

Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

WHERE SIN ABOUNDED

The world is in darkness and sin is abounding. Minds and hearts are being blinded by the passions and lusts of the flesh. Society is moving farther and farther away from the holiness of God’s Word. Professing Christians are embracing the liberal mindset of the world. Not only is marriage not respected as a lifetime commitment, but it is no longer viewed exclusively as a relationship between a man and a woman. What hope is there in this ungodly generation?

Years ago, a minister walked into the hospital room of a young gay man who was dying of AIDS. The man, in the last days of his life, lay on the hospital bed dressed in a pink negligee. The minister asked to visit with him.

“I don’t want to talk to you,” the young man replied. “You are just going to tell me that I’m going to hell when I die.”

“No,” the minister responded. “I want to tell you about God’s love for you.”

The minister began to tell this young, homosexual man, who had lived a life of great sin, about the wonderful love of God. He shared with him the beautiful truth of John 3:16-17. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

As the minister talked about the love of Jesus and how He came to save us from our sins, tears came to the dying man’s eyes. He prayed to the Lord and asked God to forgive him for all his sins. At that moment, this young man became a new creature in Jesus Christ. All the old things were passed away and everything became new (2 Corinthians 5:17). He may have been rejected by his family, he may have caused much pain to people around him, he may have lived a life of gross sin and debauchery, but God loved and accepted him. He was cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and made clean.

The young man immediately called for the nurse and asked for a regular hospital gown. This was just one small sign of this man’s true repentance before God. He asked the minister to preach his funeral. “There will be many of my gay friends at my funeral. I want you to tell them what you told me. Tell them that God loves them!”

Oh, hallelujah, praise God! As David said, “There is forgiveness with thee” (Psalm 130:4). The love and forgiveness of Jesus are extended to everyone still today, no matter how egregious or sick the sin. “Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

There was a woman who was brought to Jesus by the religious leaders. She was caught in the very act of adultery and was faced with judgment and condemnation. However, “Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more”

(continued on page 2)



“The love and forgiveness of Jesus are extended to everyone still today, no matter how egregious or sick the sin.”

Editorial

3

Bible Study:
Homosexuality and
Deviance

4

Companion Article:
Homosexuality &
Deviance

5-6

Q & A

7

Did You Know?
A Word in Season:
Bear Ye One Another’s
Burdens

8

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

(continued from page 1)

(John 8:11). Amid the judgments of others, she found a place of acceptance with Jesus. He offered hope and did not leave her in her sin. While the world says the love of Jesus accepts sin, the true love and power of Jesus will elevate from sin so that people can go and sin no more.

There was another woman whom Christ met beside a well of water. She said that she had no husband. Jesus told her that she said correctly, "For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy

"People are seeking the pleasure and passions of the flesh in an attempt to find purpose, identity, and satisfaction."

husband" (John 4:18). Jesus told her about living water that would quench the thirst of the soul. Many are just like this woman. Moving from relationship to relationship did not satisfy her longing. People are seeking the pleasures and passions of the flesh in an attempt to find purpose, identity, and satisfaction. Because those things never satisfy, people go deeper and deeper into sin, seeking yet never finding

true peace. Jesus came to minister to the depth of the soul. When people yield to Jesus Christ and forsake their sins, they will find true peace and acceptance.

Paul, the apostle, spoke to the saints in Corinth about those who would not inherit the kingdom of God: fornicators, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, drunkards, etc. He said, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1 Corinthians 6:11). What joyous words to hear in this evil time. "Such were some of you, but...." It doesn't matter how sinfully or what lifestyle someone has lived, there is salvation for all.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20). The grace of God is still more powerful than all the passions and bondage of the flesh. So, go tell them. Go tell the world of God's love. Tell them of salvation. Tell them of the hope and peace that is in Jesus Christ! ■

"Men play the part of women,
and women that of men, contrary to nature.
Women are at once both wives and husbands....
O miserable spectacle! Horrible conduct!"

