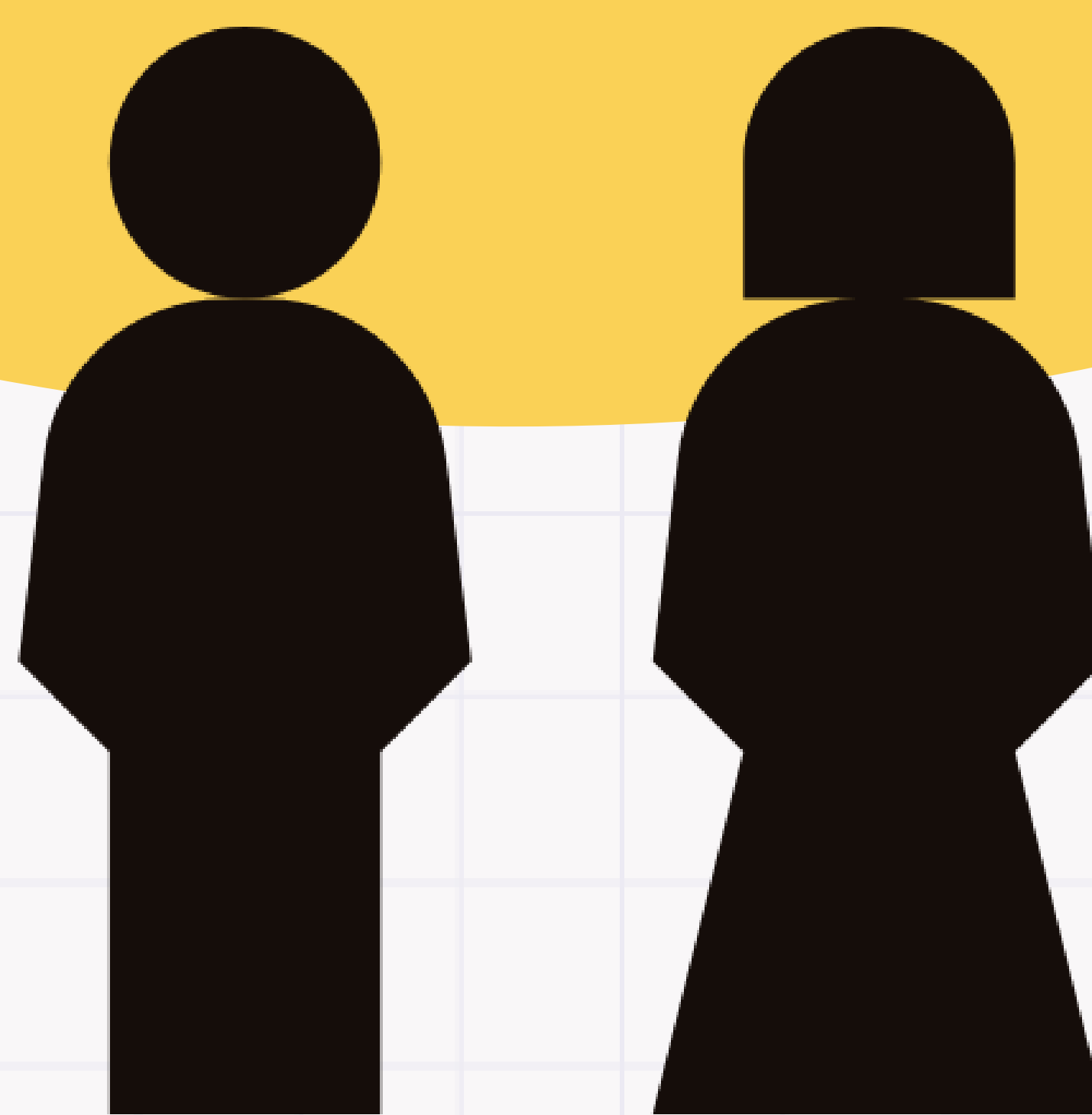
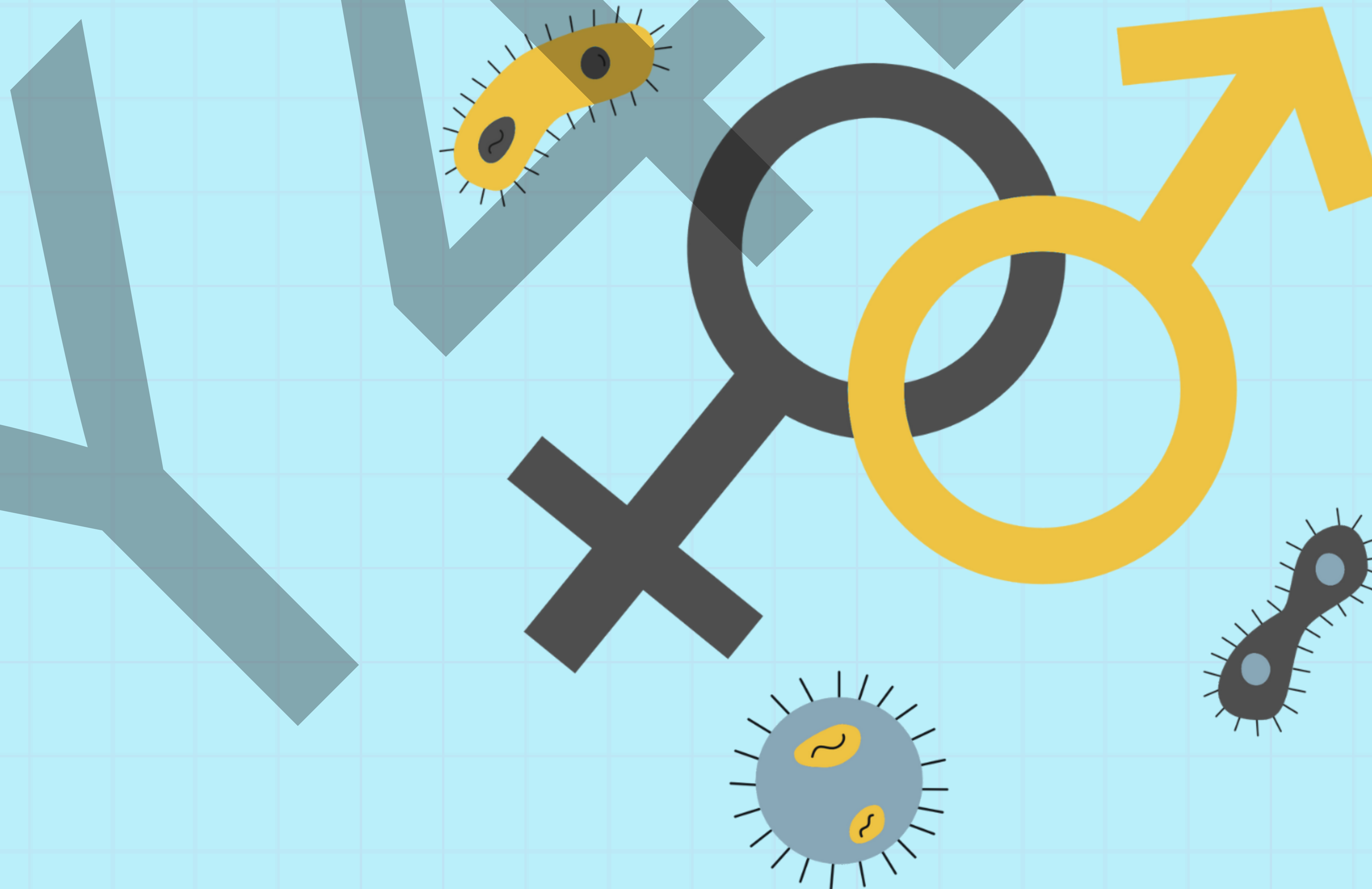
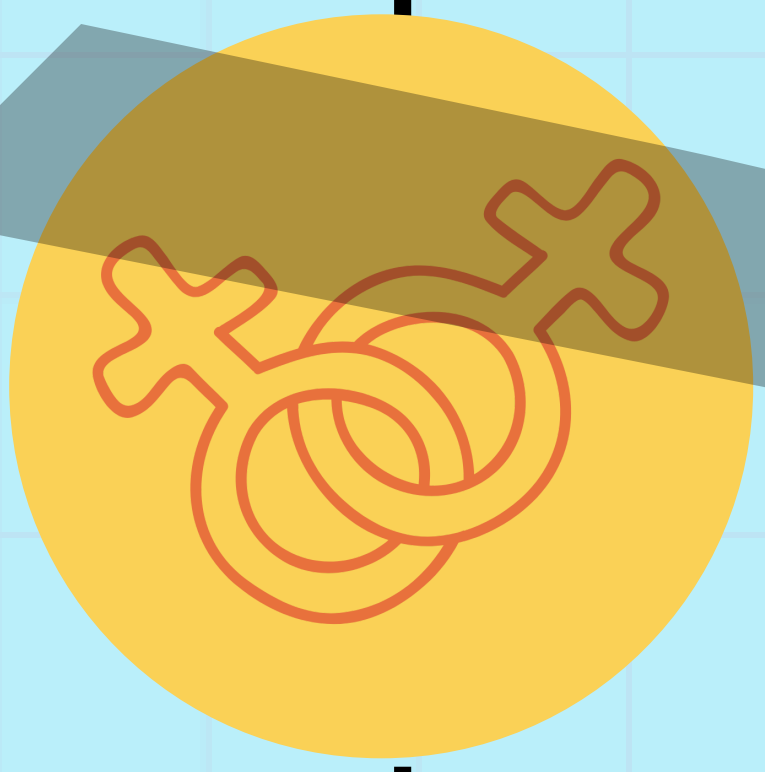
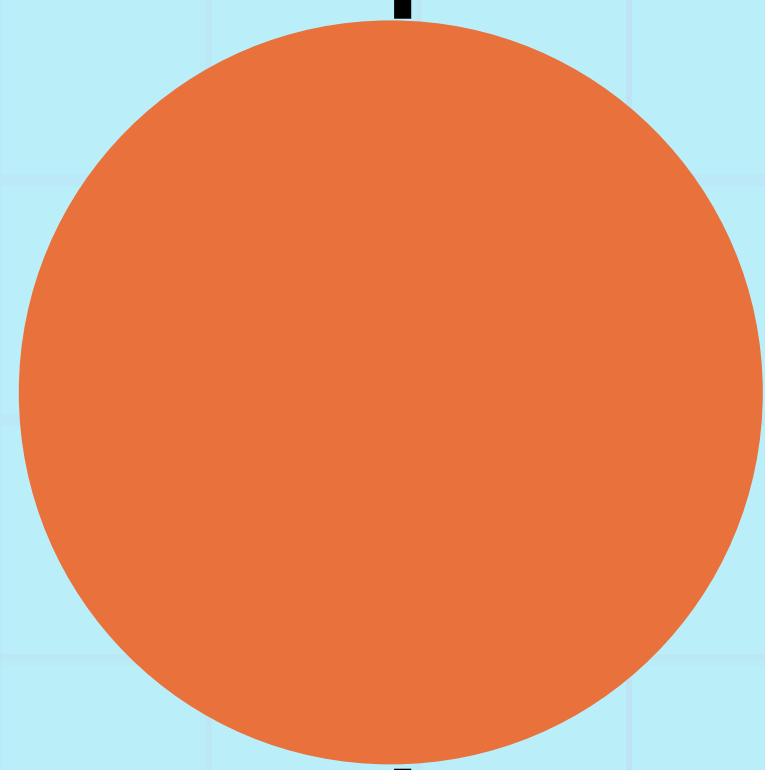
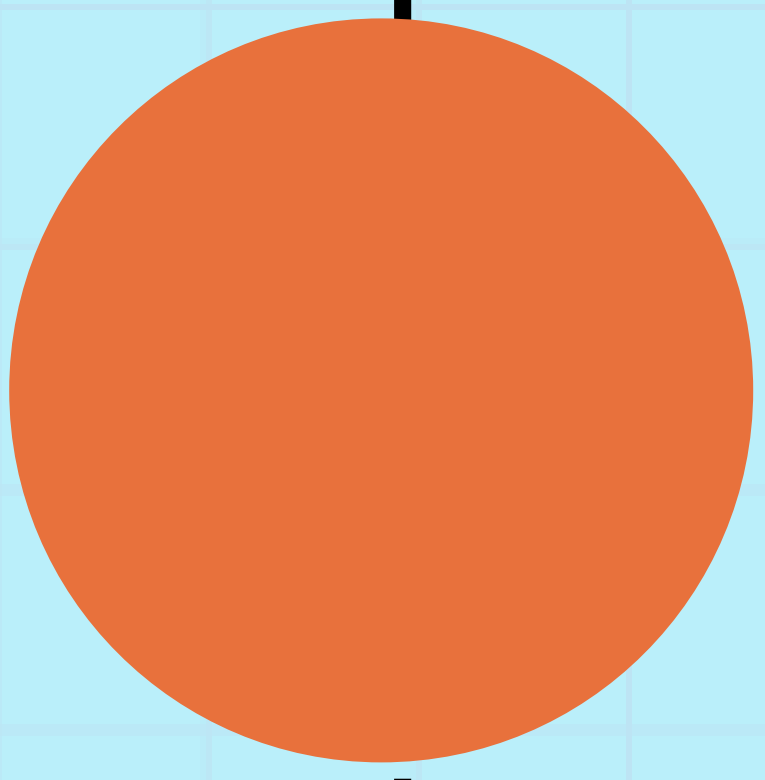


