



Homosexuality, Christians, and the Church

*A Biblical Guidebook for Christians and the
Church on Contemporary Claims*

By Thomas P. Hill

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Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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Biblical Authority

In recent years, homosexuality has increasingly captured the attention of people of all lifestyles. Online searches for this topic total in the billions of searches every day. The data includes research and commentary on biological issues, social practice, cultural acceptance, and Biblical references. Contributors involve physicians, counselors, and scientists who comment on this crucial issue.

As you would expect, homosexuals take great effort to justify their practices, even including Biblical interpretations of passages that mention homosexuality. A brief reading of the data for this subject reveals that the LGBT community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) rejects the Biblical references to homosexuality, including rejection of Biblical authority on the topic. They deny that the selected Biblical references contain any anti-homosexual or LGBTQ concepts in them. They conclude that their denials clearly prove all the Biblical references analyzed are false.

Proper Biblical Interpretation

Any analysis of the Bible, specifically homosexuality, must begin with a clear understanding of its message. In it, God reveals himself to mankind. Along with God's self-revelation comes the disclosure of his plan for his creation, including humans. The Bible answers the critical questions that mankind asks themselves.

The content of the Bible came from God to humanity through human instruments as directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit. That makes it inspired, inerrant, and infallible in all matters to which it speaks. It gives us the wisdom of God as well as his commands for his creatures. The Bible describes God's plans and purposes for people like you and me.

To accomplish this purpose, God's word comes to us as a meta-story through a variety of writings. The meta-story of the Bible follows an overarching chiasmus:

creation/perfection
 sin/judgment
 old covenant redemptive event
 new covenant redemptive event
 judgment/removal of sin
consummation/perfection (1)

You cannot interpret the Bible, i.e., passages of Scripture on homosexuality, like a cafeteria menu, picking and choosing what you like and rejecting what you do not like. A proper interpretation of the Bible

and the interrelationship of one section with another must consider its overarching meta-story. Otherwise, misunderstandings and misinterpretations occur. Those commentators who rejected Biblical references failed to follow the Bible's meta-story and lack the insight of the Holy Spirit.

Further, because of its self-attesting nature, the Bible stands above human criteria for its veracity. Therefore, it, and it alone, sets the standard(s) by which mankind must live in relationship to God, to creation, and to other humans. (2)

Because of the inherited sinful nature that all humanity possesses, we cannot understand the Bible with our own capacities. It appears foolish to us, and we cannot know its meaning. God provides his Holy Spirit to reveal his message to mankind, so we gain understanding only by revelation to us by God's Spirit.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 (KJV)

God has revealed himself to humanity and has made himself plain to mankind in a variety of ways: the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God, the Bible; his son Jesus Christ; and creation. (3) But our ungodliness and unrighteousness cause us to suppress the truth of God as revealed to us.

Yet, those who come to God through faith in Jesus Christ as their savior find forgiveness for sin and reconciliation back to God. He places his Holy Spirit within them who then have the indwelling Spirit whom God sent to reveal his word to them.

Those of us who have experienced God's salvation through faith in Jesus Christ know the reality of this truth. If you have not trusted in God's provision for sinners like you and me, his son Jesus Christ, who died as a substitute for people like us, I urge you to turn from your sin and trust him today. He will open your mind to understand the Bible and its message and prove to you the certainty of his promises.

These primary basic beliefs form the foundation upon which to properly interpret and understand the Bible. Therefore, they provide the basis to comprehend the Bible's message on homosexuality.

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Verbal Terrorism?

Remember the song, "What The World Needs Now Is Love Sweet Love?"

The homosexual community claims the modern version of this tune. They demand that everyone love them. They even dictate the terms and expressions of the love that they require from us. According to their beliefs, everything would just go smoothly in society if we just love them, according to their terms of course.

Especially the homosexual community attacks professing Christians and Church for a lack of love from Christians toward homosexuals. Their assaults against Christians emphasize its necessity. The attacks opine that since Jesus loved and welcomed everyone equally, then his followers should follow his example and love homosexuals, too.

Frequently, the LGBTQ community mischaracterizes Christ and attacks Christians with these false narratives. The homosexual community then verbally accuses them of failure to act like the erroneous Christ they have portrayed. These denigrations divert attention from the truth as revealed in the Bible regarding Jesus and homosexuality. Sadly, verbal assaults upon Christians have increased in frequency and fervor. They dominate the discussion instead of conversation on Biblical truth.

The homosexual community despises the phrase, "...hate the sin, love the sinner." Yet, Jesus, whom they love to quote out of context, proved this statement in his ministry. Jesus combined compassionate love for people and correction for their sins.

Take, for example, his encounter with the rich, young man recorded in Mark 10.17-22. This young man came to Jesus with a question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied by quoting several provisions from God's law as recorded in Exodus 20.1-17. The young man responded that he had kept each of those laws from his youth.

Next, the text says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. (1) Then, Jesus described a plan of action for the young man that identified his sins that God hates and prevented him from obtaining the eternal life he sought. Jesus loved the sinner but hated his sin, which condemned man.

In another example, he forgave the woman taken in adultery but warned her to go and sin no more. (2)

Again, Jesus met a man at the Pool called Bethesda. The crippled man had suffered his infirmity for 38 years. He sat near the pool where the infirmed sat waiting for a healing movement in the pool from God. The first person into the pool received healing. He could never get into the pool first. Jesus came to him and healed him of his malady. Later, Jesus met him in the temple and warned him to sin no more lest a worse condition befall him. (3)

At other times, Jesus, who loved his disciples, rebuked them for their sins. When crowds gathered, Jesus identified their sins and called them to repentance.

Jesus loved sinners, which he proved constantly. He also hated their

sins, rebuked them for them, and called them to forsake their sins.

The Bible also instructs the spiritual leaders of the church to adopt the pattern of Christ. Paul exhorts the leaders in Ephesus to speak the truth in love, correcting Christ followers from following false teachers and doctrines. Their teaching would help believers to become increasingly like Christ. (4)

In like manner, Paul taught his protégé Timothy to lead his Church with love and compassion, yet at the same time to rebuke and reprove those under his care. (5)

Contrary to what the homosexual community proclaims, the Bible declares by the example of Christ and by exhortation in God's word the need to love sinners but hate their sin. Granted, this combination does not come easily. It can result only in a life completely committed to Jesus Christ in reliance upon the Holy Spirit to enable someone to fulfill these difficult terms.

