

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

**What the Bible Says About
Marriage & Homosexual Practice**



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SAME-SEX MARRIAGE: A BIBLICAL OXYMORON?

*A Biblical Response to
Homosexual Practice and Marriage*

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IS SAME-SEX MARRIAGE A BIBLICAL OXYMORON?

INTRODUCTION

Oxymoron means a union of two contradictory things such as “dry rain” or “cold fire.” Is same-sex marriage a biblical oxymoron and a contradiction to what the Bible says? Many in our society claim it is not. In fact those who maintain it is a contradiction often are viewed as out of step with modern American culture. Dr. Al Mohler summed up the situation well,

The larger culture is now bombarded with messages and images designed to portray homosexuality as a normal lifestyle. Homoerotic themes are so common in the mainstream media that many citizens have virtually lost the capacity to be shocked... These days, anyone who would oppose homosexuality as a fully valid lifestyle is depicted as a narrow-minded bigot and described as “homophobic.” Anyone who suggests that heterosexual marriage is the only acceptable and legitimate arena of sexual activity is lambasted as outdated, oppressive, and outrageously out of step with modern culture. Opponents of same-sex marriage are disparaged as intolerant, judgmental, and fundamentalist.¹

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S MOTIVE AND MANNER IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE?

Non-Christians often assume wrong motives for Christian's opposition to same-sex marriage, thinking Christians are fueled by fear, ignorance, bigotry or hate. Though some who claim to be Christians may have these motives, **Most Christians are motivated by quite the opposite. Love for God and for people.** How did Jesus love people? He died and rose for them (Gal. 2:20) and offers them forgiveness and eternal life if they will repent of their sin and believe in Him as their Lord and Savior (John 3:16; 8:24; 1:11-13). How are Christians to love people? Showing kindness and telling them what Jesus has done for them, urging them to repent and believe in Him (Luke 24:46-47).

Christians believe the Bible teaches marriage was instituted by God, and to be between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4-7), and that deviation from that (whether it be adultery or homosexual practice) is sin. Because of this, Christians seek to graciously tell gay people what God says about their lifestyle, and their need to repent and follow Christ. Love for their soul, not hatred of their sexual preference compels Christians in this issue (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Jesus prayed, deeply cared for, called people to repent and believe in Him and then wept for those who would not (Luke 19:41-44). Christians who reflect Him are moved to do the same (Philippians 3:19).

The manner in which Christians are to address the issue of same-sex marriage is with grace and truth. With love and the gospel. Jesus came to earth “*full of Grace and Truth*” (John 1:14-16). He displayed this

to a prostitute caught in sin. He sternly rebuked those who had thrown her down and were going to stone her. He tenderly reached out and helped her stand up and then said to her, ***“Go and sin no more”*** (John 8: 1-11). Christians should strongly rebuke any who would malign or hurt gay people. We must protect them from any abuse, treat them with kindness and tell them ***“with gentleness and respect”*** (1 Peter 3;15-17) what Jesus says about turning from the sin of homosexual practice to receive Him as their Lord and Savior.

Often Christians are not Christ-like in their attitude toward practicing homosexuals and for this ***they*** need to repent. One Christian man’s email to me regarding this subject is very appropriate:

Thanks for addressing this timely topic. I confess that for many years I was one who hated and persecuted gay people, and loosely used Christianity as an excuse for that ungodly hate. God has forgiven me for that sin, and given me a heart of compassion for those whose “lostness” expresses itself in homosexual behavior, and who need a loving Lord and Savior just as desperately as me.

I have been saddened by the apparent lack of compassion in Christendom toward these men and women. It prompted me to read my Bible again, and I was reminded that perhaps the harshest criticism is leveled at those who profess to know God and yet practice hypocrisy (Matthew 7:5; Mark 7, etc.). The fact doesn’t make sin not to be sin, but hypocrisy (not homosexual acts) was the sin I was guilty of, and of which I could repent.

WHY IS IT CRUCIAL CHRISTIANS ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?

Sometimes Christians wonder why they should be concerned and even make same-sex marriage an issue. Their thinking is “*Why should it concern us what gay people want to do? This is a private issue. If they want to practice same-sex marriage and it makes them happy, who are we to judge them?*” They see it as simply a personal preference issue and therefore none of our business. On one level this is true. We are not called to police people’s private behavior. If so everyone would be indicted. Yet same-sex marriage is more than a personal issue. There are several reasons why this issue is significant and must be understood and addressed biblically by Christians.

Christians must address same-sex marriage because it contradicts the gospel.

Jesus declared that repentance was crucial to enter God’s Kingdom, “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel*”² (Mark 1:15). To ‘repent’ meant to turn from disobeying God’s Word. The Bible describes homosexual practice as sin and therefore something those practicing must repent of. In the passage below it is listed among several other sins:

“Realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the and sinners, for the unholy and, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and, and whatever else is contrary to teaching, according to glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted” (1 Timothy 1:9-11).

Affirming homosexual practice contradicts the gospel because it encourages people to continue in sin rather than repent of it as Jesus commanded. (Acts 2:36-38; 17:30-31; Luke 24:46-47). He came to earth and died **for** our sins to deliver us **from** our sins for, “*He came to save His people from their sin*” (Matthew 1:21). To endorse what God says is sin, contradicts the purpose for His dying.