Same Sex Attraction



Let's be honest, sexual attraction is a complicated matter. Scientists and social scientists tell us that the person we find attractive has something to do with pheromones, a biological desire for survival, and childhood history. Throw personality, social circles, and common interests and beliefs into the mix, and the possibilities become endless.



Well, maybe not *endless* . . .

The truth is, while God's Word doesn't tell us which person, specifically, we should fall in love with or be attracted to, it does set limits on our attraction.

For example, we know that humans should be attracted to other humans (Leviticus 18:23). Adults are designed to be attracted to other adults (Leviticus 18:6-10). And men and women, by God's life-affirming design, are created to be attracted to individuals of the opposite sex (Genesis 2:24).

God's limits are designed both for our good and to uphold life.



But what if you or someone you know is experiencing same-sex attraction? What if you're confused about your sexual orientation in general? What does God have to say to you?

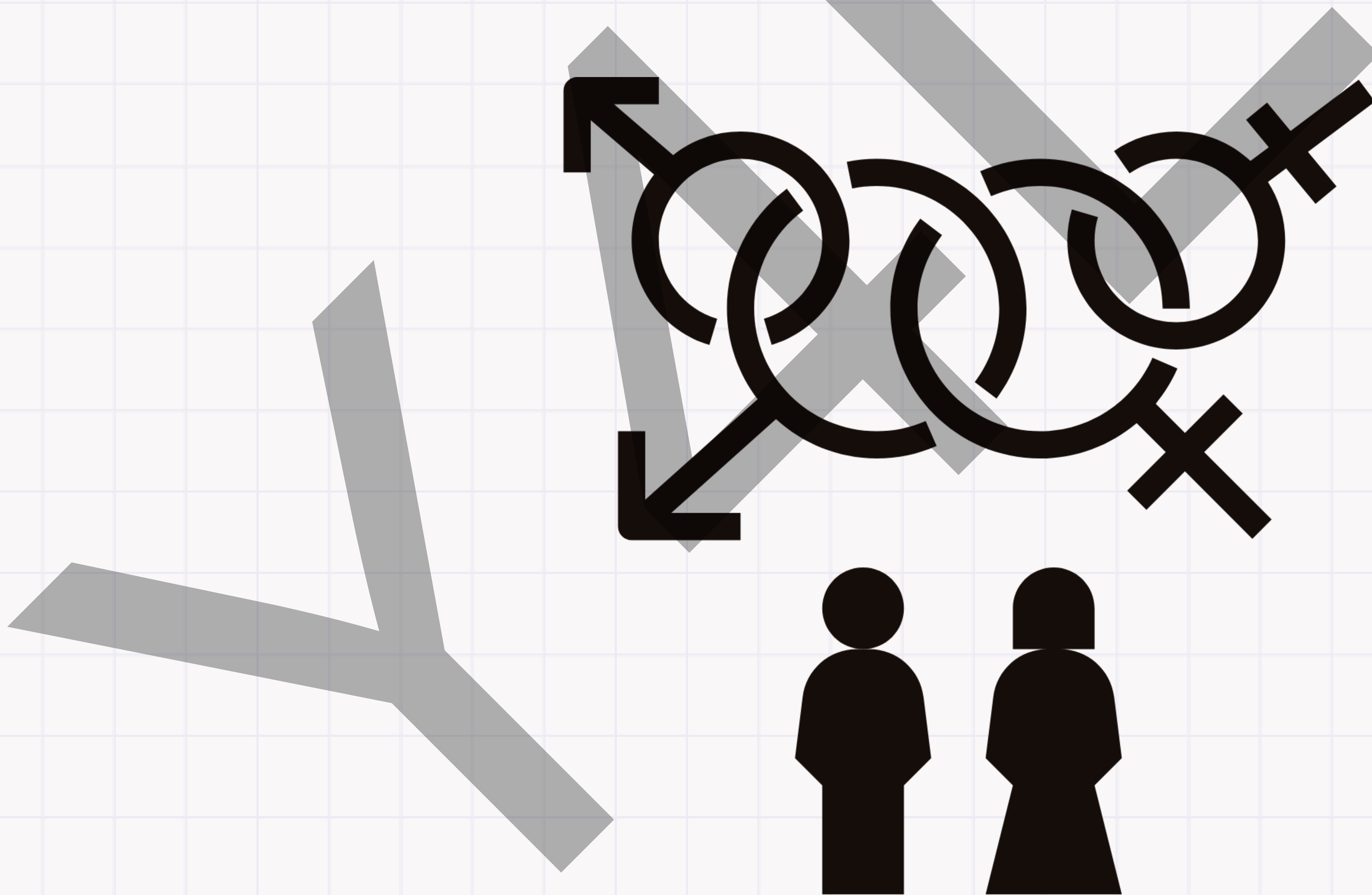
Take heart; your struggle is real, and you are not alone. You are not forsaken; instead, you are loved.

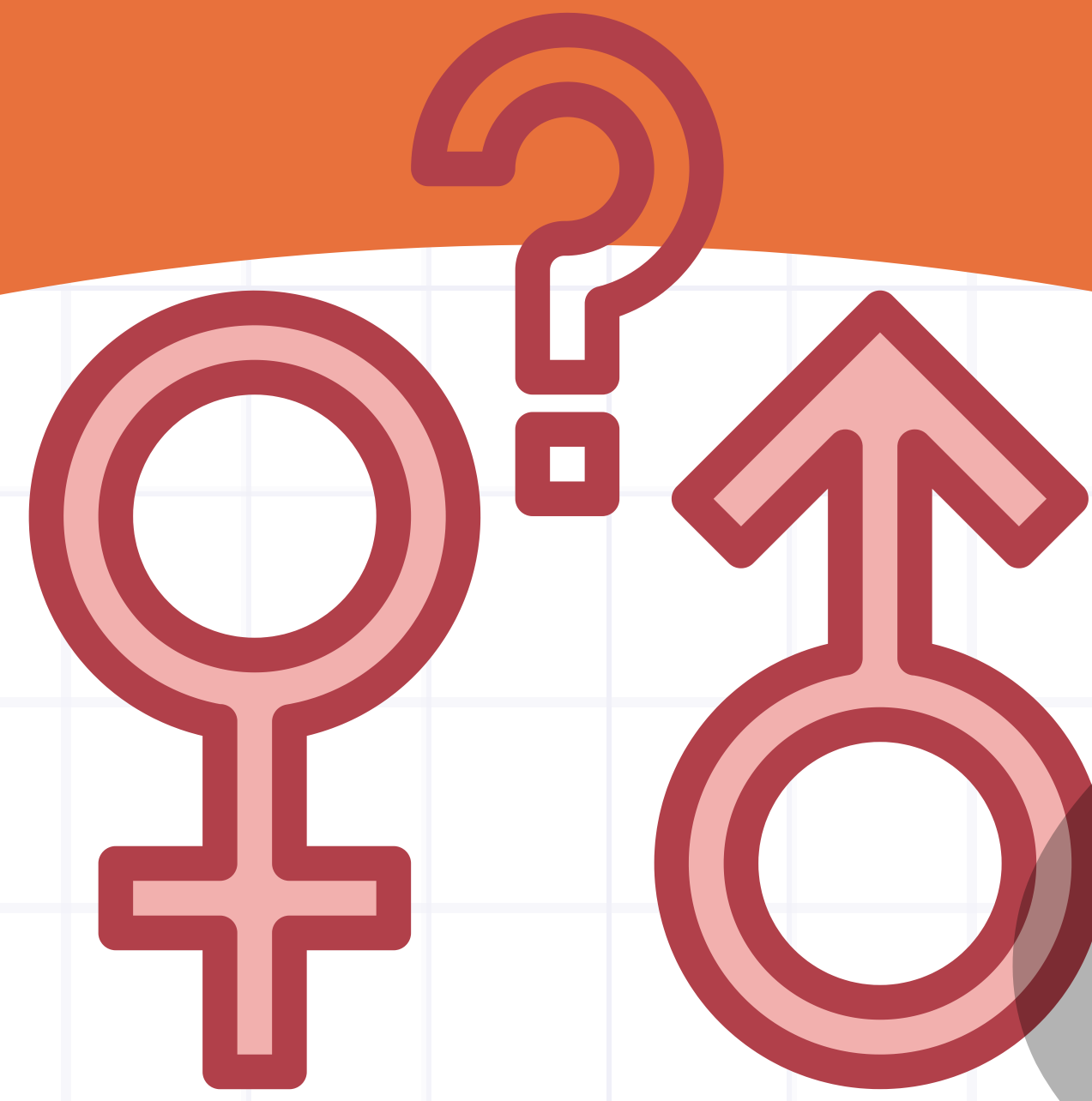
Even more, there is hope and healing for you in Jesus and His mercy.



What is same-sex attraction?

Same-sex attraction happens when a man is physically attracted to another man or when a woman is physically attracted to another woman. Different from a deep friendship, sexual attraction involves arousal and desire.





This type of sexual confusion can occur for a variety of reasons, but it almost always begins with doubting or questioning one's sexual orientation.

Questioning may be internal: ***Most girls like doing these things, but I'm not like most girls.***

Or questioning can begin after suggestions are made externally from classmates, co-workers, or friends: ***You're such a girl.***

These messages can be confusing enough to cause one to question his or her sexual orientation.

Sexual orientation according to *Merriam Webster* is defined as “a person's sexual identity or self-identification as bisexual, straight, gay, pansexual, etc.”

Modern society has defined various types of sexual attraction. Here are some of the most common:

- **Straight/Heterosexual** – Sexual and romantic attraction to humans of the opposite sex
- **Gay/Lesbian** – Sexual and romantic attraction to humans of the same sex
- **Pansexual** – Sexual and romantic attraction to humans regardless of gender or sex
- **Bisexual** – Sexual and romantic attraction to both male and females

How prevalent is same-sex attraction in the United States?

You probably know someone who is struggling with his or her sexual identity. In fact, you may have even concluded that more people struggle with same-sex attraction today than they did years ago. In some ways, you would be right.

At the time of printing (2025), LGBTQ+ identification in the U.S. has risen to 9.3% of the total population.

