

Is Homosexuality a Sin?

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Question:

"My church has been struggling with the issue of same-sex unions and whether practicing homosexuals should be ordained and so on. My question is, what does the Bible say about homosexuality?"

Answer:

It seems that a number of churches and denominations these days are wrestling with the issue of homosexuality. Since this is such an emotionally-charged subject, we need to be especially careful when we study what the Bible says about this. For example, some people use Scripture to justify homosexuality, and other people use Scripture to condemn homosexuality. Obviously the Bible does not support **both** of these viewpoints (because then Scripture would be contradicting itself), so it is important that we carefully study the Bible with an honest desire to find out **God's** view concerning homosexuality.

Jesus commanded us to love our "neighbors" (Matthew 22:39), and I love gays just as much as any other "neighbor." So if the Bible says that unrepentant, practicing homosexuals will be excluded from heaven, then it is proper for us to be just as concerned about their salvation as anyone else's salvation. I have prayerfully studied all of the arguments that I can find both for and against homosexuality, and I have not found the pro-homosexual arguments to be convincing from a Scriptural standpoint. Many of the Christian arguments against homosexuality line up with what I see in the Bible, and therefore that's the only view that I can teach in good conscience. It has nothing to do with "gay bashing" or "homophobia," it is simply a question of "What do I honestly and prayerfully see in the Bible concerning homosexuality?" It would be wonderful to be able to say that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality, but I would want to have strong proof of that because the stakes are immensely high. The stakes are nothing less than salvation itself (as we will see), and unfortunately I just don't see any Scriptural proof that homosexual activity is ever acceptable to God.

Adam and Eve

To start with, let's take a look at the first two chapters of the Bible to see some things that God says about human relationships:

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." ... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.** And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day." (Genesis 1:26-28,31)

"The LORD God said, "***It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.***" Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. **But for Adam no suitable helper was found.** So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. **Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.**" (Genesis 2:18-24)

Here are some interesting points in the above passages:

1. Humans were made "in the image of God, ... male and female he created them." Bible commentaries often take this to mean that men and women complement each other, and that together they reflect the image of God. Gays, on the other hand, tend to say that God is **above** gender, and that "in the image of God" has nothing to do with the union of male and female (in other words, we were **spiritually** created in the image of God, not physically).
2. The male/female relationship was blessed by God, and what we're going to see is that this is the **only** union which has been blessed by God in the Bible. Nowhere in the Bible has God blessed male/male or female/female unions.
3. God said that the male/female union was "very good." No other union (male/male or female/female) has been called "good" or "very good" by God.
4. God said to the man and woman, "Be fruitful and increase in number." Notice that only the male/female relationship can be fruitful. If the original humans had been homosexual then there would have been no procreation. Some commentaries make the argument that this is the reason why the Bible calls homosexuality "unnatural" or "against nature" (we'll get to that later).
5. God made a "suitable" mate for the man, and it was not another man. It was a woman. Notice that among all of the animals, none was a suitable mate for the man, and among the possible types of humans, only a woman was a proper mate for the man. As we will see, the Bible never says that a man can be a proper mate for another man, nor does the Bible say that a woman can be a proper mate for another woman.
6. The first woman was physically created from the bones and flesh of the first man, so there is a sense in which male and female are each incomplete without the other (and in the next point we'll see that this is the reason why the Bible says that a husband and wife become "one flesh" together). This does not necessarily mean that an unmarried person should get married (because the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 that Christians don't need to get married), but it means that a man cannot truly make another man complete, nor can a woman truly make another woman complete. Man wasn't created from man, nor woman from woman, so there is no "one flesh" union between two men or two women. Two homosexuals who are in love with each other might feel that they are "complete" in their relationship with each other, but this is an emotional feeling. It is not Biblical truth.
7. After describing the first woman being created from the first man, the Bible then says, "**For this reason** a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, **and they will become one flesh.**" (Genesis 2:24, above). This gives us the **reason** why a man and a woman become "one flesh" when they are married (because the first woman was taken out of the first man), and this tells us that **only** a man and a woman can become "one flesh" together. There is no such thing in the Bible as a "one flesh" union between two men or between two women.

So from the very beginning of the Bible we see that there is only one proper type of marriage: The union of a man and a woman. Whether we like it or not, the Bible never gives approval to homosexual marriages nor to same-sex unions (as we will see).

Are There Homosexual Couples in the Old Testament?

Gays sometimes point to Ruth and Naomi (in the book of Ruth), Daniel and Ashpenaz (Daniel chapter 1), and David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-4, 21, 20:17, 2 Samuel 1:26) as examples of homosexual couples in the Bible. However, if you read the short book of Ruth you'll find that Ruth and Naomi cared for each other as daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. There are no descriptions of homosexuality between Ruth and Naomi. If you read the first chapter of Daniel you'll see that it does not describe any homosexuality between Daniel and Ashpenaz.

Concerning Jonathan and David, consider that two men can express love towards each other, they can swear an oath to each other, they can enter into a covenant with each other, etc., without being homosexuals. There are different types of love, different types of oaths, different types of covenants, and so on. Even though the Bible says that David and Jonathan "loved" each other, this does not mean that they were homosexuals. For example, 1 Samuel 18:16 says, "But all Israel and Judah **loved** David, because he led them in their campaigns." Surely we shouldn't assume that all of the men in Israel and

Judah were homosexuals just because they "loved" David. In the same way, we should be careful about assuming that Jonathan and David were homosexuals just because of the word "love" in 1 Samuel 18:1, 3, 20:17, and 2 Samuel 1:26. In those verses there are two Hebrew words which are used to describe the "love" that Jonathan and David felt for each other: *'ahab*, which can mean "to have affection for (sexually or otherwise)," "love," "like," or "friend," according to Strong's Hebrew Dictionary, and *'ahabah*, which means "love," according to Strong's Hebrew Dictionary. These two words are sometimes used in the Bible to describe the love that a husband and wife feel for each other (as in Genesis 24:67 and 29:20), but these two words are also used in other ways as well:

"Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you **love** [*'ahab*], and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about."" (Genesis 22:2)

"Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he **likes** [*'ahab*] it." (Genesis 27:9)

"But all Israel and Judah **loved** [*'ahab*] David, because he led them in their campaigns." (1 Samuel 18:16)

"Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal **love** [*'ahabah*] for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness." (1 Kings 10:9)

"In return for my **friendship** [*'ahabah*] they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my **friendship** [*'ahabah*]." (Psalms 109:4-5)

Therefore, just because the Bible says that Jonathan and David "loved" each other (using the Hebrew words *'ahab* and *'ahabah*, as in the above passages), this does not mean that they were homosexuals. There are no references to any homosexual activity between Jonathan and David in the Bible (as we will see), so it is perfectly reasonable that they loved each other as **brothers** and that their relationship was forged even stronger as **brothers-in-arms** during war (an emotional bond which can be deeper in some ways than the love of a woman, as David says in 2 Samuel 1:26, where he specifically calls Jonathan "my **brother**").