Christ followers have a difficult responsibility to love others as Christ loved people. We must seek God's supernatural ability to love as Christ loved, treating people with compassion, but at the same time demanding they repent of their sins.

To those readers who long to experience the love of Christ as he demonstrated it, I urge you to trust him as he frequently called people to believe upon him:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."
(6)

Jesus called unto those in distress to come unto him, and they would find comfort and rest. He extends that call to you now, too. He promised relief from the burdens and sins to all who come to him. (7)

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02. John 8.1-11
03. John 5.1-14
04. Ephesians 4.1-16
05. 2 Timothy 2.22-26; 4.1-4
06. John 3.16
07. Matthew 11.28-30

Sodom's Behavior: Homosexuality Or Gay Rights?

Many people attempt to reconcile homosexuality with the Bible. They offer their interpretations of Scriptures on homosexuality as well as Jesus' response. (See chapter on "What Jesus Said About Homosexuality.") In some instances, they simply reject the clear statements in the Bible against homosexuality.

However, such efforts fail. You cannot reconcile truth with error. The battle to legitimize homosexuality begins with an all-out attack upon the Biblical record of Sodom. This assault changes the story of Sodom from homosexuality to inhospitality. It further misinterprets the other references to Sodom in the Bible to refer to acts other than homosexuality.

When all else fails, and the LGBTQ community cannot alter the clear meaning of a Biblical text that refers to homosexuality, they simply reject it as irrelevant to the issue. Thus, they, in essence, remove any passage of Scripture that remotely describes the sinfulness of homosexuality.

These misinterpretations and denials developed into an accepted error. They form the foundation of the homosexual movement. Those in the LGBTQ community believe that the Bible legitimizes their behavior. In fact, many professing evangelicals accept and promote these errors, too. Consequently, it appears that the Bible not only fails to condemn homosexuality, but it also actually permits it.

Do we believe falsely that Sodom and Gomorrah exemplify the sin of homosexuality? What happened that night when the men of Sodom confronted Lot? How does the Bible characterize Sodom? Has the homosexual community interpreted the Bible correctly? Should evangelicals and non-Christians accept the LGBTQ version?

These questions deserve a response. The Bible provides ample confirmation of God's attitude toward homosexuality. In particular, the Bible explains what occurred that night in Sodom. It makes it an example throughout all of Scripture. A comparison of Bible texts confirms the Bible's stance on Sodom and homosexuality, which contradicts the version promoted by the LGBTQ community.

The proper understanding of the events in Sodom begins many chapters before the record in Genesis 19. It begins prior to the flood as recorded in Genesis 6. As God viewed the world before the flood, he described the wickedness of mankind and the total corruption of humanity. (1) This awful wickedness included the full range of sexual immorality: fornication, incest, and homosexuality, even homosexual marriage. (2) The practice of homosexuality predates the flood.

After Noah and his family departed from the Ark, Noah planted a vineyard. Sadly, he drank too much of the fruit of the vine and became drunk. The wickedness of Ham ensued. The Bible says that Ham uncovered the nakedness of his father, whom he saw lying drunk on the floor of his tent. (3)

This description sounds innocent. However, a detailed examination gives a different story. When Ham saw his father, it means that he gazed with satisfaction upon his father's nakedness. (4) His look occurred with purpose and intent, not accidentally or harmlessly. (5) Rabbinic exegesis of this passage indicates that Ham's gaze turned into homosexual rape of his father. (6)

After the incident between Ham and Noah, Ham told his brothers with delight what he had done. With great care, his brothers covered their father without observing his nakedness. After Noah awoke from his drunkenness, he learned of Ham's behavior toward him. Then, because of Ham's wicked act, Noah cursed Ham's son, Canaan. (7)

The effects of Ham's wicked act upon Noah and Noah's curse upon Canaan do not appear until Genesis 13. This chapter records the split between Abram and his nephew Lot. Abram gave Lot the first choice of land, which allowed Lot to separate from Abram and to take his family and herds to a new location. Lot chose the Plain of Jordan and moved his family toward Sodom in the Plain of Jordan.

The Canaanites occupied Sodom. (8) Genesis 13.13 describes the people of Sodom as "wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Adam Clarke, in his commentary upon this passage, said that it describes persons breaking the established order of things, openly before God. Radically evil, they sought satisfaction in sensual gratification with depraved, shameless, out of order passions. (9)

Not long after Abram and Lot separated, God appeared to Abram in the form of three persons. God renewed his covenant promise to Abram and then prepared to leave. As the three men rose to depart, they told Abram of their plan to visit Sodom. They told him that they had heard the outcry of Sodom, because of their grievous sin. They planned to visit the city to see firsthand the condition of the city. (10)

In fact, the practice of homosexuality permeated the Canaanite peoples long before the record of Sodom. The Mesopotamian, Middle Assyrian, and Hittite peoples (descendants of Canaan) openly practiced homosexuality in those days. Eventually, this wicked practice became commonplace in Grecian and Roman cultures. (11)

Two of the three men who visited Abram continued their way to visit Sodom, knowing its wickedness. At Lot's insistence, they did not stay out in the city square at night as planned but went into Lot's house. While there, the men of the city came to Lot and demanded that he release the men to them in order that they might know them. The two men protected Lot by sending blindness upon the men of the city. In the morning, the two men dragged Lot, his wife, and his two daughters out of the city and then destroyed it. (12)

In contradiction to the LGBTQ version of these events, the Bible clearly depicts the homosexual wickedness of Sodom, which began many years previously. This passage contains several key elements that require explanation. Together with the context in the Bible (and nonBiblical records) these delineate the homosexual behavior of Sodom. A proper understanding begins with the meanings of key words in the text.

The men of the city

The LGBTQ community has diminished the emphasis of this phrase. They describe it merely as a delegation of men who came to see Lot. Yet, the text clearly states that "all of the men of the city, including young and old, from every part of the city, came to Lot's house." (13) They did not come to Lot's house to welcome his guests into the city nor to interrogate them. They came with one purpose: to have homosexual sex with them.

"Know"

The understanding of the intent of the men of the city comes with the proper use of the word *know*. This word has different functions in the Bible. Therefore, the context of its use provides insight to its meaning within the text. The context for the meaning of this word in this text begins early in Genesis. On three previous occasions, it appears as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. (14)

In the immediate context, the conversation between Lot and the men of the city show that Lot understood their meaning as sexual intercourse. He called their demands wicked. Further, he offered his virgin daughters to them in an immoral attempt to satisfy their sexual desires. When he did, he described them as virgins who had not *known* man. (15)

Lot did not misunderstand the men's demands as a request for an interview with his guests. He fully understood their sexual demands and rejected them, hoping he could persuade them to satisfy their passions upon his daughters. This event does not describe an attempt by the men of the city to interview Lot's visitors. Nor does it hinge upon the failed interpretation of inhospitality by the men of Sodom.

