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"I was totally surprised by the spread of the legalization of same-sex marriage. In just my lifetime we have gone from a taboo to even talk about homosexuality, to the sanction by governments of homosexual marriage. Few such large social considerations have ever before been turned over in such a short time."



Three challenges in our generation

1. Christians are confused.
2. Gay activist's are aggressive.
3. Both are afraid.

Objectives

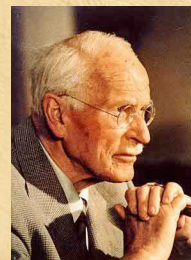
Help Christians approach this issue sensitively, Biblically, and constructively.

Show why homosexuality may play a significant role in our understanding of God's plan, the Gospel, and Easter.

Evangelicals have been too comfortable condemning homosexuality but not so eager to learn from homosexuality.

- We must see homosexuality as a picture of our need for redemption from our unnatural state as sinners independent of God.
- We must refuse to excuse and encourage our present condition as acceptable, natural, or final with the same passion we respond to homosexuality.
- Death and homosexuality are God's visual aids to reveal the unnatural nature of our fallen condition and draw us in faith to the Crucified and Risen Christ.
- **The Cross and Resurrection are good news only for those who see themselves broken before God by sin.**

Carl Jung



"Through pride we are ever deceiving ourselves. But deep down below the surface of the average conscience a still, small voice says to us, '**Something is out of tune**.'"

Some questions that leave Christians uncomfortable

- Is not homosexuality **natural** for many people?
- **Jesus** never mentions homosexuality but does talk about loving relationships. Why not follow Jesus?
- Why do conservatives seem bent on **legislating** their personal morality on everyone else?
- Should not gay people enjoy the same civil **rights** (marriage) as anyone else?
- Why should a group that is so creative, peace loving, and productive be **rejected** just because of who they choose to love?

Many well known gay and bisexual people are talented, productive, sensitive, and caring. They don't seem to be God hating, spiritual rebels, who want to destroy all that is good.

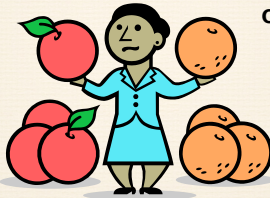
Hans Christian Andersen	Alexander the Great
Susan B. Anthony	Philip Johnson Rosie O'Donnell
Joan Baez	Angelina Jolie Ellen Degeneres James Dean
Francis Bacon	Billy Jean King Tyrone Power Elton John
Leonard Bernstein	Rock Hudson Hadrian Robert Reed
Little Richard	Bill Blass Czar Alexander I Lily Tomlin
Leonardo da Vinci	Tennessee Williams Peter Tsjaikowsky
Aaron Copland	Barry Manilow Scott Wittman Andy Warhol
Anderson Cooper	Martina Navratilova Michael Feinstein

Evangelical Christians are caught between two spiritual virtues

Sensitivity to
the heart felt
struggle of the
homosexual



To ignore this
brings the label of
"holy homophobia."



Sensitivity to
the traditional
understanding
of the Scripture



To ignore this
makes one a
Christian heretic.

Four critical questions

This week

1. Is homosexuality about action or attraction?
2. Is homosexuality a curse depicting the Fall of humanity or is it just about a small group with "Same Sex Attraction" (SSA)?

Next week

3. When should private morality drive public (social / legal) policy? How do we balance individual freedom and the general welfare?
4. Is the homosexual issue reflecting a bigger and deeper theological issue?

A popular stereotype

"AIDS is not just God's punishment for homosexuals; it is God's punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals." *Jerry Falwell*

"The Bible supplies no real basis for the condemnation of homosexuality. Therefore, people must stop opposing homosexuality merely by quoting the Bible because, taken on its own terms, the Bible simply does not support their case. If they have some other reason for their opposition, they ought to get clear what that reason is and state it up front." *Daniel Helminiak*

**This depends on how you define
"homosexuality" and how you read the Bible.**

Misunderstanding #1

What is homosexuality?

**This is a critical point in any discussion
of the Biblical teaching on homosexuality.**

Biblical culture

**Sexual Acts with
members of the
same gender.**

Modern culture

**Same Sex
Attraction (SSA) as
a personal identity.**

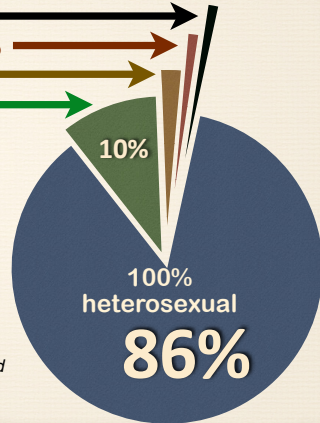
How common is homosexuality? It depends on how you define it.