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. . . For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous that He might bring you to God”
(1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

Same-sex marriage and homosexual practice that fuels it, is a gospel issue, not simply a personal one. To not call people to repent of it is to leave them unrepentant and therefore outside God’s kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Christians must address same-sex marriage and homosexual practice, because to not do so may leave those who endorse it with a false assurance of their salvation.

Many who practice homosexual behavior claim to be Christians, loved and accepted by God. One Gay Christian organization's Statement of Faith reveals this false assurance:

We worship one God, creator of heaven and earth, who is revealed in the Bible as the eternal I AM. We proclaim that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, the sinless Son of God, who was crucified for our sins and rose again on the third day. We affirm that the Bible is Holy Scripture, divinely inspired and authoritative, and not merely a human work. . . . (We believe we are) saved by the grace of God and not by our own human efforts.

We believe that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians are full participants in God's kingdom, and that the ways of holiness and the ways of sinfulness are equally available to them as to others. ³

Their assurance of salvation is **contradicted** by Scripture:

"Do not be deceived: no sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or anyone practicing homosexuality, no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

In Matthew 7:15-23 Jesus described how one is able to discern a true Christian from a false one. He said that, similar to knowing a tree by its fruit, one can discern if he/she is a true Christian, not a false one, by the fruit of their lifestyle. He says to those who claim to know Him but are unrepentant of their sin:

Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. . . but I will declare to them, 'depart from Me you who practice lawlessness (sin). (Matthew 7:23)

Christians must address the issue of same-sex marriage for the sake of pointing people to what Jesus' says is the true basis of assurance that they have received Him by faith and know Him as their Lord: turning from their sin, not continuing in it.

(1 John 2:3; 3:9; Luke 6:46; 24:46-47)

Christians must address the issue of same-sex marriage and homosexual practice because it is unloving to ignore it.

God manifested His love by sending His eternal Son to earth to become human and die for us (Romans 5:6-10; Galatians 2:20; John 3:16). His loving forgiveness is expressed toward any sinner who repents and receives Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 2:36-40; Ephesians 2:4-9). Christians who won't tell gay friends what Jesus says about repentance, contradict what He tells us to do. His plan for us is "*that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations*" (Luke 24:47).

The loving thing for a Christian to do is to graciously tell all sinners, including practicing homosexuals, that they, as all sinners, are in need of a savior. God is holy and will judge all sin (Rom. 1:18) whether it is heterosexual sins of adultery and fornication (Hebrews 13:4); homosexual sin (Romans 1:25-28; 1 Corinthians 6:9); or relational sins such as hatred, envy, jealousy, gossip, anger, etc. (Galatians 5:19-21). Love compels Christians to tell everyone that Jesus died to pay the penalty for their sins and calls them to repent and believe in Him for forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:46-47; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO DECIDE THIS ISSUE?

God. He created man and woman and instituted marriage (Genesis 1:27; 2:18-25). If you were trying to decide on whether to drive a truck over a small bridge spanning a raging river, and weren't sure it could bear the weight of your vehicle, whose counsel would you seek? The matter's too important to leave to guesswork or the opinion of others standing by. The ideal person to consult would be the architect. He designed and engineered it, and has perfect knowledge of its intended capacity.

So it is with God. He created and designed the human body and its sexual function (Genesis 1:27; 2:21). Man's opinions come and go, but God alone has the authority and knowledge to tell us the proper way to use our bodies. He not only designed the human body but also gave explicit instructions on its proper use for our good.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CONTRADICTS WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE.

MARRIAGE IS A DIVINE INSTITUTION.

The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. . . For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵*And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*
(Genesis 2:22,24-25)

Jesus affirmed that God created male and female and the institution of marriage when He said,

And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,"⁵ and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (Matthew 19:4-6)

In Genesis, God reveals *He* created the woman and brought her to the man (2:22), the *He* specified the nature of their relationship to one another (2:24-25), which is the essence of marriage. In Malachi 2:14 He called marriage a 'Covenant' between Himself and the husband and wife and therefore takes personal offense when it is violated (Malachi 2:14-16). God reveals the marriage relationship would involve four elements.

1. **Marriage was to be a preeminent commitment** above all other human relationships. This is evident by the command that the married couple must *leave Father and Mother* (Genesis 2:24). In the ancient world, the parental relationship was supreme. To be commanded to leave it was declaring the supreme nature of marriage above all other human relationships.
2. **Marriage was to be a lifelong, permanent commitment** in which the husband and wife were to *cleave to one another* (Genesis 2:24). The word "cleave" meant 'to cling or stick together'. It was used of not allowing something to depart (2 Kings 3:3). Jesus affirmed the permanence of this union saying, "*What God has joined together, let no man separate*" (Matt. 19:6).
3. **Marriage alone was to be a sexually exclusive, monogamous union.** Sexual relationship was designed by God to be enjoyed by the man and woman **after** their commitment to one another in marriage not before. *They shall become one flesh* (Genesis 2:24) *after* 'leaving and cleaving to one another' (Genesis 2:25). Two of God's Ten Commandments were designed to remind people of this. The first prohibited sex outside of marriage; *You shall not commit adultery* (Deuteronomy 5:18); and the other prohibited thinking about it, *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife* (Deuteronomy 5:21).

