

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective



Speaking The Truth In Love On A Difficult Subject

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To God Be The Glory!

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A Christian Perspective

Table Of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| A “Christ-Like” Approach To This Issue | 3 |
| Determining The Truth About Homosexuality | 5 |
| What The Bible Teaches About Homosexuality | 8 |
| What Causes Homosexuality | 13 |
| Is It Possible To Overcome Homosexuality? | 16 |
| Helping Homosexuals To Overcome | 18 |
| Concluding Remarks | 23 |

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

A “Christ-Like” Approach To This Issue

The practice of homosexuality and its acceptance as an alternative lifestyle is becoming more prevalent in our society today. Nearly everyday we read and hear of things which indicate more people are accepting homosexuality as a normal behavior. For example:

- ◆ Ordinances being passed which grant homosexuals and lesbians equal rights to practice and promote their “lifestyle”
- ◆ The formation of gay churches, even the ordination of gay priests and ministers in mainstream Protestant denominations
- ◆ Cities like San Francisco and Key West which appear to cater to the open display of homosexual behavior

How shall Christians react to all this? I believe it is our responsibility to openly and willingly face this problem in several ways.

WE NEED TO SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE

First, we need to present the truth of God on the subject of homosexuality, but in the proper way. I fear that many Christians betray a true “homophobia” in their reaction against homosexuality, and often come close to “gay bashing” in their efforts to stem the tide of increasing acceptance of homosexuality in our society.

Though we need to present what God’s Word teaches on the subject, let us do so by “*speaking the truth in love*” (Ep 4:15). We who profess to be Christians should remember the admonition of the apostle Paul when it comes to sharing God’s Word with those with whom we differ:

“And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.” (2 Ti 2:24-26)

There is no place for a self-righteous, arrogant attitude on the part of those who but for the grace of God would be just as guilty of sins as those we are trying to reach! Otherwise, we sin at the same time we are trying to lead others out of sin.

UNDERSTAND WHAT CAUSES HOMOSEXUALITY

Before we can properly teach the truth in love to others, we need to have a understanding of how one becomes a homosexual. I realize that many would take issue with the statement that one “becomes” a homosexual.

In the “nature or nurture” debate currently going on, most people would say that the cause of homosexuality is either genetic or environmental. As will be discussed later, I believe it is more complex than simply either/or. Though I don’t believe people are “born homosexual,” there are genetic factors that can make some individuals more likely to develop a “predisposition” towards homosexuality (more on this later).

Until we understand the complexity of what causes homosexuality, it is unlikely that we will appreciate how deeply ingrained homosexuality can become in some people, and the extreme difficulty one faces if they choose to abandon it. The longsuffering and love required on the part of those who would help homosexuals demands this understanding.

BE READY TO ASSIST THOSE WHO DESIRE TO OVERCOME HOMOSEXUALITY

Even as Jesus was quick to receive sinners and to lead them to the way of righteousness and life everlasting, so should those who claim to be His disciples. Again, the challenge will be to do it in the proper way.

Paul's instructions to the Galatians can serve as good beginning:

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (Ga 6:1-2)

In a spirit of gentleness we need to be able to show them how, and to provide the encouragement they will need along the way.

It is my prayer that the material presented in this study can be a positive step toward helping Christians to accomplish these three things.

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

Determining The Truth About Homosexuality

To know the truth about homosexuality, one must first determine the real source of truth itself. Many might question whether there is in reality a source of truth which governs such things as we are considering.

Most people believe that if there is, it comes from the research of scientists. But the problem with scientific research is that the testing, evaluating, and interpreting of the evidence is often flawed by the personal agendas of those on both sides of the issue. Maintaining total objectivity is rarely done, especially among scientific circles who often must be “politically correct” in order to receive the grants necessary to conduct their research.

The Christian by definition recognizes and appeals to a different “source” of truth, though it is firmly believed that with time and true objectivity this “source” will be confirmed by “scientific” sources.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we believe the truth is to be found in Him. As He Himself said...

