

Homosexuality

Culture and Theology

May 17, 2025

Reformation Church

www.thereformationchurch.com

Schedule

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 8:30-9:25 | Intro and Session 1: Biblical Sexuality |
| 9:25-30 | Break |
| 9:30-10:20 | Session 2: Homosexuality in Scripture |
| 10:20-10:30 | Break |
| 10:30-11:30 | Session 3: Common Objections |
| 11:30-12 | Q&A |

Introduction

Why are we doing this?

2 competing camps:

1. conservative or historic or traditional perspective
2. progressive or liberal or revisionist, affirming

Why are we talking about it?

- *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18–20)
- *Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.* (Acts 20:26–30)
- *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.* (Romans 1:24–25)
- *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.* (Romans 1:26–27)
- You can tell about the relative importance of a biblical doctrine by a number of factors.
 - First, how absolute is it? Are there exceptions?
 - Second, how pervasive is the condemnation? Does it appear only once or twice or does it appear in multiple books and multiple genres and by multiple authors?
 - Third, how severe are the penalties associated with it?
- "No single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'" (Abraham Kuyper)

- “We need to remember that this controversy was not dreamed up by evangelical Christians. If traditionalists are writings blogs and books by the dozens, its because revisionist leaders first wanted to have the conversation...When it comes to the cultural flash points of our day, it hardly seems wise to avoid talking about what everyone else is talking about.” (Kevin DeYoung, What Does the Bible Teach about Homosexuality)

Changing Culture

- “the so-called sexual revolution of the last sixty years, culminating in its latest triumph – the normalization of transgenderism – cannot be properly understood until it is set within the context of a much broader transformation in how society understands the nature of human selfhood.” (Carl Trueman, The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self)
- the age of expressive individualism

Sexuality in Scripture

- “Six passages in the Bible...have stood in the way of countless gay people who long for acceptance from their Christian parents, friends, and churches.” (Matthew Vines, God and the Gay Christian)
- “derived from 11 of the 1,189 chapters in the Bible” (David Gushee, Changing Our Minds)

In the beginning...

- *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* (Genesis 1:27-28)
- *Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”* (Genesis 2:18)
- *Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.* (Genesis 2:23–24)
- What do we see in these passages?
 - sexuality wasn’t the invention of man.
 - mankind was created in a polarity, a binary
 - the idea of separation
 - the goal of reunion
 - differences are aimed toward procreation

“The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.” (WCF 1.6)

Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” (Matthew 19:1–3)

- *When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house... (Deuteronomy 24:1)*
- What does “some indecency” refer to?
 - Shammai: adultery
 - Hillel: anything

He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:4–6)

Idolatry as harlotry

- *then I will set my face against that man and against his clan and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him in whoring after Molech. “If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 20:5–7)*
- *And the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers. Then this people will rise and whore after the foreign gods among them in the land that they are entering, and they will forsake me and break my covenant that I have made with them. (Deuteronomy 31:16)*
- *Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the LORD, and they did not do so. (Judges 2:17)*
- *If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man’s wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 3:1)*

Marriage as Metaphor

- *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:25–32)*
- *And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." (Revelation 19:9)*

Session 2: Homosexuality in Scripture

- Group 1: OT narrative - Genesis 19 Sodom and Gomorrah | Judges 19 A Levites Concubine
- Group 2: Mosaic Law - Leviticus 18:22 | Leviticus 20:13
- Group 3: words translated as homosexual - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 | 1 Timothy 1:8-11
- Group 4: acts which are contrary to nature - Romans 1:26-27

Group 1: OT Narrative – Genesis 19 and Judges 19

- Revisionism
 - “few serious biblical interpreters think this story is about ‘homosexuality.’ (David Gushee, Changing Our Mind)
 - “Decades ago, biblical scholars on both sides of the issue dismissed the idea that homosexuality was the sin of Sodom.” (Matthew Vines, God and the Gay Christian)

“A half-truth masquerading as a whole truth becomes a complete untruth.” (J.I. Packer)