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

(An early church father, circa 195)

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Editorial



For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

—2 Timothy 4:3-4

Paul exhorted Timothy to preach the Word. May God help us all to faithfully continue to preach, teach, and live the unadulterated Word of God. Today most people are not listening to sound doctrine. If seeking at all, they are seeking ministers and pastors who will make them feel good about their choices in life, even when they are contrary to the truth.

The subject this quarter deals with the weighty topic of homosexuality and gender identity issues. In the past, a topic such as this might have been deemed inappropriate for a gospel publication. However, these ideologies and lifestyles are prevalent in the world and society in which we live, and this is a subject that both children and adults encounter almost daily. In Gen Z (ages 11-26), 17-18%, nearly 1 out of 5, identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, omnisexual, asexual, transgender, or nonbinary. It is a major issue in our time. Because of the influences so prevalent around us, more and more young people will be struggling with questions and even temptations on these issues.

As Christians we must be willing to discuss the subject, for it is addressed in the Bible. If we do not proclaim the truth, the only voice that will be heard is the LGBTQ+ lobby which is fighting hard to normalize deviant sexual practices.

I was saddened as I studied this topic to read how people professing to be Christians are twisting and revising the meaning of very clear scriptures on this subject in an attempt to embrace sinful lifestyles as part of the Christian faith. We must be true to the Word, for we will be accountable for it.

I remember many years ago speaking to my wife disparagingly of two gay men we encountered who were shopping for women's clothing. The Lord chastised me and let me know that He died for them. I am thankful for that reminder. Jesus loves them, and we are to be ministers of His love.

When people speak out against the practices of the LGBTQ+ community, they are labeled as homophobic, haters, etc. Just because we speak the truth about sin does not make us homophobic or unkind. We must be clear on this. True people of God love ALL sinners and welcome them to come to service and hear the gospel. They are our neighbors, our friends, and our family. It is important to remember that just because someone is living a life of sin does not mean they are without other wonderful attributes and qualities. While we hate the sin and speak out against it, we love the people.

Society has lost its moral compass, but the Word of God and the power of Jesus Christ can recalibrate and renew purity and morality within the hearts of humanity. I encourage everyone to be on guard against the liberal mindset of tolerance and acceptance. Accept people but do not accept the sin and lifestyle that is clearly contrary to God's plan.

May the Lord have mercy on our world and help us to be beacons of light, love, and hope to the lost.

Michael W. Smith

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Bible Study Guide

Subject: Homosexuality and Deviance

Scripture Reading: *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind ... shall inherit the kingdom of God.* —1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Summary: The Scripture teaches that homosexuality is a sin. An intimate relationship or union with someone of the same gender is against nature and God's design for marriage. God created male and female; efforts to change one's biological sexual identity are contrary to God's ordained plan. Jesus loves, died for, and extends salvation to the LGBTQ+ community.

I. Standard of Truth

- A. 2 Timothy 3:16 Scripture is given by God.
- B. John 8:32 Truth brings freedom.
- C. Isaiah 5:20-21 Woe unto them that call evil good.

II. Old Testament Condemns Homosexuality and Bestiality

- A. Leviticus 18:22-24 Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind.
- B. Leviticus 20:13-16 Homosexuality and bestiality are an abomination.

III. Homosexual Behavior Is Contrary to New Testament Teaching

- A. Romans 1:24-28 Homosexual acts are lustful, vile, and against nature.
- B. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 The effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind.
- C. 1 Timothy 1:9-10 Homosexuality is ungodly.

IV. Sexual Immorality Is Sin

- A. Colossians 3:5-6 Put to death all evil desires.
- B. Matthew 15:19-20 Adultery and fornication defile.
- C. 1 Corinthians 6:18 Sin against the body.
- D. Galatians 5:19-21 Works of the flesh.

