

Same-Sex Attraction: Know and Understand Current Prophetic Teachings

We acknowledge the reality of the same-sex attraction experience. We can declare with Nephi that we “know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, [we] do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17).

- President M. Russell Ballard: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes that ‘the experience of same-sex attraction is a complex reality for many people’” ([Be Still, and Know That I Am God](#), May 2014).
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “I too affirm that God loves all His children and acknowledge that many questions, including some related to same-gender attraction, must await a future answer, perhaps in the next life” ([Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction](#)).

The Savior loves and understands all of His children perfectly.

- President Russell M. Nelson: “God knew that because of the adversary’s deceptive tactics and traps, the covenant path would not be easy to find or to stay on. So, He sent His Only Begotten Son to atone for us and to show us the way. The godly power available to all who love and follow Jesus Christ is the power to heal us, strengthen us, cleanse us from sin, and magnify us to do things we could never do on our own. Our Savior is the Divine Exemplar who marked the path that we are to follow” ([The Love and Laws of God](#), September 2019).
- “As followers of Christ, we resist immoral behavior and strive to become like Him. We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the help of the Savior, who knows how to succor us when we are tempted (see 1 Corinthians 10:13; Doctrine and Covenants 62:1; [Gospel Topics: Same-Sex Attraction](#)).
- “We may not know precisely why some people feel attracted to others of the same sex, but for some it is a complex reality and part of the human experience. The Savior Jesus Christ has a perfect understanding of every challenge we experience here on earth, and we can turn to Him for comfort, joy, hope, and direction” (see Alma 7:11–12; [Gospel Topics: Same-Sex Attraction](#)).

We can love others while honoring the laws of God.

- President Russell M. Nelson: “Many countries ... have legalized same-sex marriage. As members of the Church, we respect the laws of the land ..., including civil marriage. The truth is, however, that in the beginning ... marriage was ordained by God! And to this day it is defined by Him as being between a man and a woman. God has not changed *His* definition of marriage” ([The Love and Laws of God](#), September 2019).
- President Dallin H. Oaks: “We must try to keep both of the great commandments. To do so, we walk a fine line between law and love—keeping the commandments and walking the covenant path, while loving our neighbors along the way. This walk requires us to seek divine inspiration on what to support and what to oppose and how to love and listen respectfully and teach in the process. Our walk demands that we not compromise on commandments but show forth a full measure of understanding and love.” ([Two Great Commandments](#), October 2019).
- Elder L. Whitney Clayton: [An Introduction to Mormonandgay.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#)

There is no sin in the feelings and the attraction.

- President M. Russell Ballard: “The attraction itself is not a sin, but acting on it is. Even though individuals do not choose to have such attractions, they do choose how to respond to them” ([Be Still, and Know That I Am God](#), May 2014).
- “The Church distinguishes between same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior. People who experience same-sex attraction or identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual can make and keep covenants with God and fully and worthily participate in the Church. Identifying as gay, lesbian,

or bisexual or experiencing same-sex attraction is not a sin and does not prohibit one from participating in the Church, holding callings, or attending the temple” ([Gospel Topics: Same-Sex Attraction](#)).

There's a path to joy and a place in the gospel for all Saints.

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “For various reasons, marriage and children are not immediately available to all. Perhaps no offer of marriage is forthcoming. Perhaps even after marriage there is an inability to have children. Or perhaps there is no present attraction to the opposite gender. Whatever the reason, God’s richest blessings will eventually be available to all of His children if they are clean and faithful” ([Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction](#)).
- Elder D. Todd Christofferson: [Is There a Place for Me?](#)
- Mosiah 2:41

I am a child of God. I have a place in His Kingdom. I can be an instrument in His hands to bring about His work.

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “You serve yourself poorly when you identify yourself primarily by your sexual feelings. That isn’t your only characteristic, so don’t give it disproportionate attention. You are first and foremost a son of God, and He loves you” ([Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction](#)).
- President M. Russell Ballard: “I want anyone who is a member of the Church who is gay or lesbian to know I believe you have a place in the kingdom and I recognize that sometimes it may be difficult for you to see where you fit in the Lord’s Church, but you do. We need to listen to and understand what our LGBT brothers and sisters are feeling and experiencing. Certainly we must do better than we have done in the past so that all members feel they have a spiritual home where their brothers and sisters love them and where they have a place to worship and serve the Lord” ([Questions and Answers](#), November 2017).
- Elder D. Todd Christofferson: [LGBT People Who Live God’s Laws Can Fully Participate in the Church](#)

The Lord’s law of chastity.

- “Changes in the civil law do not, indeed cannot, change the moral law that God has established. God expects us to uphold and keep His commandments regardless of divergent opinions or trends in society. His law of chastity is clear: sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We urge you to review...the doctrine contained in ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World’ (First Presidency Letter, March 6, 2014, quoted in Neil L. Andersen, [“Spiritual Whirlwinds,”](#) April 2014).
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: “While same-gender attraction is real, there must be no physical expression of this attraction. The desire for physical gratification does not authorize immorality by anyone. Such feelings can be powerful, but they are never so strong as to deprive anyone of the freedom to choose worthy conduct” ([Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction](#)).

