

Homosexuality and the Bible. (Short Version)

- Increasing acceptance and approval of homosexuality by secular society and the church.

*The true Christ follower loves the homosexual and shows it by treating him in a manner according to the law of God (1 Jn. 5:2-3). The attitude of a Christ follower can never be based on violence, hatred, scorn or slander; they should protect homosexuals from personal attack. **Yet, he must also love him by being biblically honest with him.***

- The believer must love him but also be Biblically honest.

- **The Gay Right Movement.** *The gay rights movement wants more than the right to privacy and to be left alone. Attempting to promote their cause as a civil rights instead of as a moral issue, they want special legal protection for, and cultural acceptance of, their lifestyle. The Old Testament says heterosexuality is God's natural order of creation, a teaching Jesus upheld in the New Testament. Biblically, homosexuality is described as both an "abomination" and "unnatural." God calls us to reject sin, but to love and value all people. (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-27)*



- **Political Agenda.**

In an article entitled "Gays on the March," Time magazine quotes gay activist Barbara Gittings: "What the homosexual wants, and here he is neither willing to compromise nor morally required to compromise — is acceptance of homosexuality as a way of life fully on a par with heterosexuality."

- **Creation Ordinance.**

God's creation of one man and one woman to be husband and wife is the pattern or paradigm for God-sanctioned, normal, moral, blessed sexual relations. The Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that there is only one moral, legitimate outlet for man's God-given sex drive - marriage (1 Cor. 7:2).

- **Homosexuality and the Church.**

One of the mainline denominations that have actually called for affirming and fully accepting homosexuals is the United Church of Christ (UCC). As far back as 1975 they voted to end any "discrimination" based on sexual preference and left it to individual UCC congregations to decide for themselves what they believed on this matter. In 1983 the UCC General Synod passed a resolution stating that "a person's sexual orientation is not a moral issue." Finally, in 1991 the UCC General Synod approved the call for its congregations to "boldly affirm, celebrate, and embrace the gifts for ministry of lesbians, gays, and bisexual persons."

- The Authority of Scripture

- **The Law of God**

God's moral law clearly condemns homosexuality of any kind: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.... If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 18:22, 20:13).

- **The New Testament**

The New Testament agrees with and confirms the Old Testament's condemnation of homosexuality. Could any passage of Scripture be more clear in its condemnation

of homosexuality than Paul's statement found in the first chapter of Romans: "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Romans 1:24-27

➤ Human Sexuality

• **Genesis 1-2**

From the very beginning of His revelation to humankind, God has revealed His order of creation, especially as it relates to sexuality. In Genesis 1 we are told that one purpose in creating the two sexes was procreative — through the sexual union of male and female we could reproduce the race: "Male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:27b-28). "The true religious goal of human sexuality can be seen, not as satisfaction, but as completeness." This fulfillment is unattainable in homosexuality

• **Leviticus 18 and 20.**

Now that we have considered God's positive purpose in creating human sexuality, we are ready to look at biblical texts which explicitly address homosexuality. Space precludes a detailed response to pro-homosexual interpretations of these passages. The interested reader can check the resources listed in the endnotes for further reading. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. (Lev.18:22) . If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. (Lev. 20:13)

• **Romans 1:18-27.**

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Rom. 1:26-27). Men have inverted God's order by worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, and as a signal of this error, like the blinking red light on the dashboard of a car which is functioning improperly, God has given them up to "dishonorable desires" in the inversion of their sexual roles.

• **1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10.**

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... (1 Cor. 6:9, NIV)

In both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 the apostle Paul states that those guilty of sexual immorality will not inherit the kingdom of God. At the time Paul wrote his letters there was no word in classical, biblical, or patristic Greek which corresponded with our English term "homosexual." Instead, homosexual behavior was described (e.g., Rom. 1:26-27).

➤ Pederasty Theory.

The most clever attempt to repudiate Paul's condemnation of homosexuality is the pederasty theory. This view states that Paul, following Greek culture, was only condemning the sexual and emotional exploitation of young boys by men. But the Bible clearly teaches that Paul wrote under

the supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 3:15-16. Pederasty is wrong and is condemned by God because it is a form, or subset of homosexuality. It is also sinful and evil because it is a form of sex outside the bonds of lawful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage.

➤ **Act and Orientation.**

The biblical doctrine of original sin teaches that all men are born with a sinful nature or disposition. The first man, Adam, was the covenant head and representative of the whole human race before God. When Adam sinned, the guilt and pollution of sin passed to the whole human race (Rom. 5:12, 17, 19). Every person (except Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit) is born with a sinful nature. It is wrong to say, "God made me a homosexual (or a liar, or a murderer)," because sin did not originate with God but with man (i.e., our forefather Adam). The fact that all human beings are born with an orientation (or proclivity) toward sin does not excuse sinful lusts or behavior. The Bible says that all men are born liars (Ps. 58:3). Yet the Bible also says that lying is a sin (Ex. 20:16, Dt.5:20); it further says that liars will not enter the kingdom of God (Rev. 21:27). If some people are born with a proclivity toward theft, homosexuality, murder, bestiality, sadomasochism, mutilation etc., that does not somehow excuse their sinful behavior. The argument that orientation towards homosexuality somehow makes it acceptable to God could be used to excuse all sinful behavior.

