

**A COMPASSIONATE,
INFORMED CHRISTIAN
RESPONSE TO HOMOSEXUAL
PRACTICE AND “MARRIAGE”**

By Tom Barnes

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Introduction

In November of 2003 the Massachusetts Supreme court ruled “that same-sex couples are legally entitled to wed under the state constitution.”¹ The Goodridge v. MA. Dept. Of Public Health ruling reads: “Barring an individual from the protections, benefits, and obligations of civil marriage solely because that person would marry a person of the same sex violates the Massachusetts Constitution.”² Since this ruling may lead to the wedding of same-sex couples from other states in Massachusetts and then returning to their home states where the latter will face pressure to recognize the union, there is the potential of moving many states toward the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Because this trend has been a long time coming (e.g. a 1999 Vermont Supreme Court decision led to that state legislature’s decision in 2000 to recognize same-sex civil unions),³ opponents of same-sex marriage have crafted a proposed amendment to the constitution of the United States, known as the Federal Marriage Amendment.⁴ That amendment reads:

*Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither this constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.*⁵

¹See www.bostom.com/news/daily/18/gay_marriage.htm.

²Chuck Colson, “Follow The Leader?” Breakpoint (May 17, 2004). www.pfm.org.

³See www.bostom.com/news/daily/18/gay_marriage.htm. Canada has already legalized same-sex marriages. In the Texas Lawrence decision that state’s Sodomy laws were struck down. “Our Last, Best Hope, A Breakpoint Interview With Dr. Robert George,” available from Prison Fellowship Ministries.

⁴The Senate sponsor is Wayne Allard (Colorado) and the House sponsor is Marilyn Musgrave (also from Colorado). Much of their legal advise on the amendment came from Dr. Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University (“Our Last, Best Hope, A Breakpoint Interview With Dr. Robert George”), available from Prison Fellowship Ministries.

⁵www.family.org. www.allianceformarriage.org. (gives a detailed summary of bill. Click on amendment button at bottom of page).

Though there has never been a constitutional right to gay marriage, a reality that had bi-partisan support in the Defense of Marriage Act,⁶ the courts of our land are threatening to force such a view of marriage upon the American people.

The result of the Massachusetts decision and the Federal Marriage Amendment drive has been to place the issue of homosexuality and homosexual “marriage” in the forefront of the American public and op/ed. pages and also it has led many people to think about their own views toward the gay lifestyle. Should we accept it? Should we decide that it is none of our business? Is it somehow an equal alternative to the heterosexual lifestyle? What place does the Church of Jesus Christ have in this debate?

It is my conviction that the body of Christ has an unprecedented opportunity and responsibility to address compassionately and wisely the issue of homosexuality and homosexual marriage. As this booklet will set forth, for us to do so is an expression of our love toward those who presently practice homosexuality, as well as those future generations which may be more prone to practice it, if a clear, loving answer is not now given. More specifically, we must set forth a compassionate, informed position so that the Church, serving as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), will know how to discuss the topic with friends, family, neighbors, with each other, and with our political leaders through advocacy of the traditional definition of marriage.

In a nutshell this booklet will set forth the following position. First, homosexual practice⁷ is always sinful according to the scriptures. There are no exceptions. Second, there is no

⁶See the February 25, 2004 Open letter to the New York Times, Senator Edward Kennedy and other opponents of the Federal Marriage Amendment, signed by: James C. Dobson, Ph.D; Charles W. Colson; Jay Sekulow; Don Wildmon; Franklin Graham; and Deal Hudson.

⁷I speak of homosexual practice because I assert that homosexuality, though it often may feel like it, is not an inborn, unavoidable genetic predisposition of the person that is a part of who they are, something that would be like our race or gender. Instead, it is a practice or lifestyle (such as alcoholism or adultery). This is not to suggest that the inborn sin nature could not work its way out in some people to lead them to struggle with homosexual desires. It is to assert that God does not make people homosexual in the same way that He makes Caucasians or African-Americans, or males, or females--and that is “just the way they are and who they are.” See Allan Dobras, “‘Homosexual’ Is Not A Noun,” [Breakpoint](#) (July 14, 2004). www.pfm.org.

compelling scientific evidence that people are born as homosexuals or that would lead us to conclude that is “just the way they are and who they are” and they cannot change or avoid the practice thereof. Third, marriage has historically been defined as a relationship between a man and a woman that has been at least potentially tied to procreation and family and to redefine it is to harm children who need that complementary oversight and example, and it is to undermine our society itself. Fourth, Christians must share with others the dangers of the homosexual lifestyle because we love them.⁸ Finally, as such, there are not only moral or religious reasons to recognize marriage as only between a man and a woman, there is a compelling state interest to preserve that definition. As such, we must support and work toward the passage of the Federal Marriage Amendment.

Let’s now turn our attention to setting forth this compassionate, informed response.

God’s Laws Are For His Glory And Our Benefit

Though we must recognize that we will not always bring in the scriptures to our discussions in the public square, it is vital that we understand what they teach on the subject. Such a knowledge will not only increase the understanding of Christians and strengthen our commitment to God’s design for marriage, it will also equip us to help others see, when the subject arises, that clearly the Judeo-Christian scriptures and tradition unequivocally support

⁸Robert A. J. Gagnon, The Bible And Homosexual Practice (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 31, writes: “A rigorous critique of same-sex intercourse can have the unintended effect of bringing personal pain to homosexuals, some of whom are already prone to self-loathing. This is why it needs to be emphatically stated that to feel homosexual impulses does not make one a bad person. I deplore attempts to demean the humanity of homosexuals. Whatever one thinks about the immorality of homosexual behavior, or about the obnoxiousness of elements within the homosexual lobby, homosexual impulses share with all other sinful impulses the feature of being an attack on the “I” or inner self experiencing the impulses (Rom. 7:14-25). The person beset with homosexual temptation should evoke our concern, sympathy, help, and understanding, not our scorn or enmity. Even more, such a person should kindle a feeling of solidarity in the hearts of all Christians, since we all struggle to manage properly our erotic passions.”

Many same-sex advocates will argue that opposition of homosexual practice is, by definition, hateful and lacking in compassion. See, for example, the letter to the editor by Jennifer Geraci, “No Compassion In Discrimination Against Gays,” The Coloradoan, December 2, 2003: A4.

heterosexual marriage and teach the sinfulness of homosexual practice.⁹

Before examining the texts which have bearing upon this subject, a preliminary about which we must be clear is that the boundaries or standards God has set forth for us are for His glory and also our own benefit.

Without a doubt, many homosexual proponents believe that for Christians to assert the immorality of homosexual practice is to limit the rights and the potential for the pursuit of happiness among practicing gays.¹⁰ However, this is the opposite of what the Bible presents. Consider the following statements which all are found in Deuteronomy and served as a preparation for God's Old Testament covenant people, Israel, on the borders of the Promised Land:¹¹

5:16: "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

5:29-33: "Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever! [30] Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." [31] But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.' [32] You shall be careful therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the

⁹This is not to say that individuals, local congregations, organizations or bodies have not accepted or at least, in part, advocated the idea of same sex marriage and done so in the name of Christ. For examples see Lynn Vincent, "Go Forth And Sin: A Growing Mainline Movement Seeks To Affirm Homosexuality As Biblical," World (August 2, 2003: 20-21; Chuck Raasch, "Religious Split On Issue Could Have Political Fallout," The Coloradoan, (November 19, 2003): A1-2; Richard N. Ostling, "Episcopalians Consecrate The First Openly Gay Bishop," The Associated Press, The Coloradoan (November 3, 2003): A3; Rev. Mark Salkin, Roger Gregory-Allen, "Church Supports Right Of Same-Sex Marriage," Soapbox in behalf of Foothills Unitarian Church in Ft. Collins, in The Coloradoan (December 19, 2003): A8; "Canadian Anglicans Face Off," Christianity Today (Jan. 2004): 24; Chuck Colson, March 29, 2004 Breakpoint, www.pfm.org; The Circuit Rider (The United Methodist Church denominational magazine, April 1992): 4ff. Though there is some minority disagreement with my statement about what the scriptures and tradition teach, the orthodox Judeo-Christian position and the clear teachings of the Bible affirm that homosexual practice is sin and that marriage is between a man and a woman.

¹⁰Two examples that hit home are by two Ft. Collins youth. Consider Adam Forest, "Students Lead In Quest For Acceptance," Youth Views in The Coloradoan (March 2001) and Kelsey Schleusener, "Hypocrisy And Homosexuality," Spilled Ink, vol. 84, Issue 6 (Ft. Collins High School paper, Feb. 20, 2003).

¹¹Unless otherwise noted all scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

right hand or to the left. [33] You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess.”

10:13: “and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good?”

11:8: “You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess,

Each of these passages asserts the following: (1) God’s covenant people are to follow His will. (2) This kind of direction is intended to enhance, not detract from life. God’s law, in other words, is given to bring a more abundant life, not less as we see in the New Covenant (John 10:10).

Some will no doubt respond, “But, you have admitted that these admonitions are primarily for the covenant people of God, i.e. those whom He has redeemed. How can we expect non-believers to follow them when they are unable to do so fully and they are not the primary recipients?”

We can answer a number of ways. First, though it is true that God’s will is given primarily to show God’s redeemed people how to live, the standards are a reflection of God’s own nature (Lev. 19:2) and represent the moral absolutes to which God calls all people and holds them responsible (Amos 1:3-2:3), the very absolutes by which God is glorified (Lev. 22:31-33; Luke 3:7-14) and of which all fall short (Rom. 3:23).¹² In other words, this Law not only shows the unregenerate that they are lost, but also points them to the abundant life they all desire. Second, the Proverbs suggest that even by God’s common grace, when people follow His standards, there is often great benefit.¹³ Third and finally we can say that even though the non-believer is not

¹²In A Baptist Catechism (Based in large part upon the Keach’s Baptist Catechism derived from the London Baptist Confession of 1689), revised by John Piper (St. Paul, Minnesota: Desiring God Ministries), the sixth question and answer read: “May all men make use of the Scriptures? All men are not only permitted, but commanded and exhorted, to read, hear, and understand the Scriptures.” The scriptural verification includes: John 5:39; Luke 16:29; Acts 8:28-30; 17:11.

