

THE BIBLE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

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THE BIBLE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

A COMPILATION OF RESEARCH

Attached are documents prepared to assist the MH eldership in discussing current issues surrounding the topic of homosexuality. These have not been written, refined, or compiled for public distribution.

KEY SUMMARY POINTS FROM THE RESEARCH

1. All sexual expression outside of heterosexual marriage is deemed to be sin in the Bible.
2. God's intent in creating marriage is that it be an exclusive covenant between one man and one woman until death parts them.
3. The Bible includes homosexual sin in its listing of other sexual sins, with no special distinction.
4. Though the Bible deems all sin as judicially equal, it also portrays different sins as having differing degrees of effects and consequences.
5. Both homosexual activity and same-sex attraction that is romantic or sensual in nature are viewed by Scripture as being outside of God's creative intent and thus immoral.
6. Though all people are born in sin, the solution Jesus came to provide is that we can all be "born again" through faith in Him.
7. As a result of being born again, our former personal identity is transformed into a new identity in Christ.
8. This transformation includes discontinuing sinful activities as well as an ongoing reliance on the Holy Spirit's enablement to overcome temptation.
9. Christians are called to love all people and seek to bring them to redemption without discrimination.



10. All believers are directed to help other believers overcome sin in their lives.
11. The New Testament does not allow a person in ongoing unrepentant sin to be a member of the church.



APPENDIX A: A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON HOMOSEXUALITY

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SCRIPTURES DIRECTLY DEALING WITH AND FORBIDDING HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- Genesis 19:5 - This passage deals with the attack of the men and boys of the city of Sodom on the two men visiting Lot (it is an example of male gang rape, as was also described in Judges 19:22-25)
- Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 – This is a general legal passage forbidding male homosexual activity.
- Romans 1: 26-27 – This is a Pauline passage listing both male and female homosexual activity as examples of people’s deteriorating behavior once they refuse to acknowledge God anymore.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9 – In this passage Paul lists homosexuality along with numerous other sins as examples of lifestyles that will not inherit the Kingdom of God.
- 1 Timothy 1:10 – In this passage Paul lists homosexuality along with other sins that are all described as activities which stand in contradiction to sound doctrine.

PASSAGES THAT ARE BELIEVED TO INVOLVE HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY

- Deuteronomy 23:17-18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46-47; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14; Hosea 4:14 – All these passages are prohibitions against temple prostitution. This practice includes both male and female activity.
- Genesis 9:20-27 – This passage deals with the actions of Ham against his drunken father Noah. It is believed that it may have involved a male act of sodomy.



- 2 Peter 2:7; Jude 1:7 – Both these passages make reference back to the actions of the people of Sodom. The words describe their activities as sensual, unprincipled, and immoral.



GENERAL OBSERVATIONS MADE ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY FROM THE SCRIPTURES

1. Homosexual activity is consistently presented as sinful behavior in both the Old and New Testament.
2. There is never a positive example of homosexual behavior listed in the Bible.
3. Homosexuality is one of several sexual lifestyles condemned in the Scripture (fornication, adultery, rape, incest, and bestiality)
4. Every example of proper marriage in the Bible is between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3, 5; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 5:31; Titus 1:6).
5. Homosexual activity between the same persons over a long period of time does not change its status as sinful. This is the same as saying that long term, consensual adultery still remains sinful.
6. Comments made about homosexual activity in the Bible can refer to a very specific variety of the activity (gang rape- Genesis 19) or to a very broad description of it (a man with a man- Leviticus 18).
7. There is reference to both male and female homosexual activity (Romans 1:26-27).
8. There is reference to both men and boys involved in the activity (Genesis 19:4). Age is not a discriminating factor.
9. There is also reference to both the dominant and passive partners in a same sex relationship (1 Corinthians 6:9).
10. There are passages that deal with both personal as well as religious reasons for homosexual activity.
11. Forbidden acts of homosexuality are not to be limited to overactive heterosexuals just looking for additional acts of sexual outlet. Romans 1 describes both genders as abandoning their attraction for the opposite sex and burning in lust for people of the same gender. This is a new orientation, not just an explorative bisexual pattern.



12. Homosexuality is not an irredeemable sin. It can be forgiven, and the offenders cleansed and given access to church membership.



APPENDIX B: CONSIDERATIONS FROM A STUDY OF HOMOSEXUALITY

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STATISTICS ABOUT PEOPLE IN THE HOMOSEXUAL LIFESTYLE

In April of 2011, the Williams Institute at UCLA printed the following finding.

3.5% of the adults in the United States identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. 1.7 % are gay or lesbian, and 1.8% are bisexual.

In five previous surveys the estimated percentage of the adult U.S. population that are strictly gay or lesbian are rated as:

- National Epidemiological Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (2004-5) – 1%
- National Survey of Family Growth (2006-8) – 1.4%
- General Social Survey (2008) – 1.7%
- California Health Interview (2009) – 1.8%
- National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior (2009) – 2.5%

In surveys done in other countries the results are similar and slightly lower.

- Canadian Community Health Survey (2005) – 1.1%
- Australian Longitudinal Study of Health and Relationships (2005) - .9%
- UK Integrated Household Survey (2009-10) – 1%
- Norwegian Conditions Survey (2010) - .7%

In October of 2002, the Gallup Poll estimates that 3.8% of the adult U.S. population identify as LGBT. The purely gay/lesbian portion of this percentage is closer to the Williams Institute.





GENERAL ARGUMENTS SUPPORTING THE HOMOSEXUAL LIFESTYLE AS PRESENTED BY THE GAY COMMUNITY

They want to obtain the right to legal marriage.

People in the gay community want approval or acceptance from society regarding their lifestyle. Some desire the right to get married so that their relationship will be looked at, and respected as legitimate. They also want to have access to all the legal and financial benefits that are currently offered to heterosexual marriages.

In order to do this, gay marriages must attain an equality status with heterosexual marriages. Giving them equal status, when they are different, is what creates the challenge. With only 2% of the couples in the US being gay, our concern is over redefining marriage as it is experienced by the other 98% of the population.

*We should be careful to not create public policy based on exceptions, especially minor ones.

NATURAL ARGUMENTS

1. "God made me this way."
 - Two things are implied in this argument.
 - One is that homosexuals say that they come into the world with their orientations or predispositions. They then say that these orientations are natural and therefore immutable, or legitimate. If this can be established, then these innate orientations should therefore not be limited or condemned. Gay people say that they do not have these orientations by choice, but by nature.
 - The second point that the statement makes is that God made them this way, so He must approve of their orientation. This assumes that God made them this way.
 - There are three theories about the source of the human nature.
 - Pre-existent- People's immaterial nature has always been existent in its current form.



- Creative- God creates each soul and puts it in a body generated by two biological parents. This makes God responsible for all of our characteristics.
- Traducian- All aspects of a person's nature (material & non-material) come from a person's biological parents.
- People adhering to the Creative theory say that God made them the way that they are. If the Traducian theory is true, then people cannot blame God for their characteristics or orientations. The Bible says we all have a sinful nature. We are born with it. We are what we are not because of God, but because of our human/physical nature. The Bible makes it clear that God is neither responsible for our sin, nor does He tempt us to do evil- James 1:13-14.
- Our nature is sinful from the start. For humans, it is "natural" to sin. That is our nature, yet God asks us to put off our old nature with His help. We are not to stay that way, but to be transformed by the work of the cross and the Holy Spirit (put off & put on).
- Creation is fallen, and we are part of it. This means that we come into life with fallen attributes. This is not because of God but because of Adam (Romans 5). This fallenness includes sexual orientation and desires. The beauty of the Gospel is that God loves us this way. God loves us, but that does not mean that He approves of all the things that we choose to do. Our fallenness is not part of His design.
- Being born with corrupt natures is the fate of all humans and it is sufficient cause for condemnation. We are not absolved from the wages of sin simply because our corrupt natures were received from our parents.
- Romans 3 says that we are all sinners, and all choose to go our own way. That is not the original design from Genesis 1-3, but it is our reality since the Fall.
- Matthew Vines, LGBT spokesperson and author of God and the Gay Christian, says "I am part of God's creation too, including my sexual orientation. I am part of God's design." He implies that God is then happy with the natural way that he is oriented. What usually generates this idea is that people have lost sight of the nature of God. If their understanding of God is incorrect, then their understanding of man will also be incorrect. Romans 1 says that when mankind knew God but didn't respond correctly to Him, their thinking was affected. Eventually, in verse 28,



they chose not to retain any knowledge of Him at all. It is this mentality that later leads to the development of a reprobate thinking.