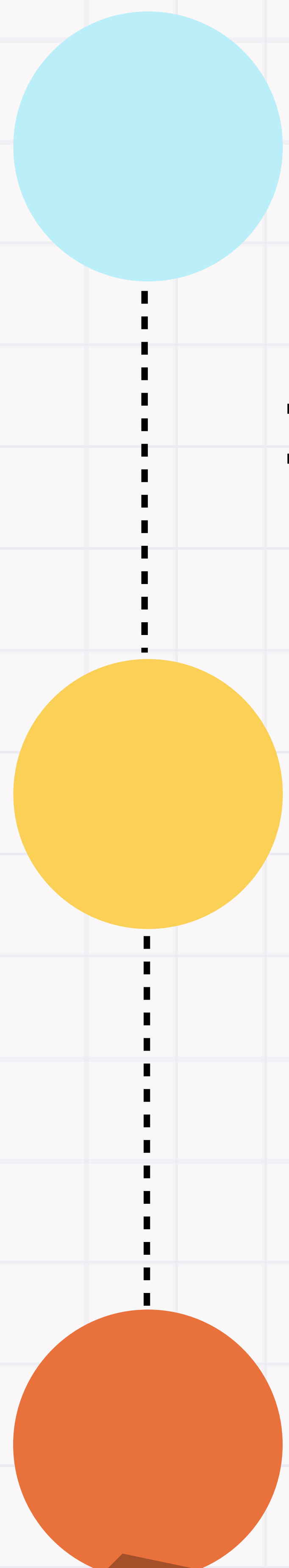
U.S. Adults' Self-Identification as LGBTQ+, by Generation, 2024

Yet, the numbers aren't equally consistent across generations.



■ Baby boomers (6.34%) ■ Generation X (14.8%)
■ Millennials (30.02%) ■ Generation Z (48.84%)

Interestingly, the number of identifiers is much higher in younger generations than in older ones. Whereas about 5% of Gen Xers identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ population, 23.1% (more than one 1 in 5) of Gen Z identify as LGBTQ+ according to Gallop polls. In fact, Gen Z is 8.9% more likely to identify as LGBTQ+ than the previous generation of Millennials.



And another culturally significant trend is also appearing: 56.3% of the self-identifying LGBTQ+ community see themselves as bisexual, much higher than in previous years and generations, indicating that sexual identity and attraction are becoming both more fluid and less discernible over time. (Of the remaining 43.7% of self-identifying youth, 21.1% self-identify as gay while 14.6% see themselves as lesbian.)



In the past 12 years, Gallup has noted that the percentage of those who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community has tripled.

Why?

There are many answers to this question. Certainly, the further we are from the fall into sin in Genesis, the more sin will compound. Even though this increase in brokenness shouldn't surprise Christians, it shouldn't be embraced.

Rather, it should move us to compassion. Living life full of uncertainty, especially concerning one's gender and sexuality, would be deeply confusing. As Christians, we can and should affirm the sexual foundation God provides each individual bodily, even as we allow for differences in talents, interests, abilities, and physical brokenness.

But it's not just sin's compounding that has happened in the last twelve years. It's also important to recognize cultural influence on our definitions of sexuality and current cultural acceptance that highlights and embraces brokenness. For example, characters portraying same-sex attraction or other deviations of the norm were rare in films made before 2000, yet that is no longer the case.

In 2022, 28.5% of movies portrayed a member of the LGBTQ community. At time of printing, at least ten major film studios now regularly include sexually confused characters as part of their mainstream content. The movement to normalize same-sex attraction and other non-normative desires is gaining momentum culturally.



Why does same-sex attraction occur?



If you ask your search engine the cause of same-sex attraction, you'll find a lot of differing information. From the medical field to the general populace, answers to this question

continue to vary. Some say there is a genetic component to same-sex attraction, that individuals are "born this way." Research is currently being done to look for one or more variants in the genetic code that can be identified as the "gay gene." The assumption in this case is that something internal, genetic even, is compelling an individual to be attracted to someone of the same sex.

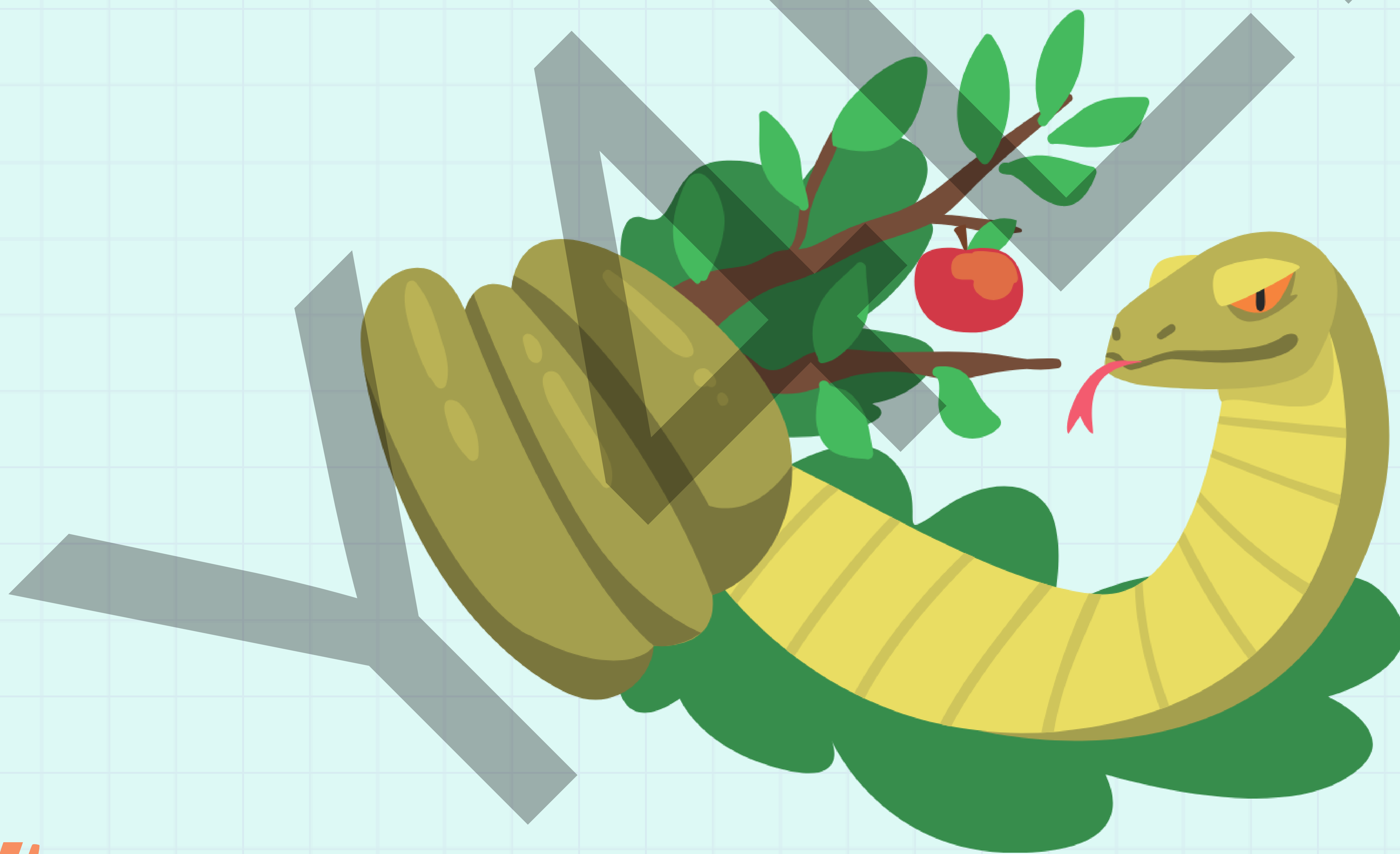
Another biological theory rests on the idea that hormonal imbalances, either the absence or overabundance of a given hormone, can play a role in one's sexual attraction. Building on both of these suppositions, some scientists believe that the combination of abnormal hormones and genetic differences change the brain, creating what they're calling "gay brain," which makes same-sex attraction preferable.

Some researchers have also observed a connection between the lack of a father figure and an increased likelihood of same-sex attraction. They postulate that sons and daughters with a very close attachment to their mother and no father figure to provide guidance increases a child's propensity to being attracted to the same sex.

While there may be truth in some of these theories, no one theory actually has enough data to prove its hypothesis true. Homosexuality is a complex issue, and it's very likely that there is no "one" cause that explains the attraction.



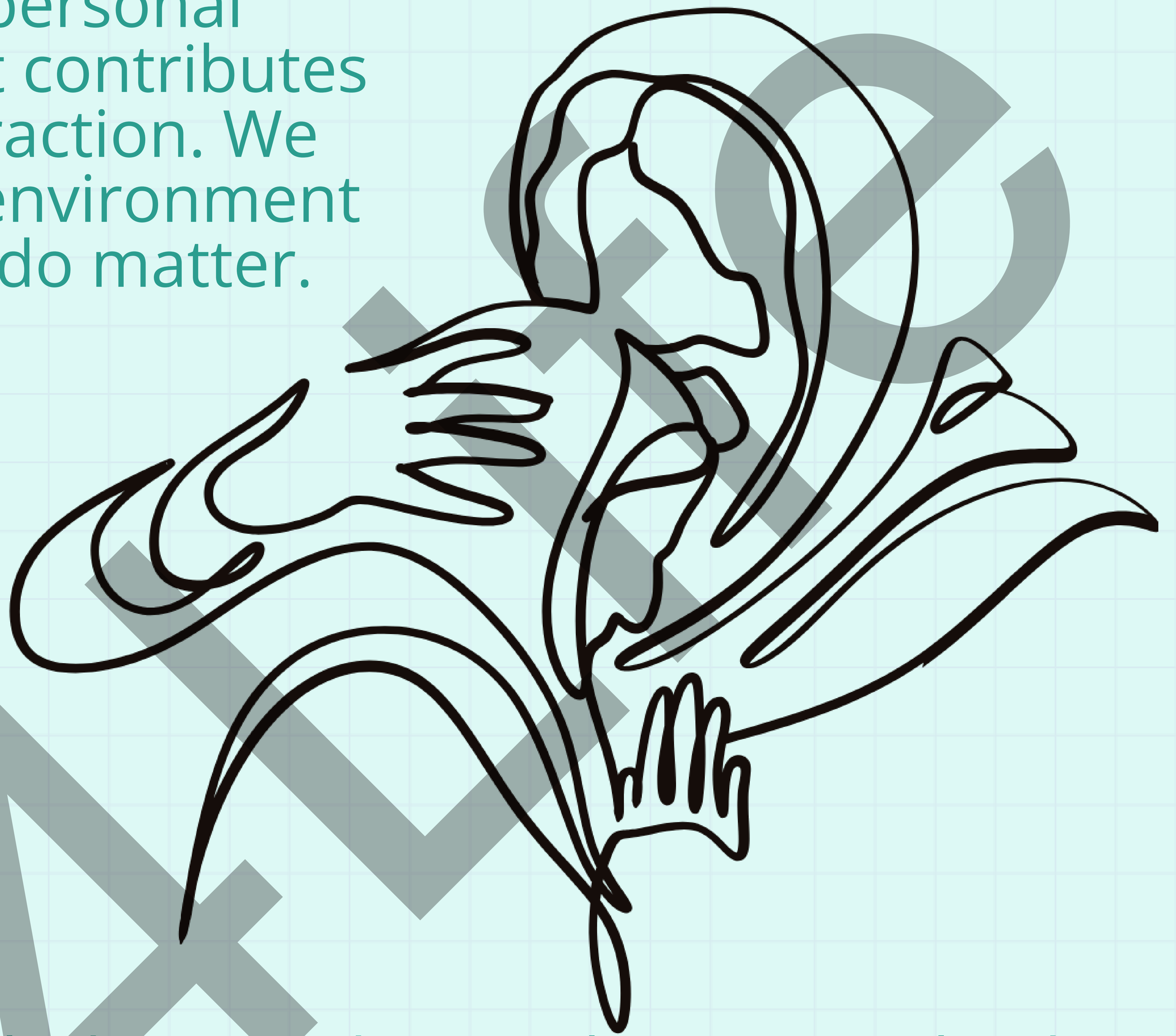
Here's what we do know: The devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh are certain to cause confusion and brokenness in our lives. What God creates for good can be twisted into actions and desires that are unholy. One of the ways this brokenness is manifested is in our sexuality.



