

Driving Thought: “We have done a great job of standing firm on the biblical teachings on homosexuality. But we haven’t been as effective in helping people walk out of this bondage. Our attitudes too often have conveyed the impression that we are more concerned about winning the culture war than we are winning men and women to Christ. This is a case where perception is reality to many people.”

– Bob Stith, SBC Gender Issues Specialist¹

Danger: The danger of emoting/turning off the rational switch vs. thinking & being willing to have true dialogue concerning hot topics such as homosexuality, abortion, and care of the poor.

Unbiblical extremes:

- 1) Passionate yet unwise preachers who use caricature and present the truth without love. It is failure to understand that Truth should be transformative.
- 2) Cowardly liberal preachers who water down the message in an attempt to be loving. It is a failure to be more concerned about what people think vs. what people truly need to hear.

Q: Shouldn’t we just focus on what unites us?

A: If we hold to Truth in any sense, there will be division.

Q: Shouldn’t we be tolerant?

A: Being tolerant means you are willing to have dialogue but not that you have to accept everything people say.

Biblical approach

Al Mohler, “Christian love requires that we believe and teach what the Bible teaches and that we do so with both strong conviction and humble hearts. The Church must repent of our failures in both of these tasks, but we must not be silent where the Bible speaks. Are Christians hypocrites in insisting that homosexual behavior is sin? We, too, are sinners, and hypocrisy and inconsistency are perpetual dangers. The church failed miserably in the face of the challenge of divorce. This requires an honest admission and strong corrective. At the same time, this painful failure must remind us that we must not fail to answer rightly when asked what the Bible teaches about homosexuality. Love requires us to tell the truth.”²

Q: Are persons born as homosexuals?

A: Proclivity is not determinism

- The logic of determinism:
 - 1) No one can ever change.
 - 2) No one is responsible for his or her actions.

¹ <http://erlc.com/homosexuality/>

² R. Albert Mohler, “My Take: The Bible condemns a lot, but here’s why we focus on homosexuality,” *CNN*, May 21, 2012.

<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2012/05/21/my-take-the-bible-condemns-a-lot-but-heres-why-we-focus-on-homosexuality/>

3) No restriction of any kind on marriage.

4) This would allow for: Every form of polygamy, bestiality, incest, & pedophilia.

Objection: But not minors & young children!

Response: Your imposition of your view of age restrictions is merely arbitrary. We must give license for anyone to be with anyone or anything they 'love.'

Fallacy: Happiness is found by pursuing one's desires 'natural' desires.

Truth: Death is found by pursuing one's natural, fallen, sinful desires by doing what 'feels good' (See *Inside Enemy* film³).

James 1:14-15 *"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death."*

Proverbs 14:12 *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."*

Rather, true life & joy is found in putting one's 'natural desires' to death and receiving the power of God via God's grace through faith. Not only does God promise to break the chain from our old life but also the power to resist & be victorious when any old, 'natural' desire that may rear its ugly head.

Romans 6:1-4 *"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."*

Galatians 2:20 *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

- John Cloud, *Epigenetics, DNA: How You Can Change Your Genes, Destiny*⁴

Even if it is genetic, why would we trust our genetics given the corruption of the human heart, the fall, & human frailty?

William Lane Craig, "The important thing is not how you *got* your orientation, but what you *do* with it."⁵

Paige Patterson, "Feelings are the worst guide to action. They should be indicators, not dictators."⁶

Q: What is biblical sexuality? We must first understand the intent and purpose behind God's

³ "Inside Enemy" produced by Justin Robinson, J-ROB Productions,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5ZNP7CL5bg>

⁴ John Cloud, "Epigenetics, DNA: How You Can Change Your Genes, Destiny,"
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1952313,00.html> January 06, 2010.

⁵ <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/a-christian-perspective-on-homosexuality>

⁶ Paige Patterson, Tweet 09.07.12

creation of human sexuality before we can assess whether homosexuality is a sin or simply an alternative preference.

Gen. 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

Gen. 2:24-25 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

C.S. Lewis, “And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled. We called sadism a sexual perversion; but you must first have the idea of a normal sexuality before you can talk of its being perverted; and you can see which is the perversion, because you can explain the perverted from the normal, and cannot explain the normal from the perverted.”⁷

John Piper, “By creating a person like Adam, yet very unlike Adam, God provided the possibility of a profound unity that otherwise would have been impossible. A different kind of unity is enjoyed by the joining of diverse counterparts than is enjoyed by joining two things just alike. When we all sing the same melody line, it is called unison, which means “one sound.” But when we unite diverse lines of soprano and alto and tenor and bass, we call it harmony; and everyone who has an ear to hear knows that something deeper in us is touched by great harmony than by mere unison. So God made a woman, and not another man. He created heterosexuality, not homosexuality.”⁸

Mark Driscoll, “Simply, according to God, marriage and sex are related, connected, and exclusive. Sex as God intends it is for one man and one woman in marriage with the overarching purpose of oneness. Subsequently, by definition anything that contradicts God’s intent is sinful. Thus, sinful acts include homosexuality, bestiality, bisexuality, fornication, friends with benefits, adultery, prostitution, rape, polygamy, sinful lust including pornography, prostitution, rape, polygamy, pedophilia, incest, and anything else invented next to try and escape the clear teachings of Scripture.”⁹

Q: Is homosexuality a sin? Gen. 19:1-13; Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9

- Gen. 19:1-13 Sodom & Gomorrah
- Lev. 18:22 *“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.”*
- Lev. 20:13 *“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.”*
- Rom. 1:26-27 *“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; ²⁷ 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.”*
- 1 Cor. 6:9 *“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,”*

⁷ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 44.

