

# Lesson 10 | November 5, 2023

## The Bible on Homosexuality

**Study Text:** Genesis 19:1–24; Leviticus 18:22–30; 20:13; Romans 1:18–32; 6:1–14, 18–23; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10

**Central Truth:** Your identity and God-given gender come from Christ, your Creator.

**Key Verse: Mark 10:6**

But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female (KJV).  
“But ‘God made them male and female’ from the beginning of creation” (NLT).

**Learning Objectives:**

- Students will recognize the danger of embracing homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.
- Students will be prepared to share the truth of the Scriptures in a loving way with those they know or meet who are engaged in a homosexual lifestyle.
- Students will be able to pray effectively for those caught up in the sin of homosexuality.

## Introducing the Study

**Say:** The church and the culture often agree on moral issues. Both, for example, condemn greed, prejudice, thievery, and violence. But sometimes a sharp division exists between the two, with one legitimizing what the other cannot. Many sexual sins, including homosexuality, fall into this category.

**Opening Activity—Gradual**

*Ask: What things in daily life may gradually develop and cause problems before they are noticed?* Examples might include peeling paint or rotting boards in the house, a small malfunction in a car, or even the buildup of dust or clutter.

**Say:** Sin in our culture is like the board that begins to rot or the tiny noise in the car that we may not even notice until the engine won’t start. Sins become popular as a society continually portrays them as acceptable behavior. Eventually, that society becomes so accustomed to seeing them there that they become normal. There’s even the threat of that happening in the church. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Our culture looks to a number of resources to distinguish right from wrong. Science and medicine are often the ultimate authority. The news media, entertainment industry, and educational system also weigh in, sometimes insisting we revise our understanding of moral issues to comply with theirs.

But for Christians, the Bible has the final say. As Paul wrote, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true . . . . It corrects us when we are wrong and

teaches us to do what is right” (2 Timothy 3:16, NLT). This lesson examines what the Bible does and does not say on the matter of homosexuality.

## **Part 1—Homosexual Practices Are Forbidden They Were Never Intended**

Leviticus 18:22–30

**Say:** Popular culture often pressures Christians to change their view on sins such as homosexuality, claiming that the Christian view is outdated, unenlightened, or even hateful. This creates tension for all involved, leading some believers (and even some entire denominations) to adjust their theology and opinions to make Christianity more user friendly and culturally acceptable. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Faithfulness to God and His Word are more important than the desire to appear relevant. Serious woes are pronounced on those who twist the truth to fit the times (Isaiah 5:20), leaving us with a mandate to consider when facing a controversial issue: We cannot condone what God condemns and we cannot condemn what God condones.

A foundational part of our faith is our belief that God purposefully created us. From the creation account in Genesis, God established and blessed the partnership between one male and one female. The fruit of that union was to be the perpetuation of humanity. A few verses later, God declared what He established was good (Genesis 1:31). These verses—along with Genesis 2—set a powerful precedent for God’s intent regarding the marital relationship. His intention for the human sexual and marital relationship is clarified in Genesis and reiterated by Jesus himself: “Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’” And he said, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together” (Matthew 19:4–6, NLT).

We must also follow God’s lead by condemning what He has declared to be less than, or other than, what He intended. Having given His intention for the human sexual union in Genesis, He subsequently clarified behaviors He did not intend. Adultery, prostitution, fornication, incest, and homosexuality are specifically condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. This is not because God is anti-gay, but because these behaviors fall short of what He knows to be in the best interest of the people He created.

Since homosexual practices violate His design, they appear alongside other such prohibited behaviors in the Law. In fact, they are called “an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22, KJV; “detestable,” NLT). God intentionally created the male/female union in the Garden of Eden. Marriage is referred to throughout Scripture as a representation for His relationship with His people (Isaiah 54:5; Ephesians 5:25–33). It stands to reason He would abhor any perversion of the heterosexual marriage union.

**Resource Packet Item 1: Cultural Shift**

Distribute the information sheet and review the time line of the cultural shift on the issue of homosexuality. (Use the tips on pages 2–3 of this guide to ensure the classroom discussion honors God and protects others' privacy and dignity.)

### **Discuss**

? Do you think it is too harsh to refer to homosexual behavior as abominable? Why or why not?

? Do you think the church condemns other sins as vehemently as we condemn this sin? If not, why do you think that is?

## **They Were Never Condoned**

1 Corinthians 6:9–10

**Say:** Homosexuality is not a new phenomenon. We have already looked at instruction from the Old Testament. Now we will examine what the New Testament has to say. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The two Greek words behind the King James Version text of 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (translated as “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind”) are referring to homosexual activity. This is why the majority of Bible translations simply translate the words as “homosexuals” or something similar. The presence of the two words is likely clarifying that both active and willing passive participants in homosexual activity are among the unrighteous who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Even a casual reading of the original language cannot yield anything other than clear prohibitions against any form of homosexual behavior. In fact, the very words making up the term *arsenokoites* (*arsen* and *koite*) are taken directly from the verses in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) that condemn homosexuality: Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.

While homosexuality is condemned throughout Scripture, it can also be argued that it is never condoned. That's significant, because while the Bible contains guidance for heterosexual couples, none can be found for same-sex couples. Not one positive example of a homosexual person can be found in the Bible. If God condoned this behavior, surely He would have provided positive examples of it and marital guidance for those practicing it as He did for heterosexual marriages.

### **Discuss**

? Have you ever known someone who claimed to be both gay and Christian? If so, how did they interpret or deal with the Scriptures we've studied so far?

? Many people are revising their view of homosexuality, adopting a “gay friendly” approach to the Bible. Why do you think this is happening?

## **Part 2—Homosexual Practices Are Condemned The Penalty for Sin**

## Genesis 19:1–24

**Say:** The destruction of Sodom is a frightening example of God’s wrath poured out on the wicked. And there’s universal truth behind this account that still applies today. It’s true that God offers opportunities for repentance to people engaged in homosexuality—like He does to all who’ve sinned—but it’s also true that brazenly sinful acts can result in horrendous penalties. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In fairness, we should note that homosexuality wasn’t the only sin Sodom was condemned for. According to Ezekiel, “Sodom’s sins were pride, gluttony, and laziness, while the poor and needy suffered outside her door” (Ezekiel 16:49, NLT). The vehemence shown by the men surrounding Lot’s home indicates cruelty and utter disregard for others, so these charges make sense. But Sodom also committed “detestable sins” (verse 50, NLT). Jude elaborates on those detestable sins by indicting Sodom for “every kind of sexual perversion” (Jude 7, NLT).

Theologian Thomas Schmidt notes that second-century literature refers to “Sodom, which departed from the order of nature” and that both Philo and Josephus view same-sex relations as characteristic of the Sodomites.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, then, homosexual acts are forbidden and, when broadly celebrated, they have carried a severe penalty.

### **Discuss**

? Why do some Christians consider homosexuality as more deserving of God’s judgment than other sexual sins, such as adultery or fornication?

? How might 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 offer hope to those who see their sins as unforgivable in God’s sight?

## **The Origin of Sin**

### Romans 1:18–32

**Say:** All sin is symptomatic of a broken relationship with God, which began with Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden. Paul’s discussion of homosexuality, along with other sins in Romans 1, points out just how far humanity has fallen from God’s plan. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

While noting that homosexuality is a problem, the broader point Paul made in Romans 1 is that homosexual relations between men and between women are indicative of something even more wrong. Creation has determined to have its own way. This is the same rebellion that manifests itself today through transgenderism. Though God created humans as male or female, their rebellion is so deep that they reject even their own nature. And whether one is rejecting gender or heterosexual marriage, it’s all sinful denial of God’s created order. Renouncing knowledge of the true God, fallen humanity

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<sup>1</sup> *Testament of Naphthali* 3:4, quoted in Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow?* (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 1995), 88-89.

chooses other gods and is given up to a multitude of ungodly and unnatural passions by the Maker who “abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done” (Romans 1:28, NLT).

Homosexuality, like the other sins in Paul’s long list in Romans 1, is a result of fallen nature and the depth of depravity it yields. The fact it appears as a prime symptom is no surprise, as Paul was hearkening back to the Genesis account of creation in which the Creator fashions humanity as male and female, bringing the first man and woman together in a remarkable union of contrast.

Paul then seems to say, “Look how far we’ve fallen! The creation rejects the Creator, and things have become so topsy-turvy that even the most basic relationship has been turned on its head from a heterosexual union to a homosexual one.”

### **Resource Packet Item 2: Reactions to Sin**

Distribute the worksheet and encourage students to complete the activity at home with prayer and reflection.

Theories on the origins of homosexuality abound. For decades it was assumed to be an emotional or mental illness, springing from faulty parenting, early abuse, or stunted psychosexual development. Then as society became more open to homosexuality, the notion of it being an inborn condition began to take root. Many experts concluded that something so deeply ingrained must be present at birth.

But these theories miss the point. Homosexuality, like any deviation from what God intended, is a result of that human tragedy we call the Fall. When God lamented the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin, including the sin nature their descendants would inherit, He explained the human experience would now contain painful and tragic elements He had never intended (Genesis 3:16–19).

And so it has been ever since. Humans are born into sin, beset with tendencies God never intended us to have. Some tendencies—like greed, selfishness, and dishonesty—are universal, meaning we all share them and can relate to them. But other tendencies—like the sexual acts condemned in Leviticus and Deuteronomy—are experienced by only some people. Homosexuality is a tendency many people do not relate to, but it is one of many consequences of the Fall.

