

1 CORINTHIANS: MOVING FROM THE CARNAL TO THE SPIRITUAL STATE

Part XII: Countering Current Claims That Homosexuality Can Be Godly

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

I. Introduction

- A. In recent times, even evangelicals are increasingly accepting homosexuality as approved of God: the New York Times reported, "Recent surveys conducted by the Barna Group show that younger 'born again' Christians are more accepting of homosexuality than older ones and are less resistant to affording gays equal rights." ("Emphasis Shifts for New Breed of Evangelicals, by Michael Luo and Laurie Goodstein, May 21, 2007 [nytimes.com/2007/05/21] as cited in Brannon Howse, The Coming Religious Reich, 2015, p. 281)
- B. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 clarifies whether homosexuality is good or evil, so we view it for our insight:

II. Countering Contemporary Claims That Homosexuality Can Be Godly, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

- A. When Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9 KJV wrote that the unrighteous who do not inherit the kingdom of God included the "effeminate" and "abusers of themselves with mankind," conservative theologians have long taught that the "effeminate" were "those who allow themselves to be used unnaturally" as passive catamites in homosexual unions while the "abusers of themselves with mankind" were "active homosexuals," those who take the lead in homosexual relationships, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Corinthians 6:9.
- B. However, efforts today to soften this view in support of homosexuality have led some to claim Paul opposed only "abuses in general" or "pederasty" or "cult prostitution" or "male, bisexual prostitution." (David E. Malick, "The Condemnation of Homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6:9," Bib. Sac. 150 (Oct.-Dec. 1993): 479-92)
- C. Conversely, a study of the Greek words behind the English translation in light of the context reveals that Paul critiqued the active and passive roles of homosexuals and homosexual activities of either gender (as follows):
 - 1. The Greek word the KJV renders "abusers of themselves with mankind" is *arsenokoites*, Ibid., p. 481, and it appears **nowhere** in Classical Greek literature or the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Jesus' era, Ibid., p. 483. This word appears in Scripture only in Paul's letters at 1 Corinthians 6:9, Romans 1:27 and 1 Timothy 1:10. (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 109)
 - 2. Thus, Paul coined the word himself, using the Greek terms in the Septuagint at Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 to describe "men lying with men" in prohibited homosexuality as he united the word *arsen*, a "male," with *koite*, "bed; sexual intercourse." (Ibid., p. 484; Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, The Sept. with Apoc.: Grk. and Eng., 1998, p. 153; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 109, 440-441) Paul meant the word to be "a broad description of mutual, adult, same-sex relationships," Ibid., Malick, p. 484.
 - 3. As for the Greek word behind the KJV term "effeminate," that word is *malakos*, which means "soft," and since by itself it is a morally neutral word, Paul meant it to be defined as a vice by the context, Ibid., p. 487-490. Since *malakos* is connected to *arsenokoites* in this context, *malakos* is the homosexual in the passive, feminine role where *arsenokoites* is the homosexual in the active, masculine role, Ibid., p. 490.
- D. Thus, Paul taught that the unrighteous who do not inherit the kingdom of God include such sinners as the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals in both the passive and the active roles, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers and swindlers, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 ESV.
- E. Paul added that such were some of his readers, but they were washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 6:11. Homosexuality is not an acceptable orientation, nor are homosexual acts acceptable to God, but in line with Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 that condemn homosexuality in its broadest sense, passages Paul had in mind when he wrote 1 Corinthians 6:9, homosexuality is sin, typical of the unrighteousness of those who do not inherit the kingdom of God.

Lesson: (1) Paul clarified that homosexuality in its broadest sense, be it the role of the passive party or the active party in any same-gender relationship, is sin just like any other sin such as general immorality, adultery, stealing, covetousness, substance abuse, reviling and swindling, sins that were typical of those who do not inherit the kingdom of God. (2) However, anyone can be saved from these practices and orientations by faith in Christ.

Application: (1) May we not yield to the world's idea that homosexuality in any form either in orientation or deed is acceptable to God, but that it is sin, and people need to be saved out of such sin by grace through faith in Christ. (2) When interpreting Scripture, may we NOT fall prey to the errant distortions of the truth promoted by biased interpreters bent on supporting some vice, but approach Scripture OBJECTIVELY, letting word usage and the context control our interpretation, that we might understand the TRUTH so as to LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY!