

What Does the Bible Say About LGBTQ?

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By Pastor Tim White

It is time for my June column. And I have struggled to know what and how to write it. In fact, this is my third version, and each one is different. Let me explain. The growing political and social pressure to fall in line and affirm something the Bible condemns and human history demonstrates is destructive to families and societies is deeply troubling. It puts people on edge and causes many "straight people" to self-censor their beliefs out of fear of verbal attacks or worse.

I find no enjoyment in addressing this issue, nor would I join those street preachers shaking their Bible as they shout biblical verses condemning LGBTQ people. I know what the Bible states about homosexual practices, same-sex marriage, and alternate sexual identities. Still, I find no personal satisfaction in throwing it in the face of a culture and society that grows increasingly opposed (hostile?) to God's standards. But love for the Truth and my "neighbor" compels me to address it.

First and foremost, I believe the Bible is the source of Truth and wisdom in this life as in 2 Tim. 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." I did not write it. My life's goal has been to read, understand, and apply it.

While some significant denominations have abandoned the Bible's clear teaching on this subject, many more have not. Let me quote the opening portion of the position paper adopted by the General Presbytery of the Assemblies of God (through which I am ordained) in 2014 entitled, "Homosexuality, Marriage, And Sexual Identity":

"It should be noted at the outset that there is absolutely no affirmation of homosexual activity, same-sex marriage, or changes in sexual identity found anywhere in Scripture. Male and female genders are carefully defined and unconfused. The consistent ideal for sexual experience in the Bible is chastity for those outside a monogamous heterosexual marriage and fidelity for those inside such a marriage. There is also abundant evidence that homosexual behavior, along with illicit heterosexual behavior, is immoral and comes under the judgment of God."

Then the paper goes on to state, "We believe, in light of biblical revelation, that the growing cultural acceptance of homosexual identity and behavior (male and female), same-sex marriage, and efforts to change one's biological sexual identity are all symptomatic of a broader spiritual disorder that threatens the family, the government, and the church."

Did you catch that? We believe that the "growing cultural acceptance of homosexual identity... is symptomatic of a broader spiritual disorder" – i.e., the root problem is spiritual and not one's sex drive. Therefore, the first step to reverse this trend is to return to our Creator in humility and confession. When we toss out the teachings in Scripture, we become like travelers in the forest without a compass.

Shortly before his execution by Nero, the Apostle Paul warned another Pastor Tim, that “...the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” (2Tim. 4:3-4 NIV84).

We witness a “turning away from the Truth to myths” when people claim there are many genders, and one is whatever gender they feel at the moment. Likewise, believing that same-sex attraction is from God and completely natural – so just give in to your “true self.” These are myths contrary to God’s standards and even nature itself.

The Bible is clear that homosexuality is a sin. In 1 Cor. 6:9-10, Paul writes to the Grecian believers – living in a highly sexualized society where it was typical for men to be bisexual and for them to groom young boys into the same – “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. (See also 1 Tim. 1:9-10)

Pause for a moment so I may make one observation. This passage equates the “greedy, drunkards, and slanderers” with the sin of homosexuality. Therefore, a “straight” drunkard or swindler is in just as much danger of eternal loss as those living in homosexuality. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (i.e., “...of God’s righteous standards”). As we interact with one another, let’s not forget that we all need the forgiveness of God offered through repentance and faith in Christ.

Moving westward across the Aegean Sea, the Christians in Rome witnessed daily the sexually permissive culture of imperial Rome. In Romans 1:25-27, Paul described the results that followed in the lives of those who rejected God and “worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator. . . . Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts...” Then, he defines what “shameful lusts” are in the following verse: “Even their women exchanged natural sexual 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 shameful acts with other men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

There can be no other interpretation except that Paul is referring to both male homosexuality and lesbianism. What should alarm us by Paul’s words is that long patterns of disregard for God’s Truth demonstrated by shamelessly rushing to fulfill all sinful passions can cause the Father – who truly loves us – to step back, so to speak, and let us pursue whatever we lust after.

Can these be saved? Of course. 2 Peter 3:9b says, “...but [God] is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.” The desire for sex is from God, and in its proper place (a monogamous marriage between a man and a woman), it is to be enjoyed and serves as the mechanism to produce the next generation. Struggling with sexual temptation is part of life, but it does not have to rule your life – see 1 Cor. 10:13 – God has a way of escape and freedom for all who seek Him.

Finally, the secret to finding a fulfilling life is not by “Following your heart (emotions)” but by “Leading your heart.” God’s Word provides the direction we need, and His Spirit does an inner work that transforms us through a growing relationship with the Father through faith in Christ (Php. 2:12-13). Jesus did not come to condemn but to save (John 3:17). My purpose must be the same.

Note: For this month’s column, I adapted material from the Position Paper mentioned earlier at the Assemblies of God website, AG.ORG, under the “Beliefs” tab if you want to research it yourself. If you need help, the website has relevant links, too. Also, my contact email has been corrected here, so if you want a copy of my almost finished paper on “What the Bible Says About Women in Ministry?” don’t hesitate to contact me.