

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY?

DOES GOD ALLOW GAY MARRIAGE?

Genesis 2:18,21-24 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” ... So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Ephesians 5:31,32 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

According to Genesis, marriage is more than a promise between two people. God created marriage to be monogamous (one man and one woman), because man and woman were created to be complementary. If the essence of marriage is destroyed through a homosexual union, it can no longer serve God’s complimentary design.

And for Christians, according to Ephesians, God gives marriage a second purpose: it’s one of the most beautiful ways we can reflect our faith. God calls husbands to mirror Christ and wives to mirror the Church. To change marriage is to take away one of God’s pictures of Christ and his Church.

IS ENGAGING IN HOMOSEXUALITY SINFUL?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ^[a] nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. [NIV translation note on [a]: The words *men who have sex with men* translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts.]

All sins separate us from God, and the bible clearly identifies engaging in homosexuality as sinful behavior. As the NIV translation note points out, there is simply no way around this in the original languages. See also Romans 1:18-27 and 1 Timothy 1:10. But note Paul in the 1 Corinthians passage above clearly says the sins of homosexuality are just as much forgiven through Jesus as the other sins listed.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS TREAT THOSE PRACTICING HOMOSEXUALITY?

Titus 2:11,12 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

We shouldn’t expect unbelievers to understand or embrace the full breadth of Christian ethics. This knowledge comes through believing God’s Word. Our chief concern is sharing Jesus, which means sharing law and gospel as the opportunity arises, with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

WHAT IS THE IMAGE OF GOD?

Genesis 1:27 tells us that God made humanity in *the image of God*. But what does this mean? Some people teach that it refers to humanity's self-consciousness, rationality, ethical nature, or relationship with God. Many of these ideas touch upon the truth, but looking at other bible passages creates a very clear picture for us.

Genesis 5:1-3 When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man." When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Genesis 5 teaches us that after the Fall people no longer bear the image of God. Scripture makes mention of no other human born bearing God's image, except one, Jesus.

Romans 8:28-30 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Further, Scripture teaches that, when a person becomes a Christian, the image is slowly being restored in the individual. So, after an inventory regarding everything else Scripture teaches clearly, what can this image be referring to? What is it that:

- Adam and Eve had it but lost it in the Fall,
- all people now no longer have it *except* Jesus,
- and when we become Christian, it is now slowly being restored?

This can only refer to one thing: **holiness**, that is, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which creates a **new self with a will aligned with God's**. We call this process of the image being restored **sanctification**. And this means the image of God in each of us will be fully restored in heaven. Note that every time the word *image* is used in the bible, it is not necessarily referring to this, and other references to Genesis 1:27 may be referring to other aspects of the created order, not just humanity's ability to do the will of God.