- “since the story is used as a type scene to characterize the depth of human depravity in Sodom and Gomorrah and thus to legitimate God’s decision to wipe these two cities off the face of the map, it is likely that the sin of Sodom is not merely inhospitality or even attempted rape of a guest but rather attempted homosexual rape of male guests.” (Robert Gagnon, The Bible and Homosexual Practice)
- The multi-faceted, multi-dimensional depths of depravity.
 - “to the extent that the story does not deal directly with consensual homosexual relationships, it is not an ‘ideal’ text to guide contemporary Christian sexual ethics.” (Robert Gagnon, The Bible and Homosexual Practice)

Group Two: Mosaic Law – Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

- *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.* (Leviticus 18:22)
- *If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.* (Leviticus 20:13)

Things to note:

1. The progression (or regression) of sin.
2. Expanded commentary on the 10 Commandments.
3. Reading deeply.
 - “By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts; and especially such as, by God’s ordinance, are over us in place of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.” (WLC, Q.124)
 - You see how they are trying to squeeze out not only the surface application, but even deeper implications of the text?

- How do we know what prohibitions are still binding? How do we know what is transcultural and permanent vs. what was only for the particular nation of Israel in the particular time of the OT?
 - How egregious was the act?
 - “the only forbidden act to which the designation ‘abomination’ is specifically attached is homosexual intercourse.” (Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*)
 - “only male-with-male sex is singled out by itself as an abomination. In fact, it is the only forbidden act given this label in the entire Holiness Code.” (Kevin DeYoung, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*)
 - How consistent and pervasive?
 - Are there exceptions?
 - Are there echoes and replication in the NT?

Group 3: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 | 1 Timothy 1:8-11

- *Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine... (1 Timothy 1:8-10)*
- *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)*
- category of vices

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Notice the flow of 1 Timothy:

- ungodly and sinners, the unholy and profane. (1st 3 commandments)
- those who strike their mothers and fathers. (5th commandment)
- murderers. (6th commandment)
- sexually immoral and men who practice homosexuality. (7th commandment)
- enslavers, (8th commandment)
- liars and perjurers. (9th commandment)

In both 1 Timothy and 1 Corinthians, we find the same Greek word.

ἀρσενοκοῖται: arsenokoitai

- *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.* (Leviticus 18:22)
 - καὶ μετὰ ἄρσενος οὐ κοιμηθήσῃ κοίτην γυναικός, βδέλυγμα γὰρ ἐστίν
 - kai meta arsenos ou koimethese koiten gunaikos bdelugma gar estin
- *If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.* (Leviticus 20:13)
 - καὶ ὃς ἂν κοιμηθῆ μετὰ ἄρσενος κοίτην γυναικός...
 - kai hos an koimethe meta arsenos koiten gunaikos...
- So what does Paul mean by arsenokoitai?
 - In the 14th century Wycliffe translated this as “they that do lechery with men”
 - In the 16th century Tyndale translated this as “abusars of themselves with the mankynde”
 - The Geneva Bible of 1599 translates it as buggers.
 - The original King James of 1611 translated this as “abusers (or defilers) of themselves with mankind.”
- What is malakoi? soft
 - Philo calls men who cultivate feminine features malakoi.
 - And when combined with arsenokoitai, we see both sides of the immoral act, both the active and passive.
 - “in 1 Cor. 6:9, *malakoi* should be understood as the passive partners in homosexual intercourse, the most egregious case of which are those who also intentionally engage in a process of feminization to erase further their masculine appearance and manner.” (Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*)

Group 4: Romans 1:26-27

- *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.* (Romans 1:26-27)
 - “Paul viewed same-sex relations as stemming from excessive sexual desire and lust, not as the loving expression of a sexual orientation.” (Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian*)

Context

- *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Romans 1:18)*
- *For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:21–23)*
- *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:24–25)*
- Notice the flow (3 exchanges and 3 responses)
 - Exchange 1: *exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:23)*
 - How does God respond?
 - *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (Romans 1:18)*
 - Giving Up 1: *God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves... (Romans 1:24)*
 - Exchange 2: *they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:25)*
 - Giving Up 2: *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature... (Romans 1:26)*
 - Exchange 3: *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature... (Romans 1:26)*
 - Giving Up 3: *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (Romans 1:28)*
- So, mankind is guilty of idolatry. And God's punishment is to give them over to immorality.
 - The punishment fits the crime. The punishment is a picture of the sin!
- Union of like and unlike | similar and dissimilar
 - God and human (Creator and created) || man and woman