¹³Consider some examples: Proverbs 5; 10:4, 9; 11:16, 17; 12:1, et al. The assertion in this section is not that those who follow God’s standards will always be free of hardship. The assertion is that following His will makes

able in and of himself to respond to God or to keep His standards in the ultimate way that pleases God, nevertheless, God has given all mankind enough revelation of Himself to know that He is there and to have a general sense of right and wrong (Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-15). If one responds to that revelation and seeks God, then God will make sure they hear the gospel (e.g. Acts 10 and Cornelius, see also Romans 2:4; Acts 17:27). And, in hearing the gospel they can respond and be saved--empowering them to follow God's will (Romans 10:13ff; Phil. 2:12-13).

We have not only asserted that God's Law is for our benefit, but also it is for His glory. This is included for this reason. Mankind was created to resemble and to represent God, in other words, he was created in order to glorify God (Gen. 1:26-28; Psalm 8:5; Is. 43:6-7) If this is our identity and our purpose, we will never find the joy and purpose we long for until we realize that chief end (compare John 14:13 and 16:24).

Now, all of this is pertinent for the present discussion in this way. If God has said that the only way we can honor Him, find joy and true purpose in the marriage relationship, is when a man and a woman are married and that same-sex unions are always wrong and harmful, then we must conclude that it is to our best interest and the best interest of others to encourage heterosexual marriage alone. This places the following discussion in its proper context for us as Christians. Our desire to advocate traditional marriage and address homosexual practice has nothing to do with hatred or disgust for the homosexual community, it has nothing to do with trying to preserve a traditional lifestyle that fits us. In other words, it is not about squelching those who disagree with us so that we don't have to put up with diverse peoples outside our comfort zone. It has everything to do with Christ-compelled love that we have for others!

Now that we have the foundation set, we can turn to the question of what the scriptures do teach.

The Scriptures Teach That Homosexual Practice Is Always Sin

The Rev. Karen Dammann, a Washington United Methodist minister on trial for the fact that she declared herself a lesbian, in March of 2004 asserted that God had called her into the ministry and, “I just can’t believe that God makes mistakes.”¹⁴ One of the implications in this statement is that homosexual practice is not contrary to God’s will. Since most Christian traditions, at least to some degree, hold to the authority of the Bible for faith and practice, this also must imply that somehow the Bible does not condemn such a way of life. Though more and more of the Church and of society is coming to this conclusion, when we look at the evidence, we realize that nothing could be further from the truth. The first type of evidence we will examine is from direct teachings about homosexual practice.

The Direct Teachings

Our first text is perhaps one of the best known, the narrative about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 19:1-29¹⁵

This chapter tells of the divine destruction of Sodom (and also mentions Gomorrah, v. 28) in response to widespread depravity and rebellion. One of the ways that the city’s sinfulness is exemplified is by means of the male populace surrounding the house of Lot after he had received two angelic visitors (thought by the town to be only two men). The mob wanted to “know

¹⁴Melanthia Mitchell, The Associated Press, “Lesbian Pastor Defends Herself To Church Jury: God Didn’t Make Mistake,” The Coloradoan (Ft. Collins, Co., March 19, 2004): A8.

¹⁵To keep this booklet at a usable length I must summarize the teachings and not deal in depth with the counter arguments which have been set forth by homosexual proponents. However, if you are interested in a full length treatment of these texts and the counter arguments, currently there is not a better book to read than Robert A. J. Gagnon, The Bible And Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001). Though evangelicals will notice right away that Gagnon does not share the same high regard of scripture and inerrancy that we do, nevertheless, he does a good job of dealing with these texts. It is such a formidable treatment that I must agree with J. I. Packer that regardless of which side of the homosexual debate one is on, if they are interested in the biblical teaching about homosexual practice, they must deal with Gagnon’s book.

them” (v. 5). This is a biblical euphemism for having sex (cf. Gen. 4:1).¹⁶ Though some have tried to suggest that the verb, “know,” does not refer here to sexual activity and therefore this has nothing to do with homosexual practice, such is clearly wrong and a misunderstanding of the narrative.¹⁷ Later commentary on the incident by Peter refers to the “sensual conduct of the wicked” (2 Peter 2:7). Certainly, the text demands a denunciation of homosexual practice as sinful and so does the later biblical understanding of it.¹⁸

Leviticus 18:22

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” Here we find an absolute prohibition of homosexual practice. Though some have suggested that the Old Testament forbids only pederasty¹⁹ or male cult prostitution, no such limitations are placed upon this prohibition. It prohibits all homosexual practice. We also find that the only sin in the Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26) that has the word “abomination” attached to it is homosexual practice.

Leviticus 20:13

“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.” What is added in this verse is that homosexuality was punishable by death. Though this showed the important nature of the sin, nevertheless, the person guilty of the sin was able to be redeemed. In fact, of the sixteen

¹⁶See James B. De Young, “The Contributions Of The Septuagint To Biblical Sanctions Against Homosexuality,” *Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society*, 34, 2 (June 1991): 157-77.

¹⁷Gagnon, *The Bible*, 78: “To suggest that the story does not speak to the issue of homosexual behavior between consenting adults, even in an indirect way, is misleading.”

¹⁸Gagnon, *The Bible*, 79ff., contains more on later biblical commentary. For a similar narrative see Judges 19:22-25.

Gagnon (63ff.) also understands Genesis 9:20-27 as dealing, in part, with homosexual sin.

¹⁹Sodomy by an adult with young males.

offenses worthy of capital punishment in the Old Testament, the only one not redeemable was murder.²⁰ This, coupled with the fact, that homosexual practice is also denounced in the New Testament suggest strongly to us that, on the one hand, we ought to see the injunctions against the sin as still binding, but on the other hand, we are not required to take the life of one guilty of the offense. In fact, in light of the payment of a redemption price, the life would not have to be taken in the Old Testament either.

Romans 1:24-27

The text reads:

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, [25] because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. [26] For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; [27] 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.

In this text Paul addresses the downward spiral into sin among the Gentile world which demonstrates that God is just in revealing His wrath against ungodliness and unrighteousness of those suppressing the truth in their unrighteousness (1:18). The affirmation of the sinfulness of homosexual practice is straightforward.

The way that homosexual proponents have sought to justify gay practice in this text is by saying that “natural relations” refer to the way that a person has been born (homosexual or heterosexual) and “contrary to nature” suggests that the sin-in-question is not homosexuality per-se, but rather a person engaging in the practice who is not really homosexual. As such, Paul is not denouncing the person practicing homosexuality who was born to do so.

The problem with this view is twofold. First, nowhere else in the scriptures or the Judeo-Christian environment of the Old and New Testament era was there any such affirmation

²⁰Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward Old Testament Ethics (Grand Rapids, Zondervan,), 165, on Numbers 35:31.

that there might be a person rightly born to be a homosexual. Second, the meaning of “nature,” according to other writings out of the time frame and the most likely Old Testament background Paul had in mind when writing this (Genesis 1:26-27, LXX), cannot mean anything other than this:

Minimally, Paul is referring to the anatomical and procreative complementarity of male and female. Put in more crude terms, Paul in effect argues that even pagans who have no access to the book of Leviticus should know that same-sex eroticism is ‘contrary to nature’ because the primary sex organs fit male to female, not female to female or male to male.²¹

It is clear, then, that in this text Paul teaches that homosexual practice (without exception) is sinful.

1 Timothy 1:8-11

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, [9] 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, [10] the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, [11] in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Three things are pertinent in this text. First, Paul equates “men who practice homosexuality” with “the lawless and disobedient,” “the ungodly and sinners,” “the unholy and profane,” that which is “contrary to sound doctrine”. In Paul’s vice lists in which he talks about actions and/or lifestyles that are in opposition to God’s will and that will not inherit the kingdom of God (see below), his point is not to speak of those who occasionally wrestle with and give into a temptation, yet know it is wrong. He is speaking of the person who has never been saved by God and who lives in that realm where he/she is enslaved to that sin and lifestyle.

Second, we need to note that Paul asserts the Law is for such persons as these. This suggests

²¹Gagnon, The Bible, 254. See also James B. De Young, “The Meaning Of ‘Nature’ in Romans 1 And Its Implications For Biblical Proscriptions Of Homosexual Behavior,” Journal Of The Evangelical Theological Society, 31, 4 (1988): 429-441; and Thomas R. Schreiner, Romans, in Baker Exegetical Commentary On The New Testament, Moise Silva, Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), en loc.

the ongoing applicability of the Law, unless the New Testament explicitly shows that certain aspects have been fulfilled in Christ or have been annulled due to a salvation-historical shift.

Finally, we see that a denunciation of homosexuality is in keeping with the gospel with which Paul has been entrusted. This adds more emphasis to the applicability of biblical teaching on homosexual practice for today and also the need for people to understand they are sinners in need of God's grace before they will accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. This hits at the heart of the purpose of this booklet.

The Indirect Teachings

One of the things we must understand is that there are not only those teachings which directly have bearing upon the homosexual debate, there are texts that apply in an indirect way. We want briefly to look at four types.

The Biblical Teaching On Marriage And Gender Complementarity

The Bible teaches that from the beginning God made males and females equal in their value and significance before God (both being created in His image, Gn. 1:26-28; 5:1-2), yet with differing roles to fulfill toward each other. In Genesis 2:21-23 we read of God's creation of woman. God had said in v. 18 that she would be a "helper corresponding to" (ESV note) him. This phrase suggests that woman would correspond to man or be equally prominent. At the same time, she would be a helper, meaning that each would have different roles. In the following verse, 2:24, we are told that the ideal for marriage was that the man and woman would come together and become one flesh. Man was to complement woman and woman man. God has designed both the sexes such that they would come together and complete each other sexually, emotionally, and relationally.

The picture of such a complementary unit and relationship is also carried over into the New Testament where we learn that men and women still fulfill different and complementary roles in

the marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:22-25ff.) and this is for the purpose of exemplifying to the world the relationship of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32). What this all means is that the marriage relationship, as designed by God, is intended to enrich man and woman (in the ways they are designed by God), it is intended to teach us a great deal about how the Savior relates to His people, and it is to be the environment in which boys and girls are nurtured and learn their God-given roles in the world.

