

view it as a sin anymore. I can't imagine my life without those kids and Karen.”
“...I can't view it as a sin anymore...” One has to ask the question — why not? Did the love he had for Katie *change* what God's Word stated? Of course not. Katie's parents had a *horribly difficult* decision to make when the ultimatum was delivered.

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man's enemies will be the members of his own household. Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” (Matt. 10:34-39 NIV)

Stories like the Reider's happen to Christian parents far more often than they should! And it's not just issues involving homosexual relationships. There are multiple sinful lifestyles and activities in which grown children become involved. So what *should* parents do when faced with heartaches like this? It's far too complex to have one answer — so just a few thoughts parents might want to ponder.

First, when an adult child *chooses* to engage in a sinful lifestyle, parents *should not allow* that child to *transfer* the guilt (which is *correctly placed*) to the parents (which would be *incorrectly placed*). The sin is the *child's!* The parents failure to *accept* the sin as something that is “right” or “ok” is *not* the sin and should carry no guilt.

Second, if parents have any part in *relieving* guilt that is *correctly placed* on their child because of sinful behavior, they might want to consider that their child could very well pay an *eternal* price. God created mankind with a conscience for a reason.

“Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last...” (John 8:9 NKJV)

Third, *unequivocally communicating* to the child that as parents, you will *never* stop loving him or her because Christ *died* for you *while you were still a sinner*. And it is *that very kind of love* that makes the grown child's *eternal* well-being *far more important* to you than fleeting earthly happiness. Godly parents will abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. Godly parents will *condone* the behavior of their grown child only when love itself does not *require* the contrary.

*The entire article *Journey Through Grief* in the Cincinnati Enquirer can be read at: <http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20090521/LIFE/905210343/1035/Reider+s+partner+journeys+through+grief>

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DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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Love — The Power To Save or The Power To Condemn

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8 NIV)

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.” (Romans 12:9 NKJV)

Most of us who are reading this article already understand the great love that God demonstrated toward mankind by giving His own Son so that we could have forgiveness for our sins. That's not what this article is about.

This article deals with something far more abstract — something that makes for difficult decisions and weighs heavy on the minds of many parents who love their own children more than they love their own life. Sort of like — but not exactly like — Jesus' love for us. There's no way a parent can understand how God was able to give His Son to die on the cross when those of us who *are* parents would *far* rather die *ourselves* than give one of our children over to such a horrible death. But both — God giving His Son — and a parent's willingness to give him or her self rather than give the child, are all because of love — love that can get somewhat confusing — and difficult at times — at least for parents.

Those of you who are reading this and are native to Cincinnati (or have lived here for many years, as we have) remember *The Ruth Lyon's 50-50 Club*. Her co-host Bob Braun, took over the show after Ruth's health began to fail and it became *The Bob Braun Show*. Both Ruth and Bob have passed away but the memory of those shows lingers in the hearts of many Cincinnatians. There were very few households who didn't welcome Ruth and Bob into their living rooms at noon everyday for many, many years. Cincinnatians *all* felt as if every person on that show was a member of their own family. Ruth Lyon's was even frequently called “mother.”

One of the cast members of the *Bob Braun Show* was a man named Rob Reider. Rob wasn't as “big” or as well known as Ruth and Bob, but he was nevertheless one of the family. Cincinnatians all loved him. They loved *everybody* and *anybody* that was a part of either of those shows.

In recent months, there has been a great deal of publicity about Rob Reider's daughter, Katie. She had become quite well known in her own right for her singing and songwriting abilities. But until the recent publicity, we didn't even know that Katie Reider existed. The huge amount of publicity lately however drew our attention to the tragic story of Katie. According to the local media, Katie developed a rare tumor in her upper left jaw that progressed into her skull base, ate into

her face, left her blind in one eye, robbed her of her voice as well as her ability to perform and took her life on July 14, 2008 at the age of 30. With such a tragedy as this, we weren't really surprised to learn that several tributes were being planned in recognition of the first anniversary of her death. One of those tributes was to be during this year's *Taste of Cincinnati* festival — an event where she had performed every year since 1998. Fitting? Perhaps. But a tribute that had not really captured our attention until the morning of May 21st, 2009.