2. "Genetics is the cause of our orientation."

- Because they consider their orientation as natural, those who believe in a genetic cause assume that it cannot or should not be changed. Their orientation is said to be a permanent part of their personal nature. This is why some say Rom 1 is not talking about modern homosexuals. Some gay scholars state that the people in that passage are said to have changed or exchanged their true orientation. They go on to say that true gays can't change their orientations. For them, Romans 1 is about heterosexuals that act homosexual. They try to alter their true nature. Their homosexual behavior does not reflect their true nature.
- Response: If the orientation is genetic then it can't be changed. If, however, some homosexuals do change their orientation, then their change refutes the claim that it is natural and cannot be changed. 1 Corinthians 6 shows that some people did change in the early church. Dr. Robert Spitzer, who used to defend the gay community, also states they can change. Dr. Nicholas Cummings says that change can occur in motivated clients. Reorientation therapy is not harmful. The condition of the orientation can be changed. Will some regress? Yes, but so will some recovering from illicit affairs and other sexual addictions, depression, alcoholism, substance abuse, etc. Regression in some does not prove immutability in all.
- If the homosexual orientation was purely genetic, it would not change with culture. A man cannot change his skin color just because cultural opinion changes. Homosexual practice is a socio-cultural phenomenon. The attitude about homosexuality has been shaped by our culture, which encourages sexual experimentation and adventurism. Change in culture does not result in genetic change. More people today are not being born gay genetically.
- Homosexual behavior is very genetically indeterminate. If it was genetic, it would have disappeared with natural selection. The orientation would not have replenished itself and would have eventually died out. In natural selection, only those traits that strengthen and help the species survive will be passed on. These traits must also have the ability to reproduce another generation. Up until the practice of artificial fertilization, the gay community could not reproduce itself; they had to conscript non-homosexual people to join their ranks.



- Note: many homosexuals were at one time attracted to the opposite sex (examples Anne Heche & Cynthia Nixon)
- Temperament and hormones do not make gay homosexual practice inevitable or irresistible. Not all effeminate men automatically become gay in practice.
- The gay community has tried to use science to justify their agenda. As a result, many Christians have developed a negative attitude toward science. This should not be. Science is not the enemy. How it is used and who uses it makes the difference. The truth is that biology can affect sexuality, but it is not the only factor that does, or the most influential one.
- Biology can also affect alcoholism, anger, sexual drive, and mental disorder, but that does not mean that drunkenness is unavoidable. A person can choose not to drink. The birth of hermaphrodites or Siamese twins shows that nature sometimes gets things wrong. Not everything that comes in birth is what should have been.
- People want to believe that homosexuality is genetic so it cannot be attacked morally. It is important to remember that the evaluation of homosexuality does not rest solely on morally neutral physical characteristics. Part of evaluating homosexuality has to do with the impact the gay lifestyle has on society. How the gay community affects the rest of society must be a consideration.
- Biological influences realistically affect behavior, but do not necessarily determine them.
- There is a difference between causing and enabling effects (determining vs facultative). Human responses are too complex to be reduced to involuntary responses. Behavior comes from both pre-natal influences and post-natal experiences. Biology is only one factor that determines sexuality. Other factors include psychological, social, and spiritual influences. Just as some biological factors are involved in heterosexual attraction, so it is true with homosexual attraction.



- Any attempt to reduce people to genetic or biological entities distorts human identity from the biblical perspective. Human choice or will is a factor in all behavior. Biology does not provide the sole excuse for behavior.
 - Homosexuality is not the same as race. Race is determined at conception. No intrauterine trauma or hormone can alter that. Genetics can affect behavior. Environment can influence gene expression. Freewill determines the response to whatever predispositions might be present. Orientation is genetically influenced but not hardwired by DNA. Predisposition is not predetermination.
3. "We were all dealt a deck of cards in life. How we play them is up to us."
- The sociological effect of parents on orientation is significant. We have a need for love from the parent of the same gender. If this is not received at a young age, the child may seek it out in places other than the parents. When mixed with sensual cravings, this can lead to homosexual experimentation. Watching a dad abuse a mom can turn a young girl away from men; so can abuse from a male adult figure. Withheld fatherly love and a smothering mother can influence a boy to being gay. It does not, however, determine that he will end up that way.
 - Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health (Human Genome Project) said, "Whatever genes are involved represent predisposition, not predetermination. Being born with a predisposition to alcohol does not make drunkenness moral."

Being inborn does not make something moral.

The best recent study, by Harvard geneticist Dean Hamer suggests that female sexual identification is more a matter of environment than heredity. "No findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors." People like Anne Heche and Cynthia Nixon prove that homosexuals can change. Note the example of Michael Glatze.

No study has determined that homosexuality is biologically determined. The study on the hypothalamus gland proves nothing. Studies have shown that the brain can change because of the actions of a person. This is called neuroplasty. This is the phenomena that educators are experiencing with students in school. The electronic millennial learns differently than



children of earlier generations. Their neurological system fires differently than the past generation. Why? It is because of the hours that they have spent playing electronic games. Their activities changed their brain function, not vice versa. The hypothalamus of a gay may not have made them gay as much as their gay activity changed their hypothalamus.



SOCIAL ARGUMENT

"The homosexual issue is a civil rights issue."

- In some countries like the UK, they have successfully made homosexuality a civil rights issue. By using the biological argument, gays have equated their situation with that of African Americans. They want to be seen as another group possessing minority-specific physical characteristics. They claim that in the past they have not had equal access to education, job opportunities, and medical services. This cannot be said today because 59% of all gays are college graduates. They conclude that it is only morally right to legally protect the civil rights of such individuals.
- Giving homosexuality civil rights status is protecting something that has traditionally been considered sin. Proponents of this lifestyle want it to be considered legitimate even though it undermines the critical role of the family as an institution and obliterates the biblical distinctiveness of the antithetical and complementary roles of man and woman.
- Homosexuality cannot be lumped together with race. Race is entirely genetic. Nothing in the mother's diet or womb experience changes that. The baby may have defects because of those things, but it will still be Afro-American, Latino, or Asian. Race is impervious to cultural, social, or psychological influences.
- Laws should protect these people from inhuman treatment and injustice. But to give them preferential status is not right.

PERSONAL ARGUMENT

1. Personal Happiness
 - Some have concluded that they should have access to whatever makes them happy. They believe this to be one of their inalienable rights. Happiness is obviously a desirable aspect of life, but it is not guaranteed. In fact the Christian life often promises just the opposite. Being a disciple of Christ can bring joy, but there is no obvious link to happiness. The message of the Bible is that sometimes we should sacrifice short-term pleasure for long-term good.



- 73% of psychiatrists say homosexuals are less happy than the average person.
- 70% of those psychiatrists say the unhappiness is NOT due to social stigmatization (Sexual Survey 4 Current thinking on Homosexuality, Medical aspects of Human Sexuality). The Christian belief is that people should do what is holy, not what makes them happy.

2. Loneliness

- Many gays live lonely lives, especially if their orientation is kept secret. Matthew Vines states that a gay cannot share in some of life's closest relationships because every time a person really cares for someone else they get too close. That assumes that closeness must always end in sex. As a result, one is always alone.
- The gay community does not have a monopoly on loneliness. There are many straight people in our society who are also lonely. Loneliness is a societal issue, not a sexual orientation issue.
- The cry for friendship is not denied to the homosexual community. They have every right to close personal, even intimate, long standing relationships. They do not need to have the sexual component with them. This is why they are welcome into fellowship in churches. The community life of the assembly can help provide a lot of the social aspect of the needs they have, without the sexual component
- Gay theologian Matthew Vines makes the statement that the Bible does not condemn, loving, committed same-sex relationships. This is true if they do not include the sexual component. He also says the Bible never calls for lifelong celibacy for a homosexual. While there are no specific biblical commands of that nature, there are commands that condemn the practice of that lifestyle. The Bible assumes that they are to remain non-practicing.
- Some say that the Bible condemns aloneness. While Genesis does say that, it must be read in context. The destiny of Adam was to propagate the earth. He could not do that alone. He needed a wife to fulfill his God-ordained destiny. His aloneness stopped the plan of God from being fulfilled. The modern homosexual cannot say that they have the same calling, or they would not be in the type of relationship that cannot propagate. Their chosen lifestyle is contradictory to the commission of Adam.
- Many unmarried heterosexual people are alone; many widows/widowers and divorcees are alone. Many handicapped or mentally challenged people are alone;



many political fugitives are alone. While this is sad, the reality is that the loneliness of gays is not a breach of some inalienable right, but their personal hardship. They are no more lonely than a young single who desires relationship but can't get a date.



3. Singleness

- Matthew Vines says that he feels no special calling to be celibate, but the condemnation of same-sex relationships means that he will be single all his life. We believe that is true. Sexual fulfillment is not an inalienable right. The boundaries of legitimate sex are within the covenant between a man and woman. Today states can refuse a marriage license to people for several reasons. This shows that the state does not assume that everyone has the right to be married. It is the same as the state determining that not everyone should be able to have a driver's license. There are boundaries placed on certain activities in life. People have to qualify to have some privileges. If someone falls within the qualifications stated, the state's only obligation to people is to treat equally all citizens who meet the qualification. It is not their duty to ensure that everyone is eligible.
- It is important to know that the Bible affirms singleness in 1 Corinthians 7:8.
- There are those who will never be married and that is okay. Advocating singleness does not contradict the Bible.
- There is a common idea that all people should be sexually satisfied, but the Bible condemns many forms of sexual behavior. It is wrong for an adulterous man to be satisfied by an affair. It is wrong for an adult to be satisfied with a child. It is wrong for a parent to be satisfied with a child in their family. It is wrong for a person to be satisfied with a harlot, or an animal. Not everyone's sexual desire can be rightfully fulfilled.
- We all have restrictions on our lives. A married person has restrictions. A single teen has restrictions. The idea that there should be not restrictions from sexual satisfaction is wrong.

ANCIENT WRITERS

Homosexuality has been present in all cultures. The Greeks accepted it because of the influence of their gods. The myths about Zeus and Eros promoted the practice. The practice of the lifestyle was well noted in the following ancient writers.

- Aristides' Apology (AD 138) Hippolytus



- Clement of Alexandria (Protr)
- *Sibylline Oracles Thucydides
- Flavius Josephus (Jewish, non-Christian, 1st century) Philo- The Special Laws
- *Both Josephus and Philo use the term “unnatural” with their discussion of homosexuality.
- Early translations of the Bible (Latin, Syriac, and Coptic) all render the term arsenokoitai with words that reflect the meaning “homosexual”.
 - These ancient writers spoke of homosexuality in terms of mutuality and permanency, as well as referring to rape and infidelity.
 - Many great Greeks were gay, including Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euripides, Phidias, Theomedon, Alexander, Pinder, and Theocritus.
 - *Note- Alexander’s men were surprised when he married Roxanne, but it was only to father a son to carry on the family name. Alexander’s gay relationships left him no heir.
 - Important sources: Symposium and Laws of Plato, and the speech “Against Timarchus” by Aeschines.
 - Plato’s Symposium (400 BC) was written to enact laws against pederasty that took advantage of boys.
 - The Laws (Plato’s last work) mentions that homosexuality arose because it was practiced by Zeus and Ganymede. He refers to sexual activities as the mightiest lusts.
 - The Symposium prohibits indulgence in pederasty and adult homosexuality because they are unnatural, even among beasts. According to Plato, laws should tend toward virtue. No one should ordain by law the homosexual practice.
 - Plato wrote, “Possibly, should God so grant, we might forcible affect one of two things in this matter of sexual relations, --- wither that no one should venture to touch any of the noble and freeborn save his own wedded wife, nor sow any ungodly and bastard seed in fornication, nor any unnatural and barren seed in sodomy.” Plato felt that violators should be disqualified from public office.
 - Augustine acknowledged Plato’s insights.
 - The work “Against Timarchus” was designed to help protect boys from sexual harassment during the school day in the classroom and gymnasium.





BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS

Argument 1: The Bible says little about homosexuality. Why make such a big deal about it?

- Although the Bible does say more about anger, drunkenness, and adultery, that does not minimize the significance of the topic. There are more than two or three verses about homosexuality and there are verses referring to different types of homosexuality.
- The number of passages about a topic does not determine its weight morally.
- There is only one legal passage on rape- Deut 22:25-27. There are other passages that describe rape taking place- Gen 34:1-2; Jdg 19:22-30; 20:35; 2Sam 13:6-29; Is 13:16; Lam 5:11; Zech 14:2 There are only three passages dealing with bestiality- Ex 22:19; Lev 18:23; 20:16. Both practices are considered wrong even in our modern culture, yet biblical material is very limited. Just because homosexuality only has a handful of verses concerning it does not mean that it is unimportant.

Argument 2: Old Testament laws are not for New Testament Christians.

- Some modern Bible scholars who support homosexual practice use the argument that Old Testament passages about gay behavior cannot be used to condemn modern behavior. They believe people in New Testament times are not bound by the Old Testament law. However, early Christian historian Eusebius (c. 300 AD), disagrees. He sees the Old Testament law as binding to Christian behavior (although not for redemption).
- The law is not valid for salvation, but it is to be respected (Romans 3:31; 1 Timothy 1:8-10). The value of the law can still be seen throughout the New Testament. The cross did not destroy the legitimate use of the Law.



- Here are some NT quotations of OT laws stating that the content is still valid.
 - Leviticus 19:18 (x8) Love your neighbor as yourself
 - Leviticus 18:5... Luke 10:28; Romans 10:5 Keep my laws and live Leviticus 19:2 ... 1 Peter 1:16 Be ye holy as I am holy
 - Leviticus 26:12 ... 2 Corinthians 6:16 I will be your God and you will be my people
 - Deuteronomy 5:16 ... Ephesians 6:2-3 Honor your father and mother Deuteronomy 5:18 ... Matthew 5:27 Do not commit adultery Deuteronomy 5:21 ... Romans 7:7 Do not covet
 - Deuteronomy 6:4-5 ... Mark 12:32 Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is One God Deuteronomy 6:13 ... Matthew 4:10 Worship only God
 - Deuteronomy 6:16 ... Matthew 4:7 Don't tempt God
 - Deuteronomy 8:3 ... Matthew 4:4 Man does not live by bread alone Exodus 20:13 ... Matthew 5:21 Do not commit murder
 - Exodus 20:13-15, 17 ... Romans 13:9 Do not commit adultery, murder, steal, covet, etc.
 - Leviticus 19:18 ... Matthew 5:43 Do not swear falsely

Argument 3: The Bible and the ancient world knew nothing about "orientation".