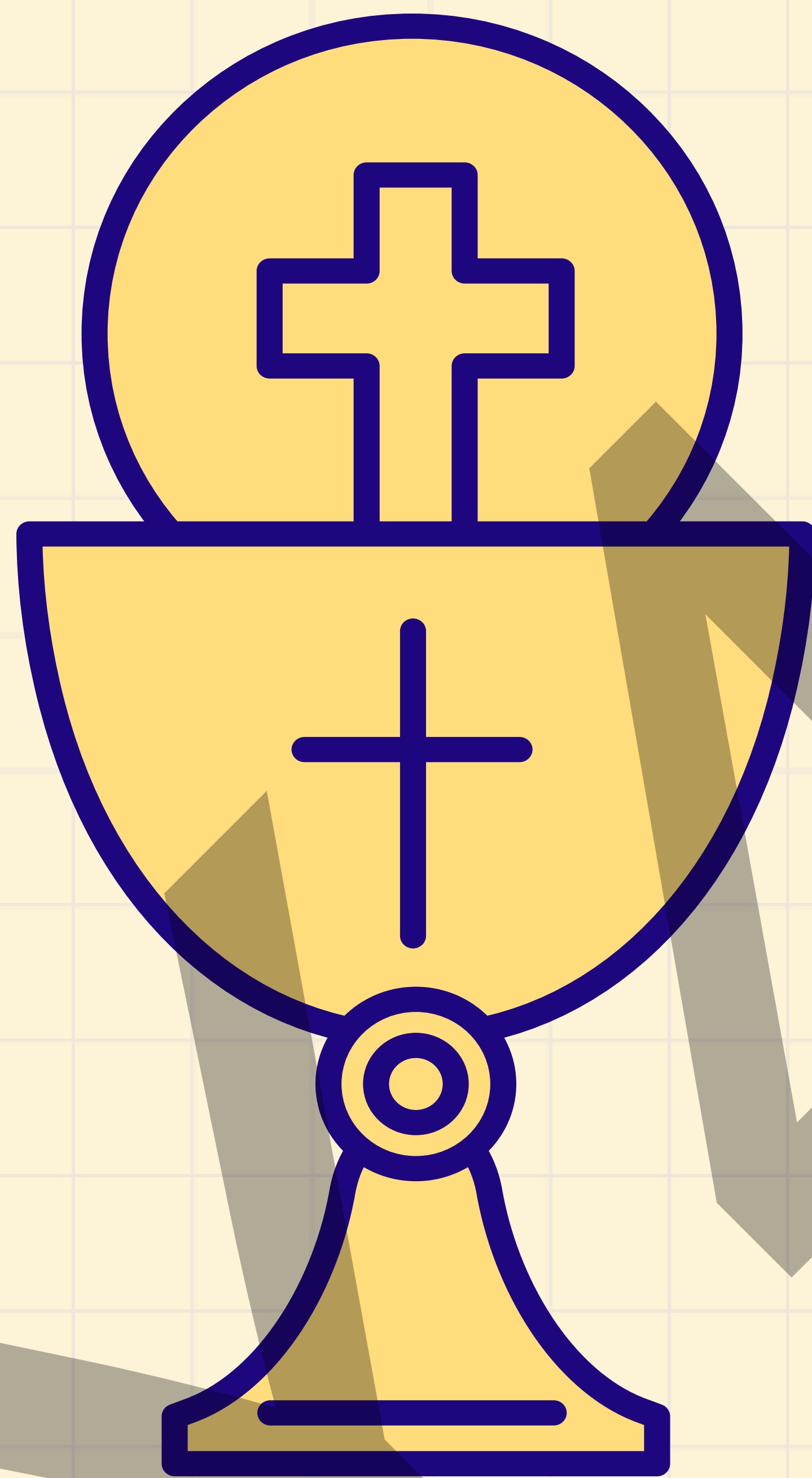
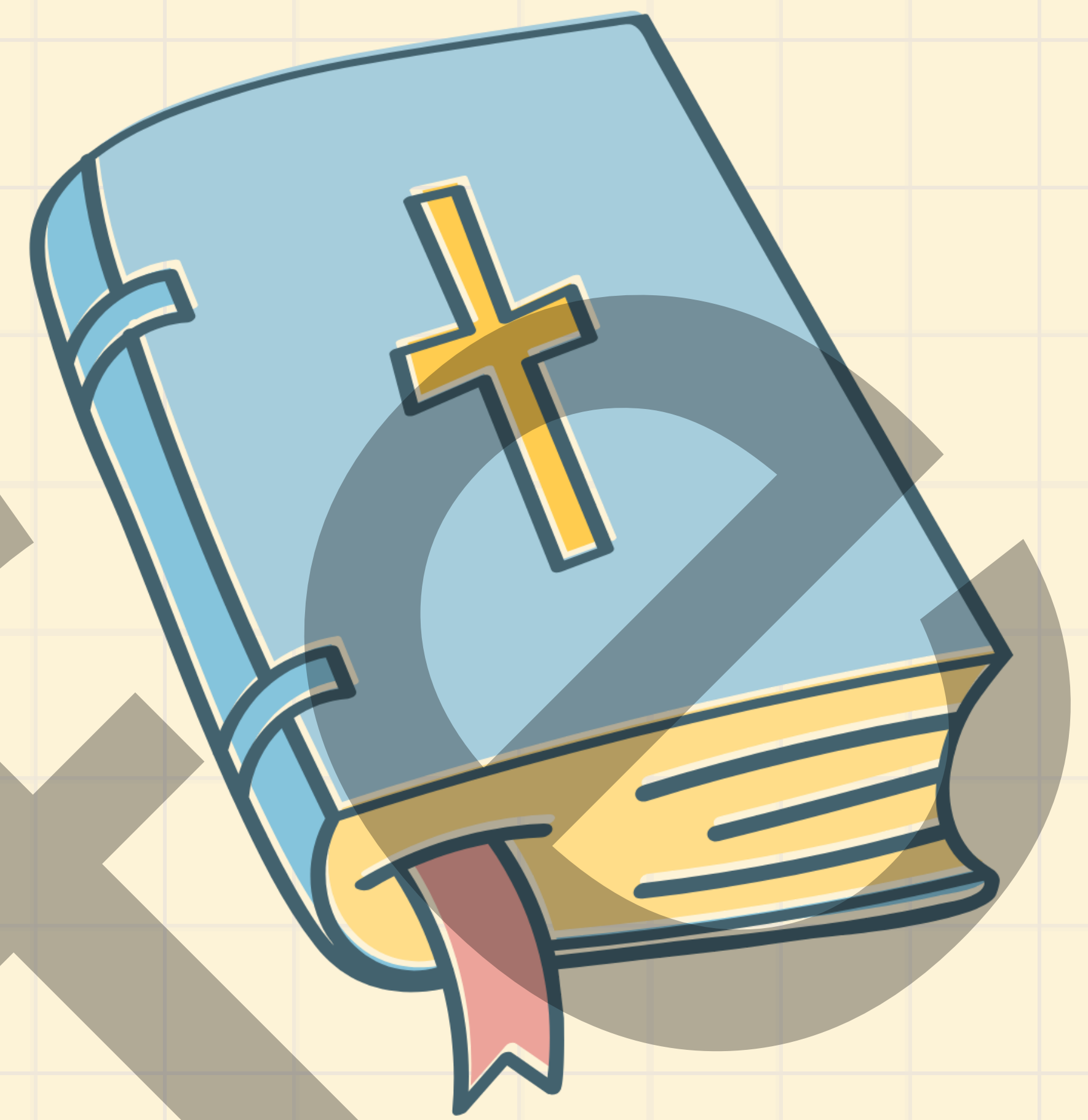
But it's not just personal brokenness that contributes to same-sex attraction. We also know that environment and experience do matter.

Sexual abuse that occurs during childhood, sometime between the ages of birth to 18, is a notable common denominator in those who

identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. We can also be certain that whether we are a victim of circumstance or experiencing the brokenness of sin, God has not forsaken those who struggle with same-sex attraction. Instead, He helps us bear our burdens and heal from our sin.



God's Word is clear, same-sex attraction – whether we act on the desire or not – is a sin. When we question our sexual identity, when we are tempted to embrace our brokenness, we may feel shame. We may even wonder if God could love us. The truth is, He can and He does.



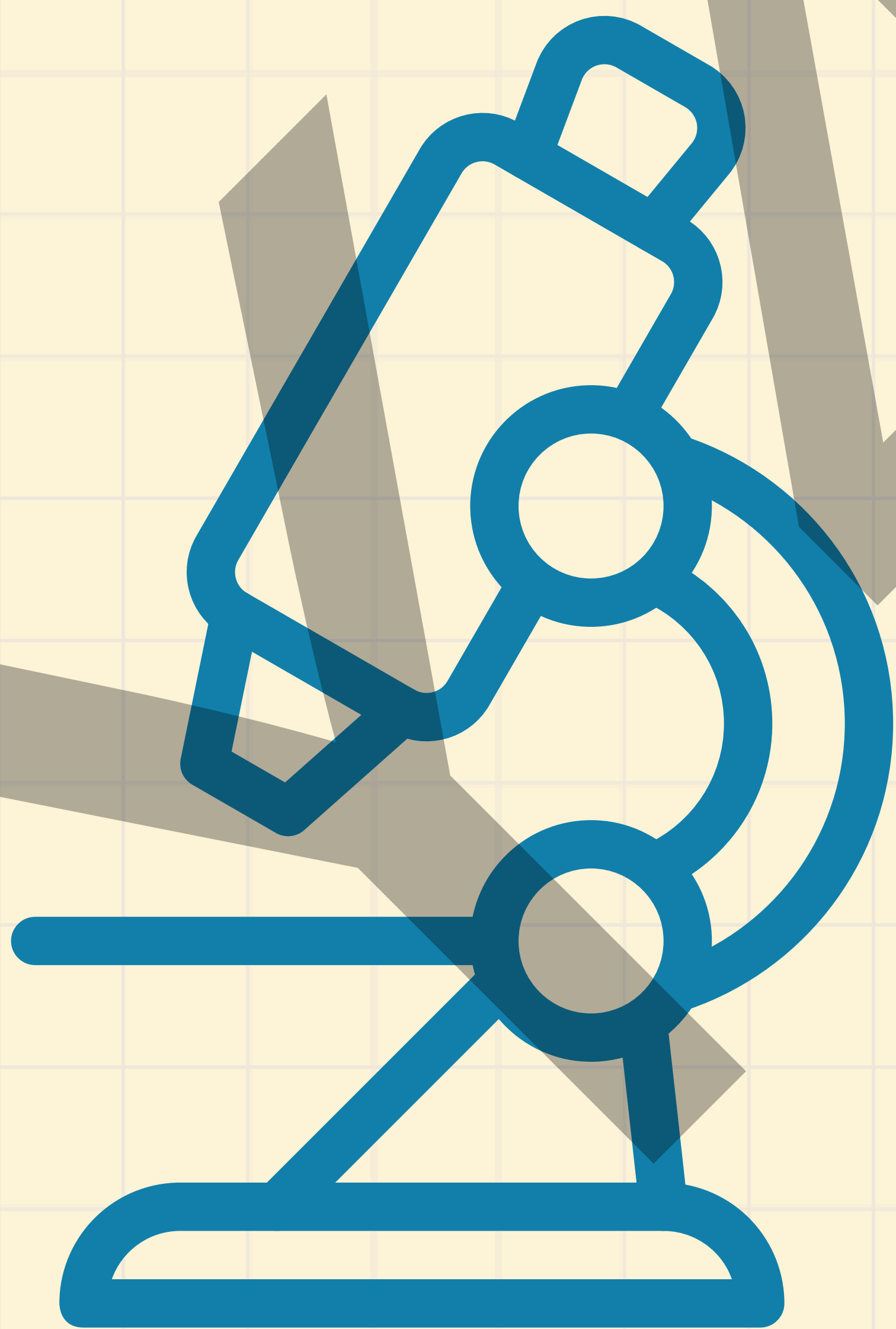
Same-sex attraction is not the unforgivable sin. Jesus died for this sin, too. Just as wonderful, He is at work to renew and heal His beloved bride, the Church. As you receive His forgiveness through Word and sacrament, you are strengthened and enabled to lead a sexually pure and decent life. And you do not have to carry your burden or temptation alone.