V. Marriage Is Between a Man and a Woman

- A. Genesis 2:18, 22-24 God created the union of one man with one woman.
- B. Matthew 19:5-6 Husband and wife are one flesh.
- C. Ephesians 5:31 Man and wife joined together.

VI. Gender Identity

- A. Genesis 1:27-28 Created to procreate.
- B. Matthew 19:4 God made male and female.

- C. Deuteronomy 22:5 Cross-dressing is an abomination.
- D. 1 Corinthians 6:9 Effeminate—Sensual and corrupt indulgences.

VII. Divine Judgment

- A. Genesis 19:1-14 Sodom and Gomorrah.
- B. Jude 1:7 The perverse will suffer eternal fire.

VIII. Imbibe Not the Spirit of the World

- A. Romans 12:2 Be not conformed to this world.
- B. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 Receive not the spirit of the world.
- C. 1 Corinthians 3:18-19 The wisdom of this world is foolishness.
- D. 1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world.

IX. God Loves LGBTQ+ Individuals

- A. John 3:16 For God so loved the world.
- B. Romans 5:8 While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

X. Reconciliation and Salvation for All People

- A. 1 John 1:9 God will cleanse from all unrighteousness.
- B. 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 In Christ, all things are new.
- C. Revelation 22:17 Whosoever will.

Conclusion

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

—1 Corinthians 6:11

HOMOSEXUALITY & DEVIANCE

God has called His people to live pure, holy lives in conformity with His divine plan for males and females. Regardless of the growing cultural, political, and religious acceptance of homosexuality and transgender practices, the Word of God identifies these as ungodly and sinful.



“Truth does not change however deviant and permissive society becomes.”

Standard of Truth

Truth does not change however deviant and permissive society becomes. The mindset of the world is one in which there is no absolute moral truth, and everything is relative. The Bible is God’s inspired Word (2 Timothy 3:16) and contains the only truth that will lead to Heaven. The truth of God’s Word will make people truly free to be at peace with God and with themselves. The prophet Isaiah pronounced a woe upon them that “call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness” (Isaiah 5:20). This is the condition of our world, and it is incumbent upon God’s people to stand not only in love but in truth. The clear teaching of the Word should be held as the ultimate standard; and the influences and agendas of the world should not be allowed to hold sway as they relate to the LGBTQ+ community and lifestyle.

The gay and lesbian lobby is strong; it is tearing at the very fabric of society and challenging the God-ordained family structure. Homosexual and transgender practices are being normalized through the media and entertainment. Even if not personally embraced, there is a general permissiveness and acceptance by too many. Homosexuality, transgender, and bestiality are condemned by the Word of God. While it is not popular to name things out, LGBTQ+ practices are sinful.

Old Testament Condemns Homosexuality and Bestiality

The Old Testament condemned homosexuality. “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith... it is confusion. Defile not ye

yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you” (Leviticus 18:22-24). The law required that those who committed homosexual acts be put to death (Leviticus 20:13-16).

New Testament Teaching

While we no longer live under the judgments of the Mosaic law, the New Testament also clearly teaches that homosexuality is sinful. Because mankind began to worship themselves more than the Creator through lust, God gave them up unto vile affections. “Women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly” (Romans 1:24-28). 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 lists people that will not inherit the kingdom of God. Among them were “abusers of themselves with mankind.” This is homosexuality. Those that “defile themselves with mankind” are listed as lawless, disobedient, and ungodly in 1 Timothy 1:9-10.

Sexual Immorality Is Sin

All forms of sexual immorality are sins, whether it be fornication or adultery with any gender. Colossians 3:5-6 instructs people to “mortify therefore your members...fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection.” Paul advised to “Flee fornication.... He that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18). Those that commit adultery, fornication, uncleanness, etc. will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Physical intimacy belongs only in marriage between a man and a woman.

