Developing a Healthy View of Sexuality in Your Kids

Guest: Dr. Al Mohler
From the series: Desire and Deceit
Air date: September 25, 2009

Bob: How should we respond to those who promote and advocate a homosexual agenda in this culture? Dr. Al Mohler says before you answer that there is a more important question to answer.

Dr. Mohler: Does the gospel define us? This is where Christians have to be really careful because the sin of moralism is right there beside us. The false gospel of moralism is right there. There are an awful lot of Christians who would want to say to homosexuals “just stop that,” “just don’t do that.” That doesn’t affect the heart first of all. It’s a false gospel. The gospel isn’t about stopping sinning. The gospel is about the grace and mercy of God in Christ. It’s about being justified by faith in Christ alone.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Friday, September 25th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife Dennis Rainey and I’m Bob Lepine. Just how should our understanding of the gospel influence our understanding of homosexuality? We are going to talk about that today with Dr. Al Mohler.

Welcome to FamilyLife Today thanks for joining us. We’ve been talking this week about the whole issue of sexual tolerance and what is going on in our culture and how we live as faithful followers of Christ in a culture that has abandoned much of the Christian morality when it comes to sexuality. I’m just curious as you’ve seen states falling one by one into the pattern of legalizing same sex marriage do you look at the landscape and think this is just where we are headed and we might as well get used to it.

Dennis: Yes, I do. In fact I think this battle is coming to your home if it hasn’t already in numerous ways not only as you face your own convictions as a man or woman, husband or wife, but as you raise your children and as you have family members who may profess to be homosexual.

Bob: So this may be the new normal for us?

Dennis: I hate to say that Bob because I always believe with the community of faith and because of the gospel and the power of a spiritual reformation that can occur that there is hope that we might turn as a nation and as individuals begin to reject what is the old immorality. I think in the mean time what we have to be able to do is to speak into it in relevant terms and with a loving spirit while still having convictions and believing in the biblical standard. With us to help us do that is Dr. Al Mohler who joins us again on FamilyLife Today. Al welcome back.
**Dr. Mohler:** It is great to be with you.

**Dennis:** Al has written a book called *Desire and Deceit*. As many of our listeners know Al is no stranger to them. He is the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Did I pronounce Louisville correctly there Dr?

**Dr. Mohler:** You got it just right.

**Dennis:** I thought I did. He and his wife have two children and live right there in Kentucky. This book is about the whole issue of sexual tolerance. I want to ask you a general question to begin with. Back to what Bob was asking about as you watch what is happening and the issue of homosexuality is brought to us on the evening news, newspapers, the internet, and in programming how are Christians basically supposed to respond? What should be our attitude?

**Dr. Mohler:** I think we need in humility to try to determine whether or not God has spoken to these things. On the issue of sexuality and marriage and all the rest it is abundantly clear God has. At that point we really have a question of obedience or disobedience.

**Dennis:** To that very point let’s say your son or daughter came home from a bunking party and as you are spending some time with them they say “I’m confused about this whole issue of sexual identity of whether I’m a boy or a girl.” If you had a child who you thought was struggling with homosexuality what would your attitude be and what would you say to that young person?

**Dr. Mohler:** I would say if your child comes up to you and says they are thinking about this that is a tremendous honor. Your child is trusting you. I think in a far larger number of cases the child will never straightforwardly say that. We are just going to assume we have to deal with this and do so lovingly as parents. We have a lot to deal with here. We’ve got the full weight of Christian conviction. We have a Creator who loved us enough to give us His written word in which He actually speaks to these things so we know what to say.

**Dennis:** In the process of your child saying something to you not to show a shock or a shame or blame or a bashing or some kind of condemnation.

**Bob:** You are saying don’t freak out?

**Dennis:** Yes, but love them. And to welcome them and cheer them on and say together we’ll get through this. I’m glad you came to me. To that child that you may be suspicious of who may be struggling with a same sex attraction. Perhaps you engage in a conversation that will allow them the safety to express that.