Not only does Christ walk with you, but He has also given you Christian family, friends, pastors, and teachers to help uphold, encourage, and pray for you.

Can a homosexual lifestyle actually be harmful?

While people tend to look at the emotional damage relationships can impart, homosexual relationships can be physically damaging, too. For example, those engaging in a homosexual lifestyle have a higher risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), which include HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, both hepatitis A and B, HPV, and meningitis.

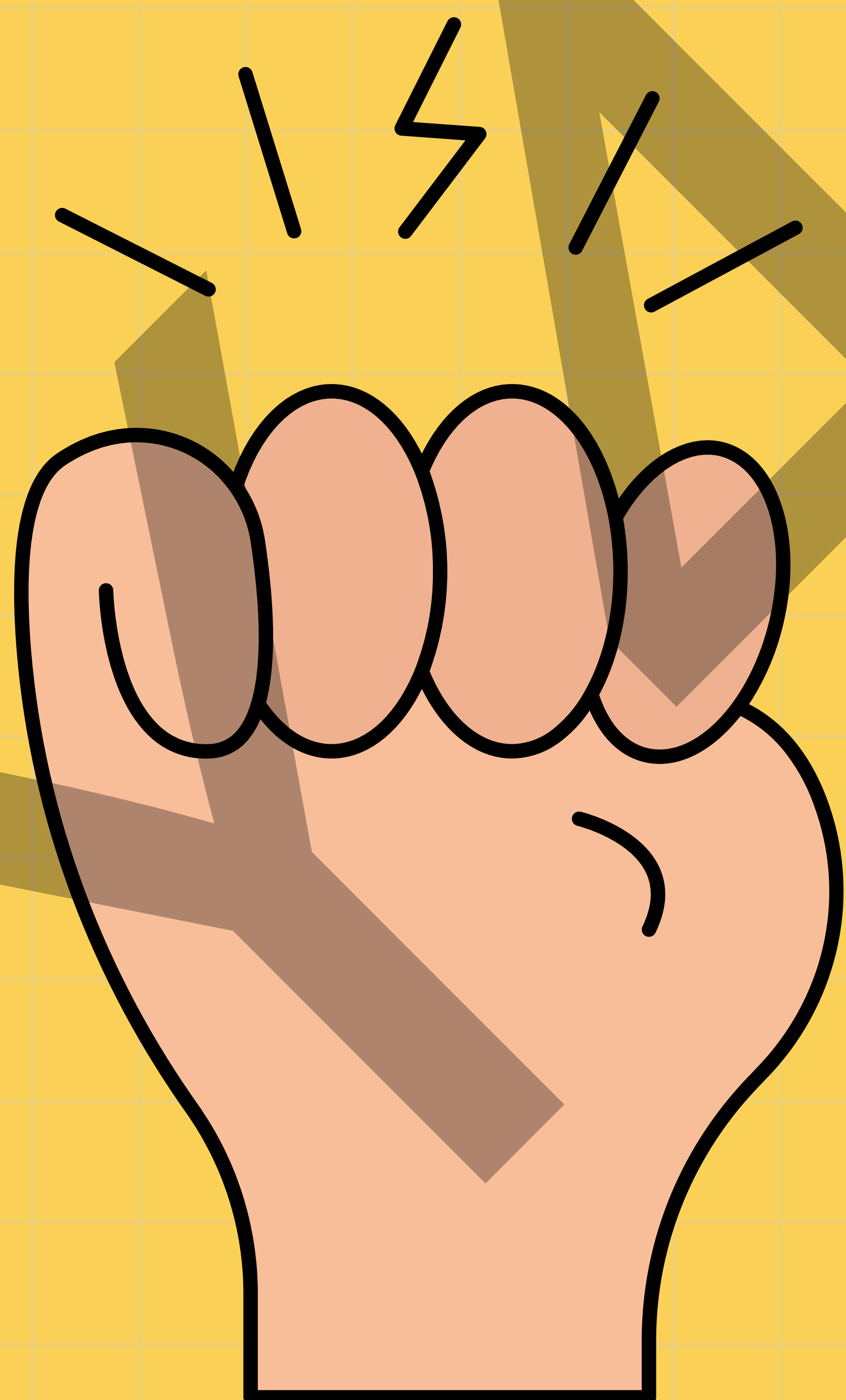
In fact, according to amfAR, the foundation for AIDS research, the population most affected by HIV in the U.S. is men who have sex with other men. "Of the 31,800 estimated new HIV acquisitions in the U.S. and dependent areas in 2022, 67% were among gay, bisexual, and other men who reported male-to-male sexual contact."



Homosexual men also have higher rates of body dysmorphia and eating disorders. They're more likely to engage in substance use and abuse both alcohol and tobacco, abuse that leads to an increased risk of permanent liver disease and damage. Tobacco and alcohol companies know about this propensity; they actually target gay and bisexual men with their advertisements.



Lastly, domestic violence for men is much more likely in homosexual relationships than heterosexual ones. Sadly, research shows that men in homosexual relationships have the same risk of physical and emotional domestic violence as their female heterosexual counterparts.



Is there any correlation between same-sex attraction and mental health difficulties?

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in 2023,

15%

of LGBTQ youth used illicit drugs

41%

had seriously contemplated suicide. In contrast, only 13% their heterosexual peers considered suicide

65%

of the LGBTQ+ identifiers felt depressed

17%

were forced into having sex,



18%

had abused prescription pain medication.

What about gay marriage? If it's legal, isn't it okay?

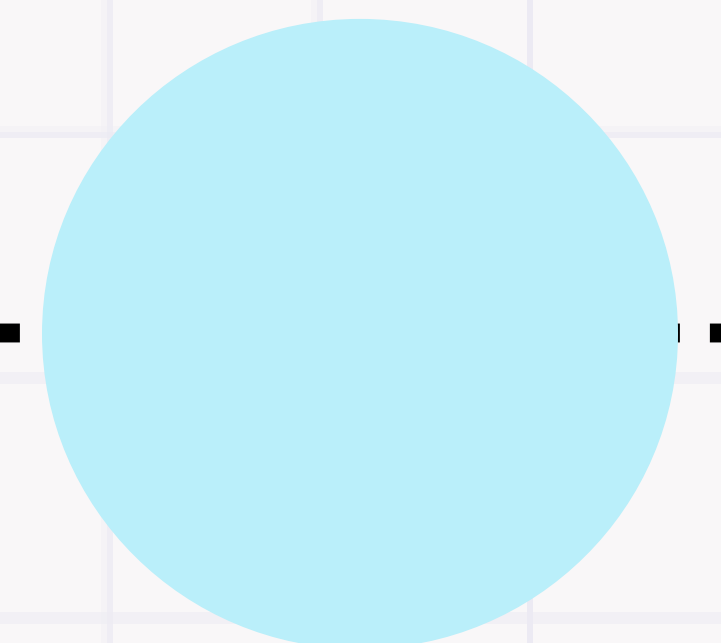
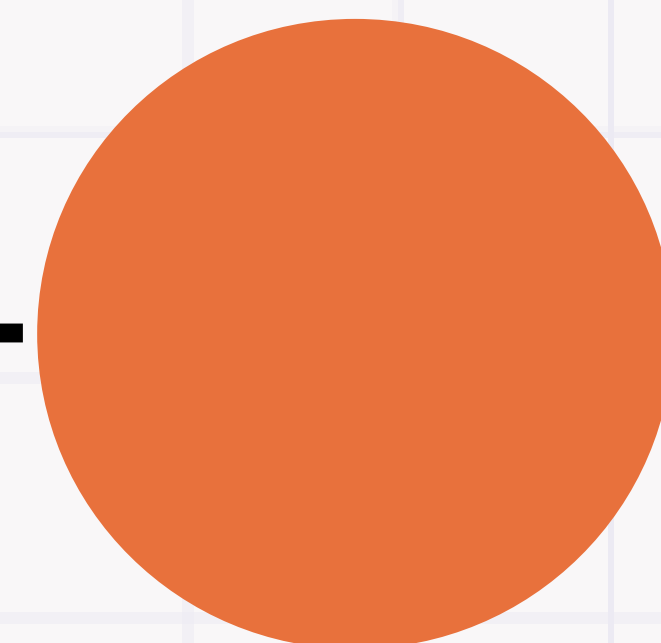
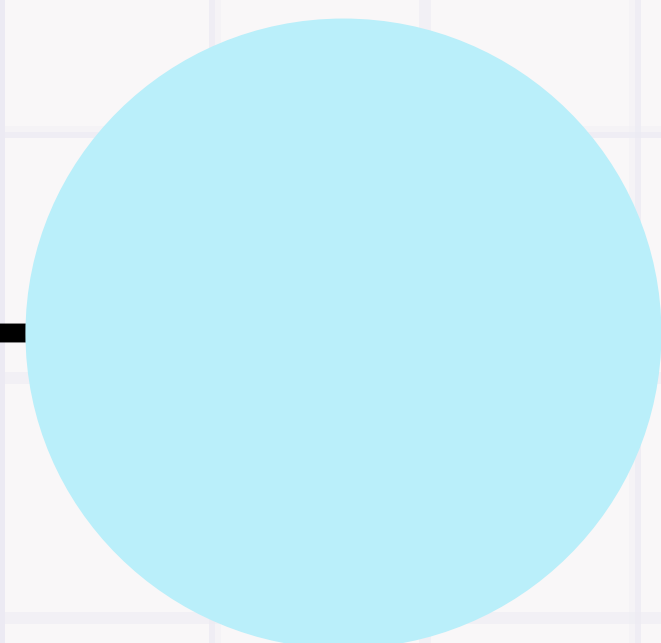
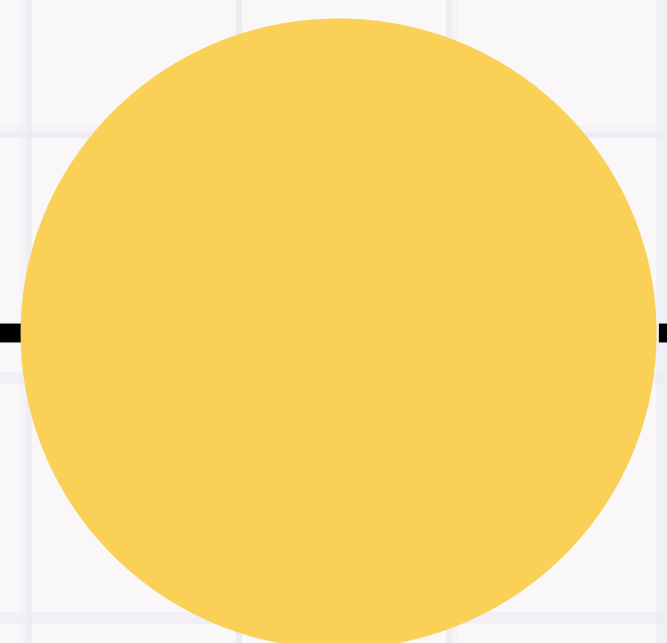


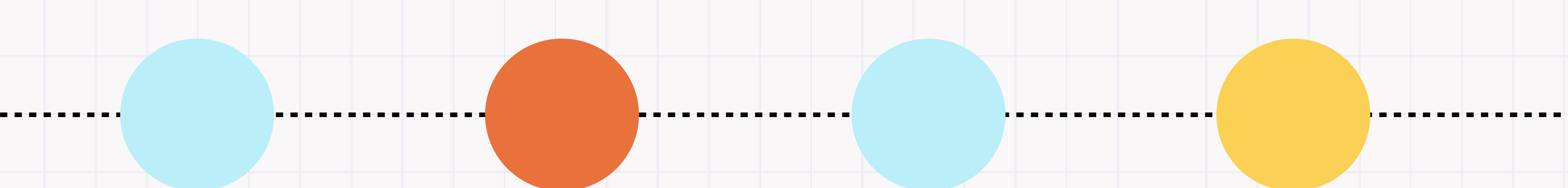
Just because something is legal, doesn't mean it is good or godly. A look at our own American history testifies to this.