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

Marriage Is Between a Man and a Woman

Marriage has been misconstrued and redefined in our culture; but from the beginning, God created a man and a woman, Adam and Eve, to dwell together in marriage as one flesh (Genesis 2:18, 21-24). God did not create two men or two women for that most intimate of all relationships. Biblical marriage was and always will be between one man and one woman.

Jesus Himself reiterated this truth in Matthew 19:5-6: “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Any other practice or acceptance of marriage between two men or two women is a perversion of God’s plan.

Gender Identity

Homosexuality is not new and has existed for thousands of years. However, in our modern world, as it became more accepted, it has led to an even greater evil in the last few years. Now not only are people choosing their sexual orientation by preference and lust, but they are also beginning to choose their gender, not based upon biology but upon preference. People are changing their gender identity where men are acting like women, women are acting like men, and even worse, some are choosing to act like animals. How far the world has fallen to accept and encourage this kind of deviant behavior!

Genesis 1:27 teaches that “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Only two gender categories are identified in scripture: male and female. Gender is not a choice but a biologically and genetically determined outcome. Crossing these boundaries through dress, surgical, or hormonal treatments defies the natural God-given gift bestowed by the Creator. Anomalies of chromosomal variance that may cause an ambiguous gender are less than 0.05% and should never be used to define normalcy. It is sad that children are born with genetic defects of any kind, but it is a reality in our world. Genetic defects are not the foundation upon which to transgress God’s plan and make gender identity a choice.

Transgender practices are sinful and forbidden by God. Cross-dressing is condemned in Deuteronomy 22:5 “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that

do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.” While this passage forbids women from wearing men’s apparel, especially armor, it also states that a man should not wear women’s clothing. 1 Corinthians 6:9 speaks of the ‘effeminate.’ This refers to those wearing soft, luxurious clothes, also encapsulating sensual and corrupt indulgences. Would not a man putting on the dress and airs of a woman be in this category? One’s biological sex is to be accepted and no attempt should be made to change, alter, or act differently.

Divine Judgment

The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is once more reaching heaven. Fire and brimstone were poured out in judgment against these cities for their gross sinfulness as it relates to this topic (Genesis 19:1-14). Jude 1:7 warns: “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

The Spirit of the World

With sexual perversions and ideologies surrounding us in this age, it is so important not to imbibe the spirit of the world (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). “Be not conformed to this world: but... prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

God Loves LGBTQ+ Individuals

While the judgments of God are sure against evil and sexual deviance of this generation, God loves every individual (John 3:16). God hates sin but loves the sinner. Jesus died for all sinners, and all of us were in that number. Regardless of the lifestyle and sin that someone has committed, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). God can take the vilest sinners and make them clean. Jesus did not come to condemn but to save people from their sins. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Salvation for All People

Let us not be discouraged but stay strong in the truth of God’s Word. Pray for those who have been drawn into the lustful traps of the enemy. All is not lost, for there is still power in Jesus Christ to transform lives. ■



“Regardless of the lifestyle and sin that someone has committed, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).



As saints, how are we to treat people who are practicing an LGBTQ+ lifestyle?

Individuals and families can find themselves in difficult situations to know how to treat people who are living LGBTQ+ lifestyles. In every decision, it is paramount to keep the spirit and love of Christ. Jesus was a friend to sinners. In Matthew 9:10-13, the Pharisees questioned why Jesus was eating with publicans and sinners. Jesus responded, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Jesus was neither partaking of nor supporting their sinful behavior; but He was reaching out to them in love for their souls’ sake. We must treat all people with love and respect as creations of God, regardless of lifestyle choices. If we completely ostracize people who are living in darkness, how will they ever find hope of salvation? Jesus also taught that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). In our sinful world, who is our neighbor? There is a balance of showing love and yet not fellowshiping sinfulness. While there is a great disdain for deviant sexual behaviors, that disdain should be for the practice, not for the person.

It is important to remember that loving someone does not mean you are in agreement with or that you condone their sinful practices. In most situations,

I would find it highly difficult to attend an adulterous wedding or a union of homosexuals. While we love the people, we could neither support nor participate in this kind of celebration.

