

About Homosexuality



Summary of AboutHomosexuality.org

On the web: [Reality Changes Things](#) | [A Vermont Mother Speaks Out](#) | [Parents Booklet by PFLAG](#)



Homosexuality can be confusing

Many people in our country have made moral judgments about homosexuality... based on flawed information.

Welcome! This website contains a wealth of information and well-reasoned thought for people who are trying to understand homosexuality--something that's not easy to do! If you're here for the first time, congratulations. You're taking an important step.

Thinking about sexuality, however, can be as uncomfortable as it is as important, and it's not unusual to have strong feelings. So go easy on yourself and don't try to absorb all of this material at once. Bookmark this site and come back after doing some reflection. Talk about what you read with other thoughtful people.

Links are sprinkled throughout the text in footnotes to show at least one source for a piece of information. You should be able to click on them—along with the links at the top of this page, even though the document you are reading is a PDF. Most of the links lead to PDF copies of the original webpages and are located located at “AboutHomosexuality.org” because web pages tend to disappear from the web over time. Reading even a few of the articles will enrich your experience.

This site was originally written in 2004 and was published for about 10 years. I republished it in 2020 with an updated look and content. I will continue to do updates as time allows.

Is homosexuality a choice?

At the present time the United States is still trying to make up its mind about homosexuality... and especially about gay marriage. Central to the argument offered against homosexuality is that it is a choice-- a choice to live a destructive, unstable lifestyle that can potentially damage our society.

However, this claim is being made without any real proof—and sometimes without serious

thought. *Read what the Methodist bishop in the footnote below has to say about that.*¹ It is a really good start on this topic. To use a rather awkward analogy, if its proponents were able to market their message as a medication and ask Americans literally to swallow it, I don't believe the FDA would give them license to do so. They would say there's not enough research proving that it's both safe and effective (accurate). They'd insist on more evidence.

We're not doing our homework

It should concern us that our country is not putting more effort into understanding the nature of homosexuality, given the message that is being put forth by some folks about the character and intentions of gay people. Unfortunately, many people who are outspoken about homosexuality know little about it. They speak with sensationalism, stirring up fear and hostility at the price of our families and national unity.

Where are the scientific studies showing that homosexuality is the result of choice, and which studies show that gay lives are intrinsically unstable or that a change to heterosexuality is possible? It may be true that no definitive, widely accepted proof has been found that homosexuality is primarily genetic, but no proof has been found for the opposite either— yet we far too often act as if there were. And if one considers the Bible to hold that proof, then keep reading for at least the next few pages.

Ignorance is preferable to error, and he is less remote from the truth who believes nothing than he who believes what is wrong."

**Thomas Jefferson
Notes on Virginia, 1782**

Why this website?

The purpose of these pages is to provide information addressing the concerns of those in our country who are upset about homosexuality. Part of the reason that those on the progressive side of racism, women's suffrage, and many other similar causes made the progress they did was because their causes had merit, and the suppositions underlying arguments against them were flawed. It's likely that the same progressive outcome will happen with homosexuality.

Social change does not happen easily in a culture, even when it is later viewed as biblical. However, how much damage will be done in the meantime?

I believe that for many people the current decision to condemn homosexuality is primarily an emotional decision rather than one that is well thought out. Yet, the happiness and well-being of our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and friends is at stake. We must learn how to live reasonably and knowledgeably with homosexuality. As you continue to read here you'll learn why many people's feelings are so strong on this subject, and how we can make some sense of homosexuality for ourselves.

What are the consequences of the outlook of those in our country who portray homosexuality as a sick, immoral lifestyle choice? Keep reading.

¹ "Gay daughter sent bishop back to Scriptures", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/bishop.pdf>



Consequences of this outlook

We don't hurt gay people only when we condemn without understanding. We hurt all of us.

It's important to acknowledge that the negative message being communicated about gay people is having an effect...and it's not a good one. In April, 2021 NBC News reported that "Suicide rates among young people have been on the rise in recent years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, but gay and bisexual youths are almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide as their straight peers."² It is clear that despite the increased acceptance of homosexuality by society in recent years, gay youth are still more at risk for self-destructive behaviors than heterosexual teens.

Why? In part, because they are being told by a large segment of society that they are abnormal, and that their feelings are shameful. They are told that they are supposed to change themselves, and they can't. So, sometimes they use drugs and sometimes they pull the trigger. How's *that* for a choice?

In fact, it's a tragedy. But it's only one example of the consequences of our view of homosexuality. When we eventually realize that our current view about homosexuality is inadequate, it won't erase drug-riddled pasts or bring back to life those dead teens. Nor will it lessen the pain of countless Americans who have lived with feelings of shame, loneliness, and rejection because of their sexual orientation.

Extreme thinking is costing us a lot

We actually know relatively little about the origins of sexuality in people. However, if we continue to relentlessly condemn gay people in our society we will pay a price. It always happens that way. Extremist thoughts and behaviors exact a high toll...whether Christian, Muslim, gay, white, or black. And let's be sure about it, Christians can think in extreme terms also. It's what all of us do when we get afraid.

However, our country is not only thinking in extremes; it is acting that way also. The shooting in a gay night club in Florida demonstrated that. And every time someone makes a public statement that is controversial—whether about homosexuality or any other politically sensitive matter—their phone starts to ring with callers uttering death threats. What are we doing?

Do the accusations make sense?

Before concluding that homosexuality is simply a sick choice ask yourself this: "When was the last time I deliberately chose a lifestyle that would cause me significant public humiliation and

² "Nearly a third of young gay people have attempted suicide, study finds", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/nbc-gay-youth.pdf>

family discord?" In the past being gay has meant not being able to marry or plan a partner's funeral when the family steps in and takes over. It has meant not being included in medical decisions about a partner after having lived together for 50 years. These are only a few things that have made being gay an unappealing experience. And unfortunately, there are people who want to make sure these things happen in our country again.

Choosing such a radically different characteristic as sexual orientation is not something that people do if they can help it. And, by the way, when was it that heterosexuals chose their orientation? In fact, given the obesity statistics in the US it's apparent that many Americans can't successfully choose to **lose weight**, despite large amounts of money spent on diet books and plans. In light of this, it seems a bit much to ask gay people to change their sexual orientation.

Also, it's an unfortunate characteristic of human nature that we blame others when they are in a difficult situation, especially when we don't know how to help them. This can happen in any circumstance, including emotional difficulties and physical illnesses. We say they have the problem because they are not trying hard enough to change it, and we add to their pain. In the treatment of trauma victims there's something called secondary wounding. It occurs with when the person is blamed for not getting over the trauma sooner. It doesn't help. It can be difficult to be gay, especially in today's society, and we don't know what to do about it, so we blame the gay person for their situation.

