

From a strictly physiological and anatomical standpoint, the human body is not constructed for anal intercourse. Such a common sense conclusion hardly requires a medical expert to validate it. Thus sodomy is nothing less than 'body abuse'. It is rightly regarded as a moral perversion.

Homophobia

It remains true that homophobia should not be encouraged any more than any other phobia. However, it is inconsistent to permit homosexuality and yet warn young people of its dangers. Medical, social and emotional consequences militate against the legalisation of homosexuality at any age.

Transforming Grace

From the standpoint of the Christian Gospel, it is true that the love of God is available to homosexuals. Yes, it is true that God calls everyone into His everlasting love but we must repent of our sins, trusting alone in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Like adulterers and murderers, homosexuals must repent of their particular sin if they wish to be part of Christ's Church and be saved.

As there is no limit to the transforming power of God's grace and Holy Spirit, so those with homosexual tendencies may be delivered from them. Such grace includes the power to repent. Such repentance is necessary. This is the judgement of God's Word, the Bible.

We must not reject those whom God accepts but neither must we change His rules. What the Lord Jesus said to the adulterous woman applies equally to penitent homosexuals: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8: 11). The Bible must be taken as a whole without us changing or diluting parts we find hard to accept.

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THE BIBLE AND HOMOSEXUALITY

Opposing the decadent agenda of aggressive liberals, orthodox Bible-believing Christians appeal to the authority of the Scriptures in the belief that there are 'absolutes'. Indeed, the Bible continues to provide infallible guidance to be applied in today's circumstances. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments do not simply provide documentary examples of the values of a bygone age for merely historical interest.

Progressive revelation

However, Christians do believe in 'progressive' revelation. With the culmination of divine revelation in our Lord Jesus Christ, certain aspects of the Old Testament became redundant. For instance, Israel's civil and ceremonial codes were not, in all their details - including the stoning of blasphemers and adulterers, to be carried over into the New Testament era. They were not to be binding on

Gentile or Hebrew believers. Christ himself refused to allow the stoning of the adulterous woman (see Jn. 8: 1-11). In the New Testament, there are no precedents for blasphemers being stoned. In short, new rules replaced old ones in the atmosphere of international and anti-discriminatory grace.

Law and Grace

However, the principles of the moral law - the Ten Commandments - were not abrogated. In the realm of sexual ethics, homosexuality continues to be regarded as sinful and unacceptable (see Romans 1: 26-7), along with adultery and fornication (see 1 Cor. 6: 9). Heterosexual marriage remains the normal relationship for valid sexual activity. However, in accordance with the gospel of God's grace, sexual deviance disqualifies no one for Church membership *provided it is accompanied by repentance and a change of life-style*.

Therefore all sin - including homosexuality - may be forgiven but no unrepentant sinner has any place in the fellowship of the Church of Christ. Within wider society, without prescribing civil penalties, the Church must act as salt and light, promoting

by holy and loving example, the acceptance of Christian values.

What is Sodomy?

The view that sodomy in the Old Testament was not homosexuality but failure to show hospitality has no justification. Certainly Ezekiel (16: 49-50) describes the 'iniquitous' affluent and selfish society of Sodom as the materialistic and indulgent setting for the 'abominations' described in Genesis 19: 5-8. These were clearly sexual rather than social.

Indeed, as was also the case with ancient Greece and Rome, these things often go together. Western affluence has also become the occasion for moral decline in general and the growth of sexual perversion in particular.

Sodomy and slavery

It is fallacious to set aside the New Testament prohibition of homosexuality on the grounds that Paul once acquiesced in now discredited slavery. When we realise that the spiritual and moral challenge of the Christian Faith did not involve a wholesale assault on the political and social culture of the Roman world, it is easy to see why Paul did not attack slavery as such. However, he did encourage slaves to seek their freedom (see 1 Cor. 7: 21).

Such teaching, coupled with the Biblical law of loving one's neighbour, contained the seed for the ultimate overthrow of slavery. However, there is no evidence to suggest that we may take a lenient and less rigorous view of the evil of homosexuality. It remains an abomination in the sight of God, besides being held in abhorrence by most human beings.

Gay gene?

It is simply not proven that homosexual orientation is determined at birth. No genetic explanation is forthcoming in this respect. However, there is much evidence that a soft and luxurious social environment promotes homosexual tendencies. Besides, if a 'gay gene' could be identified, the same might be true for adultery, murder and stealing. Such activities might conceivably be decriminalised on such grounds, to the utter ruin of civilised society as we have known it!

The Bible and the Body

Loving sexual relationships are to be confined to heterosexual marriage. Fidelity within marriage is the ultimate antidote to AIDS and other STDs.