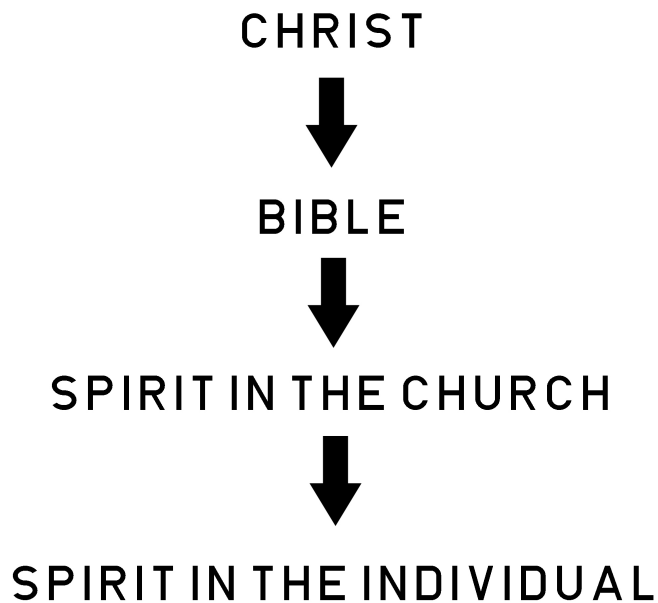


Authority of scripture

FLOW OF AUTHORITY



OTHER RESOURCES:

- March 10, 2013 sermon podcast - citychurchtulsa.com/media - Pink Elephants Series

THERE ARE MANY CHRISTIANS WHO ARE DIVIDED ON WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THIS TOPIC:

- **WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE BIBLE:** We believe the Bible is the authoritative Word of God that guides our lives and leads us into truth, whether that truth is convenient or extremely difficult to accept

How our culture does theology and textual studies:

- **Eisegesis "to read into"** – We develop our own thoughts, presuppositions, and viewpoints and then we take those to the text in order to find passages that validate our ideas

How we are called to properly interpret the Bible:

- **Exegesis "to read/pull out of"** – We allow the text (the whole of scripture) to speak truth in the cultural context in which it is written and then we extract truth and apply it to our current situation

THE ISSUE WITHIN THE CHURCH:

- Churches, leaders, & theologians who believe that scripture clearly demonstrates that homosexuality is contrary to God's design for creation and that it is a result of man's idolatry towards God (Romans 1)
- Churches, leaders, & theologians who believe that scriptures that speak against homosexuality were either only relevant during a specific time or they were only referencing idolatrous acts of homosexuality and not monogamous, committed partnerships that many people practice today.

Truths we are given in scripture:

- Our bodies have been created not only by God but also for God (1 Cor 6:13)
 - Purpose is God-glorification not self-glorification
- In his love for us, God gave us boundaries for how to use our bodies for his glory
 - God designed a man's and a woman's body to join together as "one flesh" in marriage (Genesis 2:24)
 - A heterosexual union which is outlined in Genesis 2 is a picture of God's pursuit of mankind and what he calls "good."
 - For a man and woman who have committed their lives in a covenant relationship with each other (Malachi 2:14)
 - There is not one instance in all of scripture where God advocates or celebrates sex outside of a covenant marriage between a man and woman
 - God prohibits sexual prostitution, sexual violence, sex with animals, sex with relatives - sex between a man and woman who are not married in a covenant marriage

- This is not simply a same sex issue, this is any or all sexual activity outside of God's design - regardless of an individual's attraction or pull to that specific sexual action

FROM STRICTLY A BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION PERSPECTIVE: In every book I've read from gay Christians, I have yet to read one argument that didn't take a great deal of creative license with the text to recreate the scenario in a way that is justifiable to their desired perspective.

- Many of the leading gay theologians have simply come out and said openly, "The Bible (especially Jesus and Paul) openly rebukes the homosexual lifestyle in scripture - it's clear."
- While many have given up trying to argue that the Bible fails to speak out against homosexuality, there are others who have chosen to take two different routes:
 - Forcing the text to say something it does not
 - Characterizing all texts that speak about homosexuality as irrelevant and only a product of the time in which it was written

THE ARGUMENTS:

THESE ARE CLAIMS MADE BY THOSE IN THE CHURCH WHO ESPOUSE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE THAT SUPPORTS A HOMOSEXUAL LIFESTYLE AND THE RESPONSE FROM THOSE IN THE CHURCH WHO BELIEVE IT IS CLEARLY CONTRARY TO GOD'S DESIRE FOR HUMANITY.