The role of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to represent the Savior and His teachings.

- Elder Paul B. Pieper: “In the process of taking the Savior’s name upon us, we must understand that the cause of Christ and of His Church are one and the same. They cannot be separated. Similarly, our personal discipleship to the Savior and active membership in His Church are also inseparable. If we falter in our commitment to one, our commitment to the other will

diminished, as surely as night follows day” ([All Must Take upon Them the Name Given of the Father](#)).

- President Russell M. Nelson: “Though we of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cannot change the laws of God, we *do* have the charge ‘to build up the church, and regulate all the affairs of the same in all nations.’ Thus we *can* adjust policy when the Lord directs us to do so. You have recently seen such examples. Because the Restoration is ongoing, policy changes will surely continue.

“Perhaps I can illustrate this through policy adjustments regarding those who identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) and their children. (I realize that other initials could be added to this acronym, but LGBT should suffice for the purposes of this message.)

“Consider the policy announced in November 2015 related to the advisability of baptism for the children of LGBT parents. Our concern then, and one we discussed at length and prayed about fervently over a long period of time, was to find a way to reduce friction between gay or lesbian parents and their children.

“Because parents are the primary exemplars for their children, we did not want to put young children in the position of having to choose between beliefs and behavior they learned at home and what they were taught at church. We wanted to facilitate harmony in the home and avoid pitting children and parents against each other. Thus in 2015 the policy was made to assist children and their parents in this circumstance; namely, that children being raised by LGBT parents would not automatically be eligible for baptism at age eight. Exceptions to this policy would require First Presidency approval.

“The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve have continued to seek the Lord’s guidance and to plead with Him in behalf of His children who were affected by the 2015 policy. We knew that this policy created concern and confusion for some and heartache for others. That grieved us. Whenever the sons and daughters of God weep—for whatever reasons—we weep. So our supplications to the Lord continued.

“We also took note of LGBT parents who sought permission from the First Presidency for their children to be baptized. In nearly every case in which the LGBT parents agreed to teach their children about—and be supportive of—the covenant of baptism, the requested exception was granted.

“As a result of our continued supplication, we recently felt directed to adjust the policy such that the baptism of children of LGBT parents may be authorized by bishops *without* First Presidency approval, if the custodial parents request the baptism and understand that a child will be taught about sacred covenants to be made at baptism.

“We also determined that LGBT parents may request that a baby be named and blessed by one who worthily holds the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is important that these parents understand that ward members will contact them periodically and that when a child who has been blessed reaches eight years of age, local leaders will recommend that the child be baptized.

“Finally, we also clarified that homosexual immorality would be treated in the eyes of the Church in the same manner as heterosexual immorality.

“Though it may not have looked this way to some, the 2015 and 2019 policy adjustments on this matter were both motivated by love—the love of our Heavenly Father for His children and the love of the Brethren for those whom we serve.

“Because we feel the depth of God’s love for His children, we care deeply about *every* child of God, regardless of age, personal circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, or other unique challenges” ([The Love and Laws of God](#), September 2019).

- President Dallin H. Oaks: “While we cannot change the Lord’s doctrine, we want our members and our policies to be considerate of those struggling with the challenges of mortality” ([First Presidency Shares Messages from General Conference Leadership Session](#)).

Clarification on things we do not know or cannot say about same-sex attraction.

- The Church has no official position on what causes same-sex attraction.
- The Church has no official position about our pre-mortal understanding of what specific challenges we would face in mortality.
- The Church has no expectation that individuals who experience same-sex attraction should enter an eternal marriage. Individuals make that decision for themselves (see Mosiah 2:41).
- A person can choose to live in harmony with their covenants and the commandments of God and still experience same-sex attraction. Some forms of therapy by carefully chosen professionals can be helpful.

However, extreme forms of therapy, such as “conversion therapy” are not recommended. An individual may want guidance with their self-determined therapy goals, but this is not an expectation (see <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/statement-proposed-rule-sexual-orientation-gender-identity-change>).

Additional Resources: These resources are provided for those who want to deepen their understanding on this topic.

- [“The Love and Laws of God,”](#) President Russell M. Nelson, BYU devotional, Sept. 17, 2019
- [“Two Great Commandments,”](#) President Dallin H. Oaks, General Conference, October 2019
- [“Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction,”](#) Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Oct. 2007
- [“The Lord Needs You Now,”](#) Elder Russell M. Ballard, *Ensign*, Sept. 2015
- [Gospel Topic Essay: Same-Sex Attraction](#)
- [“Same-Sex Attraction”](#) in the Life Help section of ChurchofJesusChrist.org