That God designed sexual union to be between a man and woman in marriage is evidenced by His repeated prohibitions against sexual relations with anyone but one's spouse whether before (fornication), or during marriage (adultery), (Exodus 20:14; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4-9). The polygamous practices of some Old Testament kings were never condoned by God, and resulted in serious problems. (Deuteronomy 17:17).

MARRIAGE IS A UNIVERSAL, TIMELESS INSTITUTION.

Marriage according to the Bible is supra-cultural, that is, it transcends culture and carries through every culture. Marriage was instituted by God *prior* to any human culture (Genesis 2:21-25) and affirmed by Biblical writers *through* every culture. It will continue as an institution until the end of the age when Christ returns to earth (Matthew 24:32-38).

MARRIAGE IS A HETEROSEXUAL INSTITUTION.

God created a woman not another man to be Adam's emotional and sexual partner (Genesis 2:21-25).

He designed and created the woman to perfectly correspond to the man both emotionally and physically (Genesis 2:18, 21-22), and then brought her to him. This is indicated in Genesis 2:24 where it says "***for this reason*** a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife." 'For this reason' refers back to the unique heterosexual creation of the woman (Genesis 2:18, 21-22), whom God uniquely and solely designed to become "one flesh" with the man. The marriage union was designed to be only between a man and woman because the sexual union of a man was designed to only be with a woman. It is her alone that the man becomes "one flesh" with.

God emphasized this sexual design in marriage by forbidding sexual activity outside of marriage (whether adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, fornication or incest) and warning of His judgment upon those who do so (Leviticus 18:20-24; 20:12-14; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:5-8; Ephesians 5:5-6). If someone decided to alter water by removing the oxygen and just adding more hydrogen you may call it water, but by definition the necessary components of H₂O are not there. It is no longer water, regardless of whether you call it so. Homosexual relationships may be commitments between two people, however the Bible teaches they are not marriage. It could be called a union or partnership but not a marriage because it lacks the essential **male-female union** by which marriage is defined (Genesis 2:24-25).

MARRIAGE IS A PROTECTED INSTITUTION.

Two of the Ten Commandments were designed by God to guard the sanctity of marriage by not only forbidding the act of adultery (*"You shall not commit adultery"*) but even the desiring of it (*"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife"*-Exodus 20:14,17)! Jesus strongly affirmed these commandments (Matthew 5:27-28; 19:4-9). Marriage is an exclusive life-time union and is defended by the Bible's warnings of divine disapproval on those who violate the marriage union by adultery, incest, homosexuality or unwarranted divorce (Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:4-8); Malachi 2:14-16).

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CONTRADICTS WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE.

If homosexual practice is forbidden in the Bible, it is self-evident that same-sex marriage is also, and therefore is a biblical oxymoron (contradiction). Below is a summary of what the Bible says about homosexual practice.

1. Homosexual practice is forbidden by God.

God explicitly forbids homosexual behavior.

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” (Leviticus 18:22
(Leviticus 20:13).

Homosexual practice defiles a person (making them unclean)
before God.

“Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile ourselves with them; I am the Lord your God.”
(Leviticus 18:30, Lev. 18:18,24-30)

Homosexual practice is linked with incest as a sin worthy of equal divine punishment.

“If there is a man who lies with his father’s wife, . . . their bloodguiltiness is upon them. If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, . . . They have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them. If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act . . . their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”
(Leviticus 20:11-13)

Homosexual practice is an “abomination” and “detestable” to God.

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” (Leviticus 18:22)

“If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act.” (Leviticus 20:13)

The Hebrew word translated “abomination” was one of the strongest words for something highly offensive to God. The same word is used to describe His feelings towards, adultery, child sacrifice, and bestiality (Leviticus 18:20-30).

Homosexual practice so contradicted God's design, that even a man wearing woman's clothing was an abomination to Him.

"A woman shall not wear man's clothing, nor shall a man put on woman's clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 22:5)

Homosexual practice was forbidden even though it was the cultural norm to practice it.

"If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; . . . Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nations which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them." (Leviticus 20:13,23)

2. God's prohibition of homosexual practice was evident by His judgments against it.

God's displayed ***historical*** judgment against those who practiced homosexuality. This included the Israelites (Lev. 20:13), the Canaanite nations (Lev.20:23; Deut. 9:4-5) and Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19; Luke 17:29-32). Twelve hundred years after it was destroyed, the prophet Isaiah attested to the brazenness of Sodom's sin (Isaiah 3:9).

God displayed ***tutorial*** judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah because of their homosexual practice. He judged them directly and severely as an example to future generations (Genesis 19:2, Peter 2:6; Jude 7). He doesn't usually immediately judge those who practice this sin (or any sins) now because of His gracious patience providing time for repentance (Romans 2:4-5).

God reveals His ***present*** judgment upon those who practice homosexual behavior through the physical maladies He said would afflict those who practice this.

For this reason gave them over to passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

God will display ***future*** judgment on all who practice any sin among which is listed homosexual behavior. The future, universal judgment of God against homosexual practice and all sin) is clearly stated in the Bible:

Or you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor, nor homosexuals,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

3. God's prohibition of homosexual practice is evidenced by it being described as contrary to His created sexual function for a man and woman.

