever loves even their family more than Him is not worthy of Him. (Matt. 10:37-39)

*But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!** Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? **For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.** James 2:18-26*

*"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: 'The words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze. "'I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is **teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality** and to eat food sacrificed to idols. **I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality.** Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into **great tribulation**, unless they **repent** of her works, and I will strike her children dead. **And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.** But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come. The one who **overcomes and who keeps my works until the end**, to him I will give authority over the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron, as when earthen pots are broken in pieces, even as I myself have received authority from my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says **to the churches.**' Revelation 2:18-29*

No-telling people lies, no matter how much they love to hear them, is not loving. (2Tim. 4:1-5) What IS loving is telling deceived people that they have fallen for a trick of the devil, but there is hope in Jesus. He will forgive ALL who repent, wash them clean, and help them to resist temptation. (1Pet. 5:8) He wants ALL to be saved. (John 3:16-18, Matt. 18:12-14, 2Pet. 3:9, 1Tim. 2:4) The devil wants all to perish, so he deceives us today the same as he did Eve in the garden with his famous line: "Did God really say?" Who will we believe?

(Gen. 3:1, 1Pet. 5:8, Jam. 4:7, 1John 3:8, John 8:44, Acts 13:8-10, Eph. 6:10-13, Rev. 2:10, Rev. 12:10-12)

We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands **take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.** 1 Corinthians 10:8-13

***"Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire."* Matthew 18:7-9**

It is vitaly important to understand that it is NOT loving to BULLY people for perceived differences between ourselves and them. God made ONE race—human. He made two genders—male and female. (Gen. 1:27) Some people have different color skin or physical features. There are all sorts of physical appearances and personalities. God judges by the HEART, not by appearances, and so should we. (1Sam. 16:7, John 7:24) I can say without ANY doubt that God HATES bullying. Some refuse to accept God's design for male and female. Believers should NOT support that agenda, but neither should they EVER hate ANYONE—not even their enemies. (Rom. 12:20, Prov. 25:21-22, Matt. 5:43-48)

That said, school anti-bullying programs intentionally indoctrinate children into the agenda of accepting aberrant behaviors as normal. Who could possibly be in favor of bullying? NO ONE. So they focus on that tragic aspect of "being different" and teach that ALL differences are to be celebrated (whereas the Bible not only condemns unnatural behaviors, but celebrating sin or being proud of ANYTHING other than what God has done for us is vigorously discouraged, to say the least). (1Cor. 5:1-7, 2Pet. 2:12-14, Rom. 11:17-25, Jam. 4:6, Gal. 6:14, 1Cor. 1:31, 2Cor. 10:17-18) One reason that children are being indoctrinated into this belief system at ever younger ages is that way they won't remember ever not "knowing" that there is nothing "wrong" with homosexuality. Whoever influences the children influences the future.

The "movement" began many years ago with college professors teaching students to "think for themselves," which in truth involved rejecting their parents' values and replacing them with that of their respected and admired professors—very craftily done. Satan is the father of lies and the "god" of this world. (John 8:44, 2Cor. 11:13-15) Those who received the message in college became parents, teachers, etc. who passed it on and helped it spread—a brilliant strategy. Since that successful beginning, much "progress" has been made in high school, elementary school and even preschool—not as a natural, inevitable "evolution" of the culture, but according to their PLAN all along.

*Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. **We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word**, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is **veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers**, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:1-4 (Paul discussed repentance from sin, particular sexual immorality, extensively in 1 Corinthians—especially chapters 5 and 6. He covers the topic briefly again in 2 Corinthians, chapters 12 and 13.)*

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the **day of evil** comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.** Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, **be alert** and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may **declare it fearlessly**, as I should. Ephesians 6:10-20*

