WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SEXUALITY?

Examining what the Bible says about Heterosexuality, Homosexuality, and Transgender Issues.

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2015 changed America’s sexual landscape. Bruce Jenner’s coming out as a woman named Caitlyn mainstreamed the transsexual lifestyle. The Supreme Court’s legalization of same-sex marriage forced everyone to recognize same-sex relationships. Even Christian theologians, like Mark Achtemeier, came out in favor of same-sex marriage telling us the church misread the Bible. Even old-fashioned heterosexuals find it hard to honor God when they date.

What does the Bible say about transgender issues? Is sex change surgery the answer? What does the Bible say about same-sex marriage? Are people born with a same-sex orientation? Should Christians practicing homosexuality be confident of heaven because they are forgiven by Jesus? Why would God give people homosexual desires and not want them fulfilled? What are the important Bible passages on homosexuality that everyone needs to know? In traditional dating relationships, how far is too far before the wedding night?

These are some of the questions answered in, “What does the Bible say about sexuality?”

This work is a collection of sermons delivered at CrossWinds Church Spirit Lake campus in Spirit Lake, Iowa. I want to thank Kiley Roth. She patiently edited my working manuscripts turning them into this book. I owe a special thanks to the CrossWinds family. Thank you for encouraging this series.

I pray this book helps you honor Jesus in one of the most powerful aspects of our being, our sexuality.

Because of God’s Mercy,

Kurt
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Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. If you are a regular part of the CrossWinds family, Cindy and I thank you for allowing us to take the last two weeks for a needed vacation. We didn’t go anywhere so technically it was a staycation. What did we do for two weeks? We cleaned the house. It is hard to believe how much stuff you accumulate after three kids. In addition, right before we moved to Iowa, Cindy’s father passed away and we acquired all of his stuff. In October, my mother passed away. Dad sold his house and moved in with us. Now we also have their stuff. Let’s say things were a little cramped. We needed an unprecedented level of deep cleaning and organizing. It took us two weeks do it completely. I made so many trips to the Cherish Center they were going to offer me a dedicated parking spot. The good news is that today our house is clean and uncluttered. I know that many of you are jealous. That is good.

Not only do I thank you for allowing time away but I also want to thank Pastor Jordan and Pastor Stephen. They did a great job covering the pulpit while I was gone.

Today we begin a short, but very important, four-week mini-series. The title of this series is, “What does the Bible say about sexuality?” We are looking at three topics over four weeks, heterosexuality, homosexuality and the transgendered. My hope and prayer is this series helps us to live in a culture where sex is spinning out of control.

Today we will look at heterosexuality. One thing is clear to all of us. The lifestyle of heterosexual singles is very different from 20 years ago. Virginity and purity used to be a virtue. Today they are considered an oddity or even a liability. Sociologists say singles live in a hookup and breakup culture. Just read the tabloid at the checkout aisle. Look at a movies or reality television shows. Sex is casual and without commitment. Even clean, youth-orientated movies like “Princess Bride” have Wesley and Buttercup embracing and kissing because they are in a relationship. We reason that if they kiss in clean movie like “Princess Bride,” it certainly can’t be wrong to embrace and kiss someone I love when I am in a relationship.

Living in a culture where everyone is having casual sex or at least having some sexual type of expression toward those they date acts as a battering ram that tries to destroy the purity of even the most devout Christian singles. Teenagers and young adults, there is an all-out assault in our culture planning to destroy your virginity and ruin your purity. There is so much pressure for casual sex that the young adults in the church and even the leaders of the church are massively confused. Not in this church but in a previous church I pastored I found myself in a conversation with the children of three church leaders. These young men lived with their girlfriends before marriage. When I told them
premarital sex was sinful they didn’t believe me and they even began to try and correct me. Those are the children of church leaders!

Most of us in this room know sex before marriage is sin. It is not God’s will for our lives. We know God wants us to save sex for our wedding nights. The problem is many of us are unclear on sexual limits before the wedding night. While the final act of sex before marriage is sin, what about kissing? Can dating Christians kiss? Can they make out? Can they take it farther? How far is too far?

To make matters worse, when young adults turn to the Bible for guidance, they don’t find talking about dating. The Bible is silent of what you can and can’t do sexually when you are dating. As red-blooded young adults filled with hormones, what are you to do? How far is too far? Today we will put our finger in the Bible and find the answer.

I structured this morning’s message around a series of questions. The first question is the most foundational and the most important. The answer to this question will not just help us navigate through this message but it will be the one that guides us through this series.

Why did God make us sexual?

Did you ever wonder why God made sex? Why are we not like amoebas and we just split ourselves into two when we want to reproduce? Why did God make two sexes and give us powerful desires for the opposite sex? The answer to this question is foundational to everything. I am going to give you the big idea of this entire sermon up front.

God created sex and marriage to serve as a living portrait of the relationship between Christ and the church. Sex and marriage, which were both created by God, were created to give us an earthly appetizer, to whet our appetites for the intimacy and satisfaction we were created to experience for all eternity in our relationship with God through Jesus. If you love sex and intimacy and the satisfaction of marriage, that is good. All of it is designed to whet your appetite for the closeness and intimacy and relational satisfaction that we were created to experience with God through Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us there will be no earthly marriage in heaven. Do you know why there is no earthly marriage in eternity? In heaven we are married. We are married to Jesus and nothing can be better than our relationship with Jesus. That is why eternity with Jesus kicks off with the wedding supper of the lamb. Jesus is the groom. We are the bride. If you loved your wedding day, that was just a little taste of the much greater and more satisfying wedding day that is ours when we will be with Jesus, our groom, for all of eternity. I know this sounds strange, but it is biblical. Let’s look at the text.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in
splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and
without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own
bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh,
but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are
members of his body. “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. Ephesians
5:24–32 (ESV)

Paul said all the joy and satisfaction found in marriage was created to
point us to the joy and relational satisfaction we were created to experience with
Jesus. Earthly sex and marriage point to something much greater and even
more satisfying, which is our relationship with God through Christ.

