

UNALTERABLE LIFESTYLES

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Dec. 5, 2012

Sermon in a sentence: We need the Spirit of God to empower us to live a lifestyle that pleases Him.

Scriptures: 1 Cor. 6:9-20

1 Cor. 6:9-20 NASB ... do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. 14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. 18 Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Our dealings with everyone we interact with in our world must be characterized by true Christian love! As the people of God, it is very important for us to remember where we are coming from and what He has done for us in transforming us from sinners to saints. If we forget, we can think, speak and act in incredibly hurtful and hateful things.

There is an unfortunate fiction circulating in our popular culture that Christians hate sinners. If we confront certain sins and speak out against them, it is deemed hateful, (sometimes even criminal). Yet nothing could be further from the truth! Yes, we cry out against sin, out of love for sinners, knowing that unless they repent, they will perish. This is like a parent, sibling or friend taking strong action to stop a loved one from going astray or unintentionally hurting themselves.

So, confronting wrong action is not a sign of hatred – it is a sure sign of love. We do not take strong action with people we don't know or care about.

For example, our world is steeped in immorality. Sexual sin is rampant and has touched many people in our families and among our close friends. Let us consider this topic today in light of the Word of God.

There are two aspects of sexual activity we will discuss: *within* the context of marriage and *outside* of the context of marriage. I believe it will be quite easy for us to understand the relevant principles, as the Word of God is totally consistent on this topic from beginning to end.

Firstly, adultery and fornication are sinful acts that should never be committed. Whether it is heterosexual or homosexual fornication, the Word of God prohibits it. “Sex was not made for love”, as one commentator put it, “sex

was made for marriage”.

Heb. 13:4 NASB Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Certainly we recognize the physical sexual union between a woman and her husband as an act of lovemaking, but we must understand that this is strictly reserved for the covenant relationship of marriage between spouses. Sex was never intended by God to be simply an act for pleasure between friends, or the fulfilling of lust or desire. Sex is part of the covenantal relationship between wife and husband.

Therefore, any sexual activity between individuals who are not married to each other is sinful.

With regard to homosexuality, let us consider the following:

Many in our society (and indeed throughout recorded history) have expressed strong sexual desire for those of the same gender: (e.g. pederasty (love of boys) in ancient Greece). Some have made the clear statement that they were born homosexual, so this is their natural state of being. They have never had an attraction to the opposite gender, they were not once heterosexual but now homosexual, nor are they pursuing a particular socio-political agenda. This is just *who* they are and *how* they are.

In fact, there are many homosexuals who have made a strong profession of faith in Jesus Christ and would most definitely describe themselves as Christians. Therefore, they are truly distressed by the treatment they receive from fellow Christians who treat them with disdain, disgust, rejection and condemnation.

I think we would do well to consider once again the outcome and implications of the activities that took place in the Garden of Eden, after Eve and Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This act changed the course of *everything* that followed in history, affecting the ground, the animals, the vegetation, the weather, human beings; even God Himself!

There has been no positive outcome to humanity's fall into sin. Everything that has followed thereafter has been negative, with the sole exception of the salvific activity of God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Sin, sickness and death came to us through the fall. Every selfish and violent act, all treachery and deceit, every malady and disease, all war and greed, all hate and prejudice, all lust and evil desire came upon us through the sin in the Garden.

Therefore, I have no issue believing that there are people who have been born with genetic, physiological, psychological and spiritual conditions that were not of their choosing, or according to God's original plan and design. In fact, the Word of God is all about helping us overcome the great obstacles we face in living the Christian life, due to our human failings. And yes, we *all* have them.

One may say that homosexuality is a sin in and of itself, (vs. heterosexuality), and is an "abomination" in the sight of God, thus making it qualitatively worse than other sins.

As we trace this in scripture, we find that the Hebrew word for abomination: תועבה (tō-w'ê-bāh) used in Lev. 18:22 is the same word used to describe a host of other abominations in the sight of God:

Idolatry (Deut. 7:25); Child sacrifice (Deut. 12:31); Disrespecting God by offering blemished sacrifices (Deut. 17:1); Cross-dressing to deceive others about your gender (Deut. 22:5); Offering proceeds of prostitution to God (Deut. 23:18); Re-marrying a wife you once divorced, who has remarried and been divorced by her next husband (Deut. 24:3); Stealing by using unjust weights and measures (Deut. 25:16); Pride, Lying, Murder, Evil plotting, Causing strike among brethren (Prov. 6:16); and Justifying evil and condemning righteousness (Prov. 17:15).

Coming into the NT, Jesus added another one: the Love of money (Lu. 16:15)!

In other words, sin of any sort is an abomination to the Lord!

Prior to humanity's fall into sin, God instituted marriage, the only relationship in which sexual activity is divinely permitted and endorsed. Certainly, many homosexuals have been quite willing to adopt God's institution of marriage as their way of life, living in a lifelong, covenantal relationship with a same-sex partner. Canadian society and our federal government are generally in agreement with this sentiment and laws have been passed in Parliament to permit such marriages to take place.

Why then, you may ask, do most churches and religious denominations oppose homosexual marriages between loving, committed individuals who were born with a same-gender attraction?

Let us look at the description of marriage throughout the Word of God to find our answer.

Eve was God's creative act to address Adam's need: a woman who would be his helper, companion and "one flesh" partner in procreation.

In fact, every marriage described in the Bible was between a man and a woman, culminating in the marriage of Christ Himself to *His* bride. There is not a single instance of same-gender marriage in the Bible.

References: Gen. 3:20; Gen 19:14; Song 4:9-12; Is. 61:10; Is. 62:5; Joel 2:16; 1 Cor. 7; Rev. 19:7; Rev. 21:2,9 (a very brief sampling of scriptures concerning male and female marriage).

Some have argued that since the Bible does not specifically speak against same-sex marriages, they are therefore permissible. This is called 'an argument from silence', and is the same argument used to condone things like smoking and the use of illicit street drugs.

In fact however, scripture clearly and consistently forbids homosexual relationships:

Lev. 18:22 NASB You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.

Lev. 20:13 NASB If *there is* a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

Rom. 1:26-27 NASB For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

1 Cor. 6:9-10 NASB ... do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Tim. 1:8-10 NASB But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers 10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching...

The biblical injunction for homosexuals is the same as it is for unmarried heterosexuals: do not commit fornication.

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Our world has elevated sexual activity among consenting adults (and even teens) to the status of “need”, as opposed to “desire”. Therefore, anything done to satisfy this “need” is deemed permissible and acceptable. In addition, there is a concerted effort in the secular media to promote and celebrate homosexual relationships. If we were called to simply follow and endorse current social norms, we would have no issues, but as we know we are to be guided by the Word of God, we must speak with a biblical voice.

Therefore, we again assert that marriage according to scripture is only between one man and one woman. Any and all sexual activity outside of monogamous heterosexual marriage is strictly forbidden.

God offers His help to those who are unmarried to live a life of celibacy and purity through the power of His Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11). Our own lack of willpower, our

friends, our society and the media often conspire against us when we attempt to do what is right and pleasing to God. Therefore, we must appeal to Jesus to receive His strength, His empowering, His enabling, and His holiness to live lives that are pleasing in His sight.