

Theology for Life

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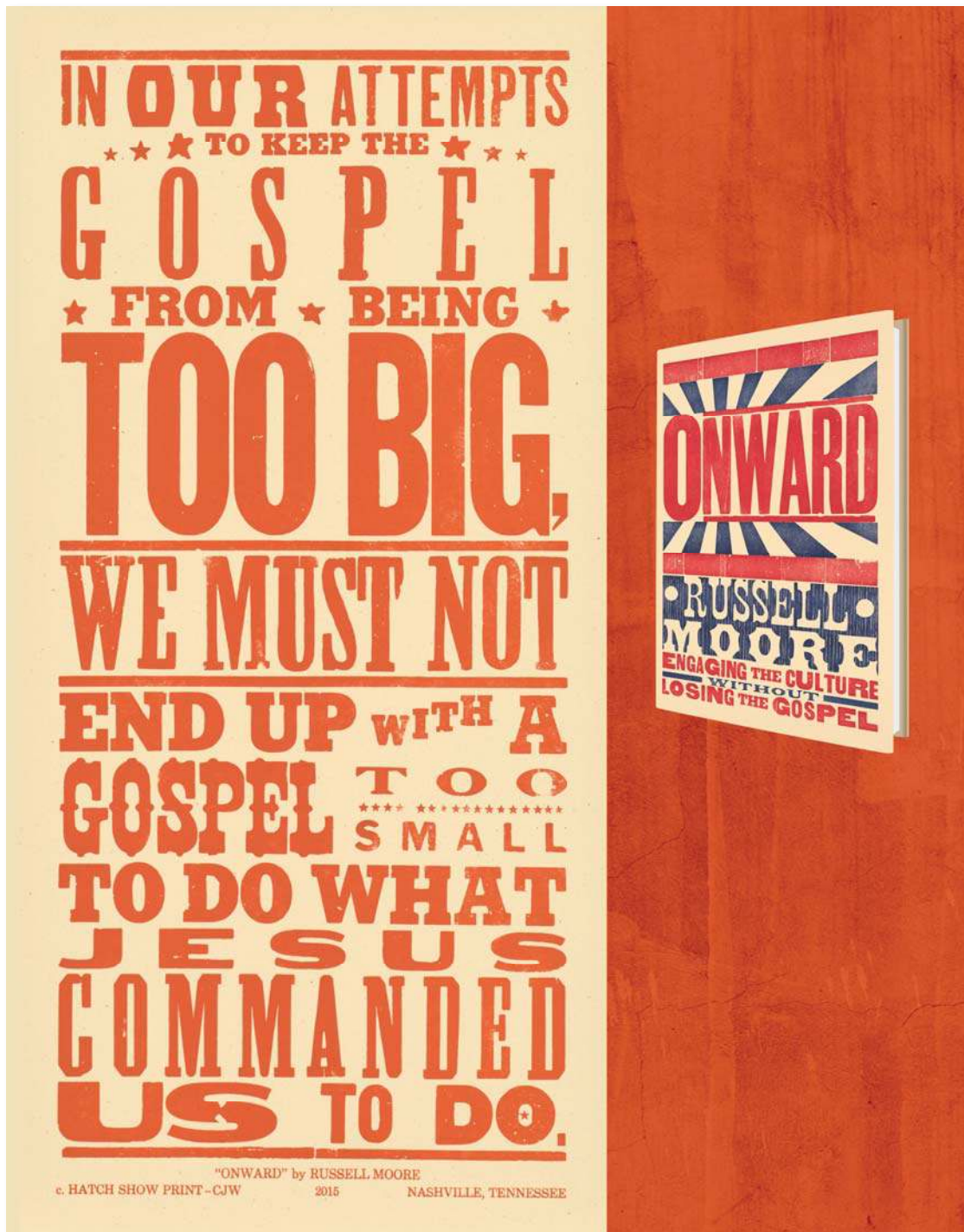


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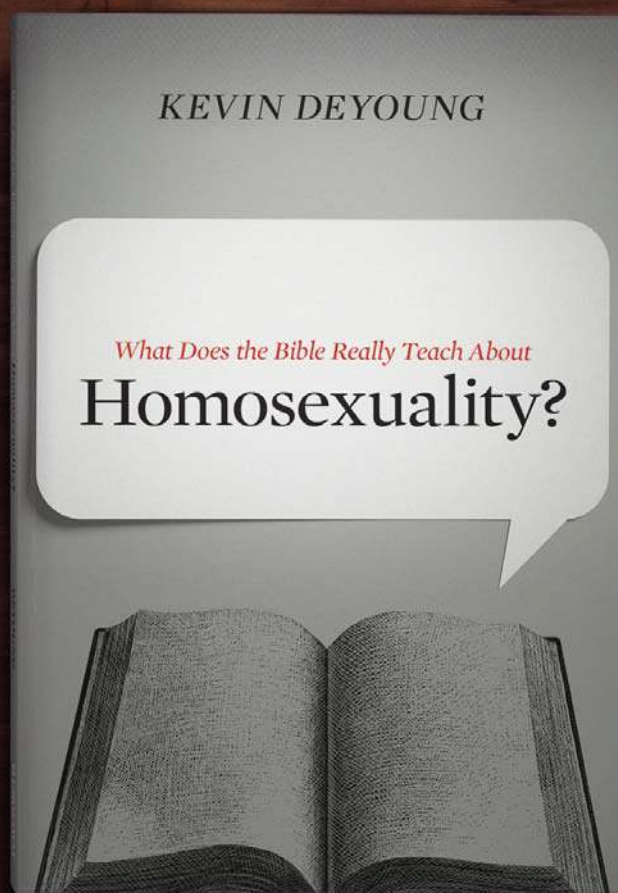
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“EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD READ THIS BOOK.”

—RUSSELL D. MOORE, President, The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission



Examining key passages as well as the Bible's overarching teaching on sexuality, DeYoung responds to popular objections raised by Christians and non-Christians—offering a timely resource for thinking through one of the most pressing issues of our day.

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Editor's Corner

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The past decade has seen an increase of attacks on the traditional definition of marriage between *one man* and *one woman* for the rest of their lives. Marriage was designed by God to be a covenant between one man and one woman, but in this day and age attacks from theological progressives, political liberals, and with increasing frequency from those who oppose the Biblical view of sexuality, have brought us to the point of no return on the traditional definition of marriage.

Those who hold to the pro-gay marriage view believe that homosexuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals. Instead of only pushing for rights for themselves to be acknowledged as couples, those who support “gay marriage” have brought the issue to such a point as to suppress the view of those who hold to the traditional (Biblical) definition of marriage. Under the old definition of *tolerance*, people could discuss issues and have a conversation about important topics. When a conservative Christian now attempts to discuss issues regarding gay marriage and how the Bible is not in support of it, he/she is shouted down and ridiculed for actually believing and applying what the Bible teaches.

Whenever I write or spoke about homosexuality, I am immediately peppered with a barrage of questions. Most of these questions center around the lack of Bible based Christian churches and the desire to find such places of worship. There are hundreds, if

not thousands, of churches, however, who have not bowed the knee to theological progressivism, with its socially-acceptable shifting-sand approach to theology.

As Christians, we have the Word of God which is inspired, inerrant, authoritative, and sufficient for faith and practice. Believing that the Bible is authoritative for faith and practice means that we're not free to do as we wish. Instead our faith and our practice—what we believe, what we say, and do—must match. Theologians call this orthodoxy (what we believe) and orthopraxy (what we do and how we practice our Christian faith). The sad thing is many “Christians” who say they believe the Bible, dismiss biblical orthodoxy (that is what the Bible teaches) and thus call for a practice (homosexuality) that the Bible itself doesn't support. To get there, they do gymnastics with their hermeneutic (how they intercept the Bible).

As Christians we have one Word (the Bible), one Lord in Jesus, and have been called to proclaim the gospel in faithfulness to God's Word. This means that what we believe must inform our lives and our practice. When people minimize or deny what they believe, and then people call to support a practice the Bible doesn't support, they are not being honest. Instead, they are intentionally misleading people away from the revealed Word. Christians can have full confidence in the Word of God. In this issue, we want to help you to grow in your confidence in the authoritative Word by helping you to deal with those who hold to wrong ideas about marriage, and especially homosexuality. This issue isn't going away, rather it's becoming more and more a part of our everyday lives and experience each passing day.

My prayer is that this issue will help build your knowledge base and equip you to serve the Risen Christ, by helping you grow in your confidence in His Word, and thus in the work of the gospel.

For the Glory of Christ,

Dave Jenkins— Executive Editor, *Theology for Life*

What About Marriage and Homosexuality?

By Michael Boling



The issue of whether Scripture denounces the practice of homosexuality, or whether such prohibitions are merely the concoction of fundamentalist sympathizers, is increasingly a central point of discussion in today's society. The question of biblical doctrine and ethical behavior in relation to the permissiveness of homosexuality within the Church is at a crossroads. Many denominations are increasingly allowing openly homosexual church members to attain positions of leadership with little or no condemnation. It is evident that there is a dilemma on how to approach this divisive and controversial issue from both a theological and ethical perspective. This article will clearly show that Scripture teaches that homosexual behavior violates God's design for love and sexuality, while bringing to the forefront the biblical doctrine that sexual conduct should be confined

strictly within the boundaries of a covenant marriage relationship between a man and woman.

Old Testament Position on Proper Sexual Relations

The Scriptural definition of marriage is presented in the opening saga of history, namely by God's creation of Adam and Eve. Claus Westermann notes, "Genesis 2 is unique among the creation myths of the whole of the Ancient Near

East in its appreciation of the meaning of women, i.e., that human existence is a partnership of man and woman." Genesis 2 prepares the moral and social foundation in Scripture for proper sexual relationships as strictly between *a man and a woman* within a covenantal marriage relationship. A suitable helper was not found in all of creation for Adam, thus the reason God created Eve—to be the companion to Adam. The creation of Eve was necessary for both moral and social reasons. James DeYoung notes, "The only model of sexual expression contemplated in Scripture is that which is patterned after the creation model of Genesis 1-2." Such a completion was essential for man and woman to fulfill the command given by God in Genesis 1:28, that is to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it". Marriage and sexual relationships being strictly between a man and a woman were meant by God to provide the

very foundation for social and moral order.

The sexual act of homosexuality cannot fulfill that important mandate by God. DeYoung further notes, "Homosexual practice is an attack against what it means to be human. Reproduction is crucial, for thereby humans enter into the creative divine work of generating further human life, which in turn has the capacity to express love for God and for people. It fulfills God's plan for the human race." Additionally, the very concept of the *imago dei* is altered by homosexual behavior. Man and woman were made in the image of God and the relationship of man and woman was ordained by God. Samuel Shin aptly comments, "The Trinity is the perfect relationship, and when God made man in his own image, he created the interconnectedness that would reflect the image of the communion of the Trinity. To break that connection is to shatter that visage, and that is what sin is, the active aggression and opposition to the will of God."

The Old Testament provides a clear and consistent denunciation of homosexual behavior as an abomination and antithetical to God's moral and social plan for humanity. The argument that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality is a clear example of faulty biblical exegesis. The context of Genesis 19 clearly declares the abomination of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah was their affinity for homosexual behavior, an activity declared in Jude 1:7 as "going after strange flesh" and in 2 Peter 2:7 as the "sensual conduct of unprincipled men".

Despite the attempt by the homosexual community to reframe the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as an issue of *hospitality*, the people of those cities are de-

scribed in Genesis 13:13 as "wicked exceedingly and sinners before the Lord". This is a rather harsh statement if their sin was merely their concern for upholding ancient hospitality codes. Genesis 19 clearly demonstrates homosexuality as perverse behavior and antithetical to proper social and moral

order. It was for this reason God placed such a complete and utter judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah while referring to their sin throughout Scripture as a reminder for subsequent generations to uphold God's principles for sex as strictly between a man and a woman.

"The argument that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was not homosexuality is a clear example of faulty biblical exegesis."

The Mosaic Law placed clear restrictions and outlines for proper sexual behavior. Timothy Dailey rightly comments, "Leviticus does not limit its condemnation to that of homosexuality in a ritual context; no mitigating circumstances are mentioned that would permit such behavior, such as within the context of a loving, committed relationship." Furthermore, Michael Ukleja suggests, "To hold such a distinction, one would have to conclude that adultery was not morally wrong, child sacrifice had no moral implications, and that nothing is inherently wrong with bestiality." To make a claim that homosexual behavior is acceptable behavior, consistent with God's ordained plan for moral and social order within society, is to at the same time lay claim that other behaviors accepted by society as abhorrent are also no longer to be considered as detestable. A major foun-

dation for the Mosaic Law is found in Leviticus 19:2, where God commanded Israel and all subsequent generations, “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.” Holy living, as outlined in the Old Testament law, and later reiterated in the New Testament, meant abstaining from sexual immorality as outlined in Leviticus 18 and 20. To “be holy” meant to obey God’s command found in Genesis 2—that marriage and sexual relations are to be strictly between a man and a woman.

An element of cultic temple worship in ancient pagan cultures was not only the practice of temple prostitution, but also homosexuality. Deuteronomy 23:17-18 declares, “No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them

“One either accepts Paul’s condemnation or rejects Paul’s ongoing authority.”

both.” The Hebrew word for prostitute is *qadesh*, which the homosexual advocates present as strictly referring to *heterosexual* prostitution. The Septuagint (LXX) translates that word as *teliskomenos*, an initiated or dedicated person. James DeYoung notes, “Ancient sources attest to the debauchery carried on at the initiations into the mystery religions, including hallucinogenic drugs, drinking blood, immorality, and homosexuality. Apparently, the LXX translators felt that these terms were the appropriate counterparts for the Hebrew words forbidding heterosexual and homosexual prostitution and behavior.”

God denounced such behavior as adversative to the social and moral order revealed in the Mosaic Law, a command fully intended, not just for Israel, but for all subsequent generations of God’s people. Prostitution, whether it be of the heterosexual or homosexual variety is contrary to the pattern of proper sexual relations between a man and a woman established in Genesis 2 and reiterated throughout the Old Testament. The sexual ethic of the surrounding pagan cultures was not to be included in a society commanded to seek after holiness and to be separate from the surrounding pagan culture.

Derrick Bailey points to the LXX translation of *qadesh* in I Kings 22:46, where it is translated as *endiellagmenos* meaning one who has “either altered his nature by becoming a homosexual pervert, or one who has been transformed by apostasy from a worshipper of Yahweh into a servant of idols.” Such a translation notes the wide variety of perversion taking place in the cultic rituals—practices abhorrent to God and in opposition to His plan for humanity. Dailey notes, “The condemnation of such behavior in various contexts...demonstrates that the Israelites intended to condemn homosexuality in every context there it was encountered” in keeping with the biblical ethic for proper sexual behavior outlined by God throughout the Old Testament.

New Testament Position on Proper Sexual Relations

Despite attempts by the homosexual community to demonstrate otherwise, the New Testament also offers a clear condemnation of homosexuality and all its affiliate

behaviors as wholly against God's ethical guidance for sexual conduct to be confined strictly within the boundaries of a covenantal marriage relationship between a man and a woman. Such an ethical delineation of sexual conduct is supported throughout the Pauline epistles as a demonstration to his readers of the same foundation provided in the Old Testament for proper ethical behavior, namely the need to be holy as God is holy.

Romans 1:24-27 is noted by scholars as the "central text for the issue of homosexual conduct on which Christians must base their moral doctrine". The Apostle Paul clearly discusses the tendency for certain individuals to pursue "shameful lusts", and women and men exchanging "natural relations for unnatural ones" with men "committing indecent acts with other men". Such language hearkens back to Leviticus 18:22 which states, "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."

Robert Gagnon notes, "The dishonoring in Romans 1:26, as in 1:24, is a dishonoring not merely of society nor even primarily of God but rather of one's own self as a human being "gendered" by God in creation and discernible in the material constitution of the body." Homosexual behavior is a rejection and dishonoring of God's original intent for sexual activity to be strictly between a man and a woman in order for procreation, the propagation of the species, and the rearing of children within the confines of a loving, nurturing marriage between a male and female.

Everett Harrison rightly comments, "The folly of homosexuality is proclaimed in its inability to reproduce the human species in keeping with the divine commandment", as found in Genesis 1:28. Homosexual supporters often claim Paul was only providing in Romans 1 a description of the moral depravity of the Greeks. In reality, Harrison explains, what Paul was doing was lifting up "both male and female homosexual acts for special attention...Then Paul detailed a lengthy list of other pagan/Gentile vices—not a random lists, but vices of hostility, the opposite of the virtue of peacemaking. These deviations from divine moral law and the created order had offended God and had both manifested and merited divine wrath." In doing so, Paul connects his statements with the Old Testament declaration of homosexuality as against God's ethical standards. As such, "One either accepts Paul's condemnation or rejects Paul's ongoing authority. This must be the conclusion, for nowhere does he or the rest of Scripture allow for sexual expression outside a heterosexual, monogamous, permanent marriage."

The pattern of condemning homosexuality as contrary to God's original intent for male and female sexual relationships is further reiterated in 1st Corinthians 6:9-11. This passage is a warning by Paul to the Corinthians of the necessity to abstain from the behaviors engaged in by the wicked. Gordon Fee aptly comments, the reason Paul outlines such behavior as wicked was to encourage the Corinthians to, "change their behavior by reminding them that they do indeed belong to God through the gracious work of Christ and the Spirit." Fee also provides excellent analysis of the Greek word *malakoi*, translated as *effeminate*, or having "the basic meaning of soft; but it also became a pejorative epithet for men who were soft or effeminate, most likely referring to the younger, passive partner in a pederastic relationship—the most common

form of homosexuality in the Greco-Roman world.”

The presupposition by many in the homosexual community, in particular those in the church, that God is not opposed to their continuing in such an immoral and unethical sexual union is contrary to Paul’s message in 1st Corinthians 6:11. Just as God commanded the Israelites to be holy as He is holy, Paul reminds the Corinthians that “they are to be and behave differently from the wicked, because God in his mercy has already removed the stains of their past sins, has already begun the work of ethical transformation, and has already given them forgiveness and right standing with himself.” This necessitates abstaining from passions of the flesh, such as homosexuality, for it is a rejection of God’s ethical commands throughout Scripture for holiness.

Furthermore, Paul demonstrates a clear support of Old Testament prescriptions against homosexual behavior by referring to Leviticus 18 in 1st Timothy 1:10. Shin notes, “The reading of the LXX shows the use of *arsen* and *koitai* in the prohibitions of Leviticus 18.” These words form the basis for the word *arsenokoites* translated as homosexuality in most modern translations. Donald Wold, in his treatment of this topic, saliently notes, “When the question of homosexuality came up for him (Paul) in the church at Corinth, we can accurately suppose that Paul’s understanding would be influenced by the Old Testament homosexuality law. And it is on this basis that he uses the term *arsenokoites*, because it accurately reflects the Hebrew of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13.” Paul is reminding his readers and subsequent generations that God’s commands regarding proper ethical sexual behavior as being between a man and a woman have *not* been altered or changed since their inception in Genesis 2. As he did in 1st Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul is reminding Timothy of the necessity for ethical and upright behavior. To participate in the behavior outlined in 1st Timothy 1:10, is to engage in law-breaking, namely the breaking of God’s ethical commands throughout Scripture. Ralph Earle notes, “[The] law is made for adulterers and perverts. The last term is *arsenokoites*, which means male homosexuals...is the peculiar sin for which God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.”

Often homosexual behavior is described as sodomy, with its adherents called Sodomites, in a clear reference to the rampant homosexual behavior that resulted in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by God. Additionally, such a reference was a stark reminder to Timothy and subsequent readers of this epistle of the seriousness by which God deals with behavior that is not only abhorrent, but in contradiction to His commands and ethical standards of behavior for male and female sexual relationships. Attributing any sense of acceptability to continuing in homosexual behavior for believer and non-believer alike is described by Paul as evidence of being deceived. Alex Montoya states, “Paul is condemning sins and vices practiced by the unbelieving world, which should not be practiced by God’s people. These are characteristics of the unrighteous and the lawless and rebellious.” Believers are called to be set apart from the lawless and rebellious deeds of the world, including homosexuality.

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In Conclusion...

As noted by James DeYoung, the condemnation of homosexuality in Scripture

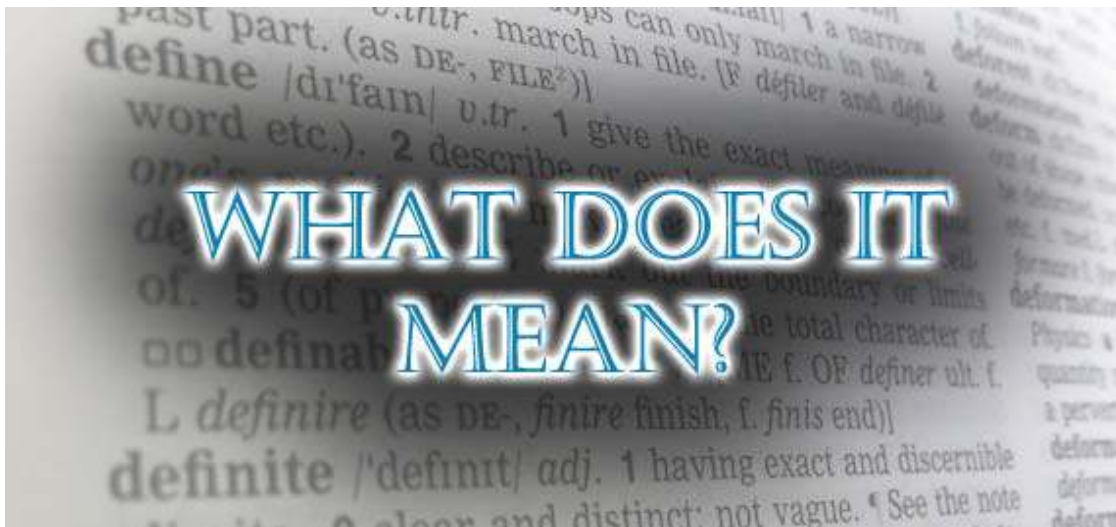
is “universal and absolute. It is never contemplated that one specific form of homosexuality is condemned while others are tolerated or accepted.” God clearly defined proper sexual relationships to be strictly between a married man and woman. Any sexual activity outside such a monogamous relationship is denounced in Scripture as perversion. One of the clearest ethical demands present in Scripture is the requirement to be holy as God is holy. Arthur Holmes rightly comments, “A sexual relationship is not confined to just two persons; it also involves God, the Creator and Lord of us all, who for his own purposes made us the sexual beings we are...Sexual union and reproduction are part of God’s creation, ordained from the beginning in the institution of marriage. Sex must not be taken out of this context.”