**“I am the way, THE TRUTH, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”
(Jn 14:6)**

The realm of truth found in Jesus covers many areas, but especially those of sexual mores and behavior. Consider what Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.” (Ep 4:17-24)

So the truth which is in Jesus has much to say about what constitutes righteousness and true holiness.

But one might ask, “Why should we accept Jesus over the scientific experts of today?”

The Christian is convinced that God has furnished proof that Jesus is the true judge in regards to righteousness. How? By virtue of His resurrection from the dead! As Paul said when speaking to the Greek philosophers in Athens:

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” (Ac 17:30-31)

Can anyone else provide such evidence that they know what they are talking about? Jesus by virtue of His resurrection provides the ultimate demonstration that when He speaks, we should listen! Until those scientists, sociologists and philosophers who speak with such assurance that homosexual conduct is a morally acceptable

lifestyle can present similar proof that they know what they are talking about, I would caution against accepting their judgments on these issues.

(For those who do not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, I invite you to examine the material presented in another **Executable Outlines** study, “**Christian Apologetics.**”)

If we accept Jesus as the ultimate source of truth, to what sources did He attribute truth? There are several:

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS (i.e., the Old Testament)

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt 5:17-19)

Though we learn later (in Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, etc.) that Jesus did indeed fulfill the Law and bring in a New Covenant, it is evident that He considered the Law and the Prophets as a source of truth.

HIMSELF (i.e., the words He spoke while on earth)

“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’” (Jn 8:31-32)

THE HOLY SPIRIT (who would carry on the work started by Jesus)

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (Jn 16:12-13)

Note carefully, that Jesus did not reveal ALL the truth Himself while here on earth. The Holy Spirit would complete the work, revealing the entire will of Christ through His apostles. This leads us to a fourth source of truth recognized by Jesus...

THE APOSTLES OF JESUS CHRIST (who gave us the New Testament)

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send (the word apostle means “one sent”) receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.” (Jn 13:20)

In accepting Jesus as the ultimate source of truth, then, we must also accept His apostles. In fact, they themselves made it clear that their message was not their own:

“If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” 1 Co 14:37)

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” (1 Th 2:13)

“We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (1 Jn 4:6)

It is also important to understand that the truth revealed by Holy Spirit to the apostles was complete. In other words, we have in the pages of the New Testament God’s full and final revelation. We should not expect the Spirit of God to give us “modern-day revelations” that are contrary to what has been given through the apostles. Several passages in the New Testament confirm this point:

“For I have not shunned to declare to you the WHOLE counsel of God.” (Ac 20:27)

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be COMPLETE, thoroughly equipped for EVERY good work.” (2 Ti 3:16-17)

“As His divine power has given to us ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,” (2 Pe 1:3)

“Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE FOR ALL (literally, one time for all times) DELIVERED to the saints.” (Ju 3)

The claim, therefore, by some denominations that the Spirit of God has led them to accept homosexuality as an acceptable alternative lifestyle is without scriptural basis. It is not the Spirit of God revealing new and modern truth, but rather human spirits who are seeking to accommodate themselves to societal pressures!

CONCLUSION

Those who accept Jesus as the ultimate source of truth must also accept His definition as to where truth is found. We have seen that He has identified several sources: the Old Testament, Himself, and His apostles. Putting it simply, the Word of God (i.e., the Bible) is the source of truth. As Jesus prayed in behalf of His disciples: **“Sanctify them by Your truth, Your word is truth.” Jn 17:17)**

Since the Word of God is the truth, then whatever it teaches regarding homosexuality must be the final word. The next section will examine what the Bible teaches about homosexuality.

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

What The Bible Teaches About Homosexuality

Assuming that one accepts the Bible to be the Word of God, and as such the final authority on issues it discusses, what then does it have to say about the subject of homosexuality? Consider the following...