⁸ John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003), 211.

⁹ Mark Driscoll, *Porn-Again Christian: A frank discussion on pornography & masturbation* (Seattle: Mars Hill Church, 2009), 4.

Point: Homosexual acts are sin and are prohibited by God's Word.

Q: I heard that Jesus never taught against homosexuality. Is that true?

1st century Judaism (strongly held to the sexual morality taught in the OT. All of Jesus' disciples were Jews as were the large majority of his hearers. Because of this, it was assumed by Jesus' hearers that homosexual acts were pagan and sinful. Furthermore, Jesus held to the OT as authoritative. Hence, Jesus' view on sexuality is the OT view because the OT is authoritative. Therefore, Jesus condemns homosexual acts via His trust in the OT as the Word of God.

What we're NOT saying: Homosexuals are not "nice" people = be careful of getting distracted by personality. Right and wrong are never an issue of personality. Rather, they are an issue of righteousness. No one will ever be able to stand before God and hear Him say, "Come on into heaven because you're a nice person" or "you're nicer than those other people."

- Difference between homosexual temptations & homosexual acts

Q: Can a person be a homosexual & be a Christian? You cannot be a practicing homosexual and be saved...neither can you be a practicing adulterer, fornicator, child molester, murderer, thief, liar, blasphemer, idolater, swindler, covetous, BUT can you be a Christian with temptations to sin? Yes. You can be a Christian and be tempted to lie, steal, look at porn, commit adultery or fornication, be wrathful in an ungodly way.

1 Cor. 6:11 *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.*

Q: Set free from what? 1 Cor. 6:9-10 *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,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

Q: Is homosexuality worse than other sins?

A: All sins are immoral. Yet certain sins are far more destructive to the human person than others.

- Self-destruction: health risks¹⁰
- Self-destruction: psychological damage¹¹
- Self-destruction: past of sexual abuse
- Self-destruction: Absent and/or abusive father

¹⁰ <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/homosexuality/ho0075.html#17>

¹¹ <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/can-a-christian-be-homosexual>

Q: Are Christians inconsistent in their interpretation of the OT?

Tim Keller: In short, *the coming of Christ changed how we worship but not how we live*. The moral law is an outline of God's own character—his integrity, love, and faithfulness. And so all the Old Testament says about loving our neighbor, caring for the poor, generosity with our possessions, social relationships, and commitment to our family is still in force. The New Testament continues to forbid killing or committing adultery, and all the sex ethic of the Old Testament is re-stated throughout the New Testament (Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; 1 Timothy 1:8-11.) If the New Testament has reaffirmed a commandment, then it is still in force for us today. Further, the New Testament explains another change between the Testaments. Sins continue to be sins—but the penalties change. In the Old Testament things like adultery or incest were punishable with civil sanctions like execution. This is because at that time God's people existed in the form of a nation-state and so all sins had civil penalties. But in the New Testament the people of God are an assembly of churches all over the world, living under many different governments. The church is not a civil government, and so sins are dealt with by exhortation and, at worst, exclusion from membership. This is how a case of incest in the Corinthian church is dealt with by Paul (1 Corinthians 5:1ff. and 2 Corinthians 2:7-11.) Why this change? Under Christ, the gospel is not confined to a single nation—it has been released to go into all cultures and peoples. Once you grant the main premise of the Bible—about the surpassing significance of Christ and his salvation—then all the various parts of the Bible make sense... *So where does this leave us? There are only two possibilities. If Christ is God, then this way of reading the Bible makes sense and is perfectly consistent with its premise. The other possibility is that you reject Christianity's basic thesis—you don't believe Jesus was the resurrected Son of God—and then the Bible is no sure guide for you about much of anything. But the one thing you can't really say in fairness is that Christians are being inconsistent with their beliefs to accept the moral statements in the Old Testament while not practicing other ones.*¹²

How should Christians deal with homosexuality?

- 1) Don't caricature
- 2) Use the Law that neutralizes the "sexual orientation" pitfall
- 3) Be prepared to provide biblical help: Family Research Council, "If Christians in America would simply stand, unapologetically, and speak the truth in love, there is no limit to the renewal we could experience as a nation."¹³

¹² Tim Keller, *Old Testament Law and the Charge of Inconsistency*, June 2012.

http://redeemer.com/news_and_events/newsletter/?aid=363

¹³ "Americans think gay population is 735% higher than it is, Gallup finds," *Family Research Council*, October 19, 2012. <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/americans-think-gay-population-is-735-higher-than-it-is-gallup-finds>