- Contrary to nature? *para physin*
 - “When male unites with female for procreation, the pleasure experienced is held to be in accordance with nature (kata physin), but contrary to nature (*para physin*) when male mates with male or female with female.” (Plato, Laws)
 - “But of all sexual relations those involving adultery are most unlawful, and no more tolerable are those involving males with males, because the daring and flagrant act is contrary to nature (*para physin*).” (Musonius Rufus, 1st century Stoic)
 - “sexual intercourse with males which is contrary to nature (*para physin*) and without restraint” (Josephus)

Session 3: Common Objections

Objections:

1. The Bible only whispers about homosexuality.
2. Jesus never Addressed Homosexuality.
3. The kinds of homosexuality that are condemned are only dealing with pederasty or other forms of abusive or exploitive same sex behavior.
4. The Bible only addresses homosexual behavior and not orientation.
5. Homosexuality doesn't hurt anyone.
6. Christians are inconsistent for condemning homosexuality while disregarding other Levitical laws.
7. Christians are inconsistent for condemning homosexuality while allowing divorce & remarriage.
8. We can dismiss texts prohibiting homosexuality based on other texts about the nature of God or love.
9. The Church has traditionally abused homosexuals.

Objection 1: The Bible only whispers about homosexuality.

- Not a good hermeneutic to simply count references to assign priority.
- Word-concept fallacy
- Scripture screams.

Objection 2: Jesus never Addressed Homosexuality

- “When Christians find a specific teaching of one of more New Testament authors to be unappealing, Jesus is often held up as a counterweight.” (Robert Gagnon)
- Subtle claim: the words of Christ are more authoritative than the words of the Spirit.
- Two responses:
 - It wouldn't matter if He never did.
 - He actually did.
 - Porneia
 - *And he [Jesus] said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality [porneia], theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”* (Mark 7:20–23)
 - “No first-century Jew would have spoken of *porneiai* (plural) without having in mind the list of forbidden sexual offenses in Leviticus 18 and 20 (incest, adultery, same-sex intercourse, bestiality).” (Robert Gagnon)

- Overall sexual ethic.
 - Matthew 19:4-6 *Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*"
 - Counter-response: "Few today who would argue that sexual purity was a low-priority issue for Jesus based on Jesus' free association with sexual sinners, would also argue that Jesus was soft on economic exploitation based on his free association with economic sinners." (Robert Gagnon)

Objection 3: The kinds of homosexuality that are condemned are only dealing with pederasty or other forms of abusive or exploitive same sex behavior.

Revision:

- "Does new information we have about homosexuality also warrant a reinterpretation of Scripture?" (Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian*)
- "Paul viewed same-sex relations as stemming from excessive sexual desire and lust, not as the loving expression of a sexual orientation." (Matthew Vines, *ibid*)
- "The Bible doesn't directly address the issue of same-sex orientation – or the expression of that orientation." (Matthew Vines, *ibid*)
- "The bottom line is this: The Bible doesn't directly address the issue of same-sex orientation – or the expression of that orientation. While its six references to same-sex behavior are negative, the concept of same-sex behavior is sexual excess, not sexual orientation." (Matthew Vines, *ibid*)
- The authors of Scripture were familiar with something like homosexual orientation.
 - "Homosexual orientation was known in the generations in which Scripture was written. Paul gives no indication that it does not fall under the general condemnations of homosexuality in Romans 1, 1 Corinthians, and 1 Timothy." (John and Paul Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World*)
 - "Every kind of homosexual relationship was known in the first century, from lesbianism, to orgiastic behavior, to gender-malleable 'marriage,' to lifelong same-sex companionship." (Kevin DeYoung)
 - "they knew a great deal about what people today would regard as longer-term, reasonably stable relations between two people of the same gender. This is not a modern invention, its already there in Plato." (N.T. Wright)
 - "Those who claim that something akin to the modern category of an exclusive, innate homosexual proclivity did not exist in antiquity are wrong." (Robert Gagnon)