The wicked behavior identified with Sodom and the surrounding peoples confirms this interpretation. Even Egyptian texts and traditions use *know* to describe sexual intercourse. (16) The LGBTQ community fails in its attempt to distort the true meaning of this term to support their agenda.

The Bible offers numerous references to this occasion and confirms its homosexual application. A brief review of these passages will verify it. Many passages use it as an example of how God detests wickedness and judges it. Sodom provides a vivid illustration.

Isaiah 1.1-9, 3.8-9, 13.19, Jeremiah 23.14, Zephaniah 2.8-11, etc.

From these references, the LGBTQ community interprets them as itemized lists of the sins of Sodom. They bypass the descriptions that identify homosexuality as the sin of Sodom. However, most of these references simply list the sins of Israel and warn it of impending judgment as God brought to Sodom.

Ezekiel 16.48-56

In particular, the homosexual community uses this verse as their trump

verse. It does list many sins of Sodom. The last sin in the list, abomination, does not serve as a summary of the previous list of sins. A singular noun, it identifies a separate sin in addition to those previously listed. The Bible calls homosexual behavior an abomination, describing it as sexually perverse behavior. In this text, abomination describes Sodom's sin of homosexuality. (17)

2 Peter 2.1-8

Peter refers directly to the wickedness of Sodom and God's judgment upon it. Here he calls the inhabitants "wicked" with "filthy conversation," and their acts "unlawful deeds." In verses 1-3, Peter warns his readers about false prophets and teachers. In the next five verses, he identifies three specific examples of God's judgment upon those who followed the sinful ways of false leaders, the last one Sodom and its sister city Gomorrah.

The "filthy conversation" of the people of Sodom does not refer to their speech habits. It means their manner of life. Their behavior lacked moral restraint. They practiced sexual licentiousness. (18)

Peter's description does not call their lawlessness "lusts for angels." The men of Sodom did not recognize Lot's visitors as angels. They called them men. No, the men of Sodom experienced defiling desires and sexual lusts for Lot's visitors. (19)

Jude 1.7

Jude mentions Sodom in his warning of judgment upon the wicked. He described their sin as "fornication" and going after "strange flesh." The word "fornication" describes sexual immorality of any type and kind, including homosexuality and lesbianism. (20) The phrase "strange flesh" does not refer to the angels from verse 6. It describes the practice of unnatural uses. They did not content themselves with sexual intercourse with their wives and other men's wives. The men of Sodom sought perverted homosexual sex. (21)

Summary

Contrary to popular error, Sodom exemplifies the sin of homosexuality. When all the men of Sodom attacked Lot's house, they demanded that he release his two visitors to them so that they could indulge their homosexual passions. In other texts, the Bible reverberates this same understanding of those events. Sadly, the LGBTQ community and many professing evangelicals have misinterpreted the Bible's declarations of Sodom's wickedness. We must reject the homosexual community's interpretation of their behavior and accept God's explanation of their sinfulness.

Thankfully, God made provision for sinners. He gave his son, Jesus Christ, as a substitute for sinners. Jesus took the punishment that people like you and I deserve. His resurrection completed the task that God sent him to fulfill. As a result, Jesus Christ will reconcile to God every

sinner who turns from self-trust and trusts Christ as his/her substitute.

God gives new life to those who come to him through faith in Jesus Christ. He washes away the sin and guilt of their past regardless of its wickedness, forgives their sin, and makes them new creatures. I recall vividly the day that I first trusted Christ. He truly made me a new creature, and I know many others with the same testimony. If you have never trusted Christ in this way, I pray that God by his Holy Spirit will bring you to experience it today.

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Homosexuality: Orientation Or Abomination?

*"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."
(Leviticus 18:22)*

*"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them
have committed an abomination..." (Leviticus 20:13)*

When confronted with these Biblical commands, the LGBTQ (lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, queer) community responds as one would expect. They cannot dismiss these commands flatly; the Scriptures speak too clearly to the issue. To legitimize their homosexual lifestyles, they must overcome the obvious meanings of these verses. To deny the application of these Biblical texts to the present day the homosexual community employs several methods. These methods fit into three categories.

Orientation

According to the homosexual community, these verses appeared in an age void of scientific knowledge. The progress of recent science, they say, gives rise to a new classification of humans. Homosexuals cannot help themselves, proponents state. They have a physically inherited condition, called orientation, which causes them to manifest same sex desires. The LGBTQ people describe it this way, "God made me this way," thus overcoming these verses and legitimizing their homosexual behavior.

Despite continued efforts, however, no legitimate scientific discovery confirms the claims of a "gay gene." In fact, numerous studies reveal no existence of a "gay gene." These studies reveal a host of factors that could influence a person to homosexual behavior. However, research has not yet found a "gay gene." (1)

As we all know, genes direct many physical manifestations in our bodies: eye color, height, color of skin, and a multitude of other features. Further, many gene anomalies cause birth defects, e.g., Toy-Sachs disease, Angelman Syndrome, Down Syndrome, Sickle Cell Anemia, and a long list of other defects. Whether the genes produce normal or abnormal effects, they do not determine ethical behavior. No "gay gene" forces particular sexual behavior. (2)

Even if scientists do discover some physical factor that influences one to experience same sex desires, the force of these verses remains unchanged. Every person on earth experiences the "uncontrollable" urge for sin(s) that plague them. Rapists, murderers, thieves, and adulterers, to name only a few sins, describe their behavior in the same fashion as homosexuals: uncontrollable urges that compel their behaviors.

The fact that they describe their behavior as an "orientation" does not relieve them from the Biblical description of sin. The Bible describes all humans born from the seed of Adam as posing Adam's sinful nature. What some call an "orientation" God calls a sinful nature, driven to commit

sins of all kinds. Thus no description of sinful behavior as an "orientation" escapes God's declaration of its behavior as wickedness.

Furthermore, the treatment of homosexuality as an orientation, or SSA, existed in cultures centuries ago, prior to Sodom and God's giving the Law to Moses and Israel, as well as during Christ's earthly ministry.

Simply stated, the LBGTQ community cannot overcome these verses with a physical explanation that science has discovered since the time of the writing of these verses from Leviticus. Furthermore, an uncontrollable urge does not legitimize any behavior. Nor does it prevail over the directions of God's commands.

