

Culture Wars: Sex and Gender

Is homosexuality sinful?

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HDBC

Historical sites around the nation mark places where important things happened. Some of those spots are simply marked with what **my history-loving wife simply calls a brown sign**. She can spot them as quickly as a four-year old can spot a Chik-fil-A. Some simply mark a spot. Others cover hundreds of acres or square miles, battlefields, for instance. We've visited more than I can count. From **civil war** sites throughout the south, to **revolutionary war** sites in the northeast to where **Custer met his fate** near the Little Big Horn River at the hands of Crazy Horse and his warriors.

Every battlefield is a reminder of a distant conflict. The monuments tell stories of **real people**, who felt **real pain**, shed **real blood**. Each battlefield points to a **clash of ideas**. The powers of persuasion were not strong enough to win the day. And so, they met on fields of battle to settle an issue through mutilation and death. Such is this broken world where Satan still roams and where sin still destroys.

But some wars are not fought with physical weapons. There are no geographical markers for them. Culture wars are like this. In a culture war, competing worldviews collide in a debate of ideas and perspectives. They are not marked with brown signs, but by the attitudes, perspectives & actions that bleed into future generations. The winner of this culture war will shape how the next generation will view two of the most precious things created by God; sex and gender.

The revolutionaries want to take us far from the foundations that have held steady for most of human history and that have served us well; foundations anchored in God's Word. Those of us on the other side believe God knows best and we are committed to His plan, His truth, His way. That's a plain as I can put it.

Is sex outside marriage sinful? YES. Is it ok for me to look at pornography? NO

Today: Is homosexuality sinful? YES I want to share two things. What the Bible actually says. What we should actually do.

1. What the Bible actually says

I'm going to take you to seven different passages that address homosexual behavior. In each case it is presented as a sin against God. Seven passages in six books of the Bible. From Genesis to Jude. On some of these I will offer some explanation. Others are simple and will require very little commentary.

1) Genesis 19:4-7

This is the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham's nephew was a resident of Sodom, which was notorious for its idolatry and open defiance of God's moral code. Because of the greatness of their sin, including homosexuality, God had determined to destroy the cities. But first, he sent a couple of angels, disguised as men, to warn Lot and get him out of the city. While spending the night with Lot, the men of the city surrounded Lot's house demanding that he send out the men so that they might have homosexual relations with them. **Read the text.**

Three things are clear.

Lot understood what the men wanted; to have sex with the two men.

Lot knew that it was wrong. Called it a wicked thing.

Lot tried to compromise. Offered his two daughters. Detestable!

Proves how much the culture had influenced him. It usually influences us more than we think. That's why it is critical that we take this culture war seriously. The name of this city became identified with homosexual sex.

2) Leviticus 18:22

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

Abomination – a detestable thing. That which causes horror & disgust in others. This is a clear and undeniable prohibition of homosexual activity given to the people of Israel.

3) Leviticus 20:13

If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death.

We've already seen that homosexual activity was a violation of God's moral code and law. Now it is stated that both parties are guilty and that the punishment was death. Why the strong punishment?

It was a violation of the natural order that God established in creation. It would be destructive to the family structure and structure of society. If allowed to be seen as acceptable practice it would corrupt the culture.

That's O.T. It was truth then and remains truth. But praise the Lord, we have the complete revelation of God, which includes the **N.T.** Let me quickly say that the N.T. affirms the O.T. prohibition of homosexual activity but offers hope and forgiveness through the redeeming work of Jesus.

4) Romans 1:26-27

This is the most comprehensive statement in the N.T. on the sin of homosexuality. I don't have time to unpack all that is in this entire passage, which includes 18-32. But I do want to point out a few things that I think are important.

