



## Me—Friend to All? Practical Love for a Challenging World

### *Gay & God:*

#### *Loving Everyone God Made and Everything God Wrote*

*In preparation for this study, we encourage participants to read or skim through the entire book to see the full scope of Pastor Novotny's message. Some in your group will have personal experience with this issue. Others will have had little exposure. May we be patient with each other and remember the Spirit's words: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).*

*It is our prayer that the lessons we learn loving the people and the passages regarding LGBT will also prepare us to love people and the passages as we deal with anyone different than ourselves.*

*Each study will begin with a time to discuss what we heard in the message the previous week. If you were not in worship prior to your study, go to [www.StPaulMuskego.org/worship/sermons](http://www.StPaulMuskego.org/worship/sermons) to watch the message, download it as a podcast, or read the manuscript.*

### Study 1 – Feb 10 – 16

#### "Different Doesn't Deter Love"

pages 4 – 18

1. What concerns do you have as we begin a study about homosexuality? What concerns might others have?
  
2. Read the message text: Luke 10:25-37. Did you ever think of Jesus as the Good Samaritan before? What did it cost Jesus to show love to us?
  
3. What is your reaction to the claim: "The primary reason outsiders feel hostile towards Christians... is not because of any specific theological perspective [including sexuality], [but] our 'swagger.'" (p.8)
  
4. Read page 12, second paragraph, to page 13, end of first full paragraph. The author made it personal as he confessed his sins. Why might an LGBT person who knows you say, "You don't love me"?

5. Read page 14. Is this statement really true: “If you don’t love your LGBT neighbor, you can’t inherit eternal life”? Explain.
6. Why is Romans 5:8 a key passage to apply, first to apply to ourselves, and then to the LGBT people in our lives?
7. Read page 16. What is a “gayborhood”? Why would we want St. Paul’s to be a “gayborhood” or a “drunkenhood” or a “sinnerhood”? What would it take for us to become that safe place?
8. Close with a minute of silent confession for the times we have failed to love the neighbor who is different than us. Then read together this prayer from the service for “Private Confession” on pages 154 – 155 in *Christian Worship*.

**O Lord, my God, I called to you for help, and you answered me. I thank you for the love you have shown me in Jesus Christ, my Savior. Through him you have rescued me from the guilt of my sin and given me the peace of forgiveness. Help me fight against temptation, correct whatever wrongs I can, and serve you and those around me with love and good works. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.**

## **Study 2 – Feb 17 – 23**

### **“LGBT”**

**pages 19 – 34**

1. The message was based on Luke 15:11-32, Jesus parable of the Lost Son. Who was “more lost,” the younger son or the older son? Explain your thinking.
2. Read page 20. Why start the “Bible” part of the discussion with “God is good”?
3. What does the author acknowledge about the Sodom accounts (page 21, 22)?
4. Read the following passages. What did you learn about each of these from the book (pages 24-27)?
  - a. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
  - b. 1 Timothy 1:9-10
  - c. Romans 1:25-27

5. Read the following passages. What did you learn about each of these from the book (pages 29-30)?

a. 1 Corinthians 6:11

b. 1 Timothy 1:15

c. Romans 6:23

6. What do the letters LGBT stand for in this book? Why is the order so important? (pages 21-22)

L\_\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_\_ T\_\_\_\_\_

7. “I learned the first rule of repentance: that repentance requires greater intimacy with God than with our sin” (page 34). Break into pairs or groups of three to discuss how you can have a more intimate relationship with God and then pray for each other.

## **Study 3 – Feb 24 – Mar 2**

### **“But What About”**

**pages 35 – 49**

1. The message this week was based on Luke 13:22-30. What lessons did you take away from this message? What question(s) would you like to discuss as a group?

2. The author takes on four questions or issues. Write a summary of his responses and discuss.

a. “I was born this way” (pages 36-38).

b. “Only God can judge me” (pages 39-42). Key points to discuss:

- Don’t judge a non-Christian.
- Be careful what you post on social media.
- The plank in your own eye.
- Remove the speck (page 42).

- c. Can LGBT people be saved? (bottom of page 42 through page 45) Key point: There is only one thing that keeps you out of heaven.

- d. Why now? (pages 46-48) Discuss the concept of “identity.” An LGBT individual may base their identity on sexual orientation. A heterosexual may base their identity on their role as a parent or spouse. What is dangerous about that?

3. Read Colossians 3:1-11. Your identity is not in what you do, but in Christ. As a result, what must you do to natural desires?
4. Our identity is children of our heavenly Father. Close by praying together the “Address” from Luther’s Small Catechism.

**Our Father in heaven.**

*What does this mean?*

**With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that he is our true Father and that we are his true children, so that we may pray to him as boldly and confidently as dear children ask their dear father.**

## **Study 4 – Mar 3 – Mar 9**

**“And!”**

**pages 50 – 62**

1. What is the most significant thing you have learned in this message series?
2. What have you found most troubling or what like to discuss, especially from the message this week?
3. The author contends that most Christians are “or” people. What is the point of his “and”?
4. Read John 8:1-11. How does this account illustrate Jesus was an “and” person?
5. What is the 14 word summary of the entire book?
6. How can you be an “and” person? What can St. Paul’s do to become more of an “and” church? What can you personally do to help bring about that change?
7. Review the outline the author used:  
L\_\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_\_ T\_\_\_\_\_
8. Break into groups of two or three. If you feel comfortable, share an LGBT individual for whom you are praying. Take turns praying for the individual(s) that another person in your group has mentioned.