

Sex and the Bible

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Introduction

The Bible was completed thousands of years ago. It is silent on some subjects and general on others, thus giving room for different opinions. But when addressing human sexuality, the Bible material is very specific. While there are some complicated situations, the basics are still clear. The goal of this article is to present the Bible's view on human sexuality in an accurate and unbiased manner. There is no intention of forcing opinion on the forthcoming material. It is not normal to state a conclusion at the start of an Article. If offensive, there is risk of immediate loss of the audience. But, in this case, it is important to keep the conclusion in view as details are being discussed. The Bible's conclusion is this: **the only approved sex is heterosexual sex between legitimately married people.**

Creation Rights

Human sexuality either arose from natural forces (evolved), or was created. There are no other options. From the first verse of the Bible, God declares Himself as Creator - including creating sex. He thought it up - and then made it. As the Creator of sex, He assumes **Creation Rights** and defines the proper, or improper, use of this created function. Actually, this is the position behind all Bible commands (See End Note 1).

The Mosaic Law

Under the Mosaic Law, twenty-eight (28) offenses called for the death penalty. Of these, 8 were for sexual offenses. Capital offenses relating to human sexuality are listed in the order in which they appear (See End Note 2).

1) Bestiality. A person having sex with an animal was to be executed along with the animal (Ex 22:19 and Lev 20:15,16).

2) Adultery. A married person having sex with some other person was to be executed with the illegal partner (Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22).

3) A son having sex with his father's wife (his mother or stepmother) was to be executed along with the partner (Lev 20:11).

4) A man having sex with his daughter-in-law was to be executed with the partner (Lev 20:12).

5) Male Homosexuality. Both men were to be executed (Lev 20:13 and Lev 18:22. Also see Ro 1:27 and End Note 3).

6) A woman who has had sex while living in her father's house and then marries (presenting herself as a virgin) was to be executed after due process (Deut 22:13-21).

7) A man who has sex with a virgin engaged to another, was to be executed (Deut 22:23-27).

8) If an engaged virgin is inside the city and has sex with another man, that woman was to be executed along with her lover. If the virgin is outside the city, she may have been

raped, so only the male is executed (See #7 above and Deut 22:23,24).

Other offenses called for violators to be “*cut off*” from the people. It does not appear this means execution. See Lev 18:6-30, Lev 20:17-24, Deut 22:5, Deut 23:17, and Deut 24:1-4 for examples.

Marriage and Complications

The conclusion states the only approved sex is, “*heterosexual sex between legitimately married people.*” But what constitutes a legitimate marriage? It is here I make an assumption. Varied cultures have different practices and procedures as to what constitutes a state of marriage. So, whatever is publically recognized in each culture as a fidelity agreement between heterosexual individuals constitutes a marriage. With this parameter, when examining sexual expectations within that arrangement, it is best to go from the simple scenario to the complex.

1) The ideal is for a male and female virgin to marry and be entirely devoted to one another sexually until death parts them. Obviously, their sex is approved (See Pro 5:15-20, and Ro 7:1-3).

2) If the mate dies, the widow (**by assumption**, a widower also) is free to remarry. The new sexual union is approved (Ro 7:2,3).

3) If two non-virgins marry, having never been married in the past, their sexual union is approved (See Ex 22:16 and Deut 22:28,29).

4) Legitimately divorced people are free to remarry. But only the violated party is free to remarry (See End Note 4). The Bible only recognizes two grounds for divorce.

a) **Sexual Immorality.** If one's partner has sex outside the marriage bond, the violated partner is free to divorce and remarry (Mt 19:3-9). This includes all types of sexual infidelity.

b) **Qualified Desertion.** A Christian deserted by a non believing mate, is free to divorce and remarry (I Cor 7:12-15).

Note: There is no provision for divorce and/or remarriage based on physical abuse.

Note: If a Christian woman **does part from an unbelieving husband** for any reason other than sexual unfaithfulness or qualified desertion, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband (I Cor 7:10,11). **By assumption**, Christian husbands are under the same directive.

5) Polygamy by a male is not condemned. However, there is no mention of women being able to have multiple husbands (See End Note 5).

