

Pastor Robert Jeffress Says Homosexuality 'Could Be Genetic'

The Rev. Robert Jeffress said that some evangelicals “were too quick to dismiss the possibility of genetic predisposition” when it comes to homosexuality.

Jeffress, who leads the 11,000-member First Baptist Church in Dallas, hasn't stopped preaching that the practice of homosexuality is sinful, but he no longer singles it out for special condemnation.

“It would be the height of hypocrisy to condemn homosexuality and not adultery or unbiblical divorce,” he said in an interview with the Associated Press (AP), while explaining that the Bible only allows divorce in the case of adultery or desertion.

Though the megachurch pastor said he is open to the possibility that one's sexual orientation could be genetic and not solved with cures or prayer—an argument the LGBT community consistently makes—his biblical beliefs about homosexuality have not changed.

Jeffress suggests, in an interview with OneNewsNow, that Romans 5 teaches that “all sin is genetic. It comes from our forefather, Adam.” He says there are likely genetic links to addictions and violence.

“We shouldn't be surprised that there might be a genetic link to homosexuality, but that doesn't mean it's acceptable behavior,” he told OneNewsNow. “The fact is we've all sinned, we've all fallen short, and [we all] need God's forgiveness.”

According to the AP, Jeffress maintains that although people

may have sexual urges, the Bible teaches that acting on same-sex desires is sinful—and this is what the church must address.

“We cannot pick and choose what parts of God’s Word we are called to share,” he said in the AP article. “God gave it to us, not to hurt people, but to help people.”

He explained to OneNewsNow: “I don’t ever teach men in our church that if you just pray hard enough, that you’ll be delivered from any temptation.

“Rather,” he added, “I think what the Bible teaches us to do is how to deal with that temptation and not give in to that temptation. The sin is not in the struggle; it’s in *giving in* to the struggle.”

The First Baptist pastor noted his concern that some pastors, who want to appear open so they can attract more church members, are bypassing their responsibility to speak openly about LGBT issues and teach what the Bible says about them.

“My sense is that people are just avoiding the subject, by and large,” Jeffress said. “They are so bent on trying to add to the numbers of their churches that they don’t want to disenfranchise new members or be characterized as unfriendly.”

A 2011 survey by the nonprofit Public Religion Research Institute shows that 62 percent of adults (18-29) said they supported gay marriage, while 71 percent supported civil unions. Those numbers were 31 percent and 51 percent, respectively, among adults 65 and older.