

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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Homosexual Conduct

Homosexual conduct is a "hot topic" in the time and place we live. Not only is the practice becoming increasingly common, but there is a strong push for *all* to *approve* of this practice.

As with all questions of morality, though, God has the authority to determine what is right and what is wrong. God tells us the truth about morality through His written Word (**John 17:17**; **2 Tim. 3:16-17**).

Instead of molding our thinking after the world's view of right and wrong, the Holy Spirit exhorts us to let God's Word transform our thinking (**Rom. 12:2**). God commands us to fit our beliefs to His will, instead of trying to make God's will fit our beliefs.

Understanding God's will related to homosexual conduct begins by recognizing what He teaches about *gender*. When Jesus was asked a question about divorce in **Matthew 19**, He responded by going back to God's original design of gender and marriage. Notice **verses 4-5**: *[Jesus] answered, "Haven't you read that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?'"*

God created exactly *two* genders. These genders are "*male and female*" (**Gen. 1:27**). God did not leave it to the man or the woman to decide what gender they'd like to be.

God did not create either the man or the woman to be superior in importance to the other. However, He did not create them to be *identical*. Instead, His design is for the man and woman to perfectly *complement* one another. The uniqueness of man and woman make them suitable for each another.

This is connected to God's design of marriage. God-approved marriage is between husband and wife. When both the husband and the wife fulfill their complementary roles, marriage works beautifully (**Eph. 5:22-33**).

God *never* authorizes "husband and husband" or "wife and wife" marriages. Same sex "marriages" violate the complementary nature of man and woman that God intends to exist in the marriage relationship.

Given this truth, homosexual conduct is sex outside of *God-approved* marriage. It is therefore a form of fornication (see *Strong G4202 & Thayer*), which is sin (**Gal. 5:19-21**).

Homosexual conduct is also condemned through passages that *directly* address this type of sexual sin.

Homosexual behavior has been a problem since the patriarchal dispensation. Sodom and Gomorrah were given to this sin (**Gen. 19:4-5**), and were destroyed for sins that included "*going after strange flesh*" (**Jude 7**). God continued to condemn homosexual conduct during the Mosaic dispensation (**Lev. 18:22**).

While this history helps us better understand how God looks at things, it must be conceded that the Law we are subject to today is the Law of Christ, which is revealed through the New Testament (**Col. 2:14-17**).

The New Testament speaks of some "*who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator*" (**Rom. 1:25**). Given their determination to reject the Lord's will, God "let them have it their way." Notice **verses 26-27**: *For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For their women changed the natural function into that which is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust*

toward one another, men doing what is inappropriate with men, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error.

These verses speak of homosexual conduct in a way that leaves no doubt it is condemned by God (also see **1 Tim. 1:10**).

Perhaps the strongest rebuke of homosexual conduct is seen in **1 Corinthians 6**. Notice **verses 9-10**: *Or don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor extortionists, will inherit God's kingdom.* Homosexuals are among the unrighteous who will face eternal condemnation in hell.

While sin leads to eternal punishment, God offers a means by which we can be forgiven. One thing He requires to be forgiven of *any* sin is repentance. This involves *turning away* from unrighteous behavior and turning toward God.

While some claim that homosexual behavior cannot be changed, God says otherwise. After homosexual conduct and other unrighteous acts are condemned in **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**, **verse 11** says, *"And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."* According to our Creator, homosexuals can turn from that behavior (notice the words "*such were*"). Those in a same-sex "marriage" can (and must) leave that relationship to be right with God. Those practicing homosexual conduct can (and must) cease that behavior to be right with God.

Perhaps the misunderstanding concerning homosexuals' ability to change stems from a failure to distinguish between *temptation* and *sin*. **Hebrews 4:15** shows a crucial difference between the two. The **verse** speaks of Christ as the *"One who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin."*

It's not a sin to be tempted. Rather, it's a sin to *yield* to temptation. Some have stronger homosexual *temptations* than others, but this does not mean that some are forced to *yield* to temptation while others are not.

Notice **1 Corinthians 10:13**: *No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.* God assures that no matter what temptation one faces, he or she always has a "*way of escape*." This is a comfort for those who want to please God.

While Christians must stand firm on these truths, we must avoid *hypocrisy* when condemning homosexual conduct.

This does not mean that we should never judge others (cf. **John 7:24**). We must be consistent, though, in identifying *all* sin as wrong. For instance, premarital sex should not be considered "less wrong" than homosexual acts. Both acts involve sex outside of God-approved marriage. Both acts are *sin*.

We must also guard against hypocrisy by watching our *attitudes* and *motives*. We must speak the truth in love (**Eph. 4:15**), genuinely desiring to help others, rather than speaking condescendingly or to "win" an argument.

The fear of hypocrisy should not discourage us from standing firm on the truth, though. We should not "water down" the truth, or be ashamed to proclaim it. God's Word is unchanging (**1 Pet. 1:24-25**). God does not "take back" the truth simply because some attempt to discard it (cf. **Jer. 36:20-32**).

As our society pushes for all to accept homosexual conduct, we should remember God's truth and His strength (**Rom 8:31**).

May those guilty of homosexual conduct submit to God's terms of forgiveness (including repentance), and may we all view and respond to homosexual conduct as God desires.

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