**Bob:** I have to think there have been students at Boys College or Southern Seminary who have gone to a trusted professor I have to confess I’ve wrestled with same sex desire and you’ve had to deal with it with students. How would a professor handle that with a student coming forward?
Dr. Mohler: Let’s just take one example. Before we get to a student with a teacher let’s take a father with his son. One of the most important things we can do with our children is say “As hard as it is to imagine I was once 15 and I know what it is like to be waking up in the middle of the night. I know what it is like to be shaken several times a day by this whole thing of sex and sexuality. This thing all of a sudden explodes within you. I understand that.

(laughter)

I once had bad hair and had to figure out how I was going to get through adolescents. I was where you are and a part of what you have to do to get from being a child to an adult is ask some of the most awkward difficult questions. I want you to know I am with you as you deal with those questions. Some of those questions are going to relate to sex. That is not because you are a little pervert. It’s because you are a human being enduring puberty. That comes with it. The reality is given Genesis 3 every single person you are going to meet is a pervert in terms of the fact that we all fall short of the glory of God with our sexuality.

Dennis: That was going to be my question because that word “pervert” is a loaded term in this culture.

Dr. Mohler: Yes.

Dennis: In fact it’s been thrown at the Christian community for using it. How would you define what a pervert is?

Dr. Mohler: Well, and I was using it there in the sense that there is a perversion of the sexual gift. And this is where Christian judgmentalism in the wrong sense really comes back to haunt us. It is because we act as if some people have their sex drives perverted. The reality is look in the mirror your sex drive is perverted.

(laughter)

Dr. Mohler: Let’s just get that out of the way we are perversion anonymous here, okay.

(laughter)

Dr. Mohler: So we can come together and say yes, according to the standard of God’s word I fall short. I fall disastrously infinitely short of God’s purpose. That doesn’t mean that that denormalized God’s plan for us. In other words there is a norm and what we need to do is seek to grow into that norm.

So many times when you talk to a person struggling with same sex attraction and arousal or even a same sex relationship one of the things that they know about themselves is that this is a deep struggle. They know that. They go through periods of self loathing as well as self questioning. They can think very self destructive thoughts because they are bearing the full weight of this confusion. However one of the problems is that they think the kid sitting next to them in school or the kid who has the locker next to them has all this wrapped up and nailed down. The reality
is every single human being has serious questions about sexuality. It is not the case that every person struggles with same sex attraction. It is the case that every single human being passed puberty struggles with sexual sin. The issue is not determining whether we are sexual sinners. That is clear. God’s word makes that clear. The issue now is where do we go with this? For Christians by the grace and mercy of God we are called unto holiness in this. That is a radical thing. We are not just called to heterosexuality. We are called unto holiness.

Dennis: Al, we get a lot of letters, e-mails, and phone calls at FamilyLife and some of the more interesting ones that come in have to do with maybe a family who has a relative who is homosexual and involved with a partner. They have been invited over the holidays to go celebrate Thanksgiving or Christmas with their family member and their partner. It raises enormous issues.

What would you say to the person who has a close family member not their son or daughter or maybe it is. How do you relate to them once they are an adult and they have made the choice of getting in this lifestyle? They are living it and it’s become the pattern with all the issues surrounding it. How would you coach them in that situation?

Dr. Mohler: I think this is an issue that calls for the keenest Christian thinking and the most sensitive Christian care giving because we really have two great dangers before us. The first is to show a lack of love by simply saying if you give yourself to this I will have nothing to do with you. I don’t even have a gospel obligation to you. That doesn’t square with the New Testament. The Apostle Paul said he was under a gospel obligation to all persons which settles that issue.

On the other hand we also realize we are in a world of social etiquette and relationships in which we can end up endorsing what we don’t mean to endorse. Trying to avoid those two things as twin evils is very difficult. I’m not sure there is a simple etiquette book we can give to Christians about how to handle this that will fit every situation. We are not even in control of every situation. It’s not just the hospitality we extend in our home but it’s where we find ourselves in a common hospitality where we are with others.

