

**“What Would Jesus Say to Ellen DeGeneres?”** 7/19-20/08 6 pm; 9 & 10:45 am

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ellen DeGeneres is a television talk-show host, stand-up comedian and actress. She currently hosts the Emmy Award-winning syndicated talk show “*The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.”

This show, in its fifth season, recently won six Daytime Emmys, including *Outstanding Talk Show* for the fourth year in a row and *Outstanding Talk Show Host* for the third year in a row; although her viewership is still eclipsed by the *Oprah Winfrey Show*.

She has hosted both the Academy Awards and the Primetime Emmy Awards. As a film actress, she is best known for being the voice of “Dory” in the animated hit film “*Finding Nemo*.”

She starred in two television sitcoms, *Ellen* from 1994 to 1998, and *The Ellen Show* from 2001 to 2002.

In 1997 during the fourth season of her sitcom, *Ellen*, she came out publicly as a lesbian in an appearance on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. Shortly afterwards, her character on the TV show, *Ellen*, also came out to a therapist played by Oprah and the series went on to explore various lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender issues as well as the “coming out” process.

The media frenzy that followed landed Ellen on the cover of Time Magazine with the famous tag line “Yep, I’m gay,” and made her into a reluctant leader for the gay and lesbian community. In her 1997 interview with Time she insisted, “I never wanted to be ‘the lesbian actress.’ I never wanted to be the spokesperson for the gay community. Ever. I did it for my own truth.”

Even though Ellen did not mean her coming out to be a huge political statement, that’s what it was. Never before had an openly gay actress played an openly gay character on television.

Ellen was born in 1958, in a New Orleans suburb in Louisiana. Her parents were Elliott and Elizabeth. Along with her brother Vance, Ellen was raised as a Christian Scientist until the age of 13.

Her parents divorced in January 1974 and it was during this time that Ellen discovered her love for comedy.

“My mother was going through some really hard times and I could see when she was really getting down, and I would start to make fun of her dancing. Then she’d start to laugh and I’d make fun of her laughing. And she’d laugh so hard she’d start to cry, and

then I'd make fun of that. So I would totally bring her from where I'd seen her start going into depression to all the way out of it."

"I saw how great it is to be able to make somebody feel good."

Shortly after her divorce, Ellen's mother re-married and Ellen moved with them to Atlanta, Texas. Her brother stayed with their father in New Orleans.

During this time of adjustment, Ellen's mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. And possibly the most life-altering event of Ellen's life occurred: her step-father molested her.

After graduating from high school and moving back to New Orleans, she finally told her mother. Her stepfather denied it, saying Ellen was exaggerating. Her mother stayed with him 10 years longer, which caused deep pain in Ellen's life. But, their relationship was later restored.

Back in New Orleans, Ellen's life took several directions: she attended the University of New Orleans but after one semester, she left school to do clerical work in a law firm. She left that, and tried several other jobs, but didn't see her future in any of them.

It was during this time, at 21 years old, Ellen developed a lesbian relationship with Kathy Perkoff, a poet. After Kathy's death in a car accident, Ellen wrote her first monologue, "*A Phone Call to God*," and performed it at her first stand-up comedy job, emceeding at a New Orleans comedy club. Her taped performances there won her the 1982 *Showtime's Funniest Person in America* award.

In 1995, her first book "*My Point ... And I Do Have One*" debuted at #1 on the New York Times bestseller list and in 1997 she released her comedy CD, "Taste This." In July 2000, DeGeneres returned to stand-up comedy, embarking on a three-month tour of major theatres across the country, culminating in her critically acclaimed and Emmy-nominated special for HBO, "The Beginning."

Most recently Ellen has been in the spotlight for announcing her upcoming marriage to actress Portia de Rossi. She did it at the taping of her show, the day the California Supreme Court announced that homosexual marriage would become legal in the state of California.

*So, what would Jesus say to Ellen?*

I think He might start by saying, "*Ellen,*

***1. "I grieve over the way you were abused by your step-father. Let Me heal you."***

Throughout the pages of the Gospels, we see that Jesus is filled with compassion for people who have been abused and broken.

Luke 8:1-2 **“After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out.”**

and v. 3 goes on to mention **“Joanna... Susanna; and many others.”**

Jesus delivered Mary Magdalene from demonic control; seven demons were controlling her.

Many others who were healed of diseases. Physical diseases are often mentioned, but, *I wonder how many were mental diseases, mental and emotional torment from what they had suffered ...*

Jesus still offers the same tender compassion, healing and acceptance today. I have talked to several women over the years who have been healed and restored by Jesus ... women who suffered just as Ellen. And the reason I think Jesus might want to start here with Ellen is because counselors and surveys have demonstrated a connection between the sexual abuse of children and homosexuality.

As opposed to being ‘born gay,’ (for which, contrary to popular belief, there is no scientific evidence) numerous studies reveal a disproportionate number of persons molested as children practice homosexuality as adults.

In the 1980s, Diana Shrier and Robert Johnson conducted a study showing that men who were sexually abused as children were almost seven times more likely to identify themselves as homosexuals.

In another study, Dr. Gregory Dickson found in a random sample of men, an astonishing 49 percent of the homosexual population admitted to being sexually molested as a young child or adolescent boy, as opposed to 2 percent of the heterosexual population. (<http://media.www.dailytoreador.com/media/storage/paper870/news/2005/02/03/Opinion/s/Davis.Radical.Homosexuals.Target.Young.Children-1280181.shtml>)

Stephen Bennett, who formerly lived a homosexual lifestyle, says his ministry often deals with homosexuals who were abused as youngsters. In fact, he says there is a definite correlation between molestation and homosexuality.

