

Lest You Also Be Tempted

By Nathan Albright

Have you ever wondered why so many opponents of homosexuality express their opposition with such passion and fervor? And why this outrage is almost totally absent when it comes to such sins as adultery and fornication which are also condemned in the scriptures? Isn't it somewhat hypocritical to demonize one sin while turning a blind eye to other?

To be sure homosexuality is identified in the scriptures as an egregious act and God Himself has a profound contempt for it. Consider how God's Great Moral Voice thunders out His indictment against this perversion. Under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul called homosexuals "lawless and disobedient" ([1Tim.1:10](#)). Additionally, His servant Moses declared that their sacrifices were not acceptable to God ([Dt.23:17-18](#)). In the Old Testament the penalty for such behavior was death ([Lev.20:13](#)). In the New Testament the pronouncement is even worse. When writing to the church at Corinth, Paul included homosexuals among those who would not enter God's Kingdom ([1Cor.6:9](#)). The scriptures proclaim without apology that homosexuality is an obscene act. It is a crime against God and even nature.

However, the Bible speaks with great force against other sexual sins and to suggest that God simply opposes one while abhorring the other it is a huge distortion of His word. Mankind may be more tolerant of certain types of sexual immorality but God most definitely is not. Here is what He says about such things: Jesus said adultery "defiles the man" (Mt. 15:19). In the Old Testament God declared to Israel that it was a capital offense (Lev. 20:10). In the New Testament the apostle Paul called it a work of the flesh (Gal.5:9). When it comes to fornication the scriptures are just as clear in their condemnation. Paul called it a sin against the body (1Cor. 6:18). Jesus indicated that it was grounds for annulling a marriage (Mt. 5:32).

But is homosexuality the greatest moral vice? Is it worse than adultery in God's eyes? And if not, why does it seem to hold that distinction among so many of God's people? Why is homosexuality to be fled from while adultery and fornication are just to be avoided?

Now there are many who would deny taking such an approach to immoral sexual conduct. Many would argue that they find all sexual sin equally repugnant and that no one sin is any worse than another. If you think you fall into this group I invite you to take a little test.

Are You a Hypocrite Test

I agree this is not a very nice name for a test, but it is intended to illustrate a point. Originally I was going to call it my "Lie Detector" test for reasons that will soon be very obvious. Here is the test.

You and your family are going to see a Sunday afternoon movie. You have been looking forward to this activity because it will be a nice break from the hectic week that has just passed. However, when you arrive at the theatre there are only a few places left that would accommodate you. You spot one but it requires you to sit next to a homosexual couple.

Meanwhile your spouse finds a spot but unfortunately it is right behind a neighbor who is snuggling up to a woman who is definitely NOT his wife. You are not close

to this neighbor and it is highly unlikely he would think of you as anything other than a stranger. Where do you sit? And why?

Now I am sure there are some who would just pick up and leave the theatre altogether. As a matter of fact, that might be my choice. However, what if that option was more difficult to exercise? For example:

You arrive at church and there are only two chairs available. One is next to someone who has struggled with homosexuality while the other is next to someone who has struggled with pornography. Assuming you know nothing else about them which seat do you choose?

In the world today we make all kinds of moral assessments. And if we are like most people, we have an unconscious grading mechanism at work in us. For example what would you find most offensive: two men holding hands or a business colleague and his secretary doing the same?

This article examines how a Christian should view trespasses that on the future appear to be unforgivable. Sins that are so great it is difficult to distinguish them from the person(s) committing them. In it I will endeavor to show how four extraordinary verses in a wonderful epistle can provide the basis for a better attitude toward sexual sins. And how they can provide a fair and balanced approach to how one can hate a sin but love a sinner.

At this point it is important to understand that this article is not suggesting that God's people throw caution to the wind when navigating their lives through some very difficult moral issues. In reality all things are not the same. However, the people who engage in them just may not be that different. And that is the point. These four verses are found in Paul's letter to the churches of God in Galatia.

Galatians 6:1-5 and Its Application to Homosexuality

Paul states in Galatians 6:1-5 the following concerning how to deal with someone who has a known sin:

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load. (Gal. 6:1-5)

Now, let us examine these verses to see how they are applicable to the situation of homosexuality. I believe there are four underlying principles that drive the message Paul was conveying in this passage.

First, there is the recognition that homosexuality is a sin. The Bible declares that even lust, whether acted on or not, is a sin. Without this recognition it is impossible for restoration. This is because repentance depends first on recognition of what we are doing wrong. We have to turn from our sinful ways before we can follow Christ and do what is right. This is impossible without coming to the realization that there is a problem in our life that needs to be fixed. Presumably all of the people reading this article (myself included) recognize that within each of us are wicked lusts that can wreck our lives. Furthermore it is presumed that those reading this article have a genuine desire to change.