Meaning of the texts

In their attempt to overturn these verses in Leviticus, homosexuals reject the meaning of the practices described there as applicable to them. They claim these references depict the behavior of cultic temple prostitutes. Further, they say it includes pederasty. Or they claim it refers to violent homosexual patterns existent solely in those days. In any event, the LBGTQ people assert these verses do not describe their behavior: loving, consensual same sex relationships.

Contrary to their conclusions, the peoples of the era of Leviticus practiced the same kinds of homosexual practices prevalent today. In fact, research from non-Biblical sources describes the prevalence of homosexuality in that time. Middle Assyrians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Mesopotamians, and inhabitants of the ancient near east indulged in same sex behavior without restrictions.

They had "gay parades" like those present in our day, even having cross-dressing males portraying childbirth. Their homosexual practices included loving, consensual, faithful relationships between same sex partners, a preview of same sex marriage in our day. Society of that day included open, free homosexual behavior without legal restraint. Societies of that day accepted it. (3)

Therefore, homosexuals have drawn false conclusions regarding the era of Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13. Sadly, the same sex preferences exhibited by many today mimic the behavior of ancient days. The exclusion of these texts by the homosexual community fails to dismiss the present relevance of the texts. Factual evidence contradicts their conclusions.

Rejection of Archaic laws

In a final attempt to refute the commands of Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13, the LBGTQ community rejects them with the claim that these decrees applied only to a bygone era. They combine this opinion with a previously discredited claim that this early society did not understand same sex behavior as the currently understood sexual orientation. They claim that these laws have no more application presently than do the ancient food and clothing laws required by God of Israel in that era.

The New Testament does not repeat these "silly" laws, so they say that

the laws commanded against homosexuality no longer apply. Therefore, as their logic concludes, these laws against homosexuality no longer apply to our day.

To follow this logic, then, the other laws against sexual immorality mentioned in the context of these verses would also disappear. These commands forbid heterosexual immorality of all types, bestiality, and incest. The emphasis upon the legitimacy of homosexuality has encouraged an increase in these awful practices, which rely upon these same arguments.

To make these claims shows a complete misunderstanding of God and his ways with Israel. God as supreme lawgiver did give a multitude of laws. They covered a variety of aspects of Israel's society at that time. For example, he gave them purity laws, e. g., the so called "silly" laws regarding clean and unclean foods, land and sea creatures, illnesses, others.

At first glance, they do appear foolish. But, God had a reason for requiring them. It taught them that a difference exists between clean and unclean behavior. Additionally, he taught them that, because of his holiness, the Israelites could not approach him in an unclean fashion. He required personal purity from those who desired fellowship with him. In addition, God gave some of these restrictions for health protections.

To direct their worship of him, God established a series of ceremonial laws. These laws governed Israel's worship of God. God outlined offerings appropriate for various sins. The laws, which governed these offerings, described sacrifices the people could present to God to atone for their sins.

Further laws provided direction on punishments appropriate to the violation of God's laws. Some of the laws, civil laws, gave guidance to Israel for their society. They promoted justice and equity.

One set of laws applies to the texts from Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13. These commands fit in the moral laws of God, sometimes called the Holiness Code. In Exodus 20, God outlined the moral laws that he demanded of Israel. Subsequently, he revealed further explanation and application of these laws. The commands stated in these texts further amplify parts the moral laws from Exodus 20.

To a certain extent, the homosexual community rightly explains that some of these laws no longer apply. For example, the purity laws, i. e., food, clothing, animals, etc., no longer apply. God no longer defines certain things as unclean. (See God's vision to Peter recorded in Acts 10.9-16 where God redefined this distinction.)

God provided a means by which sinners can approach him: through his son Jesus Christ. Jesus offered himself as an atoning sacrifice to God on behalf of sinners like you and me. Jesus calls men and women from every society and nation to come to him in faith for cleansing from their sins that his sacrifice provides. Everyone who trusts Christ when he calls them by his Holy Spirit receives his promise. God accepts as clean everyone who comes to him through faith in Jesus, because of what Christ's sacrifice accomplished on their behalf. The sacrifice of Christ renders the purity

laws obsolete.

The societal laws no longer apply. God does not deal solely with Israel as outlined in the Old Testament.

The ceremonial laws' existence ceased, too. The book of Hebrews as well as parts of the Gospels in the New Testament describe in full detail how Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Testament ceremonial laws in his life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.

However, God has not cancelled the holiness code. The New Testament repeats them, some with more complete explanation than revealed in the Old Testament. God still requires that humanity obey them, including the laws stated in Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13. You can find these specific offenses repeated in the Gospels, Romans, Paul's letters to the Church at Corinth, and other places.

Contrary to the LBGTQ interpretations, the commands issued in Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13 still apply today.

Explanation of Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13

A few words of explanation will help you to understand God's commands, quoted here again for easy reference.

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination."
(Leviticus 18:22)

"If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination..." (Leviticus 20:13)

The first part of each verse states the normal sexual relationship: a man and a woman. But not just any man and woman. From the beginning of the creation of mankind, God created them male and female. He established marriage between a man and a woman, not between same sex people. (4) Same sex intercourse violates God's created order.

Next, God described abnormal, same sex intercourse. A man shall not perform sexual intercourse with another man as he would with a woman. The description given illustrates unrestrained, unforced, "loving" consensual homosexual behavior. All the surrounding nations approved unrestrained homosexuality. God rejected it, even though none of the surrounding nations did.

God did not condone in Israel the kind of homosexual practice flaunted then and today. His law as given to the Israelites became the first such law against homosexuality. Further, he still rejects it as an abomination, which he called it in these texts. (5)

Clearly, the attempts of the LBGTQ society fail to sustain their assertions that these texts, which condemn homosexuality, do not apply today. They do.

Sadly, many professing Christians and nonChristians have accepted the errors of the LBGTQ as true. They have fallen for the lies of the enemy,

satan, who seeks their destruction. (6) The devil bases his strategy upon deceit and distortion of God's plan and purpose for mankind.

The devil lies when he says that God did not say what he said. He distorts God's purposes for mankind when he blames God for withholding pleasure from them. Perhaps you can recognize these tactics as the same ones he used in the Garden In Eden upon Eve. She, too, wanted to satisfy her own desires in contradiction to God's clear command. (7)

God made provision for sinners of all kinds regardless of the sins they have committed. All who come to him, professing believers and nonchristians alike, who turn from their sin and trust Christ's sacrifice for them, find pardon and forgiveness of sin. Perhaps this describes you today. I urge you to come to Christ and find relief from your sin.