The answer to a fallen world that loves ALL KINDS of sin is not to give in and declare all sins "not sinful." (Jam. 4:4-10, 1John 2:15-17, 2Tim. 3:1-5) The

answer is for ALL of us believers to help one another walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls us into fellowship with His precious, PURE and HOLY Son. (1John 1:3-2:6) We ALL need to let others see our good behavior so that our Father in heaven is glorified and perhaps they will want to get to know Him, too. (Matt. 5:16) "Practicing our righteousness to be seen by others" is NOT what we are doing if we refuse to join in or support sin. That refers to doing things like donating to charity or volunteering for the attention we get from it—from being esteemed by others—instead of from a pure heart to please God and to love who He loves. (Matt. 25:31-46 - Notice they had to ask when they did these things for Him—they didn't do them with the thought of receiving a reward on earth or in heaven, but from their hearts.)

*For the time that is **past** suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this **they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.** 1 Peter 4:3-5*

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And **let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works**, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. **For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.** Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has **trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?** For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "**The Lord will judge his people.**" It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. **For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."** But we*

are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:23-39

People are absolutely right when they say it's hypocritical to pick on certain sins and ignore others, or only notice the sins of other people and not our own. (Matt. 7:3-5) Again, though, the answer is not for everyone to throw in the towel and give in to sin.

*Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—**you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself**—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, **not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance**? But because of your hard and **impenitent** heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but **for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.** Romans 2:1-11*

Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible DOES distinguish between "other sins" and SEXUAL sin (of ALL kinds). THAT particular sin defiles God's temple, which is our body where He dwells IF we are truly born-again believers. Paul likens it to joining Christ with a prostitute. (1Cor. 6:12-20) He also said "come to your senses and stop sinning—I say this to your SHAME". (1Cor. 15:33-34, unlike many of today's preachers and teachers who are telling believers God is pleased with them no matter what they do, just like in certain Old Testament times—see below.) Jesus didn't save us to wallow in our FORMER sins, which is how we SOIL our garment of salvation. (Rev. 3:4, Jam. 1:27, Rev. 22:14-15) (Needless to say, unsaved people do not possess such a garment.) Whoever encourages us to do so in any way, for any reason, is NOT our friend!

*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who **bought them**, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. **And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit***

you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 2 Peter 2:1-3

For, speaking loud boasts of folly, they **entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.** For if, after they have **escaped the defilements of the world** through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are **again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.** For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: **"The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."** 2 Peter 2:18-22

To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, **their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen; behold, the word of the LORD is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it.** Therefore I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary of holding it in. "Pour it out upon the children in the street, and upon the gatherings of young men, also; both husband and wife shall be taken, the elderly and the very aged. Their houses shall be turned over to others, their fields and wives together, for I will stretch out my hand against the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD. "For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is **greedy for unjust gain**; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. **Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.** Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the LORD. Thus says the LORD: **"Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.'** Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing **disaster** upon this people, **the fruit of their devices**, because **they have not paid attention to my words**; and as for my law, they have rejected it. Jeremiah 6:10-19

We are all susceptible to temptation in many ways. Each of us has our own weaknesses, but God does not MAKE us in such a way that we are unable to overcome. He provides a way out. The best deterrent that there ever could be

is love for Jesus. The desire to honor His beautiful name can provide strength (which is another aspect of GRACE - Jam. 4:5-10) to turn from sin. Loving Him more than ourselves is a powerful incentive. (Matt. 10:37-39) Common sense goes a long way, too—we each need to avoid situations that may lead to lack of self-control to the extent possible. (1Thess. 4:2-8, 2Pet. 1:3-12, 1Cor. 15:33-34, Gal. 6:1)

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises **self-control in all things**. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But **I discipline my body and keep it under control**, lest after preaching to others I myself should be **disqualified**. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

