

A Scriptural Response to Homosexuality

Lesson 6: Evaluating Possible Causes in View of Scripture

INTRODUCTION

Brainstorm: what factors go into determining what you think, say, and do on a daily basis?

1.) What is the hidden danger in assigning causation to any thought, word, or behavior that is not God-pleasing?

James 1:14-15 Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Ezekiel 18:20 The soul who sins is the one who will die.

Romans 14:10-12 We will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: " 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.' " So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

2.) Give evidence that people refuse to take responsibility for their actions and have become experts in playing "the blame game".

BEFORE CONSIDERING ANY "EVIDENCE" OF ANY STUDY...

What factors must always be considered when it comes to the conclusions of any study?

- Any personal bias of the researcher
- Sample size
- Limitations/Terms
- When it comes to behavior correlation does not equal causation

EVALUATING POSSIBLE BIOLOGICAL / NATURAL INFLUENCES

1.) Some studies have considered purely genetic/hereditary causes established already at conception as being a determining factor. However, identical (and fraternal) twin studies have shown that the correlation between identical DNA and the expression of homosexuality is very weak and inconclusive with only 18-34% correlation depending on one's gender.

2.) Some studies consider similarities/differences in brain anatomy between heterosexuals and homosexuals. However, like any other aspect of development, one's particular habits and behavior effect the physiological and chemical makeup of the brain, which again makes the correlation questionable at best.

3.) Let's imagine that sometime in the future, legitimate scientific research found a strong genetic factor linking homosexuality to biology. The temptation would be for some to make the following argument: "Since the perfect God made me, then being true to how he has made me, I must follow my innate desires wherever they lead." How is a Christian claiming lack of moral accountability due to their biology incompatible with what God reveals to us in Scripture?

Psalms 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalms 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

1 Corinthians 6:12 "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Romans 9:20 Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' "

EVALUATING POSSIBLE NURTURE/ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

1.) Studies on family dynamics including nurturing/distant relationships, discipline styles, identifying with one parent or the other. From Scripture we would agree that parents have a sacred responsibility and play a critical role in the shaping and upbringing of their children (e.g. Deut. 6; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4 etc.).

2.) Both the Old Testament and New Testament make it clear that ungodly behavior can be influenced by exposure to sin/temptation and/or pressure by others.

Exodus 23:33 "Do not let [the Canaanites] live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you."

Numbers 25:1-5, 8b-9 While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them. The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the LORD's fierce anger may turn away from Israel." So Moses said to Israel's judges, "Each of you must put to death those of your men who have joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor." ...Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped; but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.

Matthew 18:6-7 "If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!"

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

3.) Habitual sins and repeated exposure to sin can dull and desensitize our consciences over time.

Ephesians 4:18-19 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

4.) Rather than give in to the influence of temptation or ungodly examples, God holds out the possibility of an opposite path by the power of his Spirit at work in us **Ezekiel 18**:

⁵ “Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right. ⁶ He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife or lie with a woman during her period. ⁷ He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. ⁸ He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest. He withholds his hand from doing wrong and judges fairly between man and man. ⁹ He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign LORD.

¹⁰ “Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things ¹¹ (though the father has done none of them): “He eats at the mountain shrines. He defiles his neighbor’s wife. ¹² He oppresses the poor and needy. He commits robbery. He does not return what he took in pledge. He looks to the idols. He does detestable things. ¹³ He lends at usury and takes excessive interest. Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he will surely be put to death and his blood will be on his own head.

¹⁴ “But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things: ¹⁵ He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife. ¹⁶ He does not oppress anyone or require a pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. ¹⁷ He withholds his hand from sin and takes no usury or excessive interest. He keeps my laws and follows my decrees. He will not die for his father’s sin; he will surely live. [...]

³⁰ “Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. ³¹ Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!”

CONCLUSION

1.) A believer who struggles with same-sex attraction may wonder, “Why? Why am I made to struggle with this sin or temptation?” What can we say?

Isaiah 40:27-29 “Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God’? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.”

2 Corinthians 7:7-10 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

1 Timothy 2:4 [God our Savior] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2.) What is the danger if we refuse to accept responsibility for our sins and continually blame someone or something else for them?

1 John 1:8, 10 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ... If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

3.) What does God promise to all those who accept responsibility for their sins and repent?

John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

4.) Why is confession a necessary first step for any person caught in any sin (including the sin of homosexuality) in the process of overcoming sin?