

The Sin of Homosexuality

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The following is a brief summary of sections from *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare* by Dr. Ed Murphy (Thomas Nelson Publishers Inc., Nashville, 1992). Additional information was added from other sources. Scripture references from the King James Version are specified KJV, the New King James Version NKJV, the Amplified Bible AB, and the New International Version NIV.

According to Scripture, homosexual activity in any form is sin and is strongly condemned. It is first spoken of with reference to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. The word *sodomite* has originated from the evil practices of the inhabitants of these two cities. It is used several times in the KJV of the Old Testament: “There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel” (Deut. 23:17 KJV; cf. 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7).

Homosexuality is categorically prohibited by God in the Old Testament laws governing the sexual life of His people: “You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination” (Lev. 18:22 AB). “You shall not bring the hire of a harlot or the price of a dog [a sodomite] into the house of the Lord your God, in payment for a vow; for both of these – the gift and the giver – are an abomination to the Lord your God” (Deut. 23:18 AB). The Hebrew word for a male prostitute is *keleb* (lit., ‘dog’).

Homosexuality is called an abomination five times in Leviticus 18 (vv. 22, 26, 27, 29, 30 KJV). In Leviticus 20:13 it is called a detestable act. So detestable a sin it was in the eyes of God that death by stoning was the punishment inflicted on its practitioner: “If a man lies with a male as if he were a woman, both men have committed an offence – perverse, unnatural, abhorrent and detestable; they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them” (Lev. 20:13 AB).

In Romans 1:18-32, the New Testament describes this sexual sin as one of the terrible consequences of humanity’s rebellion against the lordship of God. In verses 26-28 the apostle writes: “For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desires toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

Homosexuality was as widespread during New Testament times as it was in the Old Testament era; thus Paul’s reference to it in Romans 1:26-28 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10. Homosexuality is a problem common to both sexes. *Homo* means *alike* or *equal to*. It does *not* refer to maleness. ‘Lesbianism’ is simply a word used to describe female homosexuality.

Profs. Walvoord & Zuck (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 516), say: “Homosexuality and male prostitution were especially characteristic of Greco-Roman society. Plato lauded homosexual love in *The Symposium*. Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians, was about to marry the boy Sporus, an incident bizarre only in its formality, since 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were homosexual or bisexual.”

Homosexual activity does not have its primary origin in the biological make-up of certain men or women. Primarily it is learned behaviour. Whatever is learned can, with help if needed, be unlearned. Therefore homosexuals can unlearn this sinful sexual behaviour just as heterosexuals who persistently commit immorality must unlearn theirs. Homosexual conduct is completely forgivable, just like any other sin.

People with severe homosexual bondage need a support group to help them into freedom. Few homosexuals will make it alone. They need to confess their bondage to an understanding friend and support group. Homosexual bondage both in the imagination and in practice is one of the most oppressive forms of sexual bondage known to man.

Paul says the following on overcoming this and other sins: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11 NKJV).

Dr. Murphy states, “While not minimizing the incredible binding power of homosexuality and homosexual fantasising, I want to declare emphatically that God’s power is available to all practising homosexuals and to

all those who are plagued by homosexual lusts. The God who made new creations out of homosexuals in Paul's day is in the same regenerating business today (2 Cor. 5:17)."

Overcoming this sin

A Hollywood girl was brought to Christ while having been a practising lesbian for five years. She told the following story of her conversion and the gradual healing of her sexuality:

"A group of Christians were witnessing for Christ near Hollywood and Vine. As they shared the gospel I began to hunger to know God as they did. For the first time in my life I understood God's love for me. I was thrilled. God loved me, even me. Jesus loved me so much he gave His life on the cross for me, even me. I received Him on the spot and went home filled with peace. I sensed great joy at the reality of His love for me. Like the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-11), He did not condemn me but forgave me.

"The people who led me to Christ did not know about my lesbian partner. They said nothing about homosexuality. As I went home, however, God spoke to my heart. I knew the union was unacceptable in His eyes. I knew I would have to break off the relationship if I were to live in His kingdom. Though it was one of the most difficult things I have ever done in my life, I did what I knew was God's will. My partner did not understand. She was heartbroken. I was too, but I left.

"I associated with the group of Christian young adults who had brought the gospel to me. In time I was able to tell them about my homosexual problem. They became my family and support group. I would not have survived if it was not for their support. They taught me the Word of God and how to pray and witness for my Saviour. I went through an emotional storm for almost three years. I did not know how strong the homosexual emotions were in my mind, body, imagination, and my very being. Sometimes I did not know if I would make it, but by God's grace I did.

