

# **Is Homosexuality** *Really Wrong?*



**Aaron J. Werner**

*A Christianity which will bear witness to God's Word ...will not be afraid to engage in intellectual and philosophical contest with the prevailing dogmas of its day.*

**Oliver O'Donovan, University of Edinburgh**

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A. J. Werner studied at the University of Maine (1989-1991) and earned a B.S. in Biology from Liberty University (1994). He also earned a Master of Divinity (2002) and a Doctor of Philosophy (2007) from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Currently, he is the Dean of the Chapel and an Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Shorter University in Rome, Georgia.

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## Is Homosexuality *Really* Wrong?

Few issues in the church today are as controversial as the issue of homosexuality. While, some Christians believe that there is nothing morally wrong with homosexuality, others believe it is the ultimate sin—perhaps an unpardonable sin. Although both groups cannot be right, they could both be wrong. So, is homosexuality *really* wrong? Before we discuss this question, we must first address the importance of the question.

### Why Isolate Homosexuality?

Why take the time to write about homosexuality? Has not the homosexual community received enough condemnation from the church? Many Christians believe the answer to this question is yes. For instance, former Shorter University professor David Fillingim bemoaned, “Given that the Bible contains no mention at all of abortion and only eight possible references to homosexual acts, one wonders where American Christianity is getting its ethical priorities.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, Fillingim believes there are far greater sins requiring the church’s attention. For example, the sins of pride, greed, injustice, and selfishness are eroding the moral

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<sup>1</sup>David Fillingim, *Extreme Virtues* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 2003), 45. Although I believe Fillingim is wrong concerning the Bible’s silence concerning the topic of abortion, I think he makes a valid point concerning our ethical priorities. Nevertheless, claiming that the Bible is silent regarding abortion is like claiming that the Bible is silent concerning the trinity. Although Bible does not contain the word “Trinity,” the scriptures are replete with the doctrine. One example of a verse regarding abortion is Exodus 21:22-24, which reads, “*If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life.*” In other words, taking the life of an unborn child is a capital crime—even if unintentional.

fabric of our churches and our culture. According to C. S. Lewis, pride is the deadliest sin. He claimed, “It was through pride that the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every other vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind.”<sup>2</sup> Compared to pride, “unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, sexual sin, including homosexual sin, is a relatively minor sin compared to pride. Lewis reasoned,

Pride can often be used to beat down the simpler vices. Teachers, in fact, often appeal to a boy’s pride, or, so they call it, his self-respect, to make him behave decently: many a man has overcome cowardice, or lust, or ill-temper, by learning to think that they are beneath his dignity—that is, by pride. The devil laughs. He is perfectly content to see you becoming chaste and brave and self-controlled, provided, all the time, he is setting up in you the dictatorship of pride—just as he would be quite content to see your chilblains cured if he was allowed, in return, to give you cancer. For pride is a spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, pride is a far more dangerous sin than homosexuality.

So, why am I addressing homosexuality’s morality when I should be addressing sins that are more serious? There are at least four reasons for why am I not dealing with pride, greed, gluttony, lying, injustice, selfishness, and the like. **First**, although very few people are claiming that greed, gluttony, and selfishness are morally right, many are arguing that homosexuality is morally acceptable and good. **Second**, I am writing to initiate a discussion that will encourage the church to develop a more Christ-like attitude toward homosexuals and homosexuality. **Third**, I am writing to help me understand my own position concerning this

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<sup>2</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2001), 122.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis, 122.

<sup>4</sup>Lewis, 125. Chilblains is a minor disease similar to athlete’s-foot.

divisive topic. **Fourth**, I am writing to stimulate friendly dialogue between those who believe homosexuality is an alternatively healthy lifestyle and those who believe homosexuality is the unpardonable sin. However, before we proceed, we must first clarify what I mean (and what I do not mean) by homosexuality.

## **What is Homosexuality?**

Although many define homosexuality in terms of same-sex attraction, I believe that it is better to define a homosexuality in terms of homosexual activity—physical or mental activity. My reason for defining homosexuality in this way is, I think, biblical. If, for instance, we define homosexuality in terms of homosexual temptations, then homosexuality cannot be wrong because temptations are not sins. Since the Bible says that Jesus was “*tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15), a temptation itself cannot be sin.<sup>5</sup> Temptation certainly leads to sin, and becomes sin at some point before we physically perform the activity. For instance, Jesus said, “*You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart*” (Matthew 5:27-28). Consequently, the temptation to commit adultery becomes a sin at some point before the physical act of adultery.

Although the point at which a particular temptation becomes a sin is somewhat unclear, I think most would agree that a

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<sup>5</sup>Although I don’t think this verse means that Jesus experienced every temptation that every human has ever experienced, I do believe this verse claims that Jesus experienced the full range of human temptation. In fact, I believe that Jesus is the only person to know the full force of human temptation. Here is why: Consider two persons attempting to lift 400 pounds. The first person attempts, but fails. However, the second person is successful. Which athlete has experienced the full resistance of the weight? The obvious answer is the only second person.

temptation becomes a sin once the temptation is “entertained.” James explained this process in following way: “*Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death*” (James 1:14-15). In other words, a temptation becomes a sin at some point “after desire has conceived.” For this reason, I often tell college students that they cannot avoid temptation—especially when a provocatively dressed person passes by. I explain that the first glance (the temptation) is not necessarily a sin, but the second one is a different story. One smart-aleck college student responded to me saying, “In that case, I’m going to make the first one count.”

According to my definition of homosexuality, a person experiencing same-sex attraction would not be guilty of homosexual sin. Hence, if “being” homosexual means merely experiencing same-sex attraction, or same-sex temptation, then I say there is nothing inherently wrong with “being” homosexual. Just as there is nothing inherently immoral about having heterosexual temptations, there is nothing inherently immoral about homosexual temptation.

Some of Christians have difficulty with the idea that same-sex attraction, or temptation, is not inherently sinful. They argue that homosexual attraction (or desire) is not natural or not part of God’s original design, and is therefore sinful. For instance, Southern Baptist Seminary President, Albert Mohler wrote, “Homosexual acts *and* homosexual desire, states Paul, are a rebellion against God’s sovereign intention in creation and a gross perversion of God’s good and perfect plan for His created order.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, even homosexual desires are sinful.

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<sup>6</sup>Albert Mohler, *Homosexuality and the Bible* (Louisville, KY: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 10. Emphasis mine. I have employed the

However, though homosexual attraction is an unnatural perversion of God’s natural order, I don’t think we can say that it is inherently sinful. Ultimately, all attraction (or temptation) to sin is a perversion of God’s intention. For instance, my inborn selfishness is a perversion of God’s natural order, but that does not mean my daily temptation to act selfishly is inherently sinful. It becomes sin when I “entertain” the temptation to act selfishly. If Jesus was, “*tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin,*” then any temptation—no matter how vile or unnatural—is not sinful. Therefore, I don’t think we can call *any* temptation “inherently sinful.” Just as Eve could have guiltlessly resisted the temptation to eat the forbidden fruit, someone experiencing same-sex attraction (or temptation) can resist that temptation and not sin. Similarly, it is not inherently sinful for a married man to be attracted to (or tempted by) a woman who is not his wife. Even though such a temptation may give birth to sin, the temptation itself is not a sin.

Before we discuss the morality of homosexual activity, though, I think we must address yet another question. That is, “Is it hateful or judgmental to speak against homosexuality?”

