

The Bible & Sexuality

Our question this evening is “What does the Bible say?” As such we need to acknowledge the cultural setting in which we are asking this question, and make sure we understand how we are reading the Bible.

Our Cultural Setting

In our modern world (particularly the western world) we have seen various definitions of sexuality arise of the last few decades. Our world no longer speaks of “male” and “female”, for example:-

- Teen Issues website: Heterosexual, Homosexual, Bisexual, Questioning. 4 Types.
<http://www.teenissues.co.uk/HowToCopeWithYourSexualIdentity.html>
- Other places talk commonly about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender. Some add asexual (no interest in sex).

That makes (I think) 6? [Heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, questioning, transgender, and asexual]

How do I read the Bible?

There are two basic views of biblical authority. (1) the *a priori* view says that the Bible is authoritative in all of its parts and is so *prior to* interpretation. . . . (2) The experiential or existential view says that the Bible is authoritative only in those parts that are existentially engaging and compelling . . . This avowal can be made only after and in the light of one’s own interpretation.

(Dan Via, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views*, p2)

In other words:

1. **Revelation.** You start by assuming the Bible is authoritative (because of teaching you have been given)
2. **Reason.** The level of authority is determined by and shaped by your ability to understand and apply it to life.

You need to decide which view you are going to take as this will radically alter how you read the Bible.

Handling the conflict

What do we do when our culture is opposed to what the Bible teaches? How do we handle this conflict?

Key Bible principle: Eph 4 v 15

Truth AND love. Both are required: truth should always be presented and “given” in a loving and gracious way. And love must always include a commitment to truth, however uncomfortable that may be.

An Example - Show DVD: Jesus Loves You, this I know – the outcast. (www.jesuslovesyou.net)

What the Bible says

Creation

Can we learn something from the order of creation given to us in Genesis 2? Man is created and is in a relationship with God. From this relationship God saw that man needed woman, and so woman is created. Both are now in relationship to each other and to God.

Jesus uses this passage when He discussed divorce. Matt 19

Creation affirms two types of sexual beings: man and woman. Nothing else is mentioned.

The law

The Old Testament: Lev 18v6-20, and 20v9-21 defines the boundaries of sexual conduct. Here there is a clear understanding that sexual activity is confined to the marriage relationship (one man and one woman).

The New Testament: Romans 1v24-27 affirms this understanding and sees all other sexual activity as a sign that God has been rejected.

There are other passages that we could turn to, such as Gen 19 (story of Sodom), the lists of “sins” in 1 Cor 6, 1 Tim 1, Gal 6, Eph 5. (NB Gal6, 1 Cor 6 and Eph 5 passages all talk about how we are not to be deceived. Deception makes us think that evil is good, that wrong is right, and that some “sins” are actually not “sin” at all. See Jesus’ challenge in Matt 15:3-9.)

How do we interpret this?

If we take this as a **revelation** of God’s will, then any sexual activity outside the prescribed marriage relationship (one man and one woman) is unacceptable to God.

If we start from **reason** then we need to explore how this connects with our own experiences and understanding.

My personal position, and the position we have as a Church, is that the Bible is **revelation**.

Relating this to people

This is the difficult part. Too many people take their understanding of truth and use it as a weapon to attack others. Our responsibility is to seek God, discover His ways, live His ways, and share His ways with anyone who is interested. Love should determine how we act and react to other people, regardless of their sexual practise, or any other lifestyle choices.

People are people. We are to love people.

Twitter – 27 Sept 2010: [CSLewisDaily](#) If they are wrong they need your prayers all the more & if they are your enemies, you are under orders to pray for them

I would suggest that you can substitute the word “love” for “pray” – If people are wrong they need you love all the more & if they are your enemies you are under orders to love them!

So we should love people, befriend them, care for them, and show them we love them so they will listen to us explain the truth we have found in God’s Word.

Conclusion

We need to allow our Spirituality to shape our understanding of our sexuality, and resist the pressure to let our sexuality define our spirituality.

The Bible position is quiet clear: sexual relationships are to take place only within the marriage relationship of one man and one woman. Any sexual activity outside of this covenant relationship is considered as “sin”.

So we either accept this as revelation from God, or we use our reason to adjust scripture to our contemporary understanding.