➤ **Conclusion.**

The Bible's condemnation of homosexuality is very clear and very strong. God says that homosexuality is an "abomination"; that means that God hates, abhors and thoroughly detests homosexual behavior. The Old Testament teaches that people who are convicted of the crime of engaging in homosexual behavior should be put to death (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). The New Testament is in full agreement: the Apostle Paul says that homosexual behavior is "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32). This is not the opinion of man but the clear teaching of the Word of God. Christ's sinless blood removes the guilt and curse of sin. His sinless, perfect life is given as a gift to those who believe in Him. When Christians appear before God on the day of judgment they will be clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness. Believers go to heaven solely because of the merits of Jesus Christ. When Christ rose from the dead on the third day, it proved that His sacrifice was acceptable to God the Father. Christ rose victorious over sin, guilt, death and hell for everyone who places his trust in Him. After His resurrection Christ as the divine-human mediator was made king and Lord over everything in heaven and on earth. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Ac. 3:19).

Homosexuality and the Bible

Extended Version

We live in an age of increasing acceptance and approval of homosexuality, both by secular society and the church, where it is portrayed by many in government, in public education and in our colleges and universities as just normal, legitimate lifestyle choices. Those opposed to the homosexual lifestyle on moral and religious grounds are seen by the intellectuals, the media and the entertainment field as ignorant bigots who are full of hatred, "homophobic," etc.

True, some people hate homosexuals. People even engage in "gay bashing." It must be remembered that people who engage in these activities are sinning against God; they are not living in accordance with the law of Christ. The true Christ follower loves the homosexual and shows it by treating him in a manner according to the law of God (1 Jn. 5:2-3).

The attitude of a Christ follower can never be based on violence, hatred, scorn or slander; they should protect homosexuals from personal attack. ***Yet, he must also love him by being biblically honest with him.*** Our pagan culture should not shape our attitude towards the person engaged in homosexual behavior, but by God's inspired, infallible revelation, the Bible, which offers hope to the homosexual because it speaks the truth and proclaims forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

The Gay Rights Movement.

Claims and Arguments.

The gay rights movement wants more than the right to privacy and to be left alone. Attempting to promote their cause as a civil rights instead of as a moral issue, they want special legal protection for, and cultural acceptance of, their lifestyle. The Old Testament says heterosexuality is God's natural order of creation, a teaching Jesus upheld in the New Testament. Biblically, homosexuality is described as both an "abomination" and "unnatural." God calls us to reject sin, but to love and value all people. (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:24-27)

Whenever the Christian or the church take a stand on a moral issue, especially homosexuality, they are being accused of not being loving. "How can Christians speak out against another person's lifestyle, since Christians are called to love". The gay right movement adherents say the Bible tells Christians to reach out to people and not to be judgmental and self-righteous.

Being "politically correct" means not to speak critically concerning any person or group. True Christian love does not ignore immorality and the lives it ruins, but reaches out in the hope of helping those individuals.

This is particularly true when militant pro-homosexual groups, both within society and the church, have attacked the traditional Christian understanding of this important issue. This is not written as an attack on homosexuals, but in defense of the biblical teaching on this topic and to help those ensnared in this lifestyle.

THE GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT'S POLITICAL AGENDA

In the past 20 years or so there has been a growing gay rights movement within America. This movement has been militantly demanding not just the homosexuals' right to do whatever they wish to do behind closed doors, but, more importantly, that society fully accept their lifestyle as both healthy and normal, even demanding special rights and legislation as an "oppressed minority."

Concerning the demands of the gay rights movement, gay spokesperson Jeff Levi in a 1987 speech to the National Press Club in Washington stated: "We are no longer seeking just a right to privacy and a protection from wrong. We also have a right — as heterosexual Americans already have — to see government and society affirm our lives."

As far back as 1975, in an article entitled "Gays on the March," *Time* magazine quotes gay activist Barbara Gittings: "What the homosexual wants, and here he is neither willing to compromise nor morally required to compromise — is acceptance of homosexuality as a way of life fully on a par with heterosexuality." In response to this, *Time* wisely reflected: "It is one thing to remove legal discrimination against homosexuals. It is another to mandate approval....It is this goal of full acceptance, *which no known society past or present has granted to homosexuals*, that makes many Americans apprehensive" (emphasis added).

Concerning the radical gay rights agenda now being advanced, Fr. John F. Harvey — a nationally known professor of moral theology at De Sales School of Theology and someone actively involved in counseling homosexual persons for over thirty years — writes:

Homosexual activists...are not requesting merely the right to live their lifestyle in private, to be left alone; to use their own words, they want to convince all elements of society — even children — that "gay is as acceptable as straight."....I think that gay-rights legislation would harm children at an impressionable, malleable, and gullible age. There is plenty of evidence for the position that homosexual propaganda can sway young people into homosexual activity and, perhaps, permanent orientation in that direction.

