

What Does The Bible Say About Sexuality? — Homosexuality

August 16, 2015

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. It is great to have you! Last week we launched a small four-week mini-series for the month of August called, “What does the Bible say about sexuality?”

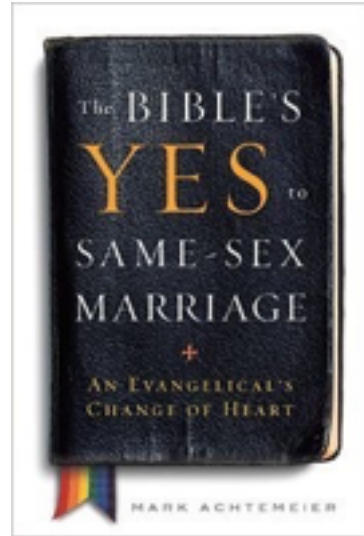
Last week we began the series by looking at heterosexuality. We studied God’s design for marriage. We spent most of our time looking at God’s design for our sexual lives prior to our wedding nights. God’s plan is we would keep absolute purity before our wedding nights and passionate intimacy after our wedding nights. Before marriage, your motto is, “If you wouldn’t do it with your sister, don’t do it with your girlfriend.” That is biblical. It is what we learn in 1 Timothy 5:2.

If you are single and searching or have a family member that is, I encourage you to get on www.crosswinds.tv and listen to that message. It will do a world of good and help you avoid a world of hurt.

This morning we move from heterosexuality to homosexuality. That is the hot topic of our day. Recently the U.S. Supreme Court gave homosexuals the right to wed. In the days leading up to the Supreme Court’s vote, homosexual marriage was likened to women being given the right to vote or the blacks being released from slavery. Homosexual marriage is considered by many to be a basic right in our culture. Christians that oppose same-sex unions are classified as behind the times, bigots, hateful and even biblically ignorant.

This is a very serious topic. We will take our study of it seriously. This is a message that will take two weeks. This week we are putting our finger in the Bible and looking at every biblical text that directly addresses homosexuality. Next week we will look at the common questions we face about the issue.

Last week I promised we would interact with a very popular book by Mark Achtemeier called, The Bible's Yes to Same Sex Marriage: An Evangelical's Change of Heart. He is an outspoken Presbyterian and one of the men leading the Presbyterian denomination toward affirmation of same-sex marriage. His book is hot off the press and many young adults are reading it. We will interact with it today.



There are two sides to this controversy. There are those who see the Bible as condemning all forms of homosexuality. That is the traditional view. On the other side are those that see homosexuality, either in committed monogamous relationships or in all forms, as acceptable. Throughout this message I will refer to those of the pro-homosexual orientation as the revisionists. That is not to demean them but it is to accurately describe them. For more than 2,000 years of church history the church uniformly condemned the practice of homosexuality as sin because everyone understood that as a clear teaching of the Bible. For 2,000 years this was never considered a debatable subject. It is only in recent history that this discussion surfaced. Those who want

to affirm homosexuality or homosexual unions are revisionists. They are leaving the clear and uniform understanding of the church for the last 2,000 years.

They are assuming all great biblical minds from the last 2,000 years of church history — Augustine, Luther, and Calvin just to name a few — read their Bibles wrong. Today we discovered something they missed. We are smarter than they were. That is a scary claim. C.S. Lewis called that chronological snobbery. When you think you are smarter than the great biblical minds that preceded you for the last 2,000 years, that is a scary claim. That is a recipe for heresy.

I want to apology up front for the level of detail in this message and the amount of notes. I promised you lots of material to help you talk with your friends so I wanted to keep my word. In addition, for us to respond to those in the revisionist camp, we need to keep our thinking caps on and deal with complex issues. So take another swig of that strong Starbucks church coffee, get out your notes and let's begin.

There are seven key biblical passages on homosexuality. Let's put our fingers in the text and work our way through the Bible.

Genesis 1 and 2 — What does the creation of man, woman and marriage teach us about homosexuality?

The first chapters of Genesis are important. In these first chapters we learn about God, the creation of the earth, the creation of mankind, the creation of sexuality and the marriage. The rest of the Bible continually references the opening chapters of Genesis as the God-given template for our lives. Genesis 1 and 2 teach us God's plan for gender, sexuality and marriage.

