

Homosexuality

“Is Homosexuality Condemned or Condoned by the Holy Scriptures?”

Part 1 – Homosexuality from the Divine Perspective

Tidal waves of immorality have inundated the world which demands that the Church responds to this pandemic in various Biblical and loving yet assertive ways. ¹The Church needs to expose the sinfulness of homosexuality as depicted in God’s Word. ²The Church also needs to clarify the grace of God and forgiveness that the Gospel extends to homosexuals. ³The Church needs to practice Biblical Church discipline and expel practicing homosexuals from its midst. For them to remain a part of the Church of Christ and its activities is a blemish which may not be tolerated because that would indicate moral compromise, a lack of courage in confronting sin and a failure to exercise the biblical prerogative of excommunication.

Developments in secular society in its acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle have put pressure on the evangelical church to respond in some way. The Evangelical Church must take a courageous and intelligent stand on this vital moral issue, and thus halt the erosion of morality in the Church. Unfortunately some evangelicals have already embraced the gay or lesbian lifestyle. Others have affirmed their right to exist as practicing homosexuals while still claiming to be Christians.

Our aim in this study is to ¹see what God says on this vital matter, to ²see how the Church ought to respond to this matter, to ³discover what implications homosexuality has on the Church and to ⁴restate and affirm the Biblical perspective on Biblical marriage portraying a heterosexual relationship between natural man and a natural woman.

Right at the outset it needs to be stated that Scripture both condemns homosexuality and gives homosexuals a plan for freedom and forgiveness. It is from this basic premise that I will be approaching this topic as I teach you God’s perspective on this in the next 4 weeks.

We live in a world which calls us to hunger after and imitate love. The trouble is that this “love” the world speaks of often is a distorted view of what the Bible teaches. This “love” often is perverse and despicable. What usually goes by the name “love” in popular culture is not authentic love at all. It is a love which Christians are warned to stay away from. See what the apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 5:1-3, *“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.”*

Immorality is perhaps our generation’s favourite substitute for love. Paul here uses the Greek word πορνεία (porneia) which includes very kind of sexual sin. This term is then used to describe the sin of homosexuality as well. Paul says here that these types of sins ought not to even to be mentioned amongst believers. Most of the talk about love these days ignores that principle. “Love” has been redefined as a broad tolerance that overlooks sin and embraces good and evil alike. But that is not love, it is *apathy* mixed with *compromise*.

True love demands the courage to confront false love and its fruits, and therefore homosexuality must be graciously yet firmly condemned for being exactly what it is – sin. Christians who advocate an attitude of

tolerance and acceptance towards the homosexual lifestyle, often in the name of love, are in fact exhibiting anything but true biblical love¹.

If the goal is to reach homosexuals with the Gospel, Christians must begin by showing them from God's Word that homosexuality in all its forms is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. The Bible never commends or condones homosexual behaviour at any level. Rather, it consistently and repeatedly condemns it as that which God hates and promises to punish. Until homosexuals understand that that the lifestyle which defines them is inherently and unnaturally sinful, they will never desire the forgiveness God offers to them (and to all sinners) if they will forsake their iniquity and embrace Jesus Christ².

God's Word is not silent on the issue of homosexuality but speaks very directly to this matter in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Word of God¹ establishes the ***Divine Design (or institution)*** for proper human sexuality, the Word² provides ***Divine Illustrations*** for God's wrath against any form of sexual perversion, the Word³ sets forth ***Divine Instruction*** directly forbidding homosexuality. However the Word also provides⁴ a ***Divine Invitation of Redemption*** to any and all who will lay aside their sin and call upon Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

We will consider items 1-3 under Part 1 and item 4 under Part 2.

1. The Divine Biblical Institution for proper human sexuality (Gen 1-2, Matt 19, Eph 5)

Genesis 1:27-28a "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."

- Sixth day of creation – God establishes the sacred institution of marriage.
- Biblical case against homosexuality begins in Genesis 1.
- Only ***one*** man and ***one*** woman. Hebrew in emphatic position, giving the sense of "the one male and the one female."
- Garden of Eden – nothing but monogamous heterosexual marriage was possible (only 1 man and 1 woman).

Genesis 2:24 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

- Underscores the divine plan for marriage.
- Monogamous heterosexual marriage was always viewed as the norm from the outset of creation.
- Homosexual unions can never be called "marriages" since it involves only one gender.
- Homosexual unions do not possess the ability to procreate.
- Homosexual unions do not provide the kind of sexual companionship God intended (i.e. it is completely unnatural for a man to lie with another man. God never intended it this way).

¹ Dr John MacArthur *God's Word on Homosexuality: The Truth about sin and the reality of forgiveness* TMSJ 19/2 (Fall 2008) 153-174

² Dr John MacArthur *God's Word on Homosexuality: The Truth about sin and the reality of forgiveness* TMSJ 19/2 (Fall 2008) 153-174

Matthew 19:4-6 "He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them ***from the beginning*** made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Christ's words taken from Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24)

- Affirmation that God, from the beginning, made human being male and female.
- Heterosexual marriage has always been God's intention, in spite of man's attempts to destroy, distort or disregard it.
- Homosexuality is not simply another option for two consenting adults.
- Homosexuality is a perversion of God's design for the procreation, pleasure, and preservation of the human race.