- Matthew 5:21-28 shows that Jesus understood that internal desire and motivation are the first influence of actions. Actions are only the outcome. The internal motivation was recognized as the basis for action. Accurately addressing the action assumes that internal motivation also be addressed.
- Too often the discussion about homosexuality focuses only on their orientation. The Bible tells us that actions also need to be examined. The orientation would not be an issue if it were not accompanied with actions. Modern homosexuals are not condemned for their orientation, but for the action that comes out of it. If they were willing to never act on their desires it would not be a concern. The discussion of homosexuality must focus on homoerotic activity and the quagmire of orientation.
- Some gays think that having a committed, monogamous relationship justifies their sexual actions. Proverbs 6:30-31 says that if a man steals food because he is hungry, it is still a crime and he must pay. The theft is still wrong regardless of the motive



- Some modern scholars say that ancient writers knew nothing or said nothing about same-sex orientation. They say this to support the idea that scripture addresses only the ancient understanding of homosexuality. Therefore the Bible does not condemn the modern practice of monogamous homosexuality. This assumes that modern homosexuality is qualitatively different than ancient forms.
- Josephus said that homosexuality has become a fixed habit for some.
- Clement of Alexandria wrote that some men from birth have a natural aversion to a woman.
- Emperors Nero and Hadrian both had gay marriages.
- From this we infer that ancient writers understood the concept of orientation, but did not use the term.

Argument 4: The Bible condemns certain kinds of homosexual activity, but not mutual marriage.

- The Bible endorses sexual activity only within the confines of a heterosexual marriage. It condemns other forms of sexual activity: fornication, adultery, incest, cultic, prostitution, etc. The Bible condemns various forms of homosexual activity: gang rape, cultic prostitution, lesbianism, and transvestitism, but does not endorse any form of homosexual activity.

Argument 5: Different people draw differing conclusions from biblical exegesis.

- While this may be true, it that does not mean that every conclusion is correct or that there is not a correct conclusion.

Argument 6: The Bible is not a valid foundation for ethical reflection today.

- You shall not murder. You shall not steal. You shall not lie or slander your neighbor.
- These are all biblical commandments which are also reflected in our modern civil laws!

Argument 7: Different translations of the Bible use different words to describe sexual activity.



- That is true of the evolution of any language. The word homosexual was not used in the King James Version because it did not exist in the English language until 1892, when it was used in Chaddock's Psychotherapy of Sexual Issues.



Argument 8: All law must be interpreted through an ethic of love.

- While this is true, it does not do away with calling wrong behavior evil. Dale Martin writes that we cannot expect to come to an answer on the issue from a particular method of reading the Bible. We must push the discussion to where it should be: into the realm of debates about Christian love, rather than into either fundamentalism or modernist historicism. The question should be, “What is the loving thing to do?”
- Matthew Vines writes “How much do you love your wife? That is how deeply you should care, and that is how tenaciously you should fight, for the very same thing for my life, because they matter just as much to me... the truly Christian response to them is acceptance, support, and love.
- In John 8, Jesus helps the woman caught in adultery. He stops her from being exposed to needless ridicule or injustice. He cares for what happens to her. He does also tell her to stop her sinful activity. The love of Christ can also have correction in it.

Argument 9: True doctrine should never lead to the destruction of self-esteem or dignity.

- This is not always true. When correction is involved there will be embarrassment and pain. 2 Corinthians 7:11 shows that Paul caused the church much embarrassment in order to get them to deal with the issue of incest in their assembly. They had momentary sorrow, but when they did the right things then it went better for them. The change in self-assessment only came when they made the correct response.
- Hebrews 12 says that the discipline of the Lord is never pleasant when you go through it. It is always the fruit that come out of the experience and not the comfort of the experience that counts.

Argument 10: The Bible says nothing about committed homosexual relations.

- The addition of commitment to the relationship does not change God's perspective about it. Human agreement does not change the morality of an activity. Ananias and Sapphira were committed to an activity and yet were wrong. The people in Ezra's day had married Canaanites from the land. They had children and homes, yet God directed them to divorce their wives. It did not matter how long they had been married. God had told them not to marry those people. They may have been committed in the marriages, but the marriages were wrong.





MODERN APPROACHES TO WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY

- D.S. Bailey- attempts to distinguish between homosexual condition and practice. He says the modern condition was unknown in biblical times.
- J. Boswell- states that the biblical prohibitions about homosexuality were about male prostitution. He says that Paul was not disapproving gay inclination & enduring loving relationship between same sex partners.
- It is true that cultic prostitution is mentioned in some passages: Deuteronomy 23:17-18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46-47; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14. This is obvious because the word qedesh was used in those passages. That word, however, is not used in Leviticus 18 & 20. Those passages are talking about general homosexual practice.
- R. Scroggs- he believes that passages like Romans 1 deal with pederasty (man-boy relations). This was the most common form of homosexual behavior in the Greco/Roman world, and Scroggs contends is so different from the modern form, that the New Testament has nothing to say that is relevant to our modern situation. If Paul was referring to only that specific form of homosexuality he would have used the term for it. There are specific Greek words to describe pederasty: paiderasteuw, paiderastew, paiderasths, paiderastia, paidomanhs.
- Peterson- The instruction in the Bible is out of place with what is experience today, and therefore irrelevant.



KEY PASSAGES THAT DEAL WITH HOMOSEXUALITY

1. Genesis 1-2

- Even though the message of the heterosexual pattern is clear in these chapters, Matthew Vines focuses on how wrong it is for a person to be alone (Gen 2:18). The passage clearly shows what God did to correct the alone situation. He gave Adam a wife. The heterosexual union of a man and woman was the solution. The wrongness of Adam's aloneness was not due to him being by himself. It is due to the fact that by himself he cannot be fruitful and multiply. The plan for God needed both man and woman to be fulfilled. Two men could not have fulfilled this divine purpose. What corrected the wrongness of Adam's solitary state is different from and is not equal with the supposed benefits of a gay marriage. It cannot be said that as marriage was the solution to Adam's situation then gay marriage is the solution to the loneliness gays feel today. Loneliness is neither the only, nor the main issue that Genesis is concerned with. Fulfilling the divine plan is focus.
- Jesus quotes from this section when talking about marriage and divorce. In this passage, the words husband, wife, and marry are all used (Matthew 19:10). The disciples knew what Jesus was talking about. He was not suggesting a gay marriage as part of the divine plan. Marriage is a good thing if it is done according to God's plan. Aloneness does not trump rightness. In this case, the gay
- interpretation of this passage places personal feeling above God's creative purposes.

2. Genesis 19

- This is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Pro-Gay advocates say the passage is not about homosexual relationship. It is about lack of social hospitality and gang rape. They say that the association of sodomy with the city did not take place until the intertestamental period. They interpret the word "know" as getting acquainted or being social.
- They go on to say that the difference between violent gang rape and consensual same-sex supposedly disqualifies the passage from being relevant.