First of all we have to understand how we are going to relate to persons who publically, very openly, say I’m going to live contrary to God’s law and to God’s plan and purpose in sexuality. We have to continue to love those persons but this is where the whole issue of tough love comes up again and again. Long before that term was coined it was found in the New Testament where parents loved their children even when they are disobedient and where spouses love each other when they are estranged. That is the way it has to be as we think of those who give themselves to this sin. I’m going to love you in the midst of this but it is going to be so difficult for us to have the relationship that I want us to have so long as this is the one thing that you put in front of us that creates an obstacle. I think that is very difficult. I know I may be frustrating some because there is no easy answer. I would say it gets all the more problematic when you add children to the mix.

Bob: Yes.
Dr. Mohler: What do you say to your kids? I had a mom who talked to me the other day. She told me she was in the park and I have an 11 year old son, 8 year old daughter and the baby is in the stroller. Right in front of them is a same sex male couple and they begin to embrace and kiss. The girl started to look and the 11 year old boy started to open his mouth and the mom said I instinctively took my hand and put it over his mouth.

(laughter)

Because she said, I knew what was on his heart and I’m obligated as a mom I really look forward to having that conversation. His dad needs to have a real good conversation with him but this was the wrong place. I would simply say you bear an obligation to help your children to understand these issues but no one can answer every question right then all the time. Sometimes we have to go clean up after something really requires an explanation.

Dennis: So if you do have a family member and your kids are observing that the issue is don’t stick your head in the sand or act like it is going to go away. Instead engage in a conversation with your child at an appropriate age where you know they are seeing it and talk with them about what this means. Again, don’t give them more detail than they need.

Dr. Mohler: I mentioned before that I think parents need to have at least an annual check-up talk with children because there are different developmental stages. Maybe you could schedule it and say at least some time during family vacation dad is going to take son and go on a walk and they are going to talk and have an inventory on this. Maybe parents need to take the kid away on a camping trip to have some good focused time.

Dads, one of the best ways to talk to your son is put him in the front seat of the car with you because you have a captive audience and you don’t have to look at each other in the eye. You can get a lot of serious God honoring talk done right in that car and there is something about men and machines. We talk better when there are machines running around us.

(laughter)

One of the things about sex is we have to talk about it all now. I don’t mean everything you could imagine but you have to talk about all the things that you know your child is confronted with and in this culture that means they are being confronted with issues of same sex attraction.

Bob: I asked Dennis earlier if he thought that in the culture we need to resign ourselves to the fact that this issue is lost and he said, probably. Do you agree?

Dr. Mohler: I think in terms of the cultural equation the answer to that is almost surely yes because I think we would not be where we are now if it were not basically lost. Whether you want to use the image of a tipping point or something like that clearly for large sectors of this society they have gone from seeing homosexuality as a sin to seeing homosexuality as an issue to seeing homosexuality as something that we would just rather not even take with moral significance. Once you reach that point that leaves the church in an interesting position.
Christian parents in the very strategic position of having to say to children that is the way the world sees it. We just can’t see it that way.

**Dennis:** And we have to stand firm with what we believe and not apologize for the truth of Scripture. At the same time we need to hold the truth of Scripture in proper tension against the mandate to love the sinner.

**Dr. Mohler:** That’s right.

**Dennis:** Speaking of loving the sinner if there was a listener right now who has been or currently is struggling with homosexuality what would you say to them? I’m asking this for two reasons. First, so you can speak to that person directly but secondly Al, I want you to model to our listeners—to moms and dads—who may have to talk to someone about this someday and also to teenagers about how they can have this conversation in a loving frank God honoring way that invites them to come to faith in Christ.

**Dr. Mohler:** One of the things we have to do before we rush into conversation is to learn to listen a little bit more when we are talking with someone. Whether we are a parent with a child or a friend with a friend, or a pastor with a church member we need to ask some questions like when did you come to know this? How did this enter your life? What do you do with this struggle? That gives us an idea of where to begin the conversation.

The bottom line is this we have to enter this saying that God has given us a gift and the first issue is we are formed by God. That means that whatever is outside of this gift which is marriage or whatever falls short of this gift all these things are wrong. If they are wrong they bring destruction and pain into our lives. Here is the bad news. You can’t solve this problem because this is part of the sin problem that you can’t solve. I’m going to tell you that I love you enough to be in this problem with you. Let’s figure this out.