100% homosexual 1%
Mostly homosexual 1%
Bisexual 2%
Mostly heterosexual

Add Health study, Wave 4 data
collected in 2008-2009 from 15,701
young adults, ages 26-32 years old

Gates, G. J. (2011). How many people
are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and
transgender? Los Angeles, CA: The
Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.

National Health Statistics Reports collected in
2013 from 34,557 adults, ages 18-44 years old
have 97.7% straight and 2.3% gay, lesbian or
bisexual



holy homophobia

I hear so often—"But homosexuality is
a choice, a sinful decision, a disorder,
a psychological mistake."

But I find such judgmental beliefs to
be the result of fearful ignorance, the
defense tactics of **holy homophobia**.

"Teen View" author

**This may be true IF we are speaking of
orientation or identity rather than conduct.**

Misunderstanding #2

The Scriptural teaching on this subject.

Rom. 1:18-28



Old Testament

Law of Moses

Lev. 18:22

Lev. 20:13

Examples

Judges 19:22-30

Ezek. 16:50

New Testament

Jesus is silent

Paul

Rom. 1:18-28

1 Cor. 6:9-11

1 Tim. 1:8-10

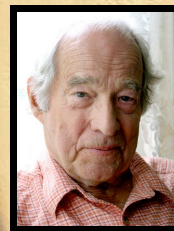
Jude 3-23

Church history

Until the modern
era, the church
has consistently
condemned
homosexual acts.

A popular impression

Rev. William Sloane Coffin



"In reality, there are no
biblical literalists, only
selective literalists. By
abolishing slavery and
ordaining women, millions
of Protestants have gone
far beyond biblical
literalism. It's time we did
the same for homophobia."

Dear Dr. Laura Schlesinger

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your show and try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind them that, as you recently pointed out, **Leviticus 18:22** clearly states it to be an abomination and cannot be condoned under any circumstances – End of debate.

I need some advice from you, however, regarding some other elements of God's Laws and how to follow them.

1. **Lev. 25:44** states that I may possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?
2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in **Ex. 21:7**. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?
3. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. **Ex. 35:2** clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should I ask the police to do it?
4. My uncle has a farm. He violates **Lev. 19:19** by planting two different crops in the same field as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton and polyester). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? **Lev. 24:10-16**. Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws. **Lev. 20:14**.

I know you have studied these things and thus enjoy considerable expertise in such matters, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging.

This is a reasonable criticism IF

- we read the Bible as an encyclopedia of proof texts.
- we disregard the theological distinction between Old and New Covenants.
- we ignore the unfolding narrative of the Gospel of Redemption in Christ.

The Old Testament speaks of six kinds of sexual sin.

- Seduction of a young girl (Exodus 22:16)
- Rape (Deut. 22:28)
- Adultery (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22)
- Incest (Lev. 20:11,12,14; Deut. 27:27,22,23)
- Bestiality (Exodus 22:19; Lev. 18:23, 20:15-16)
- **Homosexuality** (Lev. 18:22, 20:13)

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.”

Only the proscription of homosexuality is controversial in our culture.

Romans 1

“²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to **degrading passions**; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is **unnatural**, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing **indecent acts** and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a **depraved mind**, to do those things which are **not proper**,”

How do gay activists interpret Romans 1?

- Most disregard the **authority of Scripture**. *Moses and Paul reflect the primitive morality of their day.*
- Some say this refers to **temple prostitution** only. *But this is not mentioned in the text?*
- Some say this refers to unnatural acts (**heterosexuals acting like homosexuals**) only. *Would heterosexuals have passion to act this way?*
- Some say this refers to sexual **acts with children** only. *The texts reads “toward one another”?*
- Some say this refers to **lust** not love. *But the curse is “degrading passions” that lead to “unnatural acts.”*

How do most evangelical Christians interpret Romans 1?

- Many make **no distinction** between homosexual acts and orientation (identity). But homosexual orientation (SSA) is a modern concept and not part of the Biblical view.
- Many believe that homosexual **orientation is a moral choice** made in spiritual rebellion. *But does this fit the testimonial experience of all gay people?*
- Many believe that this is a **curse put on individuals** who are in spiritual rebellion. *But are all gay people really more rebellious than others?*
- Many believe that sexual **orientation can and must be changed** for a person to be saved. *Is this what Scripture really teaches?*

Paul's Gospel message is – salvation through the righteousness of faith not moral reform.