Sound ethical sexual behavior is repeatedly demonstrated in Scripture as restricted to a covenantal marriage relationship between a man and a woman. Frank Turek correctly comments, “Marriage is a social institution that provides society with the very foundation of civilization—the procreating family unit.” Within the confines of the marriage covenant, sexual activity is a glorious experience. Greg Bahnsen appropriately notes, “The Bible repeatedly condemns homosexuality, the New Testament itself stressing that it is contrary to God’s law (1st Timothy 9:10), bringing God’s judgment and exclusion from the kingdom (Romans 1:24; 1st Corinthians 6:9-10).” This condemnation is *not* an *antiquated ceremonial restriction* that no longer applies in today’s society, and it is not an observation by Paul of the Greeks or other pagan cultures, devoid of any relevance to the believer. Homosexuality is a clear violation of God’s original design for love and sexuality, as outlined in Scripture. God’s word is consistent on the issue of ethical sexual behavior—namely that sex outside the bounds of marriage is to engage in sexual perversion.

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Romans 1:26-27— A Biblical Discourse on the Term Homosexuality

By Dave Jenkins



One of the more controversial verses in the New Testament

in recent days is Romans 1:26-27, “Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual 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 shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.” While Matthew 7:1-2 may be the most used verse even by non-Christians, Romans 1:26-27 is quickly becoming the go-to passage for those seeking to qualify the truth of Scripture for their own means. According to one website that promotes a homosexually-friendly reading of Romans 1:26-27, “Romans 1

has nothing to do with homosexuality because gays and lesbians are never mentioned in Romans 1.”^[i] Noted Bible scholar Dr. Thomas Schreiner, commenting on Romans 1:24-32 rightly rejects that approach asserting, “Idolatry is “unnatural in the sense that it is contrary to God’s intention for human beings. To worship corruptible animals and human beings instead of the incorruptible God is to turn the created order upside down. Human beings were intended to have sexual relations with those of the opposite sex. Just as idolatry is a violation and perversion of what God intended, so too homosexual relations are contrary to what God planned when he created man and woman.”^[ii]

Many who support homosexual behavior have a problem with this interpreta-

tion. With that said, the idea that the context of this passage doesn't support what Schreiner saliently noted flies in the face of Paul's larger point. Romans 1:18-32 makes a clear distinction between the Creator and the creature. Paul focuses on God and His invisible attributes (Romans 1:20). Dr. Schreiner further elaborates that, "Modern controversy over homosexuality has led to a reevaluation of this text. Some scholars argue that Paul does not condemn all forms of homosexuality but only homosexual acts practiced by people who are 'naturally' heterosexual (e.g. Boswell 1980: 109-12). According to this interpretation, to act contrary to nature involves engaging in sexual activity that is contrary to the personal nature or character of the individual. Thus, Paul should not be understood as implying that all homosexuality is contrary to what God intended from creation. He speaks only against homosexual acts that are practiced by those who are heterosexuals by nature."^[iii]

John Boswell, in attempting to reinterpret Paul's words, attempts to claim that, "The persons Paul condemns are manifestly not homosexual: what he derogates are homosexual acts committed by apparently heterosexual persons. The whole point of Romans 1, in fact, is to stigmatize persons who have rejected their calling, gotten off the true path they were once on."^[iv] This interpretation must be rejected since there is no evidence that Paul understood the "nature" of human beings in the individual and psychological sense that is familiar to people in the 21st century. Biblical scholars Richard Hays and David Malick note that, "Paul rejects homosexuality as contrary to the created order—homosexuality is a violation of what God intended when he creat-

ed men and women" (Hays 1986:192-94; Malick 1993:335). The Jewish historian Josephus (*Against Apion* Book 2, Chapter 24), declares that the marriage of a man is according to nature and proceeds to say that the Old Testament law demands the death penalty for intercourse between males. Both Philo (Spec. Laws 3.7; Abr. 26) and Josephus (*Against Apion*, Book 2, Chapter 35) specifically criticize homosexual relations. Schreiner affirms "there is no evidence that Paul reverses the unanimous Jewish conviction that homosexuality was sinful" (Gen. 19:1-28; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Deut. 23:17-18).^[v]

When one considers the context of Romans 1:18-32 is that which is contained in Romans 1:16-17 (verses that focus on the righteousness of God), and then Paul's teaching on the Creator and the creature, it becomes evident that the interpretation of the homosexual community lacks warrant. Paul first gives the Gospel, then emphasizes God's character to sinners, exposing their need for Jesus. John Calvin stated that the natural world is a theater of God's glory. Romans 1:18-31 deals with the fact that God has made Himself known to humanity, but man rejected and replaced Him with other objects of worship. God delivered two judgments in response to this: one of homosexual behavior and another of an immoral mind, each of these demonstrate His abandonment and wrath toward humanity's rebellion.

The argument advanced by homosexuals that Romans 1:26-27 isn't talking about homosexuality is ultimately found wanting. Paul's argument begins in verse 19 where he declares that in the same way people naturally know God by instinct with creation itself, demonstrating God's existence through what He's made, people

naturally and instinctively know right sexual practice because of how the human body was made. Ultimately, when one considers both the context and subsequent meaning of this passage, it becomes clear that Romans 1 is referring to all forms of homosexuality and behavior. What matters is not what we think the passage means, but rather what the passage says. Homosexual behavior, in the eyes of God, is sin.

Whether you believe that it is sin, or whether you reject it, is a matter of utmost importance and urgency. Paul notes in 1st Corinthians 6:9-10, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

All that matters is what God has said. When God—who created man in His image and likeness—speaks, man must heed what He has said. To not heed what He has declared is to reject Him. God has spoken through His Word, which means how we feel about it at the end of the day isn’t of consequence. We either respond to His Word, or reject Him entirely. Paul teaches in 1st Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you. 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.”

“God as the Creator has the right to insist and demand what He wills of His creation.”

Here’s the good news! God as the Creator has the right to insist and demand what He wills of His creation. He can take away our lives or continue to sustain them. That is His right. Yet God, in His mercy, reaches out to man through the finished work of Christ. Paul, before his discourse on the Creator-creature distinction, provides the message of the Gospel in Romans 1:16-17; namely when he talks about the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God refers to God satisfying His justice by putting the penalty of man’s sin on Christ’s shoulders. It is *revealed* to those who confess faith in Christ, so that they might live faithfully. This means that, while the homosexual community rejects the clear teaching of Romans 1, God still reaches out to them calling them to turn from their idolatry to Himself, through Jesus who promises to credit sinners with His righteousness.

[i] <http://www.gaychristian101.com/how-can-you-say-that-romans-1-has-nothing-to-do-with-homosexuality.html>

[ii] Thomas Schreiner, *Romans BECT* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 1998), 54.

[iii] Ibid, 95.

[iv] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), Pg. 335.

[v] Thomas Schreiner, *Romans BECT* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 1998), 96.

What is Gospel Culture?

Gospel Liturgy in Our Homes

By Matthew Sims



Gospel culture sounds odd.

How do you create culture? And if that can be done, how does one get the gospel into it? These are important questions, and ones that I will address in this article. Culture is created when a community of people shares common symbols, languages, dress, and stories. Stories are central for creating culture. They are the glue that binds us together as a community. For those of us who grew up in the 80's, it might be a favorite phrase from *The Breakfast Club* or *The Goonies*. Before film, it was centralized around national myths. For example, some of the

most common are the King Arthur myths—which create a certain value system and expectation for its culture. Or Homer's *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*. In America, there's a certain mythos surrounding the American cowboy. Tough. Rugged. *True Grit*. That kind of manliness informed a whole generation of young men.

Israel used stories to create culture as well. These stories centered on the words and acts of God. Central to their story was the Exodus. Upon leaving Egypt and arriving in the Promised Land, Moses commands the Israelites:

"And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you

shall swear. You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth. . .

“When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us’ (Deut. 6:10-15, 20-25).

Story-telling was central to the living faith of the Church gathered in the Old Testament. The parents within the Church were strictly commanded to diligently (v. 7) teach their children the story.

Likewise, in the New Testament story is still central; the Gospels are New Testament stories of Jesus leading captives out of spiritual bondage through the

waters of baptism and into new life. The gospel encompasses the story of the Old Testament and continues forward. You move from the creation, fall, and hope of redemption in the Old Testament (based on the redemption by God from Egypt), to redemption in Jesus Christ—the “Yes and Amen” to God’s promises—and hope for the final consummation (guaranteed by the Spirit who came after Christ rose and ascended).

There are not two stories then (Old and New Testaments), there’s one large story. The one story fits all other stories

“Pay careful attention to the inclusiveness of Moses’ words. “You shall teach [your children] diligently” Where? Everywhere.”

within its pages. The emphasis on the Exodus (physical redemption from slavery) in the Old Testament parallels the Second Exodus (spiritual redemption from slavery to sin and Satan) in the New Testament. Jesus Christ took the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37) and gave them flesh and life. This movement from death to life is foundational for understanding our story within the gospel story. Caroline Cobb, in the song, “Wake Up,” sings these haunting lyrics, “Sin, it comes and takes the reins. Builds its kingdom on the backs of slaves.” The biblical imagery is rich. She captures the essence of the first and second Exodus in those short lines. Egypt thrived on the manual labor of the Israelites. This was a physical subjugation. God stepped into the story through Moses and redeemed them bringing them from death to life. In the same way, Sin and Satan

also tender in the slave trade. But God again has stepped in, through Jesus His Son, and moves us from death to life. And while Scripture frequently calls us slaves to Christ, the primary imagery for our new state is *adopted sons* and *fellow heirs with Christ* (Romans 8:12-17).

A Gospel Liturgy

We can now see how culture is “created”, but let us now turn to another question: “How do we do this [create culture] in our home with the gospel?” First let us circle the question, and then put the landing gears down. Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Pay careful attention to the inclusiveness of Moses’s words. “You shall teach [your children] diligently” (vv. 7-9). Where? *Everywhere*. Not just at church, but in your home. When you wake up and when you sleep. When you are walking outside, or when you’re in your home. When you’re at your table. Write the Word of God on your face; on your hands. This

passage always reminds me of Dr. Seuss’s *Green Eggs and Ham*. Sam pesters his friend to try green eggs and ham in every possible situation, until his friend *finally* relents and tries the green eggs and ham. Moses posits the same strategy. Parents must tell their children the story of the gospel in all areas of life. We must speak about the story of the gospel until it becomes the very air our children breathe.

A Gospel Church and Home

The first order of business is finding a church that preaches the full story of the gospel. Find a church that creates a gospel culture in its weekly meetings. Historically, this kind of gospel culture has been called *liturgy*. Liturgy is the structure of the service. All churches have a liturgy even if it’s not acknowledged. Your church tells a story. The only questions are: “What’s the emphasis of the story you’re telling?” and “Who is the Hero of your story?” Mike Cosper explains the historical liturgy of the church:

“The overarching movement is a retelling of the story, remembering God is holy (adoration), we are sinners (confession and lament), Jesus saves us from our sins (assurance, thanksgiving, petition, and instruction). It’s a movement that runs parallel to another way of thinking about the story of the gospel: creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.”

The importance of finding a church with explicit gospel liturgy is simple. Moses commands us to teach our children in every place and every moment about the gospel story. The church is part of that “everywhere”. Also, as Mike Cosper dis-

cusses throughout *Rhythms of Grace*, the liturgy of the church buttresses the faith of its members. It prepares them to recite the gospel in their everyday life. On Sundays, we are the church gathered, but during the week, in our homes, we are the church scattered.

So you see, if we are to make the story of the gospel central in our homes, it must be the central story in our churches. For good health, you cannot have one without the other. So after you've located a church that faithfully retells the gospel story and sends you out into your homes (and neighborhoods) to do the same, how do you daily retell the story everywhere? The most fundamental expression of that liturgy should include the gospel story as creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. All of life can be filtered through these four acts of the gospel story. We can discuss movies, literature, life, sex, friends, marriage, food, and religion through the lens of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. And we *must* do this.