The Bible says that His Holy Spirit works in us to help us want to know and do His will. (Phil. 2:12-16) If we have no such desire, then either we are stifling Him or He is just NOT THERE. (Rom. 8:9, 1Thess. 5:19) It is possible for us to insist upon our own way long enough and vigorously enough such that we no longer hear His prompting. The Bible recommends against it. (Acts 17:30-31, Heb. 6:4-8) We are told in 2Cor. 13:5 to examine ourselves (looking for the fruit produced by the Spirit of Jesus Christ IN US) to see if we are truly in the faith (which is to be IN and belong TO Christ—John 15:1-14, 1Thess. 4:16-17, 1Cor. 15:23, John 14:2-3). If we are born again, His Spirit inside of us produces fruit (which is obedience to Him, out of LOVE and gratitude). (John 3:3-8, Col. 3:12-17, Heb. 12:28-29, 1John 5:2-3)

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will **not gratify the desires of the flesh**. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now **the works of the flesh** are evident: **sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these**. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **self-control**; against such things there is no law. And **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-25*

*Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working*

*properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must **no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!**—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to **put off your old self**, which belongs to your **former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires**, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to **put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness**. Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and **give no opportunity to the devil**. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. Let no **corrupting talk** come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption**. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:15-32*

The loving thing to do is to speak the truth in love. Notice how Paul doesn't separate giving up sin and being loving in the passage above? The ones who like to extract tidbits of Scripture often do so in order to support unbiblical viewpoints. Needless to say, love also means there is NO room for hate of any person whatsoever—no name-calling, cursing, or violence. Even so, this is not something Christians made up out of personal preference.

God said He made male and female for a purpose (Gen. 1:28), which He also demonstrated throughout His design of nature through reproduction. He also said that we are made in His image, and we are above the rest of creation. (Gen. 1:26) There is sometimes unnatural behavior in animals, but it is not by design, and animals were not made in God's image. They do not have the reasoning that we do—they behave by instinct. Even they have been corrupted by the fall of the world into sin, but they do not need salvation like we do. (2Pet. 2:12-14)

There is a saying that came to be popular after gay marriage became the law of the land: "Love won." Gay marriage proponents object to anyone being told "who(m) they can love." Well, I'm here to tell you that love does not equal sex!

If it did, we would be in a LOT of trouble! What about pedophilia, incest and bestiality? Those were originally in the same category as homosexuality, because they are all against nature. (Lev. 20:10-21) Those sins haven't been legalized, and I hope they never will be.

People are more than labels of the sins they do (or have done). If a person has a drinking or drug problem is that all they are—an alcoholic or addict? How about a liar, thief or glutton? They have no other identity? That's ridiculous, and so it is with people who struggle with sexual sin. I would have thought we could move beyond that by this time. People used to think that we inherited tendencies to sin, but we know better now. (Children of convicts had very little chance of being adopted for that reason, unless it was to serve as a farm hand and even then, they would be a last choice.)

Need I point out that Paul, who loved everyone like a father, never had sex? (1Cor. 7:8-9) How do I know that? Because he kept the law (Acts 21:22-25, 22:3), and it was immoral to have sex outside of marriage. The sins he was ashamed of were of persecuting the Church out of ignorance before He met Jesus (Acts 7:54-8:3, Acts 9:4-5, Acts 22:4-8, 1Tim. 1:13), and of failing to demonstrate Jesus' love to the young churches as perfectly as he wanted always to do. He really had no choice—they were led astray in a multitude of ways, and he felt a giant burden to bring them back—even if he had to be harsher with them than he would like to be. (Gal 4:19-20, 1Cor. 4:6-21, 2Cor. 1:23-2:11, 2Cor. 10:1-6, 2Cor. 11:1-21)

As for "shellfish and textiles," another favorite retort of champions of homosexuality, those were symbolic of the separation between Jew and Gentile. They no longer apply because both Jew and Gentile believers in this age are being built into a temple for the Lord. (Eph. 2:11-22, Eph. 3:4-6, Col. 3:11, Gal. 3:26-29) Sexual intimacy in marriage is symbolic in a way that will never pass away, as God intended for marriage to be permanent. (Matt. 19:6-9) The "two become one" in the intimacy of marriage between a man and a woman. This is a physical picture of the spiritual truth that His Spirit becomes one with our spirit when we are born again. This is not negotiable. It doesn't change with the times. God is sovereign and His ways are perfect. Whoever doesn't understand this should seek understanding rather than attacking those who do. (Jam. 1:5-7)

