

What Does the Bible Say about Homosexuality?

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In both the OT and NT the Bible teaches that homosexual behavior is sinful. Some of the most notable passages include Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; and 1 Timothy 1:10. The Romans passage is probably the most complete statement on homosexuality, for the apostle Paul says: "For even their females exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. The males in the same way also left natural relations with females and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Males committed shameless acts with males and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error" (Rm 1:26-27). Not only does this passage condemn both male and female homosexuality, it explains *why* homosexual behavior is wrong. Simply put, it violates God's design for male and female sexuality. Men were designed to function sexually with women, a fact that is obviously consistent with human anatomy.

The Bible also implies that homosexuality, like other sins, can be overcome. Paul reminds the Corinthians that although some of them were homosexuals, they changed: "Some of you were like this; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11; see vv. 9-10 for context).

Some gay advocates try to deny that homosexuality is a sin by noting that Jesus never said anything about it. But Jesus' silence is irrelevant. Many behaviors Jesus was silent about are addressed and prohibited elsewhere in Scripture. But all the same, what the Bible *doesn't* say about homosexuality may in some cases be just as important as what it does say. First, the Bible doesn't say that homosexual behavior is the worst sin. Though it's a serious offense to God, we shouldn't heap special condemnation on homosexuals or feel compelled to make homosexuality the special focus of our witness to a world lost in sin.

Second, the Bible doesn't say to be opposed to homosexual *people*. It's opposed to homosexual *behavior*. While we should vigorously oppose public policies that try to promote homosexuality in culture, we're called to a relentless love towards all sinners, including gays. This also means we shouldn't treat Christians who struggle with same-sex attraction like they have the plague. It's important to support them in their struggle just like we'd support others struggling with different sins. The Bible also doesn't say we can't be friends with gays and lesbians. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:9-12 that we are called to judge and avoid *unrepentant Christians*, not people of this world. We can believe homosexual behavior is wrong and still have kind and congenial relationships with gays and lesbians, just as Jesus would have done.

Finally, the Bible doesn't call homosexuals to heterosexuality, but to *holiness*. Repenting from homosexuality is not about becoming straight (some choose celibacy), but becoming righteous in God's eyes. What homosexuals need is a pardon from God.

They receive that by trusting Jesus. Then God changes their desires by renewing them from the inside out.