Some Points Where the Bible is Silent

1) There is no comment on interracial marriages among non-Jews.

2) There is no comment about masturbation.

3) Other than the prohibition of having intercourse with a menstruous woman (Lev 18:19), there is no comment about the types of sexual activity between legitimately married people.

Conclusion

- 1) When one marries, authority of one's body is surrendered to the mate (I Cor 7:3-5).
- 2) The sex act creates a unique union between two people - they become one flesh (Gen 2:24 and I Cor 6:16).
- 3) Marital fidelity extends past the physical act. Internal lust for a different partner is adultery (Mt 5:27,28). However, it does not appear **internal** adultery establishes grounds for divorce.
- 4) Sex in marriage should be directed toward satisfying each others physical need (I Cor 7:9).
- 5) Sexual activity should provide a unique pleasure experience. God created the unique actions and reactions of the whole process.
- 6) Usually, this union results in the privileges and responsibilities of procreation (Gen 1:28).

End Note 1

If one opts for an evolutionary development of human sexuality, there are still parameters for acceptable sexual behavior. For example, few evolutionists condone bestiality as acceptable human sexual behavior. Sexual activities arose for the propagation and incremental development of each species. Outside of the human species, it is exceedingly rare that any creatures engage in cross species breeding. Another sexual phenomenon that is at total cross purposes to scientific evolution is homosexuality. The evolutionist sees each human being as the product of millions of years of evolution - maybe a billion years. The homosexual brings his/her billion-year line to an abrupt, eternal end. For an in-depth, copyrighted, Article entitled, "*Evolution and Homosexuality*" go to <http://www.freelygive-n.com>. There you can find the Article for free!

End Note 2

"The Mosaic Law" could be called "The Theocratic Law." The six hundred plus commands (the Ten Commandments being but a fraction) are declared as originating entirely from God. Moses was simply the channel through whom this Law came. These laws can be divided into two broad categories - **religious** and **civil**. **Religious law** deals with man's relationship toward God. In this area, there are nine offenses requiring the death penalty. **Civil law** deals with man's relationship toward man. In this category, there are nineteen offenses requiring the death penalty. Only one of these could be commuted to a lighter sentence - and that choice is presumably in the hands of the victim's family (Ex 21:28-32). Of these nineteen capital offenses, eight are for sexual offenses. There are no reprieves for sexual offenses. For an exhaustive exploration on this subject, get the Article, "*Capital Punishment and the Bible*" at <http://www.freelygive-n.com>. It too is free.

End Note 3

Female homosexuality is not addressed in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, Romans 1:26 describes female homosexuality as a "*degrading passion*" that is "*against nature.*" Female homosexuals have been "*given over*" by God to homosexuality - a judgement by Him for rejecting and/or suppressing truth (Ro 1:18-32).

In light of this Biblical material, I have often been asked to explain how homosexuality can be accepted in many churches today. There is even a homosexual “Christian” denomination called The Metropolitan Church. Here is how this happens. Principles used in Bible interpretation are called hermeneutics. Conservative interpreters have developed five (5) principles to apply to any given passage when seeking to interpret the passage properly. Those who believe homosexuality is acceptable have added two (2) more principles. The one of interest here is their “cultural hermeneutic.” This is how it works. When examining a passage, one must consider **the culture** to which it was written to understand **why** it was written. For example, in Moses’ day, the children of Israel were being led to the Promised Land - which was to be gained by military conquest. They needed warriors. Therefore, **in that culture, at that time** homosexuality was sin **for them**. After the conquest was basically over, attitudes began to soften. When Jonathan died, David cried, “*Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women*” (II Sam 1:26). These interpreters are convinced David and Jonathan were homosexual lovers. Thus, David was bisexual as he had many wives. By the time of the New Testament, Paul heralded celibacy **as superior** to marriage, but still clung to Old Testament taboos about homosexuality - at least in doctrine. But an old Apostle Paul wrote young Timothy, “*I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I might be filled with joy*” (II Tim 1:3,4). These interpreters are sure this is evidence of a homosexual union. Some also boldly point out that Jesus surrounded Himself **only with men** for 3+ years of ministry travels. So how does this work out for our culture? The argument goes something like this. “*What is one of the great concerns for our present age? How about overpopulation? In our current age, it is best, like the New Testament affirms, to be celibate. That way a person will not add to the crisis. But if one cannot remain celibate, homosexuality is the Christian way to go. In fact, homosexuality may be God's answer to the overpopulation problem.*” With this cultural hermeneutic, all Bible passages **are affirmed**. Nothing is explained away. The prohibitions were correct **for those cultures in those times** - but not ours. The teaching goes further. “*The Bible says, ‘everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, being received with thanksgiving’ (I Tim 4:4). If you were born a homosexual, it is sin to reject the way God made you. Everything God makes ‘is good’ and to reject what He has done is sin. Receive your homosexuality with gratitude! Start thanking Him for the way He made you!*”

