

Teaching and pastoring on biblical sexuality

Stuart Parker & Jamie Johnston



Plan for today

1. Biblical teaching – sexuality
2. Discipling young people
3. Being a welcoming church

Stuart's story

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Sexuality – Genesis 2:24

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Sexuality – Matthew 19:3-6

“Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.””

Sexuality – 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

“Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Sexuality – Conclusions

1. Clear – sex is special (just for marriage)
2. Consistent throughout Bible
3. Challenging
 - It is distinctive from our culture
 - We all fall short of God's standards
 - Not an “agree to disagree” matter

5 common revisionist arguments

1. “My gay friend is a wonderful person”
2. “The Bible only prohibits exploitative same-sex relationships”
3. “Like with slavery and segregation, we now see the Bible’s teaching more clearly”
4. “Eating shellfish is no longer wrong, so why can’t we move on from other OT laws?”
5. “History is moving inevitably towards greater individual freedom and equality”

Whether to teach on sexuality

- Pitfalls:
 - Might offend/upset youth and/or parents
 - Could uncover divisions within church family
- Opportunities:
 - Build confidence in the goodness of God's word
 - Model good handling of countercultural scripture
 - Avoidance is not an option!
 - Be clear to be kind
 - Take the middle ground
 - Teach the full counsel of God

Teaching sexuality well

- Teach positive vision for marriage
- Cover associated topics over multiple sessions
- Prepare/train your wider leadership team
- Include testimonies as well as doctrine
- Teach evenly on all sexual conduct
- Give space for discussion and questions
- Make your church welcoming to LGBT people
- Signpost people to helpful resources

Case study – Helen

Helen, a member of your small group, approaches you one day and tells you that she's no longer sure she can accept the traditional teaching on what the Bible says about sexuality. You're aware from previous conversations that her 15 year old son recently came out as gay and no longer attends church. You know that Helen and her husband have found this very hard.

How might you support Helen?

Case study – Helen

- Listen to Helen and help him work through her feelings
- Reassure him that you don't judge her for her son's feelings or decisions
- Signpost Helen to helpful resources/support
- Normalise the experience of disappointed parents