- “not all pederastic relations were experienced as exploitive and...other forms of same-sex relations were known, both in the classical Greek period and in the Hellenistic era, including lifelong same-sex relationships” (William Loader, *Sexuality in the New Testament*)
- Defense:
 - Plato’s Symposium: Aristophanes myth about human origins
 - Works of literature or artwork in which same sex desire is described as being mutual or reciprocal
 - The words of Scripture themselves.
 - *and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.* (Romans 1:27)
 - “What was wrong, first and foremost, for Paul in the case of same-sex intercourse was the fact that the participants were members of the same sex rather than the opposite sex. It was not a question of whether the sexual relationship was characterized by mutual affirmation or exploitation, parity in age or age disparity, procreative capacity or procreative incapacity, innate sexual urges or contrived sexual urges, or any other extrinsic set of antinomies.” (Robert Gagnon)

Objection 4: The Bible only addresses homosexual behavior and not orientation.

- Side A
 - “Christians who affirm the full authority of Scripture can also affirm committed, monogamous same-sex relationships.” (Matthew Vines)
 - the Gay Christian Network founded by Justin Lee
 - “I am for marriage. I am for fidelity. I am for love, whether it's a man and woman, a woman and a woman, a man and a man. I think the ship has sailed and I think the church needs—I think this is the world we are living in and we need to affirm people wherever they are.” (Rob Bell)
- Side B
 - started by Wesley Hill and others.
 - the Revoice Conference
 - Preston Sprinkle.
 - According to side B, the Bible condemns homosexual behavior (even monogamous or so-called marital), but not the orientation itself.

- Sinful desire
 - “While Side B seeks to uphold biblical sexual standards, because it sees sexual orientation as an accurate category of personhood (i.e., there is such a thing as a gay person—that gayness describes who someone essentially is), their theology in no way allows for an understanding of why homosexuality, even at the level of desire, is sinful and needing the grace of repentance. To the Side B Christian, homosexuality is a sexuality—one of many.” (Rosaria Butterfield)
 - “There is no ontological category of sexual orientation. The idea of identity emerging from a sexual desire embodies a philosophy of the soul that is false...Christians who feel beholden by culture to use the concept of sexual orientation ought to stop and ask one question: where ought we to situate sexual orientation in relation to biblical principles? If we were to fish around for a biblical place to contain this neologism (which is sloppy theology at best), it could only be traced to the biblical concept of ‘flesh.’” (Rosaria Butterfield)
- Compromised Humanity
 - “The kind of sexual attractions I experience are not fundamental to my identity. They are part of what I feel but are not who I am in a fundamental sense. I am far more than my sexuality...Desires for things God has forbidden are a reflection of how sin has distorted me, not how God has made me.” (Sam Allberry)
- Compromised Hamartiology
 - “sinful nature consists not merely of sinful deeds, but also of sinful desires and inclination (also known as ‘concupiscence’)” (Denny Burk & Heath Lambert, Transforming Homosexuality)
 - Romans 1 & disordered desires
 - “If same-sex erotic acts are always morally wrong, then the impulse to engage in those acts is also a manifestation of a disordered and sinful inner state. Focusing on behavior alone – and regarding as neutral the ‘preference’ or inclination toward such behaviors – simply cannot be justified from Scripture...If the acts are sinful, all inclinations to such acts are to be understood as manifestations of a sinful nature, and are to be resisted as such.” (James Brownson)
- The root presupposition of side A and side B is that sexual orientation is fixed and static. Thus, people are permanently shackled to that inclination, at least until the resurrection. There is neither hope for change nor is there a call for repentance.

Objection 5: Homosexuality doesn't hurt anyone.

- Blog: "Only God can Judge Me"
- Vertical and horizontal dimensions of sin
- Sins that involve others, hurt others.

Objection 6: Christians are inconsistent for condemning homosexuality while disregarding other Levitical laws.

