

What Does The Bible Say About Sexuality? — Homosexuality

August 23, 2015

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are in a four-week study titled, “What does the Bible say about sexuality?” Two weeks ago we looked at heterosexuality. We looked at God’s plan for marriage and dating. If you are single, I encourage you to listen to that message. It will be a great help. You can find it at www.crosswinds.tv. Play it on your phone when you are on a road trip. My prayer is God uses it for great spiritual good in your life.

Last week we began looking at homosexuality. We looked at the seven key Bible passages. If you want to talk intelligently about this subject, I recommend that message. It is also found on our web site at www.crosswinds.tv.

Next week is a special Sunday. We are taking a break from this series for our fall kickoff Sunday. There is only one service at 10 a.m. After church we have a picnic lunch at 11:30 a.m. We will provide the drinks and the burger. You bring side dishes to pass. The Spencer campus will join us. The goal is to pack this place with the entire CrossWinds family from both services and both campuses.

The following week we will return to this series for our final message of the series as we look at what the Bible says about transgender.

I told you what we did for the last two week. I told you what is happening for the next two weeks. What are we studying today? Last week we looked at the seven key Bible passages on homosexuality. Today we are looking at six

common questions about homosexuality. These are the questions we see on Facebook and read in the revisionist literature. Let's jump in.

1. If homosexuality is wrong, why doesn't the Bible talk about it more?

Last week we looked at the seven important Bible passages on homosexuality. That is only seven small verses in a very big book. The Bible has more than 30,000 verses. Is it fair to let seven small verses ostracize all practicing homosexuals? Is it fair that just seven bible passages have for centuries prevented homosexuals from finding acceptance of their lifestyle in the church? Is it fair that entire denominations, families and friendships are torn apart because of these small fragments in Scripture? If homosexuality was such a big deal, why doesn't the Bible talk about it more?

The reason the Bible says little about homosexuality is because it was an uncontroversial sin among the Jews and Christians. There is no evidence that Judaism or Christianity ever tolerated or celebrated homosexual activity. The Bible says a lot about idolatry, pagan worship and social injustice because those were the common sins of God's people in both testaments. The Bible didn't spend a lot of time warning against homosexuality because everybody knew homosexuality was sinful.

Simply counting up the number of verses on a subject does not determine the seriousness of a sin. The Bible says even less about bestiality than it says about homosexuality, but that doesn't make it less serious of a sin. It says even less about child abuse. That does not mean child abuse isn't a serious sin.

That being said, the Bible says a fair amount about homosexuality. Last week, we looked at the seven key biblical passages. While those seven

passages are the key passages on homosexuality, there are an additional four minor passages on the subject. The Bible references homosexuality 11 times (Gen. 9:20-27; 19:4-11; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judg. 19:22-25; Ezek 16:50; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Peter 2:7 and Jude 7). There are another eight references to homosexuality as part of cultic prostitution (Deut. 23:17–18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14; and possibly Rev. 21:8; 22:15). The Bible speaks about homosexuality 19 times. Every time the Bible speaks about homosexuality, it is negative. This is not a debatable issue. The Bible speaks clearly and repeatedly on the issue of homosexuality. Each time it is condemned.

Even Pim Pronk, a gay Dutch scholar, admits to the universal condemnation of homosexuality in the Bible.

“...wherever homosexual intercourse is mentioned in Scripture, it is condemned... Rejection is a foregone conclusion...”¹

Lest this entire discussion become unbalanced, we cannot overstate how seriously the Bible treats not just homosexuality but sexual immorality in general. Sexual immorality is the Greek work *porneia*. *Porneia* is a junk-drawer term that means any expression of our sexuality outside of marriage, either heterosexually or homosexually. It includes premarital and extramarital sexuality.

The Bible says persistent sexual immorality is what characterizes those who will not enter the kingdom of God. There are eight vice lists in the New Testament. Vice lists are descriptions of the lifestyles of those who don't know Christ (Mark 7:21–22; Rom. 1:24–31; 13:13; 1 Cor. 6:9–10; Gal. 5:19–21; Col.

