

# **The Challenge of Homosexual Identity & Practice...**

## **Why Is Homoerotic Behavior Such a Challenging Issue for Us?**

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## **Biblical View of Homoerotic Behavior (Bible Texts)...**

### **Genesis 19:1-11**

#### *Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed*

**19** The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. <sup>2</sup>“My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.”

“No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”

<sup>3</sup> But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. <sup>4</sup> Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. <sup>5</sup> They called to Lot, “**Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.**”

<sup>6</sup> Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him <sup>7</sup> and said, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. <sup>8</sup> Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”

<sup>9</sup> “Get out of our way,” they replied. And they said, “This fellow came here as an alien, and now he wants to play the judge! We’ll treat you worse than them.” They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

<sup>10</sup> But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. <sup>11</sup> Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

### **Judges 19**

#### *A Levite and His Concubine*

**19** In those days Israel had no king. Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. <sup>2</sup> But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her father’s house in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, <sup>3</sup> her husband went to her to persuade her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her father’s house, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him...

<sup>16</sup> That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the men of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. <sup>17</sup> When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, “Where are you going? Where did you come from?”

<sup>18</sup> He answered, “We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD. No one has taken me into his house. <sup>19</sup> We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, your maidservant, and the young man with us. We don’t need anything.”

<sup>20</sup> “You are welcome at my house,” the old man said. “Let me supply whatever you need. Only don’t spend the night in the square.” <sup>21</sup> So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

<sup>22</sup> While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, **“Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him.”**

<sup>23</sup> The owner of the house went outside and said to them, “No, my friends, don’t be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don’t do this disgraceful thing. <sup>24</sup> Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But to this man, don’t do such a disgraceful thing.”

<sup>25</sup> But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. <sup>26</sup> At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

<sup>27</sup> When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. <sup>28</sup> He said to her, “Get up; let’s go.” But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

<sup>29</sup> When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel. <sup>30</sup> Everyone who saw it said, “Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Think about it! Consider it! Tell us what to do!”

## Leviticus 18

... <sup>18</sup> “Do not take your wife’s sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

<sup>19</sup> “Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period.

<sup>20</sup> “Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor’s wife and defile yourself with her.

<sup>21</sup> “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed<sup>a</sup> to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

<sup>22</sup> “**Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.**

<sup>23</sup> “Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

<sup>24</sup> “Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. <sup>25</sup> Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. <sup>26</sup> But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, <sup>27</sup> for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. <sup>28</sup> And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

<sup>29</sup> “Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people. <sup>30</sup> Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God.’ ”

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<sup>a</sup>Or to be passed through the fire

## Leviticus 19

### *Various Laws*

**19** The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy...

...<sup>19</sup> “ ‘Keep my decrees.

“ ‘Do not mate different kinds of animals.

“ ‘Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.

“ ‘Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

<sup>20</sup> “ ‘If a man sleeps with a woman who is a slave girl promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment. Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. <sup>21</sup> The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for a guilt offering to the LORD. <sup>22</sup> With the ram of the guilt offering the priest is to make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.

<sup>23</sup> “ ‘When you enter the land and plant any kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden.<sup>b</sup> For three years you are to consider it forbidden; it must not be eaten. <sup>24</sup> In the fourth year all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD. <sup>25</sup> But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way your harvest will be increased. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>26</sup> “ ‘Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.

“ ‘Do not practice divination or sorcery.

<sup>27</sup> “ ‘Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.

<sup>28</sup> “ ‘Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> “ ‘Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prostitution and be filled with wickedness.

<sup>30</sup> “ ‘Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.

<sup>31</sup> “ ‘Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

<sup>32</sup> “ ‘Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD....

## Leviticus 20

### *Punishments for Sin*

**20** The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Say to the Israelites: ‘Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives<sup>a</sup> any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. <sup>3</sup> I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. <sup>4</sup> If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, <sup>5</sup> I will set my face

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<sup>b</sup>Hebrew *uncircumcised*

<sup>a</sup>Or *sacrifices*; also in verses 3 and 4

against that man and his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech.