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the women and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error”
(Romans 1:26-27)

Homosexual behavior is described in this passage as an abandonment of the “natural”, physically self-evident sexual makeup and function God created for male and female in exchange for an ‘unnatural’ sexual behavior.

4. God's prohibition of homosexual practice is evident by its being fueled by idolatry not worship of the true God.

Scripture reveals that man's deviation from God's sexual plan is preceded and fueled by a prior deviation from worship of Him:

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶For THIS REASON God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
(Romans 1:22-27)

Those practicing homosexual behavior (and all sins-Romans 1:26-32) do so, according to this scripture, fueled by idolatry. **Replacing the Creator preceded rebelling** against their creator. Instead of the Creator who is holy and just who will judge sin, they choose to worship gods of their own making who would not judge their sin. Their wrong worship led them into wrong behavior.

Dr. John McArthur notes the seriousness of this:

Man's rejection of God and embracing of idols can be compared to a son who murdered his father and then made a dummy figure that he introduces to the world as his father. Yet what

*sinful mankind has always done and continues to do with God is infinitely more wicked and senseless than that. The first creature man substitutes for God is himself, an image in the form of corruptible man (Romans 1:23). Instead of glorifying and worshiping God, he attempts to deify himself. Although he doubtlessly made this alleged statement in derisive sarcasm, Voltaire was correct in observing: "God made man in His own image and man returned the favor."*⁴

5. God's prohibition of homosexual behavior is evident by its prohibition being universally applicable to all ages.

Some assert the Bible's teaching on homosexuality is culturally bound and applicable only to the ancient cultures to which they were originally written. For example, just as offering animal sacrifices in the Old Testament was limited only to that time, so (it is claimed), are the instructions concerning homosexuality and marriage. However, though it's true some things are applicable to only Old Testament time, **God makes it clear when His commands *transcend any one culture* by repeating them through *every* culture.**

For example, He repeats through every culture over a period of 1,500 years, His commands to not steal, lie, murder or commit adultery (Deuteronomy 5:16-21; Ephesians 4:25-28; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:9). All admit these are universal prohibitions applicable to all cultures. The Bible similarly affirms heterosexual marriage and prohibits homosexual behavior through every culture over 1,500 years (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:5-6; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). The Bible's prohibitions regarding homosexuality are as applicable today as its teaching on adultery, incest, lying, stealing or murder.

SOME CLAIM THE BIBLE DOES NOT PROHIBIT HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE. WHY ARE THERE DIFFERING VIEWS? HOW DO WE KNOW THE RIGHT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION?

If the Bible is so clear on this subject, why do some claim the Bible and Jesus in particular sanction homosexuality? The answer is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics refers to the rules by which you interpret the Bible (or any literature).

What the Bible says about homosexual behavior was intended to be understood in its plain, literal sense (unless the genre or context clearly indicates a different understanding). Interpreted this way, the Bible's teaching concerning homosexual behavior is unequivocal. Professor Elizabeth Achtemeier of Richmond's Union Theological Seminary says, *"The clearest teaching of Scripture is that God intended sexual intercourse to be limited to the marriage relationship of one man and one woman."*⁵

Those who claim the Bible does not prohibit homosexual practice, contradict three principles Jesus affirmed were essential for interpreting the scriptures.

1. The Bible is to be understood in its literal plain sense.

Jesus interpreted literally and urged others to do so. He referred to the creation of Adam and Eve, Noah's flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and Jonah in the belly of the fish as historic literal events (Matthew 12:40; 19:4-5; Luke 17:26-30). He urged people to read and understand the Bible in its plain sense, rebuking them for being slow of heart to believe the Scriptures (Luke 24:25-27). He affirmed the literal truthfulness of all the Scriptures even down to the smallest detail (Matthew 5:17-18).

The Old Testament prophecies regarding Christ's first coming as the Messiah were fulfilled literally including the place of His birth, the precise manner of His death, the place of his burial, His resurrection, the exact number of pieces of silver for which He would be betrayed and even the fact that His clothes would be taken from Him and divided by lot (Micah 5:2; Psalm 22:10, 16,18; Isaiah 53:5,9; Zechariah 11:12-13).

Christ's own predictions were fulfilled literally such as: the manner of His death; His resurrection on the third day; the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem and the spread of His gospel around the world were fulfilled literally (Luke 18: 31-34; Matthew 16:21; 20:17-29; 24:1-2,14; Luke 19:41-44). Jesus clearly taught and modeled interpreting Scriptures in their plain, normal sense.

The Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled literally such as: Israel's 70- year Babylonian captivity (Jeremiah 25:11-12); the destruction of specific nations, (Isaiah chapters 13-23); the apostasy, conquering, dispersion and return of Israel after the Babylonian empire conquered them (Isaiah 44:24-45:7); Israel's rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah (Isaiah 53:1-5).

Those who maintain the Bible approves homosexuality often do so by interpreting the Scripture

inconsistently. While affirming a normal plain interpretation of Bible passages forbidding adultery, incest, bestiality, and rape, they deny that these same passages forbid homosexual behavior (Leviticus 18:20-23).

