

“How to Respond to...”

HOMOSEXUALITY

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Introductory Thought:

There is perhaps no more divisive issue within our society and the external church today than that of homosexuality. As more and more State laws are passed legalizing marriage between homosexuals, and with homosexuals now being able to serve openly within our U.S. Military, homosexual advocates have in recent months and years made great strides in their attempt to legitimize homosexual behavior in the eyes of the general public.

The recent decisions within some segments of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Lutheran church denominations to embrace homosexuality as an acceptable alternate life-style and to ordain practicing homosexuals into the pastoral ministry has divided the church into opposing camps. One side suggests that homosexuality should be celebrated as a gift from God. While the other side maintaining, on the basis of Scripture, that it should still be condemned as a sin before God.

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

The Bible condemns homosexual behavior, and places it in the same category as other sexual sins. The apostle Paul writes:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Paul in his letter to the Roman Christians calls homosexual behavior unnatural and shameful (cf. Rom. 1:26-27). The historical account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah reveals God’s anger with and judgment upon those guilty of impenitence with regard to such behavior (cf. Gen. 19:1-11). Some theologians suggest that the sin of Sodom was not homosexuality but rather inhospitality. Yet Scripture does not support such a view. It rather

describes the sin of Sodom as “*sexual immorality*” (cf. **Jude 6-7**). Other theologians suggest that God merely condemns homosexual rape, even as He does heterosexual rape, as opposed to condemning loving homosexual unions. This argument, too, does not find any support in Scripture, for God’s Old Testament laws clearly condemn the sexual union of two men without reference to the circumstances under which it occurs (cf. **Lev. 18:22; 20:13**). Clearly homosexual activity is sin in God’s eyes.

Responses to Avoid:

We ought not to follow the example of many in the world and in the external church who champion the cause of homosexuality. Rather, Jesus teaches:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (**Jn. 14:15**).

Paul also says:

“Flee sexual immorality... do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (**1 Cor. 6:18a-20**).

To deny that homosexuality is a sin and to even claim that sin is a blessing from God that is to be celebrated is to lie and deceive. To do so, as many in the external church are doing today in God’s name, is damning! (cf. **Jer. 23:25-26**) True Christian love calls upon us to be honest in evaluating all behavior on the basis of *what Scripture has revealed*, not on the basis of what we or mankind might think or desire!

On the other hand, we also ought not go to the opposite extreme and think, as some tend to do, that the sin of homosexuality is worse than other sins and justifies harsh and hateful responses. Individuals who have fallen into the sin of homosexuality are not to be harmed physically or intimidated in any way, but rather are to be viewed as blood-bought souls—sinners in need of God’s grace and mercy just as all other sinners!

Common Myths and Misunderstanding:

Whether it is a personal struggle or a need to respond to individuals involved with or defending homosexuality, there are certain myths and misunderstandings of which

we ought to be aware, so that we can properly understand and witness to the truth in order to help individuals caught in this sin.

1. It is commonly thought that modern science has discovered a biological cause for homosexuality—a genetic link, which has led many people to suggest: “If God made me (or others) that way, it cannot be wrong!” The fact of the matter is that while several studies have been done in this area, no solid conclusions have been made. No genetic link leading to homosexuality has been discovered. On the contrary, the best studies and evidence suggest that homosexuality arises due to environmental not biological issues.
2. It is often suggested the current percentage of homosexuals is not a minority, and consequentially, a behavior that is normal for a significant percentage of the population. Therefore, it should be accepted as normal by the entire population. While it is not unusual for a significant number of young men and women to question their sexuality at times as they grow up, the vast majority of them do not become nor ought be considered homosexual.
3. It is also maintained by many that homosexuals cannot change their sexual orientation and that no attempts should be made to make such changes. This is simply not true. Homosexuality is a behavior that occurs due to a complex set of environmental circumstances. Yet, many practicing homosexuals have left behind that lifestyle having repented of those sins, and have with the Spirit’s help maintained either a celibate life or a happily married life with a heterosexual partner.

How to Respond?

First of all, as we respond to anyone we must do so in love with gentleness and humility. Paul writes:

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1-2).

We are not to approach any individual as a Pharisee in the temple (cf. Lk. 18:9-14), but rather we are to approach every individual as a

fellow sinner redeemed by the grace of God. This is true even if we are simply speaking or sharing what God says about this particular sin to our children or in any other discussion.

Secondly, while it is important to know what the Bible says about homosexuality, it is also important we know as much as we can about the causes of homosexuality in general and the specific situations of those homosexuals we are seeking to help. Specific information on individuals we may seek to help will come naturally as God gives us the opportunities with those individuals facing these challenges.

Thirdly, many homosexuals are looking for acceptance, love, and fulfillment—things we all desire in this life. Those blessings can ultimately only come through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we want to lead individuals struggling with this problem to see their sin, but then to understand that through Christ they have the forgiveness of sins. As the apostle John explains:

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(1 Jn. 1:8-9)

Individuals struggling with any sin, including that of homosexuality, need to know that they can find peace through Jesus (cf. Jn. 14:27), rest through Jesus (cf. Mt. 11:28), strength through Jesus (cf. Phil. 4:13), and freedom through Jesus (cf. Gal. 5:1).

Finally, if we are responding to a confirmed proponent of homosexuality we can only cite Biblical truth with meekness and respect (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

Other Resources: *(If you need help locating further reading, ask your pastor)*

- *“Amy and Jason—Two True Stories Exposing the Truth about Gender Identity”*; Dare 2 Dig Deeper Series; Focus on the Family, 1999.
- *“Coming Out of Homosexuality—New Freedom for Men & Women”* by Bob Davies & Lori Rentzel; InterVarsity Press, 1993.
- DVD *“It’s Not Gay—Former Homosexuals Tell a Story Few Have Heard”* by American Family Association.
- *“Holy Scripture on Homosexuality”* by Pastor Mark Gullerud.
- *“How Should Christians Respond to ‘Gay Marriage’?”* from Answers in Genesis.
- *“The Homosexual Agenda and the Christian Response”* by Mark Alexander, Executive Editor and Publisher of PatriotPost.US.