

Your Child Says, “I’m Gay”

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“I think I’m gay.” Ed and Marie felt their hearts stop for an instant as everything around them seemed to stand still. It was like the shock of hearing that someone close to you has suddenly died. As they heard these words from their oldest son, Mark, twenty years old and home from college on spring break, Ed and Marie wondered whether this was also a kind of death for them—the death of their hopes and dreams for Mark, and the death of a life that had seemed safe and familiar.

Emma belonged to her local high school’s Gay-Straight Alliance chapter, but she didn’t tell her parents. When one of her friends let it slip, her parents confronted her. Then Emma exploded in defensiveness and blurted out, “I’m a lesbian, okay?”

Mark’s and Emma’s parents were in shock. They didn’t know; they didn’t realize. Now all sorts of questions flooded their minds. *Was this something they were responsible for? What will this mean for their children’s future? Will they ever change? How will they deal with their “companions” if they wanted to spend the holidays with them? What would their friends at church say? What would grandparents and other family members say? Worse yet, what would they think—about Mark and Emma and about them as parents?* They wanted to ask questions. They wanted to tell their children they loved them. They wanted to convince their children that they were not what they thought they were. But Mark’s and Emma’s parents found themselves saying very little. The best they could do was try to take in their child’s words: “I think I’m gay.”

If you are a mother or father like these parents, you know the shock of such an admission. Or maybe you are a parent who suspects your son or daughter might have same-sex attraction (SSA) leanings. Maybe you have discovered gay pornography on your child’s computer or smartphone. How do you respond? Not just in the moment, but after the shock begins to wear off and you try to move forward. What if you don’t have words to describe the pain or know what to say to your child?

No Easy Answers

Your first instinct may be to find refuge in denial or anger. You may want to run from the situation, or you may find yourself angry—either at your child or at God. This is not what you expected in your life! You brought your child up in the church, as a follower of Jesus Christ. He attended church with you, involved himself in youth group, showed signs of spiritual growth. And now this. Who has wounded you the most, your child or God?

This is an understandable reaction. There are no easy answers to the “bombshells” that explode unexpectedly in your life. The first thing to do in the midst of your confusion is grab an anchor. That anchor is God—the One who promises that his love endures forever during all the changes. No matter how you may feel about him right now, go to him and pour out your troubles to him. Remember what God says to us when we encounter deep waters and believe that he will get you through this. “For I am the LORD your God who