Why do they change their interpretation in the middle of a passage? Because what the Bible plainly teaches forbidding homosexual behavior is contrary to their views, so they employ a new rule of interpretation: Their own presuppositions. They start with the presupposition that homosexuality is morally permissible and then interpret the Bible in light of this, often choosing which passages are applicable for today based on their own moral filter, not the plain teaching of the Bible.

This moral filter not only compels them to deny the Bible's plain teaching forbidding homosexual behavior, it motivates some to seek to *remove* all verses from the Bible that forbid homosexual behavior. One religious leader said,

*"Not to recognize, critique, and condemn Paul's equation of godlessness with homosexuality is dangerous. To remain within our respective Christian traditions and not challenge those passages that degrade and destroy us is to contribute to our own oppression... These passages will be brought up and used against us again and again until Christians demand their removal from the biblical canon, or, at the very least, formally discredit their authority to prescribe behavior."*⁶

Any interpretation that denies the Bible forbids homosexual behavior, contradicts the basic rule of understanding the literal plain meaning of the text, and the nearly universal interpretation of the Bible for 2000 years. And most importantly, Jesus' teaching on how to understand the Bible.

2. The Bible's commands were *universally* applicable unless not carried over into future cultures.

Some claim that the Bible's prohibition against homosexual practice was limited to Old Testament times and that its prohibitions were against the cultic, abusive, idolatrous practice of homosexuality practiced by the ancient surrounding nations. Therefore, they claim they don't apply to loving monogamous modern homosexual relations. **How do we know which biblical commands are authoritative only for Bible times and which are for every generation? God tells us by continuing the commands into future cultures.**

Jesus, speaking through His Apostles in the New Testament said Old Testament dietary laws (1 Tim. 4:3-4), ceremonial laws (Col. 2:16,21) and sacrificial laws (Hebrews 9:1-5;10:1-14) were no longer applicable having been fulfilled in Christ.

However, the Old Testament moral laws, consisting of the Ten Commandments and all the statutes explaining them, such as those prohibiting murder, lying, stealing, adultery, sexual immorality etc., were restated as in effect for every culture. Jesus and His Apostles carried over the Old Testament commands

regarding heterosexual marriage and the prohibition of homosexual practice (Matt. 19:4-8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Romans 1: 26-28).

God condemned homosexual practice in 2000 B.C. in Sodom and Gomorrah **before** the Mosaic law (Gen 18-19), **during** the Mosaic Law in 1450 B.C. (Lev. 18-19; 1 Timothy 1:9-11) and **after** the law by Jesus through the Apostles (Romans 1:26-28; 1Cor. 6:9-11). Its prohibition is universal not limited to the Old Testament circumstances or times. God's commands concerning marriage and homosexual practice are supra-cultural, that is, they transcend culture and continue to every culture. Marriage was instituted by God *prior* to human culture (Genesis 2:21-25) and affirmed by Biblical writers *through* every culture.

3. The Bible, in its entirety, is to be consulted as the final authority.

Jesus said the Scriptures had authority over human reasoning, opinions or declarations in determining moral truth. When challenged by His enemies regarding His teaching of the resurrection from the dead, He replied by quoting Exodus 3:6 as proof of the resurrection. (Luke 20:37-38) When teaching on marriage He didn't quote various religious authorities or appeal to current or prevalent cultural views (whether Greek, Roman or Jewish). He quoted Genesis 1:27 and 2:25 as the final authority on what they should believe (Matthew 19:4-8). Jesus taught that Scripture was the final authority on moral issues not the shifting sands of cultural affirmation.

BIBLICAL RESPONSES TO ARGUMENTS FOR SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE.

ARGUMENT 1

How can homosexual practice or transgender orientation be wrong if people are born that way?

The Bible says:

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. . . . A woman shall not wear man’s clothing, nor shall a man put on a woman’s clothing; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God.”

(Leviticus 18:22 and Deuteronomy 22:5)

How can this be fair if people are “born that way” and therefore it comes natural to them? It would be like telling a fish not to swim, or a bird not to fly.

1. Homosexuals are not born that way.

God says in Genesis 1:27; 2:21, He created male and female sexuality not homosexual people. In Romans 1:26-27, homosexual practice is said to be “unnatural”, that is, contrary to God’s created design for men and women.

2. Science has not proven that homosexuals are born that way.

Scientific studies related to homosexual orientation are often flawed. The work of Alfred Kinsey’s studies in 1948 and 1953 and J. Michael Bailey’s in 1994 are examples. Kinsey’s claimed that a high proportion of the male and female population had a homosexual orientation. His studies were later heavily criticized because a large number of those he surveyed were prison inmates and male prostitutes. Bailey’s study of twins claimed a genetic cause of homosexuality was evident by the high rate of both twins being homosexual. These findings were spread globally by the media. However, after scrutinizing his methodology, they were criticized when it was discovered the subjects of his study were recruited from Chicago’s gay community. His later study, which was drawn from the general population, had drastically different results which did not confirm a genetic cause of homosexuality. The media was virtually silent about the flaws of his earlier study and the contradictory findings of his later one.⁷

In 1994, Philip Mitchel, a psychiatric professor from Sydney, after examining all the scientific data done up to that time concluded, *“At present, there is no convincing demonstration of a definite psychological*

or biological cause of homosexuality. . . (a) multifactorial understanding is appropriate”⁸

3. Even if there was undisputed scientific evidence of a “gay” gene, moral correctness is not determined by ones ‘natural’ orientation.

