

Tough Topics: Homosexuality/Same-Sex Attraction

Jeremiah 9:23-24: *Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."*

First Word

We are all sinners and are saved by grace through faith on account of Jesus Christ!

Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 2:1-10

World View Matters

- God's Intent in His Creation/Natural Law (foundational)
- The Fall of Man and Creation (reverses and perverts)

What Does God's Word Say?

Leviticus 18:22 & Leviticus 20:13

Leviticus 18 **forbids** this offense. Leviticus 20 **announces the penalties**.

In the context, this sin is listed with *other detestable things*. The main reason given is that the nations the Lord is driving out from the promised land *have polluted the land with these practices*. God's people are to be holy as the Lord God is holy (Lev.19:2).

There are many prohibitions in Leviticus. Some are things that have been overturned/fulfilled in Christ. *Others have not. What is the difference?*

Revelatory Sin—In certain times and places, depending on the culture, certain behaviors *reveal* the sinful condition in conduct that goes against a taboo or misaligned behavior.

Incarnational Sin—conduct that violates God's created order, what goes against the natural law. That is, *they embody sin itself by its very act, regardless of time and place*. However, this does not address the root cause of the act—the temptation to sin. We will touch on the this in a moment.

Romans 1:24-27 (Lexham English Bible with my emphasis)

Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to immorality, that their bodies would be dishonored among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God with a lie, and **worshipped and served the creation rather than the Creator**, who is blessed for eternity. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to degrading passions, *for their females exchanged the natural relations for those contrary to nature, and likewise also the males, abandoning the natural relations with the female, were inflamed in their desire toward one another, males with males committing the shameless deed, and receiving in themselves the penalty that was necessary for their error*.

Significantly, Paul is in the middle of an extended argument about the wrath of God revealed against the unrighteousness of mankind. The chief sin is worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. Paul's signal example is homosexuality, both sexes.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (Lexham English Bible with my emphasis)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Neither sexually immoral people, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, *nor passive homosexual partners, nor dominant homosexual partners*, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, not drunkards, not abusive persons, not swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And some of you were these things, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

N.B. The Lexham translation renders accurately **both** acts (active and passive), where many translations conceal both with a generic term. Paul is being quite specific!

What both Leviticus, Romans, and 1 Corinthians share is a concern that God's people **were to be distinctive from the people around them.** *They were to have a different lifestyle.* Their very identity as people of God/ones in Christ have a distinctive foundation that went against the social, political, and religious practices of the people of their age. See also 1 Timothy 1:8-11 for a discussion on the use of law against the lawless, listing among many other sins, homosexuality.

But what about the inclination or temptation apart from the action? And what if people know it's wrong and don't act on the temptation, but still have the attraction?

Matthew 5:28-29 (Lexham English Bible) "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Jesus never directly addresses homosexuality in his ministry for good reason—it would never come up! Everyone *knew* that it was abhorrent. But here, Jesus (in the context of reframing adultery) speaks about **thinking** lustful thoughts **as tantamount** to the **act** of adultery. Therefore, any thought, inclination, urge, compulsion, disordered desire *is sin*. The same would apply to any sin, including homosexuality. All sin is to be repented of, and reformed. *In this sense, we all face the same struggle with sin and temptation.*

What is our response?

Homosexuality is often considered a separate sin from others. However, this issue is as *part of the panoply of sins that stem from worshipping the creature rather than the Creator.*

- When we talk to people who have different *views who are Christians*, we are to speak with kindness, but truthfully. We can speak of this as not a personal choice or preference, but **as the way God wills it**. This takes this topic out of the realm of "choice".
- If people don't have a Christian world view, the appeal to natural law must be made. We still speak the truth in love, but again, faithful to God's Word.
- We also must be consistent—if we uphold God's desire for sexuality in one area, but are "less consistent" in others(!), people will notice and discount our witness.
- There is a distinction between "worthiness" and "appropriateness/rightness". Before God, **all people are worthy** of his love and may receive it in Christ. However, this does not mean God approves if someone lives defiantly outside of His will. While God's grace and Christ's shed blood covers all sin, **we do not take this gift and then live antithetical to His Word and desire.**
- Proactively, we must have ongoing conversations with our children and grandchildren about human sexuality in God's Kingdom. If you are **second** to the conversation, then you are **last** in the conversation. Don't let culture dictate views!
- God transforms lives. This is abundantly clear in 1 Corinthians 6! Homosexuality **and many other sins** put people out of the kingdom, but Paul assures us that we were washed and justified by Jesus and the Spirit. *We were bought with a price.* We do not lapse back into the yoke of slavery. A life of repentance and faith.
- We also must respond to those who want to change with a word of comfort. We speak the Gospel to them, that Christ died for all sinners, for all sin. We can also seek to understand their struggle, and even be a place of refuge. But we also have to identify sin as sin, and not try to rationalize it away.