When this intended makeup of marriage is twisted we can expect that overall the adults in the relationship will suffer, children will suffer with their own identity, and the world will wrestle with understanding Jesus Christ and the Church. The implication, then, is strong, that we must not only help people out of the habits and addictions of homosexual desire, but we must also preserve traditional marriage.²²

Jesus' Teaching On Morality And Sexuality

It has often been said that homosexuality is not wrong since Jesus never condemned it. Let's think about this more carefully. Though Jesus was silent about homosexuality, His teaching on sexuality in general was more strict than His contemporaries (cf. Mt. 5:27-32; 19:1-10). Since His contemporaries were clearly against homosexual practice (as was the Old Testament), it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus also saw it as sin. But why didn't He address it? Given the fact that homosexual practice was not widespread (virtually unheard of in 1st c. Palestine) it is not surprising He does not address it.²³

Others point to the narrative in John 7:53-11 where the woman is caught in adultery and Jesus

²²It should also be noted that in 1 Peter 3:1-2 Peter exhorts wives to "be subject unto your own husbands, in order that even if some do not obey the word, they might be won without a word through conduct of the wives, because they observe your respectful, pure conduct." In a context in which Wayne Grudem, 1 Peter, in Leon Morris, Gen. Ed., The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 139, is demonstrating that the husband can see this kind of conduct in his wife and the beauty of it strike a chord with his heart, he writes: "The attractiveness of a wife's submissive behavior even to an unbelieving husband suggests that God has inscribed the rightness and beauty of role distinctions in marriage on the hearts of all mankind." Of course, this can also be suppressed.

²³See Gagnon, The Bible, 187ff.

saves her from being stoned with these words: “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her,” and affirm that Jesus was far more compassionate with people’s sexuality and therefore we should conclude that He would not condemn the homosexual. First, we need to be reminded that this narrative is not found in the oldest and best New Testament manuscripts, so we want to be careful relying upon it too heavily when it comes to what Jesus did or said. Second, we need to see that Jesus rescued her from being put to death (perhaps because He wanted to save and forgive her and perhaps because He was aware of the hypocritical nature of her accusers). However, He told her to go and sin no more. As such, He viewed her actions as sin. So, Jesus was not unwilling to call sin “sin”. There is nothing here to suggest that He would not condemn homosexuality or other sexual sins.

Denunciations of Sexual Lewdness, the Unconverted, And the Kingdom Of God

Another type of indirect teaching found in the Bible has to do with those passages in which sins are listed (vice lists) and the practitioners (those who are enslaved to the vices and who have never been changed by Christ) are said to be outside the kingdom of God. More specifically, they will not inherit the kingdom. Or at least it is shown that such are not in keeping with the Christian life. I will merely list the passages for our consideration. Keep in mind that the main point is not that there is no hope for one who is enslaved to homosexual (or heterosexual for that matter) addiction. Rather, it is that those who continue in such a state without coming to Christ for forgiveness and transformation will not be part of the kingdom. Nothing could be clearer about how God views homosexual practice.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

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, [10] nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

*Galatians 5:19-21*²⁴

Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:5

For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Biblical Bearing Upon The Sense That Homosexual Desires Can Be Present From The Beginning

The final type of indirect teaching we find in the Bible is important, not for showing that homosexual practice is wrong, but rather for demonstrating that the Bible does give a full body of teaching that explains why the temptations or desires feel as if they are inborn. In both Psalm 51:5 and Romans 5:12-19 we learn that each person is born in sin, that is with a sin nature. From the time of Adam's sin onward, this has been the case. Because of this bent to rebel against God and do our own thing, it seems most likely that many people could be born with desires or tendencies toward certain kinds of vices. The way it works itself out with one person might be with alcoholism, with another anger, with another sexual addiction in the heterosexual sphere, or with another-- homosexual desires. This does not mean that the person has been designed toward this end. It is just the opposite. It is a sinful flaw from the beginning that drives them away from truth and true joy and purpose.

Though this is the case, we must not conclude that we are hopelessly enslaved to such desires--with no possibility of being transformed or saying "No" to the desires. C. S. Lewis

²⁴In these last two passages even though homosexual practice is not mentioned, we ought to understand that in the biblical context sexual immorality would certainly encompass this. Anyone enslaved to sexuality outside the marriage bonds of one woman and one man--who has never been forgiven and transformed-- are lost and this is known by demonstration of their fruits, their lifestyle.

very astutely comments about such desires:

Our warped natures, the devils who tempt us, and all the contemporary propaganda for lust, combine to make us feel that the desires we are resisting are so 'natural', so 'healthy', and so reasonable, that it is almost perverse and abnormal to resist them. Poster after poster, film after film, novel after novel, associate the idea of sexual indulgence with the ideas of health, normality, youth, frankness, and good humour. Now this association is a lie. Like all powerful lies, it is based on a truth--the truth...that sex in itself (apart from the excesses and obsessions that have grown round it) is 'normal' and 'healthy', and all the rest of it. The lie consists in the suggestion that any sexual act to which you are tempted at the moment is also healthy and normal. Now this, on any conceivable view, and quite apart from Christianity, must be nonsense. Surrender to all our desires obviously leads to impotence, disease, jealousies, lies, concealment, and everything that is the reverse of health, good humour, and frankness. For any happiness, even in this world, quite a lot of restraint is going to be necessary; so the claim made by every desire, when it is strong, to be healthy and reasonable, counts for nothing. Every sane and civilized man must have some set of principles by which he chooses to reject some of his desires and to permit others.²⁵

We need to see that the Bible sufficiently explains why our habits or addictions feel as if they are part of us and cannot be helped. In large part because, left to ourselves, they cannot be. Yet, it also teaches that God's grace is available, therefore we are responsible because by God's mercy we can change, we can be what He originally intended for us. The person who struggles with homosexual desires can say, "No" and can lead a life that is in keeping with God's will and the abundance He has for him.

Conclusion

Robert A. J. Gagnon has affirmed, "There can be no healthy transformation so long as homosexuals live in a world of unreality, including the unreality of false notions about Scripture's view of homosexuality."²⁶ This is why we have taken the time to set forth briefly what the Bible teaches. My hope and prayer is that it will give the foundation for the present

²⁵Walter Hooper, ed, The Business of Heaven, in The Inspirational Writings Of C.S. Lewis (New York: Inspirational Press, 1994, repr.), 345.

²⁶Gagnon, The Bible, 32.

and future generations of the Church to remain strong in an ever-increasing environment that pulls people toward promiscuous and deadly living. I also pray that it will give us the resolve to work however hard we have to, by God's grace, to reach those who have already been "body-slammed to the mat" by the gay lifestyle.

As Christians we know that the biblical teaching is important, yet, we also know that it will be important in the public square to make the case against homosexual practice and for traditional marriage with evidence outside the scriptures. This is why we now want to turn our attention for the rest of this booklet in that direction.

The Extra-biblical Defense For Heterosexual Marriage

We need to be reminded that even though the scriptures are the only ultimate authoritative source of knowledge by which all other knowledge is to be judged,²⁷ this does not mean that they are the only source of knowledge. The Bible itself teaches us that we can learn a great deal about life, God, right and wrong, from extra-biblical sources or General Revelation.²⁸ Since this body of truth also is from God, we can conclude that what we learn from scientific and historical inquiry, for example, if it is accurate, should not contradict the scriptures. So, we should not be surprised to find that the teachings about heterosexual marriage, as well as the harmfulness of homosexual practice, can be confirmed outside the sacred text.

Homosexual Practice Is Not Natural, Normal, or Inborn, Thus It Is Not A Civil Rights Issue

Where we need to begin in our consideration of this extra-biblical knowledge is by responding to a foundational affirmation by many homosexual proponents. Many claim that persons who have homosexual desires and/or who act upon those desires are born as homosexuals and

²⁷Cf. Matthew 15:1-9; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:16-17; Acts 17:11ff.

²⁸Psalms 19:1ff; Romans 1:19-20; Isaiah 28:23-29.

therefore, for them, the desires and practice are natural, amoral, just the way it is, and they cannot change. In other words, to be a homosexual is as much a part of the person as being heterosexual or as the person's race. Additionally those same-sex advocates who are at least minimally interested in the faith element, will argue that based upon this reality, God makes people homosexual and He approves of the practice.

If it is the case that people are born as homosexuals such that this is the way they are and they cannot change, then it stands to reason that it is heartless, cruel, bigoted, in fact a civil-rights issue, to oppose same-sex practice or to say that such is somehow morally wrong.²⁹ We must understand, then that this tenant is crucial to the debate. Let's examine the evidence.

Scientific Arguments

It has become common to refer to the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexuality from the list of abnormalities and their general advocacy of homosexual rights and repudiation of opposition of same-sex practice as proof that the scientific community has found homosexuality to be normal.³⁰ Therefore, following the experts, the rest of society should accept homosexual practice. The problem with this conclusion is twofold. First, most of the research done prior to the APA's 1973 removal of homosexuality from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual had supported the conclusion that homosexuality was an orientation and practice that should and could be changed. The current reader needs to understand that since their moratorium on gay-critiquing, little research on the problems linked to homosexual

²⁹An example would be Karen Vagley of the Lutheran Office Of Governmental Affairs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America who said in response to the possibility of a federal marriage amendment, "We see this as a civil-rights matter. Our social statements are clear: We do not discriminate." Taken from an Associated Press article by Jim Abrams, "Religious Groups Oppose Gay Marriage Amendment". A lesser outcome is also that homosexual proponents also see opponents of homosexual practice as uninformed and their beliefs as out-of-date with modern scientific knowledge. See Patricia Bedinger, Ken Kassenbrock, "Fight Bid To Limit The Rights Of Minority," *Soapbox, The Coloradoan* (Ft. Collins, Co., July 17, 2004): A8; Jennifer Geraci, "No Compassion In Discrimination Against Gays," *Soapbox, The Coloradoan* (Ft. Collins, Co., December 2, 2003): A4.