Romans 1

“¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Mankind is unrighteous and under God's wrath.

“¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,”

God let man's spiritual rebellion be reflected in unnatural lusts which dishonored the body.

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to **impurity**, that **their bodies might be dishonored among them**. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Homosexual conduct, illustrates the unnaturalness of human spiritual rebellion.

“²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the **natural** function for that which is **unnatural**, ²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the **natural** function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;”

✓ Of whom is Romans 1 speaking?

- The 1st century Jews sensed that Paul was talking only about Gentiles who were spiritual outlaws.
- The 21st century Christians sense that Paul was talking only about gay people who are spiritual rebels.
- Could it be that Paul is talking about the human race as it stands condemned before God?

Rom.1-5 is Paul's commentary on the FALL of the human race in Gen.3.

Romans 5

"¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

- All who are "in Adam" (share in the sin of Adam) are condemned.
- All who are "in Christ" (share in the righteousness of Christ) have eternal life.

Observations

- Paul pictures a chain reaction. *Revelation - Rebellion - Turning over to consequences - Hardening of heart - unnatural passion - homosexual acts - Condemnation.*
- Human choices leading to homosexuality may have little to do with sex. *Could many of our social problems (including sexual orientation) stem from a more general spiritual blindness and rebellion?*
- God "gives them (the culture) over" to homosexual lust and permissiveness. *Could homosexual attraction be but part of a curse on the culture rather than a choice by an individual?*
- There are negative natural consequences to homosexual activity. *Is homosexual activity accompanied by other negative personal / social factors?*

Note that Paul often speaks of groups that are symbolized as individuals.

Romans 5:12-21

"In Adam" "In Christ"

Romans 9:13

"Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'"

This is the sense of the O.T. quote from Malachi 1:1-5 where Jacob stands for Israel and Esau for Edom.

Paul is speaking of the whole human race, not just those who are homosexual in orientation or behavior.

Romans 2

"¹ Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, **you condemn yourself**; for you who judge practice the same things."

Romans 3

"⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks **are all under sin**; ¹⁰ as it is written, '**There is none righteous, not even one**'; ¹¹ *There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God*; ¹² *All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.*"

"²³ for **all have sinned and fall short** of the glory of God."

Galatians 3:22

"But the Scripture has **shut up everyone under sin**, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

We are all under the same curse (but in different way) and should bear one another's burdens.

Genesis 3:17

"Cursed is the ground because of you"

Romans 8:22-23

"For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

Exodus 11-12

The last plague on Egypt was the "Death of the firstborn son."

Galatians 6

"² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ⁵ For each one will bear his own load."

Chemistry, Culture, Circumstances LIFE IS NOT FAIR

- it does not deal the same "hand of cards" to each person.

Christians should understand that the secondary causes of our brokenness vary,



Nature

Some people may have a genetic predisposition to same sex attraction.



Choice

Homosexual acts are a choice stemming from spiritual decisions.



Nurture

Sexual orientation can be influenced by the home and culture.

while the primary cause is the same.

Curse



God's judgment on the earth because of Adam's sin effects everything including our sexuality.

✓ **This is why sexual morality is a big issue in Christian theology.**

- Our sexuality is near the core of our human identity and therefore a special arena for displaying the condition of our soul.
- We all stand in need of God's grace in the sexual area of life and therefore should bring a good bit of humility to our relationships and thankfulness for God's mercy.

✓ **If this interpretation is sound we might expect.**

- Homosexuality would be quite common across all cultures and eras.
- It should be widely recognized that something is out of tune (with humans) and even contrary to nature or a natural explanation.
- It is insensitive to condemn the LBGT community for their SSA.
- SSA is not just a free moral choice while actions are.

Evangelicals have been too comfortable condemning homosexuality but not so eager to learn from homosexuality.

- We must see homosexuality as a picture of OUR need for redemption from our unnatural state as sinners.
- We must refuse to excuse and encourage our present condition as acceptable, natural, or final with the same passion we respond to homosexuality.
- Death and homosexuality are God's visual aids to reveal the unnatural nature of our fallen condition and draw us in faith to the Crucified and Risen Christ.
- We must think twice before we condemn those who struggle with SSA and look at our own unnatural state.

"If you have an issue with homosexuality, then it comes to your own fear and your own darkness."

Tory Amos
(song writer)

Her response to a reader who complained that a gay couple was moving in across the street and wanted to know what he could do to improve the quality of the neighborhood.

"You could move."

Abigail Van Buren

