

Fr. Perozich comments –

“Affirmation of same-sex behaviors and false sexual identities is not accompaniment; it is abandonment. Genuine pastoral care for LGBTQ-identified persons is to meet them where they are, love and accept them, and accompany them to Jesus, who is full of grace and truth.” – Amy E. Hamilton

In 1996 at my parish a man came to me asking for help dealing with same sex attraction (SSA). He mentioned that there was no Courage group in San Diego, and asked if we could start one.

At that time there were at least 1/2 dozen parishes affirming homosexuality, but none offering chastity.

People with SSA were not accompanied to Jesus. They were abandoned.

This abandonment is magnified by some in the synod on synodality.

Amy Hamilton lays it out perfectly. When someone comes to us with a hunger for real bread, we cannot give them stones.

When someone is wounded and bleeding, we Christians cannot just walk by when we have the remedy, Jesus Christ who patiently guides the suffering to health, lifting them again when they fall, and gently encouraging them with love.

My Father Gives Me Bread: What the LGBTQ+ community needs from the Church

Affirmation of same-sex behaviors and false sexual identities is not accompaniment; it is abandonment. Genuine pastoral care for LGBTQ-identified persons is to meet them where they are, love and accept them, and accompany them to Jesus, who is full of grace and truth.

[October 4, 2024 Amy E. Hamilton](#)



(Image: us.fotolia.com)

Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him? ~Matthew 7:9–11

“If it’s wrong, You’ll have to show me another way, because I just can’t see it.” At nineteen years old, I whispered this prayer to God, closed my Bible, and turned my face away. Amid my experiences with lesbian relationships, I was **questioning Christian teaching about same-sex sexual behavior**. Many Christian leaders—from Catholic Synod participants to evangelical megachurch pastors—are now posing comparable questions. But are all inquiries into settled matters made in good faith? Too

often, we ask because we don't like the answer already given. Our "questions" are posed as a means to demand a different one.

I first experienced same-sex attraction during a youth group meeting in a Baptist church. I was sitting on the floor with my back against the couch. Innocently, one of our leaders, a young married woman, began playing with my waist-length hair. A rush of feelings welled up from deep within me. I was confused as my emotions surged toward her. These feelings were shocking and unbidden, yet forceful and compelling. At twelve years old, I could not have known that the conflict between my sexuality and my faith would become the deepest and most intense battle of my life.

Though the etiology of same-sex attraction (SSA) is not always clear, I connect mine to two adverse childhood experiences—a pair of deep wounds. First, I was separated from my birth family as an infant. Though my adoptive parents were kind and loving, this profound rupture left a "primal wound." I longed for my birth mother from my earliest recollections and was drawn to any woman who showed me nurture or kindness. Second, at age ten, I was repeatedly sexually abused by an uncle over the course of an extended summer vacation. These are the "twin tracks" laid in my early life that profoundly affected my overall development, sexual and otherwise.

When same-sex attraction began emerging two years later, I was mortified and ashamed and did my best to bury those feelings. By high school, I was confused, hurting, and thinking of suicide—a [common story](#) that has [not improved over time](#), even as school-based and societal "welcoming" efforts surge. **The wounds that had been quietly festering were now openly bleeding.** At fifteen, I wore a tuxedo to our school dance, sporting newly cropped hair and wishing I could take a girl as my date. With this gender-bending debut, my struggles officially erupted for all to see. The entire school concluded that I was gay. Worried that they might well be right, I made a plan to get a boyfriend and sleep with him to prove it wasn't true. This

desperate and misguided strategy ended with predictable results: awful experiences, guilt, and still more shame. I lost all hope. Consistent with [data to the present day](#), my teenage sexual activity made me more suicidal than ever.

But in this most desperate of times, God's love broke through. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and by His mercies, that included me. Eleven days shy of my sixteenth birthday, **I had a genuine conversion and wanted to follow Christ wherever He led. I had never been so happy. Jesus loved me, and He was going to change my life. I was a [new creation](#)—“old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”** Because I was now in Christ, I thought that my same-sex attraction and my related problems would be “done away with”—those things were gone. Except, of course, they weren't. What the Scripture actually says is that **a process of becoming a new creation has begun.** My attractions and wounds were still there, waiting to be dealt with. And I didn't know how to do anything but suppress them. I certainly didn't know how to bring them to the Lord.

In college, after years of struggling alone, I gave in. I walked away from God and straight into the arms of a woman. I came out and began building my life around my lesbian identity. I had a girlfriend, and I felt happy—indeed “there is pleasure in sin for a season.” And as with the prodigal son, my Father let me go. He did not lie to me. He did not say that I could have the joys of living in His house and the pleasures of the far country at the same time. So I left His house, and I traveled far.

Walking away from God was a painful but conscious move—I knew the Christian teaching I was rejecting was unambiguous. Evading a conscience is difficult, though. Deep down I knew what I was doing was immoral. While I had never heard the Natural Law described, I knew instinctively that I was violating something fundamental. My body was not designed for the sexual activity I

was engaging in—strong desire and pleasure notwithstanding. But I did not want to repent and steeled myself against conviction, defending my actions. I hadn't chosen to experience such attractions; indeed, they felt "natural" to me.