Leviticus 18:22

“ ‘Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.

- **CLAIM:** We cannot follow the laws in Leviticus that speak about homosexual relationships because they were particular to the governmental laws of ancient Israel and no longer relevant to us today (just like we don't follow many of the other laws in Leviticus today)
- **RESPONSE:** Some Levitical laws are civil in nature, and they specifically pertain to the government of ancient Israel. Some laws are ceremonial, pertaining to sacrifices, offerings, and festivals for God's people under the old covenant. Some are moral laws (stealing, lying, etc.) and are explicitly reiterated in the New Testament. These laws are based upon

God's character and clearly apply to all people for all time. Properly biblical hermeneutics are required when differentiating these laws.

Romans 1:24-27

24Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

26Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

- **CLAIM:** When Paul spoke against homosexual practice in Romans 1, he was speaking of sensual acts that took place in idolatrous temples and sexually inflamed homosexuals, not loving, committed, monogamous homosexual unions.
 - Other arguments:
 - Gay people are not idol worshippers
 - Second, we didn't follow this pattern of depravity into homosexual lust, we have always been attracted to the same sex.
 - Matthew Vine, who has become a leading voice for the Christian homosexual community says this, "Both men and women started with heterosexuality - they were naturally disposed to it just as they were naturally disposed to the knowledge of God - but they rejected their original, natural inclinations for those that were unnatural; for them same-sex behavior.
- **RESPONSE:** Paul looked at homosexual practice as a direct result of mankind's rejection of God, something contrary to His created order and design. It is a worldview that is accepted when mankind turns their face away from the true Creator and onto themselves.
 - The response to Romans 1 from gay theologians was not even present until the sexual revolution of the 1960's after homosexuality became a major issue. This has never been a view held by theologians or the church throughout the history of the text.
 - The issue is real, the attraction is real, the struggle is very real. Scripture is also very clear that homosexual acts are contrary to God's order and design and are only in the world because of our fallen, broken nature

- This is also the only verse in the Bible that speaks of lesbianism, something that was far less prevalent in that period than male homosexuality

Other scriptures that speak of homosexuality: *malokos & arsenokoitai*

CLAIM: The scriptures in the New Testament that speak about homosexuality (1 Cor 6:9-11, 1 Tim 1:9-10) are ambiguous in their interpretation and are more than likely referring to the passive or receptive partner in homosexual acts, which was commonplace in the 1st century Greek culture

RESPONSE: There is virtually unanimous agreement on these words among theologians and scholars. Although there is some debate regarding the meaning of *malokos* there is very little if any debate regarding *arsenokoitai* and what it means.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

- *malokos* - “soft” or referring to the receptive partner in homosexual acts as well as men who dressed and acted like women
- *arsenokoitai* - “men who lie with males”

Words of Jesus regarding homosexuality:

Matthew 15:19 - 19For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.²⁰These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

- **CLAIM:** While Jesus spoke against divorce or adultery, He never said a word about homosexual practice and only affirms that people are born gay when he talks about eunuchs. If it was that important, wouldn't Jesus have talked about it?
- **RESPONSE:** One of the reasons the Bible doesn't speak a lot about homosexuality is because the Bible clearly affirms a heterosexual union from the very beginning and throughout the text. In the Jewish culture in which Jesus grew up in and ministered, homosexual practice was explicitly prohibited and forbidden. So it shouldn't surprise us that Jesus doesn't spend a lot of time talking about it. Nobody was really debating whether or not homosexuality was morally acceptable according to the Torah in the 1st century, it was already clearly articulated. The hot topic at the time of Jesus was DIVORCE.
 - Matthew 15:19 & Mark 7:21

- The Greek word for “sexual immorality,” *porneia*, occurs in the plural form only in these two verses in the entire New Testament. This refers comprehensively to all sexual acts outside of marriage, which would have definitely included the union of same sex individuals.
- Jesus reiterates in Matthew 19:4-6 that divorce was never God’s idea and that when a man and wife are joined together they become “one flesh,” once again reiterating God’s design from mankind originating in Genesis 2.

Jesus speaking about eunuchs:

Matthew 15:11-12 - 11 Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

CLAIM: When Jesus mentions that some eunuchs were born that way he is affirming that homosexuality is something that people are born with.

RESPONSE: Gay theologians try to use this verse to say that Jesus affirms homosexuality and that people are born gay. Not only is this passage not affirming that people are born gay, but it is making a strong case for those who are called to celibacy. This teaching of Jesus has to do with people not marrying or having sex.