- The primary sin in Sodom was gang rape, but there were other sins in Sodom besides homosexuality. (Isaiah 1:10; 3:9; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:46-48). It cannot be said, however, that the story of Sodom was without sexual connotation. Judges 19 (the Levite and his concubine) was patterned after the Genesis 19 story (Lot in Sodom) and was written before the intertestamental period. The rape issue, both homosexual and heterosexual is very obvious.
 - The description of Sodom's sin in Jude 1:7 refers to gross immorality in the city.
 - The word "know" in Genesis is used ten times for intercourse, not getting acquainted with someone. The same word is used in Genesis 19:8 to describe the virginity of Lot's daughter. The word is also used in Judges 19:22-24 to describe the sexual action against the Levite's concubine.
 - Ezekiel uses the word "abomination" to describe the sins of Sodom. This is the same word used in Leviticus 18 & 20, implying that Lot's attempt to appease the men of the city was sexual in nature.
 - Passages like Jude 1:7 and 2 Peter 2:6-7 describe the immoral sexual nature of the Sodom culture.
 - As much as modern scholars may want to dismiss this passage from the discussion on homosexuality, they cannot. A form of homosexual activity (gang rape) was a part of the story.
3. Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13
- Some say that this passage is part of the holiness code in the Old Testament, and it only about ritual forms of homosexuality (prostitution). This is not true because the same passage talks about adultery (v.20), killing children for sacrifice (v.21), and bestiality (v. 23). Adultery and bestiality were not part of the ritual cultic practice. These commands are moral and social. The whole passage cannot be written off as referring merely to ritual.
 - Scholars say that Leviticus includes commands that are not to be continued today: prohibiting sex with a menstruating woman, blended fabrics, cutting sideburns, etc. In the same chapters, culinary sin is mingled with sexual sin. Because the culinary ban has been lifted in the New Testament era, they then argue that the



sexual limitations should also be lifted. Those who say this fail to consider that the elimination of culinary laws was specifically mentioned by Jesus and Peter.

- Christ made an end to the ceremonial law, but never the moral. “I did not come to destroy the Law.”
- That elimination was never applied to homosexual sin. Just because culinary laws were dropped does not mean moral laws should also be dropped.
- When Josephus refers to homosexuality he uses Leviticus 18 & 20.



- The term “abomination” (towebah) is said by some modern scholars to be ethnically distinctive, supposedly speaking of pagan practices. But other uses of the same term shows that it is not ethnically distinctive. Proverbs, a universal book, uses the same word twenty times. The mention of the name “Israel” is purposefully excluded.
- We do not have to choose whether the passage is dealing with ritual or moral issues.
- Incest, adultery, and bestiality are considered wrong even though they are in the holiness code passage. The truth is the holiness of God is the heart of the passages, and that does not change.

4. Romans 1:26-27

There are several ideas suggested for an explanation of Romans 1:

- The passage is about heterosexual people acting like homosexual people. They supposedly had abandoned their true heterosexual orientation and went against what was natural for them. It is not opposing people who follow their natural homosexual orientation. This violation of one’s nature is the perversion. Response: The text does not talk about heterosexuals going gay, or of bisexuality.
- The term “nature” is defined as custom or cultural practice. It is the fashion or way a culture does something, not biology. Response: To read “orientation” out of the passage is incorrect exegesis. In Romans 1, Paul refers back to creation in verses 20 & 25, not culture. In Chapter 5, Paul refers back to the early events of creation. It is apparent that Paul draws theology from the original created pattern. Also, both Josephus and Philo use the idea of nature to describe how homosexuality is against God’s original design. Plato refers to homosexuality as against nature.
- The passage is said to deal with pederasty (sex between a man and a boy). Some say that pederasty was the only form of homosexuality known at the time in the Roman world. Response: Pederasty was not the only form of homosexuality known at that time. Paul does not say ‘men & boys.’ No ancient source refers to female pederasty, yet Romans refers to the female version of the homosexual act. Pure lesbianism was a reality in Rome. Paul did not limit the passage to that one form because there



were other forms. To understand Paul's point does not require understanding of orientation or pederasty.



- The passage is only about cultic prostitution because it includes idolatry in verse 23. Response: Idolatry is included, but that is not the subject of the whole passage. Idolatry is one form of mankind's fallen nature referred to. The overarching cause of all the sins is mankind abandonment of what they knew about God. They did know Him, but would not honor Him. In verse 28 they chose not to retain their knowledge of Him any longer. Idolatry is simply putting things in the position that God should have had. Idolatry is also more than bowing down to an image. It is also linked with greed and covetousness (Colossians 3:5). Also, the sins mentioned in Romans 1:29-31 have nothing to do with idolatry.

Some say that the desire of the homosexuals in Romans 1 is excessive, in supposed contrast to legitimate homosexual attraction that is kept within monogamous boundaries.

5. 1 Corinthians 6:9 & 1 Timothy 1:10

- These passages have generated a lot of discussion. Some say that they are dealing with masturbation, but the word arsenokoitis means men with men, not men with themselves.
- Some say that it deals only with sexual abuse (pederasty). It may include that, but it is not limited to that. Just as fornication and adultery are examples of heterosexual sins, malakos and arsenokoitis are homosexual sins. The difference is that there is a stated positive pronouncement of heterosexual expression, but nowhere can we find a positive example of homosexual expression.
- Paul uses a general term: arsenokoitis, which he apparently coined in this passage. It is purposely broad so that it covers pederasty, gang rape and lesbianism, but it is not limited to any one of those. Paul does a similar thing in 1 Timothy 3:2 when dealing with the marital status of a leader. He uses "husband of one wife". This broad phrase covers divorce, polygamy, and one who plays around. The broad term is more effective. If he had been referring only to divorce he would have used apoluw, apostasion, or afihmi. If he was referring to polygamy he would have used polugamos, or digamos.



- Arsenokoi thj, --an adult male who practices intercourse with another adult male. (BDAG) a male who engages in sexual activity with a person of his own sex. The word assumes the one taking the active role in same-sex activity.
 - malako, j, - the word means “soft”. It refers to the passive partner in a same- sex relationship, those who take the female role.
 - What the passage tells us is that homosexuality is not an acceptable Christian activity. It will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 - It also tells us that homosexuality is forgivable.
6. 1 Timothy tells us that homosexuality is contrary to sound teaching and the glorious gospel.
- Both 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy refer back to Leviticus 18 & 20. The wording is a copy of that in the LXX of those passages.
7. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 says flee immorality.
- This is within a section dealing with incest, adultery, and homosexuality. They are all violations of God’s moral code

PARTICULAR ISSUES

By what means do people determine if something is moral? Down through history different standards have been used to determine if an action is moral or immoral.

1. Subjectivism

A person approves of an activity or believes it is right. The individual determines the standard, based on what they feel is right or wrong. This implies that everyone’s moral judgment is as good as everyone else’s or is morally infallible. As long as we believe in what we are doing, we do no wrong. This makes moral disagreement virtually impossible.

2. Cultural relativism (societal standards):



Right and wrong is determined by a certain set of principles or rules that a culture holds. This can overrule the individual's opinion if the cultural value is different.

3. Anthropological argument:

Since different cultures disagree on moral values, then there can be no universal moral standards.



4. Objective standards:

There is a rule that exists separate from human will and experience. If this does not exist, what other standard should be used?

5. Ethical Egoism:

Right and wrong is determined by what is in someone's self-interest. It would be immoral to act in one's self-interest.

6. Common sense (instinctive):

This is a standard that should be available to all people.

7. Divine command theory:

Right and wrong exist because the gods command it.

8. Virtue ethics:

Right and wrong are characterized in terms of acting in accordance with the traditional virtues (wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance). Aristotle pushed this. Ethics has to do with character. The ultimate goal of this standard was happiness, by acting in accordance with reason.

9. Utilitarianism:

Right and wrong is determined by the overall goodness of the consequences of action. No action is intrinsically right or wrong. No person's preference carries greater weight than another person's. Democratic and economic principles usually reflect utilitarianism.

10. Rational theory (Kant):

Right and wrong is determined by what is most rational. This will often present universal duties of people to each other. Doing right is our obligation; it is our law. We need to do our duty.



11. Rights-based theory:

People act in accordance with moral rights, which we all possess simply by being human. These are the inalienable rights. The theory is that someone has a right and others have a corresponding duty to provide what their right requires. The question remains, where do the rights come from and what do you do with competing rights?

