

What about homosexuality?

Introduction

Homosexuality is a huge issue in our culture today. Many of us know someone or have heard of someone who has chosen that lifestyle. For me it was my father. For you it may be a brother, sister, cousin, mother, father, some other family member or friend. We are bombarded with it in television, magazines, movies, the internet, politics, and even in the classrooms.

A 2001 Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that 60 percent of Americans ages 17 to 29 support same-sex marriage. They do not see the harm since same sex couples can be in love too, right? But this is a moral issue that affects our society and is a byproduct of our nation's anti-religious values. Some people have thrown their hands up and think society can't get any worse, but at some point we need to take a stand for morality, because it CAN get worse. ***Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 (NLT)*** says, ***"History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing under the sun is truly new. ¹⁰ Sometimes people say, "Here is something new!" But actually it is old; nothing is ever truly new."***

So this morning we deal with the issue of homosexuality. Do you know how many homosexuals there are in the United States? A gallop poll taken in May of 2011 indicated that Americans believe that 25% of Americans are Homosexual - Source - <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147824/adults-estimate-americans-gay-lesbian.aspx>

However...

According to an April 2011 report from Gary Gates of the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy, a think tank devoted to research at UCLA, there are nearly 313 million Americans and only 1.7 percent of the population would be classified as homosexual adults. – Source – <http://news.discovery.com/human/about-2-of-americans-are-gay-110411.html>

It's amazing that such a small percentage can get so much attention.

Inevitably the question I'm asked is:

I. What are the causes of homosexuality?

There is no conclusive scientific evidence. There are theories about genes & hormones. There are theories and studies about the brain. There are theories and studies about upbringing, experience, and the social environment contributing to

the development of homosexuality **but as I said just moments ago - there is no conclusive scientific evidence.**

II. What does the Bible really say about homosexuality?

There are several scriptures in the Bible that deal with the topic in both the Old Testament and New Testament.

A. Old Testament

1. **Genesis 2:21-24 (NLT)** *“So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the opening.²² Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.²³ “At last!” the man exclaimed. “This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken from ‘man.’”²⁴ This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.*

Dr. Bill Arnold says “This text elevates the idea of heterogeneous marriage between one male and one female, regardless of how we conceptualize a state-defined and sanctioned certificate of marriage. The biblical concept is clear enough.” - **Source:** Dr. Bill Arnold *Ph.D., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Author, speaker, and professor of Old Testament and Biblical Studies*

2. **Leviticus 18:22 (NLT)** *“Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.*
3. **Leviticus 20:13(NLT)** *“If a man practices homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman, both men have committed a detestable act...”*

B. New Testament

1. **I Timothy 1:9-11** *“For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are **lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful**, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill their father or mother or commit other murders.¹⁰ The law is for people who are sexually immoral, **or who practice homosexuality**, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome*

teaching¹¹ that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.”

2. **I Corinthians 6:9-10** “Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or **practice homosexuality**,¹⁰ or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—**none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.**”
3. **Ephesians 5:3** “**Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God’s people.**”
4. **Jude 7** “And don’t forget Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns, which were filled with immorality and every kind of **sexual perversion**. Those cities were destroyed by fire and **serve as a warning of the eternal fire of God’s judgment**”.

The Bible is clear that homosexuality is sin. The only alternative to heterosexual monogamy (a man and a woman being married in God) is singleness for the sake of the kingdom.

There have been some who have tried to change what the Bible says or dismiss the Bible as authoritative and church tradition as irrelevant. I’m thankful that the Wesleyan church holds steadfastly and unapologetically to the Bible.

The issue of homosexuality has been around for a long time. “**It is only a recent aberration (*deviation*) that a few denominations—infiltrated by leaders and influencers who question or reject the authority of Christian Scriptures—have arrogantly challenged twenty centuries of orthodoxy (*what is right and true*) and orthopraxy (*correctness*) by condoning homosexual relationships as behavior compatible with a Christian profession of faith**”.

“There is little disharmony in the long history of the Church about homosexual behavior being contrary to Christian faith. The apostles, the writers of Scripture, the Early Church Fathers (like Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Origen, John Chrysostom and many others), great doctors and teachers of the faith (like Augustine and Aquinas), Reformers (like Luther, Calvin, Knox and Zwingli), John Wesley and the early Methodists, along with countless modern theologians, scholars and Spirit-filled Christians

were all in one accord regarding the sinfulness of homosexual activity.” – Source –
General Superintendents of the Wesleyan Church

I don't know about you, but as a parent, I've been asked a bunch of times when I tell my children to do or not to do something, "WHY?" That's not a bad question unless I'm in a bad mood and they've asked 15 million times. ☺ You know what?... God has been asked that even more than we have. **So why did God say that?**

III. Why Is God against homosexuality?

A. Un-natural – God created sex not only for procreation but also for our pleasure, and He created mankind male and female. We complement each other and fit together in just such an amazing way that we form one flesh. To do it another way is a distortion and corruption of what God created it to be. This is what people refer to as natural law – what God intended it to be. Therefore homosexuality is “unnatural” and leads to other issues which bring me to the next reason.

