

WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN

#2 Christianity is Intolerant – Homosexuality

Can you think of recent instances in the media of 'sexual misconduct' of any form that society condemns?

Do you ever hear the underlying reasons for why that particular behaviour is wrong? Why do you think those acts are considered to be bad in our society?

We will look at this broad issue of what underpins morality ie. the reasons we deem something as wrong. But on this topic of homosexuality, for some, this is *the* issue which reveals all that is wrong with Christianity. When any of the bible passages are brought out that speak against a gay and lesbian lifestyle, Christianity is labelled as outdated, out of step, and intolerant. In our society, if anyone is negative about the homosexual lifestyle, they are charged with being "homophobic" – a trait which is as sinister as being sexist or racist. It's important to have clarity on this 'hot button' issue. If you disagree with the homosexual lifestyle, does it really mean that you must be an 'intolerant', bigoted person? Is the bible really against homosexuality anyway? Let see what the bible says.



From the Beginning

Read Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25

From this passage, what is the *purpose* of the marriage union?

To say that the relationship between the man and the woman has a *purpose*, that it was *designed* to achieve certain things, might be a foreign idea for many, but this seems to be the reason we are given this picture of the first man and woman and their marriage union.

The man and the woman are complementary and this goes to the most foundational thing of their biology – 'their bits fit together'. In being complementary, they can fulfil their *responsibility* to produce children and nurture a family in a life long monogamous union. Childlessness and celibacy are a feature of being human for many and this is usually an unwanted reality. What do you think about this idea that expressing our sexuality is not just a private thing 'what's in it for me' or 'what's in it for the two of us', but rather there is *responsibility* – 'what's in it for everyone'?

Homosexuality & the Old Testament

In the context that God's design is for sex to be part of a committed and exclusive union between a man and women, the Old Testament prohibits such activities as incest, prostitution and adultery (eg. Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18 & Proverbs). And because of the pattern of things in Genesis 1 & 2, the Old Testament only celebrates and affirms the committed and exclusive union between a man and woman (eg. Deuteronomy 24:5; Song of Songs). Given the pattern of things, it would seem that homosexual acts are excluded by implication, even if no other bible references are made. But there are passages. See Leviticus 18:22 and also the story of Sodom in Genesis 19:1-22.

It has sometimes been said that the Old Testament excludes things like eating certain types of seafood, and we don't keep to those rules anymore, so the prohibitions against homosexuality are equally outdated. Given what we've seen so far, what do you say about this?

Homosexuality & the New Testament

The New Testament has more to say about homosexuality than the Old Testament. We will look at just two passages.

1) Read Romans 1:16-32

What is the great sin of humanity according to v18-23?

What is God's judgement upon humanity for their rebellion against God? v24, 26, 28

How are homosexual relations described in this passage? v26-27

How does the concept of 'unnatural relations' make sense in the light of Genesis 1 & 2?

This passage makes it clear that homosexual relations are a sin. But it's in a list of other sins as well. In v29-31 what other sins are mentioned that are more 'palatable' for many?

What does this say about how we should view homosexuality?

As a bit of background context, it's helpful to know that Romans 1 is a word against Gentiles and Romans 2 is a word against self-righteous Jews who think they are ok with God because they have the law. It's a reminder to all of us who would be tempted to be self-righteous about our morality. As 2:1 says 'You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else.....'

2) Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

When you read this passage, what's the difference between homosexual acts and other sin?

According to verse 11, what has God done in these Christians' lives?

When it comes to the 'homosexual offenders' of verse 9, does it surprise you that God has brought change to their lives?

What does this tell us about God and the nature of homosexuality?

Discussion Questions



a) Do you think Christians can relate and think about homosexuals in a non-Christian way? What should be the Christian attitude?

b) "The greatest Christian commandment is to love (Mark 12:28-31). And in a homosexual relationship just as with a heterosexual relationship there can be great love - consensual, mutual, faithful and life enhancing". What would you say about this?

c) "Like my gender and race, my sexual orientation is part of who I am. It's not right that you can say my homosexuality is a sin." If you were in this conversation, would could you say?