Even if a genetic source to homosexual orientation were discovered, God warns that much of what comes natural to man is wrong. He says of the civilizations that perished in the flood:

The intents of the thoughts of their heart (their ‘natural inclination’) were toward evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

There is a way that seems right to man but the end is death.
(Proverbs 14:12)

Jesus warned that much of heart-felt natural behavior is in fact evil.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. (Matthew 15:19)

Jesus said lying, stealing, adultery and murder come *from our heart*, that is, flow from who we really are! They are not faked but natural to us! Such behavior comes out of a person who is simply being true to himself, yet Jesus says it is sinful and that *which defile a man* (Matthew 15:20) and is *evil* (Mark 7:23). The word “defile” meant to be unclean before God (Rev. 21:27).

If what is morally right as determined by each person’s natural inclination, all behavior would be morally permissible as long as it felt right to the person. The Bible lists homosexual practices with sins such as lying, adultery, kidnapping, stealing, swindling, perjury and murder, which people rightly agree are wrong (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:9-11). Even if such behavior could be linked to genetic make-up (which it hasn’t), it would not make the behavior right. The discovery of a ‘gay gene,’ or ‘adultery gene,’ or ‘stealing gene’ or ‘lying gene’ would not legitimize the morality of the behavior.

Joe Dallas, former practicing homosexual and gay activist said of this lifestyle: *“Whether inborn or acquired, it is still, like all sexual contact apart from marriage, immoral. And immoral behavior cannot be legitimized by a quick baptism in the gene pool.”⁹*

4. A “natural” bent towards homosexual practice must not be trusted as a moral compass, because the natural inclination (the heart) of man is deceitful and an unreliable.

The Bible says the natural inclinations of man's heart deceive and are untrustworthy:

The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?
(Jeremiah 17:9)

There is a way that seems right to man, but the end is death. (Proverbs 14:12)

The intents of the thoughts of their heart (their 'natural inclination') were toward evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool. (Prov. 28:26)

Lean not on your own understanding but in all your ways acknowledge Him (God). (Proverbs 3:6)

The deceitful, sinful bent of the human heart is inbred from birth and a part of the very nature of man.

(Evil) Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. (Proverbs 22:15)
The wicked are estranged from the womb. (Psalm 58:3)

There have never been, in the history of the world, classes offered to train children how to be selfish and disobedient. Why? It comes naturally. Ask any parent of a toddler. It takes diligent, loving training to *counteract* that in a child (Prov. 22:15). The Bible makes it clear mankind's default sinful behavior (whether it be lying, stealing, slander, immorality, murder, etc.) flows from his **natural** disposition to want to do so from the womb (Psalm 51:7;573), so that he is described as '*by nature a child of wrath*' and a "*son of disobedience*" (Ephesians 2:2-3). In addition, man's sinfulness is worsened because he will not acknowledge it due to self-deception: "*The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?*" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Homosexual behavior is natural to some people because all sin is natural to all people. Sinful inclinations flow from the earliest days of our life and are with us all our life. Lifetime, strong, natural desires do not prove homosexual practice is right any more than life-long desires to lie, steal, deceive or commit adultery, or pedophilia prove they are right.

ARGUMENT 2

ISN'T THE BIBLE OUT OF STEP WITH THE MODERN, ENLIGHTENED UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALITY?

God commands us *not* to condone homosexuality based upon any culture's acceptance of it (Leviticus

18:1-6, 18-32). He warned people not to follow the moral compass of culture. After prohibiting incest, homosexuality, adultery and bestiality he warns His people:

“Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them.” (Leviticus 23:13)

Our postmodern culture increasingly believes tolerance of all lifestyles is the highest virtue. This would be correct if there were no absolute moral laws of right and wrong. Cultural acceptance of homosexuality cannot infuse it with moral rightness. If divine absolute moral laws exist then lying, stealing, incest, slander, homosexuality and adultery are wrong regardless of what a society claims. According to Jesus, to approve such behavior is a mark, not of an enlightened society, but one that has degenerated and spiraled away from God’s laws, propelled by the centrifugal force of their own sinful hearts (Mark 7:20-23; Romans 1:20-32).

There are absolute moral laws because there is an absolute lawgiver—God. The essence of the homosexual marriage debate is therefore not ultimately social but theological. Should the Creator, the God who has authority over creation and who set moral and physical laws to govern it, be allowed to continue to exist? Or should those He created, replace Him by a god of their own desire? Homosexual proponents would choose the latter (Romans 1:20-27).

Man instinctively knows that a culture is not the ultimate determiner of what is right and wrong. If so, then such things as cannibalism, human sacrifice, slavery would have to be condoned. However, people through history have rightly been outraged by evil that was accepted in other cultures.

Jesus quoted the Scripture not the latest popular cultural views in dealing with moral issues (Matt. 19:4-8; 22:23-33; 5:28-35). He also warned that the Scriptures would often be out of step with man’s culture (2 Tim. 4:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:23-26; John 15:18-20).