Testimony – Ansunel

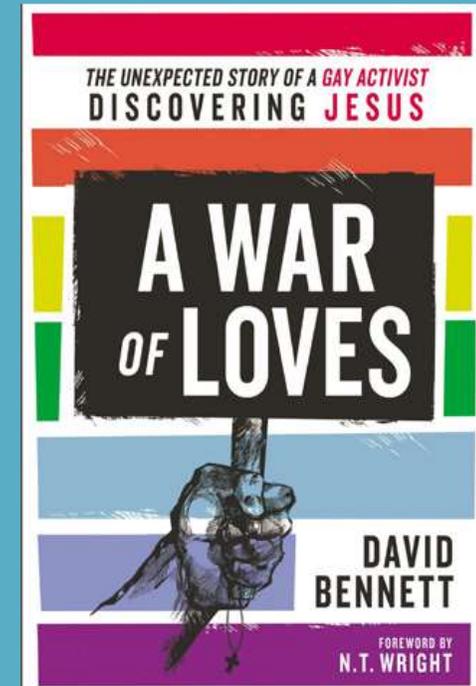
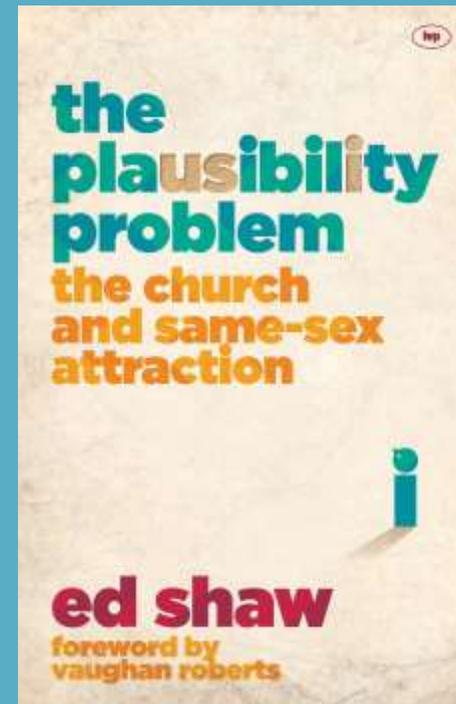
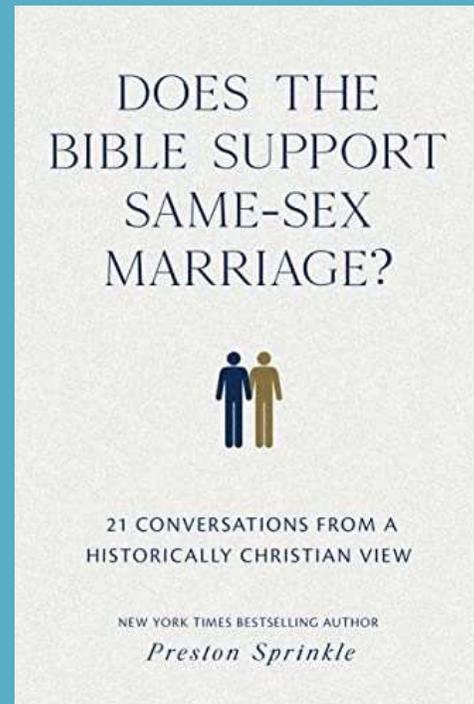
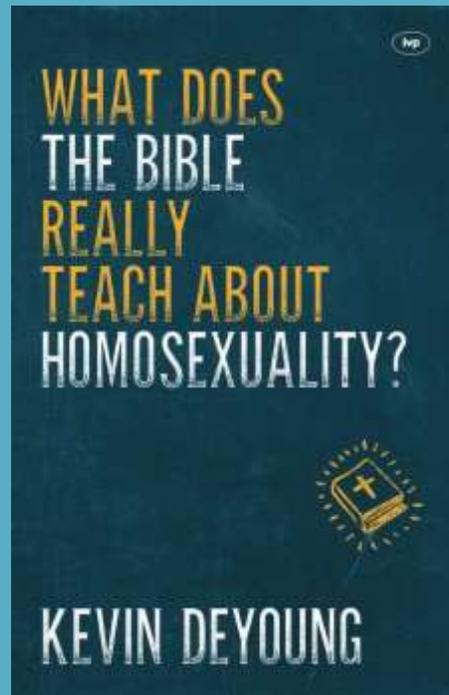


How might you speak truth with compassion to a church member who is receiving lots of encouragement to act on their same-sex attractions?

Testimony – Ansunel

- Support isn't always saying what the other person wants to hear
- It's possible to reassure warmly without condoning the other person's choices