³⁰For example, see Jennifer Geraci, "No Compassion In Discrimination Against Gays," *Soapbox, The Coloradoan* (Ft. Collins, Co., December 2, 2003): A4. Cal Thomas, "Pro-choice On Change?" *World* (Sept.13, '97): 17: Psychologists have taken the approach it is not a choice.

practice, as well as evidence for the change possibility of homosexual practice, have been published in professional journals.³¹ Bottom-line, there is little evidence that the APA made their decision or has preserved their stance based upon scientific evidence.

This leads to the second problem with referring to the APA's official position on same-sex practice and that is the political nature of the decision. In the view of Jeffrey Satinover (Homosexuality And The Politics Of Truth [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 32-36), sordid politics were behind the resolution.³² In other words, the push for the change came far more from personal worldview and desire than it did from well-researched and carefully argued evidence. And in no way did it express the views of a large majority of psychiatrists. According to Joseph Nicolosi the poll conducted among APA members that led to the removal of homosexual desires and practice from the DSM resulted in 5,834 for the removal and 3,810 against.³³

The point is not that the calling into question of the APA's conclusion "seals the deal" in favor of the traditional view toward homosexual practice. The point is that a person should think very carefully about advocating the normal or amoral nature of this lifestyle simply because supposed experts have come to that conclusion. The fact of the matter is this, those "experts" did not arrive at that decision in a non-biased scientific manner.

Yet, there is more that can be said regarding the supposed scientific evidence for homosexual practice. Not only should we question the APA's decision, there is also ample reason for

³¹Gagnon, The Bible, 421-22.

³²Cited in Gagnon, The Bible, 422. The usually restrained Gagnon, who is not prone to vitriolic words, uses the phrase "militant gay-rights activism". James Dobson, Bringing Up Boys (Wheaton: Tyndale, 2001), 115, adds: "[The decision] was made not on the basis of science but was strongly influenced by a poll of APA members, which was initiated and financed by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force." Dobson (117) continues while citing Malcolm Ritter, "Some Gays Can Go Straight, Study Suggests," Associated Press, 9 May 2001: "Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, a psychiatric professor at Columbia University, created a firestorm in May 2001, when he released the results of his research at a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. Spitzer, who had spearheaded the APA's decision in 1973...says his findings 'show some people can change from gay to straight, and we ought to acknowledge that.'"

³³Preventing Homosexuality: A Parent's Guide, cited in James Dobson, Bringing Up Boys (Wheaton: Tyndale, 2001), 115.

questioning much of the alleged homosexual scientific support that has emerged in the past two decades. The following is a brief overview:³⁴

- When carefully considered, there has been no evidence that there is a distinct homosexual brain or distinct homosexual genes. For example, in 1991 Simon LeVay (at that time with the Salk Institute and afterward founder of the Institute Of Gay and Lesbian Education) studied an area of the hypothalamus known as INAH3⁸⁶. He concluded that it was two times larger in the heterosexual male (.12) than in females (.056) and homosexual males (.051). Two problems can readily be identified with this study:
 - ⇒ There are six deficiencies with the study: (1) It was a single author study. (2) His sample size was so small that it could not be reasonably concluded that there was a representative sample of the population. (3) He may have misjudged the sexual orientation of some of the individuals. (4) The study did not confirm that all homosexuals had a smaller INAH3⁸⁶. (5) A more careful study by William Byne did not find a difference between homosexual and heterosexual male INAH3⁸⁶. (6) Finally, there is no proof that INAH3⁸⁶ has any bearing on sexual orientation.³⁵
 - ⇒ There is no proof that the size difference would be attributable to prenatal brain development.³⁶

- When carefully considered, identical twin studies have not supported a genetic element or influence behind homosexual practice. “Because identical twins are a perfect genetic match, a genetic basis for homosexuality would have to show up in higher ‘concordance rates’ for identical twins in which at least one twin is homosexual. If homosexuality were determined completely by the genes, we would expect the concordance rate in such cases to be 100%...much as eye color and sex in identical twins match 100% of the time.”³⁷ Such studies have concluded that genetic contribution would be less than 10%. In other words, research has not been able to confirm that a genetic element would have any more than a 10% influence and it most likely is less than this--virtually to the point of no

³⁴The following nine points and the accompanying material (unless otherwise noted) are taken from Gagnon, The Bible, 394-429.

³⁵Anne Fausto Sterling (a biologist at Brown University) said of LeVay’s conclusions: “My freshmen biology students know enough to sink this study.” Quoted in Joe Dallas, “Born Gay?” Christianity Today, 36, 7 (June 22, 1992): 22.

³⁶Regarding other alleged scientific evidence for a homosexual brain or gene, the 1993 finding of Dean Hamer which was called the “gay gene” could be cited. “Almost immediately the alleged finding was greeted with considerable criticism from the scientific community.... Hamer was criticized for failing to check his results against a heterosexual control group and inflating the statistical significance of his findings. One of his young researchers accused him of neglecting to report findings that would have undermined the significance of his results.” (Gagnon, The Bible, 399-400).

³⁷“Concordance rate” would refer to the rate at which the twins match each other or at which both were gay.

influence at all. This is hardly confirmation of a “gay gene”.³⁸ Elsewhere it has been affirmed: “Since identical twins share the same chromosomal pattern, or DNA, the genetic contributions are exactly the same within the pairs. Therefore, if one twin is ‘born’ homosexual, then the other should inevitably have that characteristic too. That is not the case... The probability is only 50 percent that the other will have the same condition.”³⁹

- In response to those who have suggested that excessive or inadequate levels of testosterone or estrogen during birth can bring about either bisexual or homosexual desires and practices later on, we must answer: “To say that homosexual behavior is caused by abnormal hormone levels during pregnancy is to go beyond the current data, though some indirect influence may be possible.”⁴⁰ We could also go on to say that even if a link was found between hormonal levels and homosexual desires, this is not the same as genetic influence, nor would it necessarily determine that a person is just that way and would have to give in to the urges. The fact that through nature or nurture some people struggle with alcohol, anger, impatience, or even heterosexual lust, does not lead people to conclude, “Well, that is just the way that person is, it is an amoral issue, and they can’t or should not do anything to change!”
- Though there is not consensus on all the causes behind early childhood nonconformity with one’s same-sex peers, studies have shown that in a large majority of cases, those who identify themselves as homosexual admit that they had a sense of not fitting in with their same-sex peers while growing up. In other words, females did not feel as feminine and males did not believe they measured up in the area of masculinity. This leads one to see a “nurture” influence as more likely than a “nature” influence.⁴¹
- Other evidence against viewing homosexual desires and practice as inborn, genetic, just the way a person is, comes from the contribution of cross-cultural studies for understanding environmental influence on homosexual behavior. It is clear that the

³⁸See Gagnon, The Bible, 403-406 for the complete discussion.

³⁹Dobson, Bringing Up, 116. The classic study regarding twins and homosexuality came from Richard Pillard (Boston School of Medicine) and Michael Bailey (Northwestern). Stanton L. Jones, Mark A. Yarhouse, “The Incredibly Shrinking Gay Gene,” Christianity Today, 43, 11 (October 4, 1999): 53, write about this research: “Other research had failed to produce estimates of genetic influence as strong as those of Bailey and Pillard. Now, Bailey himself (to his credit) has provided the crucial refutation of his earlier estimates. To avoid possible sample bias, Bailey sent a questionnaire on sexual preferences and experiences to the entire Australian Twin Registry, an exhaustive listing of all twins born in its population.

“The influence of genetics on development of homosexual orientation would, on the basis of this superior research, appear to be half or less of the estimates of the earlier research.”

They add: “It appears that the earlier, biased research actually found about one-third of the identical twin pairs to be concordant for homosexuality.”

⁴⁰Gagnon, The Bible, 408.

⁴¹This is also discussed in Joseph Nicolosi, Preventing Homosexuality, ch. 2, cited in Dobson, Bringing Up, 119.

numbers of persons who practice this behavior vary from culture to culture. If the desires and practice were inborn or genetic, it would seem that there would be similar percentages across the board from culture to culture. However, this is not the case. A culture that teaches homosexual behavior is a deviant and harmful condition will have far less cases than a culture that advocates and accepts the practice.

- Similar to the last point, studies have shown that urban life and education increase the numbers of persons with same-sex desires and practices. This also points to the influence of one's worldview, environment, and training as central to why one leans in this direction or not.
- There is strong evidence for the fact that homosexuals can change. Though they may not be totally free from the homosexual desires (although some might be), nevertheless, they can live content, fulfilling heterosexual lives. Again, this argues strongly against homosexuality being inborn or genetic.⁴²

In addition to the evidence that we have offered against the idea that homosexuality is inborn or genetic (just the way it is), we also must realize that there is significant biological evidence for the reality that men and women were created to differ and to complement each other and, therefore, we should keep intact this order. Consider the following points:⁴³

- Ethologists⁴⁴ “point out that among most higher social mammals studied, males are more aggressive than females and take dominant leadership roles in social groups.” Additionally, “males tend to build hierarchical social order. They are more reactive and less cautious. They are involved in breaking up squabbles with lesser ranking males, females, and juveniles. Females are more involved in parenting as a result of the close dependence of infants on maternal milk supply.... [Females] tend to socialize more horizontally and equally with other females.... They tend in their broader social contacts to be less confrontive and combative and more interested in building and maintaining

⁴²See Gagnon, The Bible, 418-429 for the specific statistics and studies.

⁴³The following points are taken from Gregg Johnson, “The Biological Basis For Gender-Specific Behavior,” in John Piper, Wayne Grudem, ed’s., Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991): 280-293. Johnson (281) is quick to say about these points: “We are speaking of averages and patterns that cannot be completely universalized. It is always possible to discover individual uniqueness and variations that deviate markedly from the norm. There are certainly females who are more aggressive than the average male or males who are more nurturant than the average female. The data simply reflect trends and average differences seen between the sexes taken as groups.”

