**Chastity and Fidelity**

**Key Teachings**

***The Family: A Proclamation to the World***

“Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”

***Handbook 2***

**Section 21.4.5**: **Chastity and Fidelity**

“The Lord’s law of chastity is abstinence from sexual relations outside of lawful marriage and fidelity within marriage. Sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. Adultery, fornication, homosexual or lesbian relations, and every other unholy, unnatural, or impure practice are sinful. Members who violate the Lord’s law of chastity or who influence others to do so are subject to Church discipline.”

**Section 21.4.6: Homosexual Behavior and Same-Gender Attraction**

“Homosexual behavior violates the commandments of God, is contrary to the purposes of human sexuality, and deprives people of the blessings that can be found in family life and in the saving ordinances of the gospel. Those who persist in such behavior or who influence others to do so are subject to Church discipline. Homosexual behavior can be forgiven through sincere repentance.

“If members engage in homosexual behavior, Church leaders should help them have a clear understanding of faith in Jesus Christ, the process of repentance, and the purpose of life on earth.

“While opposing homosexual behavior, the Church reaches out with understanding and respect to individuals who are attracted to those of the same gender.

“If members feel same-gender attraction but do not engage in any homosexual behavior, leaders should support and encourage them in their resolve to live the law of chastity and to control unrighteous thoughts. These members may receive Church callings. If they are worthy and qualified in every other way, they may also hold temple recommends and receive temple ordinances.”

**Section 21.4.10: Same-Gender Marriages**

“As a doctrinal principle, based on the scriptures, the Church affirms that marriage between a man and a woman is essential to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

“Sexual relations are proper only between a man and a woman who are legally and lawfully wedded as husband and wife. Any other sexual relations, including those between persons of the same gender, are sinful and undermine the divinely created institution of the family. The Church accordingly affirms defining marriage as the legal and lawful union between a man and a woman.”

***Church Leaders***

* “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” (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Helping Those Who Struggle with Same-Gender Attraction,” *Ensign,* Oct. 2007, 42).
* “We’re not talking about a unique challenge here. We’re talking about a common condition of mortality. We don’t understand exactly the ‘why,’ or the extent to which there are inclinations or susceptibilities and so on. But what we do know is that feelings can be controlled and behavior can be controlled” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, in “Same-Gender Attraction,” mormonnewsroom.org).
* “Many people with same-gender attractions have strong testimonies of the gospel and, therefore, do not act on those attractions. Attractions alone do not make you unworthy. If you avoid immoral thoughts and actions, you have not transgressed even if you feel such an attraction” (*God Loveth His Children,* 6).
* “If we fill our lives with spiritual nourishment, we can more easily gain control over inclinations. This means creating a positive environment in our homes in which the Spirit is abundantly evident. A positive environment includes consistent private and public worship, prayer, fasting, scripture reading, service, and exposure to uplifting conversation, music, literature, and other media” (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign,* Oct. 2007, 45).
* **“**As a church, nobody should be more loving and compassionate. Let us be at the forefront in terms of expressing love, compassion and outreach. Let’s not have families exclude or be disrespectful of those who choose a different lifestyle as a result of their feelings about their own gender” (Elder Quentin L. Cook, in Love One Another website).
* “Young people struggling with any exceptional condition, including same-gender attraction, are particularly vulnerable and need loving understanding—not bullying or ostracism” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Protect the Children,” Oct. 2012 general conference).

**Key Resources**

* *God Loveth His Children* (booklet, 2007)
* Love One Another website ([www.mormonsandgays.org](http://www.mormonsandgays.org))
* *For the Strength of Youth* (pamphlet, 2011)
* Same-Gender Attraction Roundtable Discussion ([www.lds.org/leader](http://www.lds.org/leader/)) [access restricted to stake presidents and bishops]