To every believer, God sends his Holy Spirit to indwell him/her. His presence not only confirms God's promises but also provides the power to overcome the lusts of the flesh. All sin, even homosexuality, begins with lusts of the flesh, which leads, uncontrolled, to sinful practice. (8) However, the indwelling Holy Spirit provides the child of God the power to subdue fleshly lusts and walk in victory over them. (9)

I pray that God by his Holy Spirit will come to you today, granting you new life in Christ by faith. I pray that he will continue his work in your life to bring you victory over the sinful, uncontrollable fleshly lusts that war against your soul.

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What Did Jesus Say About Homosexuality?

If homosexuality is forbidden, why did Jesus never mention it?

This question strikes at the heart of this explosive and relevant topic. A recent internet search revealed 1.5 billion, with a B, searches on "homosexuality," which proves its impact and importance in our daily lives. (1)

We confront its claims and influence every day. To protect its practices, politicians enact new laws which change our lives. Businesses and places where we work alter their advertisements and adjust their employee practices to avoid offending homosexuals yet upset non-homosexuals in the process. Social media and public press agencies report every hostile confrontation on this issue, further inflaming attitudes and reactions to it.

Families, perhaps even your family, experience their children who practice it, placing additional stress upon parents and siblings with the dilemmas that accompany homosexuality. I know first-hand this stress: my oldest brother announced his homosexuality to me a few years ago.

Pastors debate and often disagree on the interpretation and implications of the Bible's instructions on homosexuality. They join homosexuals and non-homosexuals who ask this question: if homosexuality is a sin, why didn't Jesus warn against it?

He did and here's the proof.

The Bible Is A Sex Manual

Yes, it is true that the Bible gives instruction on sex and its illicit practices. In fact, the Old Testament and the New Testament abolish every form of prohibited sexual relationship, common then and now: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, and bestiality. Jesus spoke against each of these sinful practices, which this chapter explains starting in the section on Matthew 19.

Jesus' Commands For Biblical Sexual Relationships

Matthew 5.27-28

In the Sermon On The Mount, Jesus taught his followers the fundamentals of the life he demands, including rejection of homosexuality and its modern day defense. Here he referenced the seventh commandment from the original 10 commandments: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (2) In Bible times, this sin constituted sexual intercourse between a married man and a married woman other than his spouse. The Bible treats both participants as adulterers. (3)

To the shock of everyone at this Sermon and who have read it since then, Jesus expanded the definition of adultery from actual, physical sexual intercourse. He declared that, if a man looked upon any woman other than his wife with sexual desire and lust after her in his heart, that man committed adultery with that other woman.

In other words, Jesus commanded against actual, physical adultery as well as the desire in a man's heart to commit sexual intercourse with any woman other than his wife.

This same principle applies to same sex attraction (SSA). The homosexual community condones same sex partnerships and same sex sexual longings as not breaking God's law as long as the partners do not commit actual sexual intercourse. They encourage and endorse same sex partnerships, especially among professing Christians, that include all manner of physical and emotional interaction between the same sex partners if they do not commit literal sexual intercourse.

But if Jesus called a man's sexually lusting after a woman not his spouse a sin, then he certainly calls it a sin among same sex attractions with one's desire for a sexual relationship with another person of the same sex, even those who do not commit actual sexual acts together.

Jesus further attributed homosexual desires as springing from within the heart of a person as described in Matthew 19.

Matthew 19.3-9

Currently, the LGBTQ community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) asserts forcefully that Jesus never spoke against same sex marriage, unmarried same sex partnerships, nor homosexuality. They allege that since Jesus never spoke against these issues, he clearly found them irrelevant. This group asserts that since Christ found them unimportant, people today should respond favorably to the LGBTQ agendas. They believe that the Church must follow Christ's example of noninterference and indifference toward homosexuality.

To arrive at any position, logically or biblically, based upon the absence of information, i.e., silence, causes an illogical, inaccurate, and inconclusive conclusion and therefore not a defensible one.

This text highlights when Jesus spoke to three issues that involve marriage: marriage itself, divorce, and homosexuality in marriage.

When Jesus spoke here on marriage, he began with God's created order as described in Genesis 1 and 2. When God created humanity, he created them male and female. (4) After God created Eve from Adam's rib, God brought her to Adam and put them together. He made Eve, the female, as a complement to the male, Adam. Note, he did not create another male to complete Adam, nor another female to enhance Eve. He created a woman for the man.

When God brought them together, he joined them male and female in marriage to become one flesh which occurred when they consummated their relationship together with sexual intercourse. God used this occasion to give his decree for marriage as between a man and a woman exclusively in accord with God's created order.

To say that Jesus never spoke about same sex marriage one must deliberately reject this clear teaching of Christ on this occasion which confirmed Genesis 1 and 2. Marriage is a union between a man and a woman, not two people of the same sex. Unfortunately, the homosexual community completely disregards Christ's commands.

When Jesus specifically ordered marriage as between a man and a woman, he intended for the sexual relationship between a husband and wife, male and female. Therefore, he specifically condemned same sex marriage.

In this same setting, Jesus spoke against the evil that would destroy the marriage of a man and woman. Jesus granted divorce in a marriage for one cause only, fornication. (5) In our day, we typically describe this as sexual intercourse between two people, one of them unmarried, or between

two unmarried people. However, in that day, the original Greek word carried a much broader meaning.

In Jesus' day, fornication included every evil sexual relationship. Therefore, it included adultery, fornication (as we know it), prostitution, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest, and bestiality. (6) Jesus spoke clearly when he used the word "fornication." He condemned all sexual activity outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

If the husband and/or the wife in a marriage commits one or more of these forbidden sexual practices, it gives approval from Christ for the divorce by the offended partner from the offending one. Notice Jesus said that homosexuality divided marriage and did not provide the basis for marriage. Christ gave no other Biblical grounds for divorce.

On another occasion, Jesus responded to the Pharisees who chided him for not following their prescribed traditions which provided Jesus the opportunity to confirm this meaning of fornication. (7) This time, the Pharisees accused him of failure to follow the routine that they established for cleaning hands before eating. They taught that using unceremoniously washed hands to eat defiled the user. Like the previous occasion, Jesus used this setting to teach the truth about what defiles a person.