“This is the truth that people need to understand, that molestation is a vicious, vicious cycle and the media is afraid -- most of the secular media, because it’s politically incorrect -- to make that association between molestation and homosexuality,” Bennett says.

[I]t is time, Bennett urges, for people “to stop worrying about being ‘politically correct’ in the media regarding homosexuality and finally deal with the truth ... that homosexual

(and heterosexual) molestation of children can and [does] produce future homosexual men and women.

Bennett continued, people “can find deliverance from the homosexual lifestyle through a relationship with Christ, because help and hope are available, and change is completely possible.”

Let me be very clear: being sexually abused as a child does not mean that you will have confusion over your sexuality or become involved in homosexual acts.

This research is demonstrating that this is the experience of almost half of the men in this survey.

Personally, I have met several women and men who were sexually abused as children who never were involved in homosexual acts. And, I have met some who were.

*“Ellen, I grieve over the way you were abused by your step-father. Let Me heal you.”*

Next, I think Jesus might say to Ellen,

## **2. “Trust My Design of Sexuality”**

**OPEN** to Leviticus 18 (**PAGE** 184)

Later this year I plan to do a broad and thorough treatment on marriage and God’s design for sexuality. But, today, for the sake of time, I’m going to move directly to what God says about homosexual acts.

I want to start in Leviticus because you will hear people say that the book of Leviticus can’t be seriously used to build God’s case against homosexuality because there are other things God commands in Leviticus that are outmoded and outdated.

It is true that many of the laws in Leviticus are no longer in effect. The reason why is that God later specifically states that He has put a better plan in place.

- Dietary Laws (replaced in NT)
- Sacrificial Laws (replaced in NT)
- Moral Laws (most not replaced in NT, but repeated)

The issue with the laws in Leviticus is, “*What kind of law is it?*” and “*Has it been replaced in the NT?*”

Let's look at Leviticus 18:22 **“Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.”**

This entire chapter deals with sexual acts that are not permissible, that are detestable, that defile the nation.

God specifically names what is forbidden because, between Egypt, where God had taken them out of, and Caanan, where God was taking them to settle, these sexual acts were practiced by the people who lived there. God was saying, “*You are My people. Do not live as you have seen others around you living.*”

Now, has this law been replaced as were other laws God gave in Leviticus? To answer this, we must look at the NT.

**OPEN** to Romans 1 (**PAGE** 1747)

Romans 1:18-32 “The wrath of God is being revealed from Heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

\*\*24 Therefore God gave them over [*released them*] in **the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.**

25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen.

\*\*26 Because of this, God gave them over **to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.**

\*\*27 **In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.**

This passage goes on and mentions other sins ... sins other than sexual ... but that is our focus for the moment.

Romans 1 is clear that God considers homosexual acts to be sin.

1 Timothy 1:9a, 10 “We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for **lawbreakers and rebels...**

**10 for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers - and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine.”**

“**perverts:**” “**sodomites,**” “**sodomy,**” a man who practices homosexual acts.

Here, sodomy is called **lawbreaking, rebellious** and “**contrary to sound doctrine.**” That is, it is sin, it misses God’s bulls-eye for sexual relations.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 “**Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.**”

“**homosexual offenders**” this is one word in Greek, the same word that in 1 Timothy 1:10 is translated “**perverts.**” It is more accurately translated “**sodomite,**” or “**sodomy,**” a man who practices homosexual acts.

“**male prostitutes**” a single word in Greek, used especially for men and boys who allowed their bodies to be used homosexually.

Friends, brothers and sisters, there is no confusion in the Scriptures regarding homosexual acts. They are sinful. Homosexuality is one of the many sexual sins listed in the Bible. Most sexual sins are committed by heterosexual people.

But, God does not leave us in our sin. God does not simply point the finger of judgment and say, “*You’re wrong! You’re condemned!!*”

If that was the end of the story, we would all be condemned because God says that if we violate His law at one point, we’re guilty of it all!

Here’s the *good news*:

John 3:17 “**For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.**”

Jesus came to rescue us from our sins!

*And that is what we find in 1 Corinthians 6:11:*

**1 Corinthians 6:11 “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

God’s family is filled with one kind of person: those who He has forgiven of their sins through Jesus Christ!

Next week: We will have a special guest. Her name is Yvette.

Yvette grew up in CA, and in college became involved in the homosexual lifestyle. She became a homosexual activist. Later she came to know Christ and left that lifestyle. For the past several years she has walked with Jesus, married and has two children. She also has a ministry to help those who struggle with homosexual / lesbian feelings and actions.

I will be interviewing her in our weekend services and later in the day she will be sharing more with us and answering questions you may have. More details next week ...

### **CONCLUSION**

If you are struggling with homosexual feelings or actions, Jesus wants to help you. We want to help you.

God does not call it your *identity*, He calls it *feelings* or *behavior*.

In Jesus, you can have a brand new identity as a child of God Himself, His daughter or son.

Maybe there’s something else we talked about today that you’d like God’s help with.

He is full of grace and truth ... the perfect combination for healing.

*“Father in Heaven, thank You for the grace and truth that are mine through Jesus Christ. Thank You for Your forgiveness! May I show the same grace and truth to others that You have shown to me! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*