As evidence that influencing children at a very early age is part of the gay rights agenda one need look no further than New York City's public school curriculum. Included in the curriculum materials are four pro-homosexual books aimed at very young children.

One, *Heather Has Two Mommies*, is a children's book about a lesbian couple having a child through artificial insemination. Another book, *Daddy's Roommate*, describes a boy with divorced parents who visits his father and his father's new male roommate (obviously his lover). In a third book, *Gloria Goes to Gay Pride*, part of the text reads: "Some women love women, some men love men, some women and men love each other. That's why we march in the parade, so everyone can have a choice."

The rationale for these books is found on page 145 of the city's "Children of the Rainbow" first-grade curriculum which states that teachers must "be aware of varied family structures, including...gay or lesbian parents," and "children must be taught to acknowledge the positive aspects of each type of household."

It is clear that the gay community wants much more than simply the right to privacy. But what about their civil rights? Are new laws really essential to protect those in the gay community? In answer to this Roger J. Magnuson, a nationally renowned trial lawyer, states: "Homosexuals have all of the same rights heterosexuals do. They are protected by the Bill of Rights, by federal and state statutes, and by common-law decisions. They have the same status before the law as do other citizens....The issue is not whether rights have been infringed. The issue is whether new rights, not previously recognized, should be created."

Is it right to say in God's eyes "There is no question about the homosexual's right to practice whatever deviations he or she wants to in the privacy of his or her own home."? There are many questions, however, about their attempt to codify their behavior as acceptable and good, to force their lifestyle on the rest of society, and to influence those too young to understand the moral implications of this issue.

It is simply an emotional ploy to attempt to portray this issue as involving civil rights for an oppressed minority. No one would ever say it is a sin to be black or Hispanic, just as no one would say it is a sin to be female or to be physically handicapped. But God's Word does say it is a sin to engage in homosexual behavior.

The Creation Ordinance of Marriage

In order to have a proper understanding of human sexuality one must go back to the beginning of mankind. In the beginning God created one man (Adam) and one woman (Eve). God did not create two men (e.g., Adam and Steve) or two women (e.g., Eve and Yvette). God created Adam first from the dust of ground; He then created Eve from Adam's rib. Eve was created to be Adam's wife. The Bible says they were naked, yet they were not ashamed. God's creation of one man and one woman to be husband and wife is the pattern or paradigm for God-sanctioned, normal, moral, blessed sexual relations. "The marriage union is God-ordained, and its sacred precincts must not be polluted by the intrusion of a third party, of either sex" (F. F. Bruce).

Jesus Christ quoted Genesis 2:24 as clear proof that polygamy (having more than one wife) and divorce (except in the case of adultery) are condemned by God (Mt. 19:5). The Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that there is only one moral, legitimate outlet for man's God-given sex drive - marriage (1 Cor. 7:2). Monogamous, heterosexual marriage is the only way to have sex without sin and guilt. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the [marriage] bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Anything contrary to the creation ordinance of marriage between one man and one woman is unacceptable before God and sinful.

The Bible condemns all sexual activity outside of monogamous, heterosexual marriage: homosexuality, premarital sex, polygamy, adultery, bestiality and so on. "Let no one deceive you with empty words," says Paul, "for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE CHURCH

One of the mainline denominations that have actually called for affirming and fully accepting homosexuals is the United Church of Christ (UCC). As far back as 1975 they voted to end any "discrimination" based on sexual preference and left it to individual UCC congregations to decide for themselves what they believed on this matter. In 1983 the UCC General Synod passed a resolution

stating that "a person's sexual orientation is not a moral issue." Finally, in 1991 the UCC General Synod approved the call for its congregations to "boldly affirm, celebrate, and embrace the gifts for ministry of lesbians, gays, and bisexual persons."

Many other denominations are close to this view. Some, such as the Episcopal Church, have openly practicing homosexual clergy, with the full knowledge of their church's governing bodies. Others, such as the United Methodist Church (UMC), have officially rejected homosexual practice as incompatible with the Christian faith. However, at least 44 UMC congregations "have formally opened their doors to homosexuals" and called on their bishops to bless "same-sex union ceremonies." Similarly, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's 1991 study guide on sexuality affirms that "no absolutistic judgments can be drawn" concerning homosexuality. However, the guide then goes on to promote "committed" homosexual relationships. A new gay magazine which describes itself as a "journal for gay and lesbian Christians" has a 10-page listing of "Christian" churches and organizations that "welcome gays and lesbians into full membership and participation."

Very few Christian denominations today have remained faithful to the Bible's clear affirmation that homosexuality is a sin. Among these would be the Roman Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Christian Reformed Church, and the Greek Orthodox Church.

The Authority of Scripture **The Law of God**

God's moral law clearly condemns homosexuality of any kind: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.... If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). Apologists for homosexuality try to circumvent the clear, unambiguous statements of God's law with blatant Scripture-twisting and excuse-making arguments.

