

Is Homosexuality Acceptable to God

Country musician Garth Brooks had a song out on the radio a number of years ago entitled “We Shall Be Free.” In an interview with ABC’s Barbara Walters he was asked about the meaning of a line in the song.

The line declares, “When we’re free to love anyone we choose...we shall be free.” Brooks explained that he has a sister who is homosexual and he “Just can’t condemn someone for loving someone else!” While, to my knowledge that was the first time anyone in the country music spotlight made such a public defense of the homosexual lifestyle, the sentiment is becoming more and more the norm.

Homosexuality In The Bible

Homosexuality is by no means a recent development. All the way back in the book of Genesis the Bible tells us about Sodom whose men came to the door of Lot crying out “**...Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally**” (19:5 NKJV). Of course the entire city was destroyed, not exclusively because of this sin, but homosexuality was a part of their overall wickedness.

The law of Moses was explicit regarding what was and was not proper sexual behavior. Among those things that were restricted were: premarital relations (Deuteronomy 22:23-29), adultery (Deuteronomy 22:22), incest (Leviticus 18:6-18), bestiality (Leviticus 18:23)

and homosexuality. Here is how the law read with regard to homosexuality: **“You shall not lie with a man as with a woman. It is an abomination”** (Leviticus 18:22). The punishment for disobedience to this law was also clear: **“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them”** (Leviticus 20:13).

After the conquest of Canaan an incident much like that which occurred in Sodom took place in the city of Gibeah. The men of the city surrounded the house of one of its citizen’s demanding, **“Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him carnally!”** (Judges 19:22). This bizarre incident led to the man giving his concubine to the men of the city, whom they raped, abused, and killed. This uncontrolled lust led to a national war.

The New Testament

Many in the religious world have misunderstood the fact that Jesus never addressed homosexuality directly to be a sanction for its practice in the Christian age. Nothing could be farther from the truth! As proof of this consider two points: 1.) Homosexuality is *fornication* and 2.) The apostles taught the Lord’s commandments.

In Matthew 15:19 and Mark 7:21 Jesus includes within a list of many others sins **“fornication”** (“sexual immorality” NIV). He draws the conclusion at the end of this list, **“All these evil things come from within a man and defile a man”** (Mark 7:23). The same word is used in Matthew 19:9 and Matthew 5:32 in which Jesus grants (as the sole cause for divorce) that “fornication” is a justifiable reason to put away one’s mate.

The word translated “fornication” is the Greek word *porneia* (πορνεία). According to Thayer it means “Illicit sexual intercourse in general” (532). The Bible makes it clear that while Jesus was on earth He was in full compliance with the teachings of the Law of Moses (Galatians 4:4, Hebrews 4:14,15 and Matthew 5:19).

**When Jesus condemned “fornication”
He condemned all the Law of Moses
defined as fornication, including
homosexuality.**

Further, it is clear that Jesus promised that after His departure the Holy Spirit would be given to the apostles to guide them **“into all truth”** (John 16:13). Thus when the Apostles taught they could say, **“...The things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord”** (1 Corinthians 14:37). That being the case, it is abundantly clear from the writings of the apostles that homosexuality is condemned.

The Apostles’ Doctrine

The apostle John seven times in the book of Revelation spoke in condemnation of “fornication” (2:21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3; 19:2). The apostle Paul spoke eleven times of “fornication. (Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:13,18; 7:2; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3). Further, some of the most clear statements in the Scripture condemning homosexuality are made by the apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 he includes **“homosexuals”** and **“sodomites”** in a list of those who **“...Will not inherit the kingdom of God.”** In 1 Timothy

1:10 Paul describes the behavior of fornicators and sodomites as that which, **“Is contrary to sound doctrine.”** In Romans 1:24-27 Paul traces the thinking which leads people into such practices describing it as **“vile,” “against nature”** (1:26), and **“shameful”** (1:27). All of this makes it abundantly clear that a person cannot participate in this type of behavior and have any hope of eternal life with God.

The Right Attitude Is Important

As Christians in our efforts to oppose error and urge people to repentance I believe it is vitally important that we ourselves maintain the right attitude. Because of the nature of this sin and how it has been viewed (even by our own culture) up until recent years it has been easy to view homosexuality as a more offensive sin to God than lying, stealing, lust, adultery, immodesty, drunkenness, or pride. I think it is important for us to remember that **“all unrighteousness is sin”** (1 John 5:17), **“whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness”** (1 John 3:4), and **“the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23). Christians who take a very abrasive posture toward homosexuality because of the influence homosexuals may have on our children, must be certain that we are not hypocritical in taking a lenient attitude towards the influence of social drinking, immodesty or other factors whose influence is equally pronounced. Our posture must be one that exposes the sin, yet lovingly pleads with the sinner to turn from that which leads to condemnation whether it is drunkenness, pride, or homosexuality.

What Is The Issue?

I'm afraid that many people really miss the whole point when they defend the lifestyle by

viewing it simply as a form of love shown to another person. Love is not the issue—the issue is behavior.

How does love manifest itself? I may love anyone or anything but that doesn't mean that my behavior is totally free with regard to the object of my love. For example, I may love ice cream. Does that mean that I do not have to exercise any restraint when it comes to how much I eat or when I eat? I love my spouse but that doesn't mean that my behavior doesn't have to stay within certain bounds (i.e. no abuse, no force, no compulsion). The same is true with regard to love that people of the same sex may feel for one another. The Lord has set certain boundaries on behavior, and especially sexual behavior. To willfully cross these boundaries is not “love” but rebellion against the Creator.

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