¹ Pim Pronk, *Against Nature? Types of Moral Argumentation Regarding Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 323.

3:5–9; 1 Tim. 1:9–10; Rev. 21:8). Sexual immorality is in every list. In most of those lists, sexual immorality begins the list. You are hard-pressed to find a sin more frequently or seriously condemned in the New Testament than sexual sin.

Let me show you three of the vice lists.

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5 (ESV)

But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8 (ESV)

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV)

Why doesn't the Bible speak about homosexuality more? It speaks about homosexuality 19 times and each time it is negative. Sexuality immorality, which includes homosexuality, is one of the most frequently condemned sins in Scripture.

2. Doesn't the Bible only refer to violent and abusive homosexuality?

Since the Bible clearly condemns homosexuality in 19 passages, the only possible recourse for those trying to condone homosexual relationships in the church is to disconnect the homosexuality of the Bible from modern day expressions of it. The revisionists will tell you that the Bible has no concept of people born with a gay orientation. They tell you the Bible has no concept of egalitarian, loving, committed, monogamous same-sex unions. They claim that if the biblical authors had known of homosexuality like we have it today, they wouldn't have condemned it. Therefore the biblical condemnations of

homosexuality don't apply. Let me show you this claim from Mark Achtimeier's book.

“Scripture provides no concrete examples of God blessing same-sex marriages. This is because mutually loving, egalitarian marriages between gay partners were simply not an available option for ordinary people during the times when the Bible was written.”²

Is the Bible just referring to exploitative homosexuality? Is the homosexuality that took place for thousands of years of biblical history only men forcing themselves on boys or masters forcing themselves on slaves? Were loving committed monogamous homosexual relationships something that didn't exist for all of history until today? Think about this claim.

First, it defies common sense. There is nothing new under the sun. Loving, monogamous homosexual relationship have always existed. Why would today be the first time homosexuality was a consensual and enjoyable practice?

Second, it defies verdict of history. Study the Greek and Roman world. They were rampantly homosexual, in abusive forms and in loving consensual forms. The verdict of history is that nothing is new under the sun.

Third, the most potent nail in the coffin of this argument comes from gay scholars. Louis Crompton, a gay man and pioneer in queer studies, wrote a massive book called Homosexuality and Civilization. Let me quote what he says about this argument of cultural distance.

Some interpreters, seeking to mitigate Paul's harshness, have read the passage [in Romans 1] as condemning not homosexuals generally but only heterosexual men and women who experimented with homosexuality. According to this interpretation, Paul's words were not directed at "bona fide" homosexuals in committed relationships. But such a reading, however well-intentioned, seems

² Excerpt From: Mark Achtimeier. "The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l>

strained and unhistorical. Nowhere does Paul or any other Jewish writer of this period imply the least acceptance of same-sex relations under any circumstances. The idea that homosexuals might be redeemed by mutual devotion would have been wholly foreign to Paul or any Jew or early Christian.³

When homosexuals on your own team tell you this argument doesn't work, you need to give it up.

3. Why would God give people homosexual desires and not want them fulfilled?

This is a great question. Many people agree with the biblical evidence and numerous passages that speak against homosexuality. They also do not agree with the cultural distance argument. The problem is personal feelings. Some of you have a friend that is homosexual. Some of you have a brother or sister or son or daughter that is a homosexual. This is hard. I have sympathy. My wife's half brother was a homosexual. What makes it even harder is when the one struggling with same-sex desires is you. You don't know how to change. Why would God give you same-sex desires but not want you to express them? Does God want you to live your entire life without sexual fulfillment? How would you answer those questions?

Let's think about this.

Are people born homosexual?

American Psychiatric Association says this about our sexuality and gender orientation:

"...the causes of sexual orientation (whether homosexual or heterosexual) are not known at this time and likely are multifactorial including biological and

³ Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2003), 114.

behavioral roots which may vary between different individuals and may even vary over time.”⁴

I share this so you know the current medical opinion. Doctors believe homosexuality is rooted in biology but it is also influenced by someone’s sexual experiences in their formative years. In addition, sometimes sexual orientation is consciously chosen; sometimes it is unconsciously chosen. Even more interesting is that someone’s sexual orientation can change.