The creation of woman shows she is the only possible marital and sexual complement for a man.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. Genesis 2:21 (ESV)

Adam was made from the dust of the ground. Eve was made from Adam's side. A rib was taken out of Adam to make Eve. Adam was made intentionally incomplete. The only thing that could complete him was the corresponding piece in the puzzle that was taken out of him, that is, a woman. Another man cannot complete a man. Another woman cannot complete a woman. Look at how Adam celebrated Eve's arrival.

Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Genesis 2:23 (ESV)

Adam was thrilled Eve was not another animal. Adam was also thrilled Eve was not another man. Adam was thrilled Eve is a woman. She was the only piece that could complete him. She was what fits his needs. She was his equal and his opposite. Two men and two women cannot, by definition, complete each other.

Only two people of the opposite gender can fulfill the procreative purpose of marriage.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:28 (ESV)

God created Adam and Eve to be equals but opposites. Part of the reason he created a man and a woman equal but opposite is so they can come together and have children. Children are the natural result of a healthy marriage. I realize not all married couples can have children. That is an unfortunate

consequence of sin. The point remains — the only way to conceive children and for the human race to continue is for a man and a woman to come together. Two men and two women coming together cannot make children. A homosexual union cannot complete the procreative purpose of marriage. Homosexual couples cannot be fruitful and multiply.

Malachi 2:15 reminds us one of the purposes of marriage is to raise godly children.

Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. Malachi 2:15 (ESV)

If Godly offspring is one of the purposes of marriage, and there is no conceivable way for a homosexual couple to have children between them, they are violating one of the purposes of marriage.

Some revisionist authors don't think the one man and one woman marriage declaration of Genesis is enduring. They say one man and one woman is the normal way marriage is done but it is not the normative way all marriages should be done. What do you think? Is Genesis just a marriage recommendation or is it a marriage declaration for all of time? Is marriage always to be heterosexual and is one of the purpose of marriage to produce children? Let's find the answer.

Jesus and Paul claimed Genesis doesn't just make heterosexual marriage normal, it makes it normative.

In Jesus' day there was a marriage debate. Some religious leaders taught easy divorce while others taught hard divorce. They said a husband and wife should stay committed. One day the religious leaders approached Jesus to ask

him if he was for easy divorce or hard divorce. Jesus referenced Genesis 2:24 for his answer.

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.” Matthew 19:4–6 (ESV)

Jesus went to Genesis 2:24 and said Genesis gives the foundation for all marriages for all of time. The husband and wife God joined together, don't let man tear apart. Genesis' words on marriage are normative for all of us, not just normal for some of us.

Just like Jesus, Paul went back to Genesis 2:24 when he talked about marriage and claimed it is defined by God to be one man and one woman. It is normative for all of time, not just normal most of the time.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Ephesians 5:31–33 (ESV)

Jesus, Paul and Peter said the one man and one woman pattern of marriage in Genesis is the enduring pattern for all of time. We should be very cautious when it comes to redefining marriage and claiming it can also be between two men or two women. Those who redefine marriage to include same-sex unions directly contradicting Genesis, Jesus, Peter and Paul. That is one bad chess move.

Genesis 19 — Why were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed?

Sodom and Gomorrah are famous cities. If you want to be famous, it is wise to be infamous for something better than having your city destroyed by God raining fire and sulfur upon it because of your sin. That is one bad rap sheet.

Most of you know the story. Lot, Abraham's nephew, was living in the city of Sodom. Two angels, that looked like men, came to the city to see its wickedness first hand. Lot, being hospitable, saw them in the city square looking for a place to spend the night. He opened his home. After dinner the men of the city gathered around his house and try to break in. They wanted to have sex with Lot's guests. In an especially poor move, Lot offered his virgin daughters to satisfy the men's perverted sexual urges. The men were not interested in his daughters. The mob continued to be unruly and threatened to break down Lot's door to get to the men to satisfy their sexual urges. Before the men broke down the door, the two angels struck the city with blindness. They told Lot and his family to flee for their lives before the angels destroyed the city.

Sodom was guilty of social injustices and inhospitality.

The sin of Sodom is clear. It was attempting violent homosexual gang rape. Some revisionists say the sin of Sodom wasn't primarily homosexual rape. It was just bad hospitality. Let me show you what Mark Achtemeier says in his book.