The issue of a cure for homosexuality

This promise of a "cure" for homosexuality has been offered by opponents of homosexuality. After all, if homosexuality is a choice, it must be possible to "un-choose" it. However, if there is a cure for homosexuality (a term that is offensive to many gay people), it certainly hasn't been documented very well. If one reads about the long term results of those who say that they have changed their sexual orientation to heterosexuality, one won't find much genuine emotional change. Frequently one hears that these same folks later caved in and returned to homosexuality. Many leaders of ex-gay movements have given up hope for a change in orientation.³

Both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychiatric Association have suggested that changing from homosexuality to heterosexuality is impossible for most people. After all, if you ask most heterosexual people if they could change to homosexuality, they can't imagine it. This is not to say that all people who claim to have made a change in how they feel romantically and sexually about people of the opposite gender are mistaken, because only they can know for sure. But the vast number of people who have tried with desperation to change their orientation rather than accept it, have failed.

Even if it *could* happen...

Theoretically speaking, even if some day a method were found to change sexual orientation (and it was deemed desirable to those involved), such a process would not be universally available to gay people any more than large homes with swimming pools are available to all who want them. People suffer every day because they do not receive medical treatments that already exist, either because they cannot afford them or because they simply aren't available

³ "Former conversion therapy leader comes out as gay and apologizes to community." CBS News. <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/ex-gay-quits.pdf>

for some reason. No, even if a reliable way to change sexual orientation were discovered, it would still leave many "unfortunates" out in society's cold. If our culture stays as it is now, these people will simply have to live with social rejection and condemnation.

What's the implication? The implication is that sexual orientation of the vast majority of gay people is, for all practical purposes, unchangeable—no matter what might be discovered in the future. We cannot escape the fact that we need a humane and intelligent way to live with homosexuality in our society.

What if the tables were turned?

If things were different, and heterosexuals were considered "abnormal" and discriminated against, societal change might appear more welcome to many who are upset about homosexuality today. Most people have never thought about what it would be like to go to work and feel uncomfortable about putting a picture of their life's mate on their desk, or to go to church and have the pastor say that their lifelong relationship is "a sin." Most heterosexual people have never been refused medical information about their spouse. If the tables were turned, heterosexuals could be jailed in some countries just for being heterosexual! What would that feel like to you?



What about the Bible?

It's important to reconcile our feelings about homosexuality--so we can reconcile our families and our nation.

For many Christians homosexuality doesn't fit their view of God

For many people it is difficult to accept that God would allow something as profoundly different as homosexuality to be part of the lives of so many people—something that is such a clear "reversal" of what is spelled out in Genesis as a wonderful hallmark of creation (male/female relationships). And if you add to this the other difficulties that gay people experience it can seem too different and too tragic an "error" to be allowed by God, especially in large numbers. As a result, for many people it is less disturbing to imagine that gay individuals must somehow be at fault. (The same was true in biblical times—note the story of the healing of the man born blind in John 9:1-41.)

But if you think about it, people in the Genesis account of Eden were not created blind or deaf, but we do have people who are blind and deaf in society. In fact, the World Health Organization states that approximately 15% of the world's population live with limitations that are classified as disabilities. Like homosexuality, these could be viewed as circumstances in opposition to God's plan for humankind. The same is true of people who, like gay couples, are not able to procreate within their relationship. In most of these situations we encourage people to adjust to their limitations and live the best life they can—without our blame.

However, we do tend to treat homosexuality differently. Many people find gay people to be offensive and blame them and want them to do what blind or deaf people can't do (get rid of their "affliction") or stay in the closet, just as people used to hide their disabled children from the sight of their neighbors. Speaking personally, given my current age of 71 it was pretty clear in society when I was in my 30's that I would never be a father with children and grandchildren in any form or fashion, including adoption. Fortunately that is now changing, but it was very difficult for me, and I mourned that loss for a long while. **Though I certainly don't think of being gay as a "disability" like blindness**, it has been a limitation in my own life in certain ways—and a big one. But that is not the end of the story!

The good news is that being gay has turned out to bring many blessings in my life. If we work with our difficult circumstances (whatever they are) they will bring us gifts, and this is also true about being gay. Gay people—who have a wonderful variety of gifts and talents, as well as rich relationships—can have joyful lives by the grace of God like anyone else. However, through history there has been much needless suffering because of being gay. So, if we're going to resort to categories perhaps it would be more historically accurate to see homosexuality in a "suffering" category rather than a "sinful" category.

But these thoughts are just an introduction to this topic. There's more...

But what about the Bible?

Of great concern for many Christians are the passages in both the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament that are commonly thought of as addressing homosexuality. These passages, like biblical passages on various topics, can be difficult to understand.

Sexuality as it was practiced in the ancient world is foreign to the modern mind. It is widely acknowledged that in Roman times there was no concept of sexual orientation⁴, and the gender of ones partner might vary from day to day. In fact, in Rome *"it was considered natural and unremarkable for men to be sexually attracted to teen-aged youths of both sexes, and pederasty was condoned as long as the younger male partner was not a freeborn Roman. 'Homosexual' and 'heterosexual' did not form the primary dichotomy of Roman thinking about sexuality, and no Latin words for these concepts exist."*⁵ (Pederasty is an ongoing sexual/mentor relationship between an adult male and a teenage male twelve and older. Also, see box at right regarding the terms "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality".)

As it turns out, the above articles state that in contrast to modern thought the distinguishing

People in biblical times did not have our modern concept of sexual orientation in their thinking. In fact, the terms "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" both did not exist until the 1860's, which is surprising, to say the least. As sexual orientations began to be thought of as *sexual-emotional personality orientations* in the 1800's a need arose for words to describe them. (Wikipedia article, "[Heterosexuality](#)")

⁴ "The 1860's to the 1940's", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/term-homosexual.pdf>

⁵ Wikipedia "Sexuality in ancient Rome." Reference: Williams, p. 304, citing Saara Lilja, Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome (Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1983), p. 122.

factor about one's sexuality in Rome (at least for men) was not the gender of one's partner, but whether one was an active vs passive participant. To be a passive participant was to have less status—to be viewed as the weaker man. In general, sex was about status in a variety of ways and was not to be had between equals. Romans also didn't have the concern about being sexual with younger people that we consider important today.

In summary, Rome was known for its sexual excesses, going beyond opposite-gender adult sex to include pederasty and frequent same-gender sexual behavior, including male prostitution in temple worship. History primarily records the same-gender sex as between men, though the apostle Paul attributed it to women also. Given the prevalence of these behaviors it's no wonder that Paul described Rome as a society so consumed by lust that one's sexual desire grew to include his or her own gender, much like a river that overflows its banks (Romans 1:26–27). The depraved nature of this culture was further demonstrated when they eventually burned Christians as torches and fed them (and criminals) to wild beasts for entertainment.

Hebrews during this time

The book of Leviticus in the Old Testament contains two verses about same-gender male sexual behavior—verses 18:22 & 20:13. They are part of a list of behavioral prohibitions in which God commands Israel to refrain from following the practices of its neighbors. These prohibitions included, among other things, various types of incest, offering children as sacrifices, and same-gender sexual behavior. Apparently some of the practices of the neighboring nations were considered unholy, to say the least.

What is interesting though, is the language in Leviticus and other places in the Bible about same-gender sexual behavior. In several places the meaning of the original text is unclear and is *still* the source of much debate. In order to get a clearer understanding of how these verses have been historically viewed one biblical scholar investigated centuries old translations of the Bible in French, German, Irish, Gaelic, Czechoslovakian, Polish and eventually most other major European languages. He found that prior to **1946** in both I Corinthians 6:9-10 and I Timothy 1:9-11 the words translated now as "homosexual" were translated as "boy molester" (literally).⁶ These are the only two places in our current Bible where the word "homosexual" is found. Also, the two verses in Leviticus were previously translated as sex with "young boys." This included Martin Luther's own German translation in the early 1500's, and *he was known to be very careful about his translation*.⁷ Luther's translation used "Knabenschänder" instead of the word "homosexual", where "Knaben" is boy, and "schänder" is molester.

There's been lots of speculation in the literature about the exact use of the term "boy molester" during the time of these European translations, and the cultural meaning it had for the biblical translators at that time, but its origin as a term—*before* any changes in cultural use occurred over time—seems pretty clear. There must have been other words or phrases that could have been used, but the translators of the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into various European languages were apparently content to use words whose literal meaning was "boy

⁶ "Has 'Homosexual' Always Been in the Bible?", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/word-homosexual-bible.pdf> been in the Bible

⁷ "The Bible Translation That Rocked the World", <https://abouthomosexuality.org/luthers-bible-translation.pdf>

molester.” The concept of a personality orientation that involves caring relationships between same-sex adults was not even on the table for discussion. This doesn't "prove" anything about the original meaning of the passages in scripture about same-gender sexual behavior (that argument will probably go on forever), but it certainly demonstrates that our modern understanding of those verses was not the understanding of biblical translators for hundreds of years in the past.

So, ultimately the word homosexual entered the Bible when translators in the 1900's decided that the words that had been previously translated “boy molester” or sex with “young boys” should now be translated as general homosexual behavior. And this translation didn't even appear in a German Bible until 1983, after homosexuality became more a topic of public controversy in the 1970's. It seems like a rather culturally biased translation—which many today embrace as the traditional view of the Church.

Changing the RSV

The 1946 edition of the Bible mentioned above was the RSV (Revised Standard Version). There is a rather heart-warming story⁸ by Kathy Baldock about how its editors decided that the use of the word “homosexual” had been an error, and how they replaced it in the next revision with a word that deliberately included heterosexual behavior. Unfortunately this revision wasn't published until 26 years later—in 1971. In the meantime other translations had used the RSV as a resource, and much damage to public opinion had been done.

If you are interested, two additional sources about this story are particularly interesting. The first is an article by Ed Oxford describing his role in discovering how the retraction happened.⁹ The second is a video of him relating the story in person¹⁰ followed by an interview with the seminary student who challenged the translation committee way back in 1959. The first 10 minutes gives a picture of the genuine interest of the translation committee in this matter. In addition, a documentary movie—1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture—has been filmed about these developments.

But of course, the controversy from the 70's has continued. The question appears to be: “Is there such a thing as an unchangeable sexual orientation that dictates one's sexual preference?”

The “clobber passages”

The above discussions touch on five of the six biblical passages most frequently associated with homosexuality—often called “clobber passages”. If you are interested in investigating all of them for yourself, just google “Bible and clobber passages”, and you will have your hands full.

It can be very easy to get lost in all of the differing explanations regarding these verses. Articles on both sides can demonstrate significant bias, while others will seem more convincing. Read for yourself and take away what seems reasonable to you. I like the article

⁸ <http://canyonwalkerconnections.com/forging-a-sacred-weapon-how-the-bible-became-anti-gay/>

⁹ <https://baptistnews.com/article/my-quest-to-find-the-word-homosexual-in-the-bible/#.YN3aiC1h3UI>

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdfxPDZEO5k&t=576s>

mentioned in the footnote below¹¹ and on the first page of this site, written by a well-known Methodist bishop. His handling is not as in-depth as some others, and he had obvious reason for bias, but his ministry in mainstream Christianity is respected. Lewis Smedes¹², known in the Christian ethics world, is also worth reading. And finally, two other articles may be of interest. The first is by Matthew Vines and discusses both the clobber passages and the more humane aspects of the discussion of homosexuality from a Christian viewpoint.¹³ The second is a very good article regarding the passages in Leviticus¹⁴ which are often a topic of conversation regarding homosexuality.

Though this reading is helpful, for many of us it will not be enough to change both our thoughts and our *feelings* about homosexuality. That may take time.

Arguments about human behavior are not new in Christianity. One's *approach* to understanding the Bible is important.

After getting lost in ancient language and culture while researching biblical perspectives on homosexuality, one can appreciate that some rather famous Christian leaders have felt that looking at biblical passages only can be confusing when attempting to sort out controversial subjects, since the Bible itself can be confusing about them. The attitude, "I look to the Bible alone for my direction!" has led many people to adopt attitudes that they later changed. John Wesley, famous for founding Methodism, looked to **scripture, tradition, reason, and experience**¹⁵ as important sources of information when deciding about significant beliefs. Not a bad idea! Though he considered scripture to be primary, he understood that the other three areas can assist in avoiding error, as well as shining new light on difficult areas to understand.

A critical understanding: How the Bible was used in the past

One of the most enlightening discoveries made when writing these pages was learning about the importance of themes in scripture when interpreting individual verses. This actually played an important role in our country's history. There was a time when our country was even more intensely divided over a public issue than it is about homosexuality today. It happened during the Civil War.