Some argue that the law of God does condemn homosexuality; they teach that God's law is just a human record of ancient Jewish custom and prejudice. These people deny the Mosaic authorship of the law and are ethical relativists. Their argument must be rejected because Christ and the apostles accepted the divine authorship, infallibility and absolute authority of the Old Testament (Mt. 22:39-40; Jn. 10:35; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). If you reject God's law by saying it is only the purely human ideas of ancient Jewry, then you cannot claim Christ as your Savior. You must believe either that Jesus was mistaken in His view of God's law or that He was a liar. Be forewarned: Jesus Christ is God (Jn. 1:1, 8:58-59); He cannot be mistaken or lie (Num. 23:19).

Others teach that the laws condemning homosexuality were meant only for the nation of Israel. The Old Testament laws passed away with the coming of Jesus Christ. This view is popular among those who claim to be "evangelical homosexuals." This view is totally unbiblical. When the New testament says that Christians are dead to the law, it means that Christ has fulfilled the law (the covenant of works) for the believer, and removed the curse of the law through His sacrificial death. Christians who are united to Jesus Christ in His perfect sinless life and His sacrificial death are raised with Christ and enabled by His Spirit to live unto God. Paul says that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12). Christ did not get rid of the moral law. He obeyed it perfectly for the believer. He died to remove the guilt of sin and He sends the Holy Spirit so

believers have the power to obey God's law. If Christ did away with the law in the sense that homosexual apologists assert, then there would be no need for Him to die, for if there is no law, there is no sin and guilt. The only laws which are no longer binding are laws specifically tied to the land of Israel (e.g., the jubilee) and the ceremonial laws. The ceremonial laws pointed to Jesus Christ and His work through types and figures. God's moral law and the civil case laws based on the moral law are still in force. God's law is based on His nature and character; therefore, it is absolute, unchanging and eternal.

It is obvious that the prohibitions against homosexuality have nothing to do with the sacrificial system; they clearly are not ceremonial in nature. Furthermore, if the laws against homosexuality were only meant for the nation of Israel, then why is homosexuality condemned in Sodom, over four hundred years before the nation of Israel existed: "as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh [homosexuality], are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude verse 7). Although Sodom was generally characterized by wickedness, Genesis 19 presents homosexuality as the last stage of debauchery. The men of Sodom desired homosexual relations with Lot's guests and were willing to rape them if necessary. God wrought total destruction upon Sodom. Sodom was not destroyed because the inhabitants were inhospitable, as some claim. Just being inhospitable would not explain such a total judgment by God. God utterly destroyed the city; only Lot and his family were spared.

Some homosexual apologists argue that God's law only condemns male cultic prostitution. They argue that modern homosexuality has nothing to do with the idolatrous, pagan homosexuality practiced in ancient times. God does clearly condemn male prostitution and the cultic fertility rites associated with it; Deuteronomy 23:17-18 does apply to cultic prostitution. But Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 do not mention cultic prostitution at all. "If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them" (Lev. 20:13).

The attempt to consolidate all the prohibitions against homosexuality into only one which deals with ancient cultic prostitution reveals an obvious pro-homosexual bias by these interpreters. They are forcing the biblical text into a pro-homosexual mold. They are being dishonest with the clear intent of God's Word. They are reading their own pro-homosexual presuppositions into God's law. It is illegitimate to condense three distinct prohibitions (Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Dt. 23:17-18) into one.

Pro-homosexual interpreters know this but do not care, because they are not interested in the truth; they are only interested in justifying their wicked, perverted behavior. Furthermore, their interpretation could be used to justify having sexual intercourse with sheep and goats, because bestiality was also part of ancient cultic fertility rites. Don't be deceived. God is against homosexuality in all its forms, both cultic as well as personal.

The arguments in favor of homosexuality are nothing more than pitiful excuses for a behavior that God hates and will clearly judge. "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *homosexuals*, nor *sodomites*, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Homosexuality was condemned by God, centuries before the giving of the law (e.g., Gen. 19). It is explicitly condemned by God's law (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). As will be shown, it is also clearly condemned in the New Testament by the Apostle Paul.

The New Testament

The New Testament agrees with and confirms the Old Testament's condemnation of homosexuality. Could any passage of Scripture be more clear in its condemnation of homosexuality than Paul's statement found in the first chapter of Romans: "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;...who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (Rom. 1:24-28, 32).

Apologists for homosexual behavior try to circumvent Romans 1 by claiming that Paul was only condemning homosexual lust and promiscuity not monogamous, loving, homosexual relations. The problem with this pro-homosexual interpretation is that Paul doesn't even hint at such an idea in the text. This idea has to be read into the text because it is clearly not there. Paul was an expert with intricate ethical problems. His condemnation covers all forms of homosexual behavior: promiscuous, monogamous and otherwise. If homosexuality is allowable under certain conditions, then are lying, murder, slander, and other sins listed by Paul also allowable under certain conditions? Would homosexual apologists also argue that sex with goats and sheep is permitted if the relationship is loving and monogamous?