## **Is Speaking against Homosexuality Hateful and Judgmental?**

My first experience at a Southern Baptist Convention was a memorable one.<sup>7</sup> The reason was primarily due to my interaction with the homosexual activist group called “Soul Force.” The

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word “desire” as something synonymous with “attraction” or “temptation.” Mohler, though, may be using the word “desire” to mean something akin to “lust,” or “fantasizing with intention.” If so, then I fully agree with him.

<sup>7</sup>The convention mentioned was the 2002 gathering, held in St. Louis, Missouri.

members of Soul Force were protesting the convention. At the conclusion of one of the sessions, an official told the audience not to use the primary exit because of the “Soul Force” protest. I was intrigued. Growing up in Maine, I had never seen any kind of demonstration, let alone a demonstration of this sort. So I did what any naïve, zealous seminary student would do—I engaged the demonstrators in dialogue. One of the activists, a divinity student at Yale, was willing to speak with me. When I asked him why they were protesting he explained that Southern Baptists were “murdering” homosexuals by claiming that homosexuality is immoral. He claimed that the guilt engendered by this hateful idea caused many of his friends to commit suicide. Therefore, Southern Baptist were directly guilty of hate crimes and, indirectly, guilty of murder.

**Spam illustration.** After hearing their case, I decided that the best way to answer this group was with the following analogy.

Suppose, that I believe eating “Spam” is a sin.<sup>8</sup> In fact, imagine that I believe that eating spam is such a vile and heinous sin that if a man continues in his “Spam” eating ways, he will spend eternity in Hell. If I sincerely believe that the Spam-despising deity will eternally punish all who willfully, deliberately continue to eat Spam, what is the most loving action I can do for my spam-eating friends? (Remember, whether or not my belief is true is not the issue.) If I truly care for them, then I cannot be silent about their eating practices. If I truly loved them, then I would try to convince them, in a *loving* way, of the dangers of their taste. I would *lovingly* show them any scientific evidence concerning the dangers of Spam-eating. I would *lovingly* attempt

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<sup>8</sup>Spam is a canned pork product. It has a cult-like following in certain parts of the United States—particularly Hawaii, where Hawaiians utilize as a sushi substitute. Though I do not care for Spam, I do not believe eating spam is a sin.

to reason with them, persuading them to renounce their habits. If my Spam-eating friends attempt to justify their position, I will *lovingly* refute their objections. For instance, suppose they attempted to justify their Spam-eating lifestyle by arguing that they were born with a gene that causes them to have a greater affinity for Spam than the average person. I would lovingly respond by arguing that we cannot determine morality based on genetic predispositions. For instance, suppose I was born with a gene that caused me to eat spam-eaters. Certainly, it would not be morally justifiable for me to harm any person simply because I was born with a desire to do so. In short, I would *lovingly* employ philosophical arguments and scientific evidence.

I would continue to befriend and embrace those who refuse my evangelistic efforts, and I would pray for them, and, most importantly, I would love them all-the-more. I would not bomb the spam production plants, and I would not attempt to pass legislation prohibiting the production of spam. My reason is that I believe one must willfully renounce spam eating in order to be accepted by the spam-despising deity. In other words, if a man cannot attain spam, yet he (in his heart) still lusts for spam, and would indulge in a can if he could, then his physical abstinence from spam is inconsequential and unprofitable. Although the temptation (or desire) to eat spam is not wrong, the lusting of spam in one's heart, and the intent to carry out the eating of it, makes one just as guilty as actually eating it. In other words, there is nothing wrong with an affinity for, a propensity for, or temptation to eat spam. However, if I truly love my friends, I will *lovingly* attempt to convince them to renounce their spam eating ways.

Conversely, if I sincerely believe that my spam-eating friends will spend eternity in hell, and I do not speak out to warn them, then "hatred" is a better word to describe my relationship with my

Spam-eating friends. Remember, whether or not my belief is true is irrelevant. If I sincerely believe that my friends who continue to eat spam will spend eternity separated from the love of God, then the most *hateful* thing I could do to my friends is to remain silent, and accept their eating habits as an alternatively healthy diet. If I choose not to warn them, then I really hate them. And, if my belief concerning Spam is true, then their blood is on my hands.

Although the Yale student liked my illustration, the illustration itself did not convince him that speaking against homosexuality was a loving act. So, if I could talk with him today, I would probably add another illustration—the illustration of the I-40 bridge incident.

**Bridge illustration.** On May 26, 2002 disaster struck Webbers Falls, Oklahoma. Joe Dedmon, captain of the tugboat *Robert Y. Love*, unintentionally rammed his barge into the Interstate 40 Bridge, causing a 180-meter section of the bridge to collapse into the water.<sup>9</sup> In all, fourteen people died when their vehicles plummeted into the river. Many more would have died had not some courageous citizens risked their lives to warn motorists headed for certain destruction. According to CNN,

A fisherman who helped pull a survivor from the river said he watched helplessly as vehicle after vehicle drove off the edge and dove 60 feet into the water. “That went on for almost five minutes. Just one car after another,” said Norman Barton, who witnessed the disaster from his boat, where he was participating in a bass fishing tournament. “It was just one car after another hitting the end of the bridge at 70 miles an hour. Nobody could see that the bridge was gone.” At one point, Barton said fishermen along the river shot a flare at a tractor-trailer driving toward the gaping hole. “That truck locked up,

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<sup>9</sup>Interstate 40 is one of two highways that connect the east coast of the United States with the west coast.

and stopped with his front wheels hanging over the bridge. Then he slammed it in reverse and backed up,” he said.<sup>10</sup>

Hearing such vivid descriptions of this event is especially chilling to me because just twenty-four hours before this catastrophe, my wife and I drove our vehicle across this very bridge. I could have been driving one of those cars “hitting the end of the bridge at 70 miles an hour.” The thought of this possibility still chills my spine.

Undeniably, the quick-thinking bystanders saved many lives. However, suppose that these bystanders, instead of warning the cars, decided to sit down and watch the cars zip off the bridge. Suppose they did not attempt to warn the unsuspecting drivers, but instead pulled out a video camera and began filming the carnage. I think most would agree that if they could have helped, but, chose not to do so, then their inaction was, at best, morally deficient. Some might even consider such inaction as criminal or *hateful*.

In contrast, let us suppose that the bystanders performed extremely severe measures to warn the speeding cars. For instance, imagine that a bystander took his pickup truck and rammed it into the side of one of the oncoming cars to prevent it from going off the bridge. I think most would agree that the measure was justifiable and, ultimately, a demonstration of *love*.

So, here is my point. If a Christian sincerely believes that those who do not repent of homosexuality will spend eternity in hell, then the most *hateful* thing a Christian can do is to say nothing. Conversely, the most loving thing a Christian can do is to warn homosexuals to repent.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Christians who warn homosexuals to repent should not be condemned as hateful, but should be praised as loving—especially if their beliefs are true—

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<sup>10</sup><http://archives.cnn.com/2002/US/05/28/bridge.collapse/index.html>

<sup>11</sup> Remember, whether or not my belief is true is irrelevant

but even if they are not. However, the Christians who believe that homosexuality is morally wrong, yet say nothing, should be accused of “hate crimes.” Consequently, the issue boils down to the question, “Is homosexuality *really* wrong?”