Gays also tend to say that Jonathan and David were homosexuals because they "kissed" each other: "After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they **kissed** [*nashaq* in Hebrew] each other and wept together--but David wept the most." (1 Samuel 20:41)

In order to understand what was going on here, we need to look at the context. David believed that King Saul (Jonathan's father) wanted to kill David, but Jonathan did not realize that his father wanted David dead (1 Samuel 20:1-2). Jonathan said that if his father wanted to kill David, then Jonathan would warn David and send him away safely (1 Samuel 20:12-13), and then Jonathan discovered that King Saul did want to kill David. We have seen that Jonathan and David loved each other as brothers, and now they had to leave each other (perhaps forever) because David's life was in danger. They "kissed" each other (1 Samuel 20:41, above) and confirmed their oath of friendship, and then David left. That is the context for the above passage. Notice that when David and Jonathan "kissed" each other, the Hebrew word for "kiss" in this passage is *nashaq*. This Hebrew word is also used when other men "kissed" each other in non-homosexual ways, such as when Jacob kissed his father Isaac (Genesis 27:26-27), when Laban kissed his nephew Jacob (Genesis 29:13), when Esau kissed his brother Jacob (Genesis 33:4), when Samuel kissed Saul (1 Samuel 10:1), when the king kissed Barzillai (2 Samuel 19:39), when Joab kissed Amasa (2 Samuel 20:9), and so on. So even though Jonathan and David "kissed" each other (just as those other men "kissed" each other), this does not mean that Jonathan and David were homosexuals. In some cultures (especially in the Middle East) it is not uncommon for men to kiss on both cheeks when greeting each other or when departing from each other, as we can see occasionally in the news. For example, a CNN news article about the Middle East said that "Iranian President Mohammad Khatami **kissed** Prince Abdullah **on both cheeks** in a traditional greeting" (see [Islamic leaders to discuss unity](#), emphasis added). Jonathan and David lived in the Middle East, and they were departing from each other

(perhaps forever), so it is perfectly reasonable that they would kiss on both cheeks. There is no Scriptural proof of any homosexual activity between Jonathan and David.

Gays also sometimes say that Jonathan "disrobed" in front of David:

"And Jonathan made a **covenant** with David because he **loved** him as himself. **Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt** [or "girdle" in some translations]. Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well." (1 Samuel 18:3-5)

Notice that this passage does not say that Jonathan removed **all** of his clothes, and notice that there is no indication of any sexual activity here. This passage simply says that Jonathan was **giving** some of his possessions to David. Sometimes gays acknowledge this fact, but they say that not only was Jonathan disrobing in front of David, he was also "turning the symbols of his manhood over to David." However, this is reading a particular interpretation into this passage which ignores the culture that Jonathan and David were living in. For example, here's what a Bible commentary says about this passage:

3. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant --Such covenants of brotherhood are frequent in the East. They are ratified by certain ceremonies, and in presence of witnesses, that the persons covenanting will be sworn brothers for life.

4. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David --To receive any part of the dress which had been *worn* by a sovereign, or his eldest son and heir, is deemed, in the East, the *highest* honor which can be conferred on a subject. The girdle, being connected with the sword and the bow, may be considered as being part of the military dress, and great value is attached to it in the East." ([Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary](#))

So 1 Samuel 18:3-5 (above) describes a covenant of brotherhood between Jonathan and David, and it describes Jonathan conferring a high honor on David. None of this is homosexual in nature.

Another argument that gays sometimes make is that Jonathan had "chosen" David as his "marriage partner":

"Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that **thou hast chosen the son of Jesse** to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of **thy mother's nakedness**? For **as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom**. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." (1 Samuel 20:30-31, KJV)

The homosexual argument is that the "nakedness" in the above passage is a reference to sexual relations, and that therefore the context implies that Jonathan had "chosen" David in a sexual way (in other words, that Jonathan wanted a homosexual marriage with David). Furthermore (according to this argument), King Saul was angry at this because Jonathan could not be established as king unless he had a female spouse who could produce heirs for him. But there are several problems with this argument. For one thing, notice whose "nakedness" is being described in the above passage. The expression "thy mother's nakedness" refers to Jonathan's **mother**. There are no sexual relations between Jonathan and David being implied here, and there are no sexual relations involving Jonathan's mother being implied here. This passage has nothing to do with sex or marriage, whether homosexual or otherwise. The context of this passage describes King Saul's hatred for David, and Saul's desire to kill David. Jonathan and David loved each other as brothers, and they had sworn a covenant of brotherhood to each other (as we have already seen). In the passage above, King Saul was angry at his son Jonathan **for taking David's side** against Saul, not because of any homosexuality between Jonathan and David. For example, here is how the NIV translates this passage:

"Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that **you have sided with the son of Jesse** to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!" (1 Samuel 20:30-31)

Summary: When we understand the context of the above passages and we understand the culture in which Jonathan and David lived, it is easy to see that these passages do not describe any homosexuality between Jonathan and David.

Were Jonathan and David "Married"?

Gays sometimes claim that Jonathan and David are an example of a "married" homosexual couple in the Bible. The evidence for this view combines the above arguments (which claim that Jonathan and David were homosexuals) and 1 Samuel 18:21, in which King Saul told David that by marrying Saul's daughter Michal, David would become Saul's son-in-law a **second** time. Here is 1 Samuel 18:20-21 in several translations of the Bible:

"Now **Saul's daughter Michal** was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. "I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "**Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law.**" (1 Samuel 18:20-21, NIV)

"And **Michal Saul's daughter** loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, **Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain.**" (1 Samuel 18:20-21, KJV)

"Now **Michal, Saul's daughter**, loved David. When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him. Saul thought, "I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David, "**For a second time you may be my son-in-law today.**" (1 Samuel 18:20-21, NASB)

"And **Michal daughter of Saul** loveth David, and they declare to Saul, and the thing is right in his eyes, and Saul saith, 'I give her to him, and she is to him for a snare, and the hand of the Philistines is on him;' and Saul saith unto David, '**By the second--thou dost become my son-in-law to-day.**'" (1 Samuel 18:20-21, Young's Literal Translation)

"Now **Michal Saul's daughter** loved David; and they told Saul, and it pleased him. Saul thought, I will give her to him that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. **So Saul said to David a second time, You shall now be my son-in-law.**" (1 Samuel 18:20-21, Amplified Version)

We can see that Bible translators have had difficulty with this passage and have interpreted it in different ways. It is unclear whether David became Saul's son-in-law a **second** time, or whether he had a **second opportunity** to become Saul's son-in-law, or whether Saul **spoke** to David a second time about being his son-in-law, and so on.