Storytelling as Gospel Liturgy

First, you must be regularly applying the gospel story to *your* life. Your story-time doesn't need to be long and theologically deep, but it should be comprehensive over the course of your family's life. For instance, I recently sat down with my daughters and had a three-minute conversation about why we don't pick on other people. We talked about God as creative King over everyone (Creation). We discussed how He made us all in His image, and how when we make fun of people, we don't honor that image. Or another example happened recently when I talked with

my daughters about what to do if someone tries to touch them inappropriately. My oldest made a comment about "bad people" out there and I gently reminded her that sin lives within us all (Fall).

Second, you must regularly feast with them on Scripture. Don't feel the pressure to create a three-point sermon and a Puritan-esque application. Read God's Word and explain it in language your children will understand. Highlight passages that highlight the gospel story. Don't over think it. I learned the importance of reading Scripture with my family the hard way. When I got married and had my first child, I kept asking myself, "How can I share the love, joy, and intimacy I experience with God with my family?" The answer was too simple. I had been having my own personal feast with God in His Word. I kept inviting my family, "Come join me. There's food without price!" But I had rarely actively nourished my family. After I finished my yearly Scripture reading program one year, I decided to take two weeks off to meditate on what God had taught me. I also decided to read through Ephesians multiple times over two weeks. The last day of that two-week period, I was finishing up Ephesians and Paul's admonition to husbands struck me fresh. He commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His bride "that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:26-27).

I asked myself, "How does Christ nurture, care for, and cleanse His bride?" The answer was simple—the Word. Next I had a conversation with myself that went something like this: "You idiot. You've

been feasting with God and telling your family how great this food tastes and how wonderful the fellowship is, but you have never committed yourself to nourish them.”

The Spirit will work in our families by the same power with which He raised Christ from the dead. It's that power which is evident in Scripture because the words are God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Spirit equips our families to live on mission within our communities, churches, and families with these words. Third, you must create a gospel liturgy in your daily life. Here's what I mean: the gospel story should create a rhythm in your home. Your children should constantly see the different chapters explored in the daily activities of your home. For example, you should strive to honor every member of your home as image-bearers. You should especially do this with your children. It's easy to speak and treat them in ways which we would never treat another adult. Don't belittle them. Don't treat them as sub-human just because they're small. Honor the image of God in their little hearts, souls, and minds.

You should strive for humility within your home (Philippians 2:1-10). As a parent it can be easy to brush off your sins, or make excuses about acknowledging your sinfulness in front of your family. Your depravity doesn't have that problem, it rears its ugly head in your home regularly, so show equal humility. When you sin, own it; if you sin publically, own it publically. If you made a bad call, own it. If your child was right and you were wrong, own it. You're building a foundation for a relationship of honor, respect, and trust with your kids. You're reflecting the liturgy in your church (confession) in your home.

Closely related to this, you should

be daily repenting of your sins. You know how realtors say, “Location! Location! Location!”? I say, “Repent! Repent! Repent!”

“Daddy, you didn't treat mommy kindly. You need to repent.”

As I mentioned above, if you sin, repent of it appropriately. Funny story (at least now): my wife and I were discussing something rather silly (now that we look back on it), but our sinful hearts got the best of us, and we began snapping at each other (and just generally being sinners) in front of our kids. We took a few minutes apart to let the dust settle (mainly because I had to take my oldest daughter to her swim lessons). I had both of my daughters in the car, and Claire, my oldest, says, “Daddy, you didn't treat mommy kindly. You need to repent.”

I could tell her spirit was not trying to create conflict, but was repeating back what I had told her a thousand times. The Spirit pierced my heart. I had sinned against my wife, my kids, and God. I looked back at my daughters and said something like, “Daddy did sin against mommy. I didn't treat her with respect and love. We don't treat mommy that way. I do need to repent and ask her to forgive me. Will you girls forgive me as well?” Claire quickly replied, “Dad, I knew you needed to repent. I forgive you.”

The point is—you will be surprised how much your kids soak up. You may not think they are listening or that it's making a difference, but it is. God works; the Spirit changes them little by little. Al-

so, don't be afraid to repent as a family. If you've made bad choices as the leader of your home and your family has suffered, repent personally and ask your family as a whole to repent with you.

You must also teach your kids to rejoice. Show them the beauty of Jesus Christ. Teach them how to be a Christian hedonist (experiencing full joy in life through God). Show them how the stuff most hedonists seek after is mud compared to the lasting joy found in God. C. S. Lewis explores this beautifully:

If there lurks in most modern minds the notion that to desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and is no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

Part of the way you do this is by not making God out to be a curmudgeon. He's not some cosmic Odin, just waiting to strike us with lightning. He's not capricious, He's loving. He gives us a thousand good gifts—teach your kids to enjoy them appropriately. Douglas Wilson summarizes this principle quite nicely,

Your garden of yes should have a tree of no in it, and not the other way around (Gen. 2:16). God is not a skinflint, and you should not paint Him as being one. In Christ, all the promises are yes and amen (2 Cor. 1:20). Resemble the God you serve.

Fourth, teach your kids the value of eating around the table. You might consider this out of place, but remember, we are intentionally trying to mirror the gospel liturgy from our churches in our homes. The church shares a gospel meal at the Lord's Supper. A large chunk of Jesus's interaction with sinners in the Gospels happens around a table. One of the main protests of His ministry was, "He

Thorin Oakenshield, the leader of the dwarf party, on his deathbed says to Bilbo, "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world."

eats with sinners." Teach them the importance of creating relationships, of listening, of sharing stories, of laughing, and of eating and drinking—all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). In J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, Thorin Oakenshield, the leader of the dwarf party, on his deathbed says to Bilbo, "If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world." I think he's on to something. We enjoy these things because they are gifts from God and because Jesus models how they should be enjoyed when He partakes of a marriage festivity, or when He eats with prostitutes and tax collectors, or when He eats His last meal with

His disciples. The table should be a central place for sharing the gospel in your home and for storytelling.

I would strongly encourage you to include a gospel rich storybook and a solid catechism in this time. However you do this is great, but catechisms have stood the test of time. Catechisms are like a skeleton. In our visual culture, I think we will look back and find that gospel-rich storybooks play a similar role. I'm thinking something like Sally Lloyd Jones's *Jesus Storybook Bible*. She makes Jesus the Hero and beautifully unfolds the gospel story as she walks you through the grand narrative. N. D. Wilson says stories are catechisms with flesh, and I couldn't agree more.

Once the table has been established as such, you will naturally find yourself inviting others to join your table. One thing I always knew growing up: I could bring home a friend most nights and my mom would have enough food. She was always ready to entertain. She made sure our home was a place I delighted to bring my friends. This shouldn't be a normal, run of the mill hospitality; it should be cruciform hospitality. Let your guests (friends, families, and strangers) see how the gospel story shapes your home. Let them see the cycle of humility, repentance, and rejoicing. Let them hear the words of life. Introduce them to Jesus Christ around the table.

Fifth, sing with your children. I enjoy singing. I love music. But I am not musically inclined and neither is my wife. I would love to learn to play the guitar so that we could do this better, but because I'm old now (relatively, anyway), I'll settle for making one of my daughters learn to play! With technology though, we

have no excuse. Right now we use Spotify and turn on our favorite songs, hymns, and Psalms and sing out loud. We sometimes even dance. Don't be afraid to joyfully and reverently have fun. Don't make singing a drag. Teaching them to sing songs about Jesus will also teach our children to be in-tune to "the glorious creation song that hums and buzzes around us."

Sixth, don't be afraid to talk about difficult subjects. John Milton once said, "Let [Truth] and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?" I would encourage you, as your children grow older and you increase the time you spend in the Word, to use those times as launching pads for difficult conversations. It's a lot easier to talk about homosexuality, rape, murder, hate, and death when Scripture is your starting point. It's a lot harder when MTV is.

Lastly, teach them to love the gospel more than they love rules. You will establish rules for your homes. We do not allow my youngest daughter (who is two years old) outside by herself. She could be hit by a car, kidnapped, or be eaten by a bear (okay, maybe not the last one), but we made this rule because God says to love your neighbor and that includes my daughter. We wouldn't be loving her well if we let her wander. However, as she grows, that rule will gradually change. I am preparing her *to go out*, and eventually, I will send her into the world. So be humble when making applications from Scripture. You aren't God. If your thirteen-year-old son asks you why you still won't let him go outside, you might consider humbly re-applying the command "love your neighbor".

Another way you can help your

children love the gospel more than rules is by making simple rules. God gave Israel two commandments, “Love God and love your neighbor”—which was the root of their entire legal system. The legal code of the Old Testament is far less complicated than our current legal code in the United States. God puts us all to shame when it comes to making simple rules. Consider the first rule in the Garden, “Don’t eat the fruit from one tree.” Make a few rules that are easy to remember and can evolve as your children grow.

Make *the gospel* the primary hedge around your family, *not* your cultural standards and preferences. Many churches emphasize building hedges—protecting your family by setting extra-biblical standards against sin. Building hedges in itself isn’t wrong; we all apply biblical principles in our daily life. However, these Biblical principles must not *become* Scripture. What I mean is, we must always be ready to evolve as our understanding of Scripture matures biblically. We must passionately hold fast to Scripture and we must fervently seek the Lord as we sojourn in this earthly wilderness. But we should easily release our cultural expressions when their “sell-by date” passes. It’s too easy to make our cultural expression of Christianity *the standard* for everyone.

The primary hedge we must build is a gospel hedge. We must protect our family by bringing the gospel to bear in all of life. Crucial in this regard is understanding that God created this world and said it was good. It all starts with “it is good”. You start with fall and it’s hard to make beginning from end. Gospel is always better than Law. This daily rehearsal of the gospel will create gospel hedges. These gospel hedges will prepare our families for living life as sojourners—in the world but not of the world.

Tom Holland’s *Contours of Pauline Theology* is masterful in the way he draws our attention to the theme of the New Exodus in the New Testament.

Caroline Cobb, *The Blood + The Breath: Songs That Tell the Story of Redemption* (2013)

Mike Cospers’s *Rhythms of Grace* gave me the grammar to flesh out what creating gospel liturgy in the home would look like.

Mike Cospers, *Rhythms of Grace* (Crossways, 2013), 122

C. S. Lewis, *Weight of Glory* (Harper Collins, 1980), 26

Douglas Wilson, “Mechanics of Fatherhood,” May 5, 2012, <http://dougwils.com/s8-expository/topical/meachnics-of-fatherhood.html>

I recommend Tim Chester’s *A Meal with Jesus*. See my review <http://grace4sinners.blogspot.com/2012/01/book-review-meal-with-jesus.html>

J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (Ballantine Books, 1966), 273

You could go old school and use the Westminster Catechisms or the Heidelberg Catechisms. I would recommend starting with something simple like Carine MacKenzie’s *My First Book of Questions and Answers* when your children are infants and as they move into the pre-school years transition into something like the recently released *New City Catechism* (<http://www.newcitycatechism.com/home.php>) which captures the best of the Westminster and Heidelberg Cate-

Pushing the Antithesis on Homosexuality

By Rev. Jason M. Garwood



The question of epistemology is not a short discussion. Many minds in history have attempted to answer the question, “How do you *know* that?” For the Christian, we must understand this pre-suppositional apologetic, and remember that we serve the God of knowledge, logic, and rationale. Without God as the foundation for knowledge, the only option is absurdity. It’s a fruitless endeavor to try and find some other source for ethics, morality, and knowledge somewhere else in the universe, and the reason isn’t because we Christians are “bigots” who think we have all the answers. No, we do not have all the answers, but we know *Someone* who does. It’s simple, really—the Christian worldview is based upon not only the general revelation of God in nature, but the

specific revelation of God, both in the person of Jesus Christ, and His inspired Word. Because of this, we ask, “By what standard?” By what standard, Mr. Proponent-of-Homosexuality, do you use to justify your dogma? That’s what we’re interested in. And we still haven’t heard an answer.

