

AGAPE OR PHOBIA



By Paul Miles

I keep seeing Christians who try to try to talk about their beliefs regarding homosexuality but they get confused over definitions of terms. Many well-meaning Christians are saying things that express good theology, but if we don't clarify our vocabulary, we are likely to sound like hateful homophobes.

What does the label, "homosexual," mean today? Historically, we have always identified a sin with a person who commits the sin. A person who steals is a thief; a person who murders is a murderer, etc. It would follow that a person who engages in homosexual acts would be a homosexual. But that's not what people mean when they say the word today. Recently, society has been saying that if a person is tempted with homosexuality, then he should be labeled a "homosexual."

This seems to be a phenomenon unique to homosexuality.

I saw a video of a man who wanted to be an Army Ranger. So, he bought a uniform and some patches, dressed up like a soldier and went around saying that he was a Ranger. Well, this really upset a lot of people, and rightly so. I mean, it is a lot of work to become an elite soldier and many genuine Rangers have died in the line of duty. Just because you want to be a Ranger doesn't make you a Ranger. It takes work. It takes action.

If someone wants a new Corvette really badly and he finds one abandoned in an alley with the keys in the ignition and he's really tempted to jump in and speed off into the sunset? I would hope we wouldn't judge this man and call him a "thief" just because he was tempted. He must commit the deed before he is rightfully a "thief." Actions are usually what cause labels, whether they are honorable, like 'Ranger' or dishonorable, like 'thief.'

This doesn't seem to be the case with the label of "homosexual," though. Someone is called a "homosexual" simply because he faces a certain temptation, whether or not he actually commits the act. It is widely believed that someone is a homosexual from birth, or even from the womb. Now, there are some well-intended Christians out there who are trying to argue about whether or not people "are born that way" or not.¹ Usually, they just end up sounding homophobic and pushing people away. Really, the battle is lost from the beginning, because the Christian has already conceded to label someone a homosexual because of his temptation. If that's the case, if the word, "homosexual," means someone who is tempted with homosexuality, then God Himself was a homosexual. Shocking, right?

When Christ came to earth, he was tempted in every way. Because of this, He is able to serve as the High Priest who has gone through every test and was and is victorious. He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses because of this (Heb 4:15). Had there been a sin that He hadn't been tempted with, then any of us who had fallen to that sin could say, "Well, Christ never had to deal with it, so who's to say He wouldn't have done the same thing I did?" Such is not the case, though. He was tempted in every manner - including homosexuality. The Christian religion is unique in that our God can actually relate to people being tempted with homosexuality (as well as with any other sin).

Before we heterosexual Christians get on our high horses and look down upon others whose struggles differ from our own, it would do us good to remember that we have our struggles, too, and furthermore, the only reason we can be victorious over our struggles is that Christ Himself went through them and is able to intercede on our behalf because of His triumph over sin and death. As noted in [another article](#), the Christian life can be summed up with two phrases from the Bible, "...without Me [Jesus], you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil 4:13).

Let's celebrate Christ's victory over homosexuality by extending love to others and remembering that Christ died for all sins, not just ours. Let's choose *agape* over *phobia*.



¹ Check out the Bold Grace article on the matter [here](#).

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info@boldgrace.org

Allen, TX and Lviv, Ukraine

CONTACT INFORMATION

info@boldgrace.org

410 N Bonham Dr, Allen, TX 75013

214-450-7706