## **Is Morality Objective or Subjective?**

Before addressing the question of homosexuality’s morality, we must wrestle, briefly, with another question—the question of moral objectivity. In other words, before we can say that homosexuality is morally wrong, we must first establish whether an objective standard of morality exists. If morality is relative (subjective) then there is no point in discussing homosexuality’s morality—for right and wrong do not exist. Only if morality is objective can we discuss whether homosexuality is wrong or not. So is morality objective or subjective? I think there are at least five good reasons for believing that morality is objective.<sup>12</sup>

**First: Human moral progress not possible.** My first reason for believing that morality must be objective involves the impossibility of moral improvement if morality is subjective. In other words, if morality is subjective, then moral progress is not possible. For instance, some theologians claim that Christian fundamentalism is a step backwards. Such an objection, however, requires a standard of comparison. For example, if I’m able to say that a particular culture has morally improved, then I must have some sort of standard to which I can compare the cultures. If one culture corresponds more closely that standard, then I can say it is a better culture. However, if there is no standard, then I cannot

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<sup>12</sup>My booklet titled, “Does God Exist: An Argument from Morality” expands upon this contention. In addition, the first few Chapters of C. S. Lewis’ “Mere Christianity,” as well as Paul Chamberlain’s “Can We Be Good without God?” address this issue at length.



shouldn't do that," or, "Give that back, I had it first," and "That's just wrong." They also say things such as, "How would you like it if someone did that to you?" They might even say things like, "but you promised," or "leave him alone, he isn't hurting anyone." Chamberlain observed,

*Think carefully about what each of these statements is saying. They are not merely saying that we don't like what the other person is doing. Of course, that is included, but they are saying much more than that. They are appealing to a standard of conduct, which we are saying the other person has violated. What's more, we expect the other person already to know about this standard, don't we? Never do we ask, 'By the way, have you heard of fairness?' ...Never does the other person ...say 'But who cares about fairness' ...Rather, she usually tries to show that their conduct really did somehow conform to the standard...[and that] if you really understood the whole situation ...you would know that.*"<sup>13</sup>

In short, if people did not believe in an objective moral standard, then they could not argue as they do. The fact that people certainly do argue, and impose moral standards upon others, reveals that they do believe in a standard that is binding upon all. In short, if you are going to bicker, you must also believe in an objective moral standard.

**Third, human judgments not possible.** I obtain my third reason for believing in an objective moral law from the notion of human judgments. If there is no objective moral standard, then no action, no matter how vile, can be judged as immoral. For instance, if there is no moral standard, then there is nothing wrong with selfish behavior, gluttony, slavery, torturing children, gay bashing, or the killing Jews. Deep down, though, most people know that these things morally wrong. The fact that some humans

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<sup>13</sup>Chamberlain, 59. Here Chamberlain is following C. S. Lewis' argument in *Mere Christianity*.

do not think all of these actions are wrong, is not a good argument against the idea of an objective moral standard. Just as some humans are born with various degrees of colorblindness, some humans are unable to recognize the moral standard. Nevertheless, most humans recognize that certain actions are always wrong.

**Four, subjectivism cannot be lived consistently.** My fourth reason why morality must be objective is based on the fact that subjectivism is not livable. In other words, even moral subjectivists become moral objectivists when they are wronged. For instance, consider to the way professing moral relativists respond when mistreated or harmed without reason. According to Chamberlain, “The same person who denies there is any objective moral standard one moment goes back on her word the next. She will immediately accuse you of acting unfairly or indecently or dishonestly toward her.”<sup>14</sup> The only way a moral relativist can act consistent with moral relativism is to say nothing when wronged. Yet, the fact that moral relativists respond as if there is an objective moral standard when they are wronged, suggests that relativism is false. For an amusing illustration of this point consider the amusing account of a student who wrote a paper arguing for moral relativism.

A professor at a major university in Indiana ... told the students to write on any ethical topic of their choice, requiring each student only to properly back up his or her thesis with reasons and documentation. One student, an atheist, wrote eloquently on the topic of moral relativism. He argued, “All morals are relative; there is no absolute standard of justice or rightness; it’s all a matter of opinion; you like chocolate, I like vanilla,” and so on. His paper provided both his reasons and his documentation. It was the right length, on time, and stylishly presented in a handsome blue folder. After the professor read the entire paper, he wrote on the front cover, “F, I don’t like blue folders!” When the student got the paper back he was enraged. He stormed into the professor’s office and

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<sup>14</sup>Chamberlain, 61. [Add California Starbucks Story here.](#)

protested, “‘F! I don’t like blue folders!’ That’s not fair! That’s not right! That’s not just! You didn’t grade the paper on its merits!” Raising his hand to quiet the bombastic student, the professor calmly retorted, “Wait a minute. Hold on. I read a lot of papers. Let me see . . . wasn’t your paper the one that said there is no such thing as fairness, rightness, and justice?” “Yes,” the student answered. “Then what’s this you say about me not being *fair, right, and just?*” the professor asked. “Didn’t your paper argue that it’s all a matter of taste? You like chocolate, I like vanilla?” The student replied, “Yes, that’s my view.” “Fine, then,” the professor responded. “I don’t like blue. You get an F!” Suddenly the light bulb went on in the student’s head. He realized he really *did* believe in moral absolutes. He at least believed in justice. After all, he was charging his professor with *injustice* for giving him an F simply because of the color of the folder. That simple fact defeated his entire case for relativism.<sup>15</sup>

In short, the actions of most relativists betrays their commitment to relativism. In other words, when wronged, most relativists become objectivists.

**Fifth, ubiquitous human consensus.** My fifth reason why morality must be objective is based on the ubiquitous human consensus concerning morality. For instance, nearly every culture believes that that selfish behavior is bad and altruistic behavior is good. The civilized world considers cultures that do not value selflessness, as immoral cultures. A good example of human consensus concerning morality is the UN declaration of human rights.<sup>16</sup> This inescapable pattern of thought caused a young C. S. Lewis eventually to question his atheism. He explained, “My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.”<sup>17</sup> Lewis continued, “If there were no light in the universe and therefore no creature with eyes, we should never know it was dark.

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<sup>15</sup>Geisler 173-74.

<sup>16</sup><http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr>

<sup>17</sup>C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2001), 38.

Dark would be a word without meaning.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, Lewis realized terms like *evil* and *wrong* are meaningless unless there is an objective moral law. He went on to argue that there cannot be a moral law without a moral law giver, which he called God.

In short, if morality is not objective, then homosexuality is not morally wrong, for wrongness does not exist. However, if morality is not objective, then actions such as gay-bashing, mistreating women, and torturing children for entertainment cannot be wrong. Therefore, anyone embracing moral relativism has no objective basis on which to address homosexuality. But, since we know that torturing children for fun is wrong, there must be an objective moral standard. And if there is an objective moral standard, or a moral law, then there must be a moral law giver. And if there is a moral law giver, or an authority behind the moral law, then we are obligated to search out its will concerning all moral issues. However, before we seek this moral law giver’s will, I think we must first address a more pressing question. That is, “Are some people born with same-sex attraction?”

### **Are Some Born Homosexual?**

Much of the debate concerning homosexuality’s morality seems to center around the idea of one being born with a homosexual orientation. For instance, according to Albert Mohler,

The modern—and highly political—notion of homosexual “orientation” as a natural human condition cannot be squared with the Bible. The only orientation indicated by Scripture is the universal human orientation to sin.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Lewis, 39.

<sup>19</sup>Mohler, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 14.

Some research indicates that nurture, not nature (genetic factors), causes homosexual orientation.<sup>20</sup> For instance, my brother in law, who experiences same sex attraction, has an identical twin that experiences no such desire.<sup>21</sup> If homosexual orientation has a genetic link, one would expect identical twins, which have the same DNA, to experience similar orientations.