ARGUMENT 3

ISN’T IT JUST THE *MISUSE* OF HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE THAT GOD WAS AGAINST? DOESN’T HE APPROVE OF IT IN A LOVING, MONOGAMOUS RELATIONSHIP?

Some claim that it’s abusive, non-monogamous homosexual behavior that God prohibited. Yet the Bible clearly states this is not the case.

It’s the nature of the homosexual act, not the level of affection or commitment in those engaging in it, that is an abomination to God:

You shall not lie with a male as lies with a female; it is an abomination. (Leviticus 18:22)

If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act. (Leviticus 20:13)

It's because homosexual practice is unnatural, not because it's unloving that God prohibited it. It is 'unnatural' and contradicts His sexual design for men and women.

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, with men committing acts and receiving in own persons the due penalty of their error. (Romans 1:26-27)

ARGUMENT 4

OPPOSING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS HATEFUL.

THE BIBLE IS FULL OF 'HATE-SPEECH' TOWARDS HOMOSEXUALS.

It's not hateful to tell someone you love that what they are doing is wrong. A loving Father warns his children for their good to obey him. God so loved the world He sent His eternal Son, Jesus, to not only die for our sins but warn us to repent of them. "*The son of Man came to lay down His life as a payment for the sins of many. . . I tell you. . . unless you repent you will all likewise perish. . . Unless you believe that I AM you will die in your sins*" (Mark 10:45; Luke 13:5; John 8:24).

If homosexual practice is not sin there is no need to call gay men and women to repentance nor is there any reason to oppose same-sex marriage. If it is sin, as the Bible attests, then Christians must obey Christ in loving homosexual people by graciously calling them to repentance, for Jesus says "*Thus it is written that the Christ must suffer and rise again from the dead on the third day and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations*" (Luke 24:47).

ARGUMENT 5

OPPOSING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS "HOMOPHOBIC".

God is not homophobic. On the contrary! Out of pure love, He had his eternal Son, Jesus, die for all people including homosexuals. *For God so loved the world He gave up His only son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16). Jesus gave himself up to death on a cross as a substitutionary payment for the sins of all people, in order that through faith in Him they could have forgiveness and eternal fellowship with God (Mark 10:45; Galatians 2:20). The early church had many who were homosexuals but found forgiveness and transformation through Christ (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

It is unfair and misleading to label as 'homophobic' those who won't accept homosexuality as morally

right. First, it judges people's heart. They may not be homophobic at all. They may genuinely love homosexual people yet disapprove (as cultures have for thousands of years) of their behavior.

Labeling people 'homophobic' doesn't respect the genuine moral and religious convictions of many who oppose same-sex marriage. 'Homophobic' implies those who would disagree are morally and psychologically deficient and by implication in need of help. This slanders the teachings of the faith of those who disapprove of homosexuality such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

Labeling as 'homophobic' any who oppose same-sex marriage is inconsistent. People opposing incest are not labeled 'incestphobics'; or those disapproving of adultery as 'adulteryphobics'. Why? We recognize for most people's moral objections to these behaviors is not rooted in fear or hate, but a conviction these behaviors are simply not right.

It is intolerant to claim those who oppose same-sex marriage are homophobic. The very thing our society prides itself in, open sharing of disagreements and views, it violates when it disparages those who believe homosexual practice is morally wrong. It is tolerant of everyone who agrees with its view of homosexuality and intolerant and insulting to those who don't agree.

ARGUMENT 6

THE BIBLE NEVER OPPOSED SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION OF WOMEN. ITS PROHIBITION OF HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE THEREFORE CAN'T BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

Though not specifically forbidding it, the Bible opposed slavery and oppression of women at the deeper level of human dignity, commanding that masters treat their slaves fairly as equals before God and as brothers (Colossians 4:1; Ephesians 6:9; Philemon) and that men treat their wives and women with sacrificial love, honoring them as equals before God (Ephesians 5:25-28; Galatians 3:28; 1 Peter 3:7). As a result of this, the institution of slavery, and the oppression of women fell away wherever the Bible was practiced.

The Bible however, never speaks of homosexuals as it does of slaves and women, whose dignity, well-being and loving care were to be guarded. It only speaks of homosexuality as a practice that is forbidden and whose proponents were not to be protected, but instead warned of God's judgment and called to repentance (Leviticus 18:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

ARGUMENT 7

JESUS DIDN'T FORBID OR EVEN SPEAK OF HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE OR MARRIAGE, WHY SHOULD WE?

Arguments from silence are not valid. Jesus also did not speak of incest, rape or bestiality yet no one would claim He endorsed these practices. Jesus was not silent about homosexuality because He approved

it, but because it was not an issue of disagreement. As with incest, bestiality and rape, Jesus did not mention them because even His enemies did not disagree about the sinfulness of these acts.

Jesus agreed with the Old Testament's prohibition of homosexual practice by affirming **all** the Old Testament laws, including those which would have forbid it (Leviticus 20:13; Matt 5:17-19).

Jesus prohibited same-sex marriage by affirming **only** heterosexual, monogamous marriage as God's plan for sexuality (Matt 19:4-8). He also prohibited homosexual practice through His apostles, the ones through whom He promised to give His additional truth (John 14:25-26; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Romans 1:26-27).