Jesus taught that what goes into a person does not defile him/her. The body expels the unused portions of whatever enters the mouth and stomach. On the other hand, what comes out of the mouth defiles the person. Jesus further explained what he meant by this statement. He clarified that the inward spiritual condition and desires of a person reveals itself in outward behavior.

The evil acts one performs which fulfill inward evil desires defile a person. Jesus provided a list of some of these wicked behaviors which proceed from within humanity. As expected, the list contains murder, theft, and false witness. In addition, Jesus included a term that describes sexual perversion, fornication. On this occasion, Jesus used the same word that he used to explain the evil that would destroy a marriage. Fornication in Christ's time comprised all variations of sinful sexual practice: incest, bestiality, prostitution, and homosexuality. (8)

Contrary to the homosexual community's claims, Jesus unambiguously condemned homosexuality and same sex marriage. He referred to God's created order, male and female, God's decree for sexual intimacy exclusively between a married man and woman. He also denounced the evils of sexual perversion, which included homosexuality. He could not have stated it more clearly. To declare otherwise rejects Christ's clear statements and reveals the true intent of those who refuse his declarations.

Jesus' Love For Friends

The LBGTQ community also accuses Jesus of some sort of same sex love toward his friends. (9) They describe Christ's love for his disciple John in this vein. After all, John leaned upon Christ during the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples. At another time, a man came to Jesus and questioned how to obtain eternal life. Jesus loved him, too. (10) And how about Lazarus? (11) The Gospels list numerous times that describe Jesus as loving people, especially his disciples.

Sadly, the homosexual community never lets the facts get in the way of

their arguments. They follow the dictum, "Don't confuse me with the facts, because I've already made up my mind." The accusations regarding Jesus' love for his friends fit into this description.

The word for "love" used to describe Christ's love for his friends does not include any attributes of lust or sexual connotation. The original word, "agape," describes a love driven by a deliberate act of the will without any inherent feature in the object loved as the source or cause of love. It differs from the two other Greek words commonly translated "love" in the New Testament, which describe friendship or sensual love.

Thus, to imply a same sex love from Jesus toward his friends or even a heterosexual love for a woman denies the meaning of the word used to describe Christ's love for people. Jesus did not display homosexual love toward any man nor lust after any woman. The original words which describe his love for others simply do not allow such a manufactured interpretation. Again, the homosexual community fails in its attempts to show that Jesus supported homosexuality.

Matthew 8.5-13; Luke 7.1-10

In a further attempt to prove that Jesus did not speak against homosexuality, the LGBTQ community recites the story of Christ's healing of a centurion's slave. As their interpretation goes, Jesus did not speak against homosexuality in this clear instance of a centurion and his homosexual slave. (12) The homosexuals refer to the Greek word "pais" used to describe the centurion's slave. In their judgment, the word means "boy" with homosexual connotations.

They assert that since Jesus did not mention nor condemn homosexuality in this clear instance of a homosexual relationship between the centurion and his slave, he did not view it as evil.

Again, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the homosexual community fails to follow proper interpretation rules to arrive at their conclusion. A fundamental rule of Biblical interpretation eliminates conclusions on any theological doctrine in reliance upon silence. No one can prove anything from silence, since many sides of an issue can claim that silence confirms their positions. This rule forms the bottom line in Biblical interpretation.

Second, the word "pais" can mean more than the one sense as the homosexuals conclude. In fact, its semantic range can describe a boy or a girl from the age of one to 14. (13) The text does not provide any clue as to the sex or the age of the slave. Thus, the conclusions of the LGBTQ community fail again in their attempt support their erroneous beliefs.

Third, Matthew and Luke record this incident. Luke records the events in detail. For example, Luke states that the centurion did not come to Jesus directly. He sent Jewish elders to request healing for his slave. Then, when Jesus healed the slave from a distance, the centurion sent his friends to tell Jesus that he did not need to come to his house. So, Jesus did not meet the centurion personally. Jesus met those whom the centurion sent to him.

Fourth, Luke used a different word to describe the servant than the one Matthew did. Luke utilized the word "doulos." (14) This word does not have any age or sexual connotation attached to it. It merely means "slave" or "servant."

Furthermore, to further complicate the issue for the homosexuals, the

centurion used both words in his comments regarding his servants. Therefore, the text provides no clear evidence of the sex or age of the sick servant, directly contradicting the faulty assumptions of homosexuals regarding this incident.

Jesus' Last Words

Before his ascension back to the glorious presence of the Father, Jesus promised his disciples further enlightenment than what he had taught them. In John 16.12-16, he gave them this promise:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father."

Even if, despite the proof offered in this article of Christ's messages against homosexuality, you reject it, this promise tells us that Jesus would give the disciples/apostles further guidance by the Holy Spirit. In fact, the Holy Spirit did guide the New Testament writers to condemn homosexuality in several places. Paul, Peter, John, and Jude wrote clear statements of God's/Christ's judgement against homosexuality. Other chapters in my book on homosexuality, of which this article is a chapter, explain these references. They fulfill Christ's promise to the disciples on future revelation of truth by the Holy Spirit. They confirm what I have detailed in this article of Christ's messages against homosexuality.

"Freedom to disagree with the Bible is an illusory freedom; in reality it is bondage to falsehood." (John Stott)

Dr. Stott's statement describes the circumstances of the homosexual community today. They arrive at conclusions, which they claim the Bible supports, even in its silence, that clearly contradict what the Bible actually teaches. Therefore, they believe fallacies.

Jesus condemned homosexuality during his ministry. He confirmed God's

created order, male and female. He ratified God's purpose for marriage, one man and one woman. He denounced all forms of sexual perversion, including homosexuality, lesbianism, adultery, fornication, prostitution, and incest. To declare otherwise, denies Biblical truth.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus gathered with sinners of all sorts, including those just described. He never condoned their sin. He continuously demanded repentance and forgiveness of sin from sinners. Jesus called them to trust him exclusively for salvation from their sin.

The Bible applies that same message for our day, too. God accepts only those who come to him through repentance from their sin and faith in Jesus Christ, God's provision for sinners. Jesus said it plainly in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son; that whosoever believeth in him hath everlasting life."

You may have heard this message previously and believed it. You have repented and believed as Christ demands. You know the reality of these promises in your life, have become a child of God, and a member of Christ's kingdom.

However, maybe you have not yet followed these Biblical requirements. As he did many years ago, Christ still calls people like you and me to join his kingdom. He said it like this: "Repent and believe the gospel...come unto me, all you who labor and are heaven laden, and I will give you rest." (15)

I urge you to heed his call today. Everyone who responds to his call, he accepts, regardless of past or present behavior. Trust Christ today.

