



Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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Homosexuality Is Still Sin According to God!

By

Brian Kenyon

With the recent “coming out” of certain Hollywood celebrities, the homosexual movement has gained some perceived credibility with the American public. The mainstream media would have us believe that homosexuality should be accepted as an “alternative lifestyle.” Many issues are involved in the present debate over the acceptance of homosexuality. While there are those in the field of genetics who say that homosexuality is biologically determined, there are also those in the field of religion who say that the practice of homosexuality is always wrong. Others, trying to synthesize biology with religion, advocate the acceptance of homosexuality so long as the relationships involved are characterized by “fidelity, commitment, mutuality, and generativity.”¹ If issues of sexuality are matters which fall under the realm of morality, it is obvious that they must be dealt with according to some moral standard. However, if matters of sexuality fall under the realm of biology, they must be studied in the light of science. The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate the evidence in light of an

objective moral standard. If it is the case that the practice of homosexuality can be justified on the basis of biology, then the accusations of “homophobia” to those who believe otherwise are somewhat substantiated. On the other hand, if it is the case that the practice of homosexuality violates an objective standard of morality, then the practice of homosexuality is objectively sinful and, therefore, no accountable person who continues in such practice can be in fellowship with God.

Genetics

And

Human Behavior

Although many “scientific” studies have been conducted, none of them comes close to proving that the practice of homosexuality is biologically determined. Even the once heralded study of the hypothalamus by Dr. Simon LeVay (published in 1991) proves nothing concerning a biological link to homosexuality.² In fact, human behavior, sexual or otherwise, has little to do with genetics. Rational people realize that we live in a world where we choose our behavior and where we are held responsible for that behavior.

Although geneticists do not fully understand what causes a person to become a rapist or a murderer, society does not hesitate to punish his criminal behavior. The same holds true with sexual behavior. Although one may have certain desires for sexual contact with his own or the opposite sex, the decision to follow through with those desires is a choice of which the accountable person will be held responsible. It is obvious then that sexuality does not completely fall under the realm of science.

Human Sexuality

And

Moral Law

It is, therefore, necessary that human sexuality be governed by moral law. However, not just any law is sufficient. It is not the case that people can make up their own system of morality and live happily ever after. There is a need for moral absolutes, and that need is met only through divine revelation. Moral absolutes may be defined as “objective moral values which are real and true for men regardless of whether any person or culture believes them to be true.”³ That is, moral absolutes are higher than the invention, alteration,

and/or termination of mankind. Two things are necessary for a system of morality to be based on moral absolutes: (1) moral obligations must be dependent upon objective moral truth; and (2) mankind must have the ability to be aware of and to learn of that truth.⁴

While space prevents an exhaustive study on the existence of the biblical God, it is necessary to give a brief argument for the existence of God in light of the proposition that God is the source of all objective moral truth. One such argument is as follows: "If the moral code and/or actions of any individual or society can properly be subjects of criticism (as to real moral wrong), then there must be some objective standard (some 'higher law which transcends the provincial and transient') which is other than the particular moral code and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized."⁵ The first part of this argument is recognized with regularity. Almost every day one can criticize the morality of another's actions—whether it be a jury's acquittal of an assumed criminal or the driving habits of a fellow motorist. Therefore, the second part must follow. There must be some objective standard that is recognized for there to be genuine criticism. Since it is the case that "there is some objective standard which is other than the particular moral code of any individual or society, and which has an obligatory character which can be recognized," it is the case that God exists.⁶ Therefore, God is the source of that objective moral truth which is necessary for a system of morality to be based on moral absolutes, and that truth is revealed in the Bible, God's word. Furthermore, accountable mankind does have the ability to be aware

of and to learn of that objective moral truth.

Bible Principles

As one considers homosexual practice in the light of biblical study, he or she must recognize some distinctions.⁷ First, a distinction must be made between "sins" and "crimes." There are some things which are against God's law, but may be allowed by civil laws. For example, the civil state may allow divorce and remarriage for almost any reason, but God's law only allows for one reason (Mt. 19:9). Civil laws may allow such things as drunkenness, pornography, and prostitution. However, civil government is not the ultimate source of morality (cf. Acts 5:29). One may practice homosexuality without committing a "crime" according to the laws of some governments, but that does not mean one is justified by the ultimate standard of morality. Second, a distinction must be made between "homosexual orientation" and homosexual practice. "Sexual orientation" is defined as the "direction of sexual feelings or behavior toward members of one's own or the opposite sex."⁸ Studies have not even come close to definitely linking "sexual orientation" with genetics. But for the sake of argument, suppose in the future genetic studies conclude that "sexual orientation" is biologically determined. Would this alone give one the God-given right to practice homosexuality? Homosexual practice is quite different from "homosexual orientation." People are held accountable for their sexual practice. Because one may have a "homosexual orientation" does not mean one has a right to practice homosexuality. For example, one may be "oriented" toward raping women or molesting children, but

no rational person would say that one is justified in such practices. Third, a distinction must be made between homosexual practices which are momentary acts of self-gratification and sustained homosexual relationships. While the first may denote a sin in a moment of weakness, the second denotes a continual practice of sin. The distinction may be the difference between a sin of weakness which can be forgiven (Acts 2:38; 1 Jn. 1:7-10), and a perpetual state of sin which cannot be forgiven if continued (Rom. 6:1; 1 Jn. 5:16-17).

The Bible And Homosexuality 1. Pre-Mosaic

With this in mind, consider the biblical teaching on homosexuality. It is important to note that the practice of homosexuality is condemned in all three dispensations—Patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian. Even before examination, homosexuality, because of its prohibition in each dispensation, is characteristic of something that always has been and always will be morally wrong. That homosexuality was condemned in the Patriarchal

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dispensation is obvious from Genesis 19:4–5. The “verdict on the ethics of Sodom” was given long before one comes to the details of what transpired at Lot's house.⁹ *“But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly”* (Gen. 13:13). *“The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great . . . because their sin is very grievous”* (Gen. 18:20). At least part of their exceeding wickedness had to do with homosexual practice. The men of Sodom wanted to “know” the messengers that Lot protected in his house (Gen. 19:5). Although these messengers were angels, they appeared in the form of men; therefore, one cannot say that their sin was wanting to “know” angels. The focus of this passage, regarding homosexuality, is on the word “know.” While it is true that the Hebrew word for “know” means “knowledge or acquaintance” in the majority of its occurrences, it is the context, not the majority of occurrences, that determines the meaning of a word. In the context of Genesis 19 “know” has reference to carnal and/or sexual knowledge (Gen. 19:8 cf. Judg. 19:22–23). The wickedness of Sodom was such that it demanded divine destruction (cf. Jude 4–7), and included in that wickedness was the practice of homosexuality.

Another passage which deals with homosexual practice outside of the law of Moses, yet before the Christian dispensation is Romans 1:26–27. One reason why God “gave them [the Gentiles] up” was because *“their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; the men with men working that which is unseemly”* (Rom. 1:27).

This description condemns both male and female homosexual practice. The attempt to make this a mere cultural condemnation involves the torturing of Scripture. Paul states that the practice of homosexuality changes the “natural use into that which is against nature” (Rom. 1:26). Sexual function is grounded in creation principles, not in cultural practices. “Natural” (φυσικός) and “nature” (φύσις) refer to that which is “in accordance with nature . . . as the regular natural order.”¹⁰ Since God is the author of the entire “natural order” (Gen. 1–2; Col. 1:16–17), and since God wills that sexual relationships be conducted within a God-approved monogamous heterosexual marriage (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:3–9), it follows that the practice of homosexuality opposes the will of God and is therefore sinful. Note the personal accountability inherent in Paul’s teaching—those who practice or approve of homosexuality will receive the “recompense of their error” (Rom. 1:27b).