HOMOSEXUAL CONDUCT WAS “A GRIEVOUS SIN” IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

In **Gen 19:24-28**, the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is described. The apostle Peter explains that this unique judgment upon these two cities was to serve as an example:

“and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly;” (2 Pe 2:6)

Why was Sodom and Gomorrah chosen to be an example of God’s ultimate judgment upon the ungodly? What were they doing that made them so different from other ungodly cities at that time? Here is what Abraham was told:

“And the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,’ (Gen 18:20)

What was their “sin” that was “very grievous?” I have heard homosexual theologians try to explain that the sin was their lack of hospitality. Is such the case? Well, consider the text...

“...the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house.” (Gen 19:4)

Note that “all the people” from the city are seeking to participate in whatever the “sin” is. We then read...

“And they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally.’” (Gen 19:5)

The word “carnally” is not in the actual Hebrew text, but is supplied by the translators because the word “know” as used here is often a euphemism for sexual relations (e.g., **Gen 4:1,17**). Lot’s reaction to this crowd certainly suggests that is how he understood the crowd’s request...

“So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him and said, ‘Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly!’” (Gen 19:6-7)

It is apparent that Lot understood their intentions were not honorable.

The next statement by Lot is hard to understand, but maybe it expresses his concept of hospitality in that he was willing to suffer personal loss rather than allow it to happen to his guests...

“See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof.” (Gen 19:8)

Lot's amazing offer of his two daughters at least confirms that he understood the crowd's intentions were sexual in nature. But notice also that Lot explains that his original hospitality to these two strangers (cf. **Gen 19:1-3**) was precisely to protect from the sort of homosexual rape the crowd was intent on inflicting.

The crowd's response to Lot's pleas is also insightful...

“And they said, ‘Stand back!’ Then they said, ‘This one came in to sojourn, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.’ So they pressed hard against Lot, and came near to break down the door.” (Gen 19:9)

Their reaction is somewhat similar to many today who say to those who would dare point out sinful conduct, “Who are you to judge?” People haven't really changed much, have they?

What such people fail to realize, is that when you point out what the Word of God says about certain conduct, **you** are not judging them, it is the **Word of God** that is judging them. In return, they themselves are trying to avoid the condemnation of the **message** of God by condemning the **messenger**!

That homosexuality was the “*grievous sin*” to which the Lord referred to in **Gen 18:20** becomes even more apparent when we consider what is said in the New Testament about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. For example, Jude wrote:

“as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Jude 7)

Notice that Jude describes the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as “*sexual immorality*” and “*going after strange flesh*.” Nothing about it being a lack of hospitality! Only those desperate to justify their homosexual conduct would fail to see what the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah really was.

HOMOSEXUAL CONDUCT WAS “A CAPITAL CRIME” UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES

I am grateful that we are no longer under the Law of Moses, with its extremely harsh punishments (though under the New Covenant much harsher punishments for similar crimes unrepented of are simply delayed till the Day of Judgment, cf. **He 10:26-31**). But as Paul wrote to the Romans:

“Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” (Ro 7:12)

He also wrote later that it was “*written for our learning*” (**Ro 15:4**).

So what can we learn from the Law about God's view of homosexual conduct? In Leviticus, we read:

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.” (Lev 18:22)

Can it be any clearer? Homosexual conduct is “*an abomination*” to the Lord! Together with bestiality (**Lev 18:23**) it was one of the sins that justified God in giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites, for the previous occupants were guilty of such sins (**Lev 18:24-25**). Also, the Israelites were warned that if they engaged in the same kind of sins, they too would be “*vomited out*” of the land (**Lev 18:26-30**).

More is said later in the book of Leviticus...

“If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.” (Lev 20:13)

Again, I stress that according to the New Testament we are not under the Law of Moses; but what we learn here is that while the Law was in effect, without question homosexuality was clearly a grave offense, even worthy of death!

But what about the New Testament? What does it say?

THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CLEAR IN ITS CONDEMNATION OF HOMOSEXUAL CONDUCT

To the church of God which was at Corinth, Paul wrote:

“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 homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Co 6:9-10)

In this passage, Paul uses two terms that are translated above as “*homosexuals*” and “*sodomites*.” The first term, translated “*homosexuals*” (“effeminate” in the KJV) is **μαλακος** (malakos), and is defined by Thayer as:

“effeminate, of a catamite, a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness”

The word translated as “*sodomites*” (“abusers of themselves with mankind” in the KJV) is **αρσενοκοιται** (arsenokoitai), and is defined by Thayer as:

“one who lies with a male as with a female, a sodomite”

Paul’s warning not to be deceived is very appropriate even today, for some homosexual theologians would have us believe that Paul was only condemning male prostitution. Whereas the first word (malakos) does properly speak of a male prostitute, the second word (arsenokoitai) describes any sort of homosexual conduct. Despite such efforts to twist the Scriptures and deceive many, the Word of God is clear: those who continue to engage in homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God!

[The next verse (1 Co 6:11) gives great hope, however, for anyone trapped in the sin of homosexuality, which we shall examine more closely in a later lesson.]

Paul also uses the word “arsenokoitai” (the generic term for homosexual conduct) as an example of that which is:

“...contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” (cf. 1 Ti 1:10-11)

Since the “*sound doctrine*” of the gospel of Christ condemns even sexual relations between unmarried heterosexuals, it should not be hard to understand that sex between unmarried homosexuals is wrong as well! As for “married” homosexuals, the institution of marriage which was begun and defined by God only allows for sex between a man and a woman (cf. **Gen 2:24; Mt 19:4-6**).

The “classic” passage which deals with the sin of homosexual conduct is that of **Ro 1:18-28**. In this passage, Paul discusses the wrath of God which is directed toward those who do not honor God:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man-- and birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.” (Ro 1: 18-23)

The righteous indignation of God is directed toward those who reject the clear evidence of God’s existence and power as revealed in nature, and if religious at all, make God over into an image of their own choosing. Whereas today we are too “sophisticated” to fall for thinking that God is like a graven image, there is ever the tendency to “recreate God in our own image,” so that He thinks like us, and acts like us (one would do well to read **Isa 55:8,9**).

How does God express His righteous indignation, short of bringing about the Judgment Day? Paul tells us as he continues:

“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” (Ro 1:24-25)

Rather than bringing about the Judgment Day, or striking them down with a bolt out of the sky, God has expressed His righteous indignation by “*giving them up*” to moral uncleanness. In other words, those who are not willing to honor God as God are simply allowed to degenerate into moral decay!

To illustrate, Paul continues...

“For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.” (Ro 1:26)

Here is a strong allusion to lesbianism, where women cease to appreciate that their bodies are naturally designed physically for sex with men and for procreation, and who think of “our bodies, our selves” solely as instruments of “vile passions” for one another.

In regards to men whom God has “*given up*” to uncleanness, Paul writes:

“Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” (Ro 1:27)

In similar fashion, many of those men who have been “*given up*” by God to uncleanness eventually leave the “*natural use of the woman*” and turn to other men to fulfill their lustful desires. As Paul reiterates in the next verse:

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;” (Ro 1:28)

Three times in this section we find the expression “*God gave them up (over)*” (**Ro 1:24,26,28**). The point is clear: when people choose to reject God, or to recreate Him in their own image, God “*gives them up*” to “go their own way.” Unrestrained by God in any way, they gravitate into increasing levels of immorality! For some, it

involves heterosexual immorality, such as premarital sex or adultery. But for others, it includes homosexuality and lesbianism.

And what is the consequence of such behavior? The apostle Paul referred to such people as:

“...receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.” (Ro 1:27)

An illusion to sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS? We cannot say for certain, but none can dispute that those willing to follow God’s Word as to sexual conduct have less to fear about STD’s than those who choose to disregard Him!