12. Contractarianism:

The principles of right and wrong are determined by everyone in a society agreeing upon them. They then form a social contract that all will follow.

13. Pragmatism:

Right and wrong is determined by what actions will achieve the desired goals of a collective group of people.

14. Legalism:

Whatever the government determines to be moral. We believe legality does not determine morality. Something can be legal and not moral.

15. Genetic:

Science does not determine morality. This is why the genetic studies fall short of determining how man should live. Genetics may show why a person acts a certain way, but it does not say if they should act in that way.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The biggest social failure in a nation is not homosexuality, but the failure of the heterosexual marriages. With the divorce rate at about 50%, traditionally married people cannot criticize homosexuals. Studies of social conditions will reveal all the effects of the huge divorce rate in the world, which has led to increased poverty, mental illness, physical illness, violent crime, abuse, and homosexuality. A great majority of gays were influenced to their lifestyle by a poor relationship with their



biological parents. Much of the gay problem would not exist if marriages and homes functioned as they should.

- Homosexuality is not the worst sin. It is simply one of many sexual sins.
- Christians should not presume that all gays are predatory.
- Every person is responsible for their own actions. Abuse by a father is not a legitimate excuse for anger and violence.
- If someone does not agree with the homosexual lifestyle, that does not make them homophobic. Homophobia is defined as dislike or prejudice against homosexuals. The term is often not accurately used, but has become a derogatory slur.
- Counsel for abstinence is not isolated to homosexuals. Fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness is also to be advised. Abstinence from sexual activity is recommended to singles, widow(ers), and divorcees, which constitute a much larger proportion of the population than homosexuals.
- Ignorance of God's ways leads to inverted values.
- By nature we are all born children of wrath (Eph 2:3). Tendencies at birth cannot be an excuse to act wrongly.
- Not all dreams will be fulfilled. Not everyone will have the American dream family. Not everyone will have a lucrative job, or nice house. Not everyone will be sexually fulfilled and have a good romantic relationship. These are not rights, but possibilities.
- Everyone has restrictions on their lives. No one has a free reign to do whatever they want to, at any time, and to whatever degree. Within a social community, everyone will have to restrain their activities for the benefit of the whole. We don't have the freedom to express all natural orientations. Angry people do not have the right to assault others. Kleptomaniacs don't have a right to steal. We cannot kill those we don't like, or deface what we don't like. Hardship is a fact of life. Learning and demonstrating tolerance and self-control is essential for social life.
- Self-control is an important quality for all people. It is a fruit of the Spirit, so it does not come naturally to most of us.



- Sex was created and approved by God, with boundaries. God sanctions appropriate sex, but not inappropriate sex.



- Biblical prohibitions regarding sexual activity:
 - No sex outside marriage
 - No forced sex
 - No sex between family members
 - No extra-marital sex
 - No sex involving ritual abuse
 - No same-gender sex
 - No sex with animals
 - No sex for pay

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL RESULTS OF THE LEGALIZATION OF GAY MARRIAGE?

- The connection between marriage and procreation and the link between children and their biological parents will be weakened.
- It will change what is taught about family in public schools.
- There will be pressure to silence people who believe homosexuality is sin.
- The optimum environment for raising children will be minimized. Every child has a biological mother and father and should have the right to know them. Gay marriages deny the child the opportunity to have both a mother and father. Two loving fathers or two loving mothers do not make a mother and father. Children of a gay couple will lack the input of both genders in their lives. Fatherless and motherless families will suffer. Gay adoption will deny the child the opportunity to have either a mother or a father. By law, society is saying that men and women are interchangeable.
- A gay home is different. They chose to be different, yet they want to be treated the same.
- There are increased health issues that accompany the homosexual lifestyle. 50% of AIDS cases are in gay people.



- The suicide rate in the gay community is higher than the rest of society.
- There is a high level of abuse and physical violence in same-sex couples.



WHAT SHOULD HETEROSEXUALS DO IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE GAY COMMUNITY?

- Recognize our own sin before we criticize theirs.
- Befriend them.
- Always be humble and kind in communicating with them.
- Know your Bible well and don't be afraid to represent it.
- Gain a fresh understanding of marriage. Strengthen marriages and be willing to offer public input about marriage.
- Confront them as appropriate. Paul did this to people in the church.



APPENDIX C: WHAT IS SCRIPTURE'S VIEW OF HOMOSEXUALITY?

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PRIMARY PASSAGES ON HOMOSEXUALITY

There are five primary passages that speak directly to the subject of homosexuality¹. Each is listed below along with a summary and notes regarding key issues in the text.

1. Leviticus 18:22 – “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination” (NASB).

This command is listed alongside other sexual prohibitions that are also specified as “these abominations” (v26f). The other prohibitions include various forms of incest (18:6- 18); intercourse during menstruation (v19); adultery (v20); sacrifice of children (v21)— probably included here because this was done to assure fertility²; and bestiality (v23).

This verse is a clear denunciation of homosexual activity. The text is completely unambiguous—there is nothing in the text indicating that homosexual activity is only an abomination in terms of adultery, rape, or pedophilia.³ However, it should be noted that the passage speaks of “action, not attraction.”⁴ I.e., it says nothing about homosexual proclivities or inward desires. Consensual adult engagement in homosexual activity is clearly prohibited.

It should also be noted that Christians generally agree that all of the other prohibitions listed in Leviticus 18 are intrinsically immoral, regardless of covenant. The only debated exception is intercourse during menstruation. However, technically, the passage does not address menstruation in and of itself, but—to be precise—menstrual uncleanness (tum’ah).

That is, this particular issue is singled out as pertaining to Mosaic ritualism.⁵ The primary concern here is that sexual relations ought to be holy, done without shame in sight of the Covenant-Lord. This passage seems to be intended as a timeless sexual ethic.





2. Leviticus 20:13 – “If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”

The context of this passage is almost identical to Leviticus 18. Both passages deal with a number of sexual sins, including homosexuality. Like 18:22, this passage clearly prohibits homosexual activity without qualification. The major difference in this passage is the addition of the death penalty. However, it should be noted that most of the other (hetero) sexual sins also require the death penalty here.

Modern readers are shocked by the prescription of the death penalty for sexual sins.

The death penalty for first degree murder is more understandable as it comports naturally with *lex talionis* (the punishment fitting the crime). Moreover, capital punishment for murder is established for all humankind in the time of Noah before the addition of the Mosaic Covenant (Gen 9:6). For these reasons, many Christians understand the logic behind the death penalty for murder. But death for sexual sin?!

First, it should be recognized that there seems to be arbitrariness in whether a sex crime requires the death penalty or excommunication (being “cut off from among their people”). E.g., if a man “takes” (probably marries) a woman and her daughter, they are all to be put to death (v14); but if a man “takes” his own sister, they are to be “cut off” (v17). The random oscillation between such drastically different penalties for such seemingly similar crimes may intend to communicate that both penalties are in fact options for all of these particular infractions.

That is, it could be that the death penalty is required only if the offending Israelites refuse to be removed from the community (or if the community refuses to excommunicate them). If so, essentially God is saying, “The offenders must surely be excommunicated. And I mean it! For if they remain, the only alternative is death.” In this case, homosexual activity is primarily deserving of excommunication (just like other sex crimes), and death is simply the only other penalty left on the table should excommunication be resisted.⁶ Through a literary device, the intended penalty for all of these sex crimes may be excommunication; even when the death penalty is prescribed.

In this vein, Numbers 35:31 must also be considered. “Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to



death.” The Good News Translation has, “A murderer must be put to death. He cannot escape this penalty by the payment of money.” As Walter Kaiser Jr. points out, this statement presupposes that in other scenarios involving the death penalty, ransom (i.e. monetary redemption) was actually an acceptable alternative to death.⁷

This interpretation could be combined with my “ultimatum theory” described above, so that these sex crimes could either require ransom, excommunication, or death, depending on the circumstances. A provision in Num. 35:31 suggests that a ransom might be paid instead of the death penalty whenever a crime required capital punishment; but murder always required the death penalty.

