

## Statement of Belief

Higher Ground is committed to offering redemptive Christian soul care for those experiencing unwanted same-sex attractions, while also standing against any form of evil -- including bigotry and violence -- toward those who do not share our convictions. We believe that moral disagreement is not a license for slander or harassment of any contrary group.

Higher Ground also highly esteems the marriage covenant. This gift from God has been provided to us to learn of God's love for us, for our enjoyment, and for procreating His image-bearers to fill the earth. Along with the clear teaching in the Sacred Scriptures, we affirm that this gift, which pertains to our lives' most intimate relationships, is to be expressed through a union that is life-long, monogamous, and gender-balanced. The importance of gender in defining the marriage covenant is affirmed throughout the Bible, including the specific teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ himself (Matthew 19:4-6). In short, Christian marriage is defined and given to be between one man and one woman.

Among the manifold blessings of marriage is sexual intimacy. Sexual activity outside of this sacred covenant, otherwise known as fornication, is sinful (Mark 7:21-23, Galatians 5:19). Hence, Jesus' alternative to heterosexual marriage is celibacy (Matthew 19:10-12). Although we repent of any needless pain caused by fellow Christians to those who struggle with same-sex desires, and although same-sex partnerships may supply some of the benefits, such as pleasure and companionship, which God in His common grace bestows on us through relationships, we cannot affirm homoerotic relationships as God's will for followers of Christ. At the same time, homosexual acts are not more deserving of condemnation than any other sexual acts that disrupt this covenant design.

Furthermore, Higher Ground is committed to celebrating gender, the deeply Biblical reality of our identities. We believe that it is dehumanizing to compel anyone to base his or her identity on sexual desires. Therefore we resist efforts to coerce people into labeling themselves within the identity spectrum of LGBTQ+ (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer) just because they have same-sex attractions. We harm people when we make the nature of their sexual attractions their identifying characteristics. Rather, all of us can find divinely directed restoration through understanding and affirming more deeply our genders as women and men.

Finally, Higher Ground resists the denial of choice to those seeking change. The process of change takes different forms for different people, but we pledge to walk beside those with unwanted same-sex desires who wish to take the Scriptures and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit seriously. God always makes a way for us, wherever we are in our life experience.

So we invite all to find the freedom of obedience to Christ alongside fellow sinners made new. Higher Ground is here to provide an environment of grace that allows failure alongside the challenge to grow into greater gender confidence and competence as bearers of God's image. To those opening their hearts to this transforming power of God, Higher Ground extends a warm welcome.