

**WHY CHOOSE  
HETEROSEXUALITY?**

**By John Smyth**

(Back Cover)

JOHN SMYTH is a father of four and a grandfather. He graduated from Cambridge University with degrees in Natural Sciences and Law and then practised as a Barrister for nearly 20 years being appointed Queen's Counsel at the age of 37. Five years later he left the Bar to work as a missionary in Zimbabwe. In 1986 he founded Zambesi Ministries, a multi-racial and interdenominational parachurch organisation, with the goal of 'evangelising, discipling and training for leadership, teenagers in southern Africa, especially those from unchurched homes.' With his wife Anne, for 15 years he directed the Ministry, and ran camps every school holidays for teenagers. He is deeply concerned for the substantial and increasing number of young people in today's world who face a dilemma over their sexuality.

## PREFACE

There will be different reactions to the title of this booklet.

Many, brain-washed by today's propaganda that sexual orientation is a matter of birth, will think 'stupid question' and quickly put the book on one side. The booklet is not written for them.

The second group consists of a *substantial* and *increasing* number of people, who from adolescence onwards, realise they have a choice to make about their sexual lifestyle in today's world. This booklet is especially for them.

## INTRODUCTION

When I was an adolescent schoolboy at boarding school in the 1950s we all knew where we stood on the intriguing issues of sex and sexuality that were opening up in our lives.

First, nobody questioned the fact that homosexual practices were wrong, and condemned in the Bible.

Secondly, we lived in a society where homosexuality was unacceptable.

These two external parameters meant that there was no question about the matter. Being 'gay,' or 'queer' as it was known in those days, might be a subject for jokes in the dormitory; and mild homosexual practices were not unknown, but nobody suggested they were right; we all knew they were wrong.

Even as an undergraduate in the early 1960s I found that the same beliefs were by and large accepted.

But now everything is in the melting pot; anything goes. The world at large, with the acquiescence of many church leaders, teaches that being 'gay' or 'straight' is simply a matter of birth, inclination, choice, or both. Hence the huge dilemma facing many young people today.

The psychologists teach us that very few people are created with one hundred percent heterosexual inclinations. Most have genes which place them somewhere along a fairly broad spectrum; many have some homosexual inclinations which may surface at some stage in life, if only for a short time in adolescence. Sometimes environmental or social factors, such as an over-dominant parent of the opposite sex (or other close influence), will increase the tendency for these inclinations to surface.

However, experience tells us that very few people will indulge in homosexual behaviour unless their inclination or appetite is aroused at some stage by an *external human agency*; it may be a group of peers at school, or some older man or woman either in the teens or even middle-age. In other words, although some

people have a greater *inclination* than others, an appetite for homosexuality is almost always *caught*, not inherited.

Some people have a greater susceptibility to certain diseases than others. But there will be no *manifestation* of the disease without *infection* from someone else. So it is with homosexuality; there may be *inclination*, even *orientation*, but the *practice* or *behaviour* does not begin without a human catalyst. That is the story I have heard over and over again for forty years both in the criminal courts and during my ministry with teenagers and students. Hence there is for most an opportunity to make a choice and exercise the God-given gift of free-will.

This booklet is designed to provide in a simple and easily digestible format, the material that any young person needs to make an informed and wise choice about this enormously important issue. God has ennobled us with minds; save only for the decision to receive and follow Christ, there can be no more important choice than this.

## **A. Happiness and Fulfilment**

Grade 1 biology and anatomy teach us that human bodies are designed for male and female sexual relationships. Used in the way the designer and creator intended, sexual relations can be enormously satisfying and fulfilling to both male and female partners. God intended them to be physically, emotionally and spiritually therapeutic.

Motor cars are designed to run on roads, and trains to run on rails. It may be that either can be used and made to work for a time on surfaces for which they were not designed, but the machine will never give the service and satisfaction for which it was made, and inevitably misuse will give rise to problems.

So it is if we use the body and emotions for something never intended. Experience shows that homosexual relationships are relatively short term leading to emotional damage; those engaged in them lack the joie de vivre which God intended; and physical damage nearly always occurs particularly among men. The spread of HIV due to bleeding is one obvious example. Rectal cancer, infectious hepatitis and a host of viral infections may reduce life expectancy by as much as 30%.

## **B. Children**

Common sense tells us that sexual relationships were designed first and foremost for the reproduction of children. The human race is dependent upon male-female relationships. For women and most men parenthood brings wonderful life-long rewards, and is a most enriching experience.

## **C. God's Plan for Sex – How it all began**

The Bible condemns homosexual practices more strongly than heterosexual immorality. Why is this?

Right from the very first chapter in the Bible God makes it clear that his plan and purpose for creation was predominately the male-female relationship:

1. Both men and women were created with an equal status in the image of God. (Genesis 1.26,27).
2. Both men and women were to rule over the earth and all its creatures. (Genesis 1.26)
3. Verse 31 adds that all God had made, was *very good*, thus immediately endorsing the wonder of male-female creation.
4. Chapter 2 of Genesis gives us a second account of the creation of male and female stressing more than once that God made woman as '*a suitable helper for man.*' In other words the two sexes were designed to *compliment* each other.
5. Chapter 2 ends with the *reason* why God made man and woman as two different sexes.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2.24)

This verse is enormously significant in Scripture for at least 3 reasons:

- (a) It is the only verse in the Bible that tells us how sex *is* to be used. Other Scriptures tell us how sex is *not* to be used, but right at the beginning God spells out why he had created two sexes. ‘One flesh’ means sexual intercourse; and nowhere in Scripture do we get any indication whatever of any other proper use of sexual intercourse. It is always and only to be between a man and his wife. God has provided no alternative.
- (b) Jesus unequivocally and explicitly endorsed the teaching of Genesis 1 and 2 when asked about marriage and divorce in Matthew 19. He began by reiterating Genesis 1.27 thereby endorsing *heterosexual creation*, and then

quoted Genesis 2.24 endorsing also *heterosexual marriage* and *heterosexual intercourse* within marriage. This three-fold endorsement gives us Jesus' definitive statement for the use of sex for all time.