The Bible warns about those twist the Scriptures “*to their own destruction*” (II Pet3:16). This is a current day example.

End Note 4

It is here that situations get complicated.

1) A guilty mate who leaves his/her first marriage, by committing sexual immorality or by desertion, cannot engage in approved sex before God. Even if legally remarried in his/her given society, the sexual acts are still illegitimate before God. It is continuous adultery (Mt 19:9).

2) **However**, if one becomes a Christian while in this adulterous union (legally remarried in his/her society), **it appears** this formerly adulterous union is no longer considered adulterous by God. **No adulterer** can enter God’s approaching, eternal world (I Cor 6:9,10 and Gal 5:19-21). Yet there seems to be no call for dissolution of the present union. The new Christian is declared **as forgiven for all sin** - past, present and future. So it **does not appear** the new

Christian is viewed as living in an adulterous state. Concerning the other party of this union, it does not follow that he/she is automatically pardoned because of the other's conversion. His/her part in the union may still be considered adulterous until such a time that he/she also becomes a Christian. However, it is possible the faith of the believing wife may serve to sanctify the union with the unbelieving husband, and, by assumption the same for a reversed situation (I Cor 7:14). This is complex.

3) A professing Christian cannot illegitimately leave a marriage for a new one and presume that he/she is automatically forgiven. There are numerous warnings against **presumptuous actions - assuming** deliberate sin will be pardoned (See Ro 6:1,2 and 15, Heb 6:4-6, Heb 10:26-31 and possibly Ro 3:8). It may be that the cleansing of a formerly adulterous union (as discussed in #2 above) is a one time pardon by God that occurs at the Christians conversion. The web is quite entangled here too.

The material in this End Note should **not** be considered the final word in this complex area. However, this material should not be easily dismissed either. Our sexual activities are more importance to God than any of us realize. If one is in a complex sexual/marriage web, that person should earnestly bring the situation before God and carefully work it out. The only goal is that things be in right order before Him. Weigh the counsels of others cautiously - including mine. Much counsel is half thought out and wrong.

End Note 5

For many, it is a shock to discover the Bible does not unequivocally prohibit or condemn polygamy by males. There are many instances of central Bible figures who had multiple wives. These men include Abraham, Jacob (Israel), David, and Solomon. However, there are several conditions to this arrangement. For example, each wife was unattached to any other man. If she had been previously married, her husband was dead before marriage to the polygamist (I Sam 25:39-42 and II Sam 11:26,27). The Bible is extremely clear that no adulterer, fornicator, whoremonger, or otherwise sexually immoral person will enter the kingdom of heaven (I Cor 6:9-11 and Gal 5:19-21). Many of these men died while having multiple wives. The Bible does not teach these men are condemned. In fact, quite the opposite. Polygamy evidently does not fall under the category of sexual immorality.

In the New Testament, a church elder must be "*the husband of one wife*" (I Tim 3:2). But this is not a condemnation of polygamy - just a qualification for the position of elder.

Note: Some maintain this passage also means a legitimately remarried divorcee or widower cannot become an elder as he has had more than "one wife." This is a minority position.

Many societies have laws against polygamy. If a person violates any governmental law, he/she risks the consequences of that choice. But it does not necessarily follow that God will judge that person as a violator of **His** moral code. Such appears to be the case with male polygamy.

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