The biblical view about slavery was argued from both sides by people who claimed to be speaking God's opinion as revealed in the Bible. In a truly excellent article David Booth explains how those who *supported slavery*, a practice we now consider to be barbaric, argued by quoting chapter and verse from the Bible much in the same manner that chapter and verse are quoted by those who condemn homosexuality today.¹⁶

However, some passages in the Bible about slavery are very harsh. Consider Exodus

¹¹ "Gay daughter sent bishop back to Scriptures", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/bishop.pdf>

¹² "Wideness of the Sea?", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/lewissmedes.pdf>

¹³ "The Gay Debate: The Bible and Homosexuality", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/vines.pdf>

¹⁴ "Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/whosoever.pdf>

¹⁵ "What Adventists Can Learn from John Wesley", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/quadrilateral.pdf>

¹⁶ We can learn from debate over slavery, *Star Tribune*, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/slavery-homosexuality.pdf>

21:20-21 (NASB) - "If a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod and he dies at his hand, he shall be punished. If, however, he survives a day or two, no vengeance shall be taken; for he is his property." This verse is not part of a ceremonial code that was abandoned after Old Testament times. It was an instruction that was based on common knowledge...a slave was his master's property, and if his master harmed him without killing him, it was just "unfortunate" for the slave. There were other limits placed on what a master could do to a slave, but try preaching this passage from the pulpit today and see how biblical you are considered to be!

David Booth goes on to say that those who took the opposing view to slavery during the Civil War claimed that the themes of scripture contradicted the "plain meaning" of the verses that pro-slavery ministers quoted. They said that it is rather difficult to say that you love your neighbor as yourself when you claim to **own** them and keep them as your prisoner.

It was a long and difficult public argument, and not just a few churches took the pro-slavery stance, as some have claimed.¹⁷ However, it is clear who won the argument, because you won't find a church teaching a biblical basis for slavery these days. The Church eventually accepted that the specific verses in scripture about slavery were not God's ultimate thoughts about the matter.¹⁸ Check out the articles in the footnotes below for some good reading.

Reality changes perception

A delightful essay by Rev. Charles Morrow, Jr. points out in a lively way that that the Church, like John Wesley, always ends up going beyond the Bible to include reason and experience as it matures in its understanding of difficult human situations. It is worth reading in full.¹⁹ Many of his arguments are included below.

Paraphrased and quoted ideas from "Reality Changes Things," by Rev. Charles Morrow, Jr. (Italicized and indented passages are quotes from Rev. Morrow.)

Over the centuries the church has tended to label people with broad paint strokes...including "drunkards," addicts, "possessed," and those divorced or remarried. These people have been considered unworthy of compassion or support because they made the simple, willful choice to live an ungodly life. After all, the Bible clearly says so!

However, as the nature of these conditions became better understood the church changed its response to these people, changing also its interpretation of the scriptures that had been the basis for condemnation. The average person now understands that alcoholism is a difficult condition, and that children of alcoholic or drug addicted parents have a far greater chance of becoming that way themselves.

It has also become clear to the church that physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and abandonment can also be appropriate grounds for divorce. Divorced people are no longer considered to be *"all but banned from heaven simply because they failed 'to honor their marriage vows' and keep themselves pure in marital fidelity."*

¹⁷ Southern Baptist Seminary Confronts History of Slaveholding, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/churches-proslavery.pdf>

¹⁸ Who does the Bible Seem to Tolerate the Institution of Slavery?, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/bible-harshness-slavery.pdf>

¹⁹ "Reality Changes Things", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/realitychangesthings.pdf>

According to Rev. Morrow, *"The church has even gone so far as to nearly rewrite the Bible so as to allow for just about every divorced individual to suddenly find heavenly permission to remarry after divorce, in spite of numerous Scriptural admonishments clearly to the contrary. (See Matt. 5:31-32, 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12, Deut. 24:1-4, I Cor. 7:27)"*

He goes on to make the vital point that "reality changes perception." As the worldview of Christians has changed, the Church has always updated its understanding of the Bible to reflect its new understandings. (If you didn't read it earlier, see the excellent article by Lewis Smedes listed in the footnote below.²⁰)

In terms of the Church's view of homosexuality, Rev. Morrow writes that the Church...

"...still chooses to define the complex issues of an individual's sexuality, it's expressions and attractions, as being nothing more than a conscious choice to chose evil over good, right instead of wrong, Satan in place of God. No other explanation is acceptable. None other is needed. After all, did not the apostle Paul clearly define homosexuality as being nothing short of unbridled lust and fierce, wanton, godless sexual appetite? (Romans 1:24-27)"

"I, for one, hold no grudge against Paul for his position. That 'brand' or manifestation of homosexual conduct which he was privy to witness and hear of emanating from the filthy palaces of pagan Rome would nauseate even the most liberal of Gay or Lesbian Biblical scholars. But to label all people of one race or ethnicity 'savages' because you grew up in a place where only the most backward, secluded, and uncivilized of their bloodlines' tribes lived is to do a great injustice to an otherwise proud, constructive, productive, and commendable people."

"Why are so many Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender people fighting their way into the churches? Because they are indeed these godless sorts of whom Paul writes? I think not!"

He continues by suggesting that the use of the term "gay lifestyle" is used to stereotype gay people in a way that wouldn't happen if they were taken seriously by the church. We also understand that any attempt to discuss a "straight lifestyle" would be silly...there isn't one.

He closes by saying,

"Sadly, reality is often overlooked by those who must live within its confines. When finally realized, reality has in times past changed the churches' perception on such complex issues as alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, divorce, and divorce-and-remarriage. With God's help, one day the reality of homosexuality as a natural, innate, biological state of existence for some people will emerge in sufficient evidence to speak to the hearts and minds of even the harshest of homophobic, Bible thumping critics. In that day the Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender soul will no longer have to silently sit week after week in the pews of most churches while the preacher unburdens himself of that same heavy load of misguided and abusive condemnation that their alcoholic, recovering drug addict, mentally ill, divorced, and divorced-and-remarried neighbor once too had to endure. Only then will the wonderful truth of God's grace, manifest in the person and provision of the man Jesus Christ be fully understood and much more fully realized and celebrated."

These comments are powerful. It is clear in the full text of Rev. Morrow's essay that he is not suggesting that homosexuality is an addiction or mental illness. The parallel he draws is that

²⁰ "Wideness of the Sea?", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/lewissmedes.pdf>

none of the common human conditions discussed above are simply the result of an immoral choice.

Another example from hundreds of years ago underscores the concept that "reality changes perception." A huge amount of social upset was caused when Galileo made the scientific suggestion that the earth revolved around the sun, rather than vice versa. The Church rose in fury, and he almost lost his life. After all, didn't the Bible talk about the rising sun? Because of his claims he lived in house arrest for the last part of his life. He was finally allowed a "Christian" burial 100 years after his death, and wasn't removed from the roles of heretics by the Catholic Church until 1992.²¹

The problem with an "overly conservative" faith is not its commitment to a strong belief in God. That's a good thing. The problem is its refusal to deal with the complexities of life.

Though people say that they are opposed to homosexuality because of what is said in the Bible, I believe that is not the main reason. The Bible's verses may be a primary cause of concern for some people, but I believe that the biggest reason for most people is *fear* of what seems different and unnatural. Over and over again in these pages it is plain that people are afraid of homosexuality because it is *unfamiliar to them*. They feel their way of life is threatened, and they act harshly as a result.