ARGUMENT 8

ISN'T SAME-SEX MARRIAGE GIVING HOMOSEXUALS THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS JUST LIKE BLACKS IN AMERICA WERE GIVEN THEIR RIGHTS?

Racial equality and homosexual rights to marry are biblically completely different issues. The Bible teaches and commands racial equality. It forbids homosexual practice. Racial equality is in line with what the Scripture says of man's equal standing before Him (John 3:16). In Christ there is no basis for economic, sexual or racial partiality or distinction for *There is neither Jew or Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:28).

However the Bible says homosexual practice and same-sex marriage contradicts God's created function of male and female (Romans 1:26-27). The black civil rights movement validates the Bible because it affirms what God says is right: the dignity and equal standing of all people regardless of race. The gay rights movement violates the Bible because it contradicts what God says is right: God's created design for male-female sexual union in monogamous marriage.

Practicing homosexuals are never described in the Bible as a people group needing equal rights, but as individuals needing to repent (Romans 1:18, 26-28; 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). The difference between the Civil Rights Movement and the Gay Rights Movement was summed up well by a black pastor who said: "*One is skin the other is sin.*"

ARGUMENT 9

ISN'T IT WRONG AND UN-AMERICAN TO RESTRICT PERSONAL FREEDOMS? DOESN'T OPPOSING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE CONTRADICT AMERICAN LIBERTY?

Personal freedom and choice is felt by many to be the ultimate criteria for what is right and permissible. "*As long as I don't hurt someone, what I personally feel and choose is right,*" is the American litmus test for determining what is right. Our culture regards as heroes those who express their individual choices, no matter what they are. Bruce Jenner received an honorary ESPY award because of his "bravery" in

choosing to follow his personal desire to change himself into a woman.

Personal choice does not make a behavior right.

God warns of His judgment on those who parade their personal choices of sin before others and those who give hearty approval to them. He also warns that a society focused on their 'right' to satisfy every personal desire would be plunged into moral and social chaos:

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,²⁷ and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, with men committing acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,³¹ without understanding, untrustworthy,, unmerciful;³² and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:18, 26-32)

Society gladly, regularly and necessarily restricts personal freedom. Laws restrict people from exercising their 'personal choice' to drive 80 mph in a school zone or trespass onto someone's property or have sex with children, or lie in court. No one complains about these restrictions to personal choice. Why? They intuitively understand that moral rightness trumps personal freedom.

Jesus calls people to turn from living for own 'natural' inclinations to live to glorify God and follow Him:

²³And He was saying to, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. ²⁴For wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

Jesus promises, to those who live to please Him, that He would satisfy their hearts with His joy, peace and contentment (Matthew 6:33; Luke 9:23-24; Matthew 11:29-31; John 7:37-39). In love, at a great cost to Himself, He willingly and gladly provided a way for all people to have a personal relationship with God by dying on a cross as our substitute bearing our sins. He then, as He had promised, rose from the dead (Matthew 16:21; John 10:17-18; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). He now appeals to all people regardless of their sin, to come to Him in faith and repentance promising all who do forgiveness and eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24; Luke 24:47).

GOD'S GRACIOUS PROMISE TO PRACTICING HOMOSEXUALS (AND ALL PEOPLE).

The Bible teaches that on our own, because of our sinful hearts, we all are enslaved to various sins (Romans 3:9-18), which often seem to come naturally to us in the form of strong continual desires (Matthew 15:19). God offers to forgive and free us from any sin, which may dominate us. Changing from homosexual practice and desire is claimed by some to be impossible and even wrong since it goes against the 'natural' inclination of who a homosexual is and denies their identity. However Jesus says that which comes from our heart and is 'natural' to us is often sinful (Matthew 15:19). Through faith in Him, He has changed thousands of practicing homosexuals. Stanton Jones, Chair of Psychology at Wheaton College says regarding this:

Anyone who says there is no hope (for change of homosexuals) is either ignorant or a liar. Every secular study of change has shown some success rate, and persons who testify to substantial healings by God are legion.¹⁰

Two thousand years ago, in the intellectual Greek city of Corinth, the apostle Paul described the transforming work of Christ in the lives of those who had received Him as their Lord and Savior:

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

NOTES

1. Dr. Albert Mohler, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, See Articles, 3-4, <http://www.AlbertMohler.com>.
2. All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Version unless otherwise noted.
3. Gay Christian Network, Statement of Faith, <http://www.gcn.com>.
4. John McArthur, *Electronic Commentary on Romans*. See comments on Romans 1:22.
5. Elizabeth Achtemeier, quoted in “Gays and the Bible,” by Mark O’Keefe, *The Virginian Pilot*, Norfolk, Virginia (February 14, 1993), C-1
6. Gary David Comstock, Protestant Chaplain at Wesleyan University, quoted in “Homosexuality and the Bible”, by Al Mohler, Articles, 7-8, <http://www.AlbertMohler.com>.
7. Steve Morrison, *Born This Way*, (New South Wales, Matthias Media, 2015), 47.
8. Morrison, *Born This Way*, 47.
9. Joe Dallas, *Responding to Pro-Gay Theology*, pt. 1, <http://www.exodusglobalalliance.org>
10. Stanton Jones, *The Loving Opposition*, Christianity Today, July 19, 1993, Vol. 37, No. 8.