You often hear about a homosexual gene. There are no studies demonstrating the existence of a homosexual gene making homosexuality biologically inherited. There is no documented biological basis for homosexuality. Sexual orientation is biologically and behaviorally based; plus it can change over time.

Even if a biological basis for homosexuality could be isolated, that does not remove culpability from the equation.

Everyone struggles with sinful desires that should not be expressed, not just homosexuals. Homosexuals struggle with biblically forbidden same-sex attraction. Heterosexuals struggle with biblically forbidden opposite-sex attraction. Every heterosexual has faced inappropriate sexual desires for a relationship with someone other than their spouse. Every heterosexual has faced inappropriate desires to view someone of the opposite sex inappropriately online. If heterosexuals have to restrain their sinful sexual urges and only express them in an appropriate way, why shouldn’t homosexuals also have to restrain their sinful sexual desires?

⁴ <http://www.aglp.org/pages/LGBTPositionStatements.php>

Through no conscious decision of our own, we all have proclivities to particular sins. Some of us are drawn to binge drinking and are genetically predisposed to alcoholism. Those with that addictive personality need to work extra hard to restrain those sinful desires. Young adults in their teens and 20s have higher levels of testosterone. It is harder for them to restrain their sexual desires than those that are older or younger. Their strong sexual desires do not give them a green light for sex apart from marriage. Some of us are more easily angered than others, but we all need to keep our mouths and attitudes under control.

An inclination to any particular sin, biologically or non-biologically rooted, does not produce a right to indulge in that sin. That is true for sins of anger, alcoholism, premarital sex, extramarital sex. It doesn't matter if those sexual desires are heterosexual or homosexual in nature. God calls us to restrain our sexual desires and only express them in the context of heterosexual marriage.

What if someone has a sexual orientation toward children? Does that mean they have a right to express those desires? Sometimes we want the wrong things. Jeremiah 17:9 says the heart is desperately wicked. We want sinful things.

If people are born homosexual, why would do they change?

Studies show sexual orientation is not a fixed characteristic, as if it was an inherited gene.

Rosaria Butterfield was a lesbian professor that became a Christian. She experienced a radical transformation. Today, she is married and has children. She is a homeschooling mother.⁵ That is a radical transformation!

Jackie Hill-Perry is a Christian rapper that began a life of same-sex attraction at the age of 5. After becoming a Christian, God changed her sexual orientation. Today she is a wife and mother.⁶

My college academic advisor was a former homosexual that became a Christian. He married, had children and became a computer science professor in a Christian college. Today he is an active member of an Evangelical Free Church in Pennsylvania.

People can change. If people were born homosexual, they couldn't change.

What if you are a homosexual that doesn't have the gift of celibacy?

Another version of this question is, "What if I am a homosexual and I don't have the gift of celibacy?" Revisionists rightfully point out that celibacy is a gift from God that is granted some individuals. Can you ask homosexuals that don't have the gift of celibacy to live a celibate life? Look how Mark Achtimeier describes this situation in his book that favors same-sex marriage.

"It was also clear from all the stories of brokenness I was encountering that Kristi and many others were not able to embrace a lifelong commitment to celibacy without crippling spiritual and psychological consequences."⁷

⁵ Rosaria Butterfield, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: An English Professor's Journey into the Christian Faith*, 2nd edition (Pittsburgh, PA: Crown and Covenant, 2014).

⁶ Jackie Hill, "Love Letter to a Lesbian," *Desiring God*, May 16, 2013, www.desiringgod.org/blog/posts/love-letter-to-a-lesbian.

⁷ Excerpt From: Mark Achtimeier. "The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage." iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l>

There are numerous problems with this argument.