Recommended Reading



Q&A

Refreshments

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Jamie's story

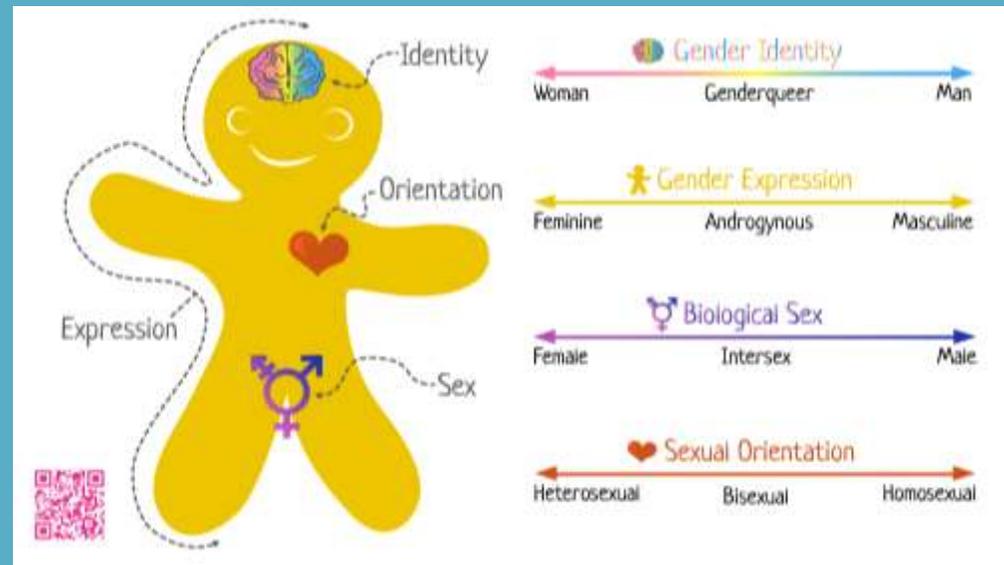
Discussion question

“How would you suggest teaching this topic to young people, especially as they are constantly taught other views at school & online?
(cancel culture etc)”

Disciplining young people

- A. Understand their world
- B. Set the tone
- C. Counter unbiblical ideas
- D. Equip them to think/talk biblically

A. Understand their world



B. Set the tone

- Make it about real people
- Model and welcome authenticity
- Normalise the struggle for sexual purity
- Talk about sexuality/gender routinely
- Make it a safe place
- Show them how to disagree well

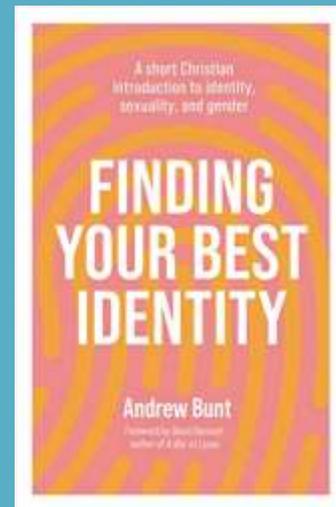
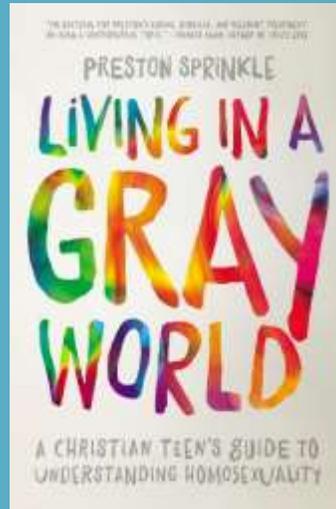


C. Counter unbiblical ideas

- Identify unbiblical ideas
- Normalise the cost of discipleship
- Explain biblical teaching on sexuality
- Teach high view of singleness

D. Equip them to think/talk biblically

- Show them how to understand the Bible
- Model a compassionate tone
- Teach on related subjects like identity
- Invite questions and discussion
- Signpost them to helpful resources
- *"God did not make us to be lonely but He called us to be godly"*



Disciplining young people

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- D. Equip them to think/talk biblically

Case study – Geoff

Geoff, 15, is a member of your youth group. During a study on the subject of identity, Geoff declares that he now wants to be known as “G”, as he’s realised that he’s gender fluid. Everyone else in the group goes silent and looks at you for a lead during an awkward pause.

What do you say?

Case study – Geoff

- Thank Geoff for being open with you and the group
- Look for an opportunity to have a 1-2-1 later
- Avoid being dismissive of Geoff
- Discuss with the group whether they want to study this biblically in a future group meeting
- Recognise that this is a teachable moment for the whole group of how a mature Christian responds to someone coming out
- Decide whether asking Geoff further questions will feel like an interrogation or like someone being positively curious

Useful websites

Lovewise Online A Better Narrative About...
Relationships ▾ Sex ▾ Living Wisely ▾ Search ...

A Christian website for young people aged 13+ with Biblical teaching on relationships, marriage, sex and wise living.

