

**Crucial Texts – See Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics***

*Old Testament*

- Genesis 1-3
- Genesis 9:20-27
- Genesis 19:4-11
- Judges 19:22-25
- Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13

*New Testament*

- Jude 7
- Romans 1: 18-32
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- 1 Timothy 1:10

**Crucial Terms**

- **μαλακοι**
  - Found in 1 Corinthians 6:9
  - Carries idea of submission/passivity (young males in sexual submission to older males in Hellenistic literature)
- **ἀρσενοκοῖται**
  - Found in 1 Corinthians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10
  - Evidently not found in any Greek text before 1 Corinthians
  - gaychurch.org – “male who has many beds”
  - Carries the idea of the active homosexual member as contrasted to **μαλακοι**
  - Paul is probably drawing upon the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 20:13 – “μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην γυναικὸς” – “with a male as those who lie with a woman” (NASB) – in order to affirm the condemnation of homosexual acts.
- **φυσικός**
  - Found in Romans 1:26, 27
  - Pertains to that which is in accordance with nature
- **φύσις**
  - Found in Romans 1:26; 2:14; 2:27; 11:21, 24; Galatians 2:15; 4:8; Ephesians 2:3; 2 Peter 1:4
  - Pertains to “the nature of something as the result of its natural development or condition” (Louw & Nida)
  - cf. **παρα φύσιν** in Romans 1:26

**Some Crucial Hermeneutical Approaches and Their Main Adherents**

- Creation Ordinance – Gagnon
- Contextualization – Take your pick (the list is endless)
- Liturgy of the body – Trinity – Marriage as Sanctification – Rogers

## Questions

1. On what side of the sins listed in Romans 1 is God's wrath? Does the wrath preclude these sins, or do the sins incur his wrath?
2. What was the meaning of Romans 1.26-27 for Paul's immediate audience?
  - Does the language in Romans 1 pertain to specific sexual sins or general ones?
3. Could Paul have conceived of a monogamous homosexual relationship?
  - Could Paul only be talking about promiscuous homosexual or heterosexual sex?
4. Oliver O'Donovan states, "The point at issue – whether homosexuality, capitalism, colonial slavery, or something else – is never the whole of what is at stake." What is at stake?
5. Oliver O'Donovan states, "It is the characteristic 'conservative' temptation to erect a moment in scriptural interpretation into an unrevisable norm that will substitute, conveniently and less ambiguously, for Scripture itself." How do we balance what is traditionally understood as the correct understanding of a text and the realization that the hermeneutical circle is never complete?
6. How do we make moral judgments in a cultural that approaches morality with fluidity?
7. Is all of scripture equally authoritative? Why or why not? If not, how does one go about to make the decisions of adjustment?
8. If accepting homosexuality is immoral, is rejecting another human being also immoral?
  - When does homophobia become a sin? Or does it?
9. What could be done to activate the churches into more actively considering a practice of visible love for people of same-sex attraction such that people influenced by same-sex attraction themselves would feel accepted?
10. In Romans 1, Paul says on three occasions that "God gave them over." Are the sins listed indicative of one that has been finally "given over," and if so, should this change our response to them?
11. 1 Cor. 6.18 states, "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body?" (NIV) Why is this the case?
  - Since we are all sinners anyway, why single out the sin of same-sex intercourse?
12. In light of Romans 2, is the worst sin the sin of judging others, including the sin of judging others who commit same-sex intercourse?
13. Would you allow a practicing homosexual couple to join your church as *non-communing* members?
14. Should biblical morality serve as a foundation for state legislation? (specifically in light of homosexuality here) Better yet, should the state be bound to protect a distinctly religious concept of marriage; or, does the state have the right to redefine marriage if it is a biblical institution?
15. Should the church support civil rights for homosexuals?
  - Is healthcare an inalienable right for which we should advocate?
16. Can homosexual persons be members of the Christian church?
17. Is it Christianly appropriate for Christians who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation to continue to participate in same-sex erotic activity?
18. Should the church sanction and bless homosexual unions?

19. Is there a difference between partnering with this church on this project and partnering with a muslim group on a social project?
20. Is there a difference between partnering with this church on this project and worshiping with them? Could this Bible study group accept the invitation to worship at this other church?
21. Does this mean that persons of homosexual orientation are subject to a blanket imposition of celibacy in a way qualitatively different from persons of heterosexual orientation?
22. Should homosexual Christians expect to change their orientation?
23. Should persons of homosexual orientation be ordained?
24. Should we partner with them in this project?
25. Would you *attend* (not officiate) the wedding of your own homosexual child?
26. What is the difference between the strength of language in Romans 1 and the sign that says “God hates fags!”?
27. Is procreation the end of marriage?
28. If procreation is not the purpose of sex, what is the difference between a heterosexual act and a homosexual one?
29. Can identity be severed from sexual orientation?
30. Would you marry a heterosexual couple in which one of the members had had a sex-change operation?
  - Would such a marriage be between a man and a woman? Does this matter?
  - What is man, and what is woman?
31. Would you treat a transexual the same way that you treat a homosexual in your church?
  - What about a hermaphrodite?