*Yet **among the mature** we do **impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away.** But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What*

no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared **for those who love him**—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. **The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.** The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.** Only let us hold true to what we have attained. **Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.** For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as **enemies of the cross of Christ.** Their end is destruction, **their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.** Philippians 3:14-19

We MUST be washed clean to enter the Kingdom of God. That does NOT mean being washed and then immediately soiling our robe of righteousness by continuing deliberately in the sins we were just washed clean from. There is forgiveness and cleansing for every sin, no matter how many times we slip, but it is not "slipping" to make a PRACTICE of a sin. (Heb. 10:26-31)

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having **escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.** For this very reason, make every effort to **supplement your faith with virtue**, and virtue with **knowledge**, and knowledge with **self-control**, and self-control with **steadfastness**, and steadfastness with **godliness**, and godliness with **brotherly affection**, and brotherly affection with **love**. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed**

from his former sins. *Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 2 Peter 1:3-12*

People who make an effort to encourage others to live in such a way as to reflect well on our worthy, almighty God are not being unloving. (Hopefully they are doing so in a gentle manner, and not being hypocritical by pointing out the sins of others but never dealing with their own—as covered earlier.)

Remember, the Holy Spirit calls each member of Jesus' Body to the task He determined and gives them gifts to enable them to fulfill that calling. Some serve, some preach, some teach, some exhort, some encourage, some show mercy, etc. (Rom. 12:4-8, 1Cor. 12:4-30) We don't work against each other by one member telling people that God loves sin and another telling them that He hates it. We're ONE Body, called to be loving AND truthful. And it's not our place to force others to serve God in the same way we do—we're not to judge one another in matters of freedom (which is different from sin). (Rom. 15:7-13) As Paul or Peter would say, Jesus' Body doesn't need all feet or all hands. (1Pet. 4:10-11, Luke 10:38-42) He is the One who decides and provides the talents, skills, desire, and everything needed so that all of His plans and purposes for the Body will be fulfilled.

*Now there are **varieties of gifts**, but the **same Spirit**; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the **same God who empowers them all in everyone**. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.** 1 Corinthians 12:4-11*

So what I'm saying is that just because YOU would rather die than tell someone that homosexuality or fornication (sleeping together before marriage) is a sin (or that God didn't make anyone "trapped" in the wrong gender of body), that doesn't mean you should condemn others as being hateful if God gave THEM the burden on their heart to reach out to people enslaved by those particular sins, many of whom have been deceived into thinking those things are

acceptable for believers to do and/or believe. (Eph. 5:3, 2Tim. 3:12-17) Mercy triumphs judgment (Jam. 2:12-13), and yet nevertheless, we have not been authorized to redefine sin according to modern times, or to accuse God of lying when He said He made everything as He did (including male and female). If God were to change or lie, then we couldn't trust Him to keep His promises to us, could we? (Heb. 13:8, Mal. 3:6)

Jesus came to save sinners. (Luke 19:10) He does so by washing them clean and redeeming them. That cleansing cost His precious blood—we're not meant to live in filth afterwards. But it's FAR more profitable to tell people what they like to hear. (2Pet. 2:2-10) A popular saying is that the Church is a "hospital for sinners." If that's so, then the truth is that most of them would have their licenses revoked because hardly anyone is "cured"! Those who subscribe to that mentality usually use it as an excuse not to confront sin. (Rom. 6:1-23)

*But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. **For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life.** Who is sufficient for these things? **For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.** 2 Corinthians 2:14-17*

