Today, many young people either know someone who is struggling with homosexual thoughts or behaviors or are contemplating the desire to enter this kind of lifestyle. Homosexuality is a topic that is often filled with heated debate. In the article, “Deconstructing Adam and Steve”, we see that “people who struggle with it feel like they’re stuck in the middle of the ocean treading water, and they need people they can trust to come along and offer a lifeboat rather than a picket line”.

As followers of Christ, we must make a decision to put down the picket signs and instead offer the lovingkindness of Jesus that leads to repentance and life (Romans 2:4). In this edition of ONCOURSE Unboxed, we’ll take a closer look at some of the difficult questions students are asking and how we can become a catalyst for hurting people to be changed through the power of Christ.

**WEB FEATURE: DECONSTRUCTING ADAM & STEVE**

Homosexuality is an argument-ridden topic. But, people who struggle feel like they’re stuck in the middle of the ocean treading water, and they need people they can trust to come along and offer a lifeboat rather than a picket line.

- What would happen if we became the catalyst for hurting people’s hearts to be truly changed through the power of Christ’s love?
- What would this look like in your own life?
- In what ways would you need to change your thinking?

In the book, “What Your Son isn’t Telling You” (Bethony Hause, ©2010) the co-author, Michael Ross responds to the question, “Can’t I be His Son and gay?” His response is, “Ask God that question. And think about this: Following Jesus isn’t about fitting Him into our world. It’s about giving ourselves completely to Him.”

- This applies to every area of our life, not just our sexuality.
- What areas in your life need to change, so that you can give yourself completely to Christ?

The gay community will accept the person as he or she is. Try putting yourself in their shoes. How would you want people to treat you? Remember, every person is created in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Researchers who study Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth are seeing a sharp drop in the average age at which adolescents are coming out. According to some studies, the average age is 14 to 16 (Lehoczky, 2005).
- Remafedi, Resnick, Blum, and Harris (1992) surveyed teenagers in the 7th to 12th grades and found that 26.9% of 12-year-olds were uncertain about their sexual orientation. This figure declines with age to 5% of 17-year-old students.
- GLBT adolescents often live in social environments characterized by fear and an active maltreatment by some members of society (Vare and Norton, 2004). Nearly all researchers agree that GLBT adolescents pose a high risk of harassment, violence and suicide not because of their sexual orientation, but rather the environmental reactions to homosexuality (e.g. family, peer, and institutional harassment and discrimination) (Savin-Williams and Ream, 2003).
- Each year, approximately 1,500 gay and lesbian teenagers take their own lives. Furthermore, these suicides account for 30% of all completed suicides and only represent about 10% of the population (Vare and Norton, 1998.).

**REFERENCES**


**PRINT FEATURE: NO MORE MASKS (P.18)**

The teenage years are difficult at best. This is a time when your sexual identity is still being shaped. Experimentation and sexual curiosity are commonplace. Society’s views have changed drastically over the last 20 years. This is noticeable in many areas of our culture, but is very evident in TV shows or movies, many of which have at least one gay character. This would seem to imply that it just a regular part of life, another option for a person to explore.

- What are your thoughts on this? Does the media’s portrayal of homosexuals influence your view? Why or Why Not?
- If it is an being so openly accepted as an option for someone to explore their sexual identity in today’s society, what should our reaction be as Christians?
- Why would it be important for someone who is struggling with sexual identity, even as a Christian, continue to attend church and be open to talk about their struggles with a Christian counselor.

**RESOURCES**

Danny Wallace is regarded as one of the leading authorities on the issue of homosexuality as it affects the church today. He is available to speak to churches or youth groups. He and wife Lynn in Atlanta. Hear his full testimony at www.dannywallace.org.

“Parent’s First Kit, Church Edition” available from GPH, item #382371.