



# Homosexuality: An Ethical Test Case

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*(Part of an apologetics course designed to give roots to the faith of Christians, assist seekers in their quest for truth, and gently and respectfully challenge those who hold to competing worldviews)*

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## How do we determine what is ethical?

The approaches we too often adopt:

- 1) Succumb to the cultural pressure that promotes an ever-increasing growth in “rights” and “freedom”.
- 2) React against any effort to bring about social change that may threaten what we’re used to or comfortable with.

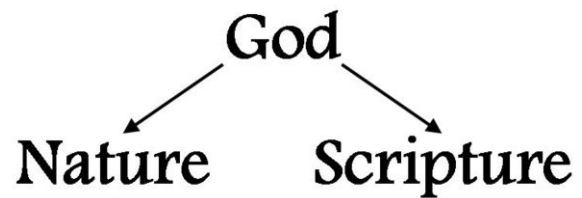
The only right approach:

Ask, “What has God said about this?”

Given that it is God who made us, and given that He has spoken to us, this is the only way we could ever determine what is truly ethical.

## How has God spoken to us?

Nature (general revelation)  
Scripture (special revelation)

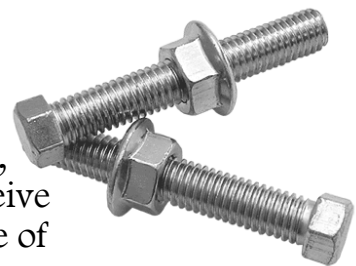


## General Revelation: What has God said through Nature?

Complementary Design – two systems or objects that show by their design that they are intended for each other.

Example: Nut & Bolt

We recognize that each was designed with the other in mind, not merely because one happens to fit in the other, but because the grooves of the one receive the threads of the other for the purpose of securing a tight fit.



The penis and vagina, and the male and female reproductive systems as a whole, show clear signs of complementary design.

Not only do the penis and anus fail to show signs of complementary design, but such sexual activity (much more common in homosexual encounters) actually does violence to the clear design and intention of the anus.

“[The anus was not] designed for the purpose of intercourse, which is readily evident from the physical injuries that often arise from such practices.”

~ Stanley Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective*, 237

“The rectum is lined with a single layer of columnar epithelial cells designed to absorb liquids. The vagina, by contrast, is lined with tough cells called stratified squamous epithelium. These cells have a layer of mucus that, along with other secretions and the thicker, more flexible vaginal wall, protects against abrasion and infection. The rectal wall has no surrounding muscular support, and it secretes a small amount of mucus that does not protect well against abrasion. But the key differences between the vagina and the rectum are the cell types and the thickness of the cell layers. The two orifices may feel very much alike to the intruding finger or penis. But one orifice is prone to repel, the other to admit, whatever microorganisms come along for the ride.”

~ Thomas Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?*, 117

“It is important to understand that physical trauma, or harm to bodily structures, is a common problem among homosexuals. Quite simply ... the rectum is not made for the industrial use of insertive homosexual activity. Anal intercourse stretches the opening to the size required for a large bowel movement. The problem, however, is not the size of the opening but the direction and repetition of the movement. The anus is a one-way valve, stimulated to open only by pressure from inside, and stimulated to contract by pressure from outside. Sudden or inadequately lubricated penetration can tear the anus itself. But more commonly the cumulative effect of anal intercourse is to cause dysfunction of the anal sphincter muscle, and the result is chronic incontinence or urgency of defecation for about one in three men who regularly engage in the practice.”

~ Thomas Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?*, 117-8

“Nor is that all. Once past the anus, the danger of physical trauma worsens. Irritation of the sensitive rectal mucus layer causes a host of reactions, including diarrhea, cramps, hemorrhoids, prostate damage, and ulcers or fissures which in turn invite infection. The thin cell layer of the rectum is easily perforated, and its insensitivity to pain can lead to serious complications before a person is aware of any harm. Extensive surgical procedures are often required to repair damage caused by the insertion of the penis, the finger or other objects into the rectum.”

