

Honor
Homosexuality and Transgenderism
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TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture:

Romans 1:24–29 (NLT)

24 So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. 25 They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. 26 That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. 27 And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved. 28 Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. 29 Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.

Leviticus 18:22 (NLT)

22 "Do not practice homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman. It is a detestable sin.

1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (NLT)

9 Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, 10 or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people— none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. 11 Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a memorable experience from any community service or mission trip you've been a part of. What was something surprising or impactful from that experience?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read Romans 1:24-29**. What do these verses suggest about the consequences of rejecting God's design, including His design for relationships?
- What does it mean when Paul says God '*abandoned them to their shameful desires*'? How should this influence our response to cultural shifts today?
- **Read Leviticus 18:22**. How do these laws given to Israel relate to our understanding of God's standards for moral and ethical conduct today?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**. How does this passage challenge us to view our past actions and current identity in Christ? What does it say about the transformative power of God's forgiveness and grace in our lives?
- Homosexuality and transgenderism are significant topics today. How can we discuss these issues in our communities in a way that respects individuals but also upholds biblical truths?
- The sermon explores the idea of predispositions versus predeterminations (referring to Dr. Yuan's insights). How does this help us understand and engage with people experiencing same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria?
- Should a Christian attend a same-sex wedding?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Take notes from this message and discussion and add them to your "witnessing toolkit" so that we may more faithfully engage the lost. Reference **Luke 15:1-7**.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Ask for His guidance and strength, and for His presence and Word to be magnified as we seek to share the healing and redemption that can only come from Him. Pray that He helps us to be salt and light as we minister to those living outside of His design.

Question: "What does the Bible say about homosexuality?"

Answer:

In some people's minds, being homosexual is as much outside one's control as the color of your skin and your height. On the other hand, the Bible clearly and consistently declares that homosexual activity is a sin (Genesis 19:1–13; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10). God created marriage and sexual relationships to be between one man and one woman: "At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'" (Matthew 19:4–5). Anything outside of God's intent and design is sin. The Bible teaches that Christians are to live for God, deny themselves, pick up their cross, and follow Him (Matthew 16:24), including with their sexuality. This disconnect between what the Bible says and what some people feel leads to much controversy, debate, and even hostility.

When examining what the Bible says about homosexuality, it is important to distinguish between homosexual *behavior* and homosexual *inclinations* or *attractions*. It is the difference between active sin and the passive condition of being tempted. Homosexual behavior is sinful, but the Bible never says it is a sin to be tempted. Simply stated, a struggle with temptation may lead to sin, but the struggle itself is not a sin.

Romans 1:26–27 teaches that homosexuality is a result of denying and disobeying God. When people continue in sin and unbelief, God "gives them over" to even more wicked and depraved sin to show them the futility and hopelessness of life apart from God. One of the fruits of rebellion against God is homosexuality. First Corinthians 6:9 proclaims that those who practice homosexuality, and therefore transgress God's created order, are not saved.

A person may be born with a greater susceptibility to homosexuality, just as some people are born with a tendency to violence and other sins. That does not excuse the person's choosing to sin by giving in to sinful desires. Just because a person is born with a greater susceptibility to fits of rage doesn't make it right for him to give in to those desires and explode at every provocation. The same is true with a susceptibility to homosexuality.

No matter our proclivities or attractions, we cannot continue to define ourselves by the very sins that crucified Jesus—and at the same time assume we are right with God. Paul lists many of the sins that the Corinthians once practiced (homosexuality is on the list). But in 1 Corinthians 6:11, he reminds them, "That is what some of you *were*. 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" (emphasis added). In other words, some of the Corinthians, before they were saved, lived homosexual lifestyles; but no sin is too great for the cleansing power of Jesus. Once cleansed, we are no longer defined by sin.

The problem with homosexual attraction is that it is an attraction to something that God has declared to be sinful, and any desire for something sinful ultimately has its roots in sin. The pervasive nature of sin causes us to see the world and our own actions through a warped perspective. Our thoughts, desires, and dispositions are all affected. So, homosexual attraction does not always result in active, willful sin—there may not be a conscious choice to sin—but it springs from the sinful nature. Same-sex attraction is always, on some basic level, an expression of the fallen nature.

As sinful human beings living in a sinful world (Romans 3:23), we are beset with weaknesses, temptations, and inducements to sin. Our world is filled with lures and entrapments, including the enticement to practice homosexuality.

The temptation to engage in homosexual behavior is real to many. Those who struggle with homosexual attraction often report suffering through years of wishing things were different. People may not always be able to control how or what they feel, but they *can* control what they do with those feelings (1 Peter 1:5–8). We all have the responsibility to resist temptation (Ephesians 6:13). We must all be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2). We must all "walk by the Spirit" so as not to "gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Finally, the Bible does not describe homosexuality as a "greater" sin than any other. All sin is offensive to God. Without Christ, we are lost, whatever type of sin has entangled us. According to the Bible, God's forgiveness is available to the homosexual just as it is to the adulterer, idol worshiper, murderer, and thief. God promises the strength for victory over sin, including homosexuality, to all those who will believe in Jesus Christ for their salvation (1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 4:13).