Also, the text of 1 Cor 5 seems to support this interpretation. Here, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for not having already excommunicated a man who “has his father’s wife.” Paul expects them to know, without his guidance, that such a man should have been excommunicated. Paul’s expectation may be attributed, in part, to the known words of Jesus in Mt 18. But we should also recognize that this very issue is directly addressed Lev 20:11. However, in Leviticus the punishment appears to be death, not excommunication. Perhaps Paul understands that, even in Leviticus, the divinely prescribed consequence is actually excommunication, with capital punishment mentioned as the only suitable alternative.

The other major difference between Leviticus 18 and 20 is that the latter concludes with laws not rooted in timeless, intrinsic morality—laws that Christians do not accept as pertinent under the new covenant. If laws reflecting eternal morality are meshed together with laws reflecting temporary covenant particularities, how can people be expected to differentiate?

Could we also claim that the laws regarding sex and sorcery in this passage were likewise temporary? Since the sins in question are also explicitly forbidden in the New Testament, we cannot make that claim.

But it may be sufficient to point out that, although in some passages timeless moral imperatives appear alongside fleeting Mosaic requirements,⁸ Leviticus 20 is not such a passage. Instead of the random interspersion of moral laws with ceremonial laws, we find the following neat divisions in the passage (Although this passage also contains some laws that no longer apply to believers, the prohibition of homosexuality appears in a distinct section of the passage that deals with timeless moral laws):



- Timeless moral laws regarding sorcery and sexual immorality (vv 1-21)
- The abovementioned practices resulted in the expulsion of the Canaanites (vv 22-23)
- Israel is to be holy and should therefore observe the difference between clean and unclean animals and avoid sorcery (vv 24-27)



God not only lists the prohibitions against intrinsically immoral practices, but He also lists some of the unique commands that help distinguish Israel from the nations. I.e., this passage focuses on two ideas: there is a negative means of holiness (abstinence from immorality) and a positive means (separation unto God by participation in his ceremonial laws).

The fact that such a clear division is observable demonstrates that there is in fact a difference. V27 helps to illustrate this difference by providing such a sharp contrast between the ceremonial laws intended to illustrate the principle of cleanness and the moral laws intended to expose that which is truly evil. In short, the moral laws are timeless and apply to all people whereas the ceremonial laws were temporary means of exposing an eternal value for holiness.

3. Romans 1:26-28 – “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. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ...

By the time we come to the New Testament, we have already discovered God's perspective on homosexual behavior. The New Testament assumes the premise that homosexuality is sinful and under the judgment of God. However, with the progress of revelation, the subject is colored in with a little more vividness as the graciousness of God and the transformational power of the Spirit are freshly emphasized.

In Romans 1, that which may have been assumed in Leviticus is explained—namely, that homosexual activity is wrong because it violates God's original design. Paul calls it “unnatural.” However, the problem is not the “grossness” of unnatural relations; rather, it is the sinner's rebellion against God's established order, “exchanging” it for their own preference.

Homosexuality is wrong because it is rebellion against God's original design for sex.

Another assumption is made plain -- lesbianism is opposed to God's law in the same way and for the same reasons as male homosexuality. There is no distinction made by Paul: Lesbianism is sinful.





Paul introduces a somewhat new concept to the Biblical teaching (perhaps assumed in Leviticus as well)—that is, homosexual desire is specified as problematic in addition to homosexual behavior. Phrases such as “degrading passions,” “burned in their desire,” and “depraved mind” make this point clear. We may conclude that homosexual behavior constitutes the sinful infraction whereas homosexual desires are the root cause.

Though not speaking to homosexuality specifically, Jesus asserts that to lust in one’s heart is to commit adultery in one’s heart (Matthew 5:28). Romans 1 is therefore invaluable to pastors who desire to help Christians struggling with same-sex attraction because it directs them to focus on the root issues. This is the only passage that isolates same sex attraction as sinful—the root cause of the behavior.

Indeed, the root cause of homosexual activity goes far beyond same-sex attraction. The entire point of Romans 1:18ff is to show the downward spiral of humans who reject God and embrace the worship of idols. Homosexuality is one sin mentioned among many others, all of which are merely symptomatic of open rebellion against God. Those struggling with homosexuality, including Christians, should recognize that, in order to overcome, they must abandon any attempt to “exchange the truth of God” regarding their identity and purpose for their own rebellious, self-invented concept.

They must ask the Holy Spirit to show them the ways in which they may be bitter at God. (This may include a skewed view of God, fostered by some kind of abuse, for example.) They must ask the Holy Spirit to expose the idols that they have propped up in their hearts to replace God (i.e. their own identity in place of God’s, human approval in place of God’s, human affection in place of God’s).

It must be emphasized that Paul is not isolating homosexuality here. His point is that all humans are sinful and end up embracing treacherous practices as a result of outright rebellion against God. Indeed, Chapter 2 flows seamlessly from Chapter 1, as Paul warns, “Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things” (2:1).

Lest this be taken as an argument to accept such practices (including homosexual), Paul clarifies, “And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things” (2:2).





His whole point is summarized well in 3:9-12: “What then? Are we better than they? Not at all, for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.’”

One issue in Romans 1 that must be addressed is the fact that God is said to give sinners over to their sinful desires. Specifically, homosexuals indulge in that behavior because God has given them over to it. If this is so, can the homosexual really be held accountable for his or her actions? Has not God condemned them to the struggle? In response, the text appears to assert that God only gives people over to the rebellious desires they already insist upon.

Before anything is stated about God’s hand in the process, we are told that it is the unrighteous people who “suppress the truth” (v18), “they became futile in their speculations” (v21), “they became fools” (v22), “they exchanged the glory of ... God” (v23); “Therefore God gave them over ...” (v 24).

God’s grace is available to everyone—as Paul has already stated by this point, “[The gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). But he will not force anyone to receive it. Moreover, there may be a point at which God, in his grace, allows us to quickly degenerate in order to expose our utter need for repentance. Indeed, there is no strong argument that God’s “giving up” is a final judgment.⁹ There is still opportunity for repentance.

Though being “born gay” is certainly a possibility in New Testament theology (where all are born sinners), this text describes people who go through a process, which begins with their suppression of the truth and leads to being given over to homosexual desires and behaviors. Theologically, it is possible to be born gay; but biblically, all we see is the process of becoming gay.

4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 – “Or 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 effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”



The controversy in this passage concerns the terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*—translated by the NASB as “effeminate” and “homosexuals” respectively. Whatever the words mean, it is abundantly clear that they are sinful, grouped unapologetically with other such vices as adultery, thievery, swindling, etc.

Regarding the meaning of the words, *malakoi* is somewhat known in ancient writing. Literally, it means “soft,” but figuratively it is used to speak of an effeminate male, specifically one who functions as the passive/receiving partner in a homosexual act; and it may suggest a male prostitute.¹⁰ In ancient Greece, and eventually in Rome, it was common practice (and more or less accepted) for grown men to groom pubescent males for a sexual relationship in which the young (“soft”) boy was the passive partner. The older man was not considered a “homosexual,” (in our terms) but only the younger man, playing the more “female” role. This was acceptable in youth, but as the boy aged, he should sleep with women, take a wife, and perhaps love young boys as he had been loved.¹¹

The word translated “homosexuals,” *arsenokoitai*, is more difficult. Its etymology (which is not always a reliable indicator of meaning) suggests “[a man] who lies with a male.” The problem is that it appears here for the first time in writing, and was in all likelihood coined by Paul himself. For this reason, the word has become a magnet for anyone’s particular interpretation. For example, since *malakoi* probably means the passive man in a homosexual relationship and could apply to pubescent males, some insist that *arsenokoitai* means a man who engages in homosexual pedophilia (as described in the paragraph above). In this view, Paul is not condemning committed, consenting homosexual couples. (“Effeminate” refers to the receptive partner and “homosexual” likely refers to the penetrative partner.)