- (c) The apostle Paul quotes the same verse in Ephesians 5.31 and goes on to speak of the union of man and woman as a profound mystery which is an allegory of the relationship between Christ and his church. Obviously to Paul sexual relationships as God designed them were something very sacred.

Is it any wonder therefore that when the Holy Spirit, speaking through the various human authors of Scripture, has to condemn the *misuse* of sex (immorality), he does so in strong terms?

And if such condemnation comes as no surprise to us, surely the *unnatural use, or abuse of sex*, between persons of the same gender is understandably condemned even more stringently. Homosexual practices in God's eyes are *both* immoral and unnatural, and do violence to the divine institution of marriage.

### **The Old Testament**

**Sodom and Gomorrah:** There is no doubt why God destroyed these two cities in such a devastating and dramatic way. Genesis 18.20 speaks of the outcry against the cities being 'so great and their sin so grievous.' Why was Lot spared and described in 2 Peter 2.7 as 'a righteous man?' The story of Lot as we follow it in Genesis would hardly lead us to expect the New Testament to commend him in this way. The reason for the commendation must be because he hated and resisted the homosexual practices going on around him (See Genesis 19 where Lot rather than permit homosexuality offers the men from Sodom his two daughters as the lesser of two evils, and 2 Peter 2.8 which tells us that Lot was 'tormented in his soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard'). The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not mere immorality, nor was it only homosexual rape; it was widespread sodomy, most of it no doubt consensual, and the New Testament confirms this in Jude 7. Every city at that time was full of immorality; Sodom and Gomorrah were singled out because

their *homosexual* immorality constituted a greater offence in God's eyes.

A similar incident to Lot's experience is recorded in Judges 19 in a village called Gibeah, again demonstrating that righteous men regarded heterosexual immorality as very much the lesser of the two evils.

**The Mosaic Law:** 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.' (Leviticus 18.22 and 20.13).

This prohibition is part of that section of the *moral law* which deals with incest, adultery, and bestiality. It flies in the face of common sense to say it is merely part of the rules and regulations written only for the health and welfare of the Israelites in the desert.

## **The New Testament – No Change**

It is often said that nowhere in the Gospels do we read of Jesus speaking of homosexuality. Certainly we do not find him speaking *explicitly* of it. Why this is we do not know. We do not read that he ever came face to face with it, and perhaps in the absence of any occasion calling for his censure he felt with St Paul 'it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.' (Ephesians 5.12)

But Jesus did mention it *implicitly* when on more than one occasion he referred to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Matthew 10.15, Matthew 11.23,24). What Jesus was doing was following the example of the Old Testament prophets who referred to the Sodom and Gomorrah when they needed an example or reminder of God's most severe judgement. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Zephaniah all did the same as any concordance will show. And Jude in his epistle follows suit (verse 7).

And we have already seen how Jesus endorsed the principles of *heterosexual* creation, marriage and intercourse by quoting from Genesis 1 and 2. To reiterate the exclusive heterosexual use of sex implicitly condemns homosexual use.

## **Romans 1.18-32    A Devastating Summary – Don't be Deceived**

Paul introduces this section with the words: “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men **who suppress the truth** by their wickedness....”

He goes on to speak of “**their thinking becoming futile and their foolish hearts darkened...**”

He says they “**exchanged the truth of God for a lie**” and these devastating indictments about the mind lead directly to a specific condemnation of homosexual practices which needs to be quoted in full:

**“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.”**

Of course we must comment at once that this terrible Divine indictment is not intended for the Christian believer who has fallen into homosexual practices but rather for the pagan homosexual cults in Rome. For the believer there is always forgiveness and restoration.

At the same time it unequivocally spells out two dire warnings for us. First, homosexual practices are always the fruit of *self-deception*. We start to deceive ourselves that what God calls black can somehow be represented as white. Secondly this passage emphasises that homosexual practices are not merely immoral but *unnatural*, and therefore they are particularly abhorrent to the creator (verses 26 & 27).

## **1 Corinthians 6. 9-11 Distinguish between the Offence and the Temptation**

**“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.....will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”**

Again we see that Paul is concerned to warn of the temptation to be deceived. And we see too that the indictment of God is against homosexual *offenders*, not simply homosexuals. It is not the inclination, nor the temptation to commit homosexual acts, which constitutes the offence, but the acts themselves. As John Stott puts it, “we must be rigorous in differentiating between ‘being’ and ‘doing’ ”. (S-S Ps 384)

The whole tenure of Scripture of course teaches us not only to love the sinner, but always to love and empathise with those tempted to sin, without ever condoning the sin itself.

## **D. Causing offence to my family and friends**

**“Make up your mind not to put any stumbling-block or obstacle in your brother’s way (Romans 14.13)**

This verse is written in the context of doubtful practices, not right and wrong; but if the principle applies to dubious things such as what we eat, surely it must be applicable even more strongly to something that most Christians find abhorrent and believe to be clearly wrong.

Should not any Christian person struggling with the choice of a heterosexual or homosexual life-style be deeply concerned about the impact on his family and friends, and social life, which will

be caused by opting for the latter even if he or she is not convinced by any of the other reasons?

John Smyth

2002