Other apologists say that Paul was only referring to Greek cultic prostitution. But the text says nothing about Greek cultic prostitution. Paul was focusing on what happens when people push God out of all their thoughts and worship idols. Paul was discussing personal moral behavior. When people abandon God, their personal behavior becomes perverse. If Paul only condemned Greek cultic prostitution, then why did the early church condemn all forms of homosexuality? Why is it that every branch of the Christian church and every Christian denomination has condemned every form of homosexuality for nearly two thousand years? It has only been since the 1970s that homosexuality has begun to receive acceptance in society. It is no accident that the churches which have changed their views are usually part of liberal denominations which reject the divine authority of the Bible. If Christ and the apostles accepted monogamous homosexuality, then why was it universally condemned in the apostolic church?

It is extremely revealing to note that almost every pro-gay group within the church shares one thing in common: *they reject the Bible as being fully the Word of God*. Of the above mentioned denominations which have accepted homosexuality or are sympathetic to it, none of them believe that we have God's inerrant Word in the Old and New Testaments. Likewise, the many pro-homosexual books that have come out almost all reject — or even ridicule — the church's historic stance on the inspiration and authority of Scripture.

Three different lines of attack on Scripture are found in the various pro-homosexual literature. The first is simply to ignore the biblical writers on the grounds that they were men who oftentimes made

mistakes, and thus to reject what Scripture says as being morally authoritative. Thus John Barton states that "the Bible is not a code at all; it is a big baggy compendium of a book, full of variety and inconsistency, sometimes mistaken on matters of fact and theology alike." And elsewhere, in John Boswell's widely cited work, we find: "In considering the supposed influence of certain biblical passages...one must first relinquish the concept of a single book containing a uniform corpus of writings accepted as morally authoritative."

A second attack relates to the first — that is, the biblical writers were *ignorant* about homosexuality. They did not know all that we do today, it is argued, and so we must judge and interpret the Bible with our modern understanding of biology, psychology, sociology, and so forth. "With the quantum leaps that have been achieved in biology, psychology, and sociology, minds in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries must subject traditional religious arguments about nature to more thorough and critical analyses."

It is not within the purview of this article to give a detailed defense of the inspiration and reliability of the Bible. However, the simple response to these attacks is that both Judaism and Christianity have always held to the full authority of Scripture, as did Jesus Himself. In speaking of the Old Testament, for example, our Lord succinctly declared: "Scripture cannot be broken" ([John 10:35](#)). Parts of Scripture cannot be accepted while other parts are rejected. And in speaking of the guidance His apostles would receive, including guidance on their future writings (i.e., the New Testament), Jesus told them: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" ([John 14:26](#); cf. [2 Tim. 3:16](#)).

It is ludicrous to believe that the Creator of the universe, in guiding the biblical authors, was ignorant concerning the things we now know about homosexuality through modern biology, psychology, sociology, and so forth. To deny scriptural statements about homosexuality on these grounds is to completely deny God's superintendence in the authorship of Scripture.

A third type of attack is to state that it really does not matter what heterosexuals think the Bible says about homosexuality, because homosexuals must interpret Scripture in view of their own experiences. Hence, in the book *Building Bridges* we find the statement that "the scriptures contain some insights that can be made known to the Christian community only through the testimony of lesbian and gay people." Thus homosexuals must "interpret the scriptures in the light of their own experiences."

The problem with this is that a person could justify *any* type of behavior by saying that Scriptures pertaining to a particular behavior can only be understood by those who engage in such behavior (e.g., incest, adultery, fornication, and even bestiality). Those who believe this should remember the words of our Lord: "Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness" ([Luke 11:35](#)).

Human Sexuality

Genesis 1-2

For those who believe that statements of the Bible are normative for our daily lives, the most important question to consider regarding homosexuality is: What was God's *purpose* in creating human sexuality? The answer to this question is more important than any other area of discussion.

From the very beginning of His revelation to humankind, God has revealed His order of creation, especially as it relates to sexuality. In Genesis 1 we are told that one purpose in creating the two sexes was *procreative* — through the sexual union of male and female we could reproduce the race: "Male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" ([Gen. 1:27b-28](#)).

More detail is provided in Genesis 2, however, where we are told that in addition to *procreation*, there is a *unitive* function of sexuality that has to do with fulfilling our need for companionship: "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him'" ([Gen. 2:18](#)). Then, after God created Eve and presented her to Adam, Adam rejoiced in his God-given companion. The chapter concludes: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" ([Gen. 2:24-25](#)).

In this second chapter several items emerge. First, man has need for companionship: "It is not good that man should be alone" ([Gen. 2:18](#)); second, God makes provision to meet this need: the creation of woman (2:19-23). Concerning this, Samuel Dresner, Visiting Professor at Jewish Theological Seminary, states: "Woman is formed and becomes his partner. In her, man finds completion." And third, God ordains the institution of marriage. We are told that the man would (1) "leave his father and mother," (2) "cleave to his wife," and (3) "they shall become one flesh." Thus we find that heterosexuality is proclaimed to be God's natural order of creation.

