

Segment 2:

The Journey of Loving Same-Gender Attracted People

David, Ron, Justin and Brian's journeys with same-gender attraction have been deeply spiritual ones. Faced with the reality of his same-gender attraction and his faith journey, David asked key spiritual questions about God, "Who is God? Does God love me?" and himself, "Who am I? Can I be loved?" In their journeys, these men are discovering a spacious place that is both free of legalistic striving and invites a robust, costly discipleship.

Such journeys are not traveled in isolation. They are journeys that are impacted and affected by the attitudes, responses and beliefs of others. Our panel shares about the need for safe people and to address issues of fear. Greg reminds us of the need to earn the right to be heard by demonstrating a willingness to serve and be in relationship for the long haul.

Reflection Questions within the screening:

1. *Aha! Moments:*
 - a. What were the key spiritual questions David asked?
 - b. What did Ron learn about friendship and intimacy?
 - c. Can you relate to Brian's turning point?
2. *Homophobia Exists:*
 - a. How have you encountered dismissive and hurtful attitudes toward gay people within the Christian community?
 - b. How can your church community be more proactive in addressing the homophobia?
3. *Love & Service:*
 - a. How can we identify with those who feel excluded?
 - b. What draws a gay person to a church?
 - c. Brian McLaren says, "I haven't found a way to love people that isn't painful." How have you found this to be true?

BIBLICAL ENGAGEMENT:

John 13: 34, 35

Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.

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Ephesians 4: 2, 3

Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Romans 13: 8, 9

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

1 Peter 3: 8, 9

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

Content:

1. Describe the kind of love Christians are called to in these passages. How do these attributes affect how we relate to same-gender attracted people within the Christian community?
2. In what ways is this kind of love costly? What does it ask of us?
3. What does it mean that other commandments are summed up in "Love your neighbor as yourself"?
4. Do you think we have been recognized as disciples of Christ by how we have loved gay people within the church? In what ways has the Christian witness been impacted by the church's treatment of gay people?

Intersect with DVD:

1. Describe the common perceptions Christians have of the faith journey of a same-gender attracted person. Did anything in the DVD challenge these common perceptions? If so, what?
2. What are some of the attitudes that you have encountered among Christians that would lead to a gay person not feeling safe? How can you address that?
3. What do you think is the most important priority for a same-gender attracted person seeking to follow Christ?

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Application:

1. Have your attitudes toward gay people changed in the last ten years? If so, describe what has changed and why?
2. What are, if any, the risks in loving and serving gay people?
3. What risks would you take to love and serve your gay neighbors?
4. In what ways can Christians stand up for justice for gay people and still stay true to their convictions?
5. Where do you think the church will be in ten years in relation to gay people? What is good about that? What makes you nervous about that?
6. Who is someone in your community who is a safe person for gay people?
7. What is one small step your church can take to influence people's attitudes toward gay people?

Optional Activity 1

Watch the bonus interviews of "The Journey of Loving Same-Gender Attracted People" DVD.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What stereotypes of gay people continue to impact how Christians think through the issue of homosexuality?
2. Are there same-gender attracted people in your church? Do they feel safe to disclose this reality trusting that they will be welcomed and cared for? (Note: If your church has more than 50 people there will be those who deal with the reality of some degree of same-gender attraction.)