However, other research seems to indicate that some people are born with a homosexual “orientation.”<sup>22</sup> For example, one study of homosexuals having an identical twin revealed that approximately 50 percent of the siblings are gay.<sup>23</sup> Far from providing evidence of a gay gene, such studies actually suggest the opposite. If there were a gay gene, then all of the twins, or most of them, would be gay. The fact that half of the siblings are gay suggests that *nurture* plays a significant role in sexual orientation. Think of it this way: Suppose a group of researchers hypothesize that certain persons are genetically predisposed to play college basketball. Suppose the group studies college basketball players that have an identical twin. Most likely, there will be a high probability that the other twin will also be a college basketball player. Does it follow that there is a college basketball gene—a gene that causes certain people to become college basketball players? I don’t think anyone would be willing to make such a connection. While it’s true that most basketball players will have similar genes, say, for height, coordination, and quick reflexes, the

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<sup>20</sup>For example, see Stanton Jones and Mark Yarhouse’s book, *Homosexuality*, (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 47-92

<sup>21</sup>I will say more about my brother-in-law later.

<sup>22</sup>For instance, see Anastasia Toufexis’ article, "New Evidence of a 'Gay Gene,'" *Time* 146, no. 20 (November 13 1995): 95.

<sup>23</sup>P. Billings and J. Beckwith, "Born Gay?" *Technology Review* July 1993: 60.

presence of such similarities does not cause one to choose to become a college basketball player. Moreover, even if there was a gene that caused persons to have a predisposition towards basketball, does it follow that these persons have no choice in the matter.

In short, homosexual advocates claim that if such an orientation exists, then homosexuality is not immoral. To them, blaming a person for their sexual orientation is as ridiculous as blaming a person for the color of their skin. For the sake of argument, let's presume that some are born with a homosexual orientation or predisposition. For instance, suppose that scientists discovered a gene that made a person possessing it more likely to choose a homosexual lifestyle. Would such a discovery morally justify homosexuality? Not necessarily. We cannot, and should not, determine morality by genetic predispositions. For example, suppose scientists isolated and identify a gene that makes a person more likely to become an alcoholic. Would the possession of such a gene morally justify alcoholism? I think most would answer "No" because alcoholism is self-destructive and harmful to others. The same is true of a number of social maladies. For instance, suppose a person was born with a genetic propensity to abuse children, to beat their spouse, to lie, to lose their temper, to rob banks, to gay-bash, or to murder. Would this natural born propensity make these actions morally right? Undoubtedly, the answer is "No." In fact, as Mohler noted, the Bible teaches that all humans have a predisposition toward many kinds of sin. Scripture describes this predisposition to sin as our "sin-nature" or "flesh. I, for one, know that I was born with at least one sinful predisposition—selfishness. In fact, each of my four daughters seems to have been born with the same trait. For instance, one of the first words each of them spoke was "mine." This inborn

affinity, however, is no excuse to act selfish. Even though God allowed me to be born selfish, I'm still obligated to renounce my selfish ways and act altruistically.

Likewise, homosexuality's morally cannot be determined by any kind of genetic, or inborn propensity or affinity. Hence, the debate concerning whether some are born gay or not is irrelevant—for there are many inborn desires that are clearly morally wrong. Consequently, we must employ other criteria, other than inborn propensity, to differentiate between right and wrong.

If inborn desire cannot determine morality, what can? Personally, I don't think anything can determine morality. Morality is not determined—it is discovered. Just as the multiplication tables, were not invented, but, instead, were discovered, so morality is also discovered. For instance, three times four was twelve long before anyone discovered that truth. In fact, the answer would have been true even if no human ever discovered that truth. Likewise, certain actions were morally wrong long before anyone discovered those truths. Just as God did not invent the laws of logic, or the rules of mathematics, God did not invent the moral standard either. Yet, neither is God subordinate to that standard. Instead, he *is* the standard. In other words, the laws of logic, and the laws of morality are an attribute of God—they are an extension of his nature. Just as certain mathematical sums are always wrong, certain actions are wrong because they violate the nature of God. However, unlike mathematics laws, moral laws are often difficult to discover. Although God designed humans with an innate knowledge of right and wrong, that knowledge has been suppressed, and understood imperfectly. Therefore, a full knowledge of right and wrong requires a special (or biblical) revelation.

## What Does The Bible Say about Homosexuality?

If God exists, then it is probably a good idea to find out if he has said anything concerning homosexuality. If the Bible is a reliable source of God's revelation to humankind, then we must consider what it says concerning homosexuality.<sup>24</sup>

**The teachings of Jesus.** Some homosexual advocates suggest that because Jesus never condemned homosexuality, then neither should Christians. The problems with this position are numerous. **First**, we don't know that Jesus never condemned homosexuality. He may have done so. All we know is that the Bible does not record any direct reference to this issue by Jesus. However, the Bible clearly states that Jesus did many things, which were not recorded.<sup>25</sup> According to John 20:30-31, "*Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*" In other words, John did not write for the purpose of providing us with the complete ethical teachings of Jesus. Instead, he wrote so that we would believe that Jesus is the Christ.

**Second**, even if Jesus never mentioned homosexuality that would not justify homosexual actions. For instance, Jesus never condemned bestiality, pedophilia, or slavery. Yet few people appeal to his silence to justify those actions. **Third**, Jesus did argue that sexual unions must be confined to marriage<sup>26</sup> and that marriage is a union between a man and a women.<sup>27</sup> **Fourth**, since

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<sup>24</sup>To find out why I believe the Bible is a reliable source of God's thoughts, see my booklet titled, "*Is The Bible the Reliable?*"

<sup>25</sup>John 20:30-31.

<sup>26</sup>Mathew 5:27-28.

<sup>27</sup>Matthew 19:3-4.

the religious leaders of Christ's day rejected homosexuality, and since Jesus habitually corrected their man made rules, his silence concerning this issue favors the understanding that homosexuality is morally wrong. **Fifth**, the rest of the Bible, which Jesus affirmed, teaches that homosexuality is morally wrong. What, then, does the rest of the Bible say about homosexuality?

**The Old Testament.** In the Old Testament, homosexual actions are described as *detestable, wicked, vile, and disgraceful*. For instance, Leviticus 18:22 says, "*Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.*" Likewise, Leviticus 20:13 says, "*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.*" Furthermore, Genesis 19:5-7 claims, "*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.*'" Additionally, Judges 19:22-23 contends,

*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."*

Some people reject these Old Testament prohibitions of homosexuality by pointing out that that are listed alongside many Old Testament commands which we feel no obligation to keep today. For example, Leviticus 19:19 says, "*Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.*"

*Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.*”<sup>28</sup> Since few Christians feel obligated to wear 100 percent cotton, or to plant only one crop per garden, homosexual advocates accuse fundamentalist Christians of “a la carte” morality. Although homosexual activists are right when they claim we are no longer obligated to keep these farming and clothing commands, they are wrong to suggest that the homosexuality prohibitions fall into the same category. One reason is that the New Testament reiterates the prohibitions in Leviticus 19:19. Consequently, the Old Testament prohibition of homosexuality still applies.

**The New Testament.** In the New Testament, homosexual actions are described as *shameful, unnatural, indecent, a perversion, wicked*, and as an offense that will preclude those who practice homosexuality from heaven. For instance, Romans 1:26-27 asserts,

*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.*

Likewise, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 maintains,

*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 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

Additionally, 1 Tim 1:9-10 declares,

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<sup>28</sup>Leviticus 19:19

*The law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.*

If these verses have been translated accurately, then one must conclude that homosexuality, according to the Bible, is at least as wrong as greed, lying, and slandering. Therefore, we must now address the question of accurate interpretation. Albert Mohler, in his work *Homosexuality and the Bible* explains two types of objections to these verses. The **first** argues, although the Bible does condemn homosexuality, those parts of the Bible are not valid today. The **second** argues that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality. According to Mohler, the revisionists who make this second case “must deny the obvious—and argue the ridiculous.”<sup>29</sup> Consequently, Mohler believes the first approach,

is the most honest as found among the revisionists. These persons do not deny that the Bible expressly forbids homosexual practices—they acknowledge that the Bible does just that. Their answer straightforward; we must abandon the Bible in light of modern knowledge and sensitivities.<sup>30</sup>

In short, although God’s Word seems to prohibit homosexual behavior, homosexual orientation (or attraction) does not seem to be prohibited.