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The Apostle Paul Condemned Homosexuality

Currently, the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community asserts forcefully that the Apostle Paul did not denounce homosexuality in his writings. In their minds, their interpretation of Paul's comments confirms their attempts to legitimize, even Biblically, homosexuality. Despite extraordinary efforts, their attempts fail.

Paul wrote three different passages in which he commented on homosexuality, a prominent practice in his day, contrary to the assertions of homosexuals. The following sections evaluate the LGBTQ opinions.

Romans 1.26-28

"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: 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. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient..."

(Romans 1.26-28)

To refute Paul's statements on homosexuality, the LGBTQ community bases their arguments on the meaning of the words "natural" and "unnatural." The gay society says that the word "natural" describes what comes naturally for a given person. Here, homosexuals assert their different orientation, same sex attraction, as their normal desire and behavior. Therefore, for a person with same sex attraction, heterosexual behavior turns into unnatural sexual practice. They conclude that when Paul condemned unnatural behavior, he endorsed homosexual desires and conduct.

In support of its position, the homosexual population fails to provide satisfactory textual, contextual, or linguistic evidence to authenticate it. They rely upon their interpretation of these words to explain Paul's comments. They eliminate what appears as Paul's obvious condemnation of homosexuality.

A plain reading of the text reveals the true meaning of the words "natural" and "unnatural." In verse 27, Paul described the unnatural exchange that men made when they abandoned the natural sexual intimacy between a man and woman and instead burned with lust for men. The word "likewise" links this description of homosexuality back to the exchange of the natural for the unnatural that women of that day practiced with other women. In both instances, it describes homosexuality as the unnatural activity contrary to nature. (1)

Natural sexuality expresses the created order that God established when he created man and woman, and thus sexual intimacy between a man and a

woman. In fact, nowhere in Scripture does it describe homosexuality as natural. God always describes same sex intimacy as unnatural and against his divinely established order.

Contrary to the LGBTQ community's assertions, the culture of Paul's day interpreted same sex relationships as "homosexual orientation" and did not condemn it, as God did. These relationships included those who believed what the same sex people of today call homosexual orientation. Some in that day chose homosexuality to express their love for others of the same sex. (2) In fact, Plato's *Symposium* prior to Paul discussed these beliefs of homosexuality (orientation and loving homosexual relationships). (3)

Further, the Stoic and Hellenistic Jewish traditions of Paul's era included definitions of natural and unnatural. They based their meanings upon the same ones expressed in God's created order. (4) When he created man and woman, he designed for them to fulfill his purpose for sexual intimacy together through heterosexual marriage.

Therefore, when Paul addressed homosexuality in this text, it included every expression of it in his culture, including but not limited to men with men, women with women, men with boys, and sexual orientation. To interpret otherwise twists Paul's intent and neglects the realities of culture at that time.

1 Corinthians 6.9-10 and 1 Timothy 1.9-10

"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, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 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." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

"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, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine..." (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

The LGBTQ community attacks these references from Paul's writings in a similar fashion as with the previous passage from Romans. They attempt to reinterpret the key words from these passages. In essence, it boils down to the interpretation of two Greek words translated "effeminate," "abusers," and "them that defile themselves with mankind."

Paul, they say, did not know about sexual orientation or inversion.

Additionally, they attempt to distinguish homosexual acts from orientation, as if Paul condemned homosexual acts but not orientation. (5)

In writing these texts, Paul relied upon the LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. He referenced Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13, which clearly addressed same sex activity and God's condemnation of it. In both passages from Paul's writings, he merged the Greek words employed in the LXX passages from Leviticus for homosexual behavior. (6) Therefore, Paul, again, as in Romans condemned homosexuality.

Contrary to the LGBTQ people, the records of nonBiblical writings prior to Paul confirm the presence of the full spectrum of homosexuality. This widespread behavior included transvestism, cross dressing, homosexual propensities and orientation, and love between same sex partners. This refutes the argument presented that Paul did not know of homosexual orientation as currently defended to justify it. (7)

Summary

In conclusion, the arguments against Paul's statements on homosexuality fail. They interpret Scripture inaccurately. They neglect or ignore the nonBiblical sources that describe the prevalence of homosexuality and the propensities of those who practiced it in Paul's day.

Paul condemned homosexuality without reservations. At the same time, he also reported the victories that some experienced who previously indulged in same sex relations. Some of the Christians in the Church at Corinth he described in the last part of the passage, verse 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. "

Some found forgiveness and relief from their disobedience against God's law regarding homosexuality. The Holy Spirit convicted them of their sin and pointed them in faith to trust Jesus Christ to save them. In faithfulness to his promise, Jesus reconciled them to God who forgave them and accepted them. You may have already trusted in Christ and know of his saving power as these people did.

If you have not yet trusted him, trust him today. Trust his promise to accept all who come to him. May the Holy Spirit give you new life and bring you to faith upon Jesus Christ, God's gracious provision to reconcile to himself people like you and me. Only the Holy Spirit can enable you to turn from your sinful lifestyle and renew your life.

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Homosexuals, Christians, and the Church

In recent years, society's attitudes on homosexuality have changed. Previously, people regarded it as an unmentionable topic, seldom, if ever, discussed among Christians or in the Christian Church. Even today, with increased awareness, many Christians refuse to discuss it. They respond with hatred or indifference toward homosexuals, who strive for full acceptance from Christians and the Christian church.

Because of the discord between homosexuals and the Christian Church, Christians must reassess their beliefs and practices. They must endeavor to recognize God's design for humanity. Christians and the Church need to respond in a loving, Biblical manner to those who suffer same-sex attractions. (1) The following steps, though not all-inclusive, outline the foundation for Biblical responses to homosexuality from Christians to this divisive issue.

Christians and the Church of Jesus Christ must love and welcome homosexuals.

Jesus did not offer an option to his followers whom they could love or reject. He taught them to love their neighbors and their enemies. (2) Sadly, the world frequently interprets this love as tolerance and blind acceptance and approval. The Bible does not teach love in this fashion. Nor did Jesus show love in this fashion.

In fact, in love Jesus confronted people with their sin throughout his ministry. The gospels provide ample evidence of it. Every time he interacted with the Scribes and the Pharisees Jesus identified their sins. Not even his disciples escaped his rebukes for their unbelief. In this vein, Jesus spoke against homosexuality and sexual perversions of all kinds as well as the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman. (3) The example of Jesus confirms that true love confronts wrong and seeks to correct it for the protection and enhancement of the one loved.