[Our aims, beliefs and values](#) [More about Lovewise](#)

Why can't we just agree that love is love?
The phrase 'love is love' is common, but can be misleading

Who cares if I'm a boy or a girl?
The Bible is very clear, right from the beginning, that God created male and female

Pastoral Papers

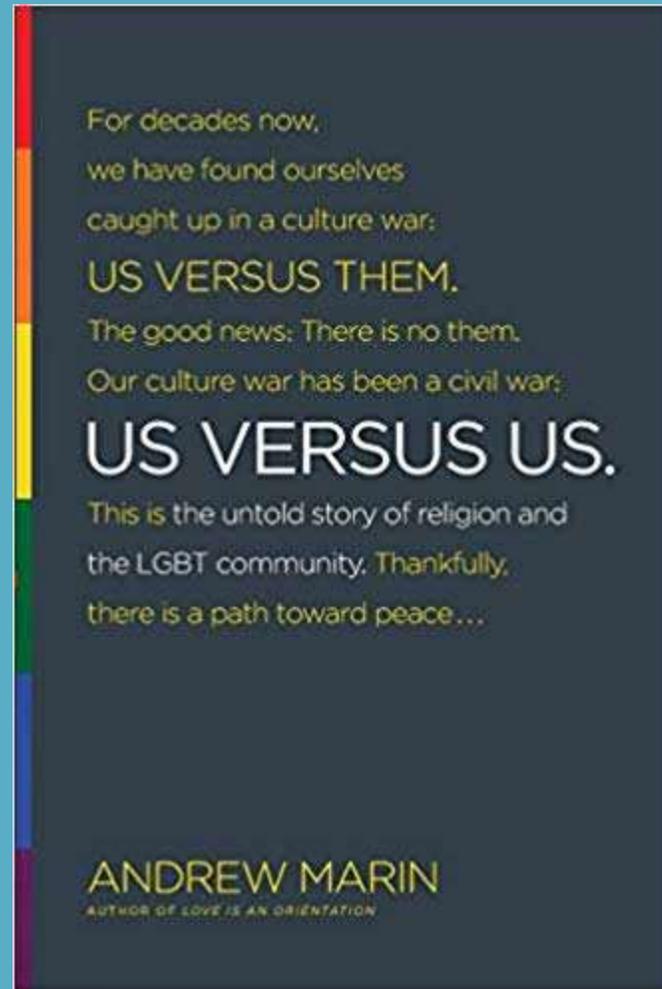
1. Attending a same-sex wedding
2. Why didn't Jesus mention homosexuality?
3. Is same-sex attraction a sin?
4. Was homosexuality the sin of Sodom?
5. 15 reasons people give for affirming same-sex relationships and how to respond to them
- 6. Parenting a gay child**
7. Adult consensual same-sex relationships in biblical times
- 8. What Christian leaders should know about gay teens**
9. Guidance for churches on gay & lesbian people
10. Sex reassignment surgery and hormone therapy
11. Pronouns for transgender people
12. Biblical conversation on transgender people
13. Polyamory
14. Guidance for churches on transgender people
- 15. Challenges faced by parents**
16. Celibate partnerships and committed friendships
- 17. Youth ministry**



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Why LGBT people leave church



Why LGBT people leave church

- 18% didn't feel safe
- 14% felt a relational disconnect with leaders
- 13% felt the church was hypocritical in elevating certain sins over others
- 12% left because people were unwilling to dialogue
- 9% were kicked out of church for being gay
- 3% left primarily because of the church's traditional theology of marriage

Discussion question (pt 1)

“What approach should Christians adopt towards a same sex married couple who start attending church?”



Discussion question (pt 2)

“If a married same-sex couple were to come to faith, should they get divorced and what if they have children?”

Case study (1/3)

Andrew (my son) and Jake have both been coming to our church since the pandemic finished despite the fact that they know that we as a church don't agree with same-sex marriages. They come every Sunday and have formed strong relationships with many in the church. The church has been amazing at loving and accepting them and Jake has found a community of people which, until now, he's never experienced. Jake takes Billy to the parent and toddler group, has helped to set up a new website and produces the newsletter (both under supervision by me).