B. Health Issues – Did you know those who practice homosexuality have “A twenty- five to thirty year decrease in life expectancy”– Source – Jefferey Satinover, *Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth* (Grand Rapids; Baker, 1996).

1. **Aids** – Homosexuals have a much higher chance of getting aids than heterosexuals. Some 89 percent of men known to have AIDS are homosexuals or intravenous drug users. – Source – <http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/aids.html>
 - Some people say Aids is God's judgment on homosexuals. This argument is a flawed one. In the Bible when God does levy a specific judgment, He has always warned them and given them another choice. (Example Jonah)
2. **Hepatitis** – Homosexuals are at increased risk for getting hepatitis, a disease of the liver. Hepatitis can cause serious health problems, including liver cancer, cirrhosis, liver failure, and even death. *#
3. **Substance Abuse** - Homosexuals have a higher rate of substance abuse. Substances used include amyl nitrates (poppers), amphetamines (including crystal meth), marijuana, ecstasy, cocaine, and alcohol. *#

4. **Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)** Homosexuals are at high risk for getting (HPV), which can cause infection and certain types of cancers. *#
5. **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)** These include gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, pubic lice or crabs.* #
6. **Body image problems, eating disorders, and obesity** --Anorexia nervosa, bulimia and obesity can lead to heart disease and diabetes. *#
7. **Depression and Anxiety** – Which can lead to an increased risk of suicide. –
*Source - <https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/lgbti/health/gaymen>
8. **Cancer** – Homosexuals are at increased risk for breast cancer, certain types of gynecological cancers, prostate, testicular, and colon cancer. *#
9. **Heart Disease** - Two of the most common risk factors for heart disease are smoking and obesity. Source - # <https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/lgbti/health/lesbians>

That’s a long list and people who get involved in the homosexual lifestyle don’t take these things into account. Do you think that the reason God said don’t do this was because He was actually trying to protect the individuals because He loved them? I do!

A third reason is

- C. **Idolatry** - Idolatry is the universal human tendency to value something or someone in a way that hinders the love and trust we owe to God. It is an act of theft from God. Paul equates homosexuality and a host of other sins with idolatry in Romans 1.

Romans 1:18-32 (NLT) “*But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.*

*²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. ²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, **they worshiped idols** made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.*

²⁴ So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. ²⁵ **They traded the truth about God for a lie.** So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. ²⁶ That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. **Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other.** ²⁷ **And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men,** and as a result of this **sin**, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

²⁸ Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. ²⁹ Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ³⁰ They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. ³¹ They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. ³² They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too."

Paul is saying "When you exchange the glory of God for idols the main one you exchange the glory of God for is yourself. In exchanging God for ourselves we are prone to fall in love with ourselves. Same sex attraction is a dysfunctional form of idolatry. — Source – John Piper

So...

IV. How should we respond?

According to a recent Barna Group survey, 91 percent of young non-Christians and 80 percent of young Christians describe the church as "anti-homosexual." – **Source** – David Kinnaman (You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith)

The church doesn't have a very good track record, especially when you hear about that group from Kansas. The term anti-homosexual indicates that we are afraid of homosexuals, i.e. homophobes, and that we don't like them. However I hope for most Christians, that is not the case. We should hate the sin but love the sinner. When the Bible calls homosexuality sin it's not listed alone, it includes a host of other sins also. **Homosexuality is not an unforgiveable sin.** The Bible only talks

about one unforgiveable sin and that's the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. As Christians we should be the first to reach out to people in sin with love and compassion! Why? Because we have experienced the love of Jesus Christ!

Let's break it down into three areas:

A. The world / Non-Christians

The Bible tells us in Matthew 22:36-39 (NLT) “**Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?**” 37 Jesus replied, “**You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**” 38 **This is the first and greatest commandment.** 39 **A second is equally important: ‘*Love your neighbor as yourself.*’** Who are our neighbors? Everyone around us - those next door, those at our work place, those we shop with, Muslims, Hindus, the rich, the poor, the homeless, the various races, everyone, including homosexuals!

In loving them we are not telling them they are right or that we approve of their choice.

By loving them we are acknowledging that God created them and that He loves them. God “wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth” (I Timothy 2:4) and He uses us. **Matthew 5:16 (NLT) “In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”**

As a church, if a homosexual walks through the doors, we should welcome them. All are welcome, come as you are and through our love, faith, and testimony it is our prayer that they will encounter Christ. When that happens the Holy Spirit will begin a process of transformation just as He has done with us!

What about:

B. Those who profess to be Christians

When Paul is listing sins in I Corinthians 6, he goes on in verse 11 to say “**Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**” God anticipates that **we will change.** That we will turn from sin and pursue him. He calls us to be Holy, just as He is Holy. (I Peter 1:16) So what do we do? We do what the Bible tells us to do in Matthew 18 “***If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you***

have won that person back. ¹⁶ But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan (unbeliever)...

¹⁸ "I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

So we love them enough to confront them and if they don't change, we continue to show the love of Christ to them without condoning what they have done.

Conclusion

The bottom line is **LOVE** mixed with a lot of **PRAYER** and the **POWER** of the **HOLY SPIRIT**. God is in the life saving and changing business.