

The Biblical view of Homosexual Practices

Over the past twenty years a huge change has taken place in what is acceptable in relationships and what is not. The change in society is reflected in attitudes expressed in the church. The question is what is actually right. To know that, we must apply to God's revealed will in Holy Scripture.

Before looking at the Bible passages which deal directly with the subject, and those which help us to rightly interpret them, we must consider the spirit in which we approach the texts, the subject before us, and indeed those who are tempted sexually. The Christian attitude will be one characterised by:

HUMILITY

Now concerning things offered to idols: we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. ² And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. (1 Corinthians 8¹⁻²)

We must have humility because it is only by God's grace that we are not involved in homosexual sins ourselves. If those things are not a temptation then it is only by God's grace that we are not committing the sins of fornication or adultery or are not addicted to pornography. Of course, if you are committing fornication or adultery then you have even greater reason for humility.

There is a further reason for humility. The changes that have taken place have done so under our noses. We have all witnessed the sexual and homosexual revolution, and what have we done about it? You see we are all implicated in these things in some measure. We are all in this together and we have nothing about which we can be proud.

COMPASSION

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. (Matthew 9³⁶)

When we look on the multitudes of people who suffer temptation in this area we need to be filled with the tears of compassion, because there is a great deal of hurt and heartache there. 80% of lesbians suffered sexual abuse in early life and cannot face a relationship with a man. That precludes from the most natural female instinct: to have children. Very many people tempted homosexually suffer self-loathing, frustration and loneliness. Most homosexually tempted people are not like the campaigners who hit the headlines. They are quiet, ordinary people struggling with things that are hard. On top of that they may feel injured by hate responses from those who express disapproval of homosexual relationships in an uncharitable way. We need to feel genuine compassion.

FAITHFULNESS

And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (1 Timothy 1²)

Our final authority all matters of faith and conduct is the Bible. Whatever our prejudices, we have to be true to the word. We have to understand, believe, speak and live out the word of God. If we do not understand the Bible on this matter and we dismiss it as all being too difficult and do not try to understand, is that faithfulness? If we understand the meaning of the texts but do not accept it, is that faithfulness? If we understand and believe but do not speak out, is that faithfulness? If we understand, believe and speak, but do not live consistently, is that faithfulness? To faithfulness we are called.

The Bible Texts Dealing with Homosexual Practices

Genesis 19: ⁴ ***Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. ⁵ 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."*** ⁶ ***So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, ⁷ and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! ⁸ 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."*** ⁹ ***And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them."*** ***So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. ¹⁰ But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.***

Sodom's wicked conduct was well known (Genesis 13¹³; 18²⁰) We should be in no doubt as to what sin they committed. Men committed homosexual acts. Some challenge this assertion and propose that the men of Sodom simply wanted to get acquainted with Lot's visitors, but that begs the question why Lot called their proposal 'wicked' in v7. '**Know**' (Gen 19⁵) is used as in 'know sexually' or 'carnally'. (Cf Genesis 4¹: ***Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain.*** Clearly that knowledge was in the sense of sexual intimacy.)

Those who question our understanding of the Genesis narrative refer to Ezekiel 16⁴⁹⁻⁵ where the sins of Sodom are identified with things

other than sexual ones: ***She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit.*** It needs to be noted, however, that the meaning of ***abomination*** is sometimes homosexual acts (as in Leviticus 18²² and 20¹³).

Leviticus 18²²: ***You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.***

Leviticus 20¹³: ***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.***

The meaning of these texts is absolutely explicit, but some deny the abiding application of them, saying that they are part of the Old Testament purity regulations no longer binding. It is certainly true that there are ritual laws in Leviticus which have been repealed, but the Lord has explicitly stated that they are not binding when that is the case (Cf Mark 7¹⁸⁻²⁰). Other Levitical laws are surely still applicable and will forever be so because they are of a moral kind. The laws written in the same context as those we are looking at are of that moral character. See Leviticus 18: ²⁰ ***Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbour's wife, to defile yourself with her.*** ²¹ ***And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.*** ²³ ***Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.*** If we say that homosexual acts are now permissible, do we conclude that adultery or bestiality are too? Furthermore, the Jewish ritual laws were not binding on other nations. Yet it is said of the laws we are considering that other nations should have kept them. See Leviticus 18: ²⁴ ***'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.*** ²⁵ ***For the land is defiled; therefore I visit***

the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. ²⁶ You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you ²⁷ (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

Romans 1: ²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers,...

This seems quite plain and yet sometimes it is said that the evil is not that the homosexually tempted should commit homosexual acts, because it is not unnatural for them, but rather it is evil for those for whom it is not natural that *they* should do them. This makes little sense in itself since those not homosexually tempted are not likely to be committing those acts. It makes no sense of the text either. There it is stated that homosexual acts are not natural for men, and lesbian relationships are not natural for women. Committing those acts are evil in the sight of God.

1 Corinthians 6: ⁹ 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, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ 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.