Second, and this is an important point, the attitude taken by the “spiritual” (that is, those who are morally upright in this regard) towards the sinner is one of compassion. In the case of SSAD, (Same Sex Attraction Disorder) this has not always been the case. Some leaders of the church, as well as some pastors, have used gay-bashing as a way to gain moral capital with their brethren. As a result, many people who want desperately to defeat this sin are now afraid to admit that they struggle with it for fear of the repercussions. A powerful point being proclaimed by Paul’s words is that instead of a self-righteous attitude towards sinners who genuinely desire to overcome, we should all be gentle to those who have the courage to confess their sins to a brother in the faith.

Third, Paul actually provides the reason for compassion. This attitude of love and mercy comes from a humble reflection on the fact that we could also be tempted and could fall into the same sort of sin that now ensnares our brother or sister.

Sadly, most people do not consider this when thinking of homosexuality. At least not the way they think of other sins. For example: it is not difficult to imagine how we could lie, how we could steal, how we could fornicate, how we could commit adultery, how we could lust, given various temptations and situations. However, most people simply cannot recognize how they could be enticed into committing sodomy. Since they cannot visualize what circumstances could drive them to have the same desires, they cannot have compassion on those who suffer from such a horrible condition. If people are to change the smug attitude they have towards SSAD, they must understand the causes of this problem so that they can imagine what life would be like if their own lives had been different during the periods that shape so much of their values, such as childhood. The point here is that if people can imagine how they could have struggled with homosexuality themselves, then they can relate to someone who actually does suffer with it.

Fourth, Paul states that helping out brethren with their burdens fulfills the law of Christ. Few, if any, of those who struggle with homosexuality will doubt that it is a burden. With this in mind consider that Christians are exhorted by the Messiah to love others as ourselves and to do unto others, as we would have them do unto us. Most of us would not wish to be abused or ridiculed or humiliated, and yet people forget this when it comes to homosexuality. If we are truly obeying God’s law and truly have the love that God would desire us to have, we would be able to help out our fellow brethren who are struggling against ANY sin. At least we should have compassion knowing that we too are sinners and are also in a great struggle.

Fifth, Paul states that those who think they are something special when they are not, deceive themselves. This principle can apply to those who believe they are more powerful than certain sins. And as amazing as this might be to believe, there are some who truly feel that way. Consider the following example. There is a leading evangelist in God’s church today that once declared, “I have never committed a serious sin.” Imagine making such a pronouncement. Fortunately, Paul did not have that kind of attitude and his epistle to the Galatians is proof of that fact.

Now consider how damaging such an attitude would be if this evangelist was approached by a member of his flock counseling about his bout with homosexuality. Once again, the point is that those who cannot see how they could fall into such a sin deceive themselves and at the same time condemn others. Therefore all of us should recognize that there are no good sins to fight against. All sin is serious and every one requires the atoning sacrifice of God’s beloved Son. This recognition is how we show ourselves to be “spiritual.”

Sixth, Paul states that each person should examine his own work to see if he is following the example of Christ. We should rejoice if we are following God’s way. We know, from Hebrews 4:15 that Christ was tempted in all things and yet did not sin. We can take heart that we have a High Priest in heaven who sympathizes with us and is compassionate. Our leaders here on earth should be the same. For as Paul says elsewhere, if we break any part of the law we suffer the penalty of the law. God judges all sin alike. Sin is the breaking of the perfect law of a perfect

God. Fortunately, God has made provisions for our weaknesses. Jesus Christ died to take away the penalty for all of our sins. By reflecting on that GREAT gift and how it applies to us, we can better understand and appreciate how that perfect sacrifice applies to others.

Seventh, Paul states that everyone should bear his or her own load. The goal of understanding and compassion is that we should all walk our Christian life in a godly manner. All of us have areas that we struggle with more than others. As sons and daughters of God in a wicked world there is no lack of ways in which we can fall into trespasses. Eventually, with the help of our leaders and our fellow brethren, we can become more complete and more mature Christians. In time, hopefully all of us can bear our own burdens, but until that time we should help others bear theirs, no matter what it may be.

Conclusion

I hope that these five verses have provided an example of the way to deal with the issue of homosexuality. If we confess to someone our sins and difficulties, we should expect a compassionate response, if that brother or minister is truly converted. Likewise, if someone confesses to us their sins, we should act compassionately towards them. It is difficult to confess our sins to others because of the difficulty we have trusting that the other person will respond in a loving and Christian manner. This is especially true in the case of sexual sin such as homosexuality. However, confessing our sins is a Christian test. It is a test for the person confessing, because it involves recognition of one's own sinful human nature and a desire to be restored to innocence. It is also a test for the person we confess to, because if they react in a manner that is not consistent with the compassion and love preached by Christ and the apostles, then they truly are not spiritual either. Therefore, let us speak like Paul: *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."*