

Thinking Biblically
Valley Fourth Church Conference
A Gracious and Biblical Response to Homosexuality
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Intro

The Legal Issue

- Homosexual marriage is legal in America right now. That is probably not going to change.
- Does this change things for the Christian? Not everything that the government permits is beneficial. **1 Cor 10:23**
- Not everything the government mandates can be obeyed.

What Does the Bible Say?

Let's Start with Marriage

- **Genesis 1:27** summarizes the creation of the first man and the first woman, *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* Male and female share the Image of God. Gender is the good creation of God.
- **Genesis 2** provides further detail into the creation of the first man and first woman and provides crucial insight into the essence of male and female – God made a sexual other, not a sexual same, for Adam.
- Adam found in Eve one who was like him, because she was taken from him.
- The irreplaceable utility of marriage to society is evident when Adam names his wife Eve, “the mother of all living” (**Gen 3:20**).

So What about Homosex?

Homosex is a **Sin**

- The Old Testament forbids homosexual activity (homosex). (Lev 18:22; 20:13).
- The New Testament forbids homosex.
 - Romans 1:18-32 is determinative. Male-male and female-female sexual relationships are forbidden. Paul's argument is grounded in the structure that is built into nature. The language also speaks to the sinfulness of homosexual desire, ruling out any argument that all Paul prohibits is exploitation or pederasty.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 speaks to both partners in the homosexual act. The consequences are dire.
 - Jesus did not specifically condemn homosexuality because he lived in a religiously conservative culture and questions about the legitimacy of homosexuality were not present. But . . .
 - Jesus consistently and uniformly spoke of marriage as between one man and one woman.

- Jesus affirmed the legitimacy of all the law and came to fulfill it all.
- Jesus's sexual ethic was considered very conservative, even by his disciples. (Jesus was not a sexual progressive or libertine.)
- What about people born that way?
 - *The Bible explains that we live in a cursed world, a world broken by human sin and rebellion. I suspect we do not know the true extent of how devastating our sin has been and is. This tells us that "What is is not necessarily what ought to be."*

Homosex is **A** sin

- Look at 1 Cor 6:9 again. Often we are so quick to look for homosex in a list of sins that we forget that it comes in a list of sins.
- Look at Rom 1 again. Note the list of sins and what is included.
- Homosex brings the same judgment that other "more respectable" sins bring.
- Sexual sins are sins against the body (1 Cor 6:18). They often brings greater destruction to the violator. They might even be, though not always, evidence of a harder heart toward God than the perpetrators of other sins. But sin is sin.

The Arguments:

1. Jesus did not ever condemn homosexuality.

- This is an argument from explainable silence.
- Jesus always affirmed marriage between one man and one woman when discussing sexual ethics.
- Jesus is very clear that he did not come to abolish the law. **Matt 5:17.**
- Finally, far from loosening or liberalizing restrictions on sexual practices, Jesus actually tightens sexual ethics. **Matt 5:27-32**

2. The biblical authors, particularly Paul, did not understand human sexuality.

3. The OT prohibitions are part of the holiness codes.

- This argument cannot be sustained because adultery, bestiality, and incest (activities not associated with any cultic activity) receive like condemnation in the same passages and homosex is condemned throughout the NT.

4. The Bible is outdated and does not reflect popular consensus and commitment to tolerance.

5. Matthew Vines – *God and the Gay Christian*

A position is known by its fruit. The church's position on homosexuality has produced some bad fruit.

The Emphasis in Gen 2 is that Adam and Eve are alike, not different. Gender distinctions and complementarity are irrelevant. Therefore a same-sex union is just as good as a heterosex union in combatting aloneness.

6. God made me this way, and God doesn't make junk (or cause to sin)

How do we respond?

- The gospel – 1 Cor 6:10

What about Same-sex Attraction?

- Recognize that we are all broken people; not one of us has been glorified yet.
 - If we are all broken, then we are all broken sexually. We all have deep rooted inclinations to sin in very specific ways. Yours might be more respectable in the eyes of some than others. But none of our sins is respectable in the eyes of God. And yet you have received mercy.
 - There is considerable debate in the evangelical church whether SSA is in and of itself sinful. I think it is undeniable that SSA is evidence of the fall, but so is heterosexual lust, and other propensities toward sin that we all have. (*See Allberry, 32*)
- Resist the idea that sexual inclinations define the essence of a person. (*See Pearcey, chap 5*)
 - We are more than, though not less than, our bodies. We are far more than our desires and feelings.
 - Every human's essential identity is that of Image Bearer (Gen 1:27). The Christian's identity is "Image Bearer who is child of the living God."
- Remember that the primary problem with an unbeliever is that, due to their sin, they are alienated from God and face his judgment (as were we all before coming to Christ). They need to hear and believe the gospel!
 - The goal is always reconciliation to God, motivated by godly compassion.
- Resist the "heterosexual gospel." (*See Perry, chap 17*)
 - Our goal in sharing the gospel with SSA people is not to convert them to heterosexuality. That may or may not happen over time.
 - Heterosexual marriage is a blessed provision. But it is not the end goal of Christianity.
- Value your singles and value your singleness
 - Being single is not a sin, nor is it a curse in and of itself – but it can be lonely.
 - Singles in community are fully imago Dei. Singles living out of community are living out of design. The church can be and must be, for the sake of all, that community.
 - The church needs to be a "plausibility argument for the celibate life." (*See Shaw*)
- For the Christian battling SSA, encourage the struggle with great grace, compassion, and conviction.

- Be the church – community, accountability, sanctification
- Practice “radically ordinary” hospitality (See Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*)

Resources

www.robagnon.net

Sam Alberry, *Is God anti-gay? Questions Christians Ask* (The Good Book Company, 2013)

David Bennett, *A War of Loves: The Unexpected Story of a Gay Activist Discovering Jesus* (Zondervan, 2018)

Rosaria Butterfield, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Crown & Covenant, 2012) & *Openness Unhindered* (Crown & Covenant, 2015). *The Gospel Comes with a House*

Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* (Crossway, 2015)

R. Albert Mohler, ed. *God and the Gay Christian: A Response to Matthew Vines* (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2014). Available for free download at <http://www.sbts.edu/press/>

Nancy Pearcey, *Love They Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality* (Baker, 2018)

Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God: The Story of Who I Was and Who God Has Always Been* (B&H, 2018)

Ed Shaw, *Same-Sex Attraction and the Church: The Surprising Plausibility of the Celibate Life* (IVP, 2015)