CONCLUSION

God’s basic principles of righteousness have remained constant through out the different periods of Bible history. For example, adultery has always been condemned by God. Likewise, we have seen that homosexuality has been identified as:

- ◆ A **“grievous sin”** in the times of the Patriarchs
- ◆ An **“abomination”** in the Law of Moses
- ◆ **“Shameful,”** indicative of **“a debased mind,”** and **“contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel”** of Jesus Christ

I can understand that those who do not believe in God or who do not accept the Bible as the Word of God would strongly disagree with such an evaluation of homosexuality. But I fear that only those with “hardened hearts” would profess to believe the Bible to be God’s Word and still approve of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle that has God’s blessings.

May those who profess to accept the Bible as the last word never hesitate to accept what it says, no matter how “politically incorrect” our society might say it is.

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

What Causes Homosexuality

Why should Christians be concerned about what causes homosexuality? A proper understanding will help in several ways...

- ◆ Remove some of the “homophobia” that many Christians have because of something they do not understand.
- ◆ Gain appreciation for the extremely difficult challenge that one who is homosexual will face should he or she try to repent.

This will in turn help us to have the compassion and longsuffering necessary if we will be able to help those who wish to repent of their homosexuality.

Before looking at the specific causes of homosexuality, some general comments...

NATURE OR NURTURE? OR PERHAPS SOME OF BOTH?

There is much controversy going on as to whether homosexuality is genetic or environmental in origin. Homosexuals are desperately looking for any evidence that would seem to confirm that they were “born homosexuals.” It should be easy to understand why, for if “God made them that way” then it is not their fault they are homosexual and it must not be a sin to act out their desires. So any research that might suggest a genetic origin is quickly offered as a defense. But the vested interest that homosexuals have often prevent them (and more “liberal thinking” heterosexuals) from seeing the obvious.

For example, recent studies done with identical twins have been offered by some as evidence that the origins of homosexuality might be in the genes. In one study, Dr. Michael Bailey of Northwestern University examined 110 pairs of identical twins who had been separated at birth and raised in different environments. He found that if one was gay there was a 52% chance the other was also. But among fraternal twins, the chance fell to 22%. Because the ratio was higher among twins who are genetically identical, this study has been referred to by many as evidence that homosexuality is genetic in origin. I even heard Dr. Dean Edell (a famous radio call-in doctor) appeal to this study in defense of homosexuality.

I may be missing something here, but the reason why identical twins are such fascinating subjects of scientific study is because they ARE alike genetically. Therefore, if homosexuality is solely genetic in origin, then if one twin is gay, you would expect the chances of the other twin being gay to be 100%! The fact that only 52% of those who were identical in genetic makeup to their homosexual twin were gay themselves would strongly suggest that genetics alone does not make one homosexual.

This study would rather confirm that though there may be genetic factors that increase the likelihood of one becoming a homosexual, these genetic factors alone do not produce homosexuality (as in the case of 48% of those heterosexuals whose identical twin was homosexual). There must also be environmental factors for homosexuality to develop.

This study confirms my understanding that the cause of homosexuality is a highly complex combination of various factors, some genetic and some environmental, that make it much easier for some people to become entrapped in this particular sin. In this regard, it is not much different than alcoholism, where similar studies

involving identical twins have shown similar results. All it confirms is that there may be some people with a genetic likelihood of developing a “predisposition” toward such things as homosexuality and alcoholism, but it requires the addition of environmental factors to produce the actual homosexual or alcoholic.

WHAT CAUSES HOMOSEXUALITY

I strongly recommend a book called “**THE UNHAPPY GAYS: What Everyone Should Know About Homosexuality**” by Tim LaHaye (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton Illinois, 1978) to gain a good insight into the factors that lead to the development of homosexuality. In his chapter on “What Causes Homosexuality?” Tim LaHaye first describes...