- deficient understanding of the relationship between the covenants of Scripture.
 - sexual sin is a moral rather than ritual/ceremonial matter
 - the consequences for breaking sexual laws are far more drastic than breaking cleanliness laws.
 - sexual laws are further cemented in the New Testament whereas ritual aspects of the Old Testament are seen as transitory and fulfilled in Christ.
 - there is no hint in Scripture of an exception to the general prohibition of homosexuality unlike in the case of food laws or clothing.
- As Robert Gagnon has said, we can distinguish different degrees of applicability of OT laws today on the basis of how pervasively, absolutely, strongly, and counter-culturally they were proscribed.

Objection 7: Christians are inconsistent for condemning homosexuality while allowing for divorce and remarriage.

- Smokescreens, apples, and oranges
 - Exceptions
 - Normalization and celebration of divorce?
 - Laxity on one issue doesn't give license on another.
 - Not all churches are lax on divorce.

Objection 8: We can dismiss texts prohibiting homosexuality based on other texts about the nature of God or love.

Revisionists:

- “if a choice must be made between the biblical position on homosexuality and the love commandment – and such a choice is often inevitable – the latter must receive precedence.” (Andrei du Toit)
- “many religious conservatives, however well-intentioned, are wrong about the most essential point of theology: the character of God” (Christopher and Richard Hays, *The Widening of God’s Mercy*)
- “Scripture reflects God’s grace and mercy towards the whole world was always broader than one might expect. It also says that God may change his mind and his approach to the world to broaden it further. So, faithfulness to God means sometimes doing the same.” (Christopher and Richard Hays, *The Widening of God’s Mercy*)

Responses

- divorces God’s will from His word
- undermines the historic view of God’s immutability
- reverses how we should think of ethics in light of Scripture.
- We need Scripture not only to tell us TO love, but also HOW to love.

How to love:

- *You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.* (Leviticus 19:17–18)
- Rebuke, reprove.
 - *Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.* (Proverbs 9:8)
 - *Let a righteous man strike me—it is a kindness; let him rebuke me—it is oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. Yet my prayer is continually against their evil deeds.* (Psalm 141:5)
- What is love?
 - “Do not imagine that you love your servant when you refrain from beating him, or that you love your son when you do not discipline him, or that you love your neighbor when you do not rebuke him. This is not love, it is feebleness. Love should be fervent to correct. Take delight in good behavior, but amend what is bad. Love the person, but not the error in the person: God made the person, but the person alone made the error. Love what God made, not what the person made. If you love one thing, you remove another. When you esteem one thing, you change another. But if you are severe, let it be out of love, for the sake of correction.” (Augustine)
 - “We must love what God loves. That’s where the church at Ephesus failed (Rev. 2:4). But we must also hate what God hates (v. 6). That’s where Thyatira failed.” (Kevin DeYoung)

Objection 9: The Church has traditionally abused homosexuals.

- Identifying the greater danger
 - “The use of fashions in thought is to distract men from their real dangers. We direct the fashionable outcry of each generation against those vices of which it is in the least danger, and fix its approval on the virtue that is nearest the vice which we are trying to make endemic. The game is to have them all running around with fire extinguishers whenever there’s a flood; and all crowding to that side of the boat which is already nearly gone under.” (C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters)

Conclusion

Traditional hermeneutical scale

- Scripture
- Tradition
- Reason
- Experience

The exaltation of experience

- “wherever homosexual intercourse is mentioned in Scripture, it is condemned” (Pim Pronk)
- “I have little patience with efforts to make Scripture say something other than what it says...I think it is important to state clearly that we do, in fact, reject the straightforward commands of Scripture, and appeal instead to another authority when we declare that same-sex unions can be holy and good. And what exactly is that authority? We appeal explicitly to the weight of our own experience and the experience thousands of others have witnessed to...” (Luke Timothy Johnson)
- *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20–21)*

Recommended Resources:

For a solid, introductory overview:

- Kevin DeYoung, What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?

For an in-depth academic overview:

- Robert Gagnon, The Bible and Homosexual Practice

For a good discussion of the cultural and philosophical currents that are feeding the sexual revolution:

- The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self, Carl Trueman
- Or his slightly more accessible: Strange New World