This is why arguments about what causes homosexual behavior are secondary to the larger question of whether the behavior is something our Maker intended. According to His own Word, it clearly is not.

Many will argue that God loves all people and He made no mistakes when He created us. It is true we are all loved by God and created by God, but the fact remains that we have each chosen to sin by rebelling against what God created us to be.

### ***Discuss***

- ? What theories have you heard about the cause of homosexuality?
- ? Read Romans 1:32 through 2:1. How can believers maintain humility and avoid judgmental attitudes regarding sins they do not personally struggle with?

## Part 3—Freedom from Homosexuality Is Found in Christ

### The Freedom to Die

Romans 6:1–14

**Say:** God does not force anyone to accept freedom from sin. He gives us the will to choose-. God calls people to abstain from sin and also empowers them to die to that sin. This enables a person to say no to a tendency or behavior she or he has become accustomed to and even identified with. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

✓ ***(Play Linda Seiler’s testimony of being miraculously delivered from homosexuality and gender confusion.***

***The video is available at [RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult](http://RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult).)***

Homosexuality is not just a sexual act or feeling. It’s an identity declared proudly in parades and coming out announcements, and clung to as an inborn trait which many claim they were born with by God’s design. While that is untrue, we should remember that the average person involved in homosexuality has felt different from early in life and has struggled, perhaps for decades, to find peace with his or her sexual orientation and identity. When confronted with God’s plan for human sexuality, such a person will often say, “How can I say no to what I feel? How can I be free of it? It’s always been there!”

Paul’s words in Romans 6 about our identification with Christ introduce an exhilarating hope to anyone who repents, including homosexuals. We are not required to free ourselves from the power of sin. Instead, we are invited to consider our sin nature to be dead, identifying it with Christ’s own death. Thereby, we claim a release from the power of our old nature, just as we would declare freedom from a once-powerful enemy who has died. Sin holds no dominion over anyone who takes Jesus at His word when He says, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36, KJV).

#### **Discuss**

- ? What does it mean to “consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin” (Romans 6:11, NLT)?
- ? Do you think a homosexual person can truly change? Why or why not?

### The Freedom to Live

Romans 6:18–23

**Say:** Paul’s audience would have been well aware of the oppressive nature of slavery. The Roman Empire was filled with enslaved people. Paul’s powerful illustration

leveraged this reality to depict the tragedy of being held captive to sin. He then described how a person could be freed from the bonds of sin by committing themselves to God. Amazing news today, when so many take a “once gay, always gay” position toward homosexual people. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In Paul’s time, many people found freedom from homosexuality. Many still do. Like all of us, homosexuals are free to die to their sinful tendencies and walk in new life, no longer servants of sin but of God.

The modern church is in grave twofold danger regarding this issue. On one hand, too many Christians are compromising truth, fearful of offending gay friends and loved ones by holding to the biblical view. This constitutes doctrinal compromise on an essential issue that no serious steward of truth can make peace with.

Yet holding the right position in the wrong way is just as dangerous. When our culture embraces an error, it’s easy to condemn blatant sins without considering the wounded souls in the grip of those sins. God loves these people. Our commission is not only to speak the truth about sexual morality, but also to speak the truth about God’s desire to bring all lost people to himself. As ambassadors for Christ, we share the whole message of the gospel, yearning for people to be “reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20, KJV).

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Showing Love and Telling the Truth**

Distribute the case studies and discuss as a class how truth and love could be balanced in each situation. (Use the tips on pages 2–3 of this guide to ensure the classroom discussion honors God and protects others’ privacy and dignity.)

#### ***Discuss***

- ? In what wrong ways have you heard someone speak the truth about homosexuality?
- ? How do you think the Church can more effectively share the gospel with homosexual people?

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** The truth about homosexuality is spelled out biblically in the clearest, most unequivocal terms. God never intended it, cannot bless it, and prohibits it. However, when it comes to the truth, it is not only *where* we stand that counts. It’s also *how* we stand. As we navigate this issue, we must always be compelled by the love of Christ and not reject or condemn the person caught in the grip of sin.

## **Living It Out**

### **Ministry in Action**

- If you know someone struggling with their sexual identity, pray for ways to demonstrate God’s love to them while maintaining your commitment to the truth.
- Think about how you identify yourself and be sure your identity reflects your relationship with God.

- Pray for the younger generation in your church who may be struggling with who they are in Christ.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

Monday:

Sexual Perversions Judged.

Genesis 19:1–13

Tuesday:

Asa Does What Is Right.

1 Kings 15:9–12

Wednesday:

Freedom from Sin and Condemnation.

John 8:1–11

Thursday:

Sexuality between a Husband and Wife.

1 Corinthians 7:1–5

Friday:

The Law for Lawbreakers.

1 Timothy 1:8–11

Saturday:

God Judges Evildoers.

Jude 5–7