

## Resources for Study – The Church and Homosexuality

1. Book: *Over the Wall: What the Bible Does Not Say About Homosexuality* by Tom Allen  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This book interweaves Mr. Allen's personal story of dealing with his growing up in a Pentecostal style church and his own coming out. He includes a good discussion on Bible scriptures that speak to this issue. He uses humor and stories to keep the reader engaged. This book is an "easy read" and was used in a "Book Study" at the Longview United Methodist Church in late 2012.
2. Book: *What Christians Think about Homosexuality: Six Representative Viewpoints*  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is the best book I have seen that looks at the range of viewpoints in the Christian world about homosexuality. It explains how each viewpoint interprets the "significant" scriptural references. It presents the arguments of each viewpoint and also how that viewpoint has been criticized. The six viewpoints represent the spectrum of Christian beliefs from very conservative to very liberal. If one wants to evaluate side by side the range of attitudes toward homosexuality and Christian belief this is the book to read.
3. Book: *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality* by Daniel A Helminiak, Ph.D.  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is a more in depth look at the Bible scriptures that relate to understanding various scriptural references in the Bible that relate to homosexuality. It provides a much more scholarly look at the scriptures than "Over the Wall" but is not as entertaining. It does come to a conclusion that is not congruent with conservative viewpoints. This book is well worth reading for the more concerned Christian.
4. *Jesus, The Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church*  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This book also looks at many scriptural references. However it also deals with how the church's history have often been used to the Bible in oppressing many other groups of people. It was written for the Presbyterian Church as a text for study and includes a Study Guide, much like the Methodist Church's study guide of "Claiming the Promise." It includes more of a philosophical and attitudinal evaluation of the church's stand reasons that it needs to change. It includes a chapter on "Real People and Real Marriage."
5. Book: *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* by Dan O. Via and Robert A.J. Gagnon  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This book is written by 2 different authors who argue for and against the conservative and liberal views of Bible interpretations on the issue. I felt this was a more limited book compared to the Six Perspectives book, but does have the credibility factor of

being written by two different authors who clearly believe their represented point of view. I didn't feel it is as clearly written as well which may be due to its smaller size.

6. Book: Same-Sex Unions in Pre-modern Europe by John Boswell  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is an excellent and thorough study of the history of Same-Sex Unions in Early Christianity and throughout medieval times. It is not religious in nature, but rather a historical and cultural description of marriage throughout this time. It makes a convincing argument that church liturgy was performed and existed through the centuries and was even condoned by the Christian church until about the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Interwoven in this history is the meaning and existence of "marriage" throughout this time as well. The impact of this is that indirectly it makes a case that our bias towards homosexuality and same-sex "marriage" did not exist in the early church and is instead a bi-product of the impact of specific church leaders and cultural changes. This book is not an easy read and has many footnotes and references.
7. Book: The Bible in Original languages is not Anti-gay: An Essential guide for Gay and Lesbian Christians. Translations and Notes by Dr. A. Nyland  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com or gayandlesbianbible.com etc.  
The book begins by a discussion of how the Bible came to us. It discusses how interpretation, changes in word meaning, inclusion of inaccurate stories, censorship, and deliberate deception have become included in our current scriptures. It then goes back to the original language text to discuss more accurate meanings of the critical Bible verses on this issue.
8. Book: The Gay Gospels: Good News for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered People by Keith Sharp  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is a very thorough discussion of relevant scriptures on the subject. This book is particularly good at looking at changing the understanding of both scriptures used to "batter" GLBTQ people as well as those scriptures which appear to affirm the acceptance and reconciliation of GLBTQ people in early Christian teachings. The author refers to the two types of scriptures as the "Defensive Testament" and the "Affirmative Testament."
9. Book: The Gay Faith: Christ, Scripture, and Sexuality by M.W. Sphero  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This book again looks at many of the scriptural references. It goes one step further by looking at the whole issue of sexuality. Covers much of the same territory as other books with just a slightly different twist.

10. Book: Holy Homosexuals: The Truth about Being Gay or Lesbian and Christian by Michael S. Piazza  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This book was written for GLBTQ Christians. Written to help overcome fear, rejection, and exclusion of gays and lesbians from the Christian Church.
11. DVD: Prayers for Bobby  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is the true life story of a conservative religious family as they deal with their gay son. The story shows how many families attempt to “save” their children from a life of sin and how this impacted the life of their son. This is a story that is not unique and thankfully I believe is becoming less prominent even in families from some conservative religions.
12. DVD: For the Bible Tells Me So  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is a documentary that chronicles the lives of families who have had to deal with gay/lesbian children and reconciling their religious beliefs. It interweaves the scriptural references that are used to teach that homosexuality is a sin.
13. DVD: Though My Eyes: An Eye Opening Experience  
Available at [www.gaychristian.net](http://www.gaychristian.net)  
A documentary. It contains interviews with youth, many who grew up in conservative Christian denominations and how they dealt with the issue of homosexuality. What these youth think, how they perceive the church, and what they wish we all knew about their experience. It is a honest, in depth reflection of the experiences of youth, the church, and homosexuality
14. DVD: The Bible and Homosexuality: How the Scriptures Changed My Mind  
Available at [www.gaychristian.net](http://www.gaychristian.net)  
This DVD is a recording of a workshop presented by Justin Lee. He explores commonly cited scriptural passages that both may appear to define homosexuality as a sin, but also passages that appear to clearly reflect that indicate otherwise.
15. DVD: Prop 8: The Mormon Proposition  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This documentary is about the California proposition that stopped gay marriages in the State of California. It is pretty pointed and clearly biased. It documents the efforts of the Mormon church and other conservative organizations to defeat a law passed by the California legislature. Those efforts clearly show how church organizations were able to legitimize their own religious beliefs into the law of that State. The proposition has been ruled as unconstitutional by appeals courts and has now been accepted for review by the US Supreme Court (which should make its ruling sometime in 2013).

16. DVD: Out of the Silence: Love, hate, and a quest for change in small town America.  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
This is another documentary that shows the impact of conservative beliefs -- which have their origin in Christian religions -- on the acceptance and fair treatment of all of its small town American citizens. The result of these attitudes is clearly antithetical to core Christian behaviors.
17. DVD: Big Eden: A Small Miracle  
Available through internet sales sites such as Amazon.com, etc.  
An entertaining fictional account of how life might be if all citizens truly cared about the happiness and freedom of their "neighbors" rather than following those attitudes typical of many small, rural towns in the United States.
18. Internet Resources: Use your search engine to find many other resources. Search for Homosexuality and Church, Gay marriage, etc.