

Homosexuality and the Bible

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The need for love and compassion

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

1 John 4:8 (NIV)

The message of the Bible is a message of love. God is love itself, and those who claim to know Him must also love others. Jesus' own example was the supreme gift of Himself by dying for us on the Cross.

The need for honesty about sin

- Sin separates us from God

God has other attributes too. He is not only a loving God, but He is also Holy, Righteous and Just (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 99:9; Psalm 119:137; Psalm 89:14). In His righteousness He warned that the penalty for sin is death (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23). Our sin results in spiritual death, which is separation from God (Ephesians 2:1).

- All have sinned

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Romans 3:9-12 (NIV)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23 (NIV)

- Jesus came to deliver us from sin and its power

Jesus often went out of His way to reach out to people who were caught in the trap of sin. In the well known case of the woman brought to Him in adultery, He said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." In His great love He was able to offer forgiveness because He was also going to satisfy the demands of Justice by dying for her. He did not deny that she had sinned. In fact, He said, "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:7-11).

- Homosexual behavior is sinful

The Bible is very clear about the fact that homosexuality is sin. Here are some of the key passages on the subject.

Even in the first book of the Bible homosexuality was shown to be wrong.
They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing."

Genesis 19:5-7 (NIV)

This happened in the city of Sodom. Immediately after this God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone. The type of sexual activity practiced by these people is called sodomy to this very day.

Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.
Leviticus 18:22

This was included among the laws which were given to Moses. In addition to being wrong, it was called "detestable." In some translations it is translated as "an abomination."

Homosexuality is also condemned in the New Testament.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other

men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Romans 1:24-27 (NIV)

This can only describe homosexuality. It is given by the Apostle Paul as part of a four-step decline of morality which leads ultimately to "depraved minds," or the inability to distinguish right from wrong. This moral decay has characterized many previous civilizations, resulting in internal collapse rather than external conquest.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. 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.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NIV)

The Greek word for homosexual in verse 9 is *arsenokoites* which means "having sex with a male." It is one of many categories of people who "will not inherit the Kingdom of God." The good news is, for people in all of these categories, that if they give their lives to Jesus Christ they will no longer be these sorts of people.

Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,

1 Timothy 1:9-10 (NAS)

The same Greek word (*arsenokoites*) is used here as in the previous passage. In the American Standard Version it is translated "abusers of themselves with mankind," and in the King James Version it is "them that defile themselves with mankind." Again, it is in the company of other serious offenses.

The point of all this is not that it is the only sin, or the worst sin, but if one claims to believe the Bible, it simply must be admitted that homosexuality is a sin, not just one among many acceptable lifestyles.

Even if it could be proven that there is some genetic proclivity to homosexual behavior (and the evidence for this is far from convincing), it would still be in the same class as every other sin since the Bible makes it clear that we all have a predisposition to sin. God's grace is greater than all our lustful urges, so those who know Christ as Savior may be delivered from any sinful habit.

Christians who help homosexuals are performing acts of love, not hate

Those who accept a literal interpretation of what the Bible teaches about homosexuality are often vilified as purveyors of hate. They are called "homophobes," or "those who fear homosexuality." To be honest, there are some who use the Bible as a front for hateful activity. They are not balanced. They do not allow God's love to motivate them.

However, most evangelical Christians have a sincere desire to help all people experience abundant life in Christ. They are usually active wherever people need help: providing food and shelter for the poor, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, assistance to prisoners and victims, aid to people suffering famine or disasters, comfort to the elderly, and whatever else they can do to share Christ's love.

There is a strong movement among some evangelical groups to offer assistance for those who would like to break away from the homosexual life-style. Thousands have responded, accepting Christ as Savior and embracing the Bible as God's literal Word. A series of advertisements have chronicled some of the success stories of these people. They have been carefully worded, in order not to inflame anger, but to offer love and hope to those who are interested.

Still there are people who are brutal and prejudiced. The recent tragic death of Matthew Shepard have caused some homosexual activists to blame these organizations for "providing an atmosphere of hate" which contributes to this violence.

Conclusion

The proper attitude for a Christian

Bible-believing Christians do not have the option of ignoring the stern warnings about homosexuality. But we can, like Jesus, be motivated by love in our contacts with people who are living in that life-style. It is the loving thing to do to share Christ with them and to be honest with them about what the Bible says. Compassion and assistance should be extended to them and to their families. We should pray for them. Our sins have been forgiven. Theirs may be also if they turn to Christ.