

A Scriptural Response to Homosexuality

Lesson 4: God-Defined Love (Part 3)

INTRODUCTION

Why are their rules in games/sports?

Who gets to make the rules?

EROS (ἔρως)

- Greek Definition: Passionate/Romantic love, desire, whose goal is sexual fulfillment
- Like *storge* this Greek word is not used in the New Testament, but it is identified and illustrated repeatedly in Scripture.

1.) In our previous lessons we've seen that God's love for us transcends and expands our horizons of *agape*, *storge*, and *philia*. Christians can have, express, and enjoy these forms of love in ever-increasing measure without limitations as to the recipient (i.e. you can't be too good of a friend or love your enemy too much!). However, with regards to *eros*, God in his wisdom and love has chosen to set boundaries within which this love is to be expressed.

After all, only the most depraved of minds would maintain that since sexual passion is an expression of love that then it can and should be given free reign everywhere, with anyone, or anything. That any reasonable person acknowledges that there must be some limits on *eros* is testimony to the God-given conscience at work. However, since we and everything about us (including our sexuality) is corrupted by sin, the sinful flesh in people to one degree or another resists, resents, and rejects the limits that God has prescribed and instead seeks to establish its own standards based on any other number of subjective "authorities"—so long as that authority is neither God nor his Word. Give some examples of such authorities and their inherent dangers and limitations, especially for us as Christians.

2.) Let's investigate what design God has built-in and what boundaries he has put around sexual passion from the beginning.

Genesis 2:20-24 ...For Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it."

- When and where did sexual desire and sexual intimacy originate? Who is its author?
- God personally hand-formed Adam and Eve and designed them to be biologically engendered as male and female. What was among his central reasons for doing so?

3.) Within the bond of marriage sexual passion is a wonderful expression of love and a unique blessing of God! You may not know it, but there is a whole book of the Bible dedicated to the romantic love between husband and wife: *Song of Songs*! As we consider the following passages, let's ask ourselves what qualities can/should the godly expression of *eros* include?

Song of Songs 2:2 "Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the maidens."

Song of Songs 5:10, 16 "My lover is radiant and ruddy, outstanding among ten thousand. ...This is my lover, this my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

Song of Songs 4:12 "You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain."

Songs of Songs 2:16a; 6:3a; 7:10 "My lover is mine and I am his." [...] "I am my lover's and my lover is mine." [...] "I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me."

1 Corinthians 7:3-4 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

4.) Yet even within marriage *eros* cannot provide the basis for life-long unselfish love and complete unity. What alone can accomplish this?

Song of Songs 8:6-7 "Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned."

Ephesians 5:22-23, 25-30 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.

5.) God's design and desire for human sexuality has not changed despite the corruption brought upon it and us and our society since the fall into sin. How do the following verses identify and condemn our sinful expressions of *eros* and guide us in godliness?

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

1 Corinthians 7:2,5,9 Since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. ...Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ...If they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Matthew 5:27-29 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."

6.) Our world says, "It's my body I can do what I want to!" How is such an attitude a complete reversal of Biblical truth?

Psalms 100:3 Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

1 Corinthians 6:13-20 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."¹⁷ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

7.) While our society makes much of *eros*, so that it is often permitted and expected to trump all other considerations and loves—*storge*, *philia*, and even *agape* (God's love for us and our love for him and each other), there are some, like the Apostle Paul and our Lord Jesus Christ, who are not pulled and driven by the passions of *eros*; they have the gift of celibacy, being content without seeking or needing sexual fulfillment. While this is the exception and not the norm, this recognized fact should also tell us that perhaps we have put too high of a premium on *eros*!

1 Corinthians 7:1, 7-9, 32-35 It is good for a man not to marry. ... I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. ...I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

Matthew 19:10-12 The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

CONCLUSION