## **The Science of Homosexuality’s Morality**

Although the Bible teaches that homosexuality is morally wrong, many do not accept those parts of the Bible. How, then, can Bible-believing Christians respond? One way is to

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<sup>29</sup>Mohler, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 9.

<sup>30</sup>Mohler, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 7.

demonstrate that science confirms the Bible's position concerning homosexuality. If one will grant me the truth of two generally accepted moral principles, then science confirms the bible's position concerning homosexuality. The **first** is that it is wrong to harm others. The **second** is that it is wrong to harm oneself. Consider the following syllogism:

- (1) If homosexuality is harmful to oneself or to others, then homosexuality is morally wrong.
- (2) Homosexuality is harmful to oneself and to others.
- (3) Therefore, homosexuality is morally wrong.

Since this is a logically valid argument, *modus ponens*, if the premises are true, then the conclusion is *necessarily* true. The argument's strength, therefore, depends on the truth of its premises. Since many homosexual activists will not be comfortable with the conclusion, they must show that one of the two premises is flawed. Let us, then, attempt to demonstrate the truth of these premises.

**Defending premise (1).** The truth of the first premise depends upon one accepting the proposition "it is wrong to harm people—both yourself and others." Although this premise cannot be proven, I most reasonable persons willingly accept it. If one does not grant the truth of this premise, then there is nothing morally wrong with torturing children, smoking in a car full of infants, or injecting methamphetamine into one's own body. The fact that we strictly regulate the use of certain drugs proves that most of us believe it is wrong to let people harm themselves. Although some people believe we have the right to harm ourselves, nearly everyone agrees it is very wrong to engage in behavior that hurts other people. For instance, many airports restrict smoking to

designated areas and ban smoking on flights to protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of second hand smoke. Similarly, most states pass laws against operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol to protect sober drivers from the intoxicated drivers. Hence, very few are willing to argue against premise (1). If they do, they have no right to argue that gay-bashing, or harming anyone else, is wrong. Consequently, if homosexual advocates want to avoid the conclusion of my syllogism, they must reject the second premise.

**Defending premise (2).** The second premise of my argument claims, “Homosexuality is harmful to oneself and to others.” Although I base my defense of this premise on science, I believe there are at two serious dangers involved in making a science-based argument. **First** is the fact that science is constantly changing its conclusions. Hence, scientific evidence for a particular argument today may become superfluous in the future. The **second** danger involves what philosophers call the fact-value fallacy. Science deals with facts, not values. For instance, science can say, “If you don’t give bone marrow to your grandmother, then she will die.” However, science cannot say that you *ought* to donate your bone marrow to your grandmother. When people use science to say that we *ought* to do something (or ought not to do something), they have left science for philosophy. Nevertheless, science can tell us what is the case—whether homosexuality is harmful or not.

However, even if the scientific evidence suggested that a homosexual lifestyle is healthier than heterosexual one, we could not necessarily conclude that homosexuality is morally good.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>For instance, one study showed that homosexual adolescent males had a lower risk for tobacco use than heterosexual adolescents (S. Bryn Austin, "Sexual

For instance, some dangerous lifestyles are clearly morally superior to safer ones. Consider, for example, the dangerous life of Mother Teresa or St. Paul. Clearly, their lifestyles were morally superior to many less dangerous lifestyles.

Despite the shortcomings of science-based arguments, science effectively confirms the Bible's concern for the lifestyle. At the very least, the following *seven* scientific truths demonstrate that homosexuality is harmful to oneself, and to others.

**First, decreased lifespan.** The scientific research suggests that a lifestyle involving homosexual activity is associated with a lifespan decreased by twenty to thirty years.<sup>32</sup> Additional research discovered that the median age of death for homosexuall men was forty-five.<sup>33</sup> Further research has confirmed these discoveries. For instance, researchers discovered that the life expectancy of practicing male homosexuals *without* AIDS is about 45 years.<sup>34</sup> However, if one includes those with AIDS, the life expectancy drops to 39 years."<sup>35</sup>

If these claims are accurate, homosexuality is clearly self-destructive and dangerous to others. Consequently, Danish researchers have recently attempted "to address recent claims of markedly shorter life spans among homosexual persons."<sup>36</sup>

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Orientation and Tobacco Use in a Cohort Study of US Adolescent Girls and Boys," *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine* 158 (2004): 317.).

<sup>32</sup>Paul Cameron, "Does Homosexual Activity Shorten Life?" *Psychological Report* 83 (1998): 847-66.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Cameron, "Homosexual Partnerships and Homosexual Longevity," *Psychological Reports* 91 (2002): 671-78.

<sup>34</sup>William Lane Craig, *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 142.

<sup>35</sup>Craig, 142.

<sup>36</sup>Morten Frisch, "Mortality among Men and Women in Same-Sex Marriage," *American Journal of Public Health* 99 (2009): 135.

Ironically, this research—which was presumed to demonstrate that the claims of anti-homosexual researchers is biased and flawed—ended up confirming the claims that homosexuality is self-destructive. For instance, the Danish researchers observed, “Despite dramatic reductions in AIDS associated mortality over the last decade, our study shows that same-sex marrying Danish men and women have overall mortality rates that are currently 33% to 34% higher than those of the general population.”<sup>37</sup> If these claims are accurate, homosexuality is clearly self-destructive and dangerous to others. Consequently, some scientists have concluded that homosexuality activity is as at least as dangerous as smoking.<sup>38</sup> If these claims are true, we must warn our youth about the dangers of living a homosexual lifestyle with the same fervor that we warn them concerning the dangers of smoking and drug use.

**Second, increased drug abuse.** In addition to having reduced life spans, those who participate in homosexual behavior are more likely to have drug and alcohol problems. In fact, homosexuals are “three times more likely than the general population to be problem drinkers.”<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, “fifty-one percent have a history of drug abuse.”<sup>40</sup> According to the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*, “A substantial body of research has documented an association between the use of recreational drugs and high-risk sex

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<sup>37</sup>Morten Frisch, "Mortality among Men and Women in Same-Sex Marriage," *American Journal of Public Health* 99 (2009): 135.

<sup>38</sup>Paul Cameron, "Homosexual Sex as Harmful as Drug Abuse, Prostitution, or Smoking," *Psychological Reports* 96 (2005): 915-61.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 113.

<sup>40</sup>Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 113.

among gay and bisexual men.”<sup>41</sup> In short, there is a correlation between homosexuality and dangerous drug use.