⁴⁴“Ethologists are students of animal and human behavior who draw generalizations regarding social behavior across animal and human groups.” Johnson, “The Biological,” 282.

social bonds.”⁴⁵

- “Anthropologists find...universal sex-specific behaviors among human cultures. Of two hundred fifty cultures studied, males dominate in almost all. Males are almost always the rule makers, hunters, builders, fashioners of weapons, workers in metal, wood, or stone. Women are primary care givers and most involved in child rearing. Their activities center on maintenance and care of home and family.”⁴⁶
- Many basic non-nervous system physiological differences are discovered in the biological profile of males and females--all of which seem to be influenced by testosterone and estrogen levels. Consider some examples:
 - ⇒ The basal metabolic rate is 6% higher in adolescent boys than girls. After puberty it is 10% higher.
 - ⇒ Regarding metabolism, girls convert more energy into stored fat and boys convert more into muscle and expendable circulating reserves. At age eighteen, on average, girls have twice as much body fat and boys, on average, have 50% more muscle.
 - ⇒ Males have, on average, denser bones, tendons, and ligaments. They also have more sweat glands. Men have larger windpipes and branching bronchi with, on average, about 30% more lung capacity.
 - ⇒ Males have fewer sensory nerve endings and higher peripheral pain tolerance which may encourage greater risk taking.
 - ⇒ Women, on average, have more stored and circulating white blood cells.
 - ⇒ The male digestive system functions at a higher pace.⁴⁷
- We find differences between males and females, typically, in the peripheral nervous system. For example, women have a more acute sense of touch, along with more acute senses of hearing, smell, and taste. Women also have a finer discrimination of color,

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid. Johnson adds: “The data point to biological predeterminants of gender-related behavior. Indeed, as we survey the biology of mammals and humans in particular, we find sex-related differences in all of the organ systems, including the brain and nervous system.”

⁴⁷Johnson, “The Biological,” 284, concludes after talking about these differences: “Sex differences present in all the organ systems across various mammalian species go far beyond the superficial anatomical characteristics necessary for reproduction. These differences are direct responses to the levels of circulating hormones, which differ significantly between the sexes. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these physiological differences predispose males and females to certain behavioral and aptitude leanings. The debate heats up considerably when we suggest that there are fundamental differences in the structure and function of the brain and nervous system that predispose the sexes to certain behaviors and capacities.”

can tolerate brighter lights, and can see better in dim light. Men can read finer print and have better night vision. Women, on average, are more perceptive when it comes to reading body language.

- There are also, on average, differences between males and females in the limbic system.⁴⁸ This system that regulates drives (hunger, thirst, sex, fighting and fleeing), as well as many involuntary responses (digestion, respiration, circulation). The differences we see here may explain male tendencies, on average, to be more reactive and quicker to act and to make decisions. It may also explain feminine patience and tolerance of more stimuli without reaction (more patience typically with children).
- There is significant evidence that points to differences in cerebral organization. Men's brains, for example, tend to be more lateralized with a lesser communication between the two halves. This may very well be why women are more in-tune with not only the content of a conversation, but also body language. It also may explain why they can typically multi-task with greater success.
- There seem to be male/female differences at birth. "Female infants...orient and fix their focus more often on faces, are comforted by voices and touch, and vocalize more than boys." "Female infants, on the average, learn to talk sooner and, when learning to draw, tend to draw people subjects." "Male infants orient more to objects, lights, and toys, and are comforted more by patterned mobiles and ticking clocks. They develop speech later, draw objects more than faces, and learn three-dimensional drawing faster."⁴⁹

What conclusions should we draw from these typical biological differences? First, we must be careful not to suggest that there would never be exceptions to the rule or that such typical differences would automatically define clear-cut role distinctions between the sexes or would automatically decide certain kinds of behavior in such a way as to negate responsibility (e.g. men can't help being insensitive because....). Yet, the amount of differences we see does suggest that males and females are contrasted with each other in more than mere anatomy. Also, the differences are more than likely natural and not from the difference in nurture. This contradicts the unisex idea of humans that suggests males and females are the same with the exception of

⁴⁸,"The limbic system includes the hypothalamus and amygdala and several other nuclei of the midbrain and lower forebrain." Johnson, "The Biological," 285.

⁴⁹We need also to affirm that there seem to be differences between males and females based upon studies performed by psychologists. If you are interested in specifics, refer to George Alan Rekers, "Psychological Foundations For Rearing Masculine Boys and Feminine Girls," in John Piper, Wayne Grudem, eds., Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood (Wheaton, Crossway,): 294-311.

our anatomy. On average, there are significant differences which suggest that men and women (though sharing much because we share humanity and are both made in God's image) are created differently to the core of their being. This argues strongly against any sense of natural, amoral, that-is-just-the-way-it-is, view of homosexuality. Homosexual practice is a deviation from the way that men and women are designed to function.

Additionally, we see that what it means to be a male and what it means to be a female are very different. Most-likely, then, based upon biblical and historical foundations, males and females are intended to complement each other. This distinction and complementarity will be necessary not only for a marriage to function well and for the spouses to find their greatest joy and satisfaction (corresponding to how they are "wired"), it will also be necessary for raising healthy and well-adjusted sons and daughters who learn what it means to be a male/husband and female/wife respectively. When this order is twisted (e.g. two moms or two dads), we can reasonably conclude that a great deal of gender and marital confusion will be experienced by such children. As we will see below, such confusion will not only lead to pain for those children as they mature, but also will lead to greater societal chaos.

Having said all this, should we conclude that a person could not have any inborn predisposition or bent whatsoever toward gay desires and lifestyle? The answer is, "No". We are merely demonstrating that the predisposition would not be something that cannot be helped or changed, something that is on the same level as one's race. Consider the insightful comments of Joe Dallas (at the time president of Exodus, International., a network of ex-gay ministries):

We can easily allow that there are, in some cases, physical imperfections that predispose people toward certain behaviors. That is not to say anyone is [predetermined] to [have to] engage in these behaviors; rather, some inborn tendencies could make it easier for a person to fall into them.

Even if it can be proven that genetic or biological influences predispose people toward homosexuality, that will never prove homosexuality is in and of itself normal. It will only prove what we already know--that genetic variances can and do affect future behavior, sometimes in undesirable ways. If some people have a genetic predisposition toward alcoholism, as the City of Hope research suggests, should we conclude the disease is a 'normal' condition and refuse to treat it? Should the biblical prohibitions against drunkenness be nullified?

*The principle is the same regarding homosexuality. Let research conclude what it may about the [influences]; genetic origins do not justify sinful behavior.*⁵⁰

The Civil Rights Question

It has become common in our society to view the acceptance of homosexuality and/or their legal ability to marry as a civil-right. Barbara Catbagan writes: “In 1967, not that far back in our history, the Supreme Court struck down all interracial marriage bans. Like gays, interracial couples fought hard battles, and married in states where it was not forbidden.”⁵¹ The implication is that the present fight in behalf of same-sex marriage is a civil-rights issue. After all, if people are born as homosexuals, then to say it is wrong or to say that they ought not be married does become equal to refusing rights to someone based merely upon their race. Yet, is this accurate?

The scientific evidence we have set forth should call into question the static view of homosexual practice that suggests this is just the way people are and which also suggests that for us to say the gay lifestyle is immoral, to suggest that it is destructive for society-at-large, or to deny same-sex couples the legal status of marriage is somehow a denial of their civil-rights.

The fact that it is a moral issue, one that deals with a deviant behavior that can and ought to be changed, was the reason that Alveda Celeste King (niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) before the California assembly in 1997 affirmed that her uncle would not have approved of laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual preference.⁵² Charles Colson adds:

⁵⁰Joe Dallas, “Born Gay?” Christianity Today, 36, 7 (June 22, 1992): 23. Actually, the Christian has a strong basis for explaining why many people wrestling with homosexual desires feel as if they are inborn and feel as if they have always been with them. Additionally, if there was ever a genetic or biological component discovered that suggested correspondence to those struggling with this temptation, it would arise from “original sin,” in other words, that is, the guilt and tendency to sin with which we are born” that comes from Adam. Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, repr.), 495. Such a sinful bent works its way out different ways in different people (e.g. alcoholism, drug addiction, anger, impatience, stronger heterosexual desires and struggles, et al). However, the bent clearly does not excuse us from our responsibility, nor does it excuse our behavior. By God’s grace we can be transformed such that we no longer have to be enslaved by sin.

⁵¹Barbara Catbagan, “I Now Pronounce You...Equally Protected,” The Coloradoan (Ft. Collins, Co.): B8.

⁵²World, 12, 16 (September 6, 1997): 10.

[Dr. Martin Luther] King repeatedly invoked the moral teaching that the Creator endowed all people with dignity and promised them life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness. King's preaching echoed the familiar truths of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution (to which he frequently referred). Yet he reached further, drawing deeply from the moral tradition that informed not only these documents but also shaped the moral values of many Americans at the time.

Drawing from this reservoir, King's appeal took on great clarity and power. He recalled and strengthened the shared notions of justice, fairness, opportunity, virtue, and other qualities found in American culture. White America, although not perfectly and not without conflict, embraced his message and segregation was eventually repealed.

When homosexual activists argue that restricting marriage to one man and one woman violates their civil rights, they invoke the memory of the civil rights movement and position themselves as disenfranchised Americans. The problem is that the moral tradition that informed the civil rights movement prohibits same-sex marriages. The association between the two movements is illegitimate.

So far, what we have seen, then, is not only that the Bible unequivocally calls homosexual practice a sin and defines marriage in heterosexual terms, but we also find that the scientific evidence supports these tenets. What this means is that we should not equate the gay battle for marriage as equivalent with the civil-rights issue. This should free us up to turn our attention to looking at the reasons why our society must preserve a traditional heterosexual definition of marriage.

Marriage Has Historically Been Tied To Child-bearing and Raising And Foundational To Family

This is one of the first and most foundational reasons we should preserve the traditional definition of marriage. The fact that there is a long standing history of such an approach which “mirrors the accumulated wisdom of millennia and the teaching of every major religion”⁵³ should cause us to pause before changing it. The reality that marriage has historically been defined as a covenantal relationship between a man and a woman that is tied to the raising of

⁵³William J. Bennett, “Gay Marriage: Not A Very Good Idea,” The Washington Post (May 21, 1996).

children (we can say that, in kind, it is for procreation) and is to result in spousal unity within a complementary relationship is recognized from a broad spectrum of thinkers. Consider the following examples.

