

Essay Series
Homosexuality:
The Case For & Against

Introduction:
Does the Protestant Bible Support
Homosexual Relationships?

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INTRODUCTION

That provocative question is the subject of *The Evangelical Review Theology and Politics* first written debate. Though eschewed by many within and beyond academia, debates have a long and important history amongst people who take truth seriously. Why? Simple, debates have numerous benefits. First, debaters demonstrate intellectual courage by subjecting their ideas to public scrutiny by those familiar with the subject. Too often academics publish their papers certain that they will never be required to engage critics. I was once told by a colleague that academics frequently do not engage critics because to do so would be tantamount to giving their opponents credibility. The authors engaged in this debate have not taken that common but cowardly position.

Second, debates benefit their audience. Having articles side by side allow the opposing views to be seen in stark contrast which aids clarity and apprehension of the material. Finally, debates underscore the Christian principle that truth is not afraid of critical examination. In

today's "Politically Correct" atmosphere which has devolved into the "Cancel Culture", fewer opportunities are available to discuss important and contentious ideas. I am pleased to play a small part in affirming the importance of engaging ideas, even controversial ones.

Paul wrote in Colossians in 2:3, that Christ contained all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In other words, there is no information that, if true, would undermine the authority or person of Jesus Christ. That is why, followers of Jesus never have to fear education or deep thinking. Because if we think correctly, the conclusion will always align with Christ and his word.

The issue for our opposing parties is, "Does the Protestant Bible Support Homosexual/Lesbian Relationships?" The writers were to focus their attention on the correct understanding of Scripture. Both sides were given the opportunity to have additional authors. Both papers were resubmitted following an initial review. The authors were also given an opportunity to have

their papers edited again, but they did not feel there was significant need, so the papers did not undergo additional review. The point is that I wanted to give the author's wide latitude to make their case, not mine. In the interest of transparency, I am not a neutral party on this issue.

Keep in mind that neither side has read the other side's paper. So, do not be surprised if they are not always directly answering each other's claims. I hope that both sides will offer a rebuttal paper following this publication.

As you read these papers, keep the following points in mind.

1. Evaluate the exegetical evidence. Are the sources used of sufficient quality? Does the evidence point in one direction or is it mixed? Is the evidence direct evidence or just implied?

2. Is the interpretive methodology consistent? I think this is one issue many readers, let alone scholars, overlook. Would the authors' exegetical approach or argument yield an acceptable conclusion on a different topic? In other words, would the authors' method affirm or deny the deity of Christ or some other cherished belief? If the methodology for answering this question is different, what is the

basis for using a different method and is the exception justified?

3. How tight is the reasoning and logic? Does the evidence necessarily lead to a conclusion or does it just imply or suggest a conclusion? Have the authors drawn the right conclusion or was another option missed altogether?

4. Did the authors make an exegetical argument or did they make a pragmatic argument? Put differently, did the authors explain what the biblical authors' meant to say? Would the biblical authors actually agree with how their words were being treated?

I am certain that other questions could be raised. The point is that readers have an obligation to consider the articles carefully and with charity. Give the writers the benefit of the doubt if a statement is ambiguous. Try to read them in the best possible light. Be sure you understand the argument before criticizing their comments. In this way, you will understand their position and hopefully your own.

I hope you find these articles stimulating as you reflect on your own faithful walk with Christ.

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