

# MY HEART *Overflows!*

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*"My son told me he's gay. I know God's Word clearly says homosexuality is a sin, but I love him. If I tell him it's a sin, he might stop talking to me or think I hate him. What do I do?"*

*"My wife left me. She says she's gay. I'm crushed and angry, but I still love her. I'm also worried about her. She not only broke her commitment to me, but now she is living a life displeasing to God. I don't want anyone to know. What would they think of me?"*

Situations like these are more common than we'd like to think. I have three close family members who are living a homosexual lifestyle. All of them grew up in the Church and learned God's Word, but now they have set that aside to pursue a lifestyle that God's Word clearly says is sinful. Undoubtedly, you have friends and family struggling with same-sex attraction as well.

We don't often know what to say to them, and when we do express our concern, it usually ends up in hurt and anger. Sometimes, they refuse to speak to us while we pretend like everything is fine. We are worried for them and weep for them.

Their continued rebellion against God through their homosexual behavior, however, has put that at risk. Although our Lord does not desire the death of a sinner, He also will not be mocked by an unrepentant sinner who refuses to acknowledge his sin, which leaves us feeling like we are battling the devil for their souls.

While fighting against the devil alone is a losing battle, he cannot prevail against God's Word. So it is with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," that we must fight the devil for them (Eph. 6:17). We cannot be afraid, reminding them that what they are doing is not okay, not because we say so but because God says so. We must, with love and firmness, continue to encourage them to repent of their sins, turn to Christ and receive forgiveness.

We are sinners too. We "have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). We were born in sin, have desires and temptations just like every other human being and fail to do the right thing time and time again. There was one Man, however, who endured every temptation without sin. He understands our suffering and promises to help us in our temptations (Heb. 4:14-16). He became the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sin. Only His blood could cover it, and He took on all of it. Jesus Christ paid for every sin on the cross through His agony and bloody sweat, through the

If you bear the burden of a friend or family member who is struggling with same-sex attraction, cling to the promises of Christ in your Baptism.

nails that pierced His hands and feet, through the spear that pierced His side and through His dying breath. It is because of the blood of Christ alone that we are saved.

The Holy Spirit helps us resist our sinful desires, and when we fail, which we inevitably do, He also convicts us to lead us to repentance once again, to receive forgiveness and cling to Christ. The weight of these sins and desires is then lifted and replaced with hope in Christ again and again. This cycle of sin, guilt, repentance, forgiveness, and hope continues throughout the life of every Christian.

Society wants us to think that homosexuality is just another choice to achieve happiness in life, and it labels anyone that maintains God's Law as the final word as hateful, unloving, judgmental or controlling. But I do know that God wants me to speak. And He wants you to speak. He wants us to proclaim His Word, both Law and Gospel, in love and to pray for them regularly.

We can encourage them to repent and then let the Holy Spirit do His work. We can seek forgiveness for the times we fail to speak up when I should. We can pray for others to have the courage to speak the truth in love to those in their lives who are struggling with same-sex desires. We will also pray for others to reach out and encourage those who may be hurting or confused about what to say to their family members with same-sex desires.

And then we will cling to Christ, His promises, our Baptisms, to the forgiveness of sins and to the hope that one day all believers will be free of sin and temptation when Christ draws us to Himself. May God break the chains of sinful desires that bind us so we all repent of our sins against God's Law and return to the loving arms of Christ.