Robert George, McCormick professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, has affirmed:

There is a reason that marriage has traditionally been understood as between a man and a woman. The reason is that historically marriage has been understood as having, at its very foundation, a biological union made possible by the complementarity of the spouses. That complementarity is fundamentally connected to the way human beings bring human beings into existence (not as objects of laboratory science) as the welcome fruit of marital union.

[Interviewer Jim Tonkovich: In other words, whereas we can eat and drink and do other biological activities as individuals, this is a situation in which we are incomplete?]

Yes, that is right. With respect to reproduction, there must be a mated pair. There is a biological unit. This biological unit/union forms the basis for a more comprehensive sharing at every level--emotional, rational, dispositional, spiritual. Marriage is more than biological, but at its foundation is biological unity. According to both Church and State this has been the case.

...in our law it is very interesting, infertility has never been considered an impediment to marriage. It's unfortunate when men and women cannot conceive children in their marriages. It is unfortunate, but the law has never considered it to be an impediment. By contrast, the incapacity to consummate a marriage by an act that is reproductive in type...is an impediment to marriage. The failure to consummate makes marriage annulable according to our law. It always has. And none of this was worked out over the issue of homosexuality...but long before homosexuality or same-sex marriage even became an issue. What we can see, if we reflect on the law's treatment of infertility and incapacity to consummate...is that the law has a particular understanding of marriage. It is not a matter of two people sharing a bed. It is a matter of two people effectuating a bodily union with a biological foundation or matrix for the more comprehensive sharing of life that marriage is.

[Interviewer Jim Tonkovich: "In other words, what you are saying is that for an infertile couple, their union is reproductive in nature because that is how it was designed.]

Yes, the act is reproductive in nature even if there is a non-behavioral impediment to reproduction. The couple still unites as one flesh biologically, even if there is an impediment.... One effectuates marriage by performing the behavioral condition of reproduction within the free choice of a man and woman. What is outside their control is whether or not that act will be fruitful on any given occasion. There are also non-behavior conditions beyond their control.

All other types of sex acts cannot effect a biological unity of a man and a woman." Acts of sodomy (even between husband and wife) have never been seen in the law as sufficient for consummation of marriage. The biological union that is procreative in type is the basis for consummation. All those vices that have been outside this boundary (sodomy, bestiality, group sex) have always legally been considered outside the bounds of marriage

*for these reasons.*⁵⁴

Susan M. Shell, professor of political science at Boston College, has a similar perspective when she writes:

*Such thinkers [i.e. Locke and liberal thinkers] have generally viewed marriage as a contractual arrangement between two individuals for the sake of mutual advantage and the generation and rearing of children to the point where they can be self-reliant (in Locke's thinking) and/or capable of exercising their individual rights in a responsible civic manner (according to Kant)... Most human societies have honored the notion that special responsibility for children lies with the biological parents. This has also been the view of almost all influential thinkers on the subject--including 'liberal' ones. No known society treats the question of who may properly call a child his or her own as simply 'up for grabs' or as a matter to be decided entirely politically as one might distribute land or wealth.*⁵⁵

John Witte, Jr., the Jonas Robitscher Professor of Law and Ethics at Emory University, agrees when he speaks of the history of the American view of marriage (presented as a sample of the American view throughout its history until recent times):

*With ample variations across state jurisdictions, a typical state statute in the nineteenth century defined marriage as a permanent monogamous union between a fit man and a fit woman of the age of consent, designed for mutual love and support and for mutual procreation and protection.... The common law discourages--and in some states, annulled--marriage where one party was impotent, sterile, or had a contagious disease that precluded procreation or gravely endangered the health of the other spouse.*⁵⁶

Finally, William J. Bennet, co-director of *Empower America* and former Secretary of Education under President Ronald Reagan, has this to add:

Marriage is not an arbitrary construct; it is an 'honorable estate' based on the different, complementary nature of men and women--and how they refine, support, encourage and complete one another. To insist that we maintain this traditional understanding of marriage is not an attempt to put others down. It is simply an acknowledgment and

⁵⁴“An Interview With Dr. Robert George,” Breakpoint CD. Breakpoint ministries, November 2003.

⁵⁵Susan M. Shell, “The Liberal Case Against Gay Marriage,” *The Public Interest*, 156 (National Affairs, Inc., Summer 2004). www.thepublicinterest.com/current/article1.html.

⁵⁶John Witte, Jr. “The Meanings Of Marriage,” *First Things*, 126 (October 2002): 30-41.

*celebration of our most precious and important social act. Nor is this view arbitrary or idiosyncratic. It mirrors the accumulated wisdom of millennia and the teaching of every major religion. Among worldwide cultures, where there are so few common threads, it is not a coincidence that marriage is almost universally recognized as an act meant to unite a man and a woman.*⁵⁷

The assertion, then, is that in kind and by definition marriage consists of a man and woman in a contractual relationship that supports, unifies, and completes one another and has also as its purpose the raising of children. The inability to conceive does not negate this because, in kind, even an infertile couple (whether they adopt or not) still fits into this definition. To redefine marriage as something altogether different (any two people or even any group of people) is to come up with something that, by definition and kind, is not marriage.

Susan M. Shell offers an analogy that can help us understand. She suggests that redefining marriage as something other than a contractual relationship between a man and a woman that, in kind, is procreative, is like a society deciding to redefine a funeral as a celebration of the life of one who is still living rather than the remembrance and celebration of one who has died. By its very nature and definition a funeral (or call it what you will in any society--it is the post-mortem remembrance of the deceased) is a shared experience of virtually all people in all cultures whereby people grieve and recognize the dead. There is no reason why a person cannot organize a party to honor himself (or why his friends cannot bring together others to recognize him), but this is not, by definition and nature, a funeral.⁵⁸

Shell's analogy is also helpful because it introduces a key rationale why marriage should not be redefined. Virtually all cultures have expressed the inborn need to grieve by recognizing their loved ones in some rite after they die. This need arising within the shared human experience

⁵⁷Bennett, "Gay Marriage". To these examples we could also add Bill Frist who has said: "What is family? Our founders assumed the answer was obvious. They didn't write into the Constitution the definition of family, because it wasn't even an open question. But the activist judges in Massachusetts are intent on destroying the traditional definition of family. Marriage should not be redefined by activist judges." In Tony Carnes, "Q + A," *Christianity Today*, 48, 4 (April 2004): 25.

⁵⁸Susan M. Shell, "The Liberal Case."

creates boundaries when it comes to how far we can go in defining a “funeral”. We might have vastly different kinds of post-mortem rites, but they all have in common the recognition of the dead. This meets a particular need(s).

The same is true of marriage. Based upon the shared experience of humans being wired as males and females (see our discussions above) and the resulting need to be in relationship with one of the opposite sex and also based upon this being the only way children can be brought into the world and the environment in which male and female children learn how to function according to their own male and female bents, marriage, in kind, has historically been a man and a woman coming together in the context of family and child-bearing. Does this mean that men and woman have not historically come together for sex outside of marriage or that same-sex couples have not historically come together sexually? Of course not. Such has been happening throughout time. However, almost universally, these have been viewed as something other than the norm and they have never been defined as marriage.⁵⁹ Why? Because just as a retirement party lacks the key elements of a funeral, so a one-night stand or a same-sex union lacks the key and necessary elements of what a marriage is.

Yet, some will counter: “Why should we stick with the historical view of marriage? Isn’t it outmoded?⁶⁰ Shouldn’t we recognize that we now have same-sex couples who are living together and who are even raising children?⁶¹ Therefore, shouldn’t we give them the legal right to marry?”

To these questions we can give three lines of response. First, the fact that marriage has a long tradition of being defined as it is, does not make it outmoded. “To the contrary, the antiquity and durability of a given prohibition against immoral conduct often indicates its workability,

⁵⁹Cf. Gagnon, The Bible,

⁶⁰Witte, Jr., “The Meanings:” 30.

⁶¹Catbagan, “I Now Pronounce”: B8: “Whether or not Musgrave likes it, there are families in America that have two dads or two moms. There are more than 1 million children being raised in these families.”

effectiveness, and elasticity as a cultural model rather than its contemporary irrelevance.”⁶²

Secondly, we have already demonstrated the scientific plausibility that men and women are typically designed differently and enhanced by relationship with one of the opposite sex. And, on the same line-of-reasoning, children would be best served by growing up in this kind of environment.⁶³ Since this is the case, we ought to readily see that there is nothing outmoded about the traditional definition of marriage, nor is there anything that behooves us, based upon the presence of same-sex couples in union already or same-sex couples raising children now, to redefine marriage.

Thirdly (and most profoundly), we need to understand that there are strong reasons for preserving the traditional view of marriage that have to do with the well-being of individual adults, individual children, and society as a whole. These reasons were not only behind God’s design of marriage (see our biblical discussion above), but also they have stood behind the conclusion of some of our best legal and ethical thinkers throughout history as to why marriage should be defined as it has been.

- Since males and females differ and since they are typically enhanced by relationship with one of the opposite sex, traditional marriage will serve spousal unity and well-being and will fit with how men and women are designed much more effectively and accurately. Because we have already covered this extensively, we need not elaborate upon it.⁶⁴

⁶²Gagnon, The Bible, 29.

⁶³This point is not ignoring the reality that there are children growing up in single parent homes in large numbers (without the benefit of two complementary parents) and certainly the point is not that there is no hope for children in such situations. Most likely Timothy was a prime example in the Bible of one raised well by only a mother and grandmother (cf. 2 Timothy 1:5) and certainly Jonathan in the Old Testament is an example of a child who successfully overcame the very imperfect situation of a terrible example of a father. The point is that the biblical evidence, as well as the current evidence from research, is that children are, on average, most effectively raised by a mother and father. See Jennifer Roback Morse, “Parents Or Prisons,” Policy Review, 120 (August 2003); the annual Rutgers study, this year by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, David Popenoe, “The Marrying Kind: Which Men Marry And Why,” The State Of Our Unions: The Social Health Of Marriage In America (2004). www.marriage.rutgers.edu/Publications/SOOU/TEXTSOOU2004.htm; and finally Linda J. Waite, Maggie Gallagher, The Case For Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, And Better Off Financially (New York: Broadway Books, 2000), ch’s 8, 9, 10.