<sup>6</sup> “I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

<sup>7</sup> “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. <sup>8</sup> Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head.

<sup>10</sup> “If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

<sup>11</sup> “If a man sleeps with his father’s wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

<sup>12</sup> “If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads.

<sup>13</sup> “**If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.**

<sup>14</sup> “If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.

<sup>15</sup> “If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you must kill the animal.

<sup>16</sup> “If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

<sup>17</sup> “If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They must be cut off before the eyes of their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible.

<sup>18</sup> “If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them must be cut off from their people.

<sup>19</sup> “Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible.

<sup>20</sup> “If a man sleeps with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless.

<sup>21</sup> “If a man marries his brother’s wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.

<sup>22</sup> “Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. <sup>23</sup> You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. <sup>24</sup> But I said to you, “You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations.

<sup>25</sup> “You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those which I have set apart as unclean for you.

<sup>26</sup> You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

<sup>27</sup> “A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.’ ”

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<sup>b</sup>Or *who sanctifies you; or who sets you apart as holy*

## 1 Samuel 18-20 (David & Jonathan)

### *Saul's Jealousy of David*

**18** After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. <sup>2</sup> From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. <sup>3</sup> And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. <sup>4</sup> Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt...

## 2 Samuel 1 (David's Lament for Saul & Jonathan)

- <sup>23</sup> "Saul and Jonathan—  
in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted.  
They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.
- <sup>24</sup> "O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery,  
who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.
- <sup>25</sup> "How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights.
- <sup>26</sup> I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me.  
Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.
- <sup>27</sup> "How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!"

## Genesis 9:18-25 (Etiology Story for the Curse of Canaan)

### *The Sons of Noah*

<sup>18</sup> The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) <sup>19</sup> These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth.

<sup>20</sup> Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. <sup>21</sup> When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. <sup>22</sup> Ham, the father of Canaan, **saw his father's nakedness** and told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup> But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness.

<sup>24</sup> When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, <sup>25</sup> he said,

"Cursed be Canaan!  
The lowest of slaves  
will he be to his brothers."

## Genesis 2

### *Adam and Eve*

<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

<sup>19</sup> Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. <sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup> The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

<sup>24</sup> **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.**

<sup>25</sup> The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

## Matthew 19

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. <sup>2</sup> Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

<sup>3</sup> Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

<sup>4</sup> "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

<sup>7</sup> "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

<sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. <sup>9</sup> I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

## Matthew 5 (Jesus' Higher Standards for Sexual Ethics)

### *Adultery*

<sup>27</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’<sup>a</sup> <sup>28</sup>**But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

## Mark 7:17-23

<sup>17</sup> After he [Jesus] had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. <sup>18</sup>“Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? <sup>19</sup>For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”)

<sup>20</sup> He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ <sup>21</sup>For from within, **out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,** <sup>22</sup>**greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.** <sup>23</sup>All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

## Ephesians 5

<sup>21</sup> Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

### *Wives and Husbands*

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup> for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”** <sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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<sup>a</sup>Exodus 20:14

Romans 1:18-32 (Context = Arguing for Universal Need of God's Gracious Salvation)

*God's Wrath Against Mankind*

<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

**<sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.**

<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup> They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup> they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. <sup>32</sup> Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

## 1 Corinthians 6:9-20

<sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: **Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes [malakoi] nor homosexual offenders [arsenokoi]<sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.**

<sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

### *Sexual Immorality*

<sup>12</sup> “Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup> “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. <sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”<sup>a</sup> <sup>17</sup> But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

## 1 Timothy 1:8-11

<sup>8</sup> We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. <sup>9</sup> **We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> for adulterers and perverts [arsenokoi], for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine <sup>11</sup> that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.**

## 1 Thessalonians 4

### *Living to Please God*

**4** Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

<sup>2</sup> For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: **that you should avoid sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, <sup>5</sup> not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. <sup>8</sup> Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.**

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<sup>a</sup>Gen. 2:24