The Components For Developing A Predisposition To Homosexuality

Please carefully note that the components listed below **do not cause one to become a homosexual**. Rather, they can contribute to the development of a **predisposition towards homosexuality**. A person can (and many do) have all these components and still not be a homosexual. As listed and described by LaHaye, these components include:

- ◆ A Melancholy Temperament
- ◆ Inadequate Parental Relationships
- ◆ Permissive Childhood Training
- ◆ Insecurity About Sexual Identity
- ◆ Childhood Sexual Trauma
- ◆ Early Interest In Sex
- ◆ Youthful Masturbator And Sexual Fantasizer
- ◆ Childhood Associates And Peer Pressure

LaHaye carefully documents how studies have often found these factors present in the development of a predisposition towards homosexuality. Only the first (“A Melancholy Temperament”) is truly related to genetics, but many of the others are environmental factors that can occur so early in the development of a child that one could easily believe that once a predisposition towards homosexuality has developed they feel they must have been “born that way.”

But even if one has a “predisposition” towards homosexuality, they are not necessarily homosexual. As LaHaye continues to illustrate, to a “predisposition” must be added other factors. He describes this as...

The Formula For Producing A Homosexual

This formula can be illustrated in this way:

A Predisposition
Toward Homosexuality
Plus
That First
Homosexual Experience
Multiplied By

Pleasurable and Positive
Homosexual Thoughts
To Which Is Added
More Homosexual
Experiences
Multiplied By
More Pleasurable
Thoughts

A Homosexual

When one already has a “predisposition” towards homosexuality, exposure to homosexual experiences and pleasurable reflecting upon them can create a powerful attraction difficult to overcome. So powerful can these experiences and reflections be that one not even need to have developed a “predisposition” to be drawn into this sort of behavior. This is why many who were not born with the “melancholy temperament” are also found in homosexual circles.

CONCLUSION

My purpose in this section has not been to provide a definitive treatment on how homosexuality develops, and I seriously doubt that what has been briefly covered will convince any homosexual that their “orientation” is primarily caused by environmental factors rather than genetic ones.

My hope is to help my brothers and sisters in Christ see that the “web” of homosexuality is one that involves more than a simple choice on the part of those entrapped. Like all those overcome by sin, it involves a complicated process, one which can be overcome only with Divine help, together with the assistance of understanding and patience on the part of children of God!

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

Is It Possible To Overcome Homosexuality?

Of course, those who believe that homosexuality is “something you are born with” would take great issue with the idea that it is possible to change or otherwise “overcome” their homosexuality. But there are at least two reasons why I am convinced that it IS possible...

THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

As indicated earlier, the scientific arena is one than can be easily “tainted” by presuppositions or political correctness (even “religious” correctness). For this reason, it will be a long time before adequate research can be done that will come close to resolving this issue conclusively. But research from impartial sources has indicated that it is possible to overcome homosexuality...

Masters & Johnson, well-known researchers in human sexuality, reported in their book **Homosexuality In Perspective** a 67% success rate in their helping homosexuals revert to heterosexual behavior. I doubt anyone could accuse Masters & Johnson of being motivated by religious prejudices in their reporting!

Also, in an article published in the **American Journal Of Psychiatry** (December, 1980), E. Mansell Pattison, M.D., and Myrna Loy Pattison, from the Department of Psychiatry and Health Behavior, Medical College of Georgia, documented eleven cases of men who claim to have changed their sexual orientation from exclusively homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality through involvement in a church fellowship.

This leads to the second reason why I believe it IS possible to overcome homosexuality...

THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

In writing to the church at Corinth, a city known for its immorality, Paul warns them:

“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 HOMOSEXUALS, nor SODOMITES, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Co 6:9-10)

Notice, as we have seen earlier, that Paul includes homosexuality as conduct that can keep one out of the kingdom of God. But then Paul says something that should give great hope to those who are willing to believe that it IS possible to overcome homosexuality...

“AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Co 6:11)

Through the blood of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, it IS possible for a homosexual to be forgiven and to be sanctified (set apart for a holy purpose)!

This is not to say that it is easy. As with all sinners, forgiveness can be received immediately when united with Christ in His death through baptism. But living the kind of “sanctified” life required of all Christians is one that requires a “transformation” which occurs in time as we submit our minds and bodies to the transforming and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit!

How this process of transformation can be applied to overcoming homosexuality will be discussed in the next lesson...