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. 1 Peter 1:14-19

I am quoting this next passage out of the Complete Jewish Bible, as they have made painfully clear which sins are being discussed. The point is not that we earn salvation by "perfecting ourselves," but that if we ARE saved, then the Holy Spirit dwells within us and transforms us from the inside out, over the rest of our lifetime. People who are controlled by the Spirit do not purposefully behave in such ungodly ways. (1John 3:4-10)

*Don't you know that unrighteous people will have **no share** in the Kingdom of God? **Don't delude yourselves**—people who engage in sex before marriage,*

*who worship idols, who engage in sex after marriage with someone other than their spouse, who engage in active or passive homosexuality, who steal, who are greedy, who get drunk, who assail people with contemptuous language, who rob—**none of them will share in the Kingdom of God.** Some of you **used to do these things.** 1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

*Now the **works of the flesh** are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. **I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** Galatians 5:19-21*

We can't take the parts of the Bible we like and disregard the rest. James said that whoever brings back a sinner from straying saves their soul AND covers a multitude of sins. (Jam. 5:19-20) Peter said that LOVE covers a multitude of sins. (1Pet. 4:8) This is not EITHER/OR—these harmonize together. Whoever doesn't believe that God hates sin does not understand that He is holy. If sin is not a big deal, then why would Jesus have to die for it?

Paul said that whoever transgresses their brother or sister in the Lord in the matter of sexual immorality will receive the vengeance of Jesus! Jesus is also pictured judging His own people in Luke 12:45-48, 1Cor. 4:4-5, 1Cor. 11:31-32, Heb. 10:30-31, Rev. 11:18, 1Pet. 4:17-18, in the Parable of the Talents - Matt. 25:30, in the Parable of the Minas - Luke 19:24. Paul said that when he came a THIRD time to the Corinthians, he would NOT SPARE those who refused to repent of their sexual sins.

*Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you **ought to walk and to please God**, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know **what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.** For this is the will of God, your **sanctification**: that you **abstain from sexual immorality**; that each one of you know how to **control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God**; that **no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8*

For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come

again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to **mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.** This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **I warned those who sinned before** and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will **not spare them**—since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. 2 Corinthians 12:20-13:3

Suppose that we had co-workers who had missed or misunderstood part of the employee manual, and so they were not aware that they were doing many things that were not allowed—things that can result in severe reprimand and even demotion in position. Shouldn't one of us other employees warn them? Of course! Well, here is such a warning: People who persist in "wallowing in the mud" AFTER Jesus has given them a pristine, white garment to wear are NOT going to receive a "well done, my good and faithful servant" from Him. They just aren't! Wouldn't it be better if they find that out NOW while there is still TIME to amend their ways? As our Lord and Master, Jesus expects obedience—not defiance. (My understanding is that the "employee" in this correlation wouldn't be "fired" for not complying with "regulations" if they didn't know better. However, there is question as to whether those who REFUSE to comply have actually been "hired" or not. Matt. 20:1-16)

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. "'I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. **Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.** Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and **repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.** Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who **have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. The one who overcomes will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'" Revelation 3:1-6

Paul said that we are to "put on Christ" and NOT gratify the desires of the flesh. (Rom. 13:13-14) Let's read our Bibles instead of watching garbage on television. Let's KNOW God from His word so that we can recognize what He wants us to do. You can read the Bible for free—don't pay someone else to tell you what it says. I recommend comparing more than one version and avoiding

modernized "paraphrases." A lot is usually lost in the translation, and sometimes there is even an ungodly agenda being promoted.

God DOES love EVERYONE and He WILL forgive ALL of us who believe for ALL of our sins, IF we admit them, turn from them and seek His forgiveness and cleansing. If we don't understand that Jesus came to set us free from the penalty of our sins AND from being enslaved by the desire to sin, then we really don't KNOW Him. (1John 2:4, 1John 3:6) How can we put our faith in the ONLY way to be saved, Jesus, if we have made up some other version of Him?