However, it has been shown, and now widely accepted among the majority of evangelical commentators, that Paul is drawing directly from the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 18:22, where “Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman” is translated using the Greek word *arsenos* for “man” and *koiten* for “lie with (sexually).” Clearly, Paul has combined *arsenos* and *koiten* to form a new plural noun, *arsenokoitai*.¹² Therefore, we should assume that he has the Leviticus context in mind. He is not addressing homosexual pedophilia. He is addressing both passive and active partners in homosexual relationships. It was necessary for him to identify both, as the



Greco- Roman mindset would be inclined to consider only the “unnatural” passive partner to be guilty.¹³

However, after defending the original meaning of the text, our primary concern for this passage should be Paul’s statement that both malakoi and arsenokoitai are things that some of the Corinthians had formerly been before they were washed, sanctified, and justified.

That is, not only can the blood of Christ atone for the sin of homosexuals, but the Spirit of God will be active in the life of anyone who formerly identified as such in order to bring about experientially the reality of his new legal position in Christ.

5. 1 Timothy 1:8-11 – “But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.”

Not much stands out here when compared to Romans 1 and 1 Corinthians 6, which have already been examined. The one major addition is the appearance of “homosexuals” (arsenokoitais) adjacent to “immoral men” (pornois). Although in earlier writings the latter may refer to male prostitutes, here it appears to be more of a general term for “fornicators.”¹⁴ Even if it should be translated “male prostitutes,” it is not strongly connected to arsenokoitais in this list, making it virtually impossible to suggest that Paul is only condemning homosexual prostitution and not homosexuality in general



APPENDIX D: PERSONAL CHANGE AND THE PROCESS OF REDEMPTION

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The Bible states that all people are sinful by nature (Romans 3:10, 23). This is because of humanity's common origin in the first man Adam (Romans 5:18). His sin was passed on to all his descendants. People come into life sinful from birth (Psalm 58:3; 51:1). As a result, they all live with sin in their lives and are by nature deserving of the wrath of God directed toward sinful people (Ephesians 2:3). This is the spiritual condition that all people share. Since all people come into life with this condition, it becomes one of the important goals of redemption to take care of it.

COMPONENTS OF THE WORK OF REDEMPTION

1. The first one is that man's sinful status before God needs to be changed. This is accomplished through the spiritual work called "justification". Paul outlines this work of justification in Romans 5:6-19. Jesus Christ's death and resurrection becomes the source of our justification before God (1 Corinthians 1:30). He paid the penalty for human sin, which allows justification to take place.
2. The second main component of redemption is called "sanctification". This is the work of grace that actually leads people to change the way that they act. This process of change is seen in the very first step of the journey to redemption. This step is called "repentance," meaning to change the way a person thinks and lives. Repentance is an important ingredient in the messages of several New Testament characters: John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2), Jesus (Matthew 4:17), Peter (Acts 2:38), and Paul (Romans 2:4).
 - The new believer coming to Christ must start by being willing to change. The change involved in repentance is then symbolized in the sacrament of water baptism. In this sacramental act, going into the water symbolizes the death of Jesus and the believer's death to their old life. Coming out of the water symbolizes the emergence into a new life represented in the Resurrection of Jesus. As a result of participating in these beginning spiritual acts, the new



Christian is seen by God as a new creature in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:17). Old things are passed away and all things in the Christian's life are then new.



- From this point, the believer is then told to align themselves with the work that Jesus Christ has done for them. This comes by putting off old ways of living and replacing them with new ones patterned after the nature of Christ (Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:5-8). This exchange of an old way of living to a new one describes the work of sanctification.
- This process of sanctification is part of the will of God for believers (1 Thessalonians 4:3).
- It takes place when an individual no longer allows the different aspects of his or her life to be used for sinful practice (Romans 6:19). The activities of life that are considered part of the old way of life needing change includes acts of immorality (Galatians 5:19-21). In the eyes of God, different acts of immorality are serious sins. They are ways that individuals actually sin against their own bodies (1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Improper sexual acts are some of the things that the work of sanctification is to help bring under control (1 Thessalonians 4:4).
- The new believer cannot continue unchanged; they must live differently.
- Homosexuality is one of the sins that cannot continue. It is an activity that believers are to be cleansed from and leave behind (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- We may come into the world with certain desires that lead to wrongful activities, but that does not mean that we are to give into them and continue to let them dictate our lives. God expects us all to change with His help into a lifestyle consistent with His nature. He comes to us all in love and kindness while we are still in our sin (Rom 5:8).
- He is patient and caring with us (Rom 2:4). That care is not intended to let us stay in our sinful behavior, but to bring us to a place of repentance.
- We are not to continue in the old way of living just because it has been natural for us to do so (Rom 6:1). A change of lifestyle is the goal that Jesus moves us toward. Regardless of the area that needs changing, all people are to move toward a transformed life.



FOOTNOTES

¹ Although Gen 19 and Jdg. 19 mention homosexual behavior, I have not included them, as the primary focus of these passages (in terms of sin) is rape. These passages do more to (1) expose the utter depravity of the godless and (2) demonstrate the immense cultural importance of honoring guests.

² John Walton, Victor Matthews & Mark Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 132. However, see Richard Hess, "Leviticus" in vol. 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, eds. Tremper Longman III & David Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 742. Hess explains that the prohibition against child sacrifice may be here for another reason: the fruit of sexual intercourse is children, and to sacrifice children is ultimately a perversion of sex according to God's design. Or perhaps Lange, et al., is correct in noting that "children" is a translation of zera (i.e. seed), but should here be translated "semen"—thus referring to an idolatrous sex act and not child sacrifice (J. P. Lange, Philip Schaff, and Frederic Gardiner, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Leviticus* [Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2008], 144-5). All three interpretations defend the presence of v21 amidst the other statements on sexual morality.

³ On this assertion, the commentators overwhelmingly agree. E.g. Gane: "This verse [Lev. 18:22] and 20:13 categorically and unambiguously condemn male homosexuality as an abomination to God." Roy E. Gane, "Leviticus" in vol. 1 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Back-ground Commentary: Old Testament*, ed. John Walton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 311.

⁴ Gerry Breshears, "The Bible and Homosexuality" (sermon given at Grace Community Church, Gresham, OR on October 12, 2014), Mp3.

⁵ James Swanson, "ב נָגַן," *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew* (Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), n. pag. See also Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible Book by Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 47.

⁶ Interestingly, first century Jews often considered excommunicated synagogue members to be dead—in extreme cases, holding funerals for the yet-living! (Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887], 2:185.) In fact, early on, Jews replaced execution with excommunication as an acceptable way to fulfill the death penalty laws (G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 709).

⁷ Walter Kaiser Jr., Peter Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred Brauch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 162.

⁸ E.g., Lev 19:18-19, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD. You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together." The two verses are not broken up naturally in the text, but v18 is reiterated in the NT and v19 is no longer required.

⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), 34.



¹⁰ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 613.

¹¹ Angelo di Berardino, "Christian Anthropology and Homosexuality: Homosexuality in Classical Antiquity," in the March 19th edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* (Baltimore: The Cathedral Foundation, 1997), 10. Accessed at www.ewtn.com/library/humanity/homo2.htm on September 10, 2015

¹² David W. J. Gill, "1 Corinthians" in vol. 3 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary*, gen. ed. Clinton E. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 133.

¹³ di Berardino

¹⁴ Bauer, 855

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