The men of Sodom intend to inflict dramatic punishment on Lot's guests in order to ensure that their city never has to tolerate the presence of foreigners within its walls.... the particular behavior that is judged so negatively in the passage turns out to be homosexual gang rape used as a weapon against foreigners!... this

negative judgment against gang rape has no implications at all for the loving, covenanted partnerships and marriages.¹

Revisionists also point out that Ezekiel 16, which is the only extended discussion about Sodom in the Bible outside of Genesis, doesn't even say the sin of Sodom was homosexuality.

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. Ezekiel 16:49 (ESV)

They claim the great sins of Sodom were social injustices and violent inhospitality toward visitors. What do you think? Are these the reasons Sodom was destroyed with fire and sulphur by God? Was it simply social injustice and violent inhospitality towards strangers? Let's examine this a little deeper.

The sin of Sodom was more than social injustice and inhospitality.

The key to understanding Ezekiel 16:49 is examining that verse in context.

Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. **They were haughty and did an abomination before me.** So I removed them, when I saw it. Ezekiel 16:49–50 (ESV)

There was social injustice and inhospitality but there was also a specific sin that was a particular abomination before God and caused him to remove the city when he saw it. What was this particular sin that God called an abomination?

The word, *abomination* in the singular is rare. It is used in Leviticus 18 and 20 to describe a specific particular sin that is called an abomination in the singular. What do you think this particular sin might be?

¹ <https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l>

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. Leviticus 18:22 (ESV)

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. Leviticus 20:13 (ESV)

Several sins in Leviticus are called abominations (plural) but only one sin is singled out as an abomination (singular). That is homosexuality. Ezekiel was intentionally echoing Leviticus 18 and 20 about the one specific sin that Leviticus calls an abomination, homosexuality. Sodom was guilty of many sins. They were pride, social injustice, inhospitality and pursuing homosexual behavior.

Jude 7 describes Sodom's sin as heterosexual sexual sin and homosexual sin.

The most important testimony we can bring to the table is the testimony of additional scriptures in the Bible. Sodom is also talked about in the New Testament book of Jude.

...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. Jude 7 (ESV)

Sexual immorality means expressing any sexuality outside of the marriage covenant. Sodom was guilty of heterosexual sin. The people of Sodom were also guilty of “unnatural desire.” The Greek literally says they were guilty of desiring “other flesh.” Not only were the Sodomites guilty of pursuing heterosexual sin but they were guilty of pursuing sex sins that desired the wrong flesh — homosexual sins.

While Genesis 19 clearly condemns violent homosexual rape, it doesn't clearly condemn consensual loving same-sex unions. Nevertheless, it should cause anyone to pause and think twice about any form of homosexual behavior.

While Sodom was guilty of many sins, homosexuality — which was clearly violent and was probably also consensual — was the tipping point that triggered their destruction.

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 — Why should we listen to two little verses in a forgotten Old Testament book?

There are two additional verses that speak very clearly about homosexuality in the Old Testament. They come from the often neglected book of Leviticus.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. Leviticus 18:22 (ESV)

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. Leviticus 20:13 (ESV)

These verses generate a lot of controversy. The revisionists are shocked when Christians refer to two small verses in the obscure book of Leviticus.

Today, we don't follow the Old Testament laws. We don't offer sacrifices in the temple. The Old Testament laws tell us not to eat shellfish but we enjoy shrimp and lobster. The Old Testament laws tells us not to wear clothing woven of two fabrics but our shirts are a cotton-polyester blend. Didn't we set aside the Old Testament law now that we are New Testament Christians? How can these obscure verses apply to the committed, loving, homosexual relationships we see today?

To answer questions about Leviticus, we need to step back and look at the big picture of the book. The big picture of the book of Leviticus is holiness. You have a holy God that wants a holy people. You have holy priests that wear holy clothes. God's people live in a holy land. They worship in the tabernacle, which

is a holy place. The people celebrate holy days and follow a holy law. Israel was to be different from the people around them. From Leviticus 17 to the end of the book is what is sometimes called the holiness code because it describes in detail how the Israelites were to live as God's holy people. Leviticus 18 is about holiness and how it relates to the family and sexual activities. It doesn't give us everything we need to know but it gives us the basics of God-honoring sex and marriage.