⁶⁴This is not to assert that single adults cannot be happy or complete in their own right. The Apostle Paul affirms the benefits of singleness (1 Corinthians 7:1, 7, 32-35) and contemporary authors have also shown that those who are single can have very rich lives: John Piper, “For Single Men And Women (And The Rest Of Us),” Recovering Biblical Manhood And Womanhood (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991), xvii- xxviii. Nevertheless, it is to affirm that the

- Once we have removed the boundary of one man and one woman, we must ask, “Where do we draw the line?” Will we draw it at a same-sex couple? On what basis? What about a man and three women? Or a woman and four men? How about nine adults living together all having sex together and deciding they want to be “married” and raise children? What impact will this have on: Marriage itself? The adults involved? The children? Society? If what we have argued above has any merit at all, we can expect that such a drastic social experiment would have grave results. We will look in more detail at the societal impact below.
- Based upon what we have seen thus far, we understand that the best situation in which children can be raised and nurtured is a home in which there is a mother and a father. Though we will always have exceptions to this rule, it must remain the ideal pattern for the well-being of children and society. After some concluding remarks for this section, we will turn our attention to this subject in more detail.

What is clear, then, is that the historical precedent of defining marriage as a man and woman in contractual agreement for spousal unity and procreation must be retained. To affirm such is not unloving toward same-sex couples, nor is it merely a religious affirmation. There are compelling human factors and a compelling state interest in this direction!⁶⁵

Children Need The Complementary Nature of Marriage

It should be clear by now that since male and female children are designed differently and need to learn how to function as males and females in family and marriage, they are best served by our preserving traditional marriage. As Mitt Romney, governor of Massachusetts told congress after the landmark state supreme court decision in his own commonwealth:

The courts viewed marriage as an institution principally designed for adults. Adults are

way God made things is that the majority will find greater satisfaction and a better life matrix in marriage (1 Cor. 7:2f.). It is also to affirm that same-sex couples are going against their design and the best life matrix to a very large degree.

⁶⁵We should also note before leaving this section that same-sex couples really don't want what marriage has historically been. They want what marriage has evolved into over the last couple of generations: Namely, little more than a recreational relationship that is for the enjoyment of the two people involved and that has certain legal and monetary advantages. See Bryce Christensen, “Why Homosexuals Want What Marriage Has Now Become,” The Family In America (April 2004). www.profam.org/pub/fia/fia_1804.htm.

*who they saw. Adults stood before them in the courtroom. And so they thought of adult rights, equal rights for adults. Marriage is principally for the nurturing and development of children. The children of America have the right to have a father and a mother.*⁶⁶

In addition to preserving the kind of environment in which children will most likely thrive, what are some other reasons children need a male/female complementary parental model? To begin with, we should have learned from the great social experiment with divorce and cohabitation that began four decades ago, the effects of which we can now easily see, that on the whole children suffer when they are removed from this environment.

Maggie Gallagher, author of several books on marriage, points out:

*For thirty years, the sexual revolutionaries have said, “Heck, kids are resilient; the important thing is that you do what makes you happy.” By rewriting the laws of marriage, the courts have essentially carried out this logic to the ultimate conclusion: Marriage is whatever the adults want. People have a right to conduct a great social experiment on children because, well, adults want to do it, and doing your own thing is the new law of the land.*⁶⁷

I am convinced that if we launch this new social experiment we will look back forty years from now with the job of “picking up the pieces” of multiplied broken lives because, like trying to force a square peg into a round hole, we would be trying to force children into environments that do not match what they need and who they are.

Second, we must understand that when we weaken the family and healthy child-rearing environments on a mass scale, society itself will suffer. If sons and daughters are to have healthy roles for their own future marriages and for their own functioning as males and females, they should be raised in complementary father/mother homes.⁶⁸ Without those roles children will be less likely to grow up as well-adjusted citizens prepared for their own families and for

⁶⁶Cited in Charles Colson, “Doing the Unfashionable Thing: Governor Romney Takes A Stand,” July 1, 2004 Breakpoint article. www.pfm.org.

⁶⁷In Charles Colson, “Doing Your Own Thing: Why Same-Sex ‘Marriage’ Undermines Family Stability,” [Breakpoint](http://www.pfm.org), November 26, 2003. www.pfm.org.

⁶⁸Dafoe Whitehead, Popenoe, “The Marrying Kind”.

contentment in life,⁶⁹ and they will be more likely to be incarcerated.⁷⁰ This latter point is especially true of male children who lack a male father figure. Here is one of the keys to perhaps the most important point in this booklet and one we will highlight shortly. Abraham Lincoln once said, “As the family goes, so goes the nation.” To redefine marriage will almost certainly negatively effect the identity, ethical fiber, and contentment level for future adult citizens of our country and drastically change the landscape of this nation.

We will close this section with the words of Robert George, who has said it well:

Heterosexual marriage is of grave concern to the society because it is in marriage that we have the suitable environment for the rearing of children. Where a marriage is fruitful (as most are), the children who are born of that marriage...in the context of a family, with a mother and a father and who are devoted to those children. Society has to be concerned about the terms and conditions of how children come into being and how they are reared. And that is the fundamental sense in which society must be concerned about marriage and the family. It cannot permit an approach of anything-goes because then the consequences will be very dire for the rearing of children. And, if children are not reared well, the structure for society is itself greatly imperiled.

The future of our democratic republic is at stake because as the founders understood government is dependent upon the character of its people. Government relies on a virtuous public (even though imperfect). There must be virtue and self-restraint. Government itself does not impart these standards. It relies first and foremost upon other institutions: church (or religious community) and family.⁷¹

Homosexual “Marriage” Will Accelerate The Already-Eroding View Of Marriage In Society

Hopefully we have grasped that the issue of what constitutes marriage is a larger issue than just who gets married. It also has to do with how one views the institution itself. For example, is marriage only about what two adults want to do in order to be happy? (This is the soil in which same-sex marriage has grown) Or is marriage not only about the spouse’s contentment, but

⁶⁹Waite, Gallagher, The Case, ch’s 4-5; 8-10.

⁷⁰Roback Morse, “Parents Or Prisons”.

⁷¹George, “An Interview.”

also about its service as a pillar of society and its crucial role in raising children? If we abandon the latter view in favor of the former, we not only are strongly implying that the state should have no say at all in any marriage (after all, isn't it only about what two [or more] grown people want to do?), we also are removing motivation for many people to get married at all.

The view of marriage that it is only about the enjoyment of two adults easily gives itself over to the conclusion, "Why mess with marriage at all? Why do we need a piece of paper or even necessarily any kind of commitment to be happy together?" In Norway where homosexual marriage has been legal for a decade this is precisely the effect on marriage. The rate of cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births have risen significantly in that same period.⁷²

So, what will end up happening is that an institution that has already been weakened by this line of thinking will be weakened even more because an increased number of people will be encouraged to take this *laissez faire* approach to wedlock. And, as University of Chicago sociologist Linda J. Waite has argued (along with Maggie Gallagher) in The Case For Marriage (New York, Broadway Books, 2000), a rise in cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births will increase the instability of women and children, as well as the percentages of those living below the poverty level.

The Acceptance of Homosexual "Marriage" Will Accelerate The Practice Of Homosexuality And the Subsequent Negative Impact

Gene Edward Veith has commented that, "Homosexuality used to be seen as a private vice, something to be ashamed of and struggled against. Now, homosexuality has become socially acceptable, even *en vogue*."⁷³ Why is this significant? Because, as we saw in our discussion under scientific evidence from cross-cultural studies and a comparison of rural vs. urban areas, one's surroundings make a drastic difference in his view toward homosexual practice.

⁷²Charles Colson, "Follow The Leader?" May 17, 2004 Breakpoint. www.pfm.org.

⁷³Gene Edward Veith, "Out Of The Dungeon," World, 16, 9 (March 10, 2001): 41.

Acceptance Will Lead To More Frequent Practice

Researchers are discovering that the sexual identity and preferences of young people are fairly malleable and highly influenced by media and peer ideas surrounding them.⁷⁴ We have seen that “Societal tolerance of homosexual practice results in a higher incidence of experimentation with bisexual and homosexual practice among youth, with all its attendant negative side effects.”⁷⁵ In a 1993 Washington Post article we read, “It has become ‘cool’ for students to proclaim they are gay or bisexual.” In the D.C. area “the caseload of teenagers in ‘sexual identity crisis’ doubled in one year.”⁷⁶

The Health Risks⁷⁷

One of the reasons we need to be concerned with a potential increase in the numbers of people practicing homosexuality is that the promiscuous lifestyle that often comes with it⁷⁸ results in great and varied health risks. Here are some of those risks:

- “Common sexual practices among gay men lead to numerous STD’s and physical injuries,

⁷⁴Charles Colson, “Gender Bender: Adolescent Girls And Heterflexibility: How Young Girls Are Being Encouraged And Persuaded Toward Lesbianism,” February 9, 2004 Breakpoint. www.pfm.org.

⁷⁵Gagnon, The Bible, 30.

⁷⁶Cited in Bennett, “Gay Marriage”.

⁷⁷Unless otherwise noted, the material in this discussion comes from John R. Diggs, Jr., M.D., The Health Risks of Gay Sex (Corporate Resource Council, 2002).

⁷⁸Colson, “Doing Your Own Thing,” has written: “Numerous studies have shown that homosexuals simply look at their relationships differently--one well-known study discovered that only 4.5 percent of homosexual respondents in “committed” relationships had been faithful.” Riggs, The Health Risks, i, writes: “Prior to the AIDS epidemic, a 1978 study found that 75 percent of white, gay males claimed to have had more than 100 lifetime male sex partners: 15 percent claimed 100-249 sex partners; 17 percent claimed 250-499; 15 percent claimed 500-999; and 28 percent claimed more than 1,000 lifetime sex partners. Levels of promiscuity subsequently declined, but some observers are concerned that promiscuity is again approaching the levels of the 1970’s.” Similar extremes of promiscuity have not been documented among lesbians. However, an Australian study found that 93 percent of lesbians reported having had sex with men, and lesbians were 4.5 times more likely than heterosexual women to have had more than 50 lifetime male sex partners.”

some of which are virtually unknown in the heterosexual population. Lesbians are also at a higher risk for STD's...and three to four times more likely than heterosexual women to have sex with men who [are] high-risk for HIV.”

