

Homosexuality and the Bible

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The topic of homosexuality and what view Christians should have of it is indeed a very hot topic in our society today. No matter what your view on the topic, you can find pastors and theologians of any denomination to back you up. There is so much confusion on this topic that I decided to add my two cents into the debate. Not that my views may carry much weight, but maybe help some see the topic from a different perspective.

In order to understand a position, one must study each side of the issue in an unbiased manner. This is more difficult than most would probably imagine. Many may only be seeking to condemn the activity based on some predisposition, and others may be trying only to justify their position because they seek to validate their actions or the actions of those close to them. This difficulty arises because no one will believe that they are "evil" because if they did they wouldn't do the act. This is why moral darkness is a required companion to all sin. The greater the moral evil that is committed, the greater the darkness is that must accompany it. How Saddam Hussein could not understand that mass genocide on innocent people was a crime of unspeakable magnitude is beyond the comprehension of most people, except of course him. Their conscience may bother them from time to time, but they have learned to handle this.

For this paper I researched a couple of pro-homosexual sites that investigated how homosexuals view the Bible. I must admit that this was very informative. However, in the end, it merely strengthened my view that without sound hermeneutics, no one can be sure of anything. The deftness and word parsing that these sites employed were fascinating. In the end, they could supply arguments detailing why seemingly clear passages of the Bible were not clear at all. I am certainly one who believes in context and use of original language tools, but in the end, only confusion reigns.

It has been my practice over the last 15 years to take the Bible's wording in its most obvious way. The pro-homosexual approach does the opposite. In the end, I deemed it too steep a climb to rigorously rebut each and every one of their arguments. Such an endeavor would require considerable time, and in the end, I do not think that anyone would be convinced one way of the other. This is because your view of homosexuality is a peripheral view. There are many assumptions that need to be addressed long before you get to this issue.

Instead of a point by point rebuttal, I feel that the best thing is to look at the fundamental presuppositions that are required to hold either view. The one site I visited was quite candid in doing this and I felt that while it did slant in one direction, the author did make an effort to be somewhat balanced.

The baseline difference between pro- and con-homosexual views is in your fundamental understanding of the Bible itself. If you are a Christian traditionalist, you will believe that homosexual behavior is a sin. If you hail more from the "enlightenment" or liberal

side of the coin (I am not using this term pejoratively), you will most likely come down on the other side. It is quite interesting on how black and white this distinction plays out. While there may be a conservative Christian who has a pro-homosexual view, they would be unbelievably rare. Therefore, as this stark distinction exists, it is easiest not to look at the myriad of Biblical passages in dispute, but to look deeper at the fundamental Biblical foundation. So with this in mind, let us look at these two schools of thought so that the uninitiated will understand where he/she may stand.

Conservative Christians (Fundamentalists and other Evangelicals) generally base their interpretation of the Bible on these basic beliefs:

The writers of the Bible were inspired by God.

The Bible is inerrant. That is, when the 66 books were originally written, God prevented the writers from making errors. Some copying errors have occurred, but these have had no impact on religious doctrines.

The official canon of the Bible was chosen by church leaders in the 4th century from among many heretical works, under God's guidance.

All passages in the Bible are equally valid and are useful as a spiritual guide. The word of God is totally consistent, and was as valid at the time of Adam and Eve as it is today. Truth does not change.

Each passage of the Bible should be interpreted literally where possible.

Liberal scholars view the Bible quite differently. Many liberal leaders and ministers have accepted the finds of theologians such as the Jesus Seminar. Liberal theologians have abandoned the concept of Biblical inerrancy. They view the Bible as having been written by authors who promoted differing religious views, reflecting the evolution of religious thought over about a 10 century time span. Some beliefs include:

Being human, the authors sometimes made mistakes.

Some forgeries have been added by unknown authors since the original texts were written, thereby making it difficult to determine even what the original authors said or meant.

Accidental errors have occurred in copying which has affected biblical doctrines.

Some aspects of the Bible should be ignored and are not suitable as a guide to modern living. Some of these include the role of women, slavery, ordering genocide, and the killing of various types of "sinners" (*including homosexuals*).

The Bible contains much material copied from neighboring Pagan cultures and pre-Abramic beliefs.

Bible passages have to be interpreted according to the beliefs of the writers and their culture; they may not be valid today.

The books of the Bible were chosen in the 4th century from many books on the basis of conformity to the current orthodox beliefs. Other books were suppressed, yet contain much valuable material.

There are numerous (hundreds) contradictions in the Bible.

Recent findings of the physical, social and medical sciences have shown that some parts of the Bible cannot be considered accurate. (Creation, demon possession, sexual orientation)

They reject religious intolerance and favor the acceptance of diversity.

I do not mean to be overreaching, but the next few points are very common in the liberal community. While all people of this view many not believe all of this, a good friend of mine who is quite a studied liberal believer does. These views may help the reader understand the ramifications of the liberal view.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis are not real. This impacts Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Able, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and the spread of the nations.

Moses did not write the first 5 books (Pentateuch) of the Bible

The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is questionable, but may have happened.

The book of Job and Jonah are myths and never occurred.

Most of what is written about Jesus is stories made up years later to teach a point but were never intended to be a literal story.

One cannot study the exact wording of the Bible to discern truth as there are too many errors, opinions, and mythical constructs. One can only read the Bible and glean from it general principles to live by.

Example

Liberal theologians do not believe that Moses wrote the first 5 books of the Bible. Below are some verses just in the New Testament with many of them coming from the mouth of Jesus. With such verses, would you imagine that anyone could hold the liberal view? However, even armed with these verses, one cannot "prove" the other side wrong. I hope that this example will enlighten the reader to understand that this is a problem with fundamental presuppositions.

Mark 7:10

For **Moses** said, 'Honor your father and your mother,'[7:10 Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16] and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'[7:10 Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9]

Mark 12:19

"Teacher," they said, "**Moses** wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother.

Luke 16:29

"Abraham replied, 'They have **Moses** and the Prophets; let them listen to them.

Luke 24:27

And beginning with **Moses** and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:44

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of **Moses**, the Prophets and the Psalms."

John 1:45

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one **Moses** wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 5:46

If you believed **Moses**, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

Romans 10:19

Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, **Moses** says, "I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding." [10:19 Deut. 32:21]

2 Corinthians 3:15

Even to this day when **Moses** is read, a veil covers their hearts.

Hebrews 3:5

Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.

Hebrews 7:14

For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe **Moses** said nothing about priests.

The reader should look up each of these verses to see things in context. I am not saying that all of these are primary passages to establish doctrine, but you will get a favor that the New Testament is resoundingly supportive of Moses writing the Pentateuch. I would say that if people cannot agree on this with this level of support and with no emotions

involved, the homosexual issue is a lost cause unless we can find common ground somewhere.

I have written this section so that those who may be unfamiliar with the ground from which various beliefs have sprung, may now be aware of the underlying and often completely unstated foundational beliefs. If you are of a liberal persuasion, then talking about the 'real' meaning of Biblical passages would be fruitless. I believe that this is why most people who engage in the topic of the acceptance of homosexuality never reach agreement. Unless we both decide to climb the same tree, we will never sit on the same branch.

If the reader falls in between these two positions, or doesn't know what positions is the correct view, this would be another paper entirely and will not be covered in this paper. But I would certainly love to have dialog.

However, what may be helpful for everyone is to by-pass these assumptions entirely and forget about Biblical passages. Proper hermeneutics (via Finney and Wesley) say that for something to be true, it must be true to Life, Reason, and the Scriptures. Wesley also adds in Tradition. So I propose to look at these other methods as a way of bypassing the fundamental assumption dilemma. As we are currently viewing Scripture as not being conclusive, we will score this as "undecided". How do the other indicators fair?