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

Helping Homosexuals To Overcome

As suggested in the previous section, it is possible for a person to overcome their homosexuality even if they are not a Christian. But there is so much more help available if one is willing to come to Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit! In this section, we shall briefly examine positive steps one can take in dealing with the pernicious sin of homosexuality.

OBEY JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR AND LORD

When one turns to the Lord in sincere faith and repentance, their baptism into Christ is the source of great blessings. As the apostle Peter proclaimed in the first gospel message on the Day of Pentecost:

“...Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Ac 2:38)

Notice carefully that when one is baptized upon repentance that there is first the “remission of sins.” By the blood of Christ every sin is washed away in baptism. But there is also the “gift of the Holy Spirit” promised to those who repent and are baptized. This refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian, Who serves as the instrumental agent by which God and Christ indwell and strengthens the Christian. As Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome:

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Ro 8: 11-13)

Yes, it is by the Spirit we are able to “*put to death the deeds of the body,*” for as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, it is through the Spirit that God strengthens our inward man:

“...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,” (Ep 3:16)

With such “divine help” we are able to do whatever the will of God calls us to do. As Paul wrote in his epistle to the Philippians:

“...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Ph 2:13)

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Ph 4:13)

When we obey Christ and submit our lives to Him, we are not alone in our struggle against sin and the temptations we often face in the flesh; by the Spirit of God we can receive the strength Christ provides!

But such ability does not come automatically. To receive the help God provides requires that we...

WALK IN THE SPIRIT

As written to the churches of Galatia:

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Ga 5:16)

Whether the *“lust of the flesh”* we are fighting involves fornication, adultery, or homosexuality, we can only overcome it as we *“walk in the Spirit.”* How does a Christian do this? The answer is found in Paul’s epistle to the Romans:

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” (Ro 8:5)

We *“live according to the Spirit”* (or *“walk in the Spirit”*) as we *“set our minds on the things of the Spirit.”* Just as a person whose mind is *“in the gutter”* will soon live accordingly, those who *“set”* their mind on the things the Spirit has revealed will live in harmony with that revelation.

In other words, the Word of God, revealed to us by the Holy Spirit working through the apostles and prophets of Jesus Christ, contains those *“things”* upon which we must *“set our minds”* if we are going to *“live according to the Spirit.”* The Word of God is the instrument (or sword, **Ep 6:17**) the Holy Spirit uses to transform the minds and lives of those who will truly give themselves to it!

As the Psalmist understood and declared so long ago...

“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” (Psa 119:11)

Even Jesus, when tempted in the wilderness, appealed to the Word of God again and again in His fight against the lusts of the flesh (**Mt 4:1-11**)! So must one who is serious in overcoming homosexuality set his or her mind on the Word of God, that they might truly walk in the Spirit and receive the strength only the Spirit can provide!

But there is more that can be said...

RESTRICT WHAT GOES INTO YOUR MIND

Jesus pointed out in His sermon on the mount that the problem of adultery actually begins in the heart (mind):

“...whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Mt 5:28)

The same can be said for homosexuality. Therefore, a person who is serious in their efforts to overcome any sexual sin must be careful about what they allow their minds to dwell on. Again, Paul wrote:

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh...” (Ro 8:5)

If a person is going to be truly *“transformed”* it will occur only when the mind is being *“renewed”*:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Ro 12:1-2)

But a person’s mind cannot be *“renewed”* if they allow themselves to dwell on those things that will prompt lustful desires. Rather, they need to heed the following admonition:

“...whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things.” (Ph 4:8)

Rather than dwelling on things that will weaken one's resolve, a person committed to overcoming temptations of the flesh will devote their thoughts, their reading, their television and movie viewing, to such things described above!

AVOID HOMOSEXUAL FRIENDS AND HANGOUTS

One should be aware of the dangers of the wrong kind of companionship:

“Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’ (1 Co 15:33)

Friends can be a wonderful blessing, but the wrong kind of friends can be a disaster! Avoid like the plague those who would entice you back into sin. And avoid those environments where the opportunities for temptations are great, where homosexuals are known to frequent. In other words...