Case study (2/3)

Before they joined the church, Andrew spoke at length to Chris our pastor saying he wouldn't promote LGBTQ rights or his theology on same-sex attraction and the pastor explained our position and said we would not ask Andrew to do any teaching, leading or up front worship

Case study (3/3)

Andrew has a strong and active faith, worshipping and studying God's Word. He attends a monthly prayer meeting and witnesses at work but has his own theology on same-sex attraction and marriage. Jake has not come to faith yet but he is asking a lot more questions, loves the fellowship at church, and people in the church now go to him to have their hair done and are witnessing to him as he does it. We think it's only a matter of time.

Case study – Robert

Robert, 21, serves with you on the refreshments team at church. One morning as you are setting up, he asks you out of the blue what you think about the Church of England’s “Living in Love and Faith” process. You wonder, from other hints he’s dropped, whether Robert might have questions around his own sexuality or gender.

How would you respond to Robert?

Case study – Robert

- Recognise that Robert may be testing you to see whether you are a safe person to share with
- Focus more on the personal impact of discussions around sexuality rather than the church politics
- Don't go too deep if your time is limited but look to set up another opportunity for an in-depth conversation

Welcoming – Conclusions

1. Improve the whole church's welcome
2. Listen well to the concerns of LGBT people
3. Be a genuine family for single people



Summary

1. Biblical teaching – sexuality
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What does TFT do?



Pastoral Support



Speaking & Teaching



Articles & Resources

Day conference - 29th June (London)



📅 Sat, 29/06/2024 - 10:00

📍 Central London

Friends, Fears & Idols - London Conference

Friendship is meant to be a blessing. Sadly, for many, close relationships can struggle from an over-dependency which ultimately disconnects us from others. This conference will consider the experience and causes of emotional dependency in our relationships, and also how we can seek help from the Lord and one another to grow in wise and loving friendships.

truefreedomtrust.co.uk

Useful websites



THE CENTER FOR
FAITH, SEXUALITY & GENDER

THE CENTER FOR
FAITH, SEXUALITY & GENDER

Pastoral Paper

WRITTEN BY:
LAURIE KRIEG

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10 THINGS I WISH EVERY CHRISTIAN LEADER
KNEW ABOUT GAY TEENS IN THEIR CHURCH

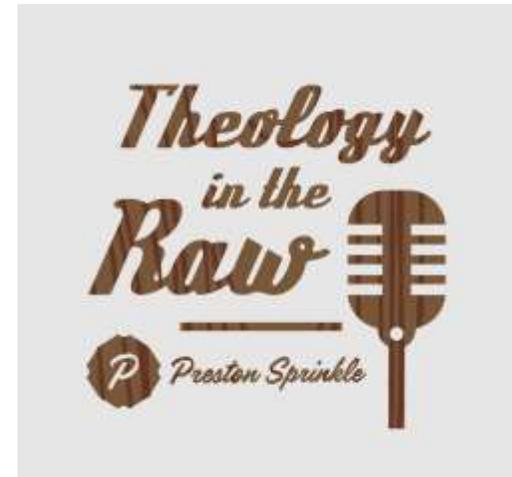
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True
Freedom
Trust

The logo for True Freedom Trust, featuring the text "True Freedom Trust" in a serif font, with a stylized white bird icon above the word "Trust".

Recommended Podcasts



Living Out

Recommended Resources

For Pastors & Leaders
Faith, Sexuality, and Gender: Digital Leaders Forum

A comprehensive course on faith, sexuality, and gender for Christian leaders and pastors taught by Dr. Prason Sprinkle.

[Start Now!](#)



FAITH, SEXUALITY & GENDER
Digital Leaders Forum

For Small Groups
Grace/Truth Small Group Experience

10 conversations that every thoughtful Christian should have about faith, sexuality, and gender.

[Start Now!](#)



GRACE // TRUTH

New podcast series

Youth Leaders' Crash Course

Coming soon on the Living Out Podcast



Q&A