Gays tend to say that by marrying Saul's daughter Michal, David became Saul's son-in-law a **second** time due to the fact that David was already considered to be "married" to Saul's son Jonathan. However, this assumes a homosexual relationship between Jonathan and David which is not supported in the Bible, and it ignores a more reasonable explanation for how David could have become Saul's son-in-law a **second** time. In order to see how David could have become Saul's son-in-law a second time, we need to understand what it meant to be "betrothed" back then. In those days, if a woman was betrothed (pledged to be married), but she slept with another man, this was considered to be adultery even though she was not formally married yet. In order to break a betrothal it essentially required a divorce, even though the man and woman were not formally married yet. Here's what some Bible commentators have said about this Old Testament bond of betrothal:

"**Adultery** in the Old Testament is described as **intercourse** between a married **or betrothed woman and a man other than her husband.**" (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Walvoord and Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary, p.201, emphasis added)

"When a woman was designated (Ex. 21:8,9) by the head of her family as the future wife of another man, the prospective bridegroom paid a certain sum of money (or service as in the case of Jacob). **A**

contract, which was inviolable, was then entered into (Gen. 34:12; Ex. 22:17). Until the time of the actual marriage, the bride-to-be remained in her own family. **It was not permissible to betroth her to any other man except by action amounting to divorce, and any violation of the rights established by the betrothal was as serious as if the two persons had been ceremonially married** (Deut. 22:23,24)." (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament*, Spiros Zodhiates, p.991, emphasis added)

"Then Joseph her husband --Compare Matthew 1:20, "Mary, thy wife." **Betrothal was, in Jewish law, valid marriage. In giving Mary up, therefore, Joseph had to take legal steps to effect the separation. being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example** --to expose her (see Deuteronomy 22:23,24)

was minded to put her away privily --that is, privately **by giving her the required writing of divorcement** (Deuteronomy 24:1), in presence of only two or three witnesses, and without cause assigned, instead of having her before a magistrate." (*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* [↗](#), emphasis added)

So a betrothal back then was a binding agreement prior to marriage, and the man and woman were considered to be husband and wife even before the official marriage ceremony. Here are some examples of this in the Bible:

"If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin **pledged to be married** [*aras*, meaning "betroth" or "espouse," according to Strong's Hebrew Dictionary] and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death--the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's **wife** [*'ishshah*, the same Hebrew word that is used for Adam's wife in Genesis 2:25 and 3:8, for example]." (Deuteronomy 22:23-24)

"This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was **pledged to be married** [*mnesteuo*, meaning "betroth" or "espouse," according to Strong's Greek Dictionary] to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to **divorce** [*apoluo*, meaning "divorce," according to Strong's Greek Dictionary] her quietly." (Matthew 1:18-19)

In Deuteronomy 22:23-24 (above), notice that "a virgin pledged to be married" was considered to be a **wife**. In Matthew 1:18-19 (above), notice that Mary was "pledged to be married" to Joseph, and that Joseph intended to **divorce** her when he found out that she was pregnant. So in those days, if a woman was pledged to be married to a man then she was considered to be his wife, even before the official marriage ceremony. The reason this is significant is because King Saul had pledged his eldest unmarried daughter, Merab, in marriage to the man who killed Goliath:

"David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear. Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. **The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage** and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel." (1 Samuel 17:22-25)

David was the one who killed Goliath, and therefore Merab was betrothed to marry David. Since a betrothed woman was considered to be a wife, this meant that David was essentially Saul's son-in-law. Then in 1 Samuel 18:17-18, King Saul offered to "give" Merab to David in marriage (conveniently ignoring the fact that he had already **pledged** Merab to David for killing Goliath), but then King Saul broke his pledge by giving Merab to another man. Here is what a Bible commentary says about this:

"**Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife** --Though **bound** to this already [1 Samuel 17:25], **he had found it convenient to forget his former promise**. He now holds it out as a new offer, which would tempt David to give additional proofs of his valor. **But the fickle and perfidious monarch broke his pledge at the time when the marriage was on the eve of being celebrated, and bestowed Merab on another man**; an indignity as well as a wrong, which was calculated deeply to wound the feelings and provoke the resentment of David. Perhaps it was intended to do so, that advantage might be taken of his indiscretion. But David was preserved from this

snare." ([Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary](#), emphasis added)

So King Saul had pledged his eldest daughter Merab to David (because David was the one who killed Goliath), and this betrothal essentially caused David to become Saul's son-in-law even before the official wedding ceremony (as we have seen). Saul then broke his pledge and gave Merab to another man. This is the context in which Saul said that David would become Saul's son-in-law a **second** time by marrying Saul's daughter Michal (or that David would have a "second opportunity" to become Saul's son-in-law):

"Saul said to David, "**Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage**; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!" But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" **So when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.** Now **Saul's daughter Michal** was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. "I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." **So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law."**" (1 Samuel 18:17-21)

This is a much more reasonable explanation for Saul's comment than saying that Saul's son Jonathan was "married" to David, especially when there is no Scriptural support for the view that Jonathan and David were homosexuals. In fact, if Jonathan and David were considered to be married then the passage above should say that David had a **third** opportunity to become Saul's son-in-law rather than saying that David had a **second** opportunity! However, there is no Scriptural evidence that either Jonathan or David were homosexuals, there is no precedent in Scripture for assuming that Jonathan and David could have been considered as being "married" even if they had been homosexuals, and in fact we will see in a moment that the Law of Moses specifically forbade homosexuality (homosexuality was a sin punishable by death). What it boils down to is that the Bible never condones homosexual marriages nor same-sex unions, and the proof just isn't there for any positive examples of homosexuality in Scripture (there are only negative examples of homosexuality in the Bible). The only valid "one flesh" union that we see in the Bible is the marriage union between a man and a woman.

Jesus Confirmed the Account of Creation

In the New Testament, Jesus confirmed that the only valid "one flesh" union is between a man and a woman:

"[Jesus is speaking] "Haven't you read," he replied, "that **at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'** [Genesis 1:27] and said, '**For this reason** a man will leave his father and mother **and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh**?' [Genesis 2:24] **So they are no longer two, but one.** Therefore **what God has joined together,** let man not separate.'" (Matthew 19:4-6)

Notice that Jesus quoted from two different parts of the Creation account (Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24), and therefore Jesus gave divine authority and divine approval to the literal interpretation of Creation. Jesus pointed out that the first two humans were created "male and female," and He said that **for this reason** a man will be united to his wife, and they will become "one flesh." In other words, there is a **reason** why a man and a woman will get married and become "one flesh." The reason is because the original woman was taken out of the original man, as we saw earlier. Then Jesus said that they are no longer two people, they are one, and that they have been joined together by God. Jesus described all of this in specific reference to a man and a woman, and neither Jesus nor the human authors of the New Testament (writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) ever applied this principle to homosexual unions. Two men cannot become "one flesh" together, and two women cannot become "one flesh" together. Whether we like it or not, we're seeing that the Bible never gives approval to homosexual marriages nor to same-sex unions.

What Is God's View of Homosexuality?

