

A Christian Perspective on Homosexuality

We believe:

- God creates all human beings in **God's image** (Genesis 1:26-27); God **loves us all** (John 3:16); and God wills **full, abundant life** for all people (John 10:10).
- At the same time, **all** human beings are **sinners** and are saved by **grace** through Christ.
- God gives us the **good gift** of sexuality. Science seems to confirm that we **do not choose** our sexual orientation. (www.apa.org/topics/orientation.html)
- The morality or immorality of sexual activity depends on its context. **God's justice** condemns promiscuity for gay and lesbian people, just as for straight people. Similarly, God gives and approves the joy of physical intimacy for monogamous heterosexual couples as well as for monogamous homosexual couples.
- Caring, same sex relationships **do not threaten** marriage and family.
- Jesus commands us to "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). **Love demands** that we seek the good for each other, including the opportunity for committed relationships.
- Christians should **encourage** all people who seek loving, committed relationships, gay and straight.

The Bible speaks:

- The debate about homosexuality focuses on at most **8 texts** in the Bible (as compared to about **3,000** that call for justice for the poor). None of them directly address the possibility of homosexual **orientation** or sexual relations between two consenting believers in a **committed, monogamous relationship**.
 - The sins of Sodom (Genesis 19:1-29, Jude 5-7) and Gibeah (Judges 19:1-30) were **inhospitality, promiscuity, greed, injustice, and rape**.
 - The Children of Israel's Holiness Code sought ritual **purity and distinctiveness** among neighboring cultures. (Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13)
 - Paul condemns homosexual acts three times, but none of them refers to sexual activity in a same sex monogamous, committed relationship. In two texts, the readings hinge on Greek words whose meaning is **vague or uncertain**. (I Corinthians 6:6-9, I Timothy 1:10). In Romans 1:18-32, Paul lists certain sexual activities as part of his condemnation of **idolatry** in the culture—loving things in place of God—but by chapter 2:1 turns the tables on self-righteous readers, emphasizing that all people are sinful: "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others, for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself...."¹
- **Jesus** says nothing about homosexuality, and the only time he quotes from Leviticus is in the great commandment, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 19:19 & 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27)
- Jesus' strongest words are **against self-righteousness**, hypocrisy, and legalism (Matthew 7:1-5, 23:13-36; Luke 11:37-44, 18:9-14)

Taking it further:

- **Vote against** Virginia's marriage restriction amendment November 7, 2006.
- **Websites:** www.CLJP.org ; www.votenova.org ; www.equalityva.org
- **Resources:** ¹*Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*, Jack Rogers (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006). *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views*, Via & Gagnon (Fortress Press, 2003).