Since earthly marriage parallels the relationship between Christ and the
church, this means the roles played by Christ and the roles played by the church
become the roles played by a husband and by a wife. These roles are not
arbitrary or reversible. Just as the church cannot die for Christ, Christ doesn’t
submit to the authority of the church. In the same way, a husband and wife,
while equal in personhood, play different but complementary roles in marriage
that take their cues from how we relate to Jesus.

How did Jesus treat his church? He loves us so much that he died for us.
That is the pattern for how a husband should treat his wife. He should
sacrificially love her and die to himself every day for her, just like Jesus did for his
bride.

Wives, wouldn’t you love to be married to a husband like that?

The way we submit to Jesus and honor Jesus in our lives, is the pattern
for how a wife submits to her husband’s authority, supports him, delights in him
and honors his leadership in her life. Men, isn’t that the picture of a dream wife?
It’s a wife that doesn’t rebel against you but looks to you for leadership. She
supports you and doesn’t undermine you. The roles of a husband and wife come
from Christ and the church because earthly marriage is a living picture of the
relationship between us and Jesus.

Paul quoted Genesis 2:24 to remind us that it isn’t just our sexuality in
marriage that was created by God but the institution of marriage was also
created by God. Marriage is not defined by the state or the supreme court. God
created marriage. He was around before they were. He defined it as one man
and one woman. The man is to leave home. He is to hold fast to his wife and
then they are to be intimate.

Notice the pattern. First, a young man becomes financially independent.
He holds fast to his wife, or as some older translations say, he is to cleave to her.
That means he makes an irrevocable commitment for better or worse, richer or
poorer, sickness or health until death. Then, and only then, does he become
intimate with a woman and experience the mysterious supernatural bonding of
sex. Today people get everything backward. They have sex with women without
making any commitment while they are living in their parents’ basement because they can’t hold a job.

I want you to notice God tells us sex is not just a casual act created to relieve our bodily desires. Something mysterious happens in sex. Sex fuses people. Because sex mysteriously and supernaturally bonds people together it is to be saved for a husband and wife.

Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” 1 Corinthians 6:16 (ESV)

What is more important than the mysterious and powerful bonding of sex is the imaging of sex. Remember sex and marriage do not stand alone. They are about the much greater reality, the relationship between Christ and his church. This is why the church is called the bride of Christ. Once we understand that sex and marriage are about Christ and the church, it changes everything.

Most of the arguments that you hear for sexual purity are pragmatically based. Don’t have premarital sex because you could get a STD. Don’t have premarital sex because there might be an unexpected pregnancy. The problem with each of these arguments is they assume sex is about us and our happiness. Sex is not about us. Sex was given to us to image Christ and the church.

Paul said don’t have sex with a prostitute because it breaks the picture of Christ’s single-minded connection to his bride. Just as Christ saved himself for his bride, we are to save ourselves sexually and wait for our husbands or wives. Just as Christ is united to his church alone, a husband is to be united to his wife alone. Just as Christ does not divorce us when we fail him, a husband does not divorce his wife when she fails him. Just as Christ has a monogamous and permanent relationship with us, we are to have a monogamous and permanent relationship with our spouses. Do you see the connection?

What we do sexually before marriage and how we treat our spouses in marriage is to consistently image of the way Christ relates to us and we relate to him. Let me say this clearly — singles, just as Christ saved himself for his bride, save yourself for your wedding night.

Life is not about us. Our sexuality is not ultimately about us or for us. We belong to Christ. Our lives and our sexuality are to bear the image of Christ. Sex and marriage are not about you and what feels good at the moment. It is all about a much higher purpose. Sex and marriage are just appetizers for the day we will see Jesus at the marriage supper of the lamb.

**Why doesn’t the Bible talk about dating?**

With this foundation, it changes everything. For the rest of the sermon I am going to focus on Christian singles. We usually hear the Bible doesn’t give clear boundaries for dating. Most people tell say the Bible doesn’t tell us how far is too far before the wedding night. Can Christians kiss? Can they have a prolonged kiss? Can they do a lot of things with clothes on? We have already
learned our sexuality before marriage and in marriage is to reflect the purity of Christ for his church, but there is more.

The Bible describes three categories of relationship. They are family, neighbor and marriage.

**Family Relationships**

In family relationships, expressing your sexual desires toward a family member is prohibited.

None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the Lord. Leviticus 18:6 (ESV)

In our house that means the boys can't prank their sister when she is in the bathroom. There is no God-honoring form of sexual expression between relatives.

**Marriage Relationships**

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 1 Corinthians 7:5 (ESV)

Marriage relationships go the opposite way. When a man and a woman are married, they are commanded to fulfill the sexual obligations they have to their spouses. You are to use your sexuality to bless your spouse in marriage, making your marriage extremely close and filled with relational joy, because our marriage is to be a little taste of the much greater relational joy we will have with Jesus.

For some of you, this is a problem. You refuse to be intimate with your spouse or you do it begrudgingly. That may be a spiritual issue. It is probably sin. In marriage, a husband and wife are told to have physical oneness and joy. The joy of physical intimacy in marriage is part of imaging the spiritual oneness between Christ and the church. The enjoyment of sex in marriage is a necessary expression of Christ’s spiritual oneness with his church. Refusing your spouse intimacy breaks the picture of Christ and the church.

**Neighbor Relationships**

To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. 1 Corinthians 7:8–9 (ESV)

The only other type of relationship in the Bible is the neighbor relationship. We are not to be involved sexually with our neighbors. Imagine your neighbor is an unmarried single of the opposite sex that loves Jesus. As you talk with her, you find yourself attracted to her. What should you do? Paul was clear. If you
find yourself burning with passion, don’t fornicate. Get married. Marriage is the only God-honoring place to express our sexual desire.