Don't take anyone else's word for it. Misery loves company. The devil knows what his own end will be and he wants to take as many with him as he can. He HATES God and God's people. Don't be fooled. God can't be fooled and He warned us repeatedly in the Bible NOT to be deceived. In the passage below, Paul is referring back to what he always preached—believers are free from the law, AND they must not indulge the passions of their former desires, which they had BEFORE they were saved. Our works do not earn salvation, but they do reflect salvation. (Jam. 1:22-25, Jam. 2:26, Gal. 6:7-9)

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. **For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.** For your **obedience** is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be **wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.** Romans 16:17-19*

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. **For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. Let no one deceive himself.** If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 1 Corinthians 3:16-20*

As long as someone can still hear, it's not too late. Physically dead people no longer hear, and neither do people who were once alive spiritually (born again), but have hardened their hearts against God by gratifying the old sinful nature and quenching His Spirit. There comes a point when can't be restored to repentance and salvation. That would take Jesus dying on the cross again, which is impossible. (Heb. 6:4-8) We can only be born once physically and "born again" once spiritually. Don't be deceived and lose the reward you expect. (Heb. 6:9-12) (If someone is concerned about this, then that is a sign that it

doesn't apply to them—those who are beyond reach truly knew God once but are now hostile, with no interest whatsoever in salvation. He doesn't "lose" anyone, but He respects the free that will He gave us.)

As for those who are "dabbling" with their faith, no one will be thanking the people who deceived them after it's too late to repent and receive forgiveness. No one will think it was worth it to have loved the temporary pleasures of this world more than Jesus once they see Him face to face. He warned that whoever would not deny themselves was worthy of Him. (Matt. 10:37-39)

*Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, **what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God**, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, **be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish**, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which **the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures**. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability**. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:11-18*

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus**, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood**. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? **"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."** **It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons**. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we*

respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. **For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.** Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. **Strive** for peace with everyone, and **for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.** 28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:1-17, 28-29

Believers are continually told that they are to walk in the light, which is Jesus, and to shine His light on others. (John 8:12, Eph. 5:8, 1John 1:5-2:6)

*"For where your treasure is, there your **heart** will be also. **The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"** Matthew 6:21-23*

If your conscience is pricked, then don't fight against it. Repent NOW while you still can. (Rom. 3:5-15) If you are one of those "loving" Christians who not only approves of homosexuality, but criticizes anyone who doesn't - just stop. In the parable of the wedding guests, one man was thrown out for not wearing the wedding garment provided. Why did he accept the invitation, but not do as was expected of all of the guests? He didn't have an answer. Apparently, he thought he could make his own rules. (Matt. 22:1-14, 1Cor. 9:24-27, 2Tim. 2:5)

How is that LOVING to reassure people that their sins that they CONTINUE IN rather than repenting from will not keep them out of the kingdom of God after Jesus specifically said the opposite?! And stop telling people that "God made them that way." Whoever says that doesn't KNOW Him. Science has not "proven" anything. What was "known" yesterday is disproved tomorrow with science. Trust God, not men. (1Cor. 1:18-31, Psa. 1:1-6, Isa. 46:8-12, Isa. 29:14-16, Isa. 45:9-12, Jer. 8:9, Job 5:17, Job 38:1-40:1)

The fact is that no matter how much we love someone, and we SHOULD love EVERYONE, we can't save ANYONE. Their knowing us, because we know God, will NOT save them. The LOVING thing to do is to help them to come to their own knowledge of the TRUTH—the ONLY way to be saved, which includes repentance of sin—like it or not. The loving thing to do is to be HONEST, and that includes with OURSELVES.

