

What the Bible Says About Same-gender Sexual Intimacy

The main point. The sole sexualized human relationship that is upheld in the Bible is one man and one woman in marriage. This is what we believe the Bible teaches.

In support of this stance are the following:

1. God designed marriage to be for one man and one woman. Genesis 2.21,22; Matthew 19.4,5. Every marriage spoken of in the Bible is between a man and a woman.
2. Interpersonal sexual expression is reserved for the one-man/one-woman marriage relationship alone. Hebrews 13.4
3. Sexualized relationships of all other types, including male-male and female-female, are contrary to the design of the Creator. None is affirmed, advocated or celebrated. There is no instance in the Bible of an exemplary marital relationship other than one between one man and one woman. The only instances of persons or marriages of sexual diversity in the Bible are outright prohibited. [Some very close same-gender human relationships are found in the Bible. These relationships are based on strong common interests, mutual concern and deep loyalty. David and Jonathan had such a relationship. One thing that made this relationship appropriate and healthy was that there was no sexual component, according to a plain and simple reading of the narrative.]
4. If same-gender and LGBT+ expressions in general were in accord with God's design, we would expect to find them being spoken of in a positive way and promoted. Yet, there is not a single instance of sexual diversity being presented in a positive way in the Bible.
5. The Statement of The C&MA on Human Sexuality defines the view of our denomination and our church.
[<https://cmalliance.org/who-we-are/what-we-believe/perspectives; Human Sexuality>] Two very brief statements summarize the view.
 - a. We are created for committed, intimate community, free from shame (Genesis 2:24–25). For a man and a woman, this intimacy may be expressed and consummated sexually when they are united as one flesh in marriage (Genesis 2:24).
 - b. Some seek to redefine the created nature of our sexuality in rebellion (Romans 1:24–27). They desire the intimacy or pleasure of sex without the commitment of marriage between a man and woman (1 Corinthians 6:16; cf. Genesis 2:24), such as homosexual or extra-marital sexual activity.
6. The views of conservative theologians and Christ-followers affirm what the Bible says about homosexuality.
 - a. Robert A.J. Gagnon, Assoc. Professor of NT at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, explains what the Bible teaches from a conservative viewpoint. He is co-author of *Homosexuality and the Bible - Two Views* and *The Bible and Homosexual Practice*.
 - b. William J. Webb, adjunct professor of NT and biblical studies at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario, presents an understanding of homosexuality

in the Bible from an in-depth hermeneutical perspective. He is the author of *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals – Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis*.

- c. The position of Christopher Yuan, a former agnostic gay man and now Christian author of *Out of a Far Country* and *Holy Sexuality and the Gospel: Sex, Desire, and Relationships Shaped by God's Grand Story* is that all Christians should seek "holy sexuality." This is lived out in one of two ways: marriage between a man and woman or celibacy. [see a collection of his articles at <https://christopheryuan.com/about/>]
- d. The position of Rosaria Butterfield, former lesbian, feminist, tenured professor and author of *The Secret thoughts of An Unlikely Convert* and *Openness Unhindered*, is that encountering Jesus through compassionate Christians is transformative. She is now married to a man and is raising a family.
- e. The position of Wesley Hill, a Christian homosexual and author of *Washed and Waiting*, contends that the pursuit of Jesus should be the primary influence over all other relationships. This pursuit led him to choose celibacy in honor of Christ.
- f. The position of Gregory Coles, a Christian homosexual and author of *Single Gay Christian*, upon accepting what he saw as the plain and simple teaching of Scripture on homosexuality, surrendered his sexual expression/involvement altogether in order to love God passionately and live in a way that pleases him. He concedes that not all homosexual devout Christians will see things as he does and come to the same conclusion.

Some people, including professing Christians, have attempted to explain away the biblical prohibitions of homosexual sex. The following four objections and responses have been greatly simplified for the sake of space.

1. Explanation 1: Jesus never spoke against homosexual sex.
Response. While this is true neither did he say a word about pedophilia, bestiality, or rape yet these are clearly prohibited. The argument from silence alone is not a strong one. Also consider that Jesus did speak of marriage as being between a man and a woman in Matt 19.4,5, "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" Further, some argue that the prohibition of homosexuality is found only in the OT yet there are three main passages in the OT and three in the NT that speak of homosexuality: Genesis 19, Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13, 1 Corinthians 6.9-10, 1 Timothy 1.10 and Romans 1.26,27. In none of these passages does the plain and simple reading in the historical and cultural context affirm, advocate or celebrate gender diverse relationships.
2. Explanation 2: Love trumps all commands. Based on Matt 22.37-40 and Rom 13.8-10, Justin Lee, a Christian homosexual and author of *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate*, expresses this view by contending that anything done in true love overrules all commands, including prohibitions.

Response. If one reads the explanation of the place of the Law and the Prophets under the new covenant [Matt 5.17-20] Jesus clearly teaches that the commands are not abolished but fulfilled. In fact, Jesus elevated the commands to move them from mere behavior to the higher standard of attitude and motivation. Verses 19 & 20 read, *Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.*"

3. Explanation 3: Prohibited homosexuality was only and always practiced in connection with idolatry. Justin Lee presents a lengthy case for this position in his book *Torn*.

Response. Very simply stated, it cannot be argued that the clear prohibitions in the book of Lev. refer only to 'idolatrous sex' because the word translated "male" in English translations is the general Hebrew for "adult man" rather than the very specific Hebrew word for "homosexual cult prostitute."

4. Explanation 4: Homosexuality in ancient Israel was the type of human evil that should be classified as "uncleanness or impurity" not "sin." As such homosexuality falls under the category of ceremonial law [and not the category of moral law] and thus became obsolete under the new covenant when Paul declared that nothing is unclean in itself [Rom 14.14]. This is the view of Dan O. Via, professor of NT at the Divinity School of Duke Univ, as presented in the book *Homosexuality and the Bible - Two Views*.

Response. This is untenable since the New Testament authors undoubtedly had the Leviticus prohibition passages in mind in its denouncing homosexual practices. One evidence for this is that the words used by the NT writers are reflective of the OT words.

5. For a fuller explanation of each of these arguments and a biblical response, one site to visit is <https://creation.com/bible-forbid-homosex>.

Conclusion: Based on the above evidence, Grace Church holds that homosexual sexual intimacy is not within God's will and design for a follower of Christ.

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