- The term eunuch initially referred to a man who had been castrated (something that happened more often in that culture than ours)
- Jesus says that some people were born without sexual capacity or desire, some have been castrated or made that way, and then others have chosen to be celibate by choice in order to advance the kingdom of God - REMEMBER: Jesus is speaking to the disciples who have more than likely given up their lives, possible marriages, a sex life, etc. to follow Christ.
 - A celibate life is possible and even celebrated by Jesus of those who choose to put the kingdom of God first - Paul mentions the same thing

OTHER STORIES USED BY THOSE WHO CONDONE HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE BIBLE:

- David & Jonathan
- Ruth & Naomi
- The Ethiopian Eunuch

- Jesus & the Centurian
 - I'm not addressing these stories because they're not even debatable in the biblical scholarly realm and have zero basis for advocating for homosexuality

LIES WE ARE TOLD TO BELIEVE ABOUT THIS ISSUE:

- ***Love requires, even demands, that we recognize, embrace, sanction, and even celebrate committed same-sex unions***
 - The greatest expression of love is leading a person into the truth laid out in scripture
- ***A person is primarily defined by their romantic attractions and sexual desires. That becomes their identity.***
 - This is not true whether you have homosexual or heterosexual attraction; your identity is first and foremost who you are in Christ, not your sexual attractions
- ***If you have same-sex attractions then you are gay and to say otherwise is to deny how God has created you***
 - Homosexuality is one of the only issues where we believe that have urges, attractions, or desires is a true indicator of who you really are. The gospel tells us that when we come to Christ we give over our desires to the Holy Spirit and become more like him. That doesn't always mean the desires or temptations cease, only that we are not controlled by them.
- ***We must see scripture through the lens of either homosexuality or heterosexuality, rather than seeing the issues through the lens of scripture.***
 - If you choose to see scripture through the lens of that issue then you will always fail to see it for what it says and only force it to say what you choose.
- ***When you choose to tell other people their lifestyle is a sin you are being judgmental, which is strictly spoken against in scripture.***
 - As believers were are called to not be judgmental; do not judge hypocritically, unfairly, superficially, or to condemn others. We are absolutely called to make good moral judgments according to scripture.
- ***These scriptures that speak of homosexuality are intended to keep me down and limit what I'm allowed to do.***

- The scriptural boundaries/commands established by God are intended to bring us into a restored relationship with Him as He intended from the beginning. These commands do not bind us, but instead, liberate us to experience life as he created.
- ***How can someone not follow certain emotions or desires that are specifically put their by God?***
 - We are never advised in scripture to follow our emotions. Our emotions are not a proper barometer for God's will in our lives. If anything, scripture compels us to stay obedient to the Word of God regardless of where our emotions want to take us.

INCONVENIENT TRUTHS IN SCRIPTURE:

This issue is more difficult because most of us have relationships with practicing homosexuals and we want them to be happy.

It is easier to follow truth when that truth is convenient. It is a whole other story when that truth is difficult, when it's unpopular, when you will face rejection for believing it, when others will accuse you of hatred and bigotry - IT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY LESS THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE

- The perspective of many Christians in regards to same sex attractions:
 - "Yes I've wrestled with what the Bible says about homosexuality, and I'm not 100% what to make of it but I do know that I have same sex attractions and therefore I will interpret the Word through the lens of me - through the lens of who I am - not what scripture says."
 - ***That is the definition of idolatry. Elevating yourself over the place of God who gave us this truth and specifically what Paul is addressing in Romans 1.***

HOW WOULD JESUS INTERACT WITH HOMOSEXUALS?

Many LGBT leaders often point out that Jesus spent time with those whom society marginalized, like prostitutes, tax-collectors, and sinners. While he absolutely did, did he also encourage the prostitutes to better their clients? Did he teach the tax-collectors how to extort more money? Of course not. He reached out them, got involved in their lives, and truly loved them. He would also always lead people into truth. **Jesus practiced transformational inclusion, not affirmational inclusion.**

HERE IS THE DIFFICULTY: We all have family and friends who we love who have same sex attraction. There is a desire in many of us that says love is simply saying, "Yes, you should follow your desire." Scripture is not about leading us into what we desire as much as it is about leading us into holiness, perfecting us into the image of Jesus and leading us into truth. Sometimes that truth can be extremely difficult to wrestle with - just like in this case.

- *You are more than your romantic attractions and sexual desires, that there is quite a difference between having a desire and acting on it, and if you will give yourself completely to the Lord, holding nothing back from Him, He will hold nothing back from you. There is a place of fulfillment and freedom that is only found in Jesus.*