What is plainly stated here is the assumed standard for sexual propriety in both the Old and New testaments. The only God-honoring place for sexual expression is marriage. That is not just talking about the final act of sex but all expressions of our sexuality. If we are not married to someone, we treat them like a neighbor or a family member. If you wouldn’t do it with your neighbor, you don’t do it with your girlfriend. That sounds harsh, but it is the biblical truth.

**What constitutes sex?**

Do you remember the President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky scandal? Our former President’s famous words were, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman.” Later we learned that meant he did not do one particular final sex act with her, but a lot happened between him and Monica besides the final act. Trust me. Hillary was not satisfied with Bill’s answer. I think we all know why she wasn’t. If you don’t have sexual relationships with another woman but you do everything else with another woman, would your wife be satisfied?

Imagine your wife bakes a chocolate cake. It is 6 p.m. You come home from work and you see the cake on the kitchen table. You wife tells you not to eat the cake because she is saving it for a friend’s birthday. Your dinner is in the refrigerator. You can reheat it in the microwave. She needs to finish getting ready because she is taking the cake to a girlfriend’s house that night for a birthday party. As she leaves the room she looks you in the eye and says, “Don’t eat the cake.” As you contrast a microwave dinner with a chocolate cake, staring at the cake gets the better of you. You cut a small piece of cake and begin chewing it. It tastes so good. She told you to not eat the cake so after you chew it and taste it, you spit it back on the plate. You decide that since the cake was so good, why not take another piece. Once again you chew it, taste it then spit it on the plate. You continue your way through the entire cake until there is only one final piece untouched. Now you take the chewed and tasted cake on the plate in front of you and scrape it back into the cake pan. As you finish, your wife comes out of the bedroom and screams! I told you to not eat the cake! You tell her that you technically didn’t eat the cake. You just tasted it. Besides, you left one final piece. Do you see the problem with a truncated definition of sexual relations that means you did not do one final act?

Sex is not just a final act. It is everything sexually leading up to that act.

This is why the Bible is clear about the way men are to treat young women.

…older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. 1 Timothy 5:2 (ESV)

All sexual activity outside of marriage is off limits. Until you are married, you treat a young woman like your sister. If you wouldn’t do it with your sister, you don’t do it with your girlfriend. Any sexual activity, no matter how minor, is to
be reserved for marriage, not just because it might lead to a time when your passions are inflamed beyond your control. The reason for absolute purity before marriage is because our sexuality is to reflect the fidelity and purity of Christ for his church. Just as Christ saved himself for his bride, we are to save ourselves for our brides.

**How did people date in the first century?**

Understanding sexual morality in the Jewish and Greco-Roman world explains why the Bible doesn’t talk about dating. The Bible consistently tells us to avoid sexual immorality. The term sexual immorality is the English translation of the Greek work *porneia*. That is a junk drawer term for any sexual activity outside of marriage.

In the ancient world, a woman’s ability to marry was dependent upon a father’s ability to prove his daughter’s purity for her wedding night. If a girl was not known for her purity, young men didn’t want her. Fathers took great pains to protect a daughter and her reputation for her wedding. Respectable young women did not leave their houses unescorted. Young women were often cloistered away from young men to make sure they were absolutely pure for their weddings. For the fun of it you can look up on your own why the father of the bride kept the bedsheets from the wedding night.

The contemporary practice of dating, where young men and women spend unsupervised time alone was unknown. Young women did not engage in time alone with young men prior to their wedding night. Women did not engage even in light sexual activity before marriage. In the pagan world, when men engaged in sexual activity before marriage, it was with a prostitute. A woman that was sexually experienced was considered a prostitute unless her husband was deceased.

I realize this level of purity is hard to fathom or achieve, especially in our culture. Maybe this kind of purity is something you were never told. The thing to remember is our sexuality was not made for us. It was given to us by God for the purpose of displaying the purity, fidelity and loving sacrifice of Christ and the church. It is to whet our appetites for the much greater intimacy we will have for all eternity with Jesus.

Our sexuality is to picture that relationship. Sex is not just about us and our own gratification. To think sex and marriage is about gratifying ourselves is to tear the entire purpose of our sexuality away from the reason God made us sexual in the first place.

**What is the problem with modern dating?**

Contemporary dating confuses the moral boundaries that exist between the neighbor relationship and the marriage relationship. When modern couples date, they think it legitimizes either full sexual expression or a truncated form of sexual expression between them.
Let me show you the problem of modern dating. As I critique dating, realize I am not critiquing dating as an activity. There is nothing wrong with men and women doing things together to get to know one another. I am critiquing dating as a relational category that supposedly exists between the neighbor relationship and the marriage relationship, where we think some forms of sexual expression are legitimized.

The reason the Bible does not give direct guidance about how far is too far when you are dating is because this relational category does not exist. You are either a neighbor with no sexual expression or you are married with full sexual expression. Regardless of what you call your boyfriend or girlfriend, you are bound by the standards of purity in the neighbor relationship until the altar. You cannot do anything with the person you date that you wouldn’t do with a blood relative. We intuitively know the proper levels of sexual expression with a family member, a neighbor and a spouse. The reason we don’t know the proper level of sexual expression for those we date is because this relational category is biblically non-existent!

When Christian singles begin to express themselves sexually before marriage, even in minor ways, they are using their sexuality outside of the context for which it was created. God ordained our sexuality to reflect the exclusivity and monogamous intimacy between Christ and the church. To break the boundaries of the neighbor relationship is to blur and confuse this picture. Remember that sex does not belong to us. Our bodies are not our bodies. We were bought with a price. We are to honor God with our bodies and that includes our sexuality.

Why is modern dating bad for women?

