

WHEN YOUR CHILD SAYS “I’M GAY”

It’s an announcement parents are almost never prepared for—one of those things we think could never happen to us. But Christians are not exempt from the effects of living in a sinful world, and more parents are confronted by this challenging situation than you might expect. Doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, mechanics, accountants, farmers—parents from all walks of life have had to face it. I know. I am a minister’s wife, and eight years ago I learned my youngest son is gay. Could it happen to you? It’s possible. How will you react if it does? I hope the following suggestions will help you survive and respond in a loving and redemptive way. Realize you’re not alone. Many other Christian parents have gone through the same experience.

- Reassure your child that you love him/her. That’s all you need to say. You want to be able to keep a loving relationship with your child, and almost anything else you say in those first terrible moments is not likely to be helpful.
- Remember that God loves you and your child. Even though He may seem far away, He is right there beside you, feeling all your pain, hurting with you. Talk to Him Tell Him exactly how you feel. Share all your perplexities. He will become more real to you through your sorrow.
- Find someone to talk to—a good friend, a doctor, a pastor or, even better, someone who has been through the same experience. Sadly, there are many good people who are so bound by their prejudices that they are not able to understand. If you cannot find anyone close to you, or if your emotions are too fragile to stand the possibility of a rebuff, talk to a Christian counselor. It’s very important to talk through your feelings with someone who will listen sympathetically.
- Read widely, prayerfully, and critically on this subject. Ask God to help you sift through extreme views on all sides of this issue and guide you to a clear and compassionate understanding.
- Try to understand that your child has already spent many years working through his/her confusion and pain. Be patient with your child and be patient with yourself. It will undoubtedly take a long time to learn to cope with this situation successfully. Your child will make mistakes and you will, too. But love and a sincere desire to understand each other will cover a multitude of mistakes.