- Leviticus 18:6-18 — A lengthy description on incest and what types of relationships are incestuous.
- Leviticus 18:19 — Coming in contact with a woman's menstrual uncleanness is bad.
- Leviticus 18:20 — Adultery is bad.
- Leviticus 18:21 — Killing your children is bad.
- Leviticus 18:22 — Homosexuality is bad.
- Leviticus 18:23 — Bestiality is bad.

The revisionists tell us the bad homosexuality described in these verses only pertains to homosexual rape, not committed, loving, homosexual activity.

Let me quote Mark Achtemeier.

“The prohibitions in Leviticus were designed to prevent the Israelites from falling into very specific idolatrous activities practiced by the pagan peoples who had previously occupied the land... When the ancient Israelites heard references to males lying with other males, their thoughts would have turned to gang rape and similarly violent forms of sexual aggression on the one hand or to temple prostitution on the other.”²

² <https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l>

Think about this. Is there anything in these verses telling us loving, consensual homosexuality is different from violent, oppressive homosexuality? Leviticus used very general words about homosexuality for a very specific reason. Homosexuality, no matter what its form or the feelings of those who participate, is always wrong. Saying it is only wrong in certain circumstances is an argument from silence. The Bible doesn't say it, we shouldn't say it. The only qualification the Bible gives is the gender of the people involved. It is two males or two females. It doesn't matter if it is consensual or monogamous or lifelong. There are no qualifications given because there are no times when a homosexual relationship is acceptable.

What makes this argument even more pointed is reflecting upon Leviticus 18:6-18. Leviticus gives us 12 verses of detail on what types of heterosexual relationships are too close and incestuous and what types are acceptable. While there are numerous details of different types of acceptable and unacceptable heterosexual relationships, there are no details on acceptable types of homosexual relationships. That means there are no times they are acceptable. To claim there are times for acceptable homosexual relationships from the book of Leviticus is to make an argument from silence.

In addition, we must be careful to not think Leviticus is an irrelevant book.

Leviticus is consistently quoted in the New Testament.

Who here has heard of "Love your neighbor as yourself"? Is it from the Old Testament or the New Testament? Jesus quoted it from Leviticus 19:18. Paul and Peter consistently quoted the moral code of Leviticus in their New

Testament letters because they viewed the moral code of Leviticus as still relevant.

In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul quoted Leviticus 18:8 to show that incest is sinful. In 1 Corinthians 6 Paul quoted Leviticus 18 to show homosexuality is sinful. If Jesus, Peter and Paul found the moral code of Leviticus relevant for today, we should be careful about discounting that entire Old Testament book.

Only one sin in the holiness code of Leviticus is called an abomination (singular).

The revisionists are quick to point out many sins in Leviticus are called abominations (plural). The problem is only one sin in the moral code of Leviticus is called an abomination (singular). That is men having sex with other men. It is a sin that required the death of both parties. This shows you the seriousness of the offense in God's eyes.

If we ignore Leviticus' instruction on a woman's menstrual period, shouldn't we also disregard Leviticus' instructions on homosexuality?

You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. Leviticus 18:19 (ESV)

In the holiness code, right after the lengthy description of all the types of relationships that are incestuous, is a commandment for a man to avoid intimacy with his wife during her period. The revisionists remind us this is a command we don't scrupulously observe today. They reason that if we throw away this command from the moral code of Leviticus, we need to throw away the rest of the moral code in Leviticus, including the prohibition against homosexuality. Is this true? How would you answer a pro-homosexual Christian that used this argument against you?

Leviticus 18 and 20 are organized in a progression. They begin with the light sins and move to heavy sins. Each step moves you further from God's design for sexuality.

In Leviticus 18 the order is:

1. Intimacy with a menstruating woman
2. Sex with a neighbor's wife
3. Sex with another male
4. Sex with an animal.

In Leviticus 20:10-16 the sins also move from light to heavy. They are:

1. Sex with your neighbor's wife.
2. Sex with a family member.
3. Sex with a family member of a younger generation.
4. Sex with another man.
5. Sex with more than one partner.
6. Sex with an animal, and it gets worse from there.

Intimacy with a menstruating wife is not mentioned in Leviticus 20 and it is the lowest form of sexual sin in Leviticus 18.

Maybe a more important question is, "Why is intimacy with a menstruating wife part of the holiness code in the first place?"

In the Old Testament, any oozing sore or open wound made someone ritually unclean. A woman's period therefore made her ritually unclean.