The Bible is clear: homosexuality is a sin. And though we dare not conflate it and other sins into some sort of reducible category of

common acceptance, this is precisely the tactics used by those who wish to promote sodomy. “Homosexuality is no different than gluttony and gossip.” On one level they are correct—all sin is sin against a Holy and Righteous God, and all sin deserves the unending, better yet, unquenchable Wrath of God for eternity. But far be it from me to believe for one second that reducing it down to this level of commonality somehow makes it okay. May it never be!

But alas, I digress. The truth of the matter is a matter of truth: God sees all sin as sin, and some sins as different than others. For example, Proverbs 6:16-19 says:

*“There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an **abomina-***

tion to him: *haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.*”

In this discussion, we must be clear on one thing: the Bible’s vision for marriage has never been between same-gendered people, but between one anatomically-male person, and one anatomically-female person. Forever. Not a man and a man, not a woman and a woman. Not a man and two women, nor a woman and two men. One man, and one woman. This is biblical marriage from Genesis to Revelation.

And yet this is not enough. It’s not enough for the revisionists who claim that God has somehow changed His mind on the matter. “That was then, this is now,” seems to be the resounding message.

“This is America, and freedom is the tattoo on Uncle Sam’s forearm....”

“Paul was a product of his world *then*, and since we know better *now*,” we are told, “We should go ahead and allow for two people that love each other to be in a committed relationship.”

Why Two, Why People, And Why ‘Committed’?

Let us push the antithesis even further: by what standard ought we to allow

for just *two* people? Why not seven? Or ten? By what standard ought we to allow for it to be restricted to *people*? Can I marry my office door, since I spend a lot of time with it? Who is to say that I cannot marry my books? I like them, a lot... By what standard ought we to look to in order to consider the validity of fidelity in *any* relationship? Why must they be committed only to one another?

The revisionists want to try and keep the slope as sturdy as possible without heading down the hill even further, so they must allow for some wiggle room while still trying to commit to the Bible as much as possible. Of course, not all revisionists care what Scripture says about the issue, and they make no apologies for making up their own standard of morality (to this day I have yet to get answer as to *what* that standard is). But some do still care about “god,” as it were, so they try to keep the talk as close to Scripture as humanly possible, totally cognizant of the fact that their consistent apothegms like “live and let love”, serve as a smokescreen to the ginormous cliff that is at the bottom of the slope, namely, the cliff of God’s *wrath*.

Listen, I get it, I really do. This is America, and freedom is the tattoo on Uncle Sam’s forearm. But let us not kid ourselves: freedom only goes as far as Christ. In other words, the revisionist’s insistence upon “equality and tolerance” only serves to promote further inequality and further intolerance. Again, we push the antithesis: by what standard ought we to tolerate *anything*? By what standard are we to be *equal*? Should we eliminate all days of the week because Sunday is spelled differently than Friday, and heaven forbid we make Thursday feel any less superior because

it's not the weekend! Where does the madness end?! And that's just it—there is no end because there is no standard. Can we defend what the Bible teaches on this issue? Absolutely. The Bible's position on homosexuality is so far from unclear, that 20/20 vision looks like blindness to its clarity. But that's not all we can do. We can ask the revisionists and those who they claim to represent a similar question. *Why* do you insist on discriminating against polygamists? Against rapists? Against pedophiles? Shouldn't they have the same freedom to express themselves as you? The response is always the same... *Crickets*.

It all boils down to ethics, and as Christians, we serve the God of ethics. He *invented* it. God's standard of justice is impeccable. The Psalmist declares, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne" (89:14). God owns logic, the sun, all trees, all heartbeats, every flower, every iPhone (or any other technology), all oxygen, all nations, and *all ethics*. That, or better, *He* is our standard. The Word of God is sufficient for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and lest we make God a liar by making up the rules as we go, we would do well to fall to our knees and repent to Him. He is patient, *and* He is angry at sin.

Here's the concern for me as a pastor, and I make no apologies for saying this. If reformation is going to spread across the land, and I do believe regeneration by the Spirit to be the only answer to the conquering of the gospel in our nation, we must rediscover the book of the Law. If it isn't obvious, I'm referring to the story of King Josiah found in 2 Kings 22. In sum: Hilkiah the High Priest discovered the book of the Law (probably a copy of Deu-

teronomy) in the Temple while cleaning it. The King's secretary read the scroll to the king, and in response, Josiah repented. But this repentance was a deep sort of repentance. He made recompense to God through his sackcloth and ashes, and led the nation to revival through his heartfelt repentance. He aligned himself with the Word of God and sought to align his people with the Word of God. Why? Because he finally understood, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Ps. 33:12).

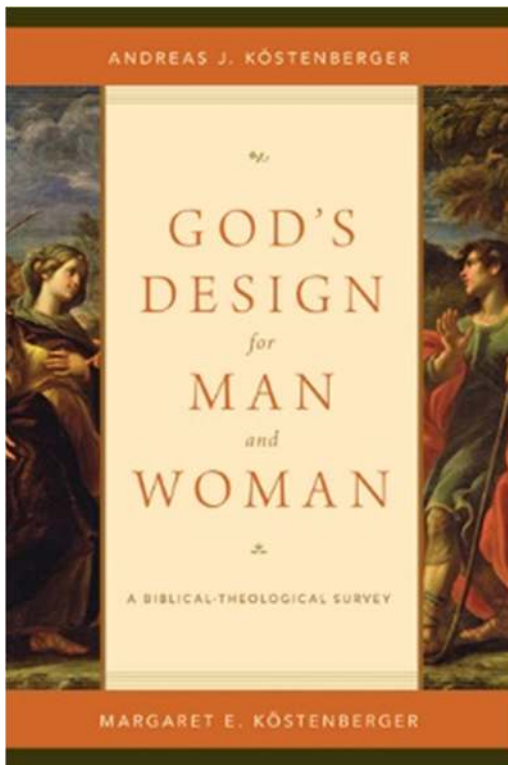
In our discussion with those who wish to defend the homosexual thesis, we must cling to the book of the Law (our Bible). We make no apologies for it, but instead challenge our neighbors by calling them to repentance, and turning to the God they *know* exists. Why do we know they exist? Because the Bible says they do (Romans 1:32), and they give evidence of it at every turn. They care about morality to some extent; they continue to borrow capital from the Christian worldview (two people, commitment, etc.). This is where the conversation must go as we seek as the Church to be salt and light of the Earth.

God is the God of ethics, and His image bearers all have the work of that Law written on their hearts (Romans 2:15). The issue of homosexuality will not go away any time soon, and so we cling to the authority of Scripture while passionately, and even patiently, begging for those who would promulgate this aberrant belief to give us some answers, while imploring them to be reconciled to God. This is pushing the antithesis on homosexuality.

God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey

An Author Interview with Dr. Andreas Köstenberger

By Dave Jenkins



Dr. Andreas J. Köstenberger is **Founder of Biblical Foundations™** and **Senior Research Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southeastern Seminary**. His most recent publication is [For the Love of God's Word](#). Forthcoming books include [The First Days of Jesus](#)

and [Going Deeper with New Testament Greek](#). For Dr. Kostenberger's publications and speaking engagements, see his website, www.biblicalfoundations.org.

T4L: Thank-you very much for taking time to do this interview with *Theology for Life Magazine*! Let us start by asking, what is your book, [God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey](#), about?

Andreas Köstenberger: *God's Design for Man and Woman* is a biblical-theological survey of what the Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—has to say about the identities and roles of men and women. We start out discussing the importance of biblical interpretation, the influence of culture on hermeneutics, and the role of biblical theology in understanding the Bible's message to us in this area. We then make our way through all of Scripture, starting with Genesis 1-3, the rest of the Old Testament, Jesus, the early church, Paul, and then through the rest of the New Testament. We conclude with a fairly-lengthy chapter on application, "God's Design Lived out Today", to help people think through the relevance of the Bible's teaching on this topic for them today.

T4L: *God's Design for Man and Woman* is one of the most interesting and helpful books I've read covering biblical gender roles. Can you tell us why you felt the need to take a biblical-theological approach to this issue?

Andreas Köstenberger: My wife Margaret (who co-authored the book with me) and I have been teaching and researching this topic for over two decades. We have found that discussions on gender have often have been polemical, at times even combative. Our desire is simply to determine what Scripture says on the subject and to present its natural teaching in a winsome way. Also, we've found that many books on the subject focus solely on women (or in some cases only men) but rarely discuss both in proper *balance* and in relation *to each other*. Our desire was that *both* voices, male and female, be heard throughout the pages of our book. In all of this, it has been our desire to help equip a new generation to witness to the beauty, goodness, and wisdom of God's design for man and woman in a culture that is increasingly rejecting biblical revelation and radically redefining gender in strictly social and individualistic terms.

T4L: Did you learn anything as a result of your studies in preparing for this book that you hadn't considered before, as it relates to the connection between biblical gender roles and redemptive history?

Andreas Köstenberger: Certainly. Our study of Genesis 1-3 was particularly rewarding in exploring God's original design and its distortion at the fall, with its abiding consequences. First, the relationship

that God intended from the beginning emphasizes a partnership aspect. Second, the dynamics of the Fall bring to light how we can guard ourselves against repeating the same kind of pattern of the husband abdicating his leadership role and leaving the woman vulnerable to Satan and his lies. I was also impressed by the pervasiveness of the pattern of male leadership and male-female partnership *throughout* Scripture. In terms of male leadership, we see a direct line from Adam to the patriarchs, national deliverers such as Moses or Joshua, Israel's kings, the Levitical priests, and then Jesus and the Twelve, the Pauline circle, and New Testament (NT) elders. At the same time, we see male-female partnership in the way in which both the man and the woman are created in God's image, and how in both Testaments women are prophesying, witnessing, and participating in the life of God's people. The key, we've come to see, is to hold these two pervasive patterns in Scripture in proper tension and to affirm both without diminishing either.

T4L: It can be tough at times to keep from diminishing one pattern or the other. When it comes to roles of men versus women in the home, what is the best piece of marriage advice you've ever received?

Andreas Köstenberger: I hope I'm not evading your question when I say that the best marriage "advice" I've ever received is found in Ephesians 5. I once was asked to teach a class on this passage, and in order to prepare for this assignment, I studied Ephesians 5 in the context of the entire letter. I was struck by the way in which the passage is embedded in the book in 3 important ways: (1) Ephesians 1:9-10,

where Paul says that it's God's plan of the ages to realign all of creation once again under the lordship and *headship of Christ*, which then is shown to include marriage; (2) Ephesians 5:18, which calls on believers to be *Spirit-filled*, which then is extended to wives and husbands; and (3) Ephesians 6:10-18, which sets marriage, I believe, within the context of spiritual warfare: our struggle is not against our

"Embrace God's design for man and woman in Scripture as worthy of active proclamation, modeling, and discipleship."

spouse, but against the devil; and we need to put on *God's armor* to withstand the attacks of our *spiritual enemy*. So marriage is to be seen within the framework of God's plan for the ages in Christ, it is for Spirit-filled believers, and it requires spiritual protection against the enemy. You don't often read that in popular books on marriage!

T4L: Very true! That type of "advice" is hard to come by, even in biblically-based marriage books. So, what do you hope lay-Christians get out of the book?