True to Tradition

I have taken this up first because it is short. No one believes that the acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle has been the tradition of the church. No matter where you look in church history, you will see a universal condemnation of the behavior. In fact, there isn't a religion in the history of the world that has embraced homosexuality as acceptable. Tradition does have a vote, but it doesn't have a veto. Therefore we cannot stop here as traditions in the past have turned out to be wrong.

But so far the score for determining if the correct scriptural exegesis of: "Is homosexuality compatible with Christian living", is one 'no', and one 'undecided'.

True to Life

God is not arbitrary. God does not change in his essential attributes. God is just and loving. Finally, God does not prohibit any behavior that is not detrimental to our self, or others. We have complete freedom to do anything inside these bounds. The question then becomes, is homosexuality inside those bounds?

A report entitled: "Homosexuality-A public Health Problem" by Raphael Kazmann found that the average age of homosexuals who die with AIDS in the United States is 39. The average age of homosexuals who die of other causes is only 41. The study, accomplished over a period of five years, showed homosexual conduct reduces life expectancy by at least 30 years. Other studies put the reduction of life expectancy of homosexuals at 40 years. The Kazmann report, which reviewed thousands of cases, found that only one percent of homosexuals lived to be 65 or older.

Other factors contributing to early death for homosexuals include:

Suicide - The suicide rate among homosexuals is 60 times as high as the general population. Although homosexuals label their lifestyle as "gay," many prefer death rather than to continue living in it." Homosexuals say suicide is the result of religious and societal pressures. But, society viciously denounces the racists of the Klu Klux Klan without raising the Klan suicide rate.

Auto accidents kill homosexuals at a rate 45 times higher than the heterosexual community.

Homosexuals are 14 times more like to have Syphilis; 23 times more likely to contract some venereal disease; thousands of times more likely to contract AIDS. Lesbians are twice as likely to suffer from genital warts; four times as likely to have scabies.

And, the ratio of homosexual men murdered was found to be 50 times that of the general population.

Another Study

In a study published in Oxford University's International Journal of Epidemiology, researchers found that, at age 20, the life expectancy of homosexual and bisexual men is 8 to 20 years less than for all men.

The Medical Institute of Sexual Health reports [Executive Summary, "Health Implications Associated with Homosexuality," 1999]: - "Homosexual men are at significantly increased risk of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, anal cancer, gonorrhea and gastrointestinal infections as a result of their sexual practices." - "Women who have sex with women are at significantly increased risk of bacterial vaginosis, breast cancer and ovarian cancer than are heterosexual women." - "Domestic violence is more common among homosexuals than among heterosexuals." - "Significantly higher percentages of homosexual men and women abuse drugs, alcohol and tobacco than do heterosexuals."

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention report that men who engage in homosexual behavior are 860% more likely to contract a sexually transmitted disease (STD), increasing up to 500% their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Men who have sex with men "have large numbers of anonymous partners, which can result in rapid, extensive transmission of STDs," the CDC warns. "Control of STDs is a central component of HIV infection prevention in the United States; resurgence of bacterial STD threatens national HIV infection prevention efforts.

Gay Health reports that men who have sex with men are 320% more likely than heterosexuals to have unprotected sex without telling their partners they're HIV-positive.

While these statistics are quite telling, I bet if you compared the homosexual rates as compared to a monogamous man and wife relationship the ratios would be much higher.

These rates are all skewed do to rampant heterosexual fornication and adultery. But even with this considered, the rates for homosexuals are still very high indeed.

With such a bevy of statistics, why would a loving parent want their child to engage in such an activity? Is this true to life? Would God be a good Father by viewing such suffering impassionedly? Could you do it? Even if you have a child who is a homosexual and you just want them to be happy, wouldn't these statistics scare the stew out of you and worry you every day? I have two homosexual friends that are already dead. One didn't even make it to our 10th high school reunion, and the other didn't make it but a month past our 20th high school reunion. A third friend is HIV positive and must live on a huge cocktail of drugs everyday.

In addition to the obvious, there are several diseases that the medical community has labeled them as "homosexual diseases". While anyone can contract these diseases, they are so prevalent in the homosexual community that they are so labeled. Among these is Hepatitis A. Also, homosexual sex tears the rectum wall and can lead to loss of bowel control.