Sodomites are literally *males who lie with males*. ***Homosexuals*** are literally *effeminate* and the word is used for male prostitutes and boys kept by men for sex acts. So the distinction between ***sodomites*** and ***homosexuals*** concerns the roles played in a relationship. We note that the Bible is not explicitly concerned with homosexual orientation but with acts. It is not that it is sinful for a man to be tempted, but what he does with the temptation is the issue.

Note also that homosexual acts are listed alongside other sins. We should be careful not to over emphasize the wickedness of these particular acts, although of course they are spoken of alongside other serious sins.

Finally, we must observe that Paul says that among his readers are those who used to sin in these ways, but have come to faith in Christ, and do so no longer. So ceasing to sin is regarded as a realistic possibility.

1 Timothy 1: ⁸ *But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.* We simply ask that you note that homosexual sin is listed with very, very serious wickednesses.

Jude ⁷: *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.

Obviously, the significance of this text depends upon the interpretation of Genesis 19.

There are probably more references in the New Testament to homosexual acts as sin. Recent research suggests that uncleanness in the following texts is a modest way of speaking of homosexual acts.

Galatians 5¹⁹: ***Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness.***

Ephesians 5³⁻⁵: ***But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*** Note that there are sins which it is not appropriate to speak about explicitly.

Colossians 3⁵: ***Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.***

Corinthians 12²¹: ***...lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.***

Surely the explicit texts in the Bible leave us in no doubt that homosexual acts and relationships are sin to be repented of and avoided.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Many will hear the word of God and then say, "Yes, but...." We need to consider the responses that are expressed when the word of God is announced.

"You have misrepresented the Bible because the texts are ambiguous and there are good men like David and Jonathan who were in a homosexual relationship." As we looked at the Bible texts we sought to show how they are called into question and why we take them as we do. 1 Samuel 18¹ reads: ***The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.*** There is no suggestion in the text that this love was sexual and it is only in a sex obsessed culture like ours that anyone would interpret the words in this way.

"I know homosexuals who are really nice people. You can't tell me they are bad." We are saying just that. Of course there are nice people who are fornicators, who are adulterers and who are in homosexual relationships. Indeed, there are many very 'nice' people who commit sins of all sorts, and who are even going to a lost eternity without Christ.

"They are born like it. They are made that way by God. So you can't condemn them." Scientific research is not conclusive concerning the causes of homosexual orientation. You cannot say dogmatically that it is genetically caused or otherwise. Even if you could, you should not blame God or excuse sin. A man could say that he was made by God with strong heterosexual passions and cannot therefore be condemned for an adulterous lifestyle. Indeed, we were all born with a 'natural' tendency to sin and yet we shall be judged by God for our sin. The homosexually tempted are no different.

"For the homosexual to live differently he would have to deny his true self." This may well be. The Lord Himself said ***"If any man would follow Me, let him deny himself..."*** This applies to everyone. The man with strong temptation to any particular type of sin must deny himself. That is the gospel demand.

“We should not judge one another”. Certainly the Lord said “Judge not lest ye be judged”, but His meaning is very clearly concerning self-righteous and hypocritical condemnation of others. We have appealed for humility in our approach to these things and it is really important—as is compassion. The Lord equally calls us to making assessment of conduct and even of others (Matthew 7⁶). How else would we decide what conduct to pursue and what to avoid?

“The message of the Bible is about love. The homosexual couple just want to live in faithful and loving relationship with each other.”

We *are* called to love one another. The Bible tells us how to love. In relationships heterosexual and homosexual there may be selfishness and self indulgence that is not loving towards another at all. We will best love one another as we keep the laws of God for they are the law of love.

WHAT IS AT STAKE

The Bible is being flouted and as a result...

Our children are being confused. They do not have a clear sense of what is right and wrong. It seems to them that you cannot call into question homosexual practices. They may wonder about themselves and even experiment sexually and persuade themselves that they are ‘homosexuals’.

Our society is being irrevocably altered. We are being asked to recognise different ‘models of family’. Marriage and the family are the foundations of our society. We thought we understood what marriage is: complementarity and the bearing of children in a stable home environment. Now we have ‘families’ that may not have a married couple and their children. There may one parent, or two people of the same sex, or some other unusual arrangement. It is sad when by death or divorce a one parent family comes into being, but to speak of anything other than a married man and a woman starting a family is not a ‘model’ (something that is an example to be copied). The foundation of society is being changed and in

consequence our society itself is altered in this dangerous experiment.

Our freedom of speech and freedom of religion is being threatened. In the interests of 'gay rights' the days may be numbered in which we can express the views written here, or believe the truths of the Holy Bible. There is precedence in other countries for faithful gospel pastors to be arrested for 'hate speech' having preached the word of God on this subject before us here. We cannot wait for that to happen in Britain.

WHAT TO DO

Believers must stand for truth and righteousness in our generation. To be silent is to contribute to the downgrade

Unbelievers in a homosexual lifestyle should come to Christ. He always gets it right in a way in which we do not. To the woman at the well He said "***Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.***" She knew that He cared for her. She also was left in no doubt about what was right and what was wrong. You can come to Christ for forgiveness and a new life.