When a woman has a discharge, and the discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. Leviticus 15:19 (ESV)

I want you to notice that neither a menstruating wife nor the man who contacted her was sinfully unclean because of this. They were just ritually unclean. Ritual uncleanness that wasn't sin and only bared you from the temple until evening is a world of difference from homosexuality which required the no-questions-asked death penalty of both parties involved.

The arguments against these two small verses begin to crumble. Leviticus 18 and 20, which strictly condemn all forms of homosexuality, are quoted repeatedly throughout the Bible as part of God's abiding moral law that is still applicable to us today. It doesn't matter if homosexuality is consensual or committed. It is still sin.

Romans 1 — Why is homosexuality just horizontal evidence of vertical rebellion?

The most detailed treatment of homosexuality in the New Testament is found in Romans 1. Let me read it for you.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Romans 1:21–27 (ESV)

Paul's point was when people walk away from God, he lets them go. He gives them up. The first thing that happens is they start worshipping the creation instead of the creator. They worship things that resemble human beings — birds,

animals and creeping things. The second step in the progression of walking away from God is they follow the lusts of their hearts for impurity. Instead of desiring a committed and monogamous marriage relationship to express their sexual desires, they begin to satisfy their sexual urges outside of marriage. They indulge in premarital sexuality, extramarital sexuality and all kinds of lusts. The last step on the ladder of depravity that Paul described is same-sex attraction instead of opposite sex attraction. Paul said same-sex relationships are a clear illustration of the idolatrous human heart turning away from God's created order and design and creating its own order and design. Homosexuality is an example on the horizontal plane of deep-seated rebellion against God that already exists on the vertical plane.

How would a revisionist, like Mark Achtemeier, handle the clear teaching of Romans 1? Let me quote part of his response.

“the Greco-Roman society that Paul inhabited had no concept of sexual orientation and no cultural spaces or institutions that could support egalitarian, committed, same-sex relationships based on mutual love. Publicly prominent same-gender behaviors in New Testament times would have been violent or exploitative: military victors raped prisoners of war, and masters routinely took advantage of slaves of both genders as a demonstration of dominance over them.”³

In short, he tells us that in the ancient world there was never committed, consensual same-sex relationships. Homosexual relationships in the ancient world were always violent and abusive. It is only in our modern day that loving, consensual homosexual relationships exist. He tells us Paul was just referring to violent, abusive homosexual relationships, not to loving, consensual ones,

³ <https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l>

therefore the prohibitions of Romans don't apply. Think about this. Does this make sense? Today is the first time history has seen loving, consensual homosexual relationships?

I will spare you the piling up of quotation after quotation from classical scholars that are knowledgeable on the culture of the ancient world. Scholars are from both the homosexual and heterosexual persuasion will tell you their clear conclusion. Committed, stable, non-violent same-sex relationships have been around throughout history. Nothing is new under the sun. Mark Achtimeier is simply not honest about this.

Let me share one quote from NT Wright.

As a classicist, I have to say that when I read Plato's Symposium, or when I read the accounts from the early Roman empire of the practice of homosexuality, then it seems to me they knew just as much about it as we do... they knew a great deal about what people today would regard as longer-term, reasonably stable relations between two people of the same gender. This is not a modern invention, it's already there in Plato.⁴

Mark Achtimeier's claim is patently untrue.

In addition, Paul's point in Romans 1 was that homosexuality is a sin simply because it is a man with a man. It has nothing to do with it being consensual or non-consensual. It has nothing to do with it being violent or loving. Paul said homosexuality is sinful because it is contrary to nature. It violates God's creation design in Genesis. According to Paul, men and women that engage in homosexual activities, even if they are being true to their feelings and desires, are suppressing God's truth in unrighteousness. They are exchanging the fitted man-female relationship for one which is contrary to nature. There is no

⁴ John L. Allen Jr., "Interview with Anglican Bishop N. T. Wright of Durham, England," *National Catholic Reporter*, May 21, 2004, <http://www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/word/wright.htm>.

way to escape the clear conclusion. Homosexual behavior, no matter what motivates it or how consensual it is when it takes place, is sinful rebellion against God.

1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1 — Will practicing homosexuals, of any form, inherit the kingdom of God?