2. Mosaic

In addition to being condemned in the Patriarchal dispensation, the practice of homosexuality is also condemned in the Mosaic dispensation. *“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them”* (Lev. 20:13). This is a law against the practice of homosexuality which is an “absolute prohibition.”¹¹ Homosexuality is not singled out in this context (cf. Lev. 20:10–21), but is a component part of that morality which must not characterize the chosen people of God. One must note that this prohibition is not merely a result of so-called

“homophobia,” but it is the prohibition of an approach to sexuality that “denies any boundaries in the creation order and uses sex as a vehicle to make that statement.”¹² It should be of no surprise then that this practice is an “abomination” to the Lord (Lev. 18:22).

3. Christian

The practice of homosexuality is also condemned in the Christian dispensation. First, it must be realized that any prohibition against “fornication” is a prohibition against homosexual practice (Acts 15:20; 1 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 5:19 et al.). “Fornication” (πορνεία) is defined as “prostitution, unchastity, fornication of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.”¹³ Since sexual relationships are God's will exclusively for a husband and wife (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:3–9; Mk. 10:6–9), homosexual practice falls under the category of “unlawful sexual intercourse.” All homosexual acts fail to fulfill the purposes for which God created sex. Second, among the list of those who cannot inherit the kingdom of God are the “effeminate” and the “abusers of themselves with mankind” (1 Cor. 6:9–11). “Effeminate” (μαλακός) refers to “men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually.”¹⁴ “Abusers of themselves with mankind” (ἀρσενικοίτης) refer to males who practice homosexuality.¹⁵ Therefore, it is obvious that no accountable person who continues to practice homosexuality can inherit the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

It has been earlier shown that the practice of homosexuality cannot be blamed on genetics. The scientific evidence, examined and evaluated, does not support the

proposition that homosexuality is biologically determined. To the contrary, human behavior, including sexuality, falls under the category of morality. It has also been shown that, of necessity, an objective moral standard exists, and that this standard is revealed in the Bible. However, homosexuality is a reality in present American society. How then should the Christian respond to homosexuality? First, the Christian must recognize that the practice of homosexuality is sin, in spite of many secular attitudes to the contrary (cf. Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12). The unrepented of and/or continued practice of homosexuality will lead to eternal destruction (Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8). Second, because Christians are concerned with the souls of individuals, Christians must deal compassionately with sinners, including homosexuals, at least in attitude if not in actual personal contact. **A l t h o u g h** homosexuality can never be considered an appropriate "alternative lifestyle," it must not be treated as a sin whose practitioners are not worthy of the

Gospel. While it is true that all do not have the talent/ability to effectively evangelize the homosexual community and that some homosexuals, like others, want nothing to do with the Gospel, Christians should at least be supportive of efforts to reach these people with the Gospel. The Great Commission is to teach the Gospel to all!

ENDNOTES

¹Jim Lamacchia, "The Morality of Homosexual Acts: A Reconsideration," *Moral Issues and Christian Response*, eds. Paul T. Jersild and Dale A. Johnson, 5th ed. (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993) 146.

²For a refutation of LeVay's

study, send a self-addressed stamped envelop to FSOP to the attention of Brian Kenyon.

³J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 240.

⁴Mac Deaver, "Why Ethics Without God is Impossible," *Biblical Ethics*, ed. Terry M. Hightower, (Pensacola, FL: Austin McGary and Company, 1991) 83.

⁵Warren-Matson *Debate on the Existence of God* (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1978) 285.

⁶Warren 285.

⁷John Stott, *Homosexual Partnerships?: Why Same Sex Relationships Are Not A Christian Option* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1984) 5.

⁸Simon LeVay, "A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men," *Science* 30 Aug. 1991:1034.

⁹Bill Flatt, Jack P. Lewis, and Dowell Flatt, *Counseling Homosexuals* (Jonesboro, AR: National Christian Press, 1982) 3.

¹⁰Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., revised and augmented by William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 869.

¹¹Flatt et al. 9.

¹²Charles W. Keysor ed., *What You Should Know About Homosexuality* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979) 52.

¹³Bauer 693.

¹⁴Bauer 488.

¹⁵Bauer 109.

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