

Compassion Without Compromise: A Christian Response To Homosexuality

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Introduction

- Today there are few topics as controversial as this one.
- This controversy is occurring in society and within the Christian church in general.
- My goal is to:
 - Share the truth of the Word.
 - Inform and educate about same sex attraction.
 - Bring a message of hope.

Points to Consider

- What does the Bible say?
- Getting the facts straight.
- What would Jesus do?
- What to do when same-sex attraction hits home.
- Corrupted terms.

The Truth Shall Make You Free

John 8:32

What the Bible Says

Which Worldview are You Using?

- How people respond to homosexuality is ultimately a worldview issue.
- For example, your worldview will determine your answer to the following question:
- “Who has the right to determine what behaviors are moral or not?”
 - Individuals?
 - Churches?
 - Universities?
 - Governments?
 - God?

Worldview cont.

- From within a Biblical worldview, it is reasonable to conclude that God, as creator, has the right to determine right and wrong in His creation.
- Moral absolutes were created by God.
- However, when you replace a Biblical worldview with another one, it is easy to see how people come to different conclusions about homosexuality (and all other moral issues).

Grace & Truth: Inseparable Concepts

- **Grace:** God's unmerited love, favor, and strength.
- **Truth:** God's holiness, perfection, and righteousness.
- *Grace and Truth cannot be separated: A biblical concept of God contains both without violating the other.*
- Grace without Truth isn't Grace: It is license.
- Truth without Grace isn't Truth: It is judgment and condemnation.

Grace & Truth cont.

- **John 1:14**
*"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) **full of grace and truth.**"*
- **John 1:17**
*"For the law was given by Moses, **but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.**"*
- **Colossians 1:6**
*"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and **knew the grace of God in truth.**"*

1 Corinthians 6: 9-11

Warning & Hope

- 9** *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,"*
- 10** *"Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."*
- 11** *"**And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

Romans 1:24-27

Sin & Distortion

- 24** *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:"*
- 25** *"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."*
- 26** *"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:"*
- 27** *"And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."*

Leviticus 18:22: Context is Important

Leviticus 18:22

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."

- When we note the entire context of Leviticus 18, it is clear the chapter covers a broad range of issues related to sexual purity including incest and adultery.
- Therefore, while God's command to abstain from homosexual behavior is clear, the call to sexual purity is not limited to homosexual acts.

1 Timothy 1:9-10

The Law Clarifies

- 9** *"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,"*
- 10** *"For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,"*

References to the Sins of Sodom

Jude 7

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

2 Peter 2:6

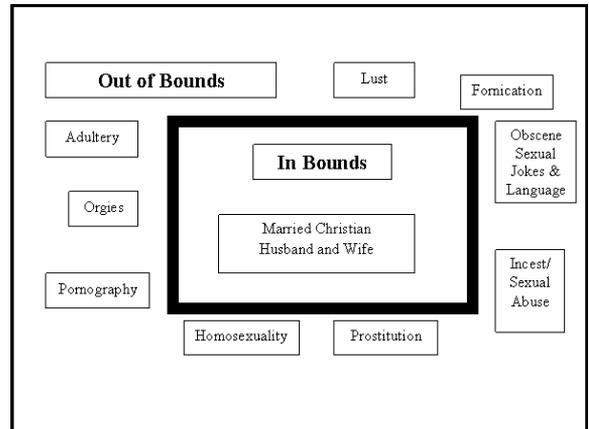
"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

Notes about Old Testament Texts

- Review the biblical texts about God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone.
- Why were these cities judged and destroyed?
 - God is holy.
 - Sin had completely overrun the cities.
- Based on these texts and how they are sometimes used by *Christians and non-Christians alike*, many homosexuals believe God hates them and so do Christians.
- We want to reinforce the truth that God is holy and He will judge **all** sin **AND** we want to reinforce that God is merciful and has given us a way to avoid the penalty of sin and to have a new life in Christ.

God's Intent

- He designed and created masculinity, femininity, and sexuality.
- *Ephesians 5* discusses how the oneness of husband and wife mirror the love of Christ and the Church.
- The abuse of freedom leads to bondage. By living within the boundaries God has given us, we experience true freedom.
- Going outside of the bounds God has established (whether with opposite or same-sex sexuality) distorts God's original design.