Ephesians 5:24-25 "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..."

- Marriage used as an illustration of Christ and the Church.
- Marriage, properly lived out, as God intended it, not only brings great joy to husband and wife, but also serves as a picture of Christ's love for His bride the Church.

2. The Divine Illustration for God's wrath against any form of sexual perversion (Gen 19, Jude 1:7, 2 Peter 2)

The Fall, with all of its corrupting effects as described in Genesis 3 began to erode the purity of human sexuality immediately:

- First polygamy (Gen 4:19)
- Demonic sexual perversion – angels taking human woman (Gen 6:2)
- Lewdness or obscenity (Gen 9:22)
- Adultery (Gen 12:15-19)
- Fornication (Gen 16:4)
- Incest (Gen 19:36)
- Rape (Gen 34:2)
- Prostitution (Gen 38:15)
- Sexual harassment (Gen 39:7)
- To this list Genesis 19 adds the sin of homosexuality

Genesis 19:4-7 "But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them." Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said, "I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly."

- During an angelic rescue mission to save Lot from the city, the inhabitants of Sodom demonstrated the dreadful extent of their lust.
- Lot recognises their homosexual passions as inherently evil. Even after the men were struck with blindness they still were groping for the doorway.
- God does so too, and He utterly destroys them for their wickedness (Gen 19:23-29)
- Any type of homosexual act or lifestyle is condemned in this passage.

Jude 1:7 "...just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire."

- This passage removes any doubt that homosexuality was a primary characteristic of Sodom.
- Sexual immorality was the main reason it was subject to God's wrath.
- The behaviour of the Sodomites serves as a lasting illustration of the utter abomination that homosexuality is in the eyes of God.

2 Peter 2:6 "...if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly..."

- Peter writes that Sodom and Gomorrah was characterized by "the sensual conduct of the wicked" (v7).
- Though Lot and his daughters were spared, everyone else in Sodom and the surrounding cities were destroyed by incineration (reduced to ashes) and asphyxiation (decreased oxygen to the body and increased carbon dioxide leading to death as a result of smoke inhalation).
- God completely overthrew them and ruined them as a result of their wickedness.
- Depraved men cannot pursue sensuality and ungodliness, and expect to escape God's judgement.
- Rest of Scripture refers back to Sodom and Gomorrah over 20 times as an illustration and warning to those who choose to live ungodly lives.

3. The Divine Instruction directly forbidding homosexuality (Lev 18, Lev 20, Rom 1)

What the book of Genesis implies (though quite plainly) about homosexuality, the Mosaic legal code makes explicitly clear ***namely that homosexuality is detestable in the sight of God.***

Leviticus 18:22 and 29 "²²You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. ²⁹For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people."

Leviticus 20:13 "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them."

- In these explicit statements in the Mosaic code, no Israelite would have doubted what God thought about homosexuality.
- Homosexuality is viewed here as equal to other sexual sins such as adultery, incest and bestiality.
- These sins are wrong in any age and in any culture for they violate the design for marriage that God established at creation.
- God's utter hatred for homosexual behaviour is brought home by the word "abomination", which describes what God thinks of it, and any other violation of His intended plan for heterosexual marriage³.

³ Dr John MacArthur *God's Word on Homosexuality: The Truth about sin and the reality of forgiveness* TMSJ 19/2 (Fall 2008) 153-174

Romans 1:26-27 “For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable 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.”

- Both male homosexuality and lesbianism are in view in this passage, with God’s judgement falling on both because they involve unnatural acts (so defined because they violate the design of God for nature)⁴.
- Both the general revelation of nature and the special revelation of Scripture bear out the fact that homosexuality goes contrary to God’s intended plan.
- No one is born a homosexual any more than anyone might be born a thief or a murderer. Those who engage in a lifestyle of unrepentant theft, murder, adultery, or homosexuality do so of their own choice⁵.
- People such as these have only themselves to blame when they “receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error”.
- People such as these will not inherit eternal life (1 Cor 6:9).

Without question we can say that any form of sexual conduct outside the bounds of Scriptural heterosexual relations between a natural man and a natural woman is clearly forbidden by and seen as an abomination in Scripture. This refers to both male homosexuality as well as lesbianism. Any such unions violate God’s intention for marriage as stipulated as early as Genesis 1. God’s attitude towards homosexualism is best demonstrated in the outpouring of His wrath upon Sodom and the surrounding cities.

Nonetheless, as we will see in part 2, the Gospel offers and extends pardon to every sinner – including the homosexual – upon repentance and sorrow of such sin. More of that to follow next time.

⁴ Douglas Moo *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 115

⁵ Craig L. Blomberg 1 Corinthians, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 123