Let's not lie to ourselves and pretend to be without sin, making ourselves into hypocrites to the people with whom we're trying to share the truth. Let's not ignore the Bible in an attempt to seem "nice" to others. (That includes marching in "pride" parades, wearing costumes designed to look like private parts, using foul language, etc. Eph. 4:29-31, Col. 4:5-6, Titus 2:1-15, Jude 1:15) Let's not lie to one another because it's easier than telling the truth. (1Pet. 3:8-12)

Put to death therefore what is **earthly** in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **On account of these the wrath of God is coming.** In these you too **once** walked, when you **were** living in them. But **now** you must **put them all away**: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and **obscene talk** from your mouth. **Do not lie to one another**, seeing that you have **put off the old self with its practices** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, **humility**, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom**, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:5-17

We're not to be ashamed of Jesus OR His words. Since we know that HE IS GOD (John 1:1, Rev. 19:13, Col. 1:15-20, John 14:7-11, John 17:20-21), then we know that we should not to be ashamed of ANY of the teachings of the Bible. God's values have not changed from the Old to the New Testament. He is entitled to insist upon holiness—He doesn't need permission from us! I believe that when we see Him face to face, we will perfectly understand and be utterly ashamed at every wicked thought we ever had and how little we loved Him compared to what He deserved. (Eccles. 12:14, 1Pet. 21:15-23) We will SEE

with our own eyes how WORTHY He is of ALL of our love and gratitude, and our obedience because of our love and gratitude. (Acts 9:15-16, Phil. 1:27-30)

*"And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, **"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."** Mark 8:34-38*

*"Once again, the **kingdom of heaven** is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and **collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.** This is how it will be at the end of the age. **The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. He said to them, "Therefore **every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.**" Matthew 13:47-52 (Note: This is referring to the Old and New Testament, not new or "updated" writings that claim to have the same authority as Scripture.)*

I don't know about you, but the more I read my Bible, the more I love God and am AMAZED at all He has endured for the sake of His creation. He created us for His good pleasure and designed everything according to His perfect will. He provides for us in every possible way—the beauty even of this fallen earth is astounding! Without God, there would be no physical or spiritual life. He even loved us enough to redeem us from the pit of hell that our deeds had earned us, at the ultimate cost to Himself. There is NOTHING that He would EVER ask of me that would be too much. He could have made beings without giving them free will and spared Himself so much pain—but He wants us to CHOOSE to accept His gift of faith and CHOOSE to obey out of our genuine love for Him.

Jesus said that the one who loves Him will obey Him. (John 14:15-24, John 15:8-10) The Bible says throughout that God deserves and expects our love—first, most, best, highest—with ALL of our strength, mind, soul AND heart. (Matt. 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34) That is not going through the motions out of obligation—it is TRUE love. Those who LOVE God will see His glory. Those who don't will not. (John 17:22-26, 1Cor. 2:19) Choose now and choose wisely.

Therefore **be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** Therefore do not become partners with them; for **at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.** Ephesians 5:1-12, 15-17

Paul tells us to speak the TRUTH in LOVE, because we don't have to choose one or the other. If we really want to do the loving thing, we will care about eternal souls enough to be honest with people. As Paul said, it's better to hurt now for a little while than forever. He told the Corinthians not to be proud of accepting sin among them in 1Cor. 5:1-2, 6-8. They responded by doing as he instructed—to clean out the leaven. He didn't tell them to do this in order to be hateful, but for the health of the Body of Christ AND for the good of the deceived person so they could escape the snares of the devil. (1Cor. 5:3-5, 1Pet. 2:24-26, 2Tim. 3:12-13, Jam. 5:19-20)

*And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. **For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.** Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. **For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.** For this is why I wrote, that I might **test** you and know whether you are **obedient in everything.** Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for*

your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. 2 Corinthians 2:3-11

Notice there IS a “test” mentioned above, but to “pass” it, they must obey by dealing with the sin instead of accepting it! And all of this out of LOVE. The aim is always restoration, not exclusion, but on God’s terms. Let’s love people enough to be truthful with them, even if it is painful for both of us. We're talking about eternal consequences here.

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ***For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.*** For see what ***earnestness*** this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to ***clear yourselves***, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves ***innocent*** in the matter. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. ***Your restoration is what we pray for.*** *For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.* Finally, brothers, rejoice. ***Aim for restoration***, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:5-11

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