Two other New Testament passages also speak clearly about homosexuality. We will take them together because they are similar.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality [oute malakoi oute arsenokoitai], nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (ESV)

understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality [arsenokoitai], enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine... 1 Timothy 1:9–10 (ESV)

You will notice I added English transliterations of two Greek words. The revisionists argue these words on homosexuality are referring to violent, non-consensual sexual behavior, not the committed consensual same-sex relations we know today. This is the same argument as before. Let me quote Mark Achtimeier as he talks about these verses.

“For our purposes, the most important thing is to recognize that these words refer to behaviors that do not look like a marriage relationship... It would make no sense, however, to take this fragment from Paul’s argument about our need to grow in faithfulness and use it to block committed gay people from entering into loving marriages...”⁵

Is that true? Should we understand homosexuals in a loving relationship can ignore these verses? What do these Greek words tell us that help?

⁵ <https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l>

1 Corinthians 6 is a little tricky. There are actually two Greek words that are translated into the word “homosexuality” in our English translations. The reason both of these Greek words are translated into the one English word “homosexuality” is because the both refer to homosexuality but each one has a slightly different nuance. Let’s examine what they mean.

Arsenokoitai — There are no examples of this word in Greek literature prior to Paul using the term in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. The word is a compound word. It literally means men-bedders. Paul literally made this word up to describe homosexuals as men who bring other men to bed. He didn’t make this word up out of thin air. In Paul’s day, the common language was Greek. The Jews had a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament they used for those who were rusty in Hebrew, just like we have an English translation of our Bible because we are rusty in our Greek and Hebrew. Remember the prohibitions against homosexuality in Leviticus 18 and 20. The Greek translation of those verses describes a homosexual as a man who takes other men to bed. Paul literally took the key Greek words out of Leviticus 18 and combined them into one word. Everybody that heard Paul call homosexuals men-bedders immediately had their mind return to Leviticus 18 and 20.

If Paul wanted Timothy, and the rest of us, to know that only violent forms of homosexuality were unacceptable to God why would he have coined a term that from Leviticus 18 which explicitly states that all forms of homosexuality are unacceptable to God? We can be confident when it says bedders of men will not inherit the kingdom of God that it means everyone that is a practicing

unrepentant homosexual will not inherit the kingdom of God. It doesn't matter if they are committed or uncommitted. It doesn't matter if they are married or unmarried. All forms of homosexuality are against God's creation order and are serious sins in God's eyes. There is no escape from this conclusion.

Malakoi — This word literally means soft or effeminate. It means men who take the role of a woman in a homosexual relationship. It means men who conduct themselves in an effeminate way or with effeminate appearance. We will look at this word more when we talk about transgender. While the previous word, *arsenokoitai* refers to men that take the male role in homosexuality, this word refers to the man that takes the female role in homosexuality. Paul was specifying that those who unrepentantly take either role in a homosexual relationship will not inherit the kingdom of God.

For many people this is hard to hear. Homosexuality is not a blessing to be celebrated or a union to be solemnized. It is a sin to be repented of, forsaken and forgiven. The Bible is abundantly clear.

Conclusion

Sometimes I hear this hard-line stance against homosexuality is unloving. Why can't we all agree to disagree? It is a debatable issue. We can figure it out in eternity when we get to heaven.

Unfortunately, this is not a debatable issue. The Bible is clear. We can not figure it out when we get to heaven because those who unrepentantly practice homosexuality will not be in heaven. Eternity is on the line. I don't care if somebody is ordained as a member of the clergy and he practices homosexuality. I don't care if he or she is a loving, kind and gracious person

while practicing homosexuality. These are not my words. They are the Bible's. Those who unrepentantly practice homosexuality will not be in heaven, no matter how religious they appear.

Next week, we continue our study of homosexuality by answering some of the common questions. We will answer questions like:

- If homosexuality is wrong, why does the Bible say so little about it?
- Why would God let someone be born with homosexual desires and not give them a legitimate way to fulfill those desires?
- Why are we rejecting homosexuality on seven small verses? Isn't the big picture of the Bible that God is love?
- Is homosexuality something people are born with or is it something people choose?
- What about same-sex marriage?

As we close, let me remind you how we should engage those struggling with homosexual sin. We love them. We care for them. While we love them, we will show them these verses in the Bible while we seek to help them turn from this sin, just like we show ourselves verses from the Bible to help us turn from our own sin. We pray God gives us wisdom to love those struggling with this sin and the courage to speak the truth as we talk with them.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics are preaching and ancient rhetoric. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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