Our understanding of the Bible will eventually change, but that will happen only when we are pushed beyond our fears and become willing for it to change. Eventually we will run out of plausible reasons to maintain our harsh stance, and we will change our views.



More about the Bible

Despite what's being said by many Christian writers, biblical faithfulness and an acceptance of homosexuality are compatible.

An overly rigid, inflexible faith

The early New Testament times were full of confusion for people of faith. Much of what the Jews had been taught was being changed, and many people didn't know what to think. Certain foods which had been unclean for over a thousand years were suddenly "clean." A whole different attitude toward Gentiles was put forth. Circumcision was no longer required. These changes were so fundamental to the faith that they were extremely controversial and threatened to split up the new, predominantly Jewish Christian church.

Consequently, the Jewish members of the church had to undergo changes in the way they thought and felt. Numerous passages in the New Testament deal with these changes.

²¹ Footnotes from History: Dead and Buried, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/galileo.pdf>

Christian Jews couldn't be rigid and still adapt to the changes in content and practice taking place in their religion. It just wasn't possible. It was a painful time for the church.

Just as accepting change was difficult in the early church, it will always be something that the church has to face. The Jews must have had visceral reactions to the changes happening around them every as bit as strong as some Christians are having about homosexuality.

Rigidity is a form of over-controlled thinking and feeling, and it can be a problem in other arenas also. In psychological circles it is sometimes said that "over-control leads to out-of-control." In fact, any form of all-or-nothing thinking, feeling, and behaving can be a problem. For example, it can be uncomfortable to study the children of rigid and judgmental parents, because there are some pretty unpleasant results of that type of parenting.²² And most extremist political groups, whether conservative or liberal, become extreme by being strongly rigid and judgmental in their views, including about what it means to be moral. Inevitably, rigid and judgmental churches also become unhealthy.

In the New Testament, faith was not comfortable. It involved changing beliefs that one's family had held ("in faith") for hundreds of years. It was a huge emotional upheaval for those involved. There was lots of discomfort in departing from the "old ways."

On common sense

Jesus challenged popular Jewish thought about keeping some of the Old Testament practices. One such practice was the prohibition of activity on the Sabbath. Over and over in the Old Testament it was said that the Sabbath was holy--"the Lord's day" (Exodus 20:8-11). God commanded that the Sabbath be a special day in which no work was to be done. In fact, the penalty for breaking the Sabbath was death (Exodus 31:14-15).

Even the old hymns warn us about being too rigid. You can view the entire text of this hymn here.

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

***There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.***

***For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.***

***But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.***

Frederick Faber, 1854

Yet, when Jesus healed on the Sabbath and was accused of breaking it, he reminded the people that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). When a sheep fell in the ditch on a Sabbath, the owner would sensibly rescue it (Matthew 12:9-14). In the same way Jesus healed on the Sabbath because it was humane. In another example, he reminded people that when there was no other food King David took the holy showbread from the temple for his men to eat (Mark 2:23-27).

Jesus taught what was considered novel to many who heard him—that the Sabbath was created for man, not man for the Sabbath. Though there was a general principle that no work was to be done on the Sabbath, there were going to be exceptions to that rule for humane reasons. That was quite a different way of looking at

²² Statistics Regarding Controlling Parents, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/controllingparents.pdf>

things; and his tone suggested that the people of his time should have known this, i.e., it *should* have been obvious (Mark 3:1-6). However, religious leaders of the day were very offended by his teaching, just as many ministers today are offended by the teaching of some Christians about homosexuality.

On common sense regarding sexuality

What about sexuality? Isn't it also true that sexuality was created for humankind, rather than humankind for sexuality? Is it some inviolable mold that all people must fit themselves into (like the restrictive view of the Sabbath mentioned above) *with no room for humane exceptions*—and at the price of one's mental health? If a loving relationship with a same-sex adult person is what a person is *able* to have, perhaps their emotional health and happiness is more important to God than a "typical" idea of what sexuality "should" look like.

There is always a need for judgment in these matters. Jesus didn't teach that doing work for trivial reasons on the Sabbath was acceptable. But he did teach that when genuine human well-being (or animal well-being, for that matter) was at stake, then an exception to the "rule" could—and should—be made. And if a gay relationship between age-appropriate adults is an "exception" to the rule, so be it.

Whether it's a creative variety in the plan of sexuality or a genetic "eccentricity" is to some degree an academic, unanswerable question at this time. It's become pretty clear that one has no more control over it than being left- or right-handed...and therefore no reason to feel shame or be deprived of social acceptance because of it. Perhaps, like Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath, this understanding should have been obvious to us. (And if we're honest, it has been to some people.) And perhaps now, instead of being quick to judge, it's time for us to demonstrate acceptance and compassion.

Gay people offer a great deal to society, often because of their make-up as gay people. We have reason to affirm gay sexuality and gay contributions to society. And, using the figure of Jesus' story, to fail to do so would be to "leave the sheep in the ditch;" in other words, to ignore the legitimate needs of a wonderful group of people. *And in truth, we don't have to understand homosexuality for it to be okay.*

At this point some people, maintaining a negative view of homosexuality, have raised the issue of celibacy rather than living out a gay sexual orientation. However, a reading of I Corinthians 7 indicates that this is not a gift that all people have, even if it were considered desirable.



Isn't homosexuality unhealthy?

We promote shame and hopelessness and then condemn people for acting those feelings out.

“Even apart from spiritual concerns, it seems that life itself teaches us that homosexuality is just too different and too unhealthy to be okay.”

As mentioned previously, one aspect of society's emotional reaction to homosexuality is that it is "different" and unnatural. For many people these can be very intense emotions.. A small example of our reaction to those who are different is how we used to try to force left-handed people to write with their right hands because being left-handed was "wrong." We want all of us to be alike.

However, in many ways we *gravitate* toward noticing our differences and generating fear around them. If our society woke up one morning and found that all the differences that have traditionally caused bias and prejudice were gone, I believe that we would find new differences between us by noon, and begin to align ourselves into groups based on those new distinctions by nightfall.

For years it was said that homosexuality was unnatural because it is not found in nature. Current animal studies have indicated the opposite, that homosexuality is found in many species of animals, including our beloved penguins²³ and dolphins.²⁴

Much of the profound discomfort with homosexuality vanishes when people actually get to know gay people and couples. It is when the situation becomes familiar that it becomes more human. However, for some people, this is not enough. Fear continues. Then one must ask, "Why am I so afraid?"

"We all know what it means to be a man, and being gay isn't it. The same is true about a woman being a lesbian."