If we knew of a parent was providing a 3-year old child with a can of gasoline and a book of matches, wouldn't child protective services step in? Isn't the parent the one who is supposed to be a bit more aware of the consequence of such behavior? What person hauled in before a judge would simply be let go because the parent allowed this insane behavior based solely on the fact that the child wanted to do it? We would hold the parent as criminally negligent for such a titanic lapse in reason?

So how could God escape such a charge if by knowing how much damage is done in a homosexual relationship he simply give his OK? Permissiveness is not love, sometimes love must say no.

Now the score for determining if the correct scriptural exegesis of: "Is homosexuality compatible with Christian living", is two 'no', and one 'undecided'. However, while tradition doesn't have veto power, Life and Reason do. Therefore, the pro-homosexual position really needs to make a big come back in the Reason section.

True to Reason

In this section we will review what homosexuals say about themselves and see if these statements are logically sound.

I was born that way / homosexuality is genetic

Let's look at this statement. Is it logical to believe such a premise? First, if something is genetic, then identical twins would both have the same trait. Statistics show that while a large percentage of identical twins are both homosexual if one is, it is far from absolute.

Bailey and Pillard (1991): occurrence of homosexuality among brothers

- 52% of identical (monozygotic) twins of homosexual men were likewise homosexual
- 22% of fraternal (dizygotic) twins were likewise homosexual
- 11% of adoptive brothers of homosexual men were likewise homosexual

J.M. Bailey and R.C. Pillard, "A genetic study of male sexual orientation," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, vol. 48:1089-1096, December 1991.

Bailey and Pillard (1993): occurrence of homosexuality among sisters

- 48% of identical (monozygotic) twins of homosexual women were likewise homosexual (lesbian)
- 16% of fraternal (dizygotic) twins were likewise homosexual
- 6% of adoptive sisters of homosexual women were likewise homosexual

Bailey, J. M. and D. S. Benishay (1993), "Familial Aggregation of Female Sexual Orientation," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 150(2): 272-277.

Here we see that approximately half of all genetically identical twins were one was a homosexual, the other was not. How can one account for such a result? Clearly this result must cast a shadow on the belief that homosexuality is genetic. This result cannot prove that homosexuality tendencies might not have a genetic component, but it does prove that homosexual behavior is not "pre-programmed" into the genes.

We also cannot forget about the homosexuals who state that they have decided to be a homosexual. Therefore one cannot make the case that all homosexual tendencies are genetic, and it is even hard to claim that any are. Now I do not doubt that many homosexuals never "chose" their orientation, at least as far as they know. But many studies have shown very similar environmental conditions between homosexuals. Not that these conditions are a guarantee, but they are quite suggestive that environment plays a large roll in homosexual tendencies. As one researcher said, "I have yet to meet a male homosexual who had a normal, healthy relationship with his father."

Scientists have been looking for a 'gay-gene' for years now, and even longer to find one linked to alcoholism. So far there has been no success. Some studies have pointed to potential links and trumpeted in the newspapers, only to be later quietly denied after further study.

So without a shred of scientific support, why do homosexuals still claim that it is genetic? It is simply so that the heterosexual world will be shamed into accepting their chosen lifestyle.

Next we need to look at where this claim may take us. If we buy this argument from the homosexuals without any proof, what about other special interest groups?

What would happen if we could just arbitrarily ascribe behavioral tendencies to genes without any rigorous proof to back it up? Clearly, if we believe that homosexuality and heterosexuality are genetically determined, by what logic can we forget about pedophilia, necrophilia, and bestiality? Cannot we just simply make the claim that all sexual orientations are all likewise equally valid? Why not?

And why stop at sexual orientations. Maybe there is a kleptomaniac gene, or an angry gene that produces in its victims such rage as to make murder almost assured. At this point, how can we put anyone in jail as all of society's ills might best be described as genetic variations? Who are we to decide to put one variation in jail, and let another adopt children? Surely such an enlightened society cannot tolerate such dichotomies!