Andreas Köstenberger: I want them to see, as my wife and I have seen, that God's design for man and woman is beautiful, wise, good, and highly beneficial for us. I want them to see that God's plan is established at creation, distorted (but not permanently overturned) at the fall, restored

in Christ, and awaiting consummation in heaven. I want people to see the big picture, which is God's consistent, coherent, and unified plan pervading all of Scripture, so they don't get turned off by polemics. I want them to understand that who we are as men and women is central to our human existence, and to the way in which we live out our Christian commitment in our marriages, in the church, and in the surrounding culture. Then I want them to share what they've learned with others, especially with the next generation, that will need to have a clear vision of God's design for man and woman in a culture that is radically departing from traditional male-female roles, often in increasingly erratic and even self-destructive ways.

T4L: Now more than ever, this is important for the church as a whole to understand. With such polar-opposite beliefs being promoted by our society today, what advice would you give to pastors and ministry leaders in regards to teaching on marriage and sexual sin?

Andreas Köstenberger: Don't avoid the topic. Embrace God's design for man and woman in Scripture as worthy of active proclamation, modeling, and discipleship. Trust God with whatever opposition, resistance, or even persecution may come your way as you stand firm and remain faithful to Scripture in this vital area of our lives. Stand against unfair stereotypes of the biblical position and celebrate the beauty, wisdom, and goodness of God's design. Live it out in your marriage relationship: as a man, accept your God-given responsibility as a spiritual leader and nurture your wife and your children spiritually, and don't leave your wife vulnerable

by being passive. As a woman, affirm your husband's leadership and be supportive, responding to his godly initiative; partner with him in ministry and in fulfilling the Great Commission to disciple the nations. Equip the next generation with a vision of gender complementarity that weds male leadership and male-female partnership in the way God intended it and in the way Christ restored it, for His glory and for our good, as we await His return.

T4L: Excellent advice, indeed! Thank you very much for sharing your insights with us. Do you have any other suggestions for how people can use this material in small groups or in their churches?

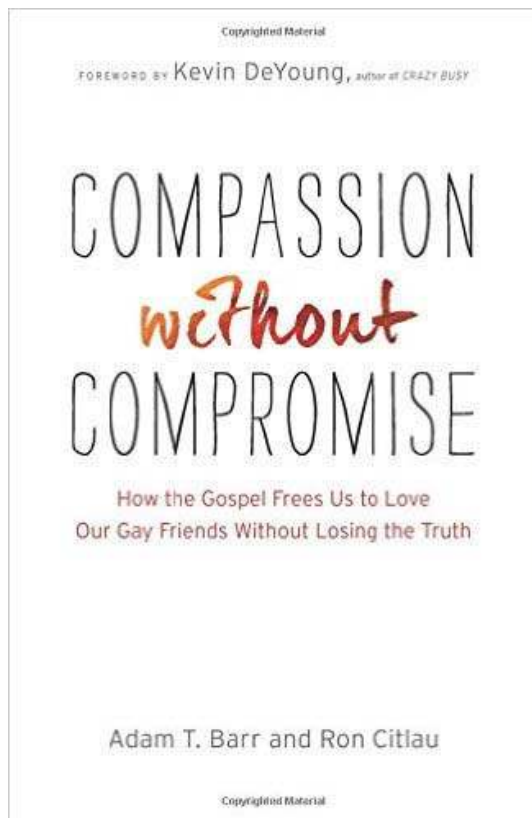
Andreas Köstenberger: My wife and I are very grateful and excited that a new online curriculum based on *God's Design for Man and Woman* will soon be available through Biblical Foundations (www.biblicalfoundations.org) and BibleMesh (www.biblemesh.com). This course will be available in two versions, academic as well as for churches and small groups. It will enable people to trace the biblical storyline on this important topic and to reflect on the implications of God's design for man and woman for their own lives through video segments, reading, personal study of Scripture, and review. The course is essentially inductive in nature, leading people through Scripture step by step, so they can see God's plan for man and woman unfold gradually through the pages of the Bible. That's been our vision all along: not merely to write a book on the subject, but to help lead others more deeply into an understanding and appreciation for God's design for man and woman.

T4L: Thanks again so much for your time, Dr. Köstenberger!

A Book Review:

Compassion without Compromise

By David Dunham



Grace and truth are to be the key markers of all Christian relationships. Often we find that we can be good with one or the other of these characteristics, but to combine both takes great sensitivity and ultimately the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The balance of the

two is particularly important when we consider the way the Christian community can and should relate to the LGBT community. [*Compassion without Compromise*](#) offers a simple exploration of the balance of grace and truth in this very relationship.

Books on the church and homosexuality are extremely popular right now. In many ways this volume is a lot like Glen Stanton's *Loving My LGBT Neighbor*. It answers many of the same questions that Stanton does, even using a similar Q&A format. This volume has, however, one unique contribution. Its authors are both pastors within the Reformed Christian Association (RCA). Both, Adam Barr and Ron Citlau are married, and both hold to a traditional Christian view of sexual ethics. Both believe in the importance of loving our gay friends well, but Ron has had a same-sex attraction most of his adult life. He writes, then, from a different perspective that adds some weight to his words and to his application of the traditional Christian sexual ethic.

The book is brief—its 10 chapters cover less than 150 pages. Needless to say it is not a comprehensive treatment of homosexuality; the authors don't intend it to be. Rather it's a starting place for digging deeper. Think of this book like a "door that will lead you to further insight on the issue" (20). Insight is what the

modern church needs. The authors are sensitive to the dramatically shifting landscape of American culture. They recognize that the church needs to be prepared to navigate new terrain.

This book needed to be written because the church needs help with how it addresses homosexuality. For the last three decades, evangelicals have tried to stand against the tide. We have tried to turn it back and “take back” our country. It is time to realize something: the ship has sailed. The question is no longer, “Can we win the culture wars?” Rather, it is, “How can we be a compassionate, uncompromising witness in a culture that celebrates what the Bible censors?” (18)

Grace and truth become the means by which we navigate this new cultural landscape.

The book starts with an emphasis on truth. The authors unpack a basic theology of sex. Chapter One seeks to answer the question, “Why did God make sex?” In answering this question they establish a foundational principle: Christian sexual ethics are grounded in God’s original plan for creation. So they write:

For the biblical authors, questions of sexual ethics were not framed in terms of “Does some behavior cross an arbitrary line?” The real question was “Does this behavior honor the Creator’s plan for human sexuality?” If the answer was no, then the behavior was censored, precisely because it would lead people out of the garden of God’s blessing and into the desert. (31)

Truth matters to these men. It matters to them because it matters to God, and they desire to faithfully follow Jesus. Demonstrating grace does not

begin by altering truth. Honesty regarding our own brokenness about the need to love others does not relieve us of God’s demands to obey His Word. “Humility does not mean there are no standards” (35). The authors believe in truth, stand by truth, and build a case for the authority of God’s truth – particularly as it is found in the Holy Scriptures.

They respond to some criticisms of the Christian sexual ethic as well. Not in

“Rather than paving the way for them to love others, their religion becomes an excuse and a barrier...”

great detail, but still their cursory treatment of revisionist Christianity is important for making their case. They respond to the criticism that Jesus never spoke about homosexuality, succinctly refuting this “canon within a canon” hermeneutic, as well as to the criticism that conservative hermeneutics are inconsistent. They also explore the particularities of sexual sin, noting that while sexual sin is not worse than any other sin, it is nonetheless unique.

But truth is not the only matter of importance. Chapter Six is a good transition to the topic of grace in these relationships. Here the authors explore the parable of the Good Samaritan as a lesson for believers on how to love our LGBT neighbors. In that parable, the religious are those who refuse to help the weak and vulnerable. “Rather than paving the way for them to love others, their religion becomes an excuse and a barrier” (81). This is not how it should be for followers of

Christ. “It is possible to be nice and orthodox. Jesus did it all the time and so can we” (80). The authors introduce us to a theology of doing good, reminding us that doing good means investing in real people. They speak of Samaritan Evangelism: coupling the art of being good neighbors with the gospel.

It’s not just individuals that need to think about these issues, however. As pastors both men want to help the church as a whole think about what it looks like to love our LGBT neighbors in grace and truth. Through posing and answering a host of questions they give us a good starting place for discussing cultural issues. Both men, no doubt, know something of this as their own denom-

“Though our landscape is changing, and though things may get difficult for Christians, we should not respond with fear.”

ination has wrestled with it for years.

Chapter Eight will no doubt be the most controversial chapter in the book. Here they answering the question, “Can the Gospel Transform Someone’s Sexual Orientation?” For some their answer will not go far enough, for they recognize that transformation does not necessarily mean a same-sex attracted person will become heterosexual. On the other hand, the very notion that some can change is anathema to some. But

Chapter Eight is an apologetic for transformation in some sense.

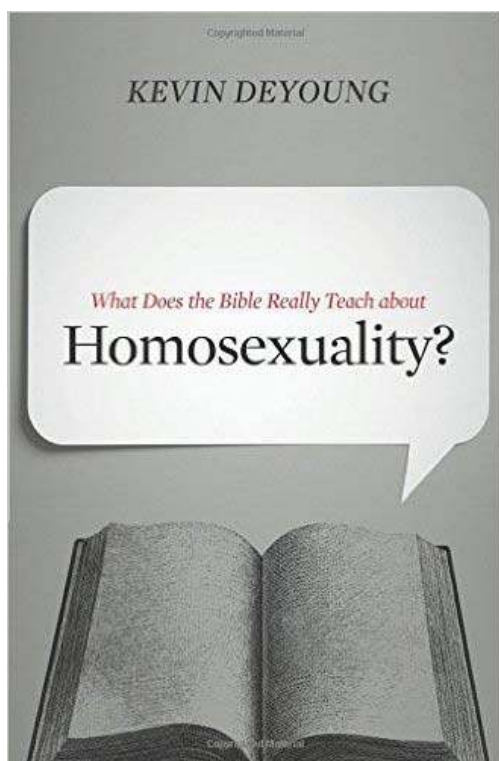
They end the book with a much-needed reminder: don’t panic. Though our landscape is changing, and though things may get difficult for Christians, we should not respond with fear. I loved this chapter as I personally found it to be an important reminder: Christians have nothing to fear, and fear itself will keep us from loving well.

Overall this is an excellent book. Although I may have appreciated Stanton’s book more, finding it more thorough, I found that Adam Barr and Ron Citalau have added to the swelling of voices calling for a better response from the Church. It’s a response that is no less concerned with truth, but upholds truth with grace. [*Compassion without Compromise*](#) is another book leading the Church in the right direction; one I would recommend to all believers.

A Book Review:

What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality

By Dave Jenkins



The topic of homosexuality has reached an epidemic level in many Christian circles. We are seeing many people cave on this issue, giving up on holding firm to the biblical perspective, as if the Bible isn't clear on this subject. In fact, it could be said that the issue of homosexuality among Christians is one of how highly we esteem the Bible. The question around this de-

bate is this, "Is the Bible clear on what it teaches about homosexuality, or is it not?" Christians have long held to the authority, inspiration, inerrancy, sufficiency, and clarity of the Scriptures. The debate on this issue relates to the sufficiency of Scripture, which relates to the question, "Do we have to practice what the Bible teaches?" Likewise, the follow-up question is, "Does the Bible literally mean what it says about homosexuality?" In other words, is the Bible to be believed when it says homosexuality is wrong, or can we just make up our own "interpretation of the relevant text" and revise it to fit our own opinion? This is what many people are doing—reinterpreting Scripture to fit their own opinions. It's also why a book like Kevin DeYoung's newest work, [*What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?*](#) is so needed.