1. **It assumes those with homosexual desires will never repent and change their orientation.** It assumes homosexuals are in a helpless place of same-sex attraction that is beyond change. As we have already demonstrated, sexual orientation can change. When people repent practicing homosexuality, God often changes their heart and restores normal heterosexual attraction in their lives.
2. **If chastity is too much to ask of a person with same-sex desires, it is too much to ask of a person with heterosexual desires.** What about the heterosexual woman that desperately wants to get married but never finds a husband? Does it give her a right to fornicate because she doesn't have the gift of celibacy? What about a young husband whose wife becomes paralyzed and is mentally and physically impaired through an accident? For the rest of her life she possesses a low level of functionality. Does that give him a right to get on the Ashley Madison website and follow their motto, "Life is short. Have an affair"? What about a soldier in the military? If he is deployed overseas and he doesn't see his wife for a year, since he does not have the gift of celibacy does that give him a right to an affair? Very few of us have the gift of celibacy. Our sexual desires are not always fulfilled. Sometimes they may never be fulfilled. That doesn't give anyone the right for sexual expression outside of marriage.

Why would God want me sexually miserable?

When you read the revisionist literature you find story after story of those with homosexual desires sharing how they felt miserable. They were hurt by the

church and their family because neither wouldn't affirm their homosexual desires. They claim they never felt close to God or experienced the peace that surpasses understanding. They were always filled with depression, confusion and even suicidal thoughts.

They claim that once they embraced their homosexuality, celebrated it and pursued it, they found new vitality in their life and vibrancy in their Christian walk. They claim God didn't want them to live a sexually miserable life.

If embracing their homosexuality was a step away from God, why would they feel so much better when they pursued the homosexual lifestyle instead of fighting it?

Listen to how Jackie Hill-Perry puts it in her book [Love Letter To A Lesbian](#).

You see what God has to say about homosexuality, but your heart doesn't utter the same sentiments. God's Word says it's sinful; your heart says it feels right. God's Word says it's abominable; your heart says it's delightful. God's Word says it's unnatural; your heart says it's totally normal. Do you see that there is a clear divide between what God's Word says and how your heart feels?⁸

If something feels right, that doesn't mean it is right. We have to submit to God's Word and live in obedience. What feels right and what is right are often different. That is not just true for homosexuality, it is also true for heterosexuality. What about the woman that leaves an unhappy marriage, marries the man she was having an affair with and after the unbiblical divorce, claims she never felt happier or closer to God? If sin and temptation didn't feel good, at least for a while, it wouldn't be called temptation.

⁸ Hill-Perry, "Love Letter to a Lesbian."

As Christians, we don't live by what feels good at the moment. We live by what God says is right all the time. Sometimes what is right doesn't feel good.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age... Titus 2:11–12 (ESV)

Renouncing worldly passions is saying, “No” to what feels good so we can live a holy life that is known for self-control.

4. Will practicing homosexuals go to heaven since Jesus forgives our sin?

Is it true that as long as we have trusted in Christ, nothing can interrupt our relationship with Jesus? Can we walk in God's will or walk in a way less than God's best, like the homosexual lifestyle, and remain confident we will be saved and spend an eternity with Jesus? After all, doesn't Jesus promise to forgive all our sin? This is important to think through not just for homosexuality but for all of life.

It is true everyone is a sinner. It is true that it is only by the grace of God that anyone will be in heaven. Here is the rub. The membership of heaven is made up of repentant sinners that trust in God's grace through Jesus. Trusting in Christ without repenting of sin is not the gospel. If we think people can have Christ as their savior without desiring to repent of their sin, we do not understand the gospel.

Repentance of sin is essential for salvation. Nobody will be in heaven without it.

...and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**” Mark 1:15 (ESV)

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but **now he commands all people everywhere to repent...** Acts 17:30 (ESV)

The church is for broken people but it is for broken people that hate what is broken about them, not celebrate what is broken about them.

No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Luke 13:5 (ESV)

It is much easier to tell people to trust in Christ and go to heaven than it is to say, “Repent of your sin and trust in Christ for heaven.” Open pursuit of a homosexual lifestyle is not just something less than God’s best. It is practicing unrepentant sexual sin that leads people to hell.

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you... Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God... 1 John 3:6–10 (ESV)

The evidence of a false disciple is they make a regular practice of sin. They aren’t repentant of sin.

5. Why should I be concerned about the legalization of same-sex marriage?

On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage. What can we expect? Will it influence us or will we be protected by our freedom of religion?

Do not dismiss the legalization of same-sex marriage casually. The legalization of same-sex marriage will have profound implications for us and our children.

First, we need to understand homosexuals already had rights before the legalization of same-sex marriage.

1. **The government was not criminalizing homosexual behavior.**

Homosexual behavior is legal in our country.

2. **The government was not prohibiting homosexuals from committing themselves to one another in public ceremonies.** Homosexuals could commit themselves to one another in any public or religious way.

3. **The government was not legislating what people could or could not do in their bedrooms.**

The legalization of same-sex marriage is about what the government recognizes as a marital relationship between two people. Traditionally the government recognized the traditional biblical definition of marriage. They recognized it not for religious reasons but for societal reasons. Marriage was good for the state because it created a stable of society. Kids do better with a mother and a father committed to them in the home. Communities do better when a husband and wife stay together and women are not left to fend for themselves. These are some of the reasons our government recognizes traditional marriage as a social institution.

Same-sex marriage is about forced equality between those in heterosexual and homosexual unions. Those who refuse to recognize homosexual unions will be systematically persecuted. This is already happening.

As an Evangelical Free Church denomination, we have two great schools. There is Trinity International University in Chicago. It is a great undergraduate school plus it is a top-notch graduate seminary. In addition, we have Trinity Western. This is the sister college of Trinity in Chicago but on the west coast.

Trinity Western is a large school with 3,500 students. It has a 157-acre campus. It is the largest privately funded university in Canada. It offers 45 undergraduate and 17 graduate programs. As for educational quality, it is top-notch. Every year, from 2005 onward, it was given an A+ rating by the college ranking organizations. It is a great school.



In July 2012, Trinity Western submitted a proposal for a new doctorate of law program to the Canadian ministry of education and the law societies of Canada. It would seem like an easy approval. It is a top-notch school with a top-notch program.

The program's accreditation was approved in December of 2013. In June of 2014, the laws society of British Columbia revoked the program's accreditation. The accreditation was not revoked because of the quality of the law program but because the society believed the school's code of conduct, which prohibits students from engaging in sexual expression outside of heterosexual marriage, discriminated against homosexuals and same-sex marriage, which is legal in Canada.

In December 2014, the law school's accreditation was officially revoked. Imagine being a graduate of their prestigious law school but you can't practice law because your school's accreditation is not valid simply because your school refuses to endorse homosexuality and same-sex marriage as a God-honoring lifestyle. This is not theory. This is reality right now in our denomination.

It will be interesting. The president of Trinity Western University, Bob Kuhn, is a lawyer. The school and the president are involved in a landmark battle over these issues. We need to keep them in our prayers.

The legalization of same-sex marriage is something that will affect all of us. Don't be fooled. What is happening in Canada is a preview of what will happen in the United States.

6. Where can I find hope in my struggle with sexual sin?

As we close, I want to read 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 the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (ESV)

Unrepentant sexual sin, of either the heterosexual form or homosexual form, is what characterizes those who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Thankful, there is more to the story. Paul said, "Such were some of you. We were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus."

Homosexuality is not the unforgivable sin. It is a sin from which there is escape. The Bible is clear that when a homosexual repents of his or her sin and trusts in Jesus to forgive his or her sin, the Holy Spirit will come into his or her life and make him or her a new person. It might be all at once or it might be an inch at time, but God will free them from the grip of sexual sin and transform their lives to be more and more holy and pure like Jesus. This is true for anyone struggling with heterosexual or homosexual sin.

This is a solid biblical promise that applies to all of us. Let us repent of our sin. Confess it to Jesus. Embrace the forgiveness that Jesus purchased on the cross and ask the Holy Spirit to transform us into new people. As we walk with him, he will.



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