Remember I am talking about dating as a relational category, not dating as spending time with someone of the opposite sex to get to know them. If you are dating, it implies commitment. It means you are in an exclusive relationship with someone because you are now “dating.” The question I have is, does dating somebody provide any real relational security? What keeps a guy from breaking up with you on Thursday so he can date a different girl on Friday? Nothing! Contrast dating with marriage.

In marriage, you are committed to an exclusive relationship even when you don’t like the person. It is for better or worse. You have both names on the checkbook and the house mortgage. Like it or not, you are married. You can’t walk away from marriage. There is no other woman to compete with you in marriage.
When you are dating, everything is different. There is no security. Don’t trick yourself into thinking your relationship is secure. You hear of people breaking up and getting back together all the time depending upon how their relationship feels.

A dating relationship is like a mountain climber scaling a sheer rock face. The whole time the mountain climber is climbing he thinks he is safe because he is putting anchor pins to hold his rope in the rock. The rope and the pins are his security and commitment to save him if he falls. When our imaginary climber gets to the rock face, he begins pulling his rope up and he notices the pins he put in the rock start falling. He was putting them in wrong. The whole time he was climbing he had a false sense of security. There was nothing holding him. In the same way, a women get a false sense of security from this artificial category called dating. They think a guy is committed but the truth is there is nothing holding him. Women, the only way you know a guy is committed is when he takes you to the altar.

The problem is that when a women feels more secure with a man because she is in a dating relationship, she starts to give him her heart and maybe even her body. After all, it is safe. She is secure. They are dating. That must mean she is safe. Ladies, you are not safe. Nothing is stopping him from breaking your heart on Thursday so he can go out with another girl on Friday. The only safe place to open yourself to a man is marriage.

Most modern men love dating because women will give them intimacy and they don’t need to make a real commitment. Women are destroyed by modern dating because of the false sense of security. Ladies, remember nothing stops a man from breaking up and moving on. The only permanent relational category is marriage.

Men, remember you are not trying to get a woman to be your girlfriend. If you are looking for a woman to be your girlfriend you are using the non-existent dating category. That is unbiblical. You are out looking for a woman to become your wife. Until she is your wife, you treat her with the level of purity and integrity you have for your sister.

**How can I get to know someone of the opposite sex?**

So far we spent most of our time reframing your thinking about how to honor God when we date. The problem is most of us think that if we followed this practice we would be single and 70. Let me provide guidance on how to meet and marry someone and honor our God-given sexuality along the way.

**Pursue a dating friendship.**

To help you do this I would like to propose some new terminology. It is called a dating friendship. This is a friendship with someone of the opposite sex where you do things together. It is just that, a friendship. Take away all the romantic and sexual overtones that usually accompany a typical dating relationship. The goal of a dating friendship is getting to know someone as a
friend and explore the viability of a marriage while preserving the purity of a neighbor relationship. If you are in a dating friendship and it doesn’t look like things are working out, that is OK. Just go back to being normal friends. If a man in the dating friendship wants more than a friendship, he asks the woman to marry him.

There are four elements to this kind of relationship that will help you.

**Maintain the sexual and romantic boundaries of a neighbor relationship.**

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you not stir up or awaken love until it pleases. Song of Solomon 2:7 (ESV)

Make a commitment to not inflame one another’s sexual passions but to focus on friendship. Keeping your passions at bay is hard. Here are some practical helps.

1. **Get accountability.** Sin thrives in isolation. Have someone that cares about you and is spiritually mature check up on you every week. Have them pray with you. Tell them to ask you the hard questions on a weekly basis. Don’t just give them the right to ask hard questions. Make them promise to ask hard questions. Hard-nosed accountability is helpful.

2. **Avoid time alone.** We don’t need help when it come to sexual sin. It comes quite naturally. Avoid dating contexts that push you toward intimacy. Avoid time alone in one another’s apartments. Avoid alone time in the car. Keep your dating friendships public or around other people. The purity that is easy at the beginning of a relationship becomes much harder as a relationship matures.

3. **Keep an outward focus.** A healthy relationship isn’t always focused on itself. A healthy relationship engages the world and spends time helping other people, not just focusing on each other. If your relationship is always focused on one another and cannot focus beyond itself, that is a warning that something is not healthy.

4. **Begin a dating friendship when it can go somewhere.** Too many people start dating when they are too young. Too many singles get too serious in high school when they are not in a position to do something about sexual desires because they are too young to get married. The relationship is hard because it is one foot on the brake and another foot on the gas. Don’t start a dating friendships where you are looking for spouse until you are in a position where you can propose or will be able to propose in the near future. If you are in college, and you meet the right person, it is better to marry while in college rather than fornicate your way through college. Many singles feel no pressure to marry because they are sleeping together before marriage. When you get the milk for free, there is no reason to buy the cow. It is better to marry than burn with passion.
5. **Keep the dating friendship short.** Once you begin a dating friendship, don’t stay in one longer than necessary. If after six to 12 months, you are unsure if your dating friendship will move forward, it is time to move on.

6. **Make a straight line to the altar.** When you get engaged, keep the engagement short. Engagement is for one thing — it is the time to prepare and plan the wedding. Waiting a year or more makes purity hard, especially if you spend lots of time together.

   One of the great benefits of a dating friendship without sex is it lets you see the real person. The more sexually involved you become with someone before the wedding night, the more you tend to see them through rose-colored sexual glasses and the relationship becomes harder to objectively evaluate. After the wedding, the glasses come off and you see a person for what they really are. If you keep your dating friendship free from sexual distractions you can judge a relationship on its own merits apart from sex.

   **Be clear on your boundaries and intent.**

   This morning, if you are single, chances are the next person you date will not be in this room. They will expect to follow the typical patterns of modern dating. They will expect sexual benefits. Everything we talked about this morning will be foreign. When you begin a dating friendship it is important that at the beginning of the relationship you explain what we talked about this morning. Explain you are looking to be friends. You are not looking for anything more until the altar. There is no mysterious dating category with fringe benefits. You are only friends getting to know each other to see if you could get married.

   Men, this is ultimately your responsibility. You need to explain this to a girl. When you know you want more than a dating friendship, you need to let the woman know you are thinking marriage instead of friendship. This way she can tell you if her feelings reciprocate. If not, both of you can separate without hurt.

   Ladies, if a guy refuses to take the lead in this area, you have the right to ask his intentions. You are not interested in being somebody’s girlfriend. You are not interested in giving all or parts of yourself away. You are interested in getting married and being a wife. Until you meet and marry the right man, you are no more than a friend to any man.

**Conclusion**

One of the great benefits of dating friendships is this helps you save yourself for your wedding night. Just as Christ saved himself for his bride; men, save yourself for your bride. Just as Christ gave himself away once, in similar fashion our goal is to fall in love and give ourselves away once.
What Does The Bible Say About Homosexuality? — 7 Key Bible Passages

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 apologize 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?

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

¹ [https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l](https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l)
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 tell 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 — Beastiality 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.”

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.”

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3 [https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l](https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l)
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, 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 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

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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 Achtmeier 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…”

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

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

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5 https://itun.es/us/tOGt1.l
 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 cannot 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.
What Does The Bible Say About Homosexuality?  
— 6 Common Questions

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 beastiality 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…”

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. 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 Achtemeier’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.”

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 rampantlly 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.

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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 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.  

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

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

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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?

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.\(^{10}\) 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.\(^\text{11}\)

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.”\(^\text{12}\)

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?13

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.

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

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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 recognized 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.
What Does The Bible Say About Transgender Issues?

September 6, 2015

Good morning CrossWinds. If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are in the last week of a four-week series called, “What does the Bible say about sexuality?” Today we finish the series by looking at what the Bible says about transgender issues.

Today, when we think about transgender issues and sex change, we think about Bruce Jenner. It wasn’t always that way. For most of his life Bruce Jenner was known as the all-American man. He won Olympic gold in the decathlon at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. He was even considered for the roles of Superman and James Bond. He was married and fathered children. It seemed like he had everything a man could want — an impressive athletic career, family and wealth. Then people noticed he started to change. He was taking on a softer appearance.

On April 24, 2015, in an interview with Diane Sawyer, he went public. Bruce Jenner announced he was transexual and for all intents and purposes claimed, “I'm a woman … call me Caitlyn.”

Bruce Jenner didn’t look like your typical cross-dressing gender changer. He claimed to be both a Republican and a Christian. He said to Diane Sawyer, “I would sit in church and always wonder, ‘In God’s eyes, how does he see me?’” That is a good question. How does God see those struggling with their sexual identity? What does God think about men that believe they have a woman’s mind and women that think their minds are a man’s? How should we, as the church, address the Bruce Jenners in our neighborhood? Let’s find out.

When someone is biologically one gender but feels his or her mind is another gender, the street term for that is called transgender. Sometimes we say people are suffering from transgender issues. The proper medical term is gender dysphoria so I want to introduce you to those terms.
When you look at television, it seems like gender dysphoria is everywhere. In reality, it is rare. A little more than one in every 20,000 men experience this at one point in their lives and about one in every 34,000 women.14

To relieve the pain of the difference between one’s biological identity and his or her felt gender identity, some transgenders cross-dress. Some take it a step further and get opposite sex hormone treatment. Others go as far as having gender reassignment surgery where for all intents and purposes, men are transformed to appear every inch a woman in every way. Even though we frequently hear about this surgery in the media, there are only 20 doctors that perform it.15

While the medical world still classifies gender dysphoria as a psychological abnormality, some doctors claim it has a biological basis in the fetal development cycle. They claim hormones that control how the body and the brain function did not work in harmony for transgenders while they were developing in utero. Some scientists theorize an opposite sex hormone wash occurred to the brain of transgenders in the womb. It caused the sexual identity of their brains to develop toward one gender while their bodies developed toward the other gender. Remember, this is a theory. When you study transgender, the brain hormone wash theory is frequently discussed and believed by many people to be a validated biological basis for transgender desires.

In popular culture, gender reassignment surgery is platformed as the most compassionate way to relieve the pain of having a mind that identifies with one gender and a body that is clearly the other gender.

Some statistics even support the popular claim that gender reassignment surgery is the way to go. According the the National Health Services web site of Britain, 96 percent of transexuals are happy with their sex reassignment and new gender identity.16 They claim their dysphoria is relieved. Is this true? Is gender reassignment surgery the answer?

This morning we are going to find the rest of the story. We are going to look at gender dysphoria from three angles. First, we will see what science says about gender dysphoria. Second, we will see what does the Bible says about gender dysphoria. Last we will look at how the church should love the sexually confused. Let’s jump into our study.


16 http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Gender-dysphoria/Pages/Treatment.aspx
What does science tell us about gender dysphoria?

Transsexuals commit suicide at an astounding rate.

While the media platforms Bruce Jenner and other transsexuals as happy, the hard facts say the opposite. One study claims the suicide rate of transgenders is 25 times greater than the general population. Another web site dedicated to transsexuals claims the transgender mortality rate at 60 to 70 percent. I assume that means deaths from suicide, bad hormone injections, bad silicone injections and the other risks that accompany the transgender lifestyle. The national suicide rate is three in every 100,000 people. Thirty-one percent of Americans that commit suicide are transsexual. Thirty to 50 percent of transgender patients commit suicide either just before or in the year after their sex change surgeries. Up to 90 percent of those who undergo sex reassignment surgery cannot be found for follow up after the surgery. They either committed suicide, are addicted to drugs and/or alcohol, return to their given names and birth genders or intentionally do not want to be found.

The media does not align with the evidence. Somebody has an agenda. Somebody is not telling the truth. Even if all the statistics are not completely accurate, one conclusion is inescapable. Transsexuals are killing themselves at an astounding rate. Sex change surgery is not the answer.

Transsexual activists say the reason transsexual suicides are so high is because transsexuals are bullied and unaccepted in society. If we would just love and accept them, their suicide problems would go away.

The lack of acceptance in society is not the reason transsexual are killing themselves. Studies show that transsexuals consistently harm themselves by cutting and self-mutilation. Cutting and self-mutilation are a sign of a lack of self acceptance. It is a sign of deep, unresolved psychological issues where people usually try to harm themselves to atone for their sin. Self-mutilation usually comes from a problem with not accepting yourself. It is usually not sourced in a problem with others not accepting you.

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Transexuals are not born that way.

The popular theory to support cross-gender identification is the brain hormone wash theory. The brain hormone wash theory is just that, a theory. There is no hard evidence to demonstrate cross-gender identity issues are created by a hormonal abnormality in the womb.

Further, the Human Genome project identified all genes in human DNA. It did not find a homosexual gene or a transgender gene. Homosexuals and transsexuals are biologically identical to the rest of us.

Medical studies show there is zero genetic abnormalities between your average person on the street and those that experience transgender desires. In short, there is no biological basis for transgender issues. There is only biological theory.

Why do transgenders desperately want to claim a biological basis for cross sexual identity? That would give them an excuse. It gives them an excuse for their cross gender desires and they believe it absolves them of responsibility for having them. It also gives transgenders a source of funding for the sex-change surgery that costs between $25,000 to $70,000 plus dollars. If transgender desires could be found to have a biological basis, it would be considered an abnormality, like a child born with a cleft pallet. Just like insurance pays for those surgeries, the insurance that you and I pay for would be forced to pay for sex change surgeries.

Most transsexuals struggle with an underlying psychiatric disorder.

Comorbidity is a medical term that means the simultaneous presence of two diseases. A survey of Dutch psychologists revealed that gender identity issues are not the only psychological problem for those with gender dysphoria. For instance, 25 percent of those struggling with gender identity disorder are also schizophrenic. Gender identity disorder is the secondary disorder. Schizophrenia is the root disorder. Seventy-five percent of patients struggling with gender identity disorder are clinically diagnosed with a psychiatric illness, personality disorder or mood dissociative disorders. Gender identity disorders are almost always a secondary problem sourced from a much deeper psychological issue.

What makes this scary is the LGBT lobby is so strong in our culture that psychologists are told to deny the possibility of secondary psychological disorders that may co-exist with gender identity issues. Laws are now in place that actually prevent psychologists from advising against irreversible sex change


surgery, even if the psychologist feels the patient will be irreversibly harmed by the surgery. The very professionals that should be showing a patient the way to health are legally prohibited from saying anything that would discourage the patient from undergoing irreversible surgery.26

Trying to solve a psychological problem through biological surgery is reminiscent of the techniques of Dr. Henry Cotton. He was a psychiatrist that lived from 1876 to 1933. He postulated that all mental illness were caused by bacteria. Our mouths are the source of most of our bacteria, he believed the way to get rid of mental illness, like depression and multiple personality disorder, was to get rid of the bad bacteria. That meant pulling people’s teeth. Dr. Cotton didn’t stop with teeth. If your mental illness involved sexuality, you can imagine the part of the body he cut off to remove what he claimed was bad bacteria that was causing your psychological condition. Between 1918 to 1925 he conducted 2,186 teeth/body part removal operations for psychiatric illnesses.27 He claimed an 80 percent cure rate. We all know nobody had a mental illness cured by his cruel barbaric surgeries.

I think the true mental patient was Dr. Cotton, not his clients. While we laugh at the idea of using a physiological surgery to cure a mental illness, isn’t that what sex change doctors are doing today when they try to solve someone’s gender identity disorder through physiologically changing his or her gender? Using physical surgery to solve a psychological problem doesn’t work. All it does is destroy the lives of men and women that find themselves mutilated for life. It now becomes clear why so many transgenders commit suicide after their sex change surgeries. My heart goes out to them. The medical community forecasts a wonderful future with a body of the opposite gender but the results are disfigurement and a life that is irreversibly changed from what they expected.

When you meet someone that has undergone this surgery or is moving in that direction, our first instinct is to run away. Our other instinct is to tell them about their sin. In reality they are deeply hurting. They need normal people to love them and tell them about the good news of Jesus, which is the only thing that can fix their minds and their lives.

What does the Bible say?

**Gender is God-given, not self-constructed.**

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

God created gender. He only created two genders. He is the one that assigned us our genders. If you are questioning your gender, simply look in the

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mirror and you will know which one God gave you. Either sin done to us or sin
done by us can start to warp our thinking and twist us into believing we are one
gender in our bodies and another gender in our minds. The Bible is clear. Our
genders are assigned to us by God. Our mental gender and our physical gender
are the same. They are given to us by God and we submit to what God has
given. To know your gender but to rebel against it rooted in deep-seated
rebellion against God. It is refusing to submit to God and the way he made you.

Our society does not encourage us to submit to our God-given genders. It
tells us our genders are self-constructed. We get to decide what gender we
want, not submit to the gender God has given. Whether a different mental
gender from our physical gender is consciously or unconsciously chosen, it is all
rooted in deep-seated rebellion against God.

Some of you have seen the new Facebook gender fields. Facebook now
has 58 different gender types. It recently introduced No. 59, which is a fill-in-the-
blank gender field. Gender is not something we decide. There are only two
genders, and it is something given to us by God. We submit to it. Refusing to
submit to your biological gender is rebellion against God’s design for your
life.

**God prohibits gender switching.**

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… 1 Corinthians 6:9 (NASB95)

Notice I used the NASB version of this verse. The ESV, and many other
good translations, combine two similar Greeks words that the NASB reveals. We
looked at this verse in our study of homosexuality. The word for homosexuals is
the Greek word *arsenokoitai*. It literally means men that take other men to bed.
It is men that take the masculine role in a homosexual relationship.

There is an additional word used to describe the man that takes the
feminine role in a homosexual encounter. It is the word *malakoi*. It is translated
by the NASB as the word effeminate. It means to be soft or effeminate. It means
a man that sexually functions like a woman or acts like a woman. This is not
talking about a man that likes the color pink or is a better cook in the kitchen than
his wife. This is talking about a man that leaves what is rightful, masculine
sexuality and sexually functions in a feminine way. That is a man functioning in a
feminine way in a homosexual relationship and would also include a man that
cross dresses to sexually attract other men, a man that pursues estrogen therapy

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or a man that pursues a sex change. It is a man that intentionally rejects his God-given sexually masculine gender identity for a feminine one.

Of course masculinity and femininity falls in a continuum and some men are more masculine than others and some women are more feminine than others. That is not the issue. What is at issue is intentional rejection of your gender role. We see this again later in 1 Corinthians.

Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head, but every wife who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since it is the same as if her head were shaven. For if a wife will not cover her head, then she should cut her hair short. But since it is disgraceful for a wife to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. 1 Corinthians 11:4–7 (ESV)

This is a difficult passage. I don’t want us to get into the cultural details of hair length and head coverings in first century Corinth. For the moment I just want to take what is the painfully obvious message of this difficult text. Men should look like men and women should look like women. It is disgraceful when women start to look and act like men and when men start to look and act like women. While the way men and women dress and conduct themselves will vary from culture to culture, the principle of men looking like men and women looking like women remains the same. There should be no intentional gender ambiguity.

Moses also wrote about this in the Old Testament.

A woman shall not wear a man’s garment, nor shall a man put on a woman’s cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God. Deuteronomy 22:5 (ESV)

If cross dressing is an abomination to God, I think it goes without saying that hormone therapy and surgical sexual transformation is an abomination to God. Why is it so abominable? It shatters the God-assigned masculinity or femininity given to us in the womb that we are given to live out and display. Remember that our gender is God-given. We submit to it. We don’t decide on it and create it.

Someone that claims he is a woman trapped in a man’s body, whether a conscious or unconscious decision, is struggling with sinful rebellion against the way God made him. By the way, all of us struggle with submitting ourselves to the way God created us, not just in our gender, but in everything.

When I was in junior high, I had a really tough time in school. I was skinny as a rail. No matter how much I ate, I couldn’t gain an ounce of muscle. There was a lot of things I didn’t like about the way God created me. Maybe some of you can relate.

I remember being so disgusted with my body that I hated myself. I hated the way God created me. Why couldn’t I be smart like some of my friends? Why
couldn’t I be a decent athlete? I was angry at God and thought he made a mistake when I looked in the mirror.

After weeks of praying, reading my Bible and thinking, a phrase popped into my head. This is it — “God doesn’t make junk. God doesn’t make mistakes. God made you.” Let me say it again, “God doesn’t make junk. God doesn’t make mistakes. God made you.” I wasn’t the fastest. I wasn’t that athletic. I wasn’t the strongest. I wasn’t the smartest. Even if I didn’t like the way God created me, since I knew God didn’t make mistakes and God made me, I wasn’t a mistake. God made me just the way he wanted me to be to accomplish what he wanted me to do. I needed to submit to the way God made me and trust that he knew what he was doing when he knit me together in the womb.

I think that is something those struggling with gender dysphoria can take to heart. When you look in the mirror and see one gender on the outside and feel you are another gender on the inside, remember that God doesn’t make junk. God doesn’t make mistakes. God made you. He made you just the way he wants you to accomplish what he has given you to do. The gender he biologically assigned you is the gender he wants you to have. Trust him with it. Submit to it. Don’t tell him he made a mistake. Don’t rebel against God.

Transgender desires are rooted in sin.

The Bible tells us sin influences everything. It influences creation. That is why we die. It influences our will. That is why we know the right thing to do but we struggle to do it. Sin also influences the mind. It influences our thinking so we cannot think clearly. One of the ways sin influences our thinking is in the area of our sexuality. Let me read Romans 1 and notice how many times Paul talked about sin influencing our thinking and influencing the way we think about our sexuality.

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 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. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. Romans 1:21–28 (ESV)
Transgender issues are not directly mentioned by Paul, but he said sin warps our thinking and it warps our sexual desires so we do what ought not to be done. Let me show you some interesting research.

Ten years after the prestigious John Hopkins University began sex reassignment surgery, it did patient follow up. Remember that on average 90 percent of patients cannot be found after the surgery either from suicide, transitioning back or dropping out of society. John Hopkins has some of the strictest screening criteria for sex change surgery applicants in the country. It weeds out anyone it doesn’t feel is a true candidate for the surgery. Doctors studied their top 50 sex change patients.

What they discovered is the patients fell into two groups.

The first group was guilt-ridden homosexual men looking to become more effeminate in their homosexual relationships. The second group was mostly older men that found intense arousal in cross-dressing. They were eager to advance their cross dressing fantasies to a surgical level. After the surgery, both the homosexuals and the cross-dressers experienced no improvement. They had the same problems with work, relationships and emotions after the surgery as they had before the surgery. The study blatantly states there were no noticeable improvements observed in any of the 50 individuals that went through sex change surgery.29

Let me quote what Dr. Meyer, the man that led the John Hopkins sex reassignment team, said after seeing the results of the follow-up study.

My personal feeling is that surgery is not a proper treatment for a psychiatric disorder, and it’s clear to me that these patients had severe psychological problems that don’t go away following surgery.30

As a result of their patient follow up study John Hopkins shut down the entire sex reassignment surgery department. After 10 years of practicing this surgery, they were not able to demonstrate it helped a single transgender patient.

**How should the church love the sexually confused?**

The Bible is clear that the only God-honoring way to express our sexuality is within heterosexual marriage. How should we handle a young couple that walks in our doors and is living together before marriage? What do we do when a homosexual couple walks in CrossWinds holding hands? How should we react when we find ourselves talking to a woman at the coffee bar and realize she has a masculine jaw line? These are tough questions. Let me give some guidance. The first things we need to know is there is no a one-size-fits-all answer.

29 Jon K. Meyer, MD and Donna J. Reter , “Sex reassignment. Follow-up” Archives of General Psychiatry, 1979;36(9):1010-1015

How do we respond to the unchurched?

This is the largest part of our culture. The unchurched are those that do not know God. They do not know the Bible. They do not have a saving relationship with Jesus. Our first instinct is to confront them over their sexual issues. In most cases, this is not the right approach. They are living a transgender lifestyle or a homosexual lifestyle or they are sleeping together because that is the natural result of living apart from God. Our goal is to build a bridge to them. Our goal is to get them under the preaching and teaching of the Bible. Our goal is to get them to open and study God’s Word. Let the Word do its work of convicting and creating spiritual life in their lives.

Are there times when you don’t endorse their actions, such as not attending a homosexual wedding? Of course. If God doesn’t agree with their marital union, we can’t support their marital union. Generally our approach is to build bridges and introduce those who need the gospel to the Gospel. Let the Word do its work.

How do we respond to the struggling?

The struggling are those who are in the church and they know they are doing what is outside of God’s will but they are struggling with their sin. They don’t need our condemnation. They need our support, encouragement and love. They need us to help them carry their burdens. They may need some tough love along the way but what they need is our love, support and encouragement.

How do we handle the rebellious?

Those are people who claim to be Christians. They understand God’s will on sexuality but they refuse to repent. They persist in shacking up with their girlfriends, in practicing homosexuality or pursuing a transgender lifestyle. The way to respond to this group is loving confrontation from the Word of God. We looked at these verse two weeks ago.

No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 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. 1 John 3:6, 8–9 (ESV)

This might involve church discipline. It will definitely involve uncomfortable confrontation. It is hard but it is the most loving thing we can do.

Laura’s Story.

We began with Bruce Jenner but I want to end with another true story. Laura was a single woman in her 40s. She had curves, shining blonde hair and red lipstick. She grabbed the attention of both men and women whenever she entered a room. One day, while meeting with her counselor, she smoothed her skirt as she asked him if he could help her find a church. She hadn’t been to one
in years but recently she wanted to learn more about God and what God thought about her life.

That conversation led Laura to try different churches. Many rejected her when they found out her story but one accepted her, helped her and when she confessed her secrets, they set up a special prayer team for her. Each week she wrote a letter to a group of 30 people in the church that committed to pray for her.

As you probably guessed, Laura was not a traditional woman. Laura was a surgical woman. She was born a he. Her birth name was Walt. Walt grew up distant from his parents. As a child, when he stayed at his grandmother’s, she made him wear girl clothes. His grandfather repeatedly molested him. As a young man, he confessed his sexual shame and guilt to an episcopal priest. Instead of helping him, the episcopal priest homosexually propositioned him. Thankfully Walt ran. He didn’t just run from the priest. He ran from God. Walt says that as a boy, for as long as he can remember, he always felt that deep inside he was a woman. As a young man, he repressed those feelings. He married, had children, and went on to work at NASA in the Apollo program. He later worked for Toyota and was part of the team that birthed the Acura car line.

All the guilt and sexual shame of his youth never went away. In mind-life it came bursting to the surface. He could no longer deny it. Deep inside he felt he was a woman, not a man. Eventually he divorced his wife and left his family. Trying to be true to his inner self, he underwent sex change surgery to become a woman. Even after becoming a stunning woman, he discovered it wasn’t all it was cracked up to be. He knew something wasn’t right. He wondered what God would say to him and about his life. That is what began his mid-life search for a church.

As you already learned, a church and a pastor eventually took him under their wings. After listening to God’s Word and studying it, Walt repented of his sin and gave his life to Christ. God’s spirit made it unmistakably clear that God’s will for his life was to be the biological gender God assigned him. His struggles didn’t magically disappear. In his biography Walt describes years of wrestling with his gender identity. He worked a job as one gender and lived at home as another gender, changing in the car on the way home. Even though he knew what was right he couldn’t shake his inner female gender identity.

God in his grace eventually helped a therapist to notice something. The Walt side of him acted one way, the Laura side of him acted another way. They Laura side of Walt had different hand writings and even different tastes in food than the male side of Walt. Walt was diagnosed with a multiple personality disorder that developed in early childhood. As a child trying to deal with the shame of molestation, his brain developed the alternate personality of a woman. After years of therapy, his multiple personality disorder was solved. Today he is one person. He is a man all the time.

The amazing part of the story is as Walt grew in his faith, he eventually met and married a woman. He went on to become the director of care ministries
at a large church in California. Even though God saved his life, he still suffers from the results of his life-altering irreversible sex change surgery. He has a letter of apology from the physician that performed the surgery asking forgiveness for performing irreversible surgery on his manhood and not digging further to discover his identity disorder came from a psychological condition.

Today he runs the web site www.sexchangeregrets.com. He is the author of many books that tell the other side of gender dysphoria that you don’t hear about in the media.

My friends, the hope for Bruce Jenner, and for others like him in our community, is not to alter their bodies with surgery or flood their systems with hormones as they try to fix the mistake they believe God made in their first births. What they need, and what all of us need, is an altogether new birth through Jesus Christ. He is the only one that fixes what is wrong with each of us.
Bibliography


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