As followers/readers of Servants of Grace website know, this issue is one I've personally addressed quite a bit over the years. It's an issue I'm very familiar with as there is a large gay community in the Seattle area, where I was born and raised. Even here in the Boise, Idaho, while not as pronounced (it seems to me) as Seattle, there is still a sizable gay community presence. When I write on this issue previously, I got all sorts of questions and push back about it—more so

than any other issue I write on. People genuinely want to know what the Bible teaches on this issue. This is why Kevin DeYoung wrote his newest book—to clear away this confusion. In Part One, he sets forth the biblical teaching on marriage, as between one man and one woman. In Part Two, DeYoung answers objections to the biblical teaching, he presented in Part One. Within the second section of his book, he tackles head-on the revisionists' arguments, which state that the Bible isn't clear on homosexuality. Included in his rebuttal are responses to the most common statements, such as: "I don't practice that type of homosexuality", "Gluttony is just as bad as sexual sin", "If marriage is supposed to be between one man and one woman, then why does the church now allow divorce?", "The church is supposed to be a place for sinners...", "Christians are on the wrong side of history", "Your position on homosexuality isn't fair", and lastly, "The God of the Bible is *only* a God of love."

The book concludes with a call to faithfulness to the Word of God. DeYoung wraps up his discourse here by stating, "Faithfulness is ours to choose; the shape of that faithfulness is God's to determine. In our time, faithfulness means a patiently winsome and carefully reasoned restating of the formerly obvious: homosexual behavior is a sin" (129). DeYoung also accurately notes throughout his book that we, as Christians, need to bring people to Jesus, and He will save them and through the Holy Spirit, bringing conviction of sin and transformation in this and every area of their lives.

DeYoung also helpfully notes, "We must not be naïve. The legitimization of same-sex marriage will mean the de-

legitimization of those who dare to disagree. The sexual revolution has been no great respecter of civil and religious liberties. Sadly, we may discover that there is nothing quite so intolerant as intolerance" (142). In the second appendix, he helps pastors and ministry

"God uses His Word to pierce the hearts of hardened sinners and point them towards His finished saving work in the Gospel."

leaders speak winsomely by noting three building blocks for helping people struggling with same-sex attraction. First, be biblically faithful, pastorally sensitive, and culturally relevant. Appendix three gives ten commitments every Christian should commit to, all of which are helpful. The book also has an annotated bibliography of helpful books for further study on this issue.

The issue of homosexuality is one that isn't going away anytime soon. This issue will continue to grow increasingly worse as time goes on. Here soon, Christians in America may be forced to not speak on this issue. We must count the cost and refuse to be silent, despite the verdict of the Supreme Court on this issue. The authority of the Bible is worth standing upon. God uses His Word to pierce the hearts of hardened sinners and point them towards His finished saving work in the gospel. God is still in the business of removing spiritual blinders. He continues to remove people's objections through the clear and faithful teaching of His Word. DeYoung's book is need-

ed for our time and place in history. Many people will say that the teaching in this book isn't "fair". They will object to DeYoung's answers to objections to the traditional understanding of marriage, as between one man and one woman for the rest of their lives. They will state that to be tolerant is to be accepting of other people's positions, even as they are intolerant of our position and try to silence us.

Mention the word

"tolerance" and you are likely to get some interesting responses.

Most of those responses will focus on how people have the "right" to think, believe, or act however they choose. In this view, tolerance is all about "my rights" and "my opinion" on any given topic. At first, this idea may sound pleasant, or even socially acceptable, but in fact, it is rotten to the core. When people who view tolerance this way apply what they think to real life, the result is to exclude those who believe in absolute truth and absolute morals.

The argument goes, "Faith is private so keep it to yourself!" That sounds like a reasonable idea at first glance. Let's all keep quiet about what we believe—after all, isn't faith a personal issue? The truth, however, is that no one is quiet about what they believe. Is Oprah quiet about what she believes? Is Ellen DeGeneres quiet about what she believes? It seems like our liberal media can use its bully pulpit to proclaim that everyone has a right to believe/proclaim whatever they want, but when Christians make exclusive claims about God, the Bible, or Jesus—according to the foundations of biblical Christianity—they are immediately discounted, shut-down, and treated as second-class citizens. Yet the "enlightened" ones want us to believe everything they say, without question, and just soak in

their magnificence. The truth of the matter is that not only does the liberal media not believe that faith is "private", they are among the loudest in our culture with regards to proclaiming what *they* believe.

This is why the language of tolerance isn't really tolerant. As D.A. Carson said in his book, *The Intolerance of Tolerance*, tolerance is intolerant because those who advocate for this so-called version of tolerance suggest that they are the gatekeepers of truth. Whenever anyone says anything "intolerant", or if a Christian such as myself speaks out against or writes about gay marriage or other issues, they are shouted down, told they are wrong, and immediately labeled a "bigot", "misguided" or any number of unsavory labels. Is this brand of tolerance really tolerant? If you believe this "tolerance" is tolerant, then you are living in a world where truth must be abandoned to its inconsistencies. If we apply the standards of truth to the worldview of tolerance, it crumbles like shifting sand. The truth is that the new *tolerance* is another word for "the spirit of this age", which longs for teachers who will tickle the ears of the people, but never give them the truth from the Word of God. This is what DeYoung explains so well in his book, *What Does the Bible Really Teach about Homosexuality?* He keeps bringing the reader time and time again back to the Scriptures, where the reader will be confronted with the truth therein.

Dear Christian, make no mistake—we are living in days that are challenging. Rest assured, however, that we also live in a day of great harvest. Stand firm on the authority of the Word of God and declare the message of the gospel! Jesus is alive, the tomb is empty, and He is ruling and reigning as His people's High Priest! The Holy Spirit is

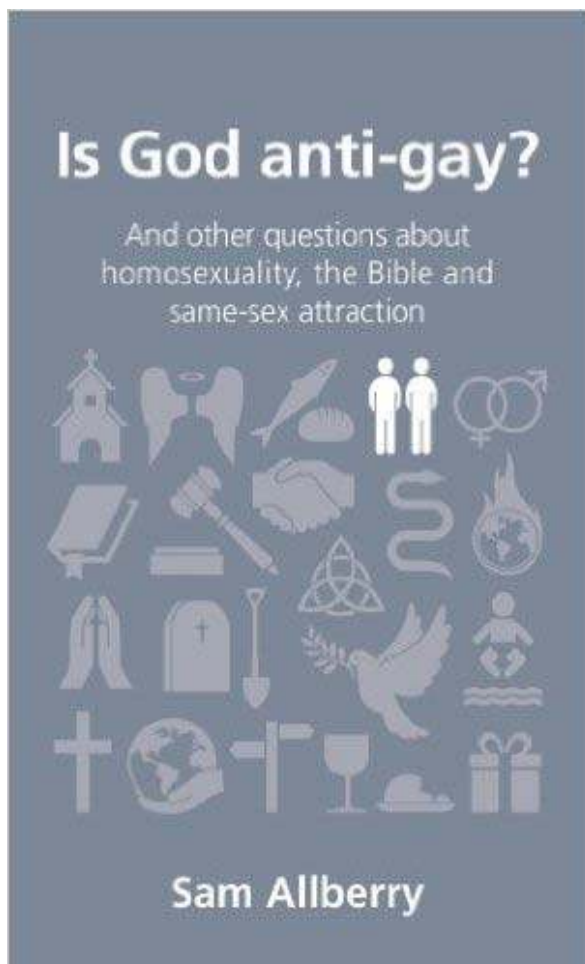
still in the business of opening people's eyes to the truth about Jesus, convicting them of their sin, and pointing them towards the truth of Jesus. The gospel is still the power of God! Preach the gospel all the more in this culture that says "tolerance is a virtue", and yet rejects its own conviction through its own inconsistency. Shout all the more from the rooftops and declare the sufficiency of Jesus to a culture that would rather celebrate its own *pride* and self-sufficiency.

I highly recommend [What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?](#) It is a book that every Christian must read to truly understand this issue. This book is a primer on God's view of homosexuality as provided in Scripture. Added to this, DeYoung responds to popular objections raised by Christians and non-Christians alike, making this book an indispensable resource for thinking through one of the most pressing issues of our time. This book is well-researched, accessible, and saturated in the gospel. As J.D. Greear said in his endorsement, "This is now the book on this subject for our generation." Dr. Moore is also correct when he states, "Every Christian should read this book." This book will help every Christian answer the challenge of homosexuality, both inside and outside the Church, with the Word of God. I highly recommend this book and believe it is Kevin DeYoung's best work to date.

A Book Review:

Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible and Same-Sex Attraction

By Craig Hurst



“We need to love them more than their gay friends do, and we need to love them more than they love their homosexuality. Only then can we point to the greater love that God has for them.” (73)

Homosexuality is one of the defining issues for the church. If you participate in blogging, chances are that you have discussed this topic. And if you haven’t personally written something on the subject, then you are certainly reading about it. If you can stomach it, you can even watch it discussed on the news media outlets, or listen to it on the radio. With a host of pastors, bloggers, counselors, and theologians weighing in on the discussion, it is easy to realize that most of them (within evangelical circles) are not homosexual themselves. They are discussing the issue from the outside looking in as it pertains to the activity of homosexuality.

That is why one of the most recent books on the issue is so unique. Sam Allberry—pastor and author—has written a

short, very readable book titled, [**Is God Anti-Gay? And Other Questions about Homosexuality, the Bible and Same-Sex Attraction**](#). Allberry is a Christian who struggles with same-sex attraction. Choosing to use the phrase “same-sex attraction” (SSA) to describe his sexual struggles, Allberry writes clearly, pastorally, and biblically. Allberry chooses to use the term SSA, instead of “gay” or “homosexual”, so as to avoid defining himself by his sexual struggles.

Laying a Biblical Foundation of Sex

In the first two chapters, Allberry discusses what the Bible has to say about sex and homosexuality. Beginning with Genesis 1 and 2, we see how sex is rooted in the goodness of God’s original creation and is designed to reflect the oneness and unity of the trinity. Adam and Eve were alike as humans, but different in gender by design. As with the Trinity, there is a oneness, but not a sameness—unity, but not uniformity. Marriage brings two of the opposite gender together as one. Sexual relations between two of the same gender is not only *not sex*, but the sexual activity that does occur falls terribly short of creating the *oneness and unity* between them that God had intended.

Following the Biblical foundation for marriage and sex, Allberry briefly and clearly tackles five key passages that spe-

cifically address homosexuality. Genesis 19: the story of Lot and the two angels that visit him in the city of Sodom, along with Jude 7 and 2 Peter 2:6, clearly indicates that homosexuality was the sin for which they were going to be judged. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are two passages that clearly denounce homosexual practices amidst the condemnation of other sexual sins such as *incest*, *bestiality*, and *adultery*. Romans 1:18-32 is a biting passage that describes homosexuality as both unnatural (in that it is against how God has created things) and is a sign of God’s judgment. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 explains that like any other unrepentant sinner, those who engage in homosexual behavior, and do not repent of it, will not enter the kingdom of God. However, the good news is that one can repent of it and enter the kingdom of God. 1 Timothy 1:8-10 describes Homosexuality as ungodly and one of the many acts of sin that the law was given to judge in order to evoke repentance.

