

MormonsAndGays.org—Summary and Quotes

(To get a full understanding of the site, please review all of the videos and written content.

This is not an official summary, but it does contain a selected sampling of direct quotes.)

The MormonsAndGays.org website is an official website of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. On the website, Elders Dallin H. Oaks, D. Todd Christofferson, and Quentin L. Cook speak on the topic of same-sex attraction and are joined by a collection of Church members. Elder Christofferson describes the conversations in this way, “[Y]ou’ll hear stories, experiences from quite a diversity of people and backgrounds and perceptions. They’re genuine, they’re real, they’re authentic.”

Where the Church stands:

The experience of same-sex attraction **is a complex reality for many people**. 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. With love and understanding, **the Church reaches out to all God’s children, including our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters**. (emphasis added)

Below we’ve highlighted some quotes from MormonsAndGays.org—

“No one fully knows the root causes of same-sex attraction. Each experience is different. Latter-day Saints recognize the enormous complexity of this matter. We simply don’t have all the answers. **Attraction to those of the same sex, however, should not be viewed as a disease or illness.** We must not judge anyone for the feelings they experience. Members of the Church who have same-sex attractions, but don’t act on them, can continue to enjoy full fellowship in the church, which includes holding the priesthood, carrying out callings, and attending the temple. **Unlike in times past, the Church does not necessarily advise those with same-sex attraction to marry those of the opposite sex.**” - Main Page, emphasis added

“Jesus Christ commanded us to love our neighbors. Whether sinner or saint, rich or poor, stranger or friend, everyone in God’s small world is our neighbor, including our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Latter-day Saints believe that our true commitment to Christian teachings is revealed by how we respond to this commandment. This love is tested every day of our lives. We may know individuals with same-sex attraction in our workplaces, congregations and town halls. As people with hopes, fears and aspirations like everyone else, these neighbors deserve our love. But we can’t truly love the neighbors next door if we don’t love the neighbors under our own roof. Family members with same-sex attraction need our love and understanding. God loves all his children alike, much more than any of us can comprehend, and expects us to follow.” - Main Page

The main page states, “[W]hat is changing — and what needs to change — is to help Church members respond sensitively and thoughtfully when they encounter same-sex attraction in their own families, among other Church members, or elsewhere,” which is based on the quote from the first video by Elder Oaks, “[W]hat is changing — and what needs to change — is to help our own members and families understand how to deal with same-gender attraction.”

Elder Christofferson says, “Everyone is important. The Savior made that plain when he told the parable of leaving the 90 and 9 and going after the 1. And I believe it’s important, it’s crucial, frankly, if we’re going to be followers of Jesus Christ as we profess and strive to be, that we do minister to each other, every one, without exception.... I can understand that there could have been a legitimate concern about the kind of reception one might find from a local priesthood leader in the past. But I’m convinced that today that there are so much more help and resources available to a bishop or a local priesthood leader. There’s greater understanding, there’s greater appreciation of the issues and how to help. We are training bishops; they have resources that they haven’t had in the past, that we haven’t been able to make available. There are resources online, there are resources in print.... Initial reactions are critical. And the inclination, the temptation that people have often is anger or rejection. Sometimes it’s simply denial, on both sides of the question, whatever it may be. And it’s important to have enough self control to lay all that aside and to have a little patience, and to begin to talk and begin to listen and begin to try to understand better. ... We don’t have to resolve everything in a month or a week or a year. These things are questions of resolution over time and accommodation over time and seeking the will of the Lord over time and guided by him over time.”

I. Kind and Reasoned Conversation

First video: 14 speakers—It's a difficult subject

Typical comment: Rhonda—"It's important that we talk about this issue because it's a taboo topic. And it actually occurs in a lot of homes, with a lot of people, and a lot of people are touched by it."

Second video: 10 speakers—Connecting and understanding

Typical comments: Greg—"Don't lecture. Don't preach. Don't tell either of my children why they're wrong, why their positions are wrong because that is going to do absolutely nothing more than push them further away. And it's hard to have a conversation with someone that is going away from you."

Barry—"The first thing that comes to my mind is to listen. I think so often ... this is a highly charged issue. People come into this conversation with the whole set of preconceived ideas and notions about what this issue is supposed to mean. Or what they think it means. And more often than not, the issues and the notions and the beliefs that we have don't necessarily match the experiences that people have."

II. Our Common Humanity:

First video: 10 speakers—We are all unique

Typical comment: Lowell—"An important aspect of our common humanity is that all of us struggle and whether we are in the Church or out of the Church we have struggles in life. Rather than having that be a divisive factor there's no reason why we can't come together and try and make our struggles mean something."

Second video: Greg—We've got to keep perspective

Third video: Kelly—I was afraid of losing my family

Fourth video: Ty—A personal experience

III. Love One Another

First video: President Carter—A leader who loves

"The best case scenarios that I have dealt with are where families have been unequivocal about their love and compassion for a family member who is gay and who has decided that they are not going to live the standards of the Church. Our counsel to these families is to preserve the family unit, to look at it eternally, and that we love and accept the members of our family, we cherish and value the members of our family, and that keeping the family together is the most important criteria."

Second video: Disciples of Christ love all people—12 speakers

Typical comment: Ty—"We have in the writings of John, he said, "we love Him because he first loved us." There's something powerful about ... it's easy to like those people that like us. Or to engage those who come to us from a place of care and understanding, of desire to understand, but as we go out and seek to understand from a place of caring, a desire to truly get to know someone for who they are, and to love them for who they are, and appreciate even where they are, as we do that we'll be drawn into a more meaningful conversation and they will be more apt to hear us. And we will be more apt to hear them."

Third video: Elder Quentin L. Cook—Bishops made incredible sacrifices

“[W]e found that we had seventeen men with AIDSAnd all seventeen of them ultimately died of AIDS while I was stake president. I learned some incredible lessons through that process, that as a Mormon community, it’s a loving and compassionate community. I watched Bishops who made incredible sacrifices to take care of some of these young men who were dying. I watched them try very hard to reconnect them with their families...I watched them take care of each other. And I watched some of them, one of them comes to mind in particular, a returned missionary... took it upon himself to take care of the most difficult situations, those that were the most ill, and he was the last one to die. I think the lesson that I learned from that is that ***as a Church nobody should be more loving and compassionate. No family who has anybody who has a same-gender issue should exclude them from the family circle. They need to be part of the family circle. ... [L]et us be at the forefront in terms of expressing love, compassion, and outreach to those and lets not have families exclude or be disrespectful of those who choose a different lifestyle as a result of their feelings about their own gender.***” (emphasis added)

IV. Being True to Religious Beliefs

First Video: 11 speakers—Being True to beliefs

Typical comment: Mike—“One of the biggest fears that we have is that if we love somebody, who may not have the same beliefs as us, that that’s going to be accepting of those things, that we accept that bad behavior, we accept those things that are wrong, and that others will think that we are endorsing that by doing so. Well, it’s just the opposite of what we think. It is by loving those who struggle and have burdens that we are actually honoring our beliefs which is that those are brothers and sisters, that God loves them no different than He loves us.”

Second video: Judy—The actual words have terrific impact

“I would hope that the parents are going to respond with wonderful compassion and acceptance because I think that’s the message of Christ Being a mother, and now a grandmother, of gay son and grandsons, has just included a myriad of feelings from anguish and despair and all of those things on that end to pure joy in the human beings that each one of them is and in their own qualities that are so unique to them. And I wouldn’t trade a one of them for anyone else.”

Third video: Ted—My life definitely changed

Fourth video: Suzanne—I never stopped going to Church

V. An Eternal Perspective

First video: 8 speakers: Living a fuller life

Typical comment: Suzanne—“The eternal perspective for me is not just in the eternal future, it’s now. And God has His hand in my life. He has His hand in each of our lives now. And when we understand that, and grasp that, and love it, is when we are able to live a much fuller life.”

Second video: Danielle—My belief system

Third video: Elder D. Todd Christofferson—Impact on families

“I think what’s critical is that we try to resolve this in patience and with a divine perspective, not trying to dictate to God how and what His answers will be to our prayers or when and how He might intervene in this situation, but trying to achieve and understand His perspective on things so that everyone’s desire is to do what the Lord would want done, to do it in the Lord’s way, and not one’s own way, and not simply to be thinking of one’s own feelings exclusively. And that might work out differently in one family than another. We’re trying to communicate that our love is inclusive, that we want to have the family remain intact, and the relationships we’ve treasured over the years to remain and to grow. So there will be some work to be done but its work that ought to always be with the question, ‘what does the Lord want, how would He have us do this together?’”

VI. Hope

“God’s plan for our lives rests on the powerful notion of free will and spiritual self-determination. Christ’s grace will take care of the rest. With Him, each of us can walk the path, and chart the destiny of our own spiritual lives. God will work out all the confusion and contradiction. With our small window into God’s grand plan of happiness, let us forever lean on the side of hope, with faith that what seems to us a trial will actually turn out to be a blessing.” – Main Page

First video: 10 speakers—It keeps us moving forward

Typical comment: Dora—“I would hope that there is hope. I just know too many people that feel that they’re not accepted, that they are not loved within the Church because they are different. I would hope that we could learn to understand and learn to accept them and find a way to let them belong, let them be a part of the Christian church that they grew up in.”

Second video: Justin—Moving in the direction of God

Third video: Elder Dallin H. Oaks—The gospel is a gospel of hope