Where did it come in your life? In one sense it came in Genesis 3. It came before you were born because sin was here before you got here. You were born a sinner. Your sexual self is going to be affected by that sin just as much and perhaps even more apparently than other dimensions of your life.

You are not alone in this. We are all struggling in the issue of our sexuality towards the wholeness and the holiness to which God has called us. You have a particular challenge and I understand this. I want to suggest that you have to think of yourself as someone other than a victim. I’m going to honor the fact that you may not know where this came from and you didn’t ask for this. Perhaps you discovered this same sex attraction in puberty and adolescents. You didn’t ask for it. You didn’t decide to be that way. I am going to tell you that as much as we would like in any area of sin to claim ourselves as victims the reality is we are responsible for what we do now. Someone may be tempted in terms of areas of finances. Someone else is tempted to be a chronic liar. Someone over here has the spirit of rebellion. You have a real challenge and the bad news is it’s going to talk more than you’ve got. The good news is God is going to give you everything you need. We don’t say this glibly. It’s not true that when a person comes to faith in Christ and comes to know the grace and mercy of God in Christ all of their
sinful temptations go away. That’s not true by a long shot. The apostle Paul in Romans 7 makes it very clear that it is not true. He makes it very clear in the Corinthians correspondence when he says look at my body and how the outer man is decaying but the inner man is being renewed.

That’s when we have to come back and say the indwelling Christ makes all the difference. What I want to say to someone struggling with same sex affection is you are not outside the grace and mercy of God. The reality is you are a sinner but we already knew that. We didn’t have to get to your homosexuality or homosexual attraction to understand that you are a sinner. Here’s a sinner talking to a sinner. We knew that before we arrived here.

Now what are we going to do about this? The issue is does the gospel define us? This is where Christians have to be really careful because the sin of moralism is right there beside us. The false gospel of moralism is right there. There are an awful lot of Christians who would want to say to homosexuals “just stop that,” “just don’t do that.” That doesn’t affect the heart first of all. It’s a false gospel. The gospel isn’t about stopping sinning. That’s impossible. The gospel is about the grace and mercy of God in Christ. It’s about being justified by faith in Christ alone.

But it is also very clear that when it comes to sin the gospel reminds us that all that is necessary for forgiveness of sins is present in Christ. It also tells us that discipleship is a road. It’s a path. What we need to make sure of is that we are moving into holiness. For folks who are dealing with same sex attraction let’s be honest. That is a real struggle. Let’s honor that struggle and say you are going to be called to the fight of your life in this but you are not called to it alone. You are united with Christ. You have the indwelling Holy Spirit and you have the body of Christ who will be working with you. Let’s face it. The Christian church has failed homosexuals and those struggling with this in so many ways.

**Dennis:** I agree.

**Dr. Mohler:** We have said we don’t want anything to do with you. We have said we aren’t sexual sinners but you are. We’ve implied that if we haven’t said it. We have said this is a sin that is so ugly we can’t name it. Let’s talk about one of the graces of God in the Bible. The Bible names our sin. That is grace. It’s wonderful. God is not embarrassed to tell us what our sin is and we desperately need to know that. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 7 I was coveting. I didn’t know it until the law said thou shalt not covet. I’m nailed now but I also know that my covetousness means I need a Savior. We don’t have to reformulate all of this and the church ought to be the place where pew by pew you have someone with rebellion here, you have someone struggling with honesty here, you have someone struggling with same sex attraction here, you have someone struggling with temptation to adultery here. You have someone struggling with pornography and they are all over the place unfortunately. We have to come back and acknowledge that we are the people who are accountable to each other at one level. We are also accountable commonly to Christ and we have to live this out.

There is so much to be said here but I would want to say to the person struggling with homosexuality if you are experiencing despair and self loathing understand that that is really about sin. It’s not really about you. It’s about your sin. The question is now what are you going
to do with this? God has given you an unrest in your soul. The problem is that the secular world and the homosexual rights activists say that unrest is what society has foisted on you because of their conception of normal and the fact that they want to ostracize homosexuality. You may even believe that for a time but let me ask you when you close your eyes in the dark do you not have the same questions? The reality is that is God speaking to you. Don’t waste that.