**Three, increased disease.** Eighty percent of male homosexual activity is physically dangerous to the human body causing problems such as “prostate damage, ulcers and ruptures, chronic incontinence and diarrhea.”<sup>42</sup> In addition, seventy-five percent of homosexual men “carry one or more sexually transmitted diseases *wholly apart* from AIDS.”<sup>43</sup> These include non-viral infections such as “gonorrhea, syphilis, bacterial infections, and parasites”<sup>44</sup> as well as incurable viral infections such as herpes and hepatitis B which effects 65 percent of homosexual men.<sup>45</sup>

Since HIV/AIDS “was first diagnosed 1981, gay and bisexual men have been leaders in dealing with the challenges of the epidemic. Gay organizations and activists, through their work, have contributed greatly to many of the guidelines for prevention, treatment, and the care of people living with HIV/AIDS.”<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, this educational effort has not slowed the spread of these diseases. For instance, the US Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports, “Whatever the reasons, in 2005, MSM still accounted for about 53% of all new HIV/AIDS cases and 71% of cases in male adults and adolescents.”<sup>47</sup> Yet, “MSM [men who have sex with men]

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<sup>41</sup>Miles McNall and Gary Remafedi, "Relationship of Amphetamine and Other Substance Use to Unprotected Intercourse Among Young Men Who Have Sex With Men," *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* 153 (1999): 1130.

<sup>42</sup>Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 117-18.

<sup>43</sup>Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 118.

<sup>44</sup>Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 119.

<sup>45</sup>Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 121.

<sup>46</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/msm/>

<sup>47</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/msm/>

made up more than two thirds (68%) of all men living with HIV in 2005, even though only about 5% to 7% of men in the United States reported having sex with other men.<sup>48</sup> In addition, a 2005 study of 5 large US cities, 46% MSM were HIV-positive.<sup>49</sup> The CDC laments, “For complex reasons, HIV/AIDS continues to take a high toll on the MSM population. For example, the number of new HIV infections between 2006 and 2009 among young MSM increased 34%”<sup>50</sup>

One explanation for the high occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases affecting homosexual men is the *highly* promiscuous lifestyle of most homosexuals. For instance, seventy-five percent of homosexuals claim to have had more than 100 different sexual partners in their lives—over half of which are complete strangers.<sup>51</sup> In fact, only eight percent of homosexuals report having had a relationship lasting longer than three years.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the average male homosexual reports having more than twenty different partners per year.<sup>53</sup> Contrary to rare cases, “lifelong faithfulness is almost non-existent in the homosexual experience.”<sup>54</sup>

**Four, financial strains.** In addition to homosexuality self-destructive properties, it is also destructive to society. The financial cost of treating diseases engendered by the homosexual lifestyle is exorbitant. If society restrained homosexuality, rather than encouraged it, more funds and more doctors could be invested

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<sup>48</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/msm/>

<sup>49</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/msm/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/msm/> brochure published May 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 106.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 106.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas E. Smidt, *Straight and Narrow* (IVP, 1995), 106.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?* (Downer’s Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 108.

into finding cures for diseases. In addition, some AIDS researchers believe that there is a danger in prolonging the life of AIDS victims with experimental treatments rather than cures. Their fear is that under such conditions the AIDS virus could mutate with something like the tuberculosis virus and become an airborne variant of the disease. I'm not suggesting that we neglect treating victims of aids. On the contrary, if God exists, and if the Bible is the Word of God, then humans are compelled to treat AIDS patients with the best care possible. I am arguing, however, that we should not promote homosexuality as a healthy alternate lifestyle to our schoolchildren.

**Five, increased mental disorders.** There is also a link between many serious psychological disorders and homosexuality. For instance, The Journal of Adolescent Health claimed that homosexuals, "reported a range of health and mental health problems, and involvement in health-compromising behaviors, such as overweight/obesity, depression, and suicidal thoughts/attempts, and many were found to have high rates of sexually transmitted infections."<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners* reports, "There are unique health disparities that exist for MSM related to social, emotional, and mental health factors, in addition to physical issues such as STDs."<sup>56</sup> Other research indicated that forty percent of male homosexuals have a history of major depression while the heterosexual population's is three percent.<sup>57</sup> According to one

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<sup>55</sup>Michele D. Kipke et al., "The Health and Health Behaviors of Young Men Who Have Sex with Men," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 40 (2007): 342-50.

<sup>56</sup>Royal Gee, "Primary Care Health Issues Among Men Who Have Sex with Men," *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners* 18 (2006): 144-53.

<sup>57</sup>Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 113.

medical journal, homosexuals are 3.41 times more likely than the general population to attempt suicide.<sup>58</sup> In fact, homosexual men attempt suicide six times more often than heterosexual men.<sup>59</sup> According to the *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, “21% had made a suicide plan, whereas 12% had previously attempted suicide.”<sup>60</sup> Although the numbers are lower, homosexual women attempt suicide twice as often as heterosexual women.<sup>61</sup> In short, there is a correlation between homosexuality and many mental disorders.

**Six, more likely to abuse children.** According to recent scientific research, homosexual practitioners are more likely to sexually abuse foster or adoptive children than heterosexual parents.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, homosexual men are significantly more likely to be pedophiles than heterosexual men.<sup>63</sup> If this data is accurate, social workers should use additional precautions when considering placing children in the care of homosexual parents.

**Seven, more likely to abuse partner.** According to the *New York Academy of Medicine*, MSM are significantly more likely to

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<sup>58</sup>Robert Garofalo, R. Cameron Wolf, and Lawrence S. Wissow, "Sexual Orientation and Risk of Suicide Attempts Among a Representative Sample of Youth," *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine* 153 (1999): 487-93.

<sup>59</sup>Craig, 141.

<sup>60</sup>Royal Gee, "Primary Care Health Issues Among Men Who Have Sex with Men," *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners* 18 (2006):149.

<sup>61</sup>Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 114.

<sup>62</sup>Paul Cameron, "Child Molestations by Homosexual Foster Parents," *Psychological Report* 96 (2005): 227-30.

<sup>63</sup>Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 115.

abuse their partners than heterosexual couples.<sup>64</sup> This abuse involves, but is not limited to, physical, verbal, and emotional abuse.<sup>65</sup>

In short, “a very good case can be made on the basis of generally accepted moral principles that homosexual behavior is wrong. It is horribly self-destructive and injurious to other persons. Thus, wholly apart from the Bible’s prohibition, there are sound, sensible reasons to regard homosexuality as wrong.”<sup>66</sup> Consequently, the liberties of homosexuals should be restricted in the same way that the liberties of gun users, smokers, and automobile drivers are also restricted. Human liberty is not a “license to engage in actions that hurt other people.”<sup>67</sup> If homosexuality is harmful to others, then perhaps homosexual couples should not be allowed to marry, and certainly should not be allowed to adopt children. If homosexuality is harmful and dangerous to others, then we should not force public schools to hire such individuals or to teach curriculum that argues for the legitimacy of homosexuality as a healthy, acceptable, lifestyle. On the contrary, if homosexuality is as self-destructive and dangerous as smoking, then society should regulate homosexuality for similar reasons. At the very least, homosexuality should not be promoted as an alternatively healthy lifestyle.

## **Are Homosexuals Bad People?**

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<sup>64</sup>Eric Houston and David J. McKirnan, "Intimate Partner Abuse among Gay and Bisexual Men," *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, Vol. 84, No. 5 84, no. 5 (2007): 681-90.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Craig, 142. Although much of this case considers male homosexuality, I believe that the dangers of female homosexuality also—albeit, to a lesser degree—warrant this conclusion.

<sup>67</sup>Craig, 143.

In many ways, many of the homosexuals that I know act more Christ-like than Christians. Unfortunately, I don't think my experience is unique. For instance, I have often heard restaurant servers complain about their Sunday afternoon clientele—Christians. These servers tell me that churchgoers are their worst clients of the week. Christians are rude, demanding, nearly impossible to please, and, generally leave a stingy tip. On the contrary, these servers tell me the openly gay couples are generally gracious, kind, patient, loving, and often leave generous tips. In these situations, homosexuals act more Christ-like than church-going Christians.