Now let's take a look at an example of how God feels about homosexual activity:

"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is **detestable** [*tow'ebah* in Hebrew]." (Leviticus 18:22)

The NIV says that if a man lies with a man as with a woman, it is "detestable" (the KJV, the Amplified Version, and the NASB all translate the Hebrew word *tow'ebah* as an "abomination"). This verse describes homosexual activity, and God clearly says that He detests it. Gays argue that this verse is not a general condemnation of *all* homosexual activity because it does not include lesbianism. However, what we're going to see is that women were held responsible for sexual sins just as men were, and that lesbianism is specifically denounced in the New Testament. It is important for us to recognize that the activity described in the passage above is "an abomination" and is "detestable" to God. Surely no professing Christian wants to do things that are **detestable** to God, right? Therefore, we need to make an honest effort to understand what God means in this verse so that we don't do something that God has denounced. To get a better understanding of Leviticus 18:22 (above), let's back up and look at verses 7 through 23:

Leviticus 18:7: ""Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her."

Leviticus 18:8: ""Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father."

Leviticus 18:9: ""Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere."

Leviticus 18:10: ""Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you."

Leviticus 18:11: ""Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister."

Leviticus 18:12: ""Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative."

Leviticus 18:13: ""Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative."

Leviticus 18:14: ""Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt."

Leviticus 18:15: ""Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her."

Leviticus 18:16: ""Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother."

Leviticus 18:17: ""Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness."

Leviticus 18:18: ""Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living."

Leviticus 18:19: ""Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period."

Leviticus 18:20: ""Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her."

Leviticus 18:21: ""Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD."

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

Leviticus 18:23: ""Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion."

These verses describe sexual sins, and the majority of these commands were specifically directed to men. Therefore, we might assume that it was *not* a sin for women to commit similar sexual acts. But our assumption would be wrong. For example, Leviticus 20:10-21 describes the **punishments** for sexual sins, and notice that the women who were involved had to be punished along with the men:

Leviticus 20:10: ""If a man commits adultery with another man's wife--with the wife of his neighbor-- **both the adulterer and the adulteress** must be put to death."

Leviticus 20:11: ""If a man sleeps with his father's wife, he has dishonored his father. **Both the man and the woman** must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."

Leviticus 20:12: ""If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, **both of them** must be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads."

Leviticus 20:13: ""If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."

Leviticus 20:14: ""If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. **Both he and they** must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you."

Leviticus 20:15: ""If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you must kill the animal."

Leviticus 20:16: ""If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."

Leviticus 20:17: ""If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. **They** must be cut off before the eyes of their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible."

Leviticus 20:18: ""If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. **Both of them** must be cut off from their people."

Leviticus 20:19: ""Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; **both of you** would be held responsible."

Leviticus 20:20: ""If a man sleeps with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. **They** will be held responsible; they will die childless."

Leviticus 20:21: ""If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. **They** will be childless."

We can see that women were held responsible for sexual sins, just as men were. So even though Leviticus 18:7-22 (above) describes sexual sins from the **male** perspective, this does not mean that women were excluded from those commands. As we just saw, we have to be careful about the assumptions that we make, and we should be careful about assuming that the homosexuality described above only applied to men (especially since the New Testament specifically denounces lesbianism, as we will see in a moment). Notice that homosexual activity was **so** detestable to God that the homosexuals had to be **put to death**:

Leviticus 20:13: ""**If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman**, both of them have done what is **detestable** [tow'ebah in Hebrew]. **They must be put to death**; their blood will be on their own heads."

This demonstrates how much God detests homosexual activity. Even though the above Old Testament commands were canceled when Jesus died on the cross (see my article called Covenants, Dispensations, and the Ten Commandments), God's **attitude** towards homosexuality has not changed. For example, in a few moments we will look at some New Testament passages which demonstrate that God still detests homosexual activity.

Some homosexuals argue that Leviticus 18:22 (above) refers to cultic idolatry in the form of male temple prostitution, or that it refers to some other specific form of homosexuality rather than describing homosexual activity in general. Notice that the preceding verse (Leviticus 18:21, above) does refer to a form of idolatry, but it has nothing to do with male temple prostitution. It's a huge stretch to use Leviticus 18:21 for making the argument that Leviticus 18:22 is referring to male temple prostitution. In fact, the very next verse (Leviticus 18:23, above) talks about having sex with animals, which has nothing to do with male temple prostitution. So the context of Leviticus 18:22 does not in any way indicate that cultic prostitution is the sin being described rather than general homosexual activity. In fact, we can prove this even further by looking at Leviticus 20:10-21 (above). In verse 13 we see the exact same reference to homosexuality, and the entire context of that verse relates to a variety of sexual sins. There is no idolatry in view here.

Examples of Homosexuality in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament there are two stories which contain homosexual references. The first story takes place in Sodom:

"The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. "My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. Before they had gone to bed, **all the men from every part of the city of Sodom--both young and old--surrounded the house. 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.

Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, **for they have come under the protection of my roof.**" (Genesis 19:1-8)

In this story the men of Sodom wanted to have sex with the two male "travelers" (angels) who were staying with Lot. The men of Sodom were demanding to have homosexual sex with the two travelers, but notice that it would not have been **consensual** sex. It would have been a gang rape. In that culture, the rules of hospitality said that travelers who stayed with someone were under the protection of their host, which was a responsibility that was taken seriously by the host. For example, Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible says that "A man who had taken a stranger under his care and protection, was bound to defend him even at the expense of his own life" (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, from <http://www.e-sword.net/commentaries.html> , Genesis 19:8). Probably for this reason, Lot offered his two virgin daughters to the crowd rather than violating the protection of the travelers who were under his roof. Lot's decision might be disgusting to us, but notice that the wickedness in this story seems to be more focused on the intentions of gang rape rather than the intentions of homosexual sex (which is an argument that gays often make). For example, if the crowd had taken Lot's daughters then their actions would still have been wicked. Even so, this doesn't change the fact that the men wanted to have homosexual sex with the two "travelers," and that homosexual activity was a sin punishable by death (as we saw a moment ago).

So in the passage above, the men of Sodom expressed their intentions of homosexuality and gang rape. Now notice what Jude said about these wicked people (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit):

"Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an **example** of those who suffer **the punishment of eternal fire.**" (Jude 1:7)

In this passage the NIV uses the word "perversion," but the Greek is more literally translated as "going after strange flesh" (which is how some other versions of the Bible have translated this verse):

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and **going after strange flesh**" (Jude 1:7, KJV)

"Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and **went after strange flesh**" (Jude 1:7, NASB)

Here's what some Bible commentaries say about this "strange flesh":

"going after strange flesh --departing from the course of nature, and going after that which is unnatural. In later times the most enlightened heathen nations indulged in the sin of Sodom without compunction or shame." (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

"Strange flesh (*sarkos eteras*). Horrible licentiousness, not simply with women not their wives or in other nations, but even unnatural uses (Romans 1:27) for which the very word "sodomy" is used (Genesis 19:4-11)." (Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament)

Bible commentaries tend to interpret "strange flesh" as being a reference to homosexuality (meaning that it is "strange" for a man to be sexually attracted to other men). However, homosexuals say that if this passage is referring to homosexuality then it should say "same flesh" instead of "strange flesh." Sometimes people say that the "strange flesh" is really a reference to "angelic flesh." The idea is that the context of Jude 1:7 (above) describes angels who impregnated human women in Noah's time, which implies that the angels had flesh of some kind. According to this view, the sin of the men of Sodom was their desire to have sex with angels, and this type of union was so detestable to God in Noah's time that God wiped out most of the human race in the Flood. Therefore, homosexuality was not really the issue in the story about Sodom.