This text reveals some things about God. 3 things

- He judges sin and unrighteousness. (18)
- He reveals Himself to all people, so they are responsible. (19-20)
- He allows people continue in their sin. *Gave them over.* (24, 26, 28)

This text reveals some things about people. 12 things

- They suppress the truth, that God has revealed to them. (18)
- They are without excuse and accountable. (20)
- They refuse to worship and honor God. (21)
- They believe their own futile speculations. (21) Evolution
- They claim to be wise, but are fools. (22)
- They create their own gods to worship. (23)
- They give in to lust and impurity. (24)
- They reject truth and believe lies. (25)
- They embrace homosexuality practice as normal. (26-27)
- They do depraved things because of depraved minds. (28-31)
- They love their sin more than they fear eternal condemnation. (32)
- They encourage others to join them in their sin. (32)

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- It is the product of a mind that has rejected God.
- It is called a *degrading passion*. (26). Dishonor, Disgrace, Shame
- It is *unnatural*. (26) Opposite of the natural, created order of things.
- It is called *indecent*. (27) Shameful. Not proper.
- It comes with a cost. (27)
- It comes from a depraved mind. (28)
- It is just one sin among others. (29-31)

5) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Paul makes the clear and unmistakable statement that *the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God*. In other words, the unrighteous will not get the Heaven. Then he offers a list to illustrate some of the things that make us unrighteous. Those who practice homosexuality are included in this list. Does that mean homosexuality is the unpardonable sin? Absolutely not. He includes idolatry, theft, covetousness, etc. on the same list. So, what is his point? 3 things.

- An unforgiven sinner will not go to Heaven, regardless of the sin.
- Homosexuality is a sin that needs to be forgiven. Like all sins.
- Homosexuality, like all sins, can be forgiven. Look at verse 11.

6) 1 Timothy 1:8-10

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurors, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching.

7) Jude 1:7

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.

Reference back to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. *Going after strange flesh.* Reminder of the punishment that fell on those cities.

2. What we should actually do

How are we to apply the Biblical teaching to our present cultural reality?

1) Trust God and His word over all other voices

Decide now, who you will trust. That is foundational.

2) Speak the truth in love to everyone

Compromising the truth will help NO ONE. Don't compromise.

3) Recognize the effects of sin in a broken world

I have no time to address the peripheral issues and questions that surround this topic. But let me at least offer a word about a few.

What about same-sex marriage? In the eyes of God there is no same-sex marriage. Just because a culture changes the definition of marriage does not mean it is changed in God's eyes.

What about same-sex attraction?

It is real. Some experience it and fight against it. Most did not choose it. It is a result of our fallen, sinful, broken world. Not part of original creation. Same is true of envy, greed, lust and jealousy. All are temptations to sin. Temptation alone is not sin. SSA as a temptation is not sinful. But . . .

If acted upon in the mind or with the body it is sin.

If embraced as normative & good, and something to celebrate it is sin. We don't celebrate other temptations, such as greed, lust, jealousy, etc.

So, what do you do if you struggle with SSA?

Acknowledge it as a temptation to sin, just like greed, lust, etc.

Reject the temptation to sin in the mind and body.

Don't let that one thing define who you are. None of us should ever allow the enemy to define us by any of the ways in which we are broken.

Ask God for deliverance and freedom.

As a church, we must come alongside those who struggle with this, realizing that we all are broken, just in different ways.

4) Love like Jesus did

We must separate the culture war from individual people. The culture war is a battle against an ungodly, destructive worldview. We are right to herald the truth of God and fight for a more God-honoring culture. However, we are not fighting against people. They are not the enemy.

Jesus rejected the temptation to love only his own people. He made a point to be with those who were considered **sinners** in the eyes of others. Our primary message is not one of condemnation but one of forgiveness, hope and redemption. Harsh, mean messages will change no one's mind. Pithy sayings like **God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve** will do nothing to advance our argument for the truth. Those involved in homosexual relationships or behavior are people whom God loves and for whom Jesus died.

We must encourage those who are experiencing this in their own families. We have multiple people in our church who have dealt with the pain of watching a loved one choose the homosexual lifestyle. They love their sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, but are deeply grieved. Sometimes they feel alone in know how to deal with it. There is help. If you find that you have a loved one who chooses that road please reach out to me and I can get you in touch with others who are experiencing the same thing and can help. As a church, we must come along side those who are hurting.

5) Trust the sovereignty of God

The longer I walk with the Jesus the more I understand the sovereignty of God. As the world in which I live continues to digress into sin, depravity and chaos, the sweeter the sovereignty of God becomes to me.

He . . . is . . . in . . . control. Fear not. He will make it all right and will ultimately win the day.

We fight the culture war . . . not simply to win . . . for that will ultimately only happen when Jesus comes again. We fight it because it is the right thing to do and because, in the process, **we will persuade some of the truth and individual lives will be brought to faith in Christ.**