That morning, as usual, we opened the morning paper* at the breakfast table to quickly catch up on whatever was new in the news. A promo at the top of the "Local Life" section caught our attention. The promo read:

"After Katie Reider died last year, her partner, Karen (pictured) and their children took to the road, a trip Katie and Karen hoped to make together..." What? Katie....her *partner*, Karen...*their* children? Wait a minute. *All* those people on Ruth and Bob's show were Christian people — at least by the *world's very* broad definition of the word. How can this be? What must her dad, Rob think of this? (Her mother Gaile passed away in 2007 after battling cancer). We opened to the inside pages (thinking perhaps we were misunderstanding the tease) to see what was nearly a full page color spread bearing the title *Journey Through Grief*. The article told of the "love story" between Katie and Karen. It told about "their" children and how Katie's death had left Karen "a single mother." The article stated that Katie and Karen had first met by a campfire at an outing of a Christian drama group. After a few years of Karen serving as a youth minister, they both ended up at Ohio State University and were eventually "married." Karen's mother "walked her daughter down the aisle at the ceremony."

So what does this story of Katie and Karen have to do with the kind of love that parents have for children and the kind of love God showed for us? Well, the statements made in the article by Karen and by Rob (Katie's father) started us thinking about the *power* of love — and how — sometimes — it can become complicated and difficult — especially for parents who are faced with adult children who commit to a life that is in direct opposition to everything they taught their children about God and His Word.

"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 ... will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9-10 NIV)

In the article, Karen stated that she and Katie had tried to "fight the feelings" they had for each other. Karen felt that they "would burn in hell" for those feelings since she considered herself to be a "christian" and knew very well what the Bible said about homosexuality. The article went on to say —

"Then Katie told Karen that she had been in a relationship with a woman.... I [Karen] remember thinking, 'if this person that I look up to and respect spiritually and as a person did this, then it could happen to me,?'"

Karen felt *justified* when someone whom she looked up to, apparently felt it was "ok" to be a homosexual! She had found *approval* from someone important to her. *That* released her from the *guilt* that would otherwise accompany the sinful lifestyle. She no longer had to believe it was a sin. The Word of God became null and void. The *earthly* relationship was what was most important to her — *more* important than her relationship with God.

The same thing happens with parents. The love that parents have for their children is *so strong* and *so great* that their earthly relationship with those children can easily become more important than their relationship with God. Please don't misunderstand, we aren't saying that a parent has to exile an errant son or daughter to a place of never again having any contact or communication with that person. We *are* saying that the love parents have for their children *does not change* God's Words.

Let's think of this another way. Because God gave His Son to die such a cruel death on the cross, can we then know that He loved mankind *more* than He loved His own Son? Not really. What we *can* know is that He recognized there was a *need* that would *require* great sacrifice. If God had placed the love for His Son above *all else*, we would all be destined for eternal punishment. There would not have been a Savior. God would never have asked His Son to go through what He did.

When God told Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:1-12) did Abraham waver as to making a decision about whether or not to make the sacrifice God was asking of him? Apparently not. Abraham determined that God's Word was supreme — whatever the price!

Could we simplify this entire dilemma then by just asking which is greater — a parents worship of God or a parents worship of the relationship he or she has with the child? Maybe. But, when faced with the reality, it doesn't *seem* that simple, does it? Let's go back to Katie and Karen for a minute. The newspaper article went on to say:

"They [Katie's parents] also believed that being gay was a sin, and Karen says it was years before they fully accepted her as their daughter's partner. Finally, Karen says, Katie told them: 'She and I are always going to be together. You can either have me and her, or not have me at all.'"

What a *horrible* ultimatum! Blackmail! But *acceptance* by the *parents* would probably relieve even *more* of the guilt that accompanied the sinful lifestyle. But what an *awful* choice for parents to have to make. Abraham had an awful choice to make also.

"Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love,... Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering." (Gen. 22:2 NIV)

The article then went on to say:

"Ultimately, Rob Reider says, he and his late wife, Gaile, decided that it was more important for them to have a relationship with Katie than to judge whether her relationship was 'right.' From a Christian perspective, everyone is a sinner, he says. No sin is worse than another. And God's grace is bigger than all of it. 'I can't understand the biology of it,' Reider says, 'but I can't