**Dennis:** Yes, and at that point come to faith in Christ because there is forgiveness, redemption, hope and healing. On that journey you described of discipleship it is true for all of us. We are all slipping and stumbling as we go down that road. The key is that we have one who has finished the race and has gone on ahead of us to prepare a place.

**Dr. Mohler:** It is sufficient for all things including this struggle.

**Dennis:** That is exactly right.

**Bob:** On this issue we have to acknowledge that we as individuals and as a collective group have not always responded with God’s grace as our dominant message as we have talked to people about homosexuality or about any kind of sexual sin. One of the things I’ve appreciated not only about what you’ve shared with us here today Dr. Mohler but about your book is that the gospel and God’s grace is at the forefront. It’s the first message and the most important message. It doesn’t mean that we shy away from talking biblically about these issues but it means it’s always in the context of a redeemer and redemption being offered to all men.

Let me also encourage you to consider getting a copy of the book that Dr. Mohler has written called *Desire and Deceit: The Real Cost of the New Sexual Tolerance*. It talks about many of the themes we have been talking about today related to human sexuality. We have copies of that book in our FamilyLife Today Resource Center.

If you’d like to go online at FamilyLifeToday.com there’s more information available there about how you can order these two books. Or call toll-free 1-800-358-6329 – that’s 1-800 F as in “family” L as in “life” then the word TODAY – 1-800-FLTODAY, and when you contact us someone on our team can let you know how you can get either or both of these books sent to you.

Let me also commend to you a copy of a book written by C.J.Mahaney that provides a good biblical understanding of what God’s intent for sexuality is. It’s called *Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*. We have that book in our FamilyLife Today Resource Center as well. You’ll find more information about both books at FamilyLifeToday.com.

Let me end the week by thanking you who help support the ministry of *FamilyLife Today* and make it possible for us to present programs like this and make it possible for us to respond to folks who are calling us today to ask for the free book that we are sending out. Your financial support of this ministry is what keeps us on the air. You help to cover the cost of production and syndication of this program and our web site FamilyLifeToday.com. We do appreciate that support.
This month if you make a donation of any amount to support the ministry of *FamilyLife Today* we want to send you a thank you gift. This message is from the FamilyLife Weekend to Remember Marriage Conference – a CD that features Dr. Crawford Loritts who is the Senior Pastor at Fellowship Bible Church is Roswell, Georgia. He was speaking about God’s Plan for Marriage. What it means to leave, and to cleave, and to become one flesh with another person.

That CD is our thank you gift to you when you help support the ministry of *FamilyLife Today*. If you’d like to receive the CD I just talked about online, type the word “gift” into the key code box on the donation form, and we’ll send you a copy of Dr. Crawford Loritts speaking on God’s Plan for Marriage from a recent FamilyLife Weekend to Remember Marriage Conference.

Or, call 1-800-FL-TODAY – you can make your donation over the phone, and just ask for the marriage conference CD, or Dr. Loritts’ CD – again we’re happy to send it out to you, and we do appreciate your financial partnership with us.

I hope you have a great weekend. I hope you and your family are able to worship together this weekend and I hope you can join us back on Monday when we are going to be featuring a message that Dr. Mohler shared with our staff when he was in our offices not too long ago. The message is taken from Deuteronomy 6 where he talks about the priority we have as parents in passing along spiritual truth to the next generation. I hope you can be with us for that.

I want to thank our engineer today Keith Lynch and our entire broadcast production team on behalf of our host Dennis Rainey I’m Bob Lepine. We will see you back on Monday for another edition of *FamilyLife Today*.

*FamilyLife Today* is a production of FamilyLife of Little Rock, Arkansas.
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

We are so happy to provide these transcripts for you. However, there is a cost to transcribe, create, and produce them for our website. If you've benefited from the broadcast transcripts, would you consider [donating today](#) to help defray the costs?

Copyright © FamilyLife. All rights reserved.

[www.FamilyLife.com](http://www.FamilyLife.com)