- There is a higher incidence of mental illness among those who practice a gay lifestyle (depression, drug abuse, suicides and suicide attempts) and this is true even in places, like the Netherlands, where homosexual practice is even more accepted than in the United States.
- Life span is shorter. “The only epidemiological study to date on the life span of gay men concluded that gay and bisexual men lose up to 20 years of life expectancy.”

We Must Speak Out In Love

At this point in our discussion we must see the need to speak out about the dangers of homosexual practice for both individuals and society. Though some may argue that opponents of homosexual practice and same-sex marriage are anything but loving,⁷⁹ this is simply not the case.

We can compare the situation to a physician who discovers that a patient has cancer. He knows that the revelation of the finding will no doubt be hard to hear. It will bring great pain

⁷⁹Gagnon, The Bible, 28: “Critics of Homosexual behavior risk being labeled *exclusive* and *resistant to diversity*. As with the use of the words *tolerant* and *intolerant*, such labels obscure the real conflict; namely, whether one determines that the behavior in question is sinful/harmful or not. No one on either side of the homosexuality debate wants to be inclusive of harmful behavior or widen diversity to include sin.”

Some will suggest that critics of homosexual behavior promote violence against homosexuals. We must always be loving and civil. Never must we even suggest that we are encouraging violence. “While homosexual violence deserves to be vigorously denounced, it does nobody any good to ignore the dangerous way in which isolated and relatively rare incidents of violence against homosexual [practitioners] have been exploited to stifle freedom of speech and coerce societal endorsement of homosexual practice.”

He adds (29-30): “First, if proponents of same-sex intercourse really have a paramount interest in curtailing acts of violence against homosexuals, the best thing for them to do is to hold up models of civil discourse among people who oppose same-sex intercourse. Second, a lesson can be learned from the tradition of Jesus’ reaction to the woman caught in adultery in John 7:53-8:11, ironically a favorite proof text for Christians who advocate the acceptance of homosexual behavior. In the story, Jesus does not back down in his opposition to adultery despite the fact that adulterous women in Israel faced the prospect of mob violence; he calls adultery a sin and commands the woman to change her ways (8:11)... Third, there is no end to the kinds of polite but critical discourse that can be squelched when the distinction between polite but critical rhetoric on the one hand and violent extremists on the other is ignored. By that same logic, for example, the United States in the nineteenth century should have endorsed the practice of polygamy in order to avoid violence against polygamists. [In a footnote he also offers examples of violence against African Americans in civil rights struggle, violence against Vietnam war protesters, violence against environmental groups] Fourth, statistically more significant than hate crimes against homosexuals are the harmful effects of various forms of homosexual behavior on homosexuals themselves....”

and fear and family upheaval. Nonetheless, he knows that ethical, competent physicians tell their patients the bad news, for it is the only way that treatment will be pursued and the life saved. Going public with opposition to the gay lifestyle and same-sex marriage is certainly not a fun thing to do. Yet, we must enter the public square and help our society continue to see its dangers so that we can help head off untold future pain and destruction.

There Is A Compelling State Interest To Preserve Traditional Marriage

Not only should caring individuals be compelled into the debate (Christians especially), but the state has a compelling interest to define marriage exclusively as between one man and one woman.⁸⁰ Though some will say that the state has no business deciding what marriage is or determining that only a man and woman can be married,⁸¹ this booklet has demonstrated that homosexual “marriage” would be destructive to the state. “Nothing less than the survival of our culture is at stake.”⁸² Therefore, we must contact our senators and our representatives and encourage them to support the Federal Marriage Amendment. Then we must ask our state representatives to define marriage as between one man and one woman only.⁸³

How should we view personal rights of those who define themselves as homosexual? David Jones, professor of theology and Christian ethics at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis,

⁸⁰Bennett, “Gay Marriage”.

⁸¹Abrams, “Religious Groups, Associated Press; David Newman, “Marriage, By Definition, Has Conflicting Concepts,” *Soapbox* in *The Coloradoan* (Ft. Collins, Co., December 2, 2003): A4; and Witte, Jr., “The Meanings:” 30.

⁸²Chuck Colson, in the conclusion to “An Interview With Dr. Robert George,” Breakpoint CD. Breakpoint ministries, November 2003.

⁸³Another issue that might be at stake is the very freedom to continue to affirm the sinful and harmful nature of homosexual practice, if we continue down the road we are on. In Canada where marriage has already been redefined as a lawful union between any two persons, it has now been designated a hate crime to speak or write publicly about homosexuality in such a way as to affirm its sinful or harmful nature. Those found guilty face stiff financial penalties and/or time in jail. Allan Dobras, “Oh, Canada, We Hardly Knew Ye...Debating Sexual Freedom in the Public Square,” May 24, 2004 essay on the Breakpoint web site. www.pfm.org.

Missouri, aptly remarked:

*Because all human beings are created in the image of God, public policy ought to protect all human beings regardless of their sexual behavior. Therefore, we don't make sexual behavior a test-case for civil rights in terms of those things which are due to all of us as citizens. We need to assert in a strong voice that just as we give civil rights to adulterers, so also people that we believe are involved in homosexual sin have civil rights.*⁸⁴

Can we make progress on this issue? Robert George says, "Yes!" "Where given the opportunity, the people voted to protect marriage by nearly two to one or more."⁸⁵ He continues:

Those who are trying to redefine marriage have had very little success through the legislative branch. When the question of marriage has been put to the people, by and large they have responded by protecting marriage. The real problem has been from the courts. When the courts speak in the name of the constitution, even when they are speaking on the basis of unintelligible, untenable understandings of constitutional interpretation, they speak in the name of the constitution and the people have no recourse other than a constitutional amendment to repair the damage done by the courts.

[Interviewer Tonkovich: What about the suggestion that this amendment is not comprehensive enough? After all, one can do an end-run around it and call it domestic partnership or something like that.]

This amendment is not as comprehensive as it could be, that is true, but it is comprehensive as it can be and remain politically tenable. Had we started this ten years ago before we have suffered even greater erosion in the support for marriage we have experienced, we could have accomplished something more comprehensive. We are not in a position to achieve a more comprehensive amendment. We are still in a position to restrain the courts, but we will have to fight more battles down the road on the state level and with the Congress. I am willing to do that, I think we can win there.⁸⁶ We must restrain the courts, keep the issue in the democratic process and fight the battle state by state to keep marriage defined as it ought to be. [He went on to share the example of Hawaii (a very liberal state) who amended their state constitution (in '96) to protect the institution of marriage.] If we can win in Hawaii, we can win anywhere. But the first thing we must do is preserve the right to fight. And that requires a constitutional amendment to keep the courts from redefining marriage at the constitutional level.

[Interviewer Jim Tonkovich: Will we win this one?]

...To us is only the trying, the rest is God's business. We must pray, we must do what God

⁸⁴"A CT Forum On Homosexuality And Public Policy: Just Saying 'No' Is Not Enough," Christianity Today, 43, 11 (October 4, 1999): 51.

⁸⁵Alan Sears, "Who Will Define Marriage?" Breakpoint (July 8, 2004). www.pfm.org.

⁸⁶George, "An Interview."

*asks us. If we do that, we can rest assured that we are doing what God asks us to do.*⁸⁷

Conclusion

I hope you will agree that Christians and other people who care about our society have an unprecedented opportunity to speak out for good and to help prevent great harm to individuals, to children, to the family, and to our culture. Yet, to accomplish this we must speak out and make a loving, compassionate, yet informed case for marriage as between one man and one woman only. We also must reveal the destruction awaiting those who practice homosexuality.

In order to help with this I leave with you one final resource which your church or community group can utilize in order to make a public affirmation. This succinct, but powerful statement comes from John Piper at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota and provides a helpful summary of this booklet. Please utilize it in shaping your own congregation and the public square around you.

Our affirmation that the Bible is the infallible Word of God with ‘supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct,’ and our affirmation that ‘a Christian should live for the glory of God’ include the following six beliefs about heterosexuality and homosexuality:

- 1. We believe that heterosexuality is God’s revealed will for humankind and that, since God is loving, a chaste and faithful expression of this orientation (whether in singleness or in marriage) is the ideal to which God calls all people.*
- 2. We believe that a homosexual orientation is a result of the fall of humanity into a sinful condition that pervades every person. Whatever biological or familial roots of homosexuality may be discovered, we do not believe that these would sanction or excuse homosexual behavior, though they would deepen our compassion and patience for those who are struggling to be free from sexual temptations.*
- 3. We believe there is hope for the person with a homosexual orientation and that Jesus Christ offers a healing alternative in which the power of sin is broken and the person is freed to know and experience his or her true identity in Christ and in the fellowship of his Church.*
- 4. We believe that this freedom is attained through a process which includes recognizing homosexual behavior as sin, renouncing the practice of homosexual behavior, rediscovering healthy, non-erotic friendships with people of the same sex,*

⁸⁷George, “An Interview.”

embracing a moral sexual lifestyle, and in the age to come, rising from the dead with a new body free from every sinful impulse. This process parallels the similar process of sanctification needed in dealing with heterosexual temptations as well. We believe that this freedom comes through faith in Jesus Christ, by the power of his Spirit.

5. We believe that all persons have been created in the image of God and should be accorded human dignity. We believe therefore that hateful, fearful, unconcerned harassment of persons with a homosexual orientation should be repudiated. We believe that respect for persons with a homosexual orientation involves honest, reasoned, nonviolent sharing of facts concerning the immorality and liability of homosexual behavior. On the other hand, endorsing behavior which the Bible disapproves endangers persons and dishonors God.

7. We believe that Christian churches should reach out in love and truth to minister to people touched by homosexuality, and that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptation should be patiently assisted in their battle, not ostracized or disdained. However, the more prominent a leadership role or modeling role a person holds in a church or institution...the higher will be the expectations for God's ideal of sexual obedience and wholeness. We affirm that both heterosexual and homosexual persons should find help in the church to engage in the Biblical battle against all improper sexual thoughts and behaviors.⁸⁸

⁸⁸John Piper, Joe Hallet, "Bethlehem's Position On Homosexuality, [Freshwords](#) (August 6, 2003).