"I abstained from all sexual relationships. When the yearnings came upon me I would call out to the Lord for His strength and He was faithful. Also I shared with my Christian support group when the temptations became almost unbearable. God slowly began to change my sexual orientation. This means He had to transform me totally, especially emotionally. Our sexuality is so interwoven with our emotions, our self-image, our mind, our will, that this transformation went to the very root of my personality.

"I realised my sexual orientation was not primarily biological. It was environmental, emotional, and the result of wrong choices I had made over a period of time. By God's grace I realised I could change to respond sexually to men, not to women. The change seemed to move through three overlapping stages:

- "First I began to see women differently. They were my sisters, not my lovers. Gradually I began to lose the sexual drive towards other women.
- "Next I began to notice men in a positive manner for the first time. Some of the brothers were so beautiful as men and as my close friends, I began to lose the negative male orientation that I had known before.
- "Lastly, I began to feel sexual attraction towards men. This was a miracle. The thought of a sexual relationship with a man before this was as repugnant to me as a homosexual relationship is to a heterosexual man or woman.

"I didn't begin to fantasise having sex with every attractive man I met. That too would have been sinful. But I could now accept the fact that marriage to a fine Christian man would be acceptable. I began to look forward to that possibility as any normal woman does. When this change began, I knew that I was truly a new creation in Christ. Sin had degraded me into something dishonouring to God. He gave my womanhood back to me. I love Him with all my heart."

Homosexuality in the church

The war with homosexuality is one of the most intense dimensions of spiritual warfare affecting the church today. The organised socio-political movement that has come to the forefront to force acceptance of open homosexuality upon society and the church is the so-called Gay Rights Movement.

As believers we must be fair to homosexuals. We must recognise that the Gay Rights Movement does not represent all of them. It is possible that many more homosexuals refuse to participate in this corrupt movement than those who do take part. Most homosexuals or individuals who battle with homosexual lusts are not interested in flaunting their sexuality before the media and the masses. They are no more interested in parading down the main street half naked and engaging in shameful sexual actions in public than are heterosexuals. Thus they are people who merit our love, compassion, and gentle, but firm Christian witness. All of them are sinners whose damaged sexuality has almost become the focal point of their life.

The present homosexual movement is making a tremendous effort to penetrate our churches and even the pastorate. They also target conservative evangelical churches. This is one of the most serious issues facing the church today. (End of summarised extracts from Dr. Murphy's book).

Condoning of homosexual lifestyles is blatantly promoted by various 'Christian' websites. One example is www.mcccchurch.org which reflects the views of the Metropolitan Community Churches. In an article, *The Bible and Homosexuality*, Dr. Mona West reveals great ignorance of historical facts with the following assertion: "The word 'homosexuality' is a modern term and did not exist during biblical times. Biblical writers had no concept of sexual orientation or sexual development as we understand those today." However, 'homosexuality' is only a modern term for the centuries-old phenomenon of sodomy.

In an article, *Homosexuality; Not a Sin, Not a Sickness*, Rev. Elder Don Eastman says, among others:

"The most beautiful word in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is 'whosoever'. All of God's promises are intended for every human being. This includes gay men and lesbians. How tragic it is that the Christian Church has excluded and persecuted people who are homosexual! We are all created with powerful needs for personal relationships. Our quality of life depends upon the love we share with others, whether family or friends, partners or peers. Yet, lesbians and gay men facing hostile attitudes in society often are denied access to healthy relationships ...

"For many centuries, the Christian Church's attitude toward human sexuality was very negative ... They say that all homosexual acts are sinful ... The Good News is that ... the emergence of a strong lesbian and gay community, and the conclusions of new scientific studies on homosexuality, has forced the Christian Church to re-examine these issues. A growing number of biblical and theological scholars now recognize that Scripture does not condemn loving, responsible homosexual relationships. Therefore, gay men and lesbians should be accepted – just as they are – in Christian churches, and homosexual relationships should be celebrated and affirmed!"

This point of view emanated from humanistic thinking. Humanism as an unbiblical, man-centred ideology has made extensive inroads on Christian theology by relegating clear doctrinal statements on a variety of issues to a subordinate position vis-à-vis the needs and views of modern society. The authority of Scripture is undermined by re-interpreting 'controversial' dogmatic statements in such a way that they are completely shunned or disregarded by those who refuse to obey them.

We are all accountable to God for how we treat His Word, and how we honour His Son who became man to teach us in the ways of righteousness and to atone on Calvary for our sins, including the highly detestable sin of homosexuality.