I am not sure why this is the case. Perhaps many homosexuals come from highly educated and relatively wealthy and refined families.<sup>68</sup> If so, many homosexuals would, perhaps, begin adulthood with more polished manners than an ordinary citizen. C. S. Lewis, before his conversion, thought that if Christianity is true then Christians should be nicer than non-Christians. Later on, however, he changed his position. He explained,

If Christianity is true then it ought to follow that (*a*) any Christian will be nicer than the same person would be if he were not a Christian and (*b*) that any man who becomes a Christian will be nicer than he was before. Just in the same way, if the advertisements of Whitesmile's toothpaste are true, it ought to follow (*a*) that anyone who uses it will have better teeth than the same person would have if he did not use it and (*b*) that if anyone begins to use it then his teeth will improve. But to point out that I, who use Whitesmile's (and have also inherited bad teeth from both my parents) have not got as fine a set as some healthy young negro who never used any toothpaste at all, does not, by itself, prove that the advertisements are untrue: Christian Miss Bates may have an unkind tongue than unbelieving Dick Firkin. That, by itself does not tell us whether Christianity works. The question is what Miss Bates's tongue would be like if

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<sup>68</sup>Although homosexuals can be found in every socioeconomic group, it seems to me that a large percent of homosexuals come from relatively affluent families.

she were not a Christian and what Dick's would be like if he became one. Miss Bates and Dick, as a result of natural causes and early upbringing, have certain temperaments: Christianity professes to put both temperaments under new management if they will allow it to do so. . . . Everyone knows what is being managed in Dick Firkin's case is much 'nicer' than what is being managed in Miss Bates's. That's not the point. To judge the management of a factory, you must consider not only the output but the plant. Considering the plant at factory A, it may be a wonder that it turns out anything at all; considering the first-class outfit at factory B, its output, though high, may be a great deal lower than it ought to be. No doubt, the good manager at factory A is going to put in new machinery as soon as he can, but that takes time. In the meantime, low output does not prove that he is a failure.<sup>69</sup>

In other words, not everyone is endowed with the same amount of social grace. Perhaps many who become Christians start their Christian life lower on the social grace scale than non-Christian homosexuals.

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<sup>69</sup>Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 210-11.

## Will Homosexuals Be Allowed into Heaven?

Can a homosexual get into heaven? The answer to this question, I think, depends on what we mean by “homosexual.” Earlier I maintained that merely having same-sex attraction does not make one homosexual. Rather, I defined homosexuality as action—both mental and physical. Consequently, there is nothing morally wrong with having same-sex temptation or attraction. Therefore, just as those who experience heterosexual temptation can enter heaven if they receive Christ by faith and repentance, so can those who experience homosexual attraction—if they receive Christ by faith and repentance.

But, what about practicing homosexuals? Will God allow practicing homosexual to enter heaven? If we define “practicing” homosexuals as those who act upon (mentally or physically) their same-sex attraction, then the Bible is clear that practicing homosexuals will not enter the kingdom of God. The Bible, however, is just as clear that neither will liars, or the greedy, or many others, enter the kingdom of heaven. The Bible says,

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

Does this mean that a person struggling, say, with alcoholism cannot be saved? I do not think so. Consequently, I must make a distinction between someone who believes that being drunk is morally wrong, yet daily struggles to stay sober (and perhaps fails from time to time) and a person who says, “I don’t care what the Bible says about getting drunk, I am going to do it anyway.”

Likewise, I believe there is an eternity of difference between someone who hates, say, lying, yet (in times of weakness) lies; and a person who says “I don’t care what God says, I’m going to lie.” Those in the latter category indicate that their hearts have not yet been changed. Consequently, I believe that a person could be struggling with homosexual desires (and possibly give into those desires during moments of weakness) and yet be truly saved. However, those who say, “I don’t care what God thinks about homosexuality, I’m going to do things my way” indicate that their hearts have not yet been born again. If you are in the latter category, then cry out to God in prayer and ask him to change your heart. Continue to call on the name of the Lord until you have the assurance from the Holy Spirit that he has transformed you into a child of God.<sup>70</sup>

### **What Should I Do if I Am Experiencing Homosexual Desires?**

Suppose that a person who has “*called upon the name of the Lord*”<sup>71</sup> and has received assurance of his or her salvation from the Holy Spirit, continues to struggle with homosexual attraction. How should that person respond to those temptations? I offer the following five suggestions. **First**, those with same-sex attraction must determine whether homosexuality is morally wrong. If one does not resolve this question, then the following suggestions are irrelevant. **Second**, those who are struggling with same-sex attraction should pray for God to deliver them from this temptation. However, they must not blame God if the desire does not go away. Just as a person who struggles with, say, anger

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<sup>70</sup>For more information concerning this topic, read my booklet titled “*What Must I Do to Get to Heaven.*”

<sup>71</sup>Romans 10:13

management must not blame God for not taking away his anger problems, so the person struggling with same-sex attraction must not blame God if he does not choose to intervene in a miraculous way.

**Third**, those who are struggling with homosexual temptation should respond to those temptations the same way that those undergoing heterosexual temptation deal with them. Just as heterosexual singles should practice abstinence from all sexual immorality, so should those struggling with homosexual temptations. In the same way that heterosexual individuals should avoid pornography and fantasizing, so should Christians with homosexual struggles.

**Fourth**, I think that those who experience homosexual temptations should, when they experience such a temptation, thank God for an opportunity to glorify him by resisting the temptation. This concept may sound strange, so let me explain it in relation to something less controversial. Suppose that a particular person has recently overcome an addiction to compulsive gambling. I have never had (and probably never will have) any desire to gamble. I don't think I have ever been tempted to gamble. Therefore, I have no opportunity to glorify God by overcoming a temptation to gamble because I have no such desire. However, the person who has recently overcome a gambling addiction may have many opportunities to glorify God by resisting temptations to gamble. Consequently, when tempted to gamble, the person tempted should thank God for the opportunity and pray for strength to endure the trial. Likewise, those experiencing same-sex temptations should thank God for the opportunity to glorify him by overcoming the trial.

**Fifth**, those struggling with same-sex attraction should seek out professional help from a qualified Christian counselor. My

brother in law, Phil Mitchell, is one such counselor. Phil was a youth pastor at a 16,000-member mega-church in Arkansas. The ministry grew tremendously under his leadership. At one point, Phil was leading the Southern Baptist Convention by baptizing over 200 youths per year. However, all along, Phil was harboring a secret—same-sex attraction. For years, he suppressed this temptation by discipline and self-restraint. Eventually, however, he gave our adversary a foothold, and this temptation gave birth to sin. In due course, his sin “found him out.”<sup>72</sup> Consequently, he was fired from his job and his wife left him. Phil always believed homosexuality was morally wrong. He simply did not know how to deal with his temptations. Fortunately, a ministry of Johnny Hunt’s church—First Baptist Church of Woodstock—specializes in helping people like Phil.<sup>73</sup> Today he is free from the bondage that once chained him. Now he lives to help others to find that same freedom.

## **How Should the Church Respond to Homosexuality?**

In general, Christians, both liberal and conservative, have failed the homosexual community. Conservative Christians have failed homosexuals by refusing to pursue them with the same grace offered to heterosexuals. In many ways, conservative Christians have viewed homosexuals similar to the way Jonah viewed the people of Nineveh—as those unworthy of God’s grace. Since God was clearly displeased with Jonah, we can be sure that he is also displeased with those who develop a similar attitude toward homosexuals. Liberal Christians, on the other hand, have also

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<sup>72</sup>Numbers 32:23.

