

Would You be Okay with a Gay Kid?

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Details magazine is an American version of what the Brits call “laddie mags” — rather racy magazines that present a vision of what the good life is supposed to look like for young adult males. The magazine features an assortment of articles on male fashion, gear, lifestyle issues, and entertainment. Like most of these magazines, glossy advertising takes up much of the magazine.

The cover of this month’s issue includes this interesting question: “Would you really be okay if your kid was gay?” [warning: offensive language] That a magazine of the cultural left (at least on lifestyle issues) would even ask such a question is fascinating in itself. The content of the article is even more fascinating.

Writer David Hochman sets up his [article](#):

Jerry (not his real name) is an unapologetic Hollywood liberal. He drives a Prius and supports Barack Obama. He’s as open-minded about homosexuality as a fortyish heterosexual Little League dad can be. In fact, as someone who’s responsible for the day-to-day operations of some of TV’s biggest comedies, Jerry might as well be the mayor of Gayberry. “If I’m on a set and there are no gay people, I actually get worried,” he says.



Geoff (not his real name) is the same way. A history professor and author in New York City, he is surrounded by a veritable gay army—his editor, his literary agent, his closest confidants (“Gay, gay, way gay,” he says) —and that’s the way the happily married 42-year-old father, whose idea of heaven is courtside Knicks seats, likes it.

But while Jerry, Geoff, and other progressive dads of their generation are more than happy to down margaritas and watch Project Runway with gay friends, they’re not so comfortable with the idea of their own offspring going the way of Dumbledore. And only on the condition of anonymity will they elaborate on why, exactly.

These are men who clearly want to say that homosexuality is okay. They live and work in a social world in which that is the only politically correct position. And yet, when it comes to their own sons — they would definitely *not* be okay with them being gay.

“That . . . would be tricky,” said Geoff. As Hochman explains:

If you’re a father, chances are you’ve had a similarly conflicted inner dialogue. No matter how enlightened you are (or think you are), when it comes down to it, you don’t want your kid to be gay. You may chuckle when little Leo dons butterfly wings and plays tea party for the third day in a row (hey, it’s just a little gender blurring), but you’re really thinking, No, God, no. This all gets especially complicated when you move in social circles where homophobia is considered as inconceivable as pedophilia, and where parents throw coming-out parties for grade-school boys to show how tolerant they are (this is actually happening in places like Berkeley, California). Caitlin Ryan, a clinical social worker in San Francisco, has heard of at least a couple of these events. “Parents have had a variety of celebrations,” she says. “And this is another way to mark a rite of passage.

The admission that these men would not want their sons to be homosexual is considered newsworthy by *Details*. It raises a host of questions for a secular magazine. Is this just a form of moral hypocrisy? Is this merely a cultural taboo rearing its head? Are these men supposed to just get over this concern? The article honestly relates that these men are not concerned only with the sexuality of their young sons but with the fact that they associate with traditional gender signals as well.

One additional section of the article demands close attention. Hochman explains that Ritch C. Savin-Williams, the director of Cornell University's Sex & Gender Lab, has made an interesting discovery:

Parents who say they're open to the idea of homosexuality are often the most difficult for a child to come out to. "Perhaps they make a distinction between your kid and mine," he says. "It's nice for other people's children to be gay or to have gay friends, but one's own child is a different story. Indeed, some of the young people say religiously conservative parents respond the best, because of the value of family. But it's the progressive, holier-than-thou parents who often can't cope."

That is another surprising part of the article, given the nature of the magazine itself. Savin-Williams is probably on to something when he relates that many young people find coming out to Christian parents to be easier in the key respect that these parents do know that God expects them to love their children, no matter what may come.

I hope there is another key reason that Christian parents might respond differently. Christians believe in the transforming power of the Gospel. What strikes the world as increasingly out-of-step is the biblical belief that homosexual behavior in any form is a sin. But the idea that people can change — or even *ought* to change — is increasingly out-of-step with the cultural mood as well.

The situation detailed in *Details* reveals tremendous confusion on the cultural left about the question of homosexuality, not in the culture, but in the lives of their own children. Is hypocrisy revealed in this picture? Of course it is. But hypocrisy is the danger inherent in any moral position — on both sides of the debates over homosexuality.

The men interviewed in this article also reveal the power of common grace — a lingering shadow of moral conscience. The hesitation concerning their sons and homosexuality — almost a panic — is a subtle sign that they possess a moral knowledge that complicates their moral reasoning. They *want* to be okay with their sons and homosexuality — they just *can't*.

Christian parents and Christian churches had better think ahead to this question — What would you say if your son (or daughter) came out to you on the sin of homosexuality?

Those who believe (or say they believe) that homosexuality is not a sin can only respond with some form of what the world calls acceptance. But, as this article reveals, this is often a false acceptance.

Christians know that homosexuality is a sin — that it is not the Creator's purpose for our sexuality. The Christian parent's response to the "coming out" of a child is surely shock and grief, but also an opportunity for grace and witness. At that point the child needs those Christian parents to be *deeply* Christian. We are indebted to *Details* for reminding us of that.

God sometimes has a strange way of getting our attention.

We discussed this issue on Thursday's edition of *The Albert Mohler Program* [[listen here](#)] where you will find more extensive comments on the *Details* article.