For example, slavery was legal in America until the 13th Amendment passed in 1865, but it was never good or godly. How can we be certain of this?

Because God declares that every human being is equally valuable and equally loved; each life, including those trapped in slavery, is handmade by God (Psalm 139:13-16).





Just as God creates and establishes human value, so, too, does He create, define, and establish marriage.

God gives us a perfect image of what marriage is intended to be when He unites Adam and Eve, male and female, in the garden.

Not only are they given in love to each other, specifically designed to uphold each other's lives, but they are also given the gift of unity that will result in new life. Marriage was, and still is, designed to be life-affirming and life-begetting.



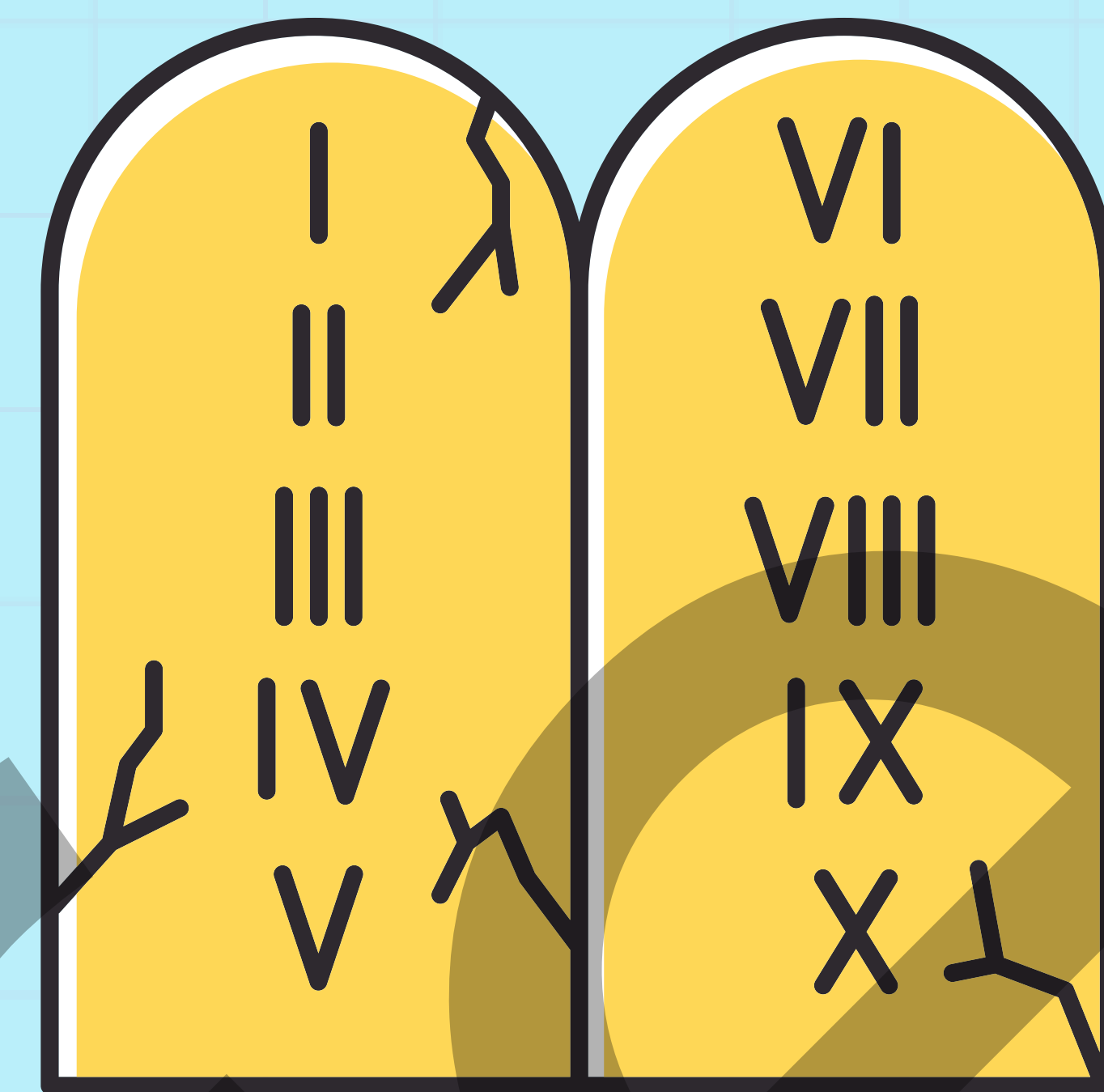
Marriage was, and still is, designed to be life-affirming and life-begetting.

Finally, in a study conducted on 200 kids with same-sex parents, the propensity for family brokenness became clear: Only two lived with both of their parents until the age of 18.

God's laws are given because He loves us, and each of His laws protects a life-affirming gift He desires to give.

When we uphold God's laws in society, we show love to our neighbors – from those who struggle with same-sex attraction to family members and children who may be confused or harmed by a same-sex relationship.

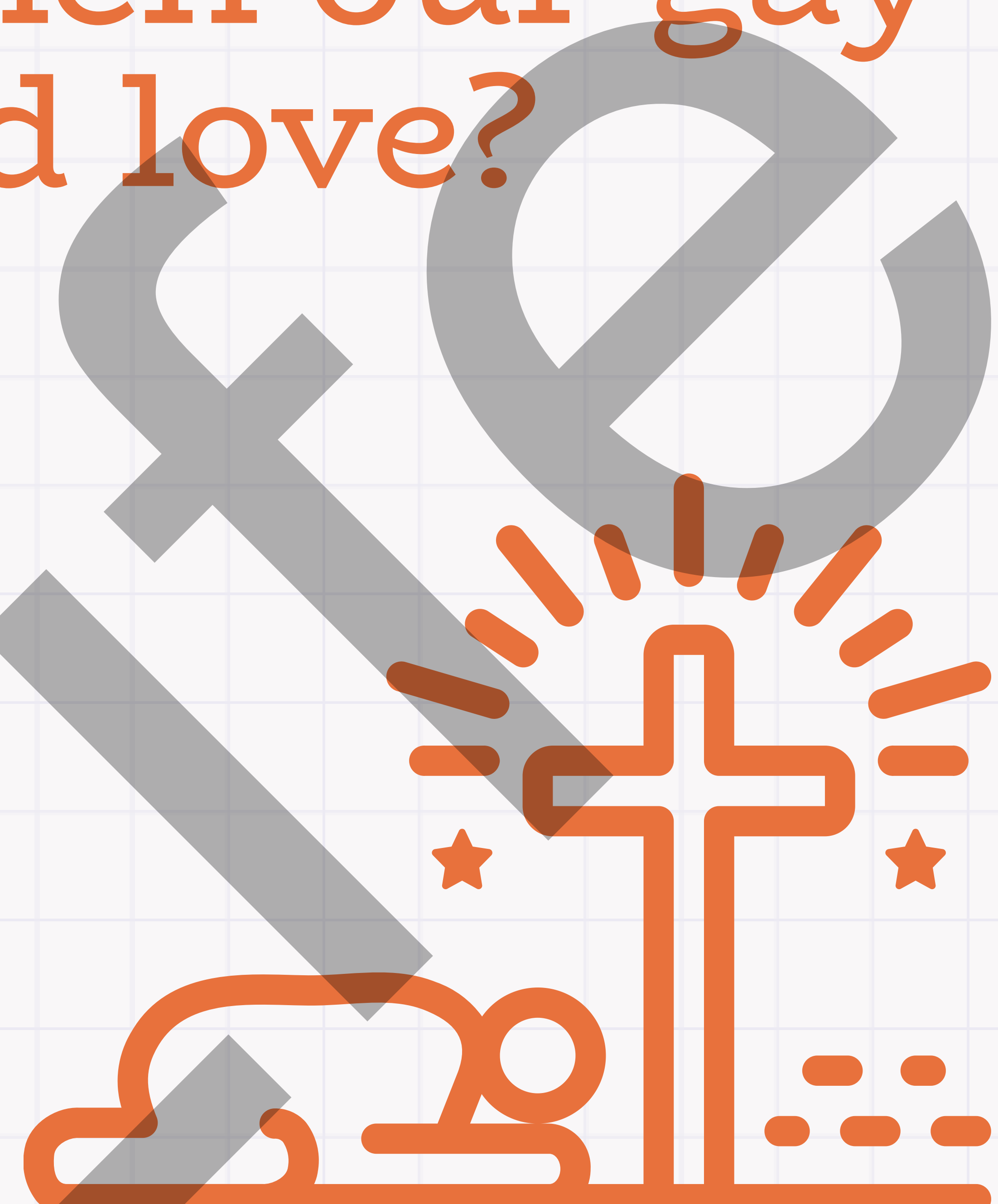
Called to the vocation of neighbor, we care about secular laws and policies because we care for those around us.



Isn't love, love? Why can't we just be happy when our gay friends find love?

When you love someone, you want what is best for them. As Christians, we know that God's ways are always the best ways; His guidance is full of love and blessing. Based on the statistics and information already shared in this infographic, we have to admit that God's warnings against same-sex attraction are valid.

The truth is, when someone chooses to openly break the sixth commandment, he or she is choosing to actively live in a sin, to embrace it even. While this sin isn't unforgivable, it does place us in a precarious position. When we embrace sin and repeatedly refuse to repent, we are torn apart from our Savior and Creator, the One who loves us the most. And the longer we absent ourselves from God and His love, the more likely we are to fall from the faith.



We want our friends to be close to the risen Savior, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, through whom we receive grace, forgiveness, and mercy. As we love our friends, especially those who have chosen to live outside of God's goodness, sometimes loving means speaking the truth in love and mercy.