Another very major issue about our reaction to homosexuality is that it has to do with gender. Even thinking about gender is scary. Talk about fighting words!

What makes a man a man and a woman a woman is one of our most fundamental understandings of life. Feelings about gender run deep and cause strong reactions. Just ask the girl who likes to work on cars or the straight fellow who likes ballet. They'll tell you about the comments they receive because their interests don't conform to stereotypical male/female interests.

²³ Love That Dare Not Squeak Its Name, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/gay-penguins.pdf>

²⁴ Homosexuality in marine mammals, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/marine-gay.pdf>

In fact, as recently at the early 2000's a web search on "should women wear pants" would turn up a host of web sites proclaiming how immoral it is for women to wear pants. And only in the mid-1990's did California pass a law guaranteeing the right of women to wear pants to work because of the amount of controversy surrounding it. Feelings about gender run deep.

It's a stunning fact that when it comes to concrete, physical gender—something measured by “hard science” —some 1.7 percent of humans are born with bodies that are not exclusively male or female.²⁵ Often these differences are at a genetic or chromosomal level, and the physical body may or may not show it. This is a shocking statistic to many people, but it is true, and recent surveys of research literature have made this increasingly obvious (e.g., Melanie Blackless et al., “How Sexually Dimorphic Are We?” *American Journal of Human Biology* 12 (2000): 151–166).²⁶

Why would we expect more of sexual orientation?

It's understandable that facing our feelings about gender is difficult. When we learn that there are exceptions to one of our basic beliefs about life it can feel disorienting, and we panic about what else in life might have exceptions. But if our beliefs about something have been wrong, then they may have also limited us or caused harm, whether we immediately see it or not. As with other things that are difficult, the good news is that when we actually get through the hard part of changing our thinking things aren't not as bad as we thought. In fact, it turns out to be fine, even if we learn that life is more complicated than we wished.

“Homosexuals lead unstable lives.”

Many people think of the lives of homosexual people as emotionally unstable. Being gay does require a lot of adjustment for most folks, and it can be hard to establish a healthy self-esteem in the midst of being told that you're sick. And in today's society it can be difficult to find a stable relationship for both gays and straights alike. How many straight couples are together because of the children?

Nevertheless, many gay people do live stable lives and always have. Research has been very clear that, by and large, gay people who make it past their teen years (or if adults, their “coming out” process) lead lives every bit as stable as straight people. Many are strong individuals who make their way through life with a sense of grace no matter what their circumstances are. For others, it can be more difficult. Check out the footnote below to read what John Gottman, one of America's foremost marriage researchers and therapists, has to say about gay/lesbian relationships.²⁷

Fortunately, many states have discovered that gay people are capable of adopting and caring for children. Unfortunately, some of these same states would prefer that these adoptive parents *not* be married. That's quite a change from the “old days” when when we thought all adoptive parents *should* be married!

²⁵ The Five Sexes-Revisited, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/five-sexes.pdf>

²⁶ How Sexually Dimorphic Are We?, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/blackless-dimorphic.pdf>

²⁷ Gay and Lesbian Research, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/gottman.pdf>

What about promiscuity and "the gay lifestyle?"

"We all know that gays are so promiscuous!" This is an interesting observation. There's no doubt that there's a lot of emphasis on sex in the gay community. Why? At least two factors contribute significantly to this.

First, as has been mentioned here repeatedly, homosexual people are told by many straight people that they are wrong to be sexual within their gender — period. And they're told that even if they want a monogamous relationship, they're still wrong. So, it's a rather hopeless situation. The unspoken feeling for some people is, "Why bother exercising any self control? I might as well go ahead and be as sexual as I wish, since I'm a 'bad person' either way."

Research has reported that hopelessness is often (but not always) correlated with self-destructive behavior. In fact, mental health workers know that for severe depression the risk of suicide is made worse by hopelessness. So, when people argue that homosexuality is spiritually decadent, we need to ask ourselves whether society's attitude towards homosexuality actually contributes to the behaviors it criticizes. We promote shame and hopelessness about sexual orientation and then complain when people act out those feelings.

Second, the gay community's emphasis on sexual behavior is mostly attributed to gay men, rather than to lesbians. To some extent, if straight men could have sex with women without the moderating influence of women on sexual behavior, we might not see such a difference between the sexual behavior of straight and gay people.

In fact, in 2004 a prominent web site promoting internet filters as a way to fight porn reported findings indicating that 53% of Promise Keepers (a conservative Christian men's group) in their study had viewed porn in the previous week.²⁸ And this is a group of men known for their sincere anti-porn stance. More recent studies report similar findings (68%) among men in the current Christian world.²⁹ *Apparently a sexual focus is more of a "guy" thing than a "gay" thing.*

This issue of a "gay lifestyle" comes up often in arguments about homosexuality. Rev. Morrow, in his article quoted earlier, says it well:

"While there are some (like the pagans of the Rome Paul was writing to) within both the straight and Gay-Lesbian communities who genuinely embrace a godless lifestyle, devoid of rules and knowing no boundaries, particularly sexually; it is foolish to lump all of any given group or segment of our society into the same mix. The most absurd phrase ever employed within the English vernacular is 'Gay lifestyle.' This fictitious phrase falsely suggests that all Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender people walk beneath the same banner, march to the same drummer, and live out their daily existence in the same identical manner one as the other. To even suggest that all homosexual people

Society complains about gay promiscuity. But when gay people say that they want to be monogamous and married or that they want to be church pastors and elders, society says, "You're intruding on our institutions." It leaves the gay person in a rather difficult place.

²⁸ "How Many Porn Addicts Are in Your Church?", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/porn-church.pdf>

²⁹ "Pornography and Christians:", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/porn-christians-current.pdf>

behave identically is to ignore the vast array of talent, skill, accomplishment, diversity, and versatility found within its ranks. No one would be so foolish as to use the phrase 'straight lifestyle.' Everybody knows that such a term is far too broad to even be usable, yet the similar phrase, 'Gay lifestyle' is tossed about by opponents of homosexuality as though it were valid simply because it's being applied to someone other than themselves. A people, I might add, whom they obviously know precious little about in truth. Again, they've read the definitions supplied in Scripture and applied it across the board, without ever trying to look honestly and openly at the human condition of homosexuality as it realistically appears in our world today. (From "Reality Changes Things," by Rev. Charles Morrow.)

On a lighter note...acknowledging gay contributions to society

In the midst of all this negativity, it should be remembered that gay people have long offered society a rich heritage. Gay people have always contributed much of what is beautiful and talented in our culture. Many famous people have been gay, including those famous for athletic ability and military accomplishments, as well as the more artistic and intellectual endeavors. And despite difficulties, many gay people are happy with their lives.



What about marriage?