In Summary

- The Bible refers to homosexual behavior as sin.
- This is also true for all sexual activity apart from that between a married husband and wife (fornication, adultery, pornography, etc.).
- The Bible does not reserve special condemnation for homosexuality over other sins.
- God will judge all sin.
- God wants all people (including those dealing with homosexuality) to be reconciled to Himself through Jesus Christ.

Getting The Facts Straight

Same-Sex Attraction (SSA)

- When possible, it is preferable to say that an individual “deals with same-sex attraction” instead of saying “that person is a homosexual.”
- This wording:
 - Doesn't equate a person with their behavior.
 - Doesn't lead to conclusions about someone's identity.
 - Doesn't treat the person's identity as fixed and unchangeable.

Yarhouse's Three Tier Model

- **Tier 1: Same-Sex Attraction**
 - Those who are attracted to the same-sex.
 - 6.2% of men and 4.4% of women.
- **Tier 2: Homosexual Orientation**
 - Know they are attracted to their same sex and feel like a same sex relationship would be fulfilling.
 - Often don't let others know of their feelings and many times never engage in homosexual acts.
 - 2.0% of men and 0.9% of women.

Three Tier Model cont.

- **Tier 3: Gay Identity**
 - Self-identification and self-labeling as gay.
 - Engage in homosexual acts.
 - The exact percentage of people in this group is unknown.

Yarhouse (2005) Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling; Yarhouse (2005) The Sexual Identity Clinic; Laumann et al., 1994

Dealing with Gender Confusion

- It is not uncommon for adolescents to feel uncertainty about their sexual orientation.
- For example, one study found that 25% of 12 year olds were “unsure” of their sexual orientation, but by age 17 this number had fallen to 5%. (Remafedi, Resnick, Blum, & Harris. Pediatrics 1992)
- Transient (passing) feelings of attraction toward someone of the same gender occurs and should not be of a major concern.
- Sexual attraction can often be understood as a signal of an underlying emotional longing.

What Causes Homosexuality?

- There is no simple answer to this question.
- People often try to oversimplify the issue.
- There is no single pathway or cause for homosexuality.
- Sexuality is determined by multiple factors.
- Genetics and biological causes, in themselves, are not sufficient to lead to homosexuality.
- Childhood trauma (sexual abuse, etc.) sometimes leads to gender confusion.

Do People Choose to be Gay?

- It depends on what you mean by “choose.”
 1. If you mean they choose to feel same-sex attraction, then “No.”
 2. If you mean they choose to act on their urges, to take on a gay identity, and to accept the gay lifestyle, then “Yes.”

"Choice" cont.

- "Choice" is often misunderstood.
- The vast majority of people dealing with same-sex attraction do not choose to feel this way. This is why many people believe they are born gay.
- Most heterosexual individuals have no recollection of how they became attracted to the opposite sex either.
- However, just because someone didn't choose to feel same-sex attraction, it does not mean they must act on their feelings.

Common Factors

- While not true in all cases, the most commonly noted progression for male homosexuality is the combination of:
 - Detachment, disengagement, or absence of a healthy relationship with a father.
 - Over-connectedness with the mother or a domineering mother.
 - Biological predisposition to have a sensitive disposition, keen aesthetic sense, and strong creative drive.

Sallinover (2007) How Might Homosexuality Develop?: Putting the Pieces Together. www.marh.com

Emotional Dependency

- "Emotional dependency occurs when the ongoing presence and nurturing of another person is believed to be necessary for personal security."
- "In a dependent relationship, one or both people are looking to a *person* to meet their basic needs for love and security rather than Christ."
- Emotional dependency is a key issue in same-sex attraction; this is particularly true for women.

Quotes from Rentzel (1990) Emotional Dependency

Can Homosexuals Change?

- Yes, within limits.
- We shouldn't expect the person to shift to being a "macho" or "manly" person.
- However, only those who view their same-sex attraction as problematic and who are willing to do what is necessary can change. It is often a long, arduous process.
- We all must bring all parts of our selves, including sexual behavior, into subjection to Christ.
 - **1 Corinthians 9:27**, "*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*"
 - **2 Corinthians 10:5**, "*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*"

Situations That Are Not Homosexuality

- The term homosexual should not be applied in the following situations:
 1. To children and preadolescents.
 2. Individuals who experiment with same-sex involvement due to curiosity.
 3. People who engage in homosexual behavior in prisons or other situations in which opposite sex partners are not available.