Was I born this way? This was 1989, and the search for the "gay gene" was intensifying. I resorted to arguing that I was, but I did not really believe it; such was thin but easy cover. At the time, I did not know that the [increased prevalence of adverse childhood experiences](#), especially sexual abuse, among those who experience same-sex attraction and engage in homosexual behavior, was and would continue to be well established in the research. Psychology has always had to admit that complex interactions of genetics, environment, and experience must play a role, and impressive large-scale studies in recent years have produced definitive evidence that sexual orientation is [not genetically pre-determined](#) nor even [primarily a heritable attribute](#). Even if such inclinations had been inborn, how would that remove my responsibility for evaluating them morally and exercising my will in light of God's truth? But I was enjoying myself, and I did not want to think of such things. I kept constructing my life around my lesbian identity.

During this time, I began to search for my birth mother in earnest, eventually obtaining a court order to unseal my adoption records. The night before I was to present it at the state capital, I was out at some lesbian bars with my friends. As we strolled through downtown Austin, I exuberantly and defiantly proclaimed: "I love this life, and nothing will ever make me give it up!" The next morning, a state clerk handed me my original birth certificate. My hands trembled as I opened the envelope that would reveal my mother's name. Finally, I could find her.

For brevity's sake, I must skip to the end. I did not receive the warm welcome that I had been dreaming of. Far from being glad to hear from me, my beautiful mother admitted that she had dreaded the day. Woefully unprepared for her rejection, the pain

of it shocked me. For days, I cried from the moment I woke up until sleep overtook me at night. And after about a week of such days, I started to realize that these **tears weren't blurring my vision; they were clearing it. Like the prodigal son, I was coming to my senses.**

For the first time in many months, I had a conversation with God that went something like this: **"God, I don't know how I got here. But I can't live without You. And if there's any way You can bring me home, bring me home."** I had to **return to the Father's house.** And just as in the parable, my Father was running to meet me.

My feelings, however, remained unchanged. I did not want to leave my lesbian life, yet I knew Jesus was calling me to lay that down. I was deeply conflicted and felt at an impasse. "I am a lesbian. If I am gay, **how does one repent from who they are?**" As I wrestled with this question, I providentially happened upon a television program on gay rights. Among the mainly gay-affirming messages, there was a brief portrayal of Christians who were leaving homosexuality behind to follow Christ. I was shocked. I had never heard of anyone like this. Unsurprisingly, they were being portrayed as fools. The interviewer grew impatient with one woman as she admitted her continued struggle: "Come on, all this God stuff, tell us the truth. **Right now, if you could choose, who would you choose? Would you choose to be with a man or a woman?**" Her reply? **"I choose Jesus."**

And with those words, light streamed into my soul. I thought, "I can do that. That's what I can do. I choose Jesus. Because I cannot say that I would choose a man. One hundred percent of me would choose a woman. But I can choose to follow Christ in obedience. **My sexual feelings do not have to define me. I choose Jesus."**

Thus I surrendered my sexuality to God and focused on following Him. In doing so, I never thought my attractions

would even lessen in degree, and I fully expected to be single, celibate, and perhaps struggling with longings, for the rest of my mortal life. But I was willing to do it, because I knew Who was asking: “Lord, to whom else shall we go? You have the words of life.”

In those early days, **my battle with temptation truly was fierce and felt constant.** I had never really struggled with lust before, but now I did. I honestly didn’t think I was going to make it, and my determination to walk a different path was a white-knuckled one. **In desperation, I began meditating on Jesus and the temptations in the desert.** I contemplated how, after forty days, Jesus had legitimate hunger; however, He did not wrongly use His power to meet His needs. He refused to turn stones into bread. And it was after He resisted Satan’s offers that the ministry of the angels came. **I called this to mind often as I struggled to wait on God.**

My repentance was still fresh when the biggest temptation yet arrived in the mail—a card from my ex-girlfriend. Of course, she would come back into my life now. “I’m being kicked while I’m down,” I told a friend, “here I am trying to follow Christ, and this is the one woman I can’t resist.” I finished my rant by declaring, “But I’m not going to do it. **I will not turn these stones into bread.**”

And as I spoke those words, I closed the card. I had been so quick to open to its message, I hadn’t paid attention to the cover. There on the front was a single image—a close up picture of a pile of stones. The photo title on the back read: “Stones on a beach.” **The divine message could not have been clearer: I know you are hungry. This is not bread. My hunger was legitimate; satisfying it through a same-sex relationship was not. I was going to have to wait on God and trust Him to give me bread in His time.** After all, it was Jesus who said, “What father among you, if his child asks for bread, would give him a stone?”

Stones are neither nutritive nor designed for digestion. Same-sex sexual relationships are neither unitive nor complementary and can never be fruitful. I had a sexual appetite for things that could not fulfill God's design or intentions for my female body. Just as I was not designed to eat stones, I was not designed for same-sex relations. God did not create me to be "gay." Despite the tenacity of my same-sex attraction, I am not a third category of human, nor are my body and reproductive system differently ordered. In my sexuality, **my Father did not say that stones would serve as bread for me. He wouldn't bend the Natural Law for me, but He would help me live in harmony with it.** God asked me to trust Him because He is good, and only within His will can I flourish and be free.