~ Thomas Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?*, 118

## Special Revelation: What has God said through Scripture?

Primary passages dealing with the question of homosexuality:

“Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom – both young and old – surrounded the house. They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.’ Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and said, ‘No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.’”

~ Genesis 19:4-8

“Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.”

~ Jude 7

“Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.”  
~Leviticus 18:22 (also, Lev 20:13)

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

~ Romans 1:26-27

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

~ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

[Though these passages are sufficient to demonstrate that homosexual activity is unethical, some will attempt to explain how these passages fall short of condemning homosexual activity as we know it today. But Jesus’ approach (below) cuts through all this...]

Jesus' approach to dealing with ethical issues of marriage and sexuality:

Jesus reasons, "As it was at the Creation, so it ought to be now."

"Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?' '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"?' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

~ Matthew 19:3-6

Jesus uses the Genesis language of "being united to your wife" and "becoming one flesh" to draw out the ethical implication that "man should not separate what God has joined together."

Using Jesus' own method of Biblical interpretation, we should observe that at the Creation God "made them male and female" (i.e., opposite genders) and that "a *man* will ... be united to his *wife*, and the two will become one flesh."

We should then conclude, using Jesus' reasoning that "as it was at Creation, so it ought to be now," that marriage / sexual union is designed and intended to be enjoyed between a man and a woman.

[Note: Even if it were true that the passages previously mentioned all fall short of condemning homosexual activity as we know it today, following Jesus' own method of Biblical interpretation would lead to this ethical conclusion anyway.]

### Aren't some people "born gay"?

Two reasons not to accept the notion that some people are "born gay":

- 1) It is not true
- 2) It is dangerous

The notion that some people are "born gay" is simply not true.

This notion implies that, if you have homosexual feelings, you should embrace those feelings since that's how God made you.

While it is true that we should embrace how God has made us, this notion assumes that homosexual feelings must be a result of how God made us and doesn't even consider that they might be a result of how the fall has corrupted us.

The biblical view is that, due to the fall, we are all born sinful, and as a result have all sorts of corrupt inclinations to one degree or another.

The notion that some people are "born gay" is dangerous.

This notion suggests that, if you have homosexual inclinations, you should be honest with who you are and embrace your inclinations.

While we should certainly be honest with who we are, we should also be discerning, embracing those things about us that are a result of how God made us, and rejecting those things about us that are a result of how the fall has corrupted us.

Embracing our fallen tendencies reveals us as those who do not know God and bars us from inheriting the kingdom of God:

"No one who lives in him [God] keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin [i.e., embraces sin as a friend/way of life] has either seen him or known him."

~ 1 John 3:6 (also 3:9, 5:18)

"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this [i.e., embrace such things as a way of life] will not inherit the kingdom of God."

~ Galatians 5:19-21

The biblical approach to dealing with our fallen tendencies is not to embrace them, but to put them to death.

"If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

~ Romans 8:13-14

## Total Depravity: We are all guilty of every type of sin

Myth – Only some people are tempted by this type of sin (i.e., not me).

Fact – We are all tempted by every type of sin to one degree or another.

“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one [Jesus] who has been tempted *in every way, just as we are*—yet was without sin.”

~ Hebrews 4:15

Implications:

- 1) Jesus understands every type of temptation.
- 2) We are all in the same boat (i.e., there is no type of sin where we can say “The fall has not hit me here”).

## “What shall we do?!”

Repent from your sins:

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.”

~ Acts 3:19

Believe in Jesus:

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

~ John 3:16

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

~ Acts 16:31

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

~ Romans 10:9

	Repent	Believe
<b>Mind</b>	Recognize your sin for what it is—rebellion against your Creator, making you worthy of divine judgment.	Acknowledge Jesus as the one God has sent into the world to save sinners from their sin and divine judgment through his death and resurrection.
<b>Heart</b>	Despise your sin.	Embrace Jesus and the salvation he has accomplished.
<b>Will</b>	Renounce your sin.	Surrender your life to Jesus as your rightful King.

## Resource Recommendations

David Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics*

Thomas Schmidt, *Straight & Narrow?: Compassion & Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate*