

Why “Praying the gay away” doesn’t work God’s give and take

By Tim Wilkins (Permission granted to reprint; cite www.crossministry.org)

On the March 8 TV episode of “Our America with Lisa Ling”, Ling introduced a special titled “Pray the gay away.” The program’s lasting impression was that a person can not pray the gay away – a statement with which I totally agree.

If I had a grain of sand for ever time I prayed God would take away these “feelings”, I could build my own beach that would rival Miami’s.

For years I’d fall asleep every night praying “God, take these attractions away.” Simultaneously, I reached under my pillow with one hand to find the other hand. Once found, I clasped the two together; the tactile sensation of both hands fitting together provided a weak sense of connectedness – something I both craved intensely and feared immensely. But I’d wake the next morning and the same-sex attractions were still there.

Why can one not pray the gay away? First, let’s be specific about what the terms homosexual, lesbian, and gay mean. Remember that whether used as a noun or adjective, in their simplest form these terms refer to persons who happen to have same-sex attractions.

So we could and should refine the statement to “Pray the same-sex attractions away.”

Let me go a step further and say - same-sex attractions are a temptation, not an orientation. The clinical sciences, which have helped us understand same-sex attractions, devised the term “homosexual orientation” and unfortunately the church has adopted it. To be sure, all of mankind has an orientation, a sin orientation or sin nature. (Romans 3:23)

For seventy-six years, Pluto was known as the ninth planet in our solar system – until the members of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) met in 2006 to revisit the object. None of the IAU’s members doubted an object existed on the outer periphery of our solar system. What they doubted was if Pluto measured up to planetary status. It did not and Pluto was demoted to a “Pluton”. For certain, it was easier for the IAU to demote Pluto than for psychology to redefine same-sex attractions as a temptation because, first – Pluto’s astrological status holds no political correctness and second, Christianity should not expect the clinical sciences to use biblical terminology.

God’s Give and Take

Ling interviewed a variety of persons – most of who said they had tried to pray the gay away, but failed. God DOES take away specific things we ask of Him – and His specialty is sin. John 1:29 records John the Baptist telling one of his disciples as he pointed to Jesus, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

The greatest “take away” in history is when God was in His Son Jesus Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. (2 Cor 5:19) Christ carried away our sins as he hung on the cross. (1 Peter 2:24)

Selective Amnesia

What many persons with uncomfortable feelings or thoughts (same-sex or otherwise) want is what I call “selective amnesia”. We want God, or psychology, the counselor, or the hypnotist to zap that portion of our brain that contains these unwanted feelings and send them to the “Recycle Bin” of our brain and immediately “Emptied” – where they can never be “Restored” to their previous brain cell.

What all mankind knows is that the person or thing to whom they direct their plea or prayer does not always respond as we wish. There’s a reason – particularly as it relates to God.

God declares “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” ... “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8-9)

With uncomplicated clarity, we read that God’s way of thinking and working are far superior to our way.

While the same-sex attracted person is often obsessed with God taking away the gay (same-sex attractions), God’s way is to give you what you need. Our God is a giving God and John 3:16 states the greatest gift is His Son. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

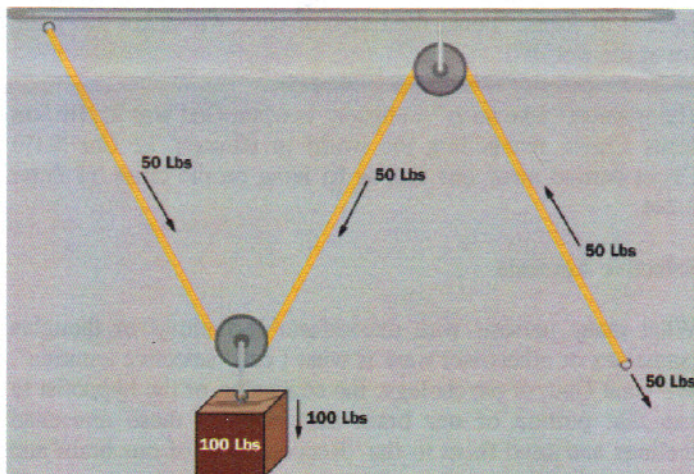
Moreover, Christians are given the “mind of Christ.” (I Cor 2:16), a “hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11), and “wisdom”. (Prov 2:6) “But [God] gives us more grace.” (James 4:6) and “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9-10)

God provides His children with spiritual resources to bear the burden.

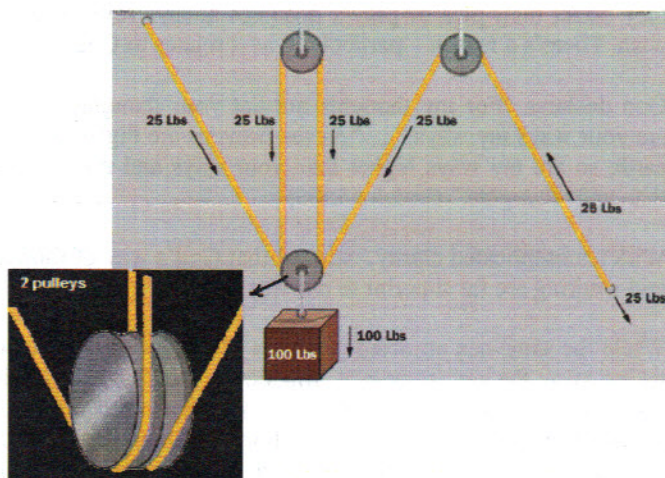
The Natural Realm

Can you lift a 100 pound weight by exerting only 25 pounds of force? Impossible? Not if you use a "block and tackle hoist." Such an arrangement of rope and pulleys allows you to trade force for distance and gain a mechanical advantage in lifting.

Imagine you have a 100 pound weight suspended from a rope attached to a horizontal beam. The rope runs through two pulleys – as seen below, and the rope's holder exerts only 50 pounds of force.



Adding a third and fourth pulley and the power you exert is 25 pounds, a mere fourth of the actual weight.



Holy Hydraulics

Many such devices providing power or strength, unequalled to our own, can be found in everyday life - power steering and brakes which work on hydraulics.

The unique shape of a crowbar (a lever) multiplies the user's strength in prying two objects apart.

A would-be Olympic diver knows she reaches her maximum height when leaving the diving board by planting the balls of her feet at the extreme end of the board. If the diving board has a movable fulcrum, she knows to adjust it to soar even higher.

So what does God want to give you? Where does God want you to plant your feet to reach heights unknown? How heavy a burden can you carry with ease by appropriating His strength? Have you asked for the Lord's leverage?

Once I understood God had much to give me, my prayer changed. I stopped pleading with Him to take the feelings away; I told Him "I'll take everything you've wanted to give me."

What Cross Ministry is!

Cross Ministry, founded in 1996, is a speaking and writing ministry. We recognize that millions of believers need to more fully understand the dynamics of same-sex attractions. Thus we communicate these biblical truths via training events, speaking engagements, and writing for various periodicals. These articles, op-ed pieces and columns draw a larger audience that if Cross was a counseling/support group ministry.

Cross could impact 20-30 persons in a counseling setting every year, but in a speaking/writing ministry, we can more than quadruple the number of persons needing help.

Thus we look for opportunities to target the masses via conferences, mission's events, and outreach venues.

Cross recently was contacted by a New York production company wanting to produce a TV show on how in-laws respond when they learn their son or daughter in law has a homosexual background. Though appreciative of their interest, we did not believe investing our time in this venue to glorify God. We politely ignored the call.

We look to God's voice when such invitations come and follow His plan. Our desire is to do the will of Him who sends us and currently, there's some discussion of taping our 1-day conference in DVD format for distribution. We have also been asked about partnering with a denominational group in conducting out MORE THAN WORDS 1-day conference.

Pray for His will to be done!

Let us hear from you!

office@crossministry.org

Cross Ministry
PO Box 1122
Wake Forest, NC 27588
www.crossministry.org