One problem with this view is that there is no evidence that the men of Sodom knew that the two "travelers" were angels. For example, Genesis 19:1-8 (above) says that "all the **men** [enowsh in Hebrew] from every part of the city of Sodom [said] 'Where are the **men** [enowsh] who came to you tonight?'" In other words, the men of Sodom referred to the two travelers as **men**, not as angels. In addition, Jude 1:7 (above) tells us that not only did the men of Sodom go after "strange flesh," but also the people of Gomorrah and the cities around them committed the same sins. It is very unlikely that the men of Gomorrah and the other cities all had angels that they wanted to have sex with. Rather, it is more likely that the intentions of homosexuality and gang rape were representative of the types of sexual sins

being committed by those people. As Jude 1:7 (above) says, they "gave themselves up to sexual immorality," which indicates a pattern of ongoing sexual sins. So the men of Sodom were not punished for lusting after these two angels (as some gays claim), but rather they were punished because they had given themselves over to sexual perversions. We can prove this even further by noticing that God intended to destroy Sodom even **before** the two angels arrived there:

"Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him." Then the LORD said, "**The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous** that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing--to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" **The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."** ... Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "**For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.**" When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. **The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening**, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground." (Genesis 18:17-19:1)

God intended to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah **before** the angels arrived in Sodom, and therefore the sin of the men of Sodom was not that they lusted after these two angels. Sodom and Gomorrah were not destroyed for wanting to have sex with angels, nor were they specifically destroyed for practicing homosexuality. They were destroyed because they had given themselves up to all sorts of sexual perversions, and we are told that homosexuality (a sin punishable by death) was one example of their immorality.

Gays sometimes say that homosexuality was **not** a sin in the above story of Sodom because throughout the Bible, no other passage about Sodom mentions any homosexuality. Therefore, homosexuality was not a sin in Sodom. The problem is that this argument is misleading as well as being false. Apart from the passages we have looked at, Sodom is mentioned in 41 other verses in the Bible (here are the references: Genesis 10:19, 13:10, 12, 13, 14:2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 21, 22, 18:16, 19:24, 28, Deuteronomy 29:23, 32:32, Isaiah 1:9, 10, 3:9, 13:19, Jeremiah 23:14, 49:18, 50:40, Lamentations 4:6, Ezekiel 16:46, 48, 49-50, 53, 55, 56, Amos 4:11, Zephaniah 2:9, Matthew 10:15, 11:23, 24, Luke 10:12, 17:29, Romans 9:29, 2 Peter 2:6, Revelation 11:8). With only a single exception, those verses do not mention **any** of the sins of Sodom, and this is why homosexuality is not mentioned either (which is why that argument is misleading). The **one** passage elsewhere in the Bible that describes some of the sins of Sodom is Ezekiel 16:49-50:

"Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did **detestable things** [*tow'ebah*] before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen." (Ezekiel 16:49-50)

We saw earlier in Leviticus 18:22 that God calls homosexual activity "detestable" (using the Hebrew word *tow'ebah*), and we saw in Leviticus 20:13 that God once again calls homosexual activity "detestable" (using that same Hebrew word *tow'ebah*). This is the very same Hebrew word which is used in Ezekiel 16:49-50 (above) to describe the sins of Sodom. The Bible tells us that homosexual acts are "detestable" things (*tow'ebah*), and the above passage says that the men of Sodom did "detestable things" (*tow'ebah*). But again, Sodom and Gomorrah were not specifically destroyed for their homosexual behavior, they were destroyed because they had given themselves up to all sorts of sins and sexual perversions.

The other Old Testament story which contains references to homosexuality is in Judges 19:20-24, where an old man took in some travelers:

"That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in **Gibeah** (the men of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?" He answered, "We

are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD. No one has taken me into his house. We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants--me, your maidservant, and the young man with us. We don't need anything." "You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square." So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink. While they were enjoying themselves, **some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."** The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this disgraceful thing. Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don't do such a disgraceful thing." (Judges 19:16-24)

This story (which took place in Gibeah) describes a situation that is similar to the story of Sodom, and we see the same intentions of homosexuality and gang rape. Notice that God later used the sins of Gibeah as an analogy to illustrate how wicked Israel had become:

"The days of punishment are coming, the days of reckoning are at hand. Let Israel know this. Because your sins are so many and your hostility so great, the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac. The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God. **They have sunk deep into corruption, as in the days of Gibeah. God will remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins.**" (Hosea 9:7-9)

As Bible commentaries sometimes point out, in the above passage God was comparing Israel's wickedness with the sins described in the story of Gibeah. Here's an example:

"as in the days of Gibeah --as in the day of the perpetration of the atrocity of Gibeah, narrated in Judges 19:16-22, &c." ([Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary](#))

So once again we see a story of homosexuality and gang rape being used as an illustration of "corruption" and "wickedness."

Gays say that God certainly condemned the violence and the lust and the gang rape described in these two stories, but homosexuals argue that this has no bearing on loving, committed gay relationships. While it's true that the stories of Sodom and Gibeah have nothing to do with loving, committed gay relationships, the problem with this line of argument is that there are no examples of any loving, committed gay relationships at all anywhere in the Bible. There are no examples of homosexual marriages or same-sex unions in the Bible, and marriages throughout the New Testament are always described as having both a husband and a wife. Homosexual activity is consistently denounced throughout the Bible.

Homosexuality in the New Testament

Before we look at another argument that gays often make, let's take a look at a healing that Jesus did: "Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie--the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, **he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"** "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." **Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.** The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?" The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. **Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.**" The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well." (John 5:2-15)

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus **always** healed those who wanted to be healed, and He never refused to heal anyone for being a sinner (for proof, I invite you to see my article called [Every Example of Healing in the New Testament](#)). In the passage above, Jesus asked a man if he wanted to be healed, and then Jesus healed the man. Notice that Jesus told the man to "stop sinning" or else something worse might happen to him. In other words, Jesus knew that this man was a sinner, yet Jesus healed him anyway. With that in mind, let's look at a passage which gays sometimes use to "prove" that Jesus condoned a homosexual relationship:

"There a centurion's servant, whom his master **valued highly** [*entimos* in the Greek], was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well." (Luke 7:2-10)

Gays sometimes say that the centurion and his servant were involved in a homosexual relationship of some kind, and that Jesus obviously approved of this homosexual relationship because Jesus healed the servant. According to this argument, if homosexuality is a sin then Jesus should have rebuked the centurion and refused to heal the servant. However, Jesus **never** refused to heal people because of their sins (as we just saw), so it would be incorrect to assume that Jesus approved of a homosexual relationship just because He healed one of the partners. Another problem with this argument is that there is no Scriptural evidence that the centurion and his servant were involved in any kind of homosexual relationship at all. Gays say that the servant was "precious" and "dear" to the centurion (based on the Greek word *entimos* in the passage above), but this Greek word does not mean that they had a homosexual relationship. Notice that apart from the passage above, this Greek word is used four more times in the New Testament:

"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more **distinguished** [*entimos*] than you may have been invited." (Luke 14:8)

"Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and **honor** [*entimos*] men like him" (Philippians 2:29)

"As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and **precious** [*entimos*] to him" (1 Peter 2:4)

"For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and **precious** [*entimos*] cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."" (1 Peter 2:6)

Notice that the other occurrences of this Greek word in the New Testament do not imply any kind of sexual feelings or romantic feelings or homosexual behavior. There is no Scriptural reason for thinking that the centurion and his servant were involved in a homosexual relationship.