The Case of Sexual Abuse

- Some sexual abuse victims experience pleasurable feelings while being sexually abused.
- This often leads to confusion, guilt, and self-doubt about whether he/she wanted to be abused, "asked for it," or enjoyed it.
- Gender confusion and fears commonly occur when one is abused by a same-sex person.
- Many victims are heterosexually oriented but have fears of being gay.
- The effects of the abuse and trauma need to be treated. There is healing and hope!

The Case of OCD

- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a condition in which people experience obsessions (that lead to distress) and compulsions (behaviors or mental actions to help them feel calm).
- Common obsessions include: feeling contamination, needing symmetry, unrealistic fears about harming others or sinning, etc.
- Common compulsions include: checking, washing, seeking reassurance, repeating, etc.
- Sometimes people with OCD have the obsession, "What if I'm gay?"
- While this often causes them great distress, having this obsession has nothing to do with the person's gender identity. The OCD needs to be treated.

What Would Jesus Do?

Responding Appropriately

Incorrect Ways to Respond

- Moral superiority – viewing your own sin as less sinful than their sin.
 - Be careful of the temptation to rate homosexuality as a worse sin than others.
 - Our sins are forgiven based on God's grace and not because our sins aren't of a certain type.
- Condemning people instead of viewing them as souls that God loves.
- Mocking people and telling jokes about gays.
- Any type of unkind or unloving behavior.
- Avoidance or shunning.

Correct Ways to Respond

- Do as Jesus would do. Love them.
- Interact with the person – separate out the sinful behavior from the person.
- Be kind, courteous, friendly.
- Share your faith – Point them to Jesus and the Truth of the Word.
- Treat them with respect.
- Don't treat them differently than you would treat anyone else.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

24 *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."*

25 *"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"*

26 *"And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."*

Questions & Answers

- "Is being tempted with same-sex attraction the same thing as sin?"
 - No.
- "Does engaging in a homosexual act make a person a homosexual?"
 - No.
- "Will getting married take same-sex attraction away?"
 - No. Just as with other sexual problems and sins (e.g., pornography), marriage doesn't necessarily "fix" these problems.

Now What?

What To Do When Same-Sex Attraction Hits Home

Action Plan for Same-Sex Attraction

- Resist the temptation to remain silent and deal with the struggle alone. Shame is Satan's tool to keep you isolated.
- Don't be afraid to call ACCFS. We won't think bad of you and we will be glad to talk things through with you.
- Read information found on the ACCFS website and links to other information.
- Remember you're not alone.
- Don't label yourself as "gay" or "homosexual."

Action Plan cont.

- Remember there are a number of reasons people experience same-sex attraction.
- Get a good assessment of what is going on. You must avoid magnifying and minimizing the problem.

Corrupted Terms

Diversity, Tolerance and Multiculturalism: Good or bad?

- It all depends on how you define the terms!
 - Defined properly, there is no problem with any of them.
- Unfortunately, the terms have been redefined.
- Nowhere is this more true than on the college campus!
- The same people who "preach" the new definitions of these terms have redefined it to **not apply** to those who believe in moral absolutes.
- That is, they believe everyone can believe whatever they want; however, Christians who believe that the Word of God is true are considered judgmental, etc.

Corrupted Words: Diversity

- Actual definition: "A point of respect in which things differ."
 - Who created diversity: God did!
- New definition: Normalizing various sexual behaviors and other sinful behaviors. Anything goes.

Corrupted Words: Multiculturalism

- Actual definition: “Of, relating to, or including several cultures.”
 - God created and loves all people of all tribes and nations!
- New definition: Not limited to race, ethnic culture or difference in beliefs or morals, but now includes sexual behaviors as a designated minority class.

Adapted from
Exodus International

Corrupted Words: Tolerance

- Actual definition: “The capacity for or the practice of recognizing and respecting the beliefs or practices of others.”
 - Jesus did not shy away from the truth; however, He never forced someone to agree with Him either. He spoke and lived out the truth, then He let the people decide.
- New definition: Accepting, promoting and encouraging homosexual behavior.

Adapted from
Exodus International

Online Information Sources

- Exodus International – best Christian source
 - www.exodus-international.org
- National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality – best source for research and statistics
 - www.nARTH.com
- Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity
 - www.sexualidentityinstitute.org
- Warren Throckmorton
 - www.drthrockmorton.com
- People Can Change
 - www.peoplecanchange.com