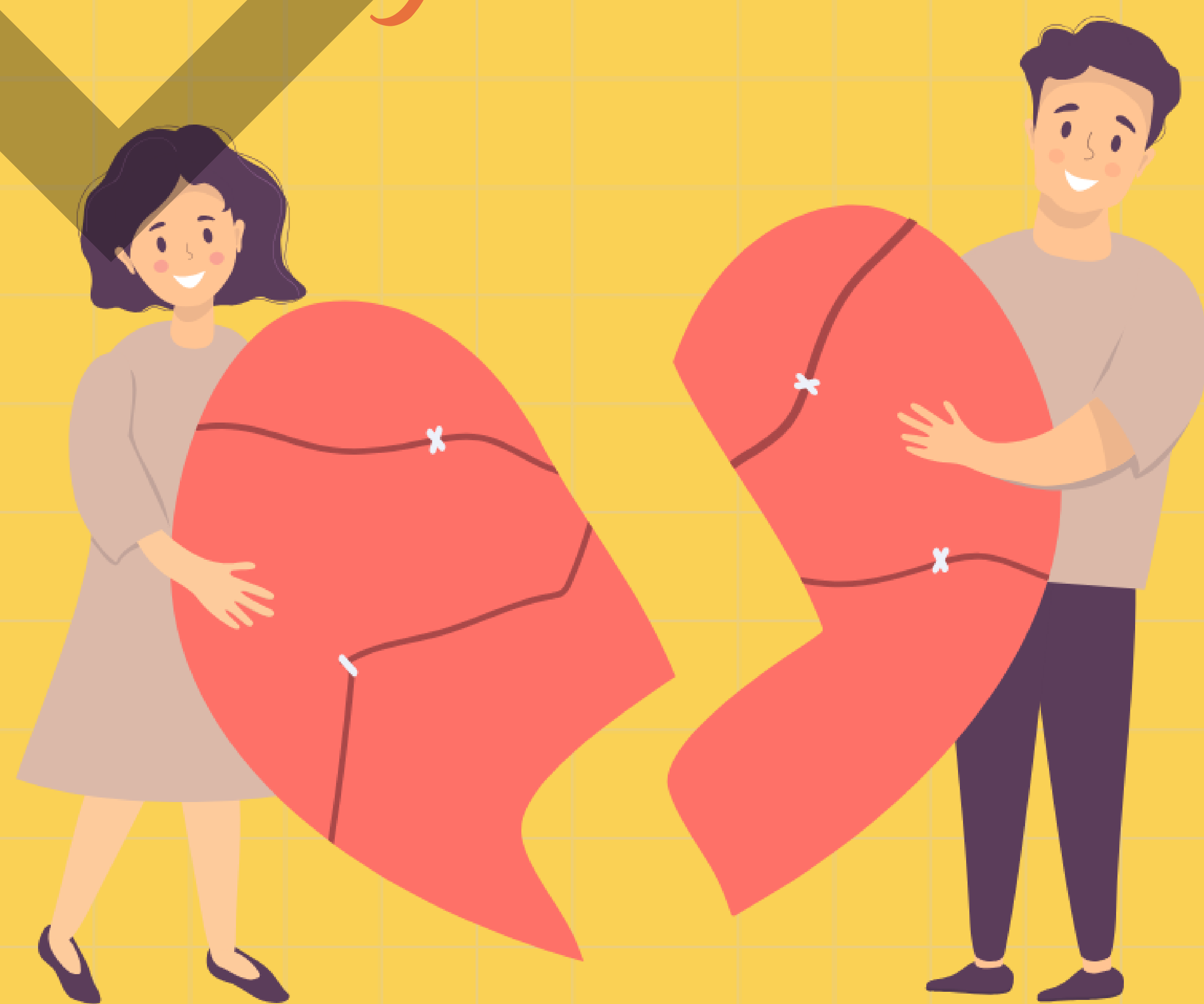
Ephesians 4:15 reminds us that encouraging a Christian friend to continue in the struggle against sin can be good:

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.”

And for those who are still struggling?
1 Corinthians 13:4-7 tells us,

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

We don't rejoice in wrongdoing; instead, we rejoice in truth, without being arrogant or rude. When we love our friends, we care for them with a Gospel-motivated voice that helps connect them to their Creator and Redeemer.



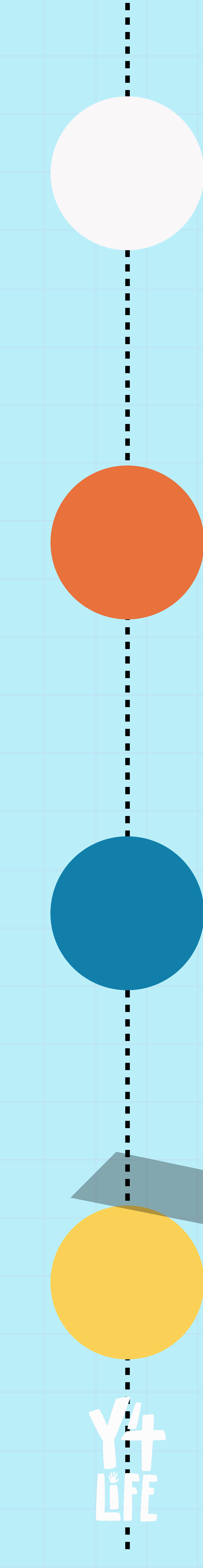
What about gay Christianity? Can a person be gay and Christian?

Christians can and do struggle with sexual sins. We have all broken the sixth commandment in some way and are in need of forgiveness.

Those who are struggling with same-sex attraction need love and support from the Church and Christian community, even as they work to abstain from acting on their attraction.

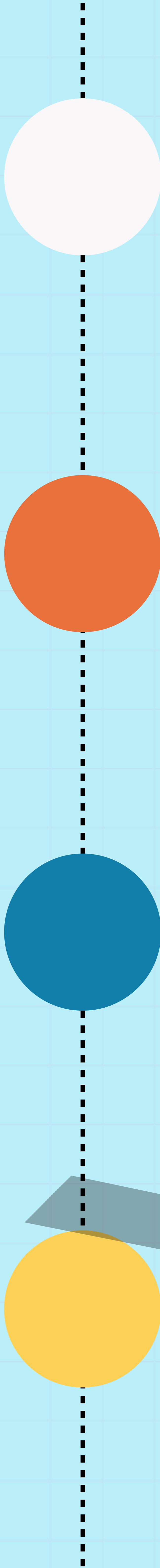
Yet, while it's true that a Christian can struggle with same-sex attraction temporarily or throughout their entire life, even act on this temptation in a moment of weakness, it is not true that a Christian can openly embrace and celebrate a gay lifestyle and claim this is God-pleasing. Why? Because God's Word says the opposite.





Christ refers to Himself as the way, the truth, and the life, and it is in Him that we find both our identity and life. When we make two identities co-equal, as in the term gay Christianity, we make a public declaration that homosexuality is just as sacred as Christ. But Philippians 1:21 reminds us that to be one with Christ is to die to self rather than cling to our own brokenness.

Christians who openly celebrate same-sex attraction are celebrating acting on their sinful impulses, and this is never God-pleasing. Would we openly celebrate those abusing drugs, practicing racism, or abusing their spouse or child? No, we would not. Instead, we would remind them of what Scripture says, pray for them, and encourage them to repent.



What about adoption? Are there any advantages or disadvantages to a child having two moms or two dads?

When God created the family unit, His intention was that each child would have both a mother and father to raise him or her. Despite society's work to convince us otherwise, mothers and fathers are not interchangeable; each has unique gifts to give children, gifts the Creator wove into men and women to be expressed physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

While there is eagerness to put forth evidence that same-sex couples raise typical, healthy children, there is plenty of research that indicates otherwise. For example, adopted children in same-sex marriages are twice as likely to experience mental health issues as compared to children adopted into families with both a mom and dad. Studies have also shown that children of same-sex parents have a higher risk of mental health issues due to their parents' propensity for having a higher risk of severe psychological distress.

What difference does being raised by two men make?

Research shows that children who have two dads will struggle more with their mental health than those who have both a mother and father. Children in same-sex male homes are more likely to experience poverty as children and to have higher arrest rates later in life. On the other hand, females who were raised by two dads tend to have more sexual partners of both sexes than females raised in heterosexual homes.

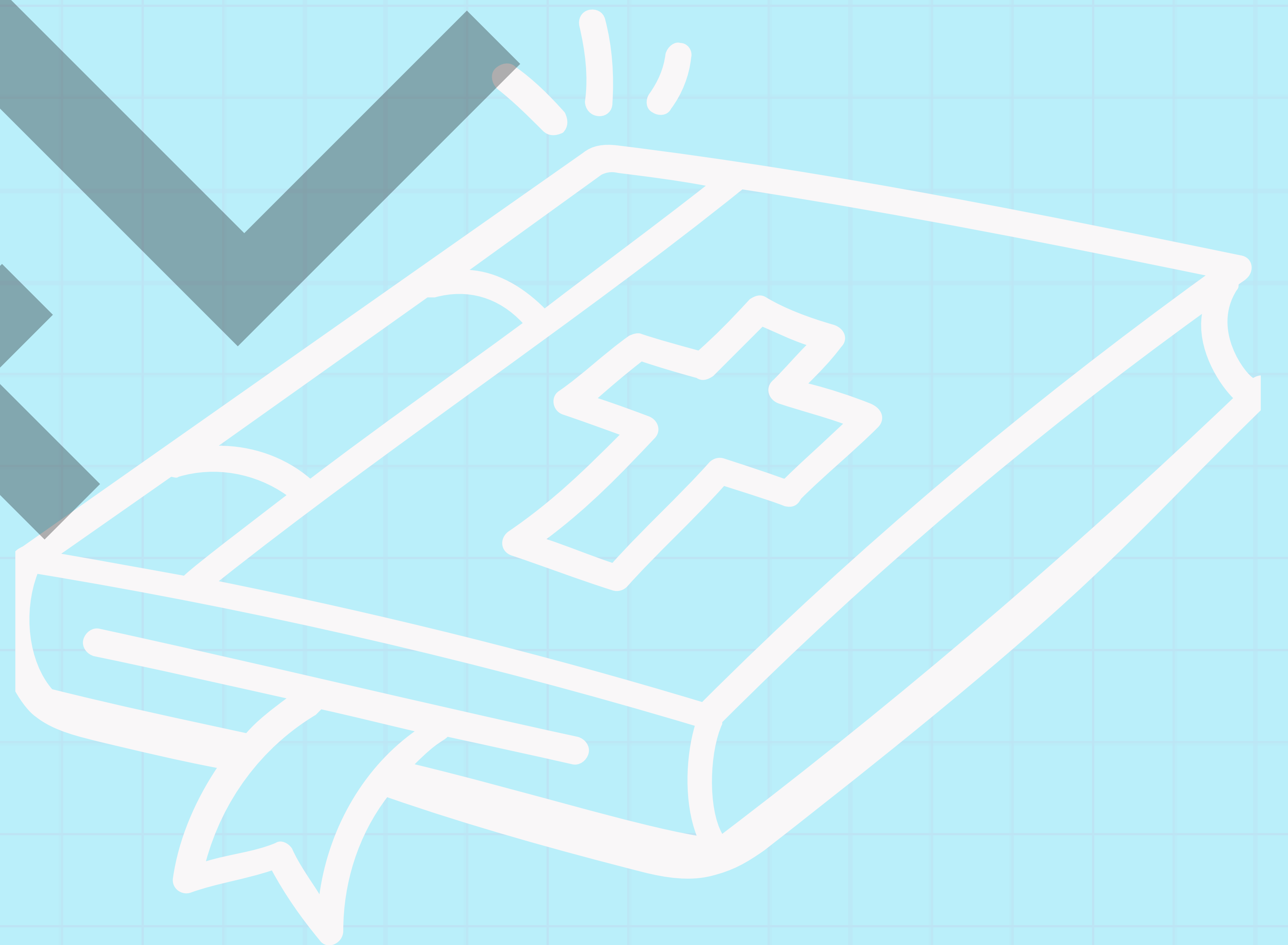
In contrast, children raised by lesbian mothers are more likely to cohabit than marry as adults; they are eleven times more likely to have been abused sexually in childhood than children raised in intact biological families, and they struggle with attachment disorders in relationships with others.

They are four times more likely to identify as something other than heterosexual. Lastly, girls raised in lesbian homes are four times more likely to have been forced to have sex against their will than girls raised in heterosexual households.

What does
God's Word say
about engaging
in homosexual
activity?

Let's start at the beginning: Genesis 1 and 2 record God's creation of man and woman. Adam and Eve are designed as complementary beings, perfectly made to become one flesh and to be fruitful and multiply. In other words, they were designed to bring life into the world.

The first marriage was established between one man one woman – and that is how God intended marriage to continue to be. In Matthew 19, Jesus is clear about what marriage is when He refers back to Genesis.



Jesus, who was there at creation, points out that marriage is made for companionship, love, and procreation. If not joined together in marriage with a member of the opposite sex, God's desire for every man and woman is abstinence.



In Mark 7:21-23 Jesus says, "...from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." In other words, God didn't create broken sexual desires. Those come from us.



Paul talks about sexual immorality in the Epistles as well. In Romans 1, Paul specifically addresses same-sex immorality in verses 24-27. He says,

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

Paul warns against this behavior in his letter to the people of Corinth,

“Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. 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.”

The institution of marriage should be honored. Gender is a gift meant to be used in service toward others.