In the New Testament, whenever the subject of sexuality comes up, the heterosexual norm of marriage is always upheld. For example, Jesus, in answer to a question, quoted Genesis 1 and 2: "Have you not read, that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" ([Matt. 19:4-6](#)).

In addition, the apostle Paul reaffirms the norm of heterosexuality in several of his letters, also quoting the Genesis passages (e.g., [Eph. 5:25-33](#); cf. [1 Cor. 7:2-3](#), [10-16](#); [1 Tim. 3:2](#), [12](#)). And while some protest that we cannot take Genesis 1 and 2 as modern scientific treatises, these chapters nonetheless teach us spiritual truths concerning God's intended order for His creation.

It is *only* in the heterosexual union of marriage that we find the fulfillment of God's intended order, both procreative *and* unitive. However, pro-homosexual writers argue that while homosexual activity in and of itself cannot be procreative it can still fulfill the unitive role of Genesis 2. In response to this Harvey writes:

Consider the three common forms of sexual activity between homosexual persons. Mutual masturbation in no way constitutes a physical union.... Among female homosexuals some form of genital massage is used to bring the partner to orgasm, but this is not a physical union. In anal or oral intercourse between males the intromission of the penis in an opening of the body not meant to be used for the genital expression

of sexuality cannot be called a true physical union....By way of contrast, the heterosexual union aptly symbolizes the psychological and spiritual union that ought to exist between a man and a woman.

One does not need a Ph.D. to realize that homosexuality is anatomically aberrant; that is, there is a created biological order intended in our sexuality. As an editorialist at Harvard's *Peninsula* journal writes: "How can (homosexual) people be happy when they're persistently deceiving themselves, believing that it is just as natural for sperm to swim into feces as it is to swim into eggs?"

"The true religious goal of human sexuality can be seen, not as *satisfaction*, but as *completeness*." This fulfillment is unattainable in homosexuality.

Now that we have considered God's positive purpose in creating human sexuality, we are ready to look at biblical texts which explicitly address homosexuality. Space precludes a detailed response to pro-homosexual interpretations of these passages. The interested reader can check the resources listed in the endnotes for further reading.

Leviticus 18 and 20

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. ([Lev. 18:22](#))

If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. ([Lev. 20:13](#))

Although these prohibitions explicitly condemn homosexuality as an abomination before God, we are told that they are not relevant today. Why? First, the pro-homosexual interpretation is that since these condemnations are contained in the "Holiness Code" of Israel, they were only applicable to ancient Israelites, to keep them separate from the pagan practices of their neighboring tribes.

Second, parts of this code are not kept today. Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott assert that "consistency and fairness would seem to dictate that if the Israelite Holiness Code is to be invoked against twentieth-century homosexuals, it should likewise be invoked against such common practices as eating rare steak, wearing mixed fabrics, and having marital intercourse during the menstrual period."

Much effort need not be expended answering these objections. First, God did not condemn certain behavior for the Israelites *only* because Israel was to be kept separate from Canaanite practice. Otherwise, if the Canaanites *did not* practice child sacrifice and bestiality, would these then have been all right for the Israelites? Of course not! Having sexual relations with an animal and killing one's child are inherently wrong and evil, even when they are not related to pagan worship; they are abominations before God. And yet, these specific prohibitions also are listed in this passage, both immediately before and after the condemnation of homosexuality ([Lev. 18:21-23](#)).

Other prohibitions listed in Leviticus include incest and adultery ([Lev. 18:6ff](#); [20:10](#)). Were these too only condemned because of the Canaanites? To argue in this fashion is dishonest and denies that there are eternal moral absolutes.

What of the fact that other parts of the Holiness Code in Leviticus are not kept today? Again, the answer is simple. The Holiness Code contained different types of commands. Some were related to dietary regulations or to ceremonial cleanliness, and these have been done away with in the New Testament (Col. 2:16-17; Rom. 14:1-3). Others, though, were *moral* codes, and as such are timeless. Thus incest, child sacrifice, homosexuality, bestiality, adultery, and the like, are *still* abominations before God.

Romans 1:18-27

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Rom. 1:26-27)

If there were no other passage than this which condemns homosexuality, those engaged in this lifestyle would still be, in Paul's own words, "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Paul's intent in Romans 1 - 3 is to show that all have sinned, Jew and Gentile alike, and turned from God. It is not an accident that the apostle begins his argument with a reference to the Creator and His creation (1:16-20). His Jewish/Christian audience would immediately have connected this with Genesis 1 - 2, which, as we have seen, tells us not only about God's created order, but also about the complementary design of male and female within that order.

In his catalogue of sins (Rom. 1:18-32) Paul lists homosexuality and lesbianism first after idolatry not because they are the most serious sins, but because they are warning signs that a violation of reason and nature has occurred. Men have inverted God's order by worshipping the creature rather than the Creator, and as a signal of this error, like the blinking red light on the dashboard of a car which is functioning improperly, God has given them up to "dishonorable desires" in the inversion of their sexual roles.

