

# Homophobia Causes STDs and Fat-Shaming Causes Obesity (and Other Urban Myths)

I was recently sent an article, asking for my comments. It was written in 2013 and alleged that in the states where same-sex “marriage” had been opposed in America, there was an increase in STDs among gays, demonstrating that it was homophobia more than homosexual acts that caused STDs. In sum, the author claimed, “bigotry makes us sick” but “full acceptance ... improves our health.” More recently, I was sent an article that claimed that it was fat-shaming that largely contributed to obesity.

Can we utter a collective sigh?

Regarding the first claim, the reality is that the reported increase in STDs was miniscule (especially when compared to the extraordinarily high rates of STDs among gay men), and the data was quite limited. But even if it were true that where gay “marriage” is discouraged, there is slightly more gay promiscuity, which in turn results in slightly higher rates of STDs, this would not for a moment negate three important realities.

First, it is sexual promiscuity that causes STDs, not homophobia.

Second, there is more promiscuity among gays than straights.

Third, men who have sex with men (MSM) have the highest rate of STDs, to the point that the CDC reported in 2010 (and beyond) that, “Gay Men’s HIV Rate 44 Times that of Other Men; Syphilis Rate 46 Times Higher.”

Tragically, these numbers remain extremely high, and even a

2015 CDC report that is quite sympathetic to the gay community states that "Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (collectively referred to as MSM) are at increased risk for STDs, including antimicrobial resistant gonorrhea, when compared to women and exclusively heterosexual men."

The bottom line, then, is simple: Regardless of the presence or absence of alleged homophobia, STDs are transmitted sexually (hence their name), and they remain disproportionately high in the gay community, especially among men.

Could it be that God did not design our bodies for promiscuity or certain homosexual acts? If we want to reduce STD's—among heterosexuals as well as homosexuals—that's the place where we need to focus.

Regarding causes of obesity, a January 5, 2017 article claims that, "Fat shaming—not lack of willpower—is why so many Americans struggle with their weight."

In short, "Fat-shaming—the process of insulting, bullying or stigmatizing a person for their weight—is an American pastime," and this in turn creates greater anxiety and stress, which in turn leads to more weight gain.

To be sure, there is a lot of pressure on Americans today to have the perfect body, and without a doubt, many of us treat thin people more nicely than fat people (or, at the least, view thin people differently than fat people). And there's no question that millions of Americans hate being fat and keep trying to lose weight, ending in failure and frustration.

As someone who was overweight (or even obese) much of my life, I have tremendous sympathy for those who struggle, and I abhor the idea of making overweight people, who already feel bad about their condition, feel even worse.

But it is deeply misguided to blame societal fat-shaming for

people's obesity, since the only reason I will be fat, barring a specific medical condition, is if I eat too much food, especially unhealthy food.

The article I cited here claims that there is scientific support for the thesis that, "Fat-shaming can spike stress hormones that can increase weight gain," and while there may be some truth to this, for every ounce gained because of a spike in stress hormones due to "fat-shaming," there is surely a pound (or many pounds) gained because of lack of self-control and/or poor eating habits.

What these two articles have in common is a refusal to take full responsibility for our struggles, pointing a finger instead at others—the homophobes and the fat-shamers—rather than saying, "What can I do to correct a serious, health-threatening problem in my life?"

Funnily enough (welcome to my world!), a gay website recently attacked an article of mine titled, "Is It a Sin for a Christian to Be Obese?," responding with this headline: "Anti-LGBT Radio Host Fat Shames for the Lord to Sell His Diet Book."

Apparently, I'm not only a homophobe, I'm also a fat-shamer, and even though my article starts off with all kinds of caveats as to why people may be obese, even though I urge us to judge ourselves for being overweight, not judge others, and even though I wrote the article to lift people up, not beat them up, I'm still a fat-shamer.

As the gay website states, "Brown does tell readers that God is not condemning them, but goes on to say: 'I encourage you to confess your bad eating habits as sin, asking the Father for mercy and forgiveness, believing that Jesus paid for this sin as well and trusting God for grace to overcome. With His help and with a good plan, you can do it!'"

This is fat-shaming?

What makes this all the more ironic is that, for years, critics have said to me, "You Christians are such hypocrites. You preach against homosexuality but you don't preach against gluttony. And many of you are so fat!"

Of course, from a biblical standpoint, committing a homosexual act is far more serious than having a big bowl of ice cream, but now that my wife and I have written a book encouraging others to healthier living, rather than commending me, these same critics condemn me. Is anyone surprised?

The take-away in all this is simple: Although there are many societal factors that contribute to the choices we make, we are ultimately responsible for those choices, and if we don't like sleeping in the bed we made, we have no business blaming others for it.

Positive change comes when we take full responsibility for our actions, and with God's help, radical, lasting change is possible for all. {eoa}