Gay marriage is a shocking idea to many, but it's to be expected from people who do care about relationships.

Why do gay people want marriage?

In some ways, the question about why gay people want to marry is pretty easy to answer. It's for the same reasons straight people want to marry. However, probably the best way to find out the answer is to find a gay person and ask him or her. Watch their facial expression and eyes as they give you their answer. You'll see a lot of emotion in many of them.

Probably you'll find out that gay people want the same things you do...a chance to build a life with someone else, to have respect for their relationship in the community, and to contribute to those around them. For a really interesting article on this read the USA Today article listed in the footnote below.³⁰

There are those who claim that gay marriage in Scandinavia has damaged heterosexual marriage there. However, a careful examination of the facts does not substantiate this.³¹ And

³⁰ Marriage strengthens bond of same-sex couples, too, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/usatoday-marriage.pdf>

³¹ "Prenuptial Jitters", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/gay-marriage-scandinavia.pdf>

if you're interested in some humor read a tongue-in-cheek article³² linked below by a straight man complaining about how the gay couple down the street threatened his marriage.

Did we move too fast?

Actually some gay people voiced concern several that years ago the Massachusetts Supreme Court mandate about gay marriage followed too closely on the heels of the Texas Supreme Court's ruling against laws prohibiting same-gender sodomy.

The concern expressed by some people was that our country might not be ready for that much change all at once, that there could be a panic response. To some degree, this has happened. However, on the other hand, gay people have waited a long time for the right to have socially sanctioned relationships. There also seems to be a lot of energy around the use of the word "marriage"...a clear indication of the emotional nature of the issue. However, it is clear to many that gay people deserve the same legal rights as technically "married" people.

Who has a vested interest in the acceptance of gay people and gay marriage in our society?

Actually, more of us have a vested interest in this than is commonly acknowledged. For starters, one might think that all of the women who married gay men and the men who married lesbians have a reason to be interested in encouraging gay people to marry one another. Many gay men and women make a genuine attempt to marry the opposite gender, only to find out years later that they are hopelessly depressed by their marital situation and unable to be a passionate partner to their mate.

Another group of people are the parents gay children who watch their children suffer. For an excellent article on this read the words of a Vermont mother.³³

Actually, we all have plenty of reason to want a better understanding and acceptance of gay people. When any of us in our society are discriminated against, we all lose. And we all have a lot to offer. Check out Gerald Ford's comments on the topic.³⁴

"I think they (gays) ought to be treated equally. Period," Ford declared. Asked specifically whether gay couples should get the same Social Security, tax and other federal benefits as married couples, he replied, "I don't see why they shouldn't. I think that's a proper goal."

**President Gerald Ford
Detroit News, Oct. 29, 2001**

³² "Real threat to real men", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/real-threat-to-real-men.pdf>

³³ Editorial from the Concord Monitor, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/vermont-mother.pdf>

³⁴ "Gerald Ford: Treat gay couples equally", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/gerald-ford.pdf>



A threat to society

Society is much more of a threat to gay people than gay people are to society.

Wouldn't accepting homosexuality (and especially gay marriage) upset our society?

Do you have a negative reaction to the picture above? Some people have a visceral reaction to any same-sex intimacy. It happens--but it goes away when the humanity of the emotions is experienced. As has been mentioned before, we are all afraid of change, especially when it has to do with the "order of life " as we understand it.

In actuality, our understanding about the order of life constantly changes. Television and the internet were two big social changes that have affected most of us. Granting the right to women to vote was a big change also, as was allowing individuals of different races to marry. We have lived through all of them, and we are better for it. See the article written by Barry Goldwater about this.³⁵

The sky is not falling!

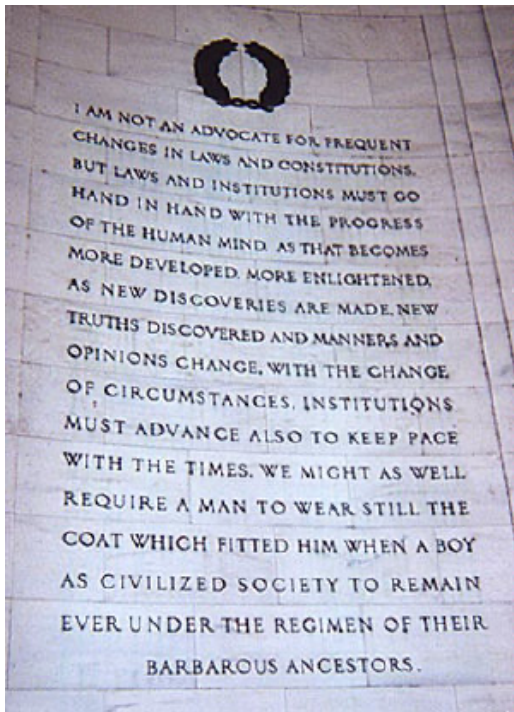
When it comes to social change, it's easy to get a mentality that "the sky is falling." However, it isn't. The "threat" to society by homosexual people is not nearly so great, whatever it is, as is the threat toward homosexuals by straight society (and by self-hating gay people.) It's gay people who are being bashed, shamed, and sometimes, as in the case of Matthew Shepard, killed.

Also, homosexuality isn't contagious. Sexual orientation is determined early in life, and the sexual orientation of a straight teenager isn't going to be changed by having gay friends. People do not need to be afraid that exposure to gay people is going to affect *anyones* orientation.

"It's time America realized that there was no gay exemption in the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in the Declaration of Independence. Job discrimination against gays – or anybody else – is contrary to each of these founding principles."

**Barry Goldwater, former
Republican presidential
candidate and senator from
Arizona, 1994**

³⁵ "Job protection for gays", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/barry-goldwater.pdf>



Conclusion: We can do this if we're willing, and we'll be the better for it

Thomas Jefferson recognized both the difficulty and necessity of social change.

This may be scary for some of us, but it can be a sane, rewarding experience if we work together.

The above panel at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC, reads: "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

-- to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1810

We've covered a lot of ground in these pages, and it can be difficult to sort through all of it. However, for those who are discovering that homosexuality is their own *personal* reality, the word "difficult" takes on a whole new meaning.

For some people it starts in their teens around issues of attraction to the opposite gender. "I'm not right. I don't feel like my friends do." And then the fear starts. "Am I gay? What's going to happen to me if I am? What are my friends going to say? My family? Can my dad and mom deal with this? The kids at school are going to make fun of me. What's college going to be like? Will I have to hide this from my roommate...maybe I can change. I don't want to do this. Are they going to want me around church any more? I like my minister. I want to get married and have children like everyone else. This can't be happening."

But if it *is* happening to you—and you're discovering that you are gay—your life has just changed whether you want it to or not. It can actually work out just fine, but that can be hard to see at first. Getting some support can help.