Two main arguments are raised against the historic understanding of this passage. The first is that Paul was not referring to true homosexuality here because he stated that they exchanged "the natural function for that which is unnatural." It is argued that for those with a true homosexual orientation, that *is* their "natural" sexual expression. Hence he could only mean heterosexuals who were leaving their heterosexual relations for what was against their natures.

This argument involves an amazing anachronism. That is, those saying this are attempting to place a very recent twentieth century understanding of homosexuality back into the first century mindset of Paul. People in the first century did not think in terms of "sexual orientation." It is inconceivable for Paul to have even attempted to make a psychological differentiation such as this. Concerning this, Richard Hays writes: "The idea that some individuals have an inherent disposition towards same-sex erotic attraction and are therefore constitutionally 'gay' is a modern idea of which there is no trace either in the NT or in any other Jewish or Christian writings in the ancient world."

The second attempt to refute Paul's clear condemnation of homosexuality argues that his words "unnatural" or "against nature" do not refer to a certain created order, but rather use "nature" in the sense of "current convention" or "current custom." While "nature" is sometimes used in this fashion (e.g., 1 Cor. 11:14), the context of Paul's argument in Romans 1 clearly is that of creation and the natural order established by the Creator Himself (Rom. 1:20, 25). Thus Paul is asserting that homosexuality is a

gross violation of God's natural design for His creation. In addition, it should be noted that the phrase "against nature" was used in connection with homosexual intercourse by both Philo and Josephus, contemporaries of Paul.

1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10

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... (1 Cor. 6:9, NIV)

In both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 the apostle Paul states that those guilty of sexual immorality will not inherit the kingdom of God. At the time Paul wrote his letters there was no word in classical, biblical, or patristic Greek which corresponded with our English term "homosexual." Instead, homosexual behavior was *described* (e.g., Rom. 1:26-27). The words Paul uses here — *malakoi* ("male prostitute") and *arsenokoitai* ("homosexual offenders") — have been translated in different ways. Because of this those condoning homosexuality have tried to lessen the impact of these verses, saying that all Paul was condemning was either homosexual prostitution or pederasty (i.e., men having sexual relations with boys).

Virtually every Greek lexicon, however, including all of the standard English ones, has understood these words (especially *arsenokoitai*) to be referring to homosexuality.³⁵ Arndt and Gingrich's lexicon says *malakoi* refers to persons who are "soft, effeminate, especially of catamites, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually." Likewise, *arsenokoites* means "a male homosexual, pederast, sodomite."

We also find these terms in classical Greek literature (e.g., Lucian and Aristotle) "sometimes applied to obviously gay persons." As well, if Paul were only condemning certain types of homosexuality he would certainly have specified this. Instead, he used a term directly based on the Greek Septuagint translation of the prohibitions against homosexuality in Leviticus: *meta arsenos ou koimethese koiten gynaikos* (Lev. 18:22) - *koimethe meta arsenos koiten - gynaikos* (Lev. 20:13)

Paul, a rabbi thoroughly trained in the Torah, was certainly mindful of these Levitical condemnations and the Septuagint translation of them when he chose his wording in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy.

The Pederasty Theory

The most clever attempt to repudiate Paul's condemnation of homosexuality is the pederasty theory. This view states that Paul, following Greek culture, was only condemning the sexual and emotional exploitation of young boys by men. This view assumes that Paul was only a product of the pagan, Greek culture of his time. But the Bible clearly teaches that Paul wrote under the supernatural direction of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 3:15-16). To understand Paul's worldview, one should not look to pagan Greece or Rome but to the Old Testament, the teachings of Jesus Christ and the other apostles. Paul's condemnation of homosexuality is fully consistent with, and a continuation of, God's law revealed to Moses. Pederasty is wrong and is condemned by God because it is a form, or subset of homosexuality. It is also sinful and evil because it is a form of sex outside the bonds of lawful, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. Homosexuality is wicked, no matter what the age of the participants. The idea that once two males reach the age of 18, God approves of them having oral and anal sex is absurd. Paul condemned such wicked, foolish thinking long ago: "But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but

for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for *sodomites*, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Tim. 1:8-10).

Act and Orientation

Any discussion of homosexuality would be incomplete without addressing the difference between act and orientation. Many homosexuals will say, “I was born a homosexual—God made me this way; therefore, my thoughts, desires, and lifestyle should not be condemned.” If some people are born with a predisposition toward homosexual behavior, does that somehow make their homosexual lusts and behavior acceptable to God? Absolutely not!

The biblical doctrine of original sin teaches that all men are born with a sinful nature or disposition. The first man, Adam, was the covenant head and representative of the whole human race before God. When Adam sinned, the guilt and pollution of sin passed to the whole human race (Rom. 5:12, 17, 19). Every person (except Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit) is born with a sinful nature. It is wrong to say, “God made me a homosexual (or a liar, or a murderer),” because sin did not originate with God but with man (i.e., our forefather Adam).

