

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

BORN THAT WAY

By Heath Rogers

One of the arguments set forth by the pro-homosexual agenda is that people are born with a genetic disposition or inclination to be attracted to members of the same sex. We are told that acting out on this attraction is only natural for such people. Therefore, homosexuality cannot be viewed as something that is perverted, against the norm, or unnatural; and it certainly cannot be condemned as a sin. “They can’t help it. They were born that way.”

The Bible has an answer to this argument. Consider Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians: **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God”** (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Contained in this passage is a list of sinful activities which will keep an individual from entering Heaven. Can individuals be exempted from this condemnation because they have been born with a genetic disposition towards homosexuality? The answer to this question is seen in applying the same argument to other sins in the passage.

What about the husband who habitually cheats on his wife? Some scientists claim that as man evolved, the genes that survived came from men who purposefully tried to pass on their genetic material to as many offspring as possible (they aggressively tried to mate with as many women as possible). Therefore, today’s man is “hardwired” to cheat. Using the reasoning of the pro-homosexual agenda, shouldn’t the sin of adultery also be tolerated? Shouldn’t wives learn to understand that this is the way men are today? Where is the tolerance and acceptance for the philanderer and the adulterer? He was born that way.

Drunkenness is condemned in the above passage. What if a person has a genetic disposition towards addictive behavior? They can’t help it. Once they are exposed to an addictive substance (alcohol, nicotine, narcotics, etc.) or activity (gambling, pornography, etc.) they are helplessly enslaved and should be given a “free pass.” If not, why not?

There is more than genetics at play in this discussion. Scientists tell us that an individual’s behavior is also influenced by his surroundings. What if a person was raised by a thief, a covetous person, an extortioner, or a reviler (someone who is abusive in their talk) and they turned out to be a thief or a reviler? It isn’t their fault. They learned this behavior from their role models. Like father, like son. Like mother, like daughter. We don’t expect the apple to fall far from the tree, so why should we insist that these people change?

If “born that way” applies to one sin in this passage, wouldn’t it apply to all of them? I believe it should, but the truth is that this argument does not apply to any of these sins.

These individuals were taught to repent of these sins. Notice what Paul goes on to say about these individuals. **“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God”** (1 Cor. 6:11). These fornicators, idolaters, and adulterers stopped their sinful behavior. The drunkards, thieves, extortioners, and revilers stopped their sinful behavior. The homosexuals and sodomites also stopped their sinful behavior.

Was it wrong for Paul to insist they stop their sinful behavior? Not at all. Repentance has always been a prerequisite for baptism and a condition for salvation (Acts 2:38; 8:22; 26:18-20; Lk. 3:7-9; Ezek. 18:30-32). While it may be socially unacceptable, it is not immoral or inappropriate for us to call upon homosexuals to repent (to stop practicing homosexuality) in order to be saved.

Sins are habit forming. I am not so naive to believe that once the homosexuals in Corinth were saved they never had to struggle with these temptations again. These Christians still had desires and battles with these sins. Is it right to expect a person to have to fight these battles and abstain from such activities? Yes, it is. When Jesus calls us to be His disciples, He says we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Matt. 16:24). The ongoing battle with an addictive behavior (fornication, drunkenness, stealing, reviling, or even homosexuality) is a cross that such a Christian has to bear if they are going to follow the Lord. Every Christian has a cross to bear, regardless of our past.

The beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ is seen, not only in its power to save sinners, but also in its ability to reform sinners. There is an initial sanctification and justification that takes place in the washing of baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21). However, there is also an ongoing sanctification that takes place as we learn to put off the old man and put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-11). Sinful conduct must stop, regardless of where it may have come from (genetics or learned behavior). The struggle remains, but with the Lord's help it becomes easier as we learn to put on the new man who is made in the image of Christ. God has not given the Christian a license to continue in sin, but a way to escape temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). We are responsible for taking that way of escape, regardless of the nature of our temptations.

What is the Christian to do with the "Born That Way" argument? This argument is really an effort to lay man's sin at God's feet. If a person was born a homosexual, then God made them that way. It is His fault. Therefore, God would be unrighteous and unjust to condemn homosexuals. If God can't condemn homosexuals, who are Christians to try to do so?

You see, "Born That Way" isn't really about "how" one comes to be a homosexual. It is about the forceful acceptance of homosexuality.

The Bible clearly answers the "Born That Way" argument. Stand firm, Christian. ■

CAREFUL WITH THE WORD MIRACLE!

By Gardner Hall

I see increasing numbers of references among disciples of Christ referring to events in their lives as miraculous, or even asking for a miracle. Perhaps it's time for a reminder that we don't live in the miraculous age. That fact almost used to be taken for granted in congregations I know and perhaps for that reason many have neglected teaching on it. Therefore, we increasingly see loose usage of the word, perhaps as a result of the influence of postmodernism and its emphasis on feelings over reason.

By definition, a miracle involves an act that violates the laws of nature, in many cases the instant healing of permanent and visible defects (Jn. 11; Acts 3:2; 13; Jn. 9, etc.). Sometimes miracles were supernatural signs such as walking on the water, turning water to wine, feeding the 5,000, etc.

What is marvelous is not necessarily a miracle. The design of our body and especially our brain with the amazing ability to fight disease, give birth, and invent medicines is a work of God that shows His infinite intelligence. But the wonderful function of our bodies isn't a miracle in the biblical sense.

The danger in applying the term "*miracle*" to what is not truly miraculous is a cheapening of the concept. If we apply the word to gradually getting better from an illness or to having a tumor shrink with treatment, unbelievers will begin to see "*miracles*" as no big deal, but something that commonly happens among all people as well as believers. We don't want to cheapen the impact of the true miracles of Jesus and the apostles! Therefore, let's be discreet and avoid applying that word loosely. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250