Another argument that gays sometimes make is that the apostle Paul implied that God did not give everyone the same sexual orientation, and therefore we should respect each others' differences:

"I wish that all men were as I am. **But each man has his own gift from God**; one has this gift, another has that." (1 Corinthians 7:7)

The homosexual argument is that even though Paul might have wished that all men were like him (heterosexual), the above passage shows that Paul recognized that everyone has different sexual orientations. Since each person has his own gift of sexual orientation from God (according to this argument), we should not force our personal orientations onto other people. But notice that when we place Paul's statement in its proper context, it paints a very different picture:

"Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to **marry**. But since there is so much immorality, **each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband**. The **husband** should fulfill his **marital duty** to his **wife**, and likewise the **wife** to her **husband**. The **wife's** body does

not belong to her alone but also to **her husband**. In the same way, the **husband's** body does not belong to him alone but also to **his wife**. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. ***I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.*** Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: ***It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am.*** But if they cannot control themselves, they should ***marry***, for it is better to ***marry*** than to burn with passion." (1 Corinthians 7:1-9)

The context here is all about marriage and proper sexual relations (which are only allowed within marriage). In this passage, Paul said that he was unmarried and celibate, and that he considered his celibacy to be a gift from God. However, he understood that not everyone will be able to remain celibate, so he said that it is better to get married than to burn with passion (so that we don't become tempted to commit fornication). So when Paul said that each man has his own gift from God, this has nothing to do with sexual orientation. The context is all about marriage relations versus celibacy, it's not about heterosexuality versus homosexuality. In fact, notice in this entire passage that marriage is meant to be between a **husband** and a **wife**. This is because throughout the entire New Testament, marriages **always** involve a husband and a wife. There are no positive examples of homosexuality anywhere in the New Testament (there are only negative examples), and there are no homosexual marriages nor same-sex unions anywhere in the New Testament.

Now let's take a look at some things that the New Testament specifically says about homosexuality:
"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, ***they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*** Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. ***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 1:20-27)

The above passage says that certain people's hearts had become darkened because they neither glorified nor thanked God, and then it says that God ***gave them over*** to sexual impurity because they worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. Here are some things that Bible commentators have said about this passage:

"These people had already wilfully deserted God who merely left them to their own self-determination and self-destruction, part of the price of man's moral freedom." ([Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament](#) )

"As they deserted God, God in turn deserted them" ([Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary](#) )
In other words, God turned His back on them and let them go down the path of their own self-destruction. God abandoned them to "shameful lusts," and women turned to lesbianism and men turned to homosexuality, which the above passage calls "their perversion." So whether we like it or not, this passage uses the terms "shameful" (or "vile"), "unnatural" (or "against nature"), "indecent" (or "unseemly" or "shameful"), and "perversion" (or "error") when it describes homosexuality.

Gays sometimes respond to the above passage by saying that it refers to heterosexuals who went against their own **individual** natural relations by engaging in homosexual behavior. The argument is that if a person is homosexual by nature then it would not be "against nature" for that person to engage in homosexuality, and therefore the above passage is not actually referring to homosexuals at all. This argument might be valid if the above passage said that women exchanged their own **individual** natural relations for unnatural ones, and that men abandoned their own **individual** natural relations with women.

But the passage does not say that. There is no distinction made in the above passage between those who are "heterosexual by nature" and those who are "homosexual by nature." There is no such distinction in the entire Bible because the Bible consistently teaches that homosexuality is a sin in God's eyes, which tells us that no-one is "homosexual by nature."

Another way that gays sometimes respond to the above passage is by saying that when people "exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones," this does not necessarily involve homosexuality. For example, in the Law of Moses it was forbidden for people to have sex with animals (Leviticus 18:23), and it was forbidden for a man to have sex with a woman during her menstrual period (Leviticus 18:19). The argument is that these are examples of "turning from the natural use," and therefore Romans 1:20-27 (above) does not necessarily condemn homosexuality. The problem with this argument is that Romans 1:20-27 (above) specifically says, "***In the same way*** [i.e. in the same way that the women had done] the men ***also*** abandoned natural relations with women ***and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men.***" This is a direct reference to homosexual activities, which the above passage calls "unnatural." As we have seen over and over, God consistently refers to homosexuality as being "detestable," "shameful," "unnatural," "indecent," and a "perversion." All of the evidence demonstrates that homosexuality of any kind is "against nature."

Another argument that gays sometimes make concerning Romans 1:20-27 (above) is that the context of Romans 1:18-32 indicates that homosexual temple prostitution (cultic idolatry) is the sin being described rather than homosexuality in general. However, that argument fails when we notice that these people had degraded their bodies ***with one another*** (not by going to temple prostitutes), and that they were inflamed with ***lust for one another*** (not that they were participating in cultic rituals). The language of Romans 1:20-27 (above) describes general homosexual behavior, not ritualistic temple prostitution. In fact, that passage says that ***because of*** idolatry, God ***gave them over*** to shameful lusts and homosexual behavior. This means that the general homosexual behavior described in that passage was not a form of idolatry but rather it was a ***consequence*** of idolatry.

Now let's look at another New Testament passage:

"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*** [*arsenokoitai*] nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

This passage describes certain people who are wicked and will not inherit the Kingdom of God, and on this list of people we see "homosexual offenders." The Greek word which is translated in the NIV as "homosexual offenders" is *arsenokoitai*, which means:

"from *arsen* (730), a male, and *koite* (2845), a bed. A man who lies in bed with another male, ***a homosexual*** (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10 [cf. Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:27])" (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament*, Spiros Zodhiates, p.258, emphasis added)

In every Greek dictionary and Bible commentary that I have checked, this Greek word is always described as being a reference to homosexuality. The few times when I have seen this Greek word defined as something other than homosexuality (such as "a sexual aggressor" or "a man who sleeps around"), it has always been in pro-homosexual literature.

