

## Divine Appointments, Week 5: Good News for the LGBTQ+ Community

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**Moralism:** an **emphasis** on proper moral behavior to the exclusion of genuine faith.

We're all sinners in need of God's forgiveness and grace. Moralism has **no** power to justify or sanctify a sinner. We're saved by grace, through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8), not by keeping a moral code, however **biblical** that code may be.

**To share the gospel with anyone from the LGBTQ+ community, we want to become familiar with some concepts we hope will be of help:**

### 1. Let Christ Alone Empower You.

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." **Acts 1:8***

It can be intimidating to share the gospel with someone who has been marginalized because of how they may have been mistreated in the past. As with anyone we share the gospel with, we fear how they may perceive us, and we may be tempted to think they'd never listen. We not only have to know the gospel, we have to believe the gospel – and display the gospel in how we live! And, we have to discern the timing of the gospel, too. When we rely on Christ to be the power source, he provides us exactly what we need to be his witnesses.

### 2. Don't Downplay Who Jesus is to You!

Ask the person (family member or friend) to share their story with you. Ask them to help you understand how that became a part of their identity. Ask if they've experienced any hurdles or setbacks in their journey. Part of loving people is getting to know them. As you do this, ask if you can tell them how you view your identity in Christ. We want to magnify the one who brings us to God. Jesus came for us as sinners of all kinds, and we have to keep that message central. Jesus is the hope for everyone, no matter how the fall shows itself in our lives.

### 3. Share the compassion AND conviction of Christ.

*"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." **Matthew 9:36***

We've got to maintain both compassion for people and conviction about truth the way Jesus did, then lovingly communicate the truth. As someone once said, the good news is only good if it arrives in time. If we only spend all our time being compassionate, we might never get around to sharing the truth that saves.

We need to practice communicating how our lives have been transformed by the truth and power of the gospel (think about three specific ways right now and share one with someone sitting next to you. Remember, our current or past sin isn't what keeps us from being saved – refusing to place our trust in Christ is!

Love stripped of compassion isn't love – it's hypocrisy: a serious sin and not what Christ's love is all about. Jesus was unstained by sin, yet he had remarkable compassion for sinners. As we

reach out to the unsaved, we reach out to them with the same heart as Jesus. What is more heartbreaking than for a person made in God's image to remain lost in sin and forever separated from the love of God? We need to ask God to help us see those in the LGBTQ+ community as He does: with conviction and compassion.

#### 4. Make Our Church a Desirable Refuge

We need to remember that the LGBTQ+ community is a refuge from the rejection and inner turmoil many LGBTQ+ people experience among the general population. They often find a place where they're accepted and embraced in the LGBTQ+ community.

As we build relationships with LGBTQ+ friends and invite them into our lives, they'll hopefully see a community that surpasses anything they've experienced elsewhere or could even imagine!

#### Watch the video – [Rosario Butterfield's story](#)

We've got to be a faith community that's constantly growing in our ability to extend grace to the LGBTQ+ community and especially our brothers and sisters in Christ with same-sex attraction.

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*

**John 13:34-35**

As we build relationships with LGBTQ+ friends, invite them into your life to enjoy them, let them enjoy you, to hear them, and share with them, and to eventually explain the gospel, but also to let them see the gospel portrayed through the life of our church.

#### 5. Anticipate Questions and Prepare Answers"

*"but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect" 1 Peter 3:15*

There are always objections to the gospel many of us don't feel fully equipped to answer. But God calls us to give a defense for our hope in Jesus ([1 Pet. 3:15](#)). There are also going to be specific questions about LGBTQ+ related issues that we need to know – and be ready to answer, such as these:

- Why do you believe some verses in the OT and ignore others?
- Why did God make me gay if he condemns it as a sin?
- Why is it wrong for two loving people to be in a committed relationship
- Do I have to become straight to become a Christian?
- Why didn't Jesus say anything about homosexuality?
- Can I become a gay Christian?

Part of our role as Jesus' ambassadors is to work through questions like these and show that God's Word has answers. If you're unsure how to respond, don't be afraid to say, "That's a really important question and I need to look into that. Can we meet up and talk about this?"

## **6. Be patient.**

Have patience with others. We don't always develop friendships, share the gospel, and see them immediately turn to Jesus. Impatience can tempt us to give up quickly when we don't see results. But people are people, not projects. View yourself as part of God's means to help them see and hear the gospel.

What do we know about love? It's patient ([1 Cor. 13:4](#)). Show love by entering the relationship for the long haul.

## **7. Never underestimate Jesus' power to save and transform!**

The gospel is God's power for salvation ([Rom. 1:16-17](#)). The good news for anyone in the LGBTQ+ community is the same good news for everyone else.

So don't doubt the power of Christ. Pray for soft hearts, open doors, and lasting fruit. Trust in God's wisdom and power, not your own. Remember that every believer is a living miracle. If Jesus can save you, he can save anyone—including someone in the LGBTQ+ community who needs you to be their friend.