

Marriage & Homosexuality

What Does the Bible Say?

by Pastor Brad Cranston

The Origin and Definition of Marriage

Marriage is a Biblical institution. The very concept of marriage originates solely from the Scriptures.

Genesis 2:24 *Therefore shall a **man** leave his father and his mother, and shall **cleave** unto his **wife**: and they shall be one flesh.*

At the same time that God instituted marriage He clearly defined it. The **man** is to **cleave** to his **wife**. The word “cleave” identifies the physical relationship that God intended within the boundaries of the marriage relationship. Nowhere does the Scripture authorize or condone the intimate physical relationship defined by the word “cleave” between members of the same gender. This command to “leave and cleave” is in perfect harmony with God’s command to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:27 & 28...

Genesis 1:27 *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male** and **female** created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply,** and replenish the earth...*

The command, “*Be fruitful and multiply,*” can only be obeyed through an intimate relationship of a **man and a woman**.

Based on it’s Biblical origin and definition the word “marriage” has the exclusive meaning of “the union of a man and a woman.” Furthermore, in the 80 times that the word “marry” or a form of the word “marry” is used in the Bible, not once can it be construed as referring to anything other than the union of a man and a woman.

The history of the English language provides additional verification that the definition of the word “marriage” is limited exclusively to the union of a man and woman. Webster’s 1828 Dictionary defines marriage as follows:

“MARRIAGE, n. [L.mas, maris.] The act of uniting **a man and woman** for life; wedlock; the legal union of a **man and woman** for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. **Marriage was instituted by God** himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children.”

Since the term marriage is defined both Biblically and historically as the union of a man and a woman then it is impossible to define a homosexual relationship with the term “marriage.” There simply is no such thing.

You could choose to call a legally recognized homosexual relationship a “civil union” as some states have done and at least be using accurate terminology. However, it doesn't matter the name or the legal status that you give to a relationship God has condemned, it is still sin.

Old Testament vs. New Testament

There are those who claim that the Biblical definition which defines marriage as being between one man and one woman as well as the Biblical condemnation of the homosexual relationship cannot be supported in our present day society because both are Old Testament concepts. Their statement only proves their ignorance of the Scriptures. In Matthew chapter 19 Jesus reaffirmed marriage as being between one man and one woman.

Matthew 19:3 *The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a **man** leave father and mother, and shall **cleave** to his **wife**: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

In regards to the condemnation of homosexual behavior the New Testament speaks loud and clear:

Romans 1:26-31 “**26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.”**

Old Testament Punishment

What about the Old Testament punishment prescribing the stoning of sinners for a variety of sins including both homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13) and adultery (Deuteronomy 22:22)?

Those who are critical of the position of Bible believers occasionally bring up this supposedly incontestable argument: If a person takes the position of being against homosexuality then by default they must also be in favor of stoning both homosexuals and adulterers.

The error of their argument is in their premise. When a Bible believer takes a position against homosexuality **he is not endorsing the stoning of anyone.** The New Testament believer does not believe that a homosexual or an adulterer should be stoned, but rather that both should confess their sin to God, repent of their sin, and with the help of God, stop their sinful behavior. This truth is exemplified by the New Testament story about Jesus and the woman caught in the act of adultery who was brought to Him by the Pharisees.

John 8:3 *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.***

Those who cite this passage in an attempt to bolster their argument that “no one has the right to condemn a person for committing a homosexual act” usually stop quoting verse 11 at the end of the phrase, “**Neither do I condemn thee: ...**” They fail to remember the last words of Christ to this woman, “**...go, and sin no more.**” **Jesus forgave this woman, but He did not condone her sin.** He did **not** say, “Neither do I condemn thee, **go and live as you please.**”

This New Testament attitude of Christ is to be the present day believer’s attitude towards both the adulterer and the homosexual... and for that matter, the person guilty of any sin: **Forgive but do not condone.** It is the New Testament way to Biblically love the sinner while at the same time, doing as Jesus did, and condemn their sin.

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