In the passage above, the NIV has translated this Greek word as "homosexual offenders," which is misleading because someone might take the view that it is acceptable for a person to be a homosexual as long as he is not also an "offender." However, such a view would contradict all of the passages that we have seen so far which demonstrate that God detests homosexual activity. Here is how the above verse looks in a ***literal*** translation of the Bible:

"have ye not known that the unrighteous the reign of God shall not inherit? be not led astray; neither whoremongers, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor ***sodomites***" (1 Corinthians 6:9, [Young's Literal Translation](#) )

This literal version of the Bible translates the Greek word *arsenokoitai* as "sodomites," which is one of the ways that Strong's Greek Dictionary describes this Greek word. The Amplified Bible translates this Greek word as "those who participate in homosexuality," and the NASB translates it as "homosexuals." The

English word "offenders" is not in these translations because there is no Greek word for "offenders" in this verse. Here are some things that Bible commentators say about the Greek word *arsenokoitai*:

"Effeminate. This and the next clause refer to a shameful crime quite prevalent among the heathen, the first submitting themselves to the foul sensuality, and the second **actively "abusing themselves with men," contrary to nature. Both are Sodomites.** None guilty of any one of the list of vices given can be an heir of heaven." (People's New Testament [↗](#), verses 9-11, emphasis added)

"Be not deceived (*mh planasqe*). Present passive imperative with negative *mh*. Do not be led astray by plausible talk to cover up sin as mere animal behaviourism. Paul has two lists in verses Colossians 9,10, one with repetition of *oute*, neither (fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, or *malakoi*, abusers of themselves with men or *arsenokoitai* or **sodomites** as in 1 Timothy 1:10 a late word for this horrid vice, thieves, covetous), the other with *ou* not (drunkards, revilers, extortioners). All these will fall short of the kingdom of God. This was plain talk to a city like Corinth. It is needed today. It is a solemn roll call of the damned even if some of their names are on the church roll in Corinth whether officers or ordinary members." (Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament [↗](#), emphasis added)

"Nor abusers of themselves with mankind; sodomites." (Gill's Exposition of the Bible, from <http://www.e-sword.net/commentaries.html> [↗](#), 1 Corinthians 6:9, emphasis added)

"For them that defile themselves with mankind - Sodomites. See the evidence that this crime abounded in ancient times, in the notes on Rom_1:27. **It was forbidden by the law of Moses, and was punishable with death;** Lev_20:13." (Barnes, from <http://www.e-sword.net/commentaries.html> [↗](#), 1 Timothy 1:10, emphasis added)

"Them that defile themselves with mankind - arsenokoitai From *arsen*, a male, and *koite*, a bed; a word too bad to be explained. **A sodomite.**" (Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, from <http://www.e-sword.net/commentaries.html> [↗](#), 1 Corinthians 6:9, emphasis added)

"The list of offenders was similar to that noted earlier (1 Cor. 5:10-11), which no doubt corresponded to problems in Corinth and in other large cities of the day (cf. Eph. 5:3-6). **Homosexuality and male prostitution, for example, were especially characteristic of Greco-Roman society.** Plato lauded homosexual love in *The Symposium* (181B). Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote this letter, was about to marry the boy Sporus (Suetonius *Lives of the Caesars* 6. 28), an incident bizarre only in its formality, since 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were homosexual or bisexual." (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Walvoord and Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary, p.516, emphasis added).

"Paul here identifies three kinds of immoral persons: adulterers, male prostitutes and **males who practice homosexuality.** In Ro 1:26 he adds the category of **females who practice homosexuality.**" (*The NIV Study Bible*, p.2208, emphasis added)

As in the above examples, many Bible scholars interpret *arsenokoitai* as being a reference to homosexuality (men who sexually bed other men). Since this Greek word literally means "male-bedders," it is common in pro-homosexual literature to see *arsenokoitai* defined as "men who sleep around" (or something similar). However, this definition is unlikely for several reasons. First, notice that if a man sleeps around then he is either a fornicator (an **unmarried** man who is sexually active, whether for free or for a fee) or else he is an adulterer (a **married** man who has sexual relations with women other than his wife). These are the only two possible meanings of "men who sleep around." With this in mind, let's look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 again:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators** [*pornos*], nor idolaters, nor **adulterers** [*moichos*], nor effeminate, nor **abusers of themselves with mankind** [*arsenokoitai*], Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, KJV)

Thayer's Greek dictionary and Strong's Greek dictionary (and other Greek dictionaries) define *pornos* (above) as being a fornicator or a (male) prostitute, and they define *moichos* (above) as being an adulterer. Remember, the only two types of "men who sleep around" are fornicators and adulterers, and Paul described both of these types of sinners using the Greek words *pornos* and *moichos*. But then Paul went on to list **another** type of sin using the Greek word *arsenokoitai*. When Paul mentioned the

arsenokoitai, he had already dealt with unmarried men who sleep around (*pornos*) and he had already dealt with married men who sleep around (*moichos*). Since Paul had already described **both** types of men who sleep around earlier in that verse, it is highly unlikely that Paul then used *arsenokoitai* as meaning "men who sleep around."

For another reason why it is unlikely that *arsenokoitai* means "men who sleep around," let's look at the only other place in the Bible where this Greek word occurs:

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for **murderers of fathers** [*patraloas*, "father-threshers"] and **murderers of mothers** [*metraloas*, "mother-threshers"], for **manslayers** [*androphonos*, "man-slayers"], For whoremongers, for **them that defile themselves with mankind** [*arsenokoitai*, "male-bedders"], for **menstealers** [*andrapodistes*, "men-stealers"], for liars, for **perjured persons** [*epiorkos*, "false-swearers"], and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:9-10, KJV)

According to Thayer's Greek dictionary and Strong's Greek dictionary, all of the Greek words shown in the passage above are compound words (they are each formed from two other Greek words), and the English equivalents of these compound words are shown in brackets (above) based on Thayer's and Strong's Greek dictionaries. Paul's word-play in this passage gives us further insight into the meaning of *arsenokoitai*. The compound words in the above passage **all** contain a word which describes a type of person (threshers, slayers, bedders, stealers, swearers), preceded by a word which further defines the sin involved (father-threshers, mother-threshers, etc.). Now, notice that if our views require us to be **inconsistent** in how we interpret a passage of Scripture, this is often a sign that we are trying to **force** the passage to fit our preconceived beliefs. Since homosexuals tend to say that the compound word *arsenokoitai* ("male-bedders") means "males who bed other people," let's see if this interpretation is **consistent** with Paul's use of the other compound words in that same passage:

1. *patraloas* ("father-threshers") are **those who** "thresh" (kill) their fathers.
2. *metraloas* ("mother-threshers") are **those who** "thresh" (kill) their mothers.
3. *androphonos* ("man-slayers") are **those who** slay men (i.e. murderers).
- 4a. *arsenokoitai* ("male-bedders") are **those who** bed males.
- 4b. *arsenokoitai* ("male-bedders") are males who bed other people.
5. *andrapodistes* ("men-stealers") are **those who** steal men (i.e. slave traders).
6. *epiorkos* ("false-swearers") are **those who** swear falsely.