Not only this, but since they are genetically "programmed" to act in a certain way, how can we do anything but look on them with pity and offer "support"? Gone is any notion of self-determination, free will on any such construct. We are all simply robots acting out as our "coding" is willing.

Dysfunction

The next obvious question to ask is: "If homosexuality is a genetic variation, should we not search for a cure?" Even if one ascribes to evolution, we can see that homosexuality is an abnormality that should be eventually eliminated from the gene pool through natural selection. As homosexuals cannot reproduce, they do nothing to add to the longevity of the species and are therefore not as suitable as heterosexuality. As they are non-reproductive, they cannot pass on any genetic benefits of their lifestyle. If any disease occurred whereby the homosexual lifestyle was the only defense, then the entire human race would cease to exist in a matter of a couple of decades.

With this in mind, how caring a society are we if 2-5% of our population are held captive by this genetic deformation, yet we will not spend a single tax dollar on its cure. Why is the homosexual lobby not demanding a cure?

The answer is that they don't want to be seen as defective, but only as different like skin color or hair color. However we have seen that homosexuality greatly limits a person's expected life span. My wife has diabetes which is certainly genetic and also decreases the expected life span. The Juvenile Diabetes Association spends tens of millions of dollars every year to find a cure. So why don't homosexuals demand the same thing? They are quite vocal on a whole range of issues including AIDS (a symptom) but they are silent on the root cause. My wife would jump at the chance to be free from here condition, why are homosexuals so different?

Summarizing this point, homosexuality is not genetically caused. This claim is not back up by any science, and the adoption of such a paradigm to excuse behavior would wreak havoc in our society. Their own actions even show that they themselves don't really even believe it.

We are not hurting anyone

With the statistics stated earlier, it is hard to imagine how someone can think that this behavior isn't hurting someone. I would say having someone die 30 years before he normally would have died is hurting him.

This concept is usually followed by "whatever consenting adults do in the privacy of their bedroom is no one else's business." This one is almost laughable as we have laws against prostitution in almost every state in the Union. Should we expunge these from our books and legalize prostitution everywhere? What about gambling, and drug use? Who is it hurting if I light up a doobie in my own house? (I also find it rather interesting that the pro-choice crowd isn't also pro-prostitution. Why is it only that a woman's body is her own business when it is to get rid of the by-product of sex, and not also for how the baby got there in the first place? Many of these groups are too hypocritical to be believed. As Christian opposition groups level this same charge at us, I would love to show how any such charge is baseless (i.e. pro-life, support capital punishment))

Does this mean that if I want to set up a methamphetamine lab or a still in my bedroom, the police would have nothing to say about it? If I was skinning cats alive, would PETA take such a view? How about assisted suicide? If someone wants to kill himself, should it be alright for someone else to shoot them in the head as long as they were in one of their bedrooms?

Does what we do even stay in the bedroom? Say someone watches non-stop pornography for years. Will this not alter his actions around women? How about how he would relate to a wife or girlfriend, or will he only think these thoughts when he is in his bedroom? Can he even stop bringing these thoughts out of the bedroom?

Similarly, why is child pornography wrong? If someone wants to view it and the child and parent agree to monetary compensation, where is the crime? Who is getting hurt? I hope that it is obvious that society does care and does have a stake in what people do even if no one is getting "hurt". However, to even claim this about homosexual activities is quite a stretch.

Gay marriage will hurt no one.

The ruse for allowing gays to marriage is cast under the banner of "why should we prohibit two people in a loving committed relationship from marrying"? Who would it possibly hurt?

This is interesting as the gay community is asking society as a whole to completely redefine an institution vital for a stable society based on "discrimination". It shouldn't be lost to the reader that no society in all of human history has taken this plunge until recently. That alone should cause some to think. But what about their claim, is it valid, is it reasonable?

First one must realize and study the function of the family in society. Families aren't just good ideas that someone came up with long ago (Conservative Christians would say in the book of Genesis.), but it is essential to a stable society. One only needs to look at the inner cities where the traditional family has all but completely broken down. What do we

see? Do we desire this everywhere? The protection of the family is absolutely vital for the vitality of any society.