If you are questioning the meaning of these passages before reading Allberry’s lucid thoughts, this book will bring you back in line with Scripture. He dispels the popularly perpetuated myth that God is for “committed and faithful relationships whether they are heterosexual or homosexual” (37-38). He concludes this chapter by saying, “The situation is worse than people think. God is opposed to all sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage.” (36)

The Christian and Homosexuality

The question is commonly asked, “Can one be a *gay* Christian?” Since God clearly does not condone homosexuality, then how are Christians supposed to handle SSA? Allberry embarks on this chapter, explaining the fine distinction between the unrepentant person who takes hold of their SSA and lives it out, and the Christian who recognizes their struggle with SSA, but seeks to walk in repentance

“For Allberry, a Christian with SSA, who accepts God’s teaching on [homosexuality], will not seek to give themselves over to those passions and therefore not welcome the idea of being a “gay” Christian.”

and their identity in Christ. “What marks us out as Christians is not that we never experience such things, but how we respond to them when we do.” (41) For Allberry, a Christian with SSA, who accepts God’s teaching on it, will not seek to give themselves over to those passions and therefore not welcome the idea of being a “gay” Christian. The term *gay* Christian carries with it an acceptance and toleration of one’s same-sex attractions that God does not.

Chapter four gives a number of

helpful practices for Christians struggling with SSA, such as prayer, Biblical thinking about one’s identity in Christ, and especially the willingness to be open about their struggles with others in order to seek spiritual help and accountability. Allberry is right to point out that change in regard to a person’s sexual desires is possible “but a complete change of sexual orientation is never promised in the Bible.”(46)

The Church and Homosexuality

Many people in the unbelieving world, and even some Christians, contend that the mere belief that homosexuality is wrong is bigoted, intolerant, and unchristian. In Chapter Four, Allberry lays out some honest and helpful advice for how churches (Christians) should approach those identifying themselves as homosexuals attending their churches. Central to this advice is that we need to see their spiritual needs in the proper order. Every sinner needs Jesus first, and then we can show them what Jesus has to say about their sexuality as creatures created in God’s image. At the end of the chapter, Allberry delicately and unequivocally warns Christians (and the Church) that teaching that any kind of homosexual activity is okay is actually sending people into destruction (69-70).

So, is God anti-gay? Allberry says no. God is against our sin whether it is

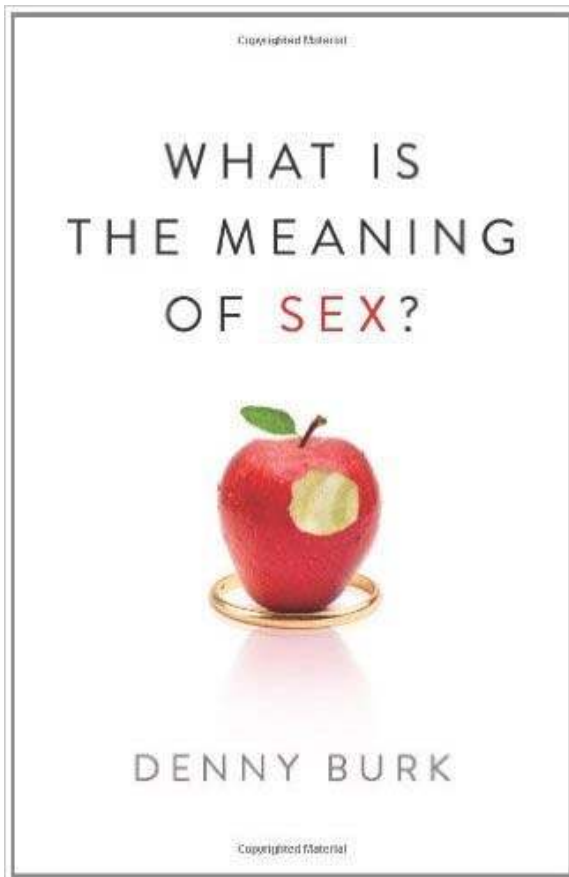
adultery, lying, idolatry, or homosexual behavior. He is against the person who lives in unrepentance sin. God is still seeking to save the lost unrepentant sinner and bring them to repentance, and into a right relationship with Himself through Christ.

In *Is God Anti-Gay?*, Allberry has certainly gone out on the limb to write this book as a Christian who struggles with SSA. The author has put himself out there for the benefit of Christians, so that they can help their brothers and sisters in Christ who struggle with SSA. He's also written this book to help non-believing homosexuals, so that Christians can better understand them and how to help and love them. When a Christian gets to know a homosexual or a fellow Christian who struggles with SSA, and he or she wants to know what Scripture has to say about the subject, this is the first book I would recommend.

A Book Review:

What is the Meaning of Sex?

By Dave Jenkins



Questions about sexuality touch on nearly every facet of our lives, and for some people, even define entire groups' identities. Entering into this sexually confused

world is Dr. Denny Burk's book, [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#). Dr. Burk has been writing and speaking about these issues for quite some time.

In the preface Dr. Burk sets forth the purpose of the book, namely his "attempt to show from the Bible what the meaning of sex is and thereby how we ought to order our sexual lives under God" (12). The introduction demonstrates that the approach of the author is to show how "Scripture is plainly concerned with the formation of moral character as the basis for moral choices. Scripture is also concerned with rules and divine commands and on the glory of God as the purpose of all things" (31). Each chapter begins with the words, "Glorify God", and looks at glorifying God with your body (chapter 1), your hermeneutic approach (chapter two), your marriage (chapter three), your conjugal union (chapter four), your family planning (chapter five), your gender (chapter six), your sexuality (chapter seven), with your singleness (chapter eight), and concludes by wrapping up his discussion by looking at how Christians can declare the truth of a biblical worldview in a sexually confused world.

This book is one of the most important books I've read in the last five years. I am currently in the unique position to read and review many of the latest and greatest Christian books. While most

of these books I know in advance that I am going to like, I enjoy reading books that challenge, not only the way I think, but that also help me think through a topic. [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) is a book that falls into the category of “I knew I would like it”, but now that I’ve read it, I like it even more. Allow me to explain this statement further.

First, this book is biblical.

Many books today make this claim, but in reality are not. This book is explicitly tied to the Bible. This shouldn’t surprise anyone, since Dr. Denny Burk is the Associate Professor of Biblical Studies and Ethics at Boyce College—the undergraduate arm of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to this, Dr. Burk is an Associate Pastor at Kenwood Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky and maintains a popular blog that has helped my personal growth tremendously (<http://www.dennyburk.com/>). I bring up all of these points to emphasize the fact that it shouldn’t surprise us to know that Dr. Burk takes a biblical and theological approach to these issues, as he is a respected biblical scholar. As I read this book, I felt like I was getting a crash course on what the Bible teaches about gender roles, sex, abortion, as well as the importance of having a biblical worldview. Second, the author has a deep command of the biblical languages and offers his own translation of certain verses, something I’ve honestly seen very few authors even capable of doing!

Finally, what I appreciate the most about this book is the pastoral tone. Dr. Burk engages the issues at hand with the mind of a scholar, but the heart of a pastor. His command of the literature, and the emphasis on why it matters, is bril-

liant and should serve as a model for other scholar-pastors, who write to help the people of God on the issues they discuss. Dr. Burk’s pastoral tone on the contemporary fascination of evangelicals with sex, and what we can and cannot do, is but one example of this. In this book, he critiques the views of popular pastors who emphasize what we can do, to the point of exclusion of what we cannot. Dr. Burk

“Does what I believe match up with what the Bible teaches? If not, then our lives must conform to the Bible.”

points out that, “Christian ethical reflection has to take into account the whole counsel of God” (117). Rather than asking if it lawful and permissible for someone to engage in these types of behaviors, and then listing certain acts Christian couples can perform, Dr. Burk instead aims to reorient our perspective by asking, “Does it glorify God?” (119). This, of course, is the most important question a Christian can ask! Do my actions and behavior glorify God? Does what I believe match up with what the Bible teaches? If not, then our lives must conform to the Bible. It is for this reason and many others that this book, in my opinion, is one of the most important books that been written within the last 5 years.

[*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) is a needed word for our day. By rightly emphasizing, as the author does, the teaching of Scripture *above his opinion* on these matters, by taking a pastoral tone, and by

showing the importance of a biblical sexuality within a biblical worldview, Dr. Burk has done the Church a great service. In a sexually confused world, where gay marriage is viewed as a litmus test for tolerance, and in a culture that increasingly engulfing itself in the consumption of pornography, [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) brings the truth of the Bible and gospel in a way that confronts the worldview of those who oppose biblical sexuality. [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) is an apologetic tour de force that will correct the thinking of many evangelicals on issues of sex, by pointing them to the truth of the Word.

Whether you are struggling with pornography, wrestling with questions about sexuality, or a multitude of other related issues, [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) has something for you. Dr. Burk's careful biblical work, practical application, and pastoral tone is a great blessing to the Church confronted with a myriad of issues related to biblical sexuality. I highly recommend this book for pastors and ministry leaders. This book will help readers to gird their loins for battle, because the issue of biblical sexuality is not going away — it truly has just begun. This is why Christians need to steady ourselves in the anchor of the inspired, inerrant, sufficient and authoritative Word of God. This book helps reader to do just that and does so brilliantly.

[*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) will also help Christian high school and college students who are struggling with these matters every day, as they are inundated with images through commercials and social media that challenge their biblical convictions. This book will also be a help to Bible College and seminary students, preparing for a life of serving God in and through the local church, or on the mission fields. Wherever you are at in your life, [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#) has something for you. I sincerely pray that this book gains a wide and far reaching readership. While this book is likely to unsettle many people, I became convinced, as I slowly read and digested this book, that it is thoroughly biblical, grounded in the Gospel, and has the right pastoral tone and application in it. Please go pick up [*What is the Meaning of Sex*](#), by Dr. Denny Burk, and learn why biblical sexuality is under attack, and how you can stand fast for the truth of biblical sexuality in a sexually confused world.

Recommended Books on Marriage and Homosexuality

This month at **Servants of Grace**, we've been considering the topic of marriage and homosexuality. We live in an age where homosexuality is celebrated, while biblical marriage is marginalized or even labeled as a relic of the past. A right understanding of the doctrine of marriage will help us to not only understand God's plans for marriage, family, and our sexuality, but also lead us to a right view of the Church as Jesus' bride. Furthermore, understanding the meaning of biblical marriage will strengthen our witness to those in the homosexual community, as well as others who are living in blatant disregard for biblical relationships.

Through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, our eyes are opened to the God-ordained blessing that has been given to us in this sacred covenant known as marriage. We are thusly empowered to make much of Jesus for the purpose of being about His mission—seeing the lost saved and disciples made. A right understanding of marriage and homosexuality will help Christian to see the biblical passages, not as they want, but as they truly are—from God's perspective. The following list of books reflects, in my view, the best teaching on the doctrine of true biblical marriage. Some are newer and some are older; the list is provided in no particular order.

- *Marriage Matters: Extraordinary Change through Ordinary Moments* by Dr. Winston Smith
- *What Did You Expect: Redeeming the Realities of Marriage* by Dr. Paul David Tripp
- *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God* by Dr. Tim Keller
- *This Momentary Marriage* by Dr. John Piper
- *The Same Sex Controversy* by Dr. James White
- *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?* by Kevin DeYoung
- *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* by Robert Gagnon

- *Is God Anti-gay?* by Sam Alberry
- *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* by Ryan T. Anderson
- *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* by Rosaria Butterfield
- *Washed and Waiting* by Wesley Hill
- *Can You Be Gay and Christian* by Dr. Michael Brown
- *What is the Meaning of Sex?* by Dr. Denny Burk
- *Compassion without Compromise* by Adam Barr and Ron Citla
- *Love and Light* by Peter Hubbard

I trust you'll enjoy these as much as I have. For more resources, please feel free to visit <http://theologylife.org> or <http://servantsofgrace.org>!

In Christ Alone,

Dave Jenkins
Executive Editor—*Theology for Life Magazine*

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