In certain situations it may be necessary to implement some guidelines and limit interactions in order to preserve the sanctity of one’s home, to protect oneself or younger children from ungodly influences. Whatever is said and done should always be with the spirit of Christ. Most importantly, pray much for their salvation. ■

What do I do if I am attracted to the same gender?

The enemy has worked hard to normalize same-sex relationships. If somebody is attracted to someone of the same gender, prayer is the chief weapon to combat the enemy and the flesh. There is a divine freedom from sin and a place in Christ where temptation can lose its power. When spirits of lust are involved, there is deliverance. As sexual deviance in society becomes more prevalent, there will be increased temptations. Experiences, environment, and natural inclinations can make some people more vulnerable than others. It is important to remember that temptation is not sin; yielding to it is sin. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

It is also very important not to feed the attraction. Do not watch things or associate with people that would feed or enhance this temptation. Flee all things that would create more of a desire for an unholy alliance. In your struggle, keep fighting. Daily pray for God to help you keep your heart and mind on good, pure things. Surround yourself with a strong support group of holy people and continue to grow in your walk with God.

If unmarried, do not seek to be married to someone in an attempt to overcome an attraction to someone of the same gender. That will follow you into marriage and could cause great damage. Get victory first and then seek God for a godly companion in the will of God.

Be encouraged. There is power over sin and temptation; God has a place of victory and peace for you. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

“Some 7% of Americans are lesbian, gay or bisexual, according to a Pew Research Center survey of 12,147 U.S. adults conducted in summer 2022. Some 17% of adults younger than 30 identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, compared with 8% of those ages 30 to 49, 5% of those 50 to 64 and 2% of those 65 and older.” [Brown, Anna. June 23, 2023. www.pewresearch.org.]

“Across the 30 countries surveyed, 3% on average identify as lesbian or gay, 4% as bisexual, 1% as pansexual or omnisexual, and 1% as asexual.” [www.ipos.com (2023)]



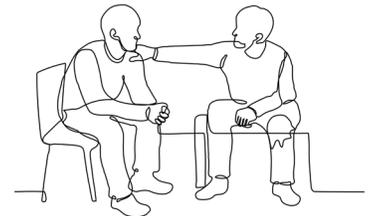
A Word
in Season

BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. — Galatians 6:2

We live in a broken world because of sin. People are struggling with destructive behaviors, addictions, and forces of lust. They are lonely and seeking identity, belonging, and peace. Family relationships are being severed and marriages broken. Children are facing negative influences and pressures as never before. Mental health issues and emotional problems are on the rise. The tide of the world is destroying lives.

While it looks bleak, there is a bright hope in Jesus Christ. We have Heaven ahead of us where there will be no more brokenness. In the world there is tribulation, but through Jesus, we have light, hope, and peace. We have something wonderful to share with people who are struggling. The things of this world are not solving the problems that people have; they are making them worse. Let us communicate freely the glorious hope of the gospel.



The Scripture teaches us to “Bear ye one another’s burdens.” This means to lift up, to carry, to endure patiently the burdens of others. People that are broken need love, care, and understanding. We can’t fix people, but we can be there for them. We can listen, we can pray, we can share hope, and most of all we can point them to the Savior, who can do what man cannot do.

Bearing the burdens of others is not usually easy, but it is our call and our responsibility. People who are hurting can be hurtful; they can lash out at those who love them. As you bear people’s burdens, remember that you may be hurt. When you sacrifice yourself for others, they will sometimes cause you pain with their words and actions. Look beyond what they say or do and see their brokenness. Where will they be if you forsake them?

As God has been so patient and faithful to us, let us fulfill the law of Christ and extend that same patience and love to others who are struggling to find their way. Let us show them Christ by our love and care. May the Lord Jesus bless each of you as you bear the burdens of others. ■

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HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD