

What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?

By Melanie Stone

The subject of homosexuality and God is an emotional issue for many. This is an issue that includes love combined with physical attraction toward the same sex.

I think there are some Christians who are confused as to why a loving God would not support people who love each other, even if it's the same gender. They see homosexual couples in a struggle to be accepted by society and the church, and they sympathize with their pain when these couples are rejected.

These Christians have found themselves at odds with other Christians, Christians who want to make a stand for righteousness and to protect our society from going farther away from God and His ways. Some of these zealous Christians have come across as judgmental, angry, obstinate, and uncaring.

If we really want to know what God thinks, we must turn to the Bible. Whether you consider yourself to be born again or not, whether you support homosexual couples or not, or whether you have homosexual desires or not, I hope you receive this article with the same love and truth that the Holy Spirit shared with me. In this article, I will share scriptures on homosexuality, and I will also address some of the interpretations of those scriptures.

What is sin?

Before answering this question, we should address what sin is. To sin means, "to miss the mark." The mark we're aiming for is the standard that God has established between what is right and wrong, or what is holy and unholy.

We've all sinned, in one form or another, and we've all have had the need not only for forgiveness, but also for salvation from eternal damnation. We cannot earn our salvation, but by submitting to Jesus Christ and allowing Him lordship over our daily lives, we can receive new life and a change in our nature.¹ Unfortunately, there are many who think they are born again because they have asked for the forgiveness of sins; however, because they have not submitted to Christ, they have not gone through the transformation necessary to receive eternal life. There is a difference.

Righteousness is actually a result of a heart that has been made righteous. With a new nature, we are positioned in right standing with God and are in a process of transformation of becoming more like God. Receiving a new nature doesn't make us perfect, but it does cause us to want to be holy. Being born again completes us in spirit, and it begins a process of sanctification in body and renewal in soul.

If a person is not born again, then we should not be surprised if they don't understand God or his ways. The rebirth and the process of renewal are necessary for knowing God.

¹ II Corinthians 5:17

Is homosexuality a sin?

If your heart is to know God, then I believe you will be open to receive God's love and His transformation. According to the Bible, homosexuality is an unholy sin against a holy God, a God that never changes.² Below are specific scriptures on homosexuality in the Bible. These scriptures reveal the character and nature of God woven through both Old and New Testaments.

Genesis 19:1-11

Leviticus 20:13

Isaiah 3:9

I Timothy 1:8-11

Romans 1:32

Leviticus 18:22

Deuteronomy 23:17

I Corinthians 6:9-11

Romans 1:26-28

Jude 5-7

Homosexuality is among other sins considered as sexual immorality. If we truly want to know God, then we will conform our lifestyle to the Bible rather than trying to conform the Bible to fit our lifestyle. Here are further scriptures to study on sexual immorality and fornication:

II Corinthians 12:21 "... I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced."

Galatians 5:19-21 "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, (20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, (21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 5:3 "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints."

Colossians 3:5 "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."

I Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality."

Revelation 21:8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Revelation 22:15 "But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."

Know the Word of God is not given to offend you, but to lead you to life in God.

² Malachi 3:6

Homosexuality is not an equality issue. It is a morality issue.

If you do not see homosexuality as a sin, then you might feel there is discrimination against homosexual couples. However, homosexuality is not an equality issue; it is a morality issue.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

From a holiness point of view, to say it is discrimination to discern homosexuality as a sin, would be the same as calling it discrimination to make discernments regarding murder, stealing, child molestation, rape, or the like.

Does God create people to be homosexual?

Many feel that homosexual tendencies can be recognized from an early age. Some people have felt they were born homosexual, concluding that God made them that way. *They feel that homosexuality is not as much a choice of what they do, but it is more of a matter of who they are.*

God's plan was not for us to be born into sin of any kind. However, the Bible does tell us that because of the sinful condition of the world, we are born into sin. I believe that people can be affected by sin at a young age, one of which could be homosexuality (Romans 5:17, Ephesians 2:3). However, it is not God's doing, and sinful desire of any kind is something that God wants to help people to overcome. In fact, God loved the world so much that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our salvation and to show us the way to victory over sin.

Can a person develop homosexual tendencies later in life?

Like any other sin, if homosexuality is given a place in a person's thought life, their thoughts can take action.

James 1:13-16 "(13) Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God;' for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. (15) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

Therefore, what you allow into your mind through associations, imaginations, entertainment, education, and the like, can produce thoughts that lead to sin.

In addition, this is not always the case, but it does deserve to be mentioned, that sinful desires can sometimes stem from a life trauma or dysfunctional environment. Unholy things are often a result of life that has been twisted or perverted. For example, some may not trust people of the opposite sex if they have experienced sexual abuse by someone of another gender. Also, if someone of the same sex abused a person, that person's mind and soul could associate love with their experience and develop attraction for the same sex.

What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?

In addition, whether you realize it or not, we have a spiritual enemy. There are some instances where an evil spirit has influenced a person to sin. I do believe that in some cases, people can open themselves up to spiritual influence that drives them to sinful behavior.

How can someone overcome homosexuality?

I hope that you know the love that God has for you. If you are not born again, you need to become born again. God will give you a new nature, a nature like His.

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies (Mark 7:21).

Once your nature has been recreated to be like God's nature, if you will yield to it, God will begin to make you more like Him.

Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

If you are born again, you have a new nature, but your soul and your body need to be brought into obedience. This means that you make choices as to what you think about, look at, listen to, and do.

Ephesians 4:21-23 "If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: (22) that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, (23) and be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

I Corinthians 6:18 "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."

Can someone be a Christian and practice homosexuality?

Many call themselves "Christian" because they believe that God exists, and they have asked for salvation and eternal life; however, transformation does not take place unless that person makes Jesus their Lord (Romans 10:9,10). Many call Him "Lord," but have not truly submitted to His lordship (Matthew 7:21-23).

I John 3:7, 8 "(7) ...He who is practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. (8) He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

If you are truly born again, your conscience will not allow you to continue in sin. The Holy Spirit will continue to draw you to repentance. If Jesus is truly your lord, then you love Him and choose to submit to His ways over your own.

What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?

The way you know someone's heart is by looking at his or her behavior; however, God is the only one who truly knows if someone is His or not. God also is merciful, understanding the effect of sin on the people He loves. It was His love that sent Jesus to die for our salvation, and it is the same strong love that continues to call out for our sanctification. Remember that God is holy, and what is unholy cannot exist in His presence. His mercy should be responded to with repentance, not despised and rejected.

How can we minister to a homosexual?

First, assure that the person is actually born again. If the individual is not born again, then explain the way of salvation. If he or she is not born again, then their nature is not made new, and the Holy Spirit is not dwelling in their hearts.

Like with any ministry, pray for the individual before you approach him or her. Invite the Holy Spirit to work in their heart, to reveal truth, to express love, and to draw him or her away from sin.

In addition, demonstrate love for the person. God is merciful, and He understands how the world can twist a person away from what is upright. God also understands that sin is deceptive, appearing to be right, when it is really an unholy sin that separates a person from the nearness of God.

Ask God for discernment. Each individual has a different journey in life. You don't know why someone accepts or practices homosexuality. God cares about the motive because God cares about wholeness, not just obedience. For some, they don't have the knowledge about God, and they need to be taught. For others, they discover homosexual desires within them, and they don't know how to deal with them. Others may have been damaged in their soul through a trauma in their past that has caused their sexual function to become warped from what is upright. Others could have a spirit oppressing or even possessing them.

Then lean on the Holy Spirit for the wisdom and the power to minister, and share the truth of salvation from the Bible without a superior or condemning attitude. If their heart is open to receive, minister to him or her. If their heart is closed, you have done your part. Be careful to love people, but guard yourself from rebellious hearts.³

Lead the person to Christ. There is not one of us that can change without the power of the Holy Spirit and the redemptive work of the cross. The Holy Spirit is the one who transforms us, and it is the Holy Spirit that will continue to help a person overcome sinful desires in the soul and body.

Some will receive you, and some will reject you. However, know this, that when a person rejects love and truth, they are not only rejecting you, but they are rejecting the God you represent. When they accept the truth, they are responding to the love of their Father in heaven.

³ I Corinthians 5:9-11

It is a sin for a Christian to support homosexuality

There is a difference between God's compassion and human pity. Compassion shares the love of God with people, a love that leads them to holiness. Pity feels sorry for people, and instead of leading them to holiness they try to strengthen them, even in their sin. What the believer needs to realize is that sin is like a poison that will lead a person to death. If the believer genuinely cares for a person in sin, they will lead the person to repentance and life in Christ.

Don't become guilty of sin by supporting it. Sin is not of God; sin is of Satan. You don't want to become guilty of sin and siding with devils. Paul wrote concerning the danger for people who gave approval to those who practice homosexuality.

Romans 1:32 "Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them."

Sin can be deceptive, so be careful not to be deceived by it. Sin is bondage and it always leads to destruction. There are eternal consequences to sin, and if I love you, then I will tell you that. If you genuinely care about a person, then you will lead them to truth to set them free.

Galatians 6:7-8 "(7) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. (8) For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."

Be aware that even people you love will make the choice to live their way instead of choosing God's ways. They have chosen the love for their pleasure over their love for God. Paul instructed Timothy to turn away from those that made that choice.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 "(1) But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: (2) For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, (4) traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (5) having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

Rescue those who will be rescued, guarding yourself so that they don't pull you into sin with them.

When we disagree on homosexuality

Know I still love you.

I'm not perfect; I'm forgiven. I want the same for you.

I will tell you the truth, but I will not try to punish you.

If you aren't a Christian, I don't expect you to understand the new nature.

I will not compromise what I believe, even for the people I care about.

If you continue to sin, I will be there for you if you want to return to God.

I respect your right to choose. Please accept mine.

Your salvation is between you and God.

FAQ

The following are answers to some common questions on Scriptures concerning homosexuality:

Should we still live by Old Testament laws?

One way we know that an Old Testament sin still applies today is if it is found in the New Testament, and homosexuality is considered a sin in the New Testament.

However, the Old Testament is filled with rules meant for the Jews in their day that do not apply to them or us today; therefore, this has raised the question if any of those Old Testament rules should still be in effect, including homosexuality. The rules that God gave the Jews in their history had more than one purpose. One purpose was to make the law impossible to keep, showing the Jews and the world our inability to be righteous on our own. The law showed us our need for a Savior. Another purpose of the law was to reveal the character of God, identifying what was holy and what was unholy. When the law reveals the character of God, it still brings us life. Homosexuality was not just against a rule; it was identified as unholy. What was unholy then is still unholy now. What was holy then, is still holy now.

The Apostle Paul was a Christian Jew, a Jew who was familiar with the Old Testament law, as well as the New Testament grace. Paul writes to Timothy in I Timothy 1:8-11 that when the Old Testament law is addressing a condition of the human heart, it is still valid and useful.

I Timothy 1:8-11 "Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted."

Paul actually had a dispute with some of the other apostles regarding the law. There were Jews who wanted to enforce Jewish laws onto the Gentiles, such as circumcision. In Acts 15:21 Paul makes his case on what law applies and what does not apply. Paul makes a point that Old Testament writings from Moses should be preached. Paul also made the point in previous verses that Jewish law should not be imposed on the Gentiles unless it is about abstinence from idolatry, **sexual immorality**, and some health issues.⁴

Acts 15:19, 20 "(19) Therefore I judge (discern) that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, (20) but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood."

⁴ See also Acts 15:29, 21:25

What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?

In addition, we read another author, Jude, who wrote how we should learn from the examples in the Old Testament. Jude specifically mentions Sodom and Gomorrah, known for homosexuality, encouraging people to repent to escape the punishment of eternal fire.

Jude 5-7 “Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day – just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”

Was Paul addressing male prostitution in Romans 1?

Even if male prostitution and child endangerment was happening in the Roman culture, Paul is addressing homosexuality as a dishonorable passion, and is not specific to male prostitution or child pornography.

Romans 1:26-28 “For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.”

Did Apostle Paul discriminate?

Some want to discredit New Testament scriptures on homosexuality on the grounds that Apostle Paul discriminated against certain people, such as women. Some cite where Apostle Paul wrote that women were not to teach in I Timothy 2:12. However, this verse has been misinterpreted. Paul was a big advocate of women teaching and serving as leaders in ministry as seen in Romans 16, Acts 16:40, Colossians 4:15, I Corinthians 1:11, and Acts 18:2, 26. The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female.” Apostle Paul did not discriminate against people based on their race, age, or gender.

What about the dysfunctional families we see in the Bible?

What about the history of the Bible where one man would marry many women and have concubines too? What about the history of the Bible where Jews would conquer other nations and take their women to be their wives? They were people like we are – some of them made wrong choices. It doesn't mean that God advocated their choices. God has never forced His ways on people, but He has allowed them to do what was in their heart to do.

We see the ways of God in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 17:14-17. God told the people that when they want a king, the king was not to have multiple wives, “lest his heart turn away.”

What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?

Don't families come in all shapes and sizes?

In the beginning God's plan was for one man to marry one woman and have children. However, there are now 7 billion people on the earth. Is what is known as the "traditional family" still God's plan? Is the plan still necessary?

People change, governments change, legislation changes, ideas change, but God never changes. His Word never changes. His standard for righteousness never changes. Homosexuality is not in God's plan because homosexuality is sin.

Matthew 19:4-6 "(4)...Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, (5) and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' (6) So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

There are lots of families who do not have the traditional mother, father, and kids. There are single parent homes, blended families, and kids living with grandparents. Many of these families have experienced the consequence of divorce, adultery, substance abuse, and more. Sin has had an affect on all of us. **Know that God is for you, not against you.** God is about mercy, compassion, restoration and blessing for those that turn to Him with humble and submissive hearts.