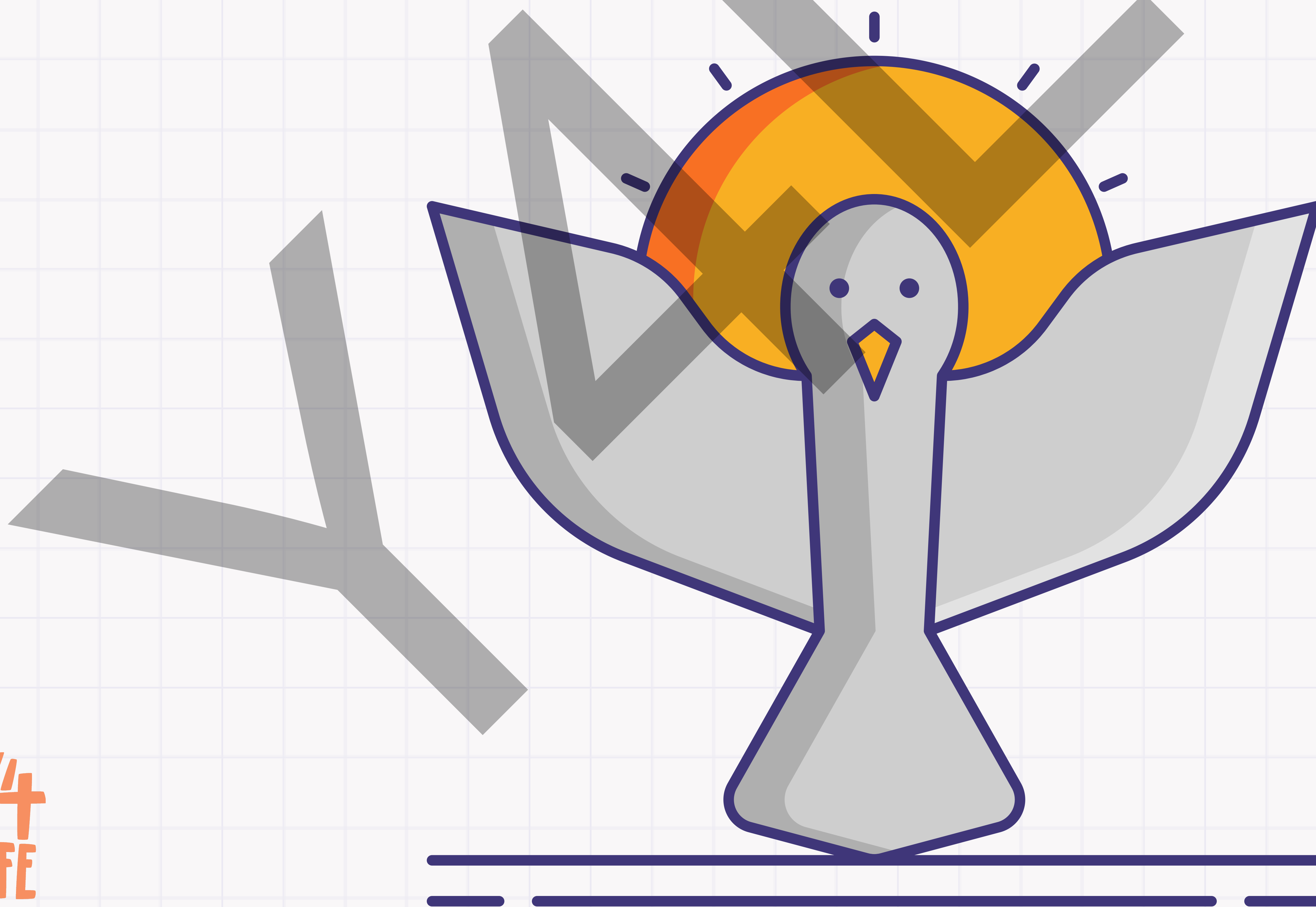
Is homosexuality the unforgivable sin?

The only unforgivable sin is the sin against the Holy Spirit, the repeated rejection of Jesus and His mercies. (If it was only one rejection, Paul would not be saved. He certainly rejected the Gospel more than once!)
Homosexuality is not the unforgivable sin.



Once Christians are brought to faith, the Holy Spirit lives in them, and through His work, Christians are able to turn from sin. It's true that we will fail at times, but **the key is the struggle.** When we openly embrace sin without hesitation, and we do so repeatedly, we are resisting the work of the Holy Spirit in our life, and we are in danger of pushing Him out for good.

The Holy Spirit enables us to fight back, to struggle, to make us uncomfortable with sin -- even when we give in. He helps us turn away from sin and lead lives that glorify our Creator. Will you fail? Yes, we all do, but how you handle the struggle is key. Do you embrace and rejoice in the sin or turn back in repentance? It is the Holy Spirit who causes us to repent, to turn back toward God and His Word, and to try again to live the life God desires us to live.



How do I help my friend who is struggling with same-sex attraction?

The first step is to be a Christian friend. Pray for those struggling with sexual sins and pray with them. Extend your care for, concern about, and commitment to helping them. Ask how you can help them bear the burden they carry. And share God's message of hope and forgiveness. No matter the stage or depth of the struggle, your friend is deeply in need of hearing God's mercy and grace.

We all sin and are in need of God's grace daily. As a fellow sinner, assure your friend that you have compassion and love for him or her.

Seek guidance from your pastor on how to help. Remember, pastors care for their sheep, and that includes you, too! With your pastor's help, try to connect your friend not only to his or her pastor but also with a Christian counselor who will encourage your friend to respond faithfully to God's calling for abstinence and Christian sexuality.

Rejoice in opportunities for healthy same-sex relationships. God designed each of us for same-sex affection and fellowship with parents, siblings, other relatives, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ. Those relationships do not need sexual activity to prosper. Platonic connections still matter a great deal, and they can and should be encouraged.



Finally, the world will tell you to embrace your friend's newfound sexuality, but remember that we are called to love our friends and uphold them in truth and love. God's Word is truth. And His work is loving. If your friend was struggling in some other way, you would help him or her overcome the struggle. That's exactly how you are called to support your friend who is struggling sexually.

What if I'm struggling?

What message does God have for me?

Each and every one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Christians struggle with sexual sin, and those sins come in various forms: lust, pornography, premarital sex, cohabitation, and self-pleasure, to name just a few.

Same-sex attraction is a sexual sin that results in struggle as well. Just like the other sins Christians face, God stands ready to strengthen and forgive. Here are truths you can cling to:



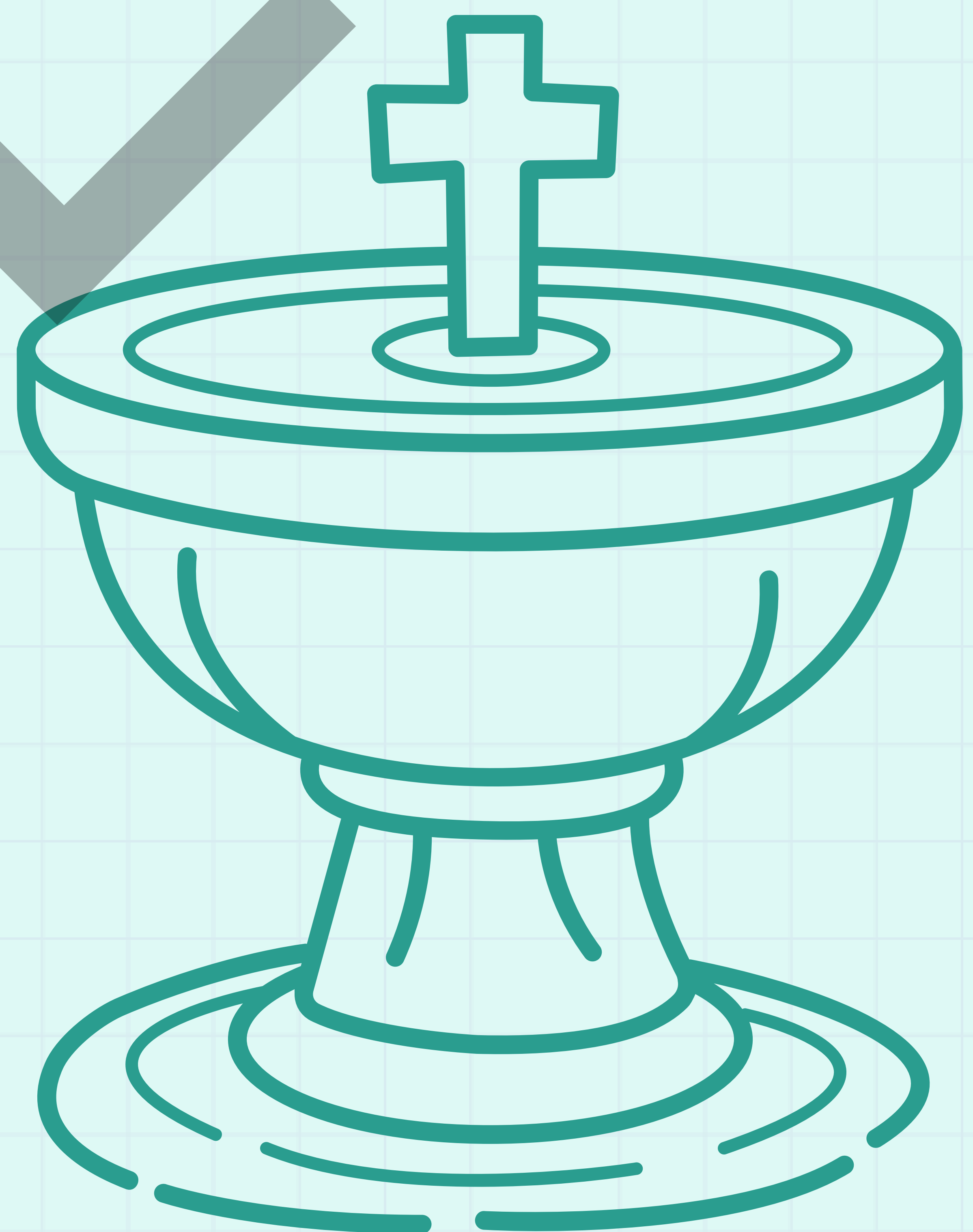
You are not the first person to struggle with sin.

Paul reminds us of his struggle,

“So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me”
(Romans 17:17-20).

Like Paul, you have likely failed. You may have given in to temptation. But God's Word speaks to this, too:



“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Christ has paid for your sins, and He is now at work in you to forgive and heal.

Your struggles do not define you.

You are still a dearly beloved and cherished child of God. God desires to give you the strength you need to combat temptation through His Word and Sacraments. He desires to fulfill your every need; ask for His help and seek His forgiveness.

You are not alone.

Jesus is with you. He came for all who struggle, and He desires to provide you with help, mercy, and forgiveness. You may feel like the lost sheep in Matthew 18 who wanders off, trying to manage earthly struggles on your own, but Jesus came to find, forgive, and love you.

And no matter how many times you have fallen, He still desires to love and strengthen you today – not only through Word and Sacrament, but also through your pastor, your family, your Christian friends, and your church.

He has prepared people ready and waiting to uphold you, people who are praying for you even now.



Your struggle is real, but it is one filled with hope.

Christ has won the victory over sin, death, and the devil, and that victory is not an abstract reality. It is real and present in your life as you endure in Him. Christ has won the victory for you, and He is at work in your life, even now, to sustain you and to make that victory complete. The book of Revelation reminds us that God is already at work to bring our suffering, our brokenness, and our longings to an end:

“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’”

God makes you new in your Baptismal waters daily; daily He strengthens you to face temptation. Healing can happen this side of heaven, and it is good to pray boldly for that healing, for we know that God’s grace is the only ultimate healing remedy for same-sex attraction. But when complete healing does not happen,

God promises to sustain us until we meet Him, until He makes us new for eternity and for LIFE.



Closing Prayer:

Heavenly and Gracious Father, thank You for the gift of my body. Please let me use it to glorify You. Please help me combat earthly sexual struggles and turn me toward You for help and mercy. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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