“...put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH, to fulfill its lusts.” (Ro 13:14)

Do not provide opportunities for the flesh to be tempted to give into unlawful desires!

BECOME ACTIVE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Those who have been converted from homosexuality especially need the encouragement of that which comes from Christian fellowship. The very purpose of our assemblies is to provide such:

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another...” (He 10:24-25)

Of course, it is essential that those struggling with trying to overcome homosexuality be fully accepted despite their past by their fellow Christians, or they will be terribly discouraged! It is the Lord's desire that local congregations be a haven for ALL who seek to serve the Lord and overcome sin.

BECOME ACTIVE IN A WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

The early Christians realized the value of home Bible studies with others...

“And daily in the temple, AND IN EVERY HOUSE, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” (Acts 5:42)

“...I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.” (Ac 20:20)

The value of such special studies should be especially apparent for those Christians overcoming difficult problems (such as drugs, alcohol, homosexuality) where meeting with the church during its regular assemblies is not enough. Again, this calls for understanding and committed Christians who are willing to spend such time in study with their brethren who may be weak.

BELIEVE IN GOD FOR AN “UNLIMITED” FUTURE!

It is important to remember that with God nothing is impossible! The scriptures tell us that God is able to do things beyond what we are able to imagine:

“...who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” (Ep 3:20)

Notice the superlatives used by Paul (*exceedingly, abundantly, above all*), you soon get the impression that this “*power*” that works in us is really beyond description! But it is available to those who commit themselves to serving the Lord!

Not only that, but we have the promise that God will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to handle:

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Co 10:13)

With the power of God working IN us to give us strength, and the providence of God working AROUND us to keep us out of temptations beyond our ability to overcome, we can change and be all that God wants us to be! (And remember, when we do fall because we do not take advantage of God’s power and providence, there is still the grace of God to provide forgiveness when we truly repent and come back to God.)

PRESENT YOUR BODY FORMALLY TO GOD

When one becomes a Christian, their body then belongs to the Lord:

“Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Co 6:18-20)

Since we now belong to God, we should present our bodies to God as part of our reasonable service...

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Ro 12:1-2)

Whereas before you may have allowed your body to be used as an instrument for sin, let it be used as an instrument of righteousness in the service of God:

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” (Ro 6:12-13)

The more we think of serving God with both body and spirit, the less we will succumb to allowing either to engage in sinful activities.

FINALLY, PRAY!

Yes, pray! And “*pray without ceasing*” (1 Th 5:17) whenever the temptation is greatest. Why pray? The author of Hebrews gives us two good reasons:

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (He 4:16)

Through prayer we can receive from God both mercy and grace to help us in time of need. Mercy for the times when we do not take advantage of the help God provides, and grace to help in those times when we DO seek to take advantage of it.

Through prayer, the Word, the help of brethren, and the Holy Spirit Himself, anyone (including the homosexual and lesbian) should be able to say with the apostle Paul:

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

May God give us all whatever portion of that strength we need!

Homosexuality

A Christian Perspective

Concluding Remarks

If there is one passage of Scripture which summarizes God's view of homosexuality, then it is that found in Paul's letter to a church which was in a city famous for its sexual immorality:

“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 homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”
(1 Co 6:9-11)

In this passage we find both condemnation and hope. Homosexuality and sodomy are condemned as sin, but hope is seen in that those who engaged in such can find forgiveness and the ability to change through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. May God be praised!

As children of God, let those of us who are disciples of Christ not renege on our responsibility concerning this sin which is becoming more acceptable in our society. It is my prayer that this material may be used in the service of God by others to:

- ◆ Teach the truth in love
- ◆ Expose homosexuality for the sin that it is
- ◆ Lovingly accept and assist those who come to Jesus in an effort to overcome this tenacious sin

May God give us the grace to do so, in a spirit becoming of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Mark A. Copeland