So how can homosexual marriage going to affect the other marriages?

In European countries where homosexual marriages have been permitted; statistics show that the decline of traditional marriages is epidemic. Why? When you divorce a concept from its meaning, what good is it anymore? The flag represents something, but it in of itself isn't anything but a piece of cloth. Likewise, marriage must mean something. When it now is reduced to whoever loves whatever, it is merely a ceremony without meaning. Why bother, why spend the money?

Marriage in the Western culture in the last two millennia has been a covenant before God that two people of the opposite sex will form a union. This was no civil ceremony devoid of any meaning except for better tax breaks and spousal health benefits. We have not lost the concept of a covenant, and we have certainly jettisoned any idea of God. Therefore, if society deems it acceptable to tinker with the definition even further, then one must ask, why stop here.

I have found it interesting that the "new view" advocates have just asked for marriage to be between any two loving people. On what basis do they make this claim? Shouldn't the Mormons come in and claim that marriage should be between any number of loving people. What is so sacred about the number two? Why is polygamy against the law, while homosexual marriage is going to be legal? On what rational basis can one make this distinction?

Why does marriage have to be between two people? Why cannot those engaged in bestiality marry their chicken or sheep? Why they're at it, why not marry the whole herd as the acceptance of polygamy is surely around the corner? The point being is that when a word "marriage" is divorces from any meaning, the institution itself will die a painful death. We will be lost in moralistic relativism. Society will certainly be harmed by such an act.

Being Gay is normal

This is another curious statement. In society we see that boys act like boys, and girls act like girls. While there are overlapping traits, by and large we see that boys are quite different from girls. This brings in the real question about homosexuality.

If homosexuality was normal, why do we not see two feminine lesbians or two masculine males getting together? Why is there always a "wife" in a homosexual couple and a "butch" in a lesbian couple? If a heterosexual union is not for them, why do they form units that mimic the exact form? Why do only some of the lesbians feel that they need to act and look exactly like a man? This is indeed curious. If all homosexuality is, is an orientation, there is no reason to believe that the person would have to mimic the opposite sex. So why do we universally see this? There appears to be no rational explanation for such a behavior. Clearly heterosexual men and women share the same living quarters

without the need for one of them to "swing" the other way. This concept clearly shows that there is more going on than meets the eye.

Now the score for determining if the correct scriptural exegesis of: "Is homosexuality compatible with Christian living", is three 'no', and one 'undecided'. I believe that by using the methodology of this paper, one can better see which view to take of scripture. Of course I understand that this paper was not written in a manner that would make much of an impact on someone who is a liberal theologian, but I do hope that it may have help shed some light on those who are truly confused on the issue. As the umpire in baseball says; three strikes and you're out. The reader will have to make up his own mind. However, I would love to talk to anyone who holds a traditional view of Scripture and still disagrees with my view.

Summary

Trying to delve right into determining if homosexuality is compatible with Christianity by employing dueling verses is absolutely futile. This is why I have not taken this course, and in fact have removed any Scriptural debate from consideration. I have taken the long held hermeneutical practice that for any doctrine to be true, it must be true to Life, Reason, Scripture, with a consideration given to Tradition. Therefore, if two scriptural positions can be supported, the other means must be employed to referee the debate.

On these grounds, I have attempted to show that the claims of homosexuality are not traditional, or true to Life or Reason. The reader must decide if I have made a convincing case.

In writing this paper I have no anti-homosexual agenda. Gay people are God's children as much as any of us. This doesn't mean however that what they do is all that pleasing to God, but that we must treat everyone with love and respect. Just because one believes the gay lifestyle to be wrong doesn't mean that we cannot be friends with gay people. My friend who is HIV infected is one example. I think it rather funny that a Bible-thumping evangelical Christian has such a good time with him. We acknowledge our differences and go on from there. He knows where I stand, but he also knows that I respect him.