If, however, this is not happening to you but to someone you know and love, it becomes your turn to figure out how to cope with homosexuality. Try as you might, and whatever your motivation, it's very unlikely that you're going to be able to change what is happening to your friend or family member. (Just ask the people who have tried.) Most likely you'll either have to

adjust to what is happening or risk watching them gradually cut you out of their life. If they are your child, remind yourself that when you had children you signed up for a lot of unknowns. Now is the time to show up for your children. They need you.

If this does happen to you as a parent try to rein in your own anxiety and tell your child that you'll be with them as they—or both of you—figure things out. Tell them you love them either way and that things are going to work out ok, and then get help for yourself. Talk to other parents and friends of gay people and find out how they came through it. Read the PFLAG booklet for parents³⁶ and see a therapist or gay affirming minister if you need to. Offer the same help to your child.

If your Bible is important to you, you'll either have to figure it out or just accept you've found another confusing topic in scripture. Don't get lost in the the ancient history spelled out here and elsewhere so much that you lose the big picture. The Pharisees in the Bible were good at talking about details (tithing spices?), but Jesus was good at talking about the big picture. (He summed up the entire law and prophets in two sentences.) In any case you don't have to let a few verses—some of which were written more than 2,000 years ago about people who do not sound like your son or daughter—steal what is important to you. After all, your child isn't an adult running around in a Roman toga looking for a sexual relationship with an underage person, or having incest with family members like others in the ancient world. She or he just wants to find a life of love and relationship, and some self esteem.

Yes, now it becomes your turn to deal with "what is". The Bible says that we see some things "dimly" in the present day, but you can see with clarity the person in front of you whom you love. Don't let the fear of the unknown drive you into rejecting them. If necessary, deal with the complexities of an ancient Bible and update your faith.

The bottom line—a humane response

It's been important to go point by point through this discussion to address common concerns about homosexuality. It's helpful to resolve the various hesitations we have about such a profound phenomena. However, I am of the opinion that only two questions actually need be answered by all of us about homosexuality.

Circling back to the beginning of this site the first question is: *"Do we really think that homosexuality is a choice?"*

As already stated, in April, 2021 NBC News reported that "gay and bisexual youths are almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide as their straight peers."³⁷ This should say something loud and clear to us about how genuinely these youth have found themselves unable to change.

Also, many of the people who started organizations to help gay people become "ex-gay"³⁸

³⁶ "Our children: Questions and answers...", <https://abouthomosexuality.org/pflag.pdf>

³⁷ "Nearly a third of young gay people have attempted suicide, study finds", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/nbc-gay-youth.pdf>

³⁸ "Former Ex-Gay Leaders Unite in Opposition to Conversion Therapy, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/former-exgay-leaders.pdf>

have closed them amidst apologies for the harm they have caused³⁹. A new crop of these organizations has arisen in the wake of their demise, but they are unlikely to be successful either, in my opinion. There are millions of gay people around the world who would rather have married the opposite gender and had families if they could. *Do their circumstances and their voices not convince us? Do we really think it's reasonable to ignore them and blame them for being gay and unable to change?* I think not. In fact, I believe there is some shame for many of us in not believing our own people.

Answering this question about choice also doesn't really require a trip to the Bible to study 2,000-year-old culture-laden texts that are hard to understand. If the Bible appears to differ from the voices of all the gay people around the world about their lack of choice in the matter of sexual orientation, *especially given the reasons they have for wanting to change*, then it is up to us to question our conclusions about the verses being examined and reconsider the expectations we bring to the ancient text of the Bible--namely that it will adequately address our modern concept of sexual orientation, something that did not exist when the Bible was written. *Our present reality should be convincing enough for us.* After all, we did not have to search the Bible to believe that the sky is blue—it is self-evident.

If you wonder why some of us are so resistant to accept the presence of a homosexual orientation in our midst, I think it is because it is not what we expected from life, and we don't like it. (We're not alone, after Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem his disciples didn't get what they expected either as they essentially saw him "lynched" publicly by a jeering mob.) We don't like to be disappointed and we don't like life to be complicated or messy, and homosexuality is definitely both. We also fear anything that is different than ourselves, and label it as wrong and bad, or even evil, even if it causes no actual harm to the rest of us.

In addition, we don't like things that challenge our worldview (just ask Galileo) so we stubbornly deny facts right in front of us. Unfortunately, we as humans are good at denial. Even in modern times we twist history and don't record it without significant omissions and false accounts when it pleases us to do that.

This is not actually rocket science...it's about facing up to what we don't understand and don't like. I realize that I am sounding a bit harsh here, but gay people have lived with harshness for too long, and it's time that some of that intensity is shifted to those who condemn them. Too many gay people have died, and too many suffer today.

The second question is this: *"In light of all of this, what is the most **humane** way we can respond to the presence of homosexuality in the lives of those in our society?"*

Getting historical thought in perspective...

Why did the term "homosexuality" only originate in the 1860's? Why not earlier?

Given the homosexual behaviors described in the ancient world, *what would we expect writers and others at that time to say about those behaviors?*

Do you expect any ancient culture—or the Bible—to adequately address the modern concept of sexual orientation 1,000-2,000 years before it was known?

³⁹ "Out of the Darkness: Conversion Therapist Quits 'Ex-Gay' Movement", <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/out-of-darkness.pdf>

I'll let you answer that for yourself, but make sure that your response includes love, humility and compassion.

Change is difficult, necessary, and possible

It's true that change is scary and hard, but it doesn't have to be haphazard or erratic. The gay people in your life, and the gay community at large, are going to gradually insist on more civil rights as a greater understanding of homosexuality emerges in society. Set aside your prejudices and open your mind and heart to look at life in a bigger way. The sky truly is not falling.

So why not affirm the gay people in your life and watch those you care for live up to your affirmations? You will be a better person, and happier for doing so. And you'll get to keep your family.

One last comment: these pages have focused on homosexuality, but it's clear that much of this material is relevant to bisexuality and gender identity (transgender) concerns. So yes, there is more to learn. (For starters, here's an article on gender formation⁴⁰ that is very enlightening.) Fortunately, this whole process can be easier for us if we accept that there will *a/ways* be more to learn and that we'll never have complete control over our circumstances. However, the good news is that life is still a gift, and better days *are* coming.

And by the way, thanks for reading all of this. David

The sexual orientations of the people depicted in this document are unknown. Images were obtained from FreeFoto.com and other free stock image sites. © 2004-2024 by About Homosexuality. abt.homosexuality@gmail.com

⁴⁰ Publicly shared tweets by Rebecca R. Helm—assistant professor of biology UNC Asheville, <https://AboutHomosexuality.org/gender-formation.pdf>