<sup>73</sup>More information about this program can be found at [www.hopequestgroup.org](http://www.hopequestgroup.org).

failed the homosexual community by affirming the lifestyle as an alternative, God-honoring, way of living. Since Jesus requires all people to repent or perish, this too is equally damning to the homosexual.<sup>74</sup> How then, should a loving Christian relate to homosexuals? I think the answer to this question involves a dynamic conversation in which both groups seek to understand each other more fully. In the meantime, however, I think Christians can apply the following seven principles to their interactions with homosexuals.

**First**, Christians must realize that many homosexuals claim that they did not choose their orientation. Many also report that they would like to change their orientation if they could.<sup>75</sup>

**Second**, Christians need to love and support those who are struggling with this problem in the same way that they help those struggling with any life-dominating issue such as alcoholism, destructive gambling, or heterosexual sexual addiction. **Third**, Christians should avoid crass language or jokes concerning homosexuals. For years, I made fun of homosexuality around my brother-in-law. This seemingly innocuous humor probably kept him from sharing his struggle to me earlier. Had I been more sensitive, perhaps he could have receive help before he gave “the devil a foothold.”<sup>76</sup>

**Fourth**, Christians must find ways to extend the love of Christ to the homosexual community and individual homosexuals. By

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<sup>74</sup>Luke 13:3

<sup>75</sup>Today, growing numbers of homosexuals seem to be proud of their orientation. Yet, most still claim that they did not choose their orientation. I don't claim to know what causes one's orientation—it's probably a mixture of nurture and nature. However, all humans have an orientation for sin—regardless of its particular manifestation.

<sup>76</sup>Ephesians 4:27

this I mean finding ways to evangelizing and serving homosexuals. **Fifth**, Christians must continue to speak the truth, but, as Ephesians 4:15 commands, speak the truth in love. **Sixth**, Christians must remember that Jesus, when asked why he spent time with notorious sinners, said, *“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick”* (Matthew 9:12). If Jesus spent time with those that society rejected, then we should as well, for the Bible says, *“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did”* (1 John 2:6). Consequently, churches must find ways to open their doors and affirm homosexuals without affirming homosexuality. **Seven**, Christians must be willing to talk about homosexuality with their children and their youth groups. Despite the fact that Paul said, *“it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret”* (Ephesians 5:12), we dare not avoid this discussion any longer. Christians must lovingly, and openly, initiate discussions concerning homosexuality.

## **How Should Christians Respond To The Gay-Marriage Debate?**

Jesus clearly stated that a Christian marriage is between a man and a woman. However, most Christians appear to have abandoned the concept Christian marriage a long time ago. The institution we presently call marriage today is no longer Christian marriage. Given the divorce rate among professing Christians, I think today’s institution is best described as “serial monogamy.” Perhaps we should start a new kind of marriage—a truly Christian marriage—enforced in the church, not in the courts. In the 1940’s C. S. Lewis wrote,

There ought to be two distinct kinds of marriage: one governed by the state with rules enforced on all citizens, the other governed by the church with rules

enforced by her on her own members. The distinction ought to be quite sharp, so that a man knows which couples are married in a Christian sense, and which are not.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps Lewis was right. Maybe Christians lost marriage a long time ago. Perhaps the only way to save it is to give civil union away and start over with a truly Christian marriage—a union that exemplifies the relationship between Christ and his church. A union made by God that no man can dissolve.<sup>78</sup>

I do realize that I have not actually answered the question concerning gay marriage. Instead, I have argued that the civil institution we call marriage today is not Christian marriage. Before we worry about “gay” marriage, we need to reclaim Christian marriage. I’m not sure if that means we need to coin a new term such as “Christian Union,” or salvage the original. Either way, I believe that we need to reclaim Christian marriage and enforce it within the church, not with a secular government. Perhaps one way to remove Christian marriage from the secular sphere of influence is to cut all secular benefits (such as tax breaks and medical benefits) to all married couples. Then homosexual couples would have not as many financial incentives for marriage. In short, although I do not support gay marriage, neither do I support what Christian marriage has become.

### **What about Hermaphrodites?**

Some people are born as hermaphrodites—having both male and female sexual organs. How should these people choose their sexual orientation? This is a very good question. Since we live in

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<sup>77</sup>Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 112. For more information concerning Lewis’ idea of a Christian marriage, see chapter six in *Mere Christianity*.

<sup>78</sup>Matthew 19:6 says, “Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

a sin-stained world, all sorts of detrimental genetic disorders have emerged and will probably continue to do so.<sup>79</sup> For instance, Down Syndrome—a genetic disorder involving an extra chromosome—entails, among other things, significant cognitive impairment.<sup>80</sup> I believe that Christian researchers should attempt to find genetic cures, not mere treatments, to these kinds of diseases. Our country should be ashamed of the fact that, for example, the vast majority of the money given to cancer research goes to finding new treatments for cancer rather than for finding cures. I believe the reason for this disparity is that treating a disease is financially more lucrative than curing one. Nevertheless, I'm confident that continued and persistent research will uncover cures to many of the genetic diseases that plague our world. If we develop the ability to correct genetic disorders like Down Syndrome, then we should. Likewise, if we can employ some sort of recombinant DNA technology to “splice in” the proper genes into those with disordered hermaphroditic genes, then we should. Similarly, if there is a “gay gene” then maybe we should, if we could, consider replacing it in a similar fashion.<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

My goal for this booklet was to stimulate dialogue between the homosexual community and the various Christian communities—particularly conservative Christianity. In short, I have argued that same-sex attraction (or temptation) is not morally

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<sup>79</sup>If you would like to know why and all-powerful, all loving God might allow evil, see my booklet “*If God Exists, Why Is There So Much Evil in The World?*”

<sup>80</sup>This genetic disease is also called Trisomy 21.

<sup>81</sup>I do realize that I have not actually answered the question of how hermaphrodites should determine their sexual orientation. Instead, I argued that we should seek cures for this chromosomal disorder.

wrong. I have, however, argued that acting upon same-sex attraction (or temptation) is morally wrong. I have also maintained that both liberal Christians and conservative Christians have “dammed” homosexuals—albeit in different ways. Liberals have dammed homosexuals by affirming their lifestyle and refusing to warn them of the coming judgment. Conservatives, on the other hand, have dammed homosexuals by refusing to share the love of Christ and his good news with them. By viewing homosexuality as the ultimate sin, many conservative Christians have adopted an attitude toward homosexuals similar to the attitude Jonah had toward the people of Nineveh. Since God was not pleased with Jonah’s attitude, we can safely presume that he is equally unhappy with many conservative Christians.

I do not claim to have the final word on this topic. On the contrary, my contentions could be wrong. If I have misunderstood the Bible, then I am willing to change my theology to fit the Bible. If I have reasoned wrongly, I will change my conclusions to better correspond to reason. If I have misapplied scientific evidence, then I am willing to apply it properly. Consequently, I am asking incredulous readers to respond to this article by emailing me at the address included at the beginning of this document. In other words, I am willing to change my position if given compelling intellectual reasons to do so.<sup>82</sup>

In closing, I want to reemphasize the truth that we are all born with an inclination to sin. Despite the fact that some of us have sinful predispositions toward heterosexual sin, and others (perhaps) toward homosexual sin, God demonstrated his own love for us in this way: “*While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Romans

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<sup>82</sup>I said “intellectual reasons,” to distinguish between the physical threats that I often received from those who disagree with my conclusions.

5:8). If we will turn from our sin, and turn to Christ, he will “*forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).