During my graduate studies, I found a faithful evangelical church and was blessed with spiritually mature mentors who prayed for me. When they found out I had been lesbian-identified and still experienced same-sex attraction, **they never labeled me with a sexual identity.** They never said, "Amy is gay." How does the Good Shepherd call us? He calls us by name. They honored me by doing the same.

For more than ten years, they held me in the bosom of their friendship and prayers. I matured as a disciple as they walked alongside me, affirming my identity in Christ, helping me up after each fall and pointing me to Jesus each step of the way. I still walk in sweet fellowship with these wonderful mentors, and they pray for me to this day.

Over the course of this decade, my attractions to women actually lessened. As I turned thirty, I even began to experience an awakening towards men. But I never sought or expected this: my orientation seemed fixed to me, and the culture had led me to believe that this was a characteristic that never changed. I later learned how much the narrative of **immutability** was utilized for political expedience. The major gay rights organizations had

campaigned effectively to deny the possibility of change, and to create **social norms against transformation**. Despite their efforts, **human sexuality remains fluid**. **The potential for change in one's desires is real, and countless studies and testimonies demonstrate that truth.**

To my surprise, I married at age thirty-seven and was blessed with two children. However, had I remained single as I always thought I would, I would have been more than content. I chose Jesus, and indeed, He is more than enough. My joy and life's fulfillment do not come from my sexuality or my marital state, but from my Creator and being in harmony with His will.

As I have **written** before, I am deeply grateful that there is concern for greater pastoral accompaniment for those struggling with their sexuality. But I am gravely **concerned** by those whose response to that struggle is to **advocate for capitulation to sin**. In the name of welcome and inclusion, too many preach that Christian moral teaching has somehow missed the mark for millennia. The reality is that God's commands are gifts of love, and He only forbids that which harms us. What motivates this disastrous compromise on something not only attested throughout Church teaching but also declared in the theology of the body? Perhaps the biggest factor is a false compassion and misguided (and misnamed) mercy.

For decades, those who identify as sexual minorities have been known to suffer negative mental and physical health disparities compared with heterosexuals. **The scapegoat for these disparities has long been the burden of "minority stress" emanating from both society's rejection and the Church's disapproval. Our compassion for those who suffer misleads us.** "If only same-sex relationships were okay, then these people would be okay. If we provide enough affirmation and welcome, these people will suffer no more." The truth is that record-high societal acceptance, legalized same-sex marriage, and a massive cultural shift of power have not alleviated these disparities, as **study after study** shows.

Along with decades of [data](#) from the [Netherlands](#), the first country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage, recent [population-based studies in the U.S.](#) tell the same story: increasing societal affirmation does not eliminate the mental and physical health gaps between heterosexuals and those who identify themselves as lesbian or gay. In Australia, four waves of population-based surveys of young women in the 2010s yielded [similar results](#). The authors expressed their dismay and surprise that despite the study being conducted at a time in which “acceptance of same-sex sexuality was relatively high,” the data showed that **“the adoption of a nonheterosexual identity was still associated with a large and meaningful elevation in psychological distress.”**

Over three decades, across three generations, on three different continents, there has been [no measurable change](#). Why? Because there is a “law written on the heart,” a Natural Law, and alternative sexualities violate that law. Our bodies were not made for this; hence, we were not made for this. Technological advances can create buffers and political “progress” can offer novel rights. `Neither can change the simple reality of the` [harmfulness](#) and [barrenness](#) of nonheterosexual sex.

When confronted with this truth, too many progressives—both inside and outside the church—double down on their errors. The [Australian researchers](#) propose that alleviating distress will require “reforming heteronormative social structures” and “[d]ismantling the social structures that continue to produce these disparities” in order “to support the mental health and well-being of young women.” But **God’s created order and design is not an oppressive “social structure” made by human hands. Those who want to change Christian teaching in order to alleviate the distress of the LGBTQ+-identified align themselves with this worldly wisdom. To do so, they have no choice but to defy God and attempt to dismantle reality itself.** Thus, they are doomed to fail and will exacerbate

the very suffering they claim to heal. What we need now is a compassionate response to the LGBTQ community that is also truthful about the human person and human sexuality.

Faithful pastors, priests, and prelates: Affirmation of same-sex behaviors and false sexual identities is not accompaniment; it is abandonment. Genuine pastoral care for LGBTQ-identified persons is to meet them where they are, love and accept them, and accompany them to Jesus, who is full of grace and truth. Remember that you offer bread in the midst of a culture that has normalized eating stones.

What man among you, if his son asks for bread, would give him a stone?

A good father will not give his child a stone. A good father gives bread. As shepherds of His flock, I beg you, do the same.

(Editor's note: This essay was first posted on the "What We Need Now" Substack and is published here with kind permission of the author.)

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