Compare 4a and 4b (above) with the other compound words in the list. Which interpretation of *arsenokoitai* is consistent with Paul's word usage here? 4b is the definition which is used in pro-homosexual literature, but it is clear that 4a is the only one which allows us to be **consistent** in our interpretation of Paul's compound words here. It requires being **inconsistent** in how we interpret this passage if we say that "male-bedders" means "males who bed other people" or "men who sleep around," and this type of inconsistency often happens when we try to force our own interpretation onto a passage of Scripture.

What it boils down to is that there is no evidence that *arsenokoitai* means "men who sleep around" (or something similar). Instead, all of the evidence points to homosexuality as the meaning of the Greek word *arsenokoitai*.

Now that we have a better understanding of *arsenokoitai*, let's look at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 again:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind [*arsenokoitai*], Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, KJV)

This passage says that unrepentant *arsenokoitai* will not inherit the Kingdom of God, and again, most Greek dictionaries, Bible translations, Bible commentaries, etc., interpret *arsenokoitai* as homosexuals. It is very important that we don't allow our personal biases to influence our interpretation of *arsenokoitai*, because the above passage says that the *arsenokoitai* are unrighteous and shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If we truly love our neighbor, as Jesus commanded us to do, then the only way we can help any

arsenokoitai to be forgiven and go to heaven is by prayerfully and honestly seeking the proper interpretation of this Greek word without allowing our desires and biases to influence us.

But there is also **good news** in the above passage! Even though Paul said that unrepentant *arsenokoitai* will go to hell, he went on to say, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Do you see the significance of that? This passage describes several types of sins, including homosexuality, and it says that some of the Corinthian Christians had been enslaved in those sins. Then the passage says that they had been **set free** from those sins (including homosexuality) through faith in Christ. This tells us that people can be set free from homosexuality! Since God consistently refers to homosexuality as "detestable" and "unnatural" and a "perversion" and so on, this means that no-one is born a homosexual. Homosexuality is not genetic, because if it were genetic then it would not be a sin. For example, having brown hair is not a sin, having blond hair is not a sin, being tall or short is not a sin, and so on, because these things are genetic. We don't sin by being tall or short because we can't **choose** to be tall or short. We only sin when we choose to do things which the Bible says are wrong. In the Bible, homosexual acts are **always** described as being sinful, and therefore homosexuality cannot be genetic. In addition, here are several articles which explain why science has never proven that homosexuality is genetic:

- [Is There a "Gay Gene"?](#)
- [Is Homosexuality Genetic?](#)
- [The Gay Gene?](#)

Since homosexuality is not genetic, this means that people can be delivered from homosexuality through the shed blood of Christ, and they can be forgiven! This is exactly what 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (above) says had happened with some of the Christians in Corinth.

Apart from 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (above), the only other place in the entire Bible where *arsenokoitai* is used is in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 (which we looked at a moment ago):

"We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, **for murderers, for adulterers and perverts** [*arsenokoitai*], for slave traders and liars and perjurers--and for whatever else is **contrary to the sound doctrine**" (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

In this passage the apostle Paul used the same Greek word (*arsenokoitai*) that he used in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (above), which most Greek dictionaries and Bible commentaries describe as being a word for homosexuals. The NIV translates this Greek word as "perverts," the KJV translates it as "them that defile themselves with mankind," the Amplified Bible translates it as "those who abuse themselves with men," and the NASB translates it as "homosexuals." So in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 (above) we see the apostle Paul listing homosexuality along with other sins such as murder and adultery, and Paul said that these sins (including homosexuality) are contrary to sound doctrine.

Conclusion

We have now looked at the main passages in the Bible which directly refer to homosexuality (as well as other passages which some people claim are references to homosexuality). There are other possible references to homosexuality in Deuteronomy 23:17, 1 Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:46, 2 Kings 23:7, and Job 36:14 (all of which refer to male temple prostitutes, which Strong's Dictionary describes as "sodomites"), and in Deuteronomy 23:18 and Revelation 22:15 (both of which refer to "dogs," which are often taken to mean male temple prostitutes). It is no coincidence that every one of these references is negative. Throughout the Bible, homosexuality is always described as being a sin in God's eyes. Therefore, I don't see how we can escape the conclusion that unrepentant homosexuals will be excluded from heaven and will be cast into hell. As harsh as that may sound, it demonstrates how God feels about homosexuality. This is not "gay bashing" or "homophobia," it is simply what I see in the Bible, no matter how much I might wish it were otherwise. The weight of Scriptural evidence shows homosexuality in a negative light.

But as we saw, there is good news! Since homosexuality is a sin, it can be forgiven. For example, in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 (above), notice that the list of sinners includes murderers, adulterers, and homosexuals. Just as unsaved murderers and unsaved adulterers can receive salvation, unsaved homosexuals can

receive salvation as well. But after receiving salvation, people must turn away from committing murder and adultery. Therefore, after receiving salvation, people should turn away from committing homosexuality as well, and there are a number of ministries which are devoted to helping people get free from homosexuality (try doing an Internet search on "+homosexual +Christian +deliverance," for example). Remember, homosexuality is not genetic because if it were genetic then it would not be a sin.

Since God's view of homosexual activity is so clear, it is easy for us to determine how the Church should respond to homosexuality. The most important thing that the Church needs to understand is that God **loves** those who are ensnared in homosexuality (John 3:16), and therefore so should we. We should welcome them into our churches with open arms and open hearts, just as we should welcome **all** people into our churches. This doesn't mean that we condone homosexuality or any other sins, but it means that we should be displaying God's unconditional love rather than man's condemnation. Since it would be wrong for churches to ordain unrepentant, practicing murderers and unrepentant, practicing adulterers, then it would also be wrong for churches to ordain unrepentant, practicing homosexuals (see 1 Timothy 1:9-10, above). In addition, marriage is always between a man and a woman throughout the New Testament, and homosexuality is always denounced. Therefore, whether we like it or not, churches have no Scriptural precedent, no Scriptural command, and no Scriptural authority for performing homosexual marriages or same-sex unions. Personally, if the Bible said that a homosexual marriage is just as proper as a heterosexual marriage then I would be all for it. I would have no reason and no desire to dispute homosexual marriages if the greatest weight of Scriptural evidence supported any type of same-sex unions, but I just don't see that support in the Bible.

The world's viewpoint is that homosexuality is genetic, and this makes it difficult for some people to understand why God speaks out so strongly against homosexuality in the Bible. This is a very emotionally-charged subject, and we have seen many different ways that people try to find support for homosexuality in Scripture. The danger, though, is that when we try to find support in the Bible for what we **want** to believe, we might be placing ourselves in open rebellion against what God actually said. That's why we need to be very careful to study the Bible with a sincere and humble desire to find out **God's** views. This doesn't guarantee that we will always interpret Scripture accurately, but if our heart is right then God will ultimately lead us to a proper understanding of His Word. If we seek to honestly understand and apply God's Word to our lives, honoring His ways above our own ways or our own desires, then He will honor us for it and pour out incredible blessings in our lives!

I hope this has been helpful, and may the Lord abundantly bless you as you study His Word!