The fact that all human beings are born with an orientation (or proclivity) toward sin does not excuse sinful lusts or behavior. The Bible says that all men are born liars (Ps. 58:3). Yet the Bible also says that lying is a sin (Ex. 20:16, Dt.5:20); it further says that liars will not enter the kingdom of God (Rev. 21:27). If some people are born with a proclivity toward theft, homosexuality, murder, bestiality, sadomasochism, mutilation etc., that does not somehow excuse their sinful behavior. The argument that orientation towards homosexuality somehow makes it acceptable to God could be used to excuse all sinful behavior. Such an argument destroys personal responsibility; it renders God’s law meaningless and salvation through Jesus Christ unnecessary. All men will be held responsible before God for every sinful thought, word and deed, regardless of one’s orientation. Blaming God for one’s sinful behavior may make the homosexual feel better, but it will be ineffective on the day of judgment, when all unrepentant homosexuals are cast into hell (1 Cor. 6:9-10, Rev. 21:27). Furthermore the Bible teaches that man cannot blame God for his sinful behavior, because God doesn’t tempt man. Man is drawn away by his own lust: “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (Jas. 1:13-15).

Some argue that homosexual acts are indeed immoral, but homosexual feelings and desires for some are inborn and therefore unavoidable and not sinful. The Bible does teach that it is not a sin to be tempted (Christ was tempted, yet He never committed sin, Heb. 2:18). What is sinful is when a person dwells upon that which tempts him, fantasizes and makes plans to engage in that sinful behavior. The Bible clearly teaches that it is not only a sin to commit evil acts, it is also a sin to have immoral desires, lusts and thoughts.

Jesus Christ forbade heterosexual lust in Matthew 5:27-29. Jesus said that when a man looks upon a woman to lust after her, he has committed adultery with her in his heart (Mt. 5:28). The idea of condemning only the outward act but not the inward lust was a doctrine of the Pharisees; Christ strongly condemned such false teaching (Mt. 5:21-22, 15:19-20). The Apostle Paul forbade ungodly

fantasies, lusts, and evil desires (Col. 3:5). Paul said that Christians must sanctify (i.e., make holy) their very thoughts (Phil. 4:8). James said that if desires are not controlled, sin will follow (Jas. 4:1). Inward, homosexual lust is condemned in Romans 1:24, 26, 27. The prophet Isaiah said that repentance must extend to one's "thoughts" as well as to one's "way" (Isa. 55:7). Since the Bible condemns sinful lusts and sinful acts there can be no such thing as a Christian homosexual—or a Christian murderer or a Christian thief. If a homosexual becomes a Christian, he must put away both homosexual acts and thoughts; therefore, when he becomes a Christian, he ceases to be a homosexual. He may still be tempted at times but he refuses to dwell on, fantasize about, and commit such abominable deeds. "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8). "We should not lust after evil things as they also lusted" (1 Cor. 10:6).

Conclusion

The Bible's condemnation of homosexuality is very clear and very strong. God says that homosexuality is an "abomination"; that means that God hates, abhors and thoroughly detests homosexual behavior. The Old Testament teaches that people who are convicted of the crime of engaging in homosexual behavior should be put to death (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). The New Testament is in full agreement: the Apostle Paul says that homosexual behavior is "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32). This is not the opinion of man but the clear teaching of the Word of God.

The people who claim to be compassionate toward homosexuals by excusing and approving of their perverse behavior are liars and false teachers. Their attempts to reinterpret the Bible to make it accepting of homosexuality are nothing more than pitiful excuses made for those who do not want to repent. They are leading homosexuals down the broad path which leads to destruction (Mt. 7:13). They are the true enemies of the homosexual community.

Your only hope is to accept what God says regarding your sinful behavior. If you are going to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ, you must first be convinced that your behavior is wrong, wicked and deserving of judgment. After Paul says that homosexuals are excluded from God's kingdom he says, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). There were Christians in the church at Corinth who rejected their former homosexual lifestyle and were delivered of their sin. They repented and believed in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, as He is presented in the Scriptures, is the sinner's only hope of salvation: "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Ac. 4:12). If you believe in Him, all your sins will be forgiven. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Rom. 10:9-11).

Christ's sinless blood removes the guilt and curse of sin. His sinless, perfect life is given as a gift to those who believe in Him. When Christians appear before God on the day of judgment they will be clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness. Believers go to heaven solely because of the merits of Jesus Christ. When Christ rose from the dead on the third day, it proved that His sacrifice was acceptable to God the Father. Christ rose victorious over sin, guilt, death and hell for everyone who

places his trust in Him. After His resurrection Christ as the divine-human mediator was made king and Lord over everything in heaven and on earth. “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Ac. 3:19).

NOTE

This paper has not only been a product of my knowledge or wisdom, many other people have contributed to the overall content. I have tried to give them credit by including their name as a source right after their quotation whenever possible.

Paul Taming
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