Therefore, Christians and the Church of Jesus Christ need to follow the example of Christ. We must speak the truth to homosexuals in love. Further, we ought to demonstrate Christ's love to them just as we should show it to any other person who needs to know his love. We must teach them the Biblical attitude toward their behavior and the victory that repentance and faith in Jesus Christ brings to those who trust him. (4)

However, the Bible condemns homosexuality in all its forms and practices, calling it sin.

The homosexual activists, along with consent from some professing Christians, assert its interpretations of the Bible regarding this volatile topic. Their explanations appear to provide Biblical support for same-sex practices. However, the gay apologists attempt to justify their beliefs upon flawed and speculative interpretations of key Biblical references. Their arguments fail to prove their assertions.

Sadly, tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals hurts them in the end because it displays a lack of love and concern for those who desperately need help. Guenther Haas states it this way.

"An examination of the Biblical passages from linguistic, historical and ethical-theological perspectives fails to support the revisionist ethic and reinforces the traditional Christian teaching that homosexual practice is morally wrong." (5)

Further, non-Biblical historical and literary evidence contradicts the interpretations offered by homosexuals of the actual conditions of society in Biblical times. Same-sex enthusiasts attempt to prove the nonexistence of sexual inversion and homosexual relationships established upon love prior to modern times. (6)

Instead, these sources reveal the pervasiveness of homosexual practice during Biblical eras as far back as Noah. They confirm the existence of the current emphases of homosexuality based upon sexual orientation and love relationships. These evidences strengthen the Biblical condemnation of homosexuality by confirming the Bible's relevance not only to societies in Biblical times but also to today's emphases.

This description of homosexuality appears harsh. All of us initially respond adversely to hear our attitudes and behaviors described as sin. However, further reflection reveals that it contains the seed for relief from oppression.

The Bible commands those overwhelmed by homosexuality to repent of their sin.

All humanity descends from the original created humans, Adam and Eve. God placed them in the Garden in Eden to fulfill his purposes for them. As part of his commands to them, he told them not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden. They ate the forbidden fruit and became the progenitors of sinful mankind. (7) Every human being inherits their sinful natures from Adam and Eve, who willfully disobeyed God's command to them.

When God confronted Adam and Eve after their sin, he promised a champion, born of a woman, who would come and defeat the one who tempted them into sin, the devil. (8) In the process of time, God sent forth his son, Jesus Christ, as the promised champion. In his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus crushed the power of the serpent-tempter, the devil. (9) That same tempter, in combination with a person's sinful nature, leads one into the tyranny of sinful practices today, including homosexuality.

The gay activists frequently describe their acceptance of their same-sex desires, which God calls sin, as the beginning of freedom. However, the Bible presents a different description. The indulgence of sinful lusts results in bondage to those lusts. (10) In addition, the practice of homosexuality results in physical harm to the bodies of those who practice

it. (11)

Contrary to their beliefs, homosexuals will find true freedom only when they turn from their sinful same-sex practices. When sinners repent from their sins and trust Christ, God's provision for sinners, they experience freedom from guilt, hopelessness, and despair. In addition, homosexuals can find supernatural power from God to enable them to reject their same-sex desires and practices.

The Bible provides an example of this kind of victory. The Apostle Paul wrote to his friends in Corinth and warned them that those who practiced sexual immorality, including homosexuality, would not inherit eternal life. He, then, explained that some of them had found relief from these sins through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. (12)

God provided a remedy for those trapped by sinful lusts, including those with same-sex desires and practices. When appropriate, Christians and the Church of Jesus Christ must present to homosexuals the message of God's provision for them in Christ. Christians and the Church of Jesus Christ need to speak this truth in love and compassion.

All who repent of their sins, even homosexuality, and trust Christ to save them from their sins, become new creatures in Jesus Christ.

The Bible clearly presents this certainty. It describes the one in sin before repentance and faith in Christ as the old person. All who come to trust Christ no longer live under the rule and reign of the old person. (13) They become new creatures in Christ. (14) God transfers the child of God from the powers of darkness into the kingdom of his son. (15)

Homosexuals need not suffer the bondage of sin, guilt, hopelessness, or despair. They can experience victory over their sinful same-sex desires and practices by the power of the Holy Spirit resident within them. God will enable them to walk in newness of life, not according to their old lifestyles. (16)

This newness of life in Jesus Christ does not mean the absence of temptation. The child of God faces sinful desires everyday. The presence of temptation does not make one a failure. (17) However, God promised his presence and power to enable his children to resist temptation and live in victory over it. (18)

Christians and the Church of Jesus Christ must uphold Biblical directives regarding the Church.

Churches apply discipline only occasionally. Sometimes they exhibit irregular attitudes toward certain sins. The Church's inconsistency in these regards results in deserved attacks of hypocrisy. All too often, the Church chooses leaders who fail to meet the specific requirements for church leadership as outlined in 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus.

For example, Christians frequently select pastors and other Church leaders with children too young to prove themselves as followers of Christ. Others have older children, who fail to demonstrate by their lives

a firm faith in Christ. Many of these leaders' children live sinfully, contrary to God's commands. These practices violate God's commands for church leadership. (19) Further, many rise to responsible positions in the Church whose lack of personal holiness disqualifies them.

Church discipline seems to apply occasionally and targets irregular sins. Some churches practice no Church discipline at all, even for flagrant transgressions. Such behavior exposes the Church further to the charge of hypocrisy.

The Church correctly denies Church leadership to practicing homosexuals. No one who commits sexual immorality of any kind qualifies for pastor, elder, deacon, or other leadership roles. Throughout the New Testament, and even the Old Testament, God expresses his demands for personal holiness from his followers, especially of leaders. The Apostle Paul then adds to these requirements with specific qualifications for Church leaders.

The church errs gravely when it fails to follow God's directives in these selections. The Church cannot bar homosexuals from Church leadership for Biblical reasons and simultaneously fail to exclude others who also do not qualify biblically. The Church and Christians must repent of their hypocrisy and disobedience and meet God's prerequisites for their leaders.

The Challenge

Sadly, many Christians and Christian churches target the homosexual community. In the absence of Christian love and concern, they reject them. Yet, they openly accept others whom the Bible equally describes as sinners. This unchristian behavior grieves God and quenches the Holy Spirit's work.

Christians must reassess their beliefs and practices and repent of their sin. They must seek God's direction by the Holy Spirit on how to respond in a loving, Biblical manner to those who suffer same-sex attractions.

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