

A Biblical Study on Gender

by Dr. Harley Ihm

Before we begin this study, let me say that this is not an attack on what people call alternative lifestyles. Jesus was criticized for eating with tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners. Jesus said He did not come here as a mission to the saved. He left Heaven to come and seek and save the lost. That was Jesus' priority in life. However, in that mission we see the lady who was caught in adultery. The holy men wanted her stoned to death as the law gave authority to do. However, Jesus interceded and told the holy men that they could stone her to death. He challenged the one who could say he was without sin to throw the first stone. They all went away. Jesus then told her, "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8:11 NIV)

Jesus was loving and compassionate, but He did not pretend that the life she was living was okay. He stepped in to save her and then pointed out that she needed to change. That is true love. He would be lying to her if He told her that everyone sins, so just don't worry about. Be who you are and enjoy life. That would have been hateful, because it would have led to her ultimate judgment in the future. True love does not lie or hide the truth.

So, we need an honest look at what God has taught us about morality, especially concerning gender roles and gender responsibility in His eyes. In today's world, it is easy for people to try to reinterpret the Bible or eliminate passages that disagree with a currently held belief. Often people believe that we have evolved to the point that the Bible does not address these times we are living in, because it was written so long ago.

It is important to realize we have the ultimate guide to life. From our first breath to our last, we have a manual for living that was written by the Creator who transcends all of time. God recorded the beginning and the end of all things. He described to us the new heaven and the new earth that will come when the time is right. It is all recorded in the Bible, the Holy Scriptures.

It is also important to grasp that God stands outside of time and space. He has recorded the events of history from the creation of the world to the final form of our existence. To say God didn't understand what would happen in our generation is to truly not understand God. To choose to not listen to God is idolatry and it will lead us down many different paths, all of which will destroy us and our civilization. Look throughout history and see what has happened to every nation and culture who decided God was not real or not worth listening to. They are gone. Babylon, Persia, Assyria, Rome, The Third Reich, all wiped out. Yet God is still on His throne and in complete control. That is a key truth to grasp as we begin this study on creation and the role of genders and relationships as God created them.

This study is not meant to be critical or judgmental, but simply an honest look at a various passages God has the Biblical writers address in the area of Gender, sexuality and relationships. If we cannot approach our Creator for real answers, we are in deep trouble. I want to begin by saying that we do not need to know how society describes these relationships, but rather how God, our Creator, Savior and Judge describes them.

Let's begin by making certain we understand the context of the writings and teachings. It was given within a specific setting and understanding the times and challenges are critical,

especially since we know that the Holy Spirit is the author who guided all the writing of the 66 letters that make up the Holy Bible. If the Spirit of God who stands outside of time wrote specific teachings to help us remain pure and godly, then we need to take it seriously. Let's begin at the beginning recorded in Genesis.

Genesis – The Beginning of Genders and their purpose

I once had a lady who was in Christian ministry state that she was a lesbian. She argued that no one can say that is not right, because it is how God made her and no one had a right to tell God he made a mistake. She had made the dangerous choice of placing her will above the will of God. She believed she was “Fearfully and wonderfully made...” (Psalm 139:4) as a lesbian by God. She was practicing what is referred to as EISEGESIS, reading meaning INTO the Word of God, rather than using EXEGESIS, obtaining the meaning FROM the Word of God. Eisegesis takes whatever one believes and finds an idea to support it without consideration of context, obtaining the actual meaning

She believed that serving the Lord was her calling to ministry. She also believed that God had created her to be attracted to the same sex. Even if she was faithful to one partner, does that faithfulness make her right in the eyes of God? Could she be moral in this situation? Can we truly live in a personal relationship with Jesus and live an alternate lifestyle? Again, this is the problem with taking our beliefs into our faith life. God alone created all life and it is God alone that has given us His truth to live by. We will not stand before the Lord on what we thought God said or did. It will not matter what our government or our best friends believe. We will stand before the Lord on what He said. True living faith only seeks the mind of God without regard for the man’s opinions on right and wrong, good and evil, love and sin. So, how does Scripture tell us that God created us? What was His design, His blueprint for mankind?

After creating the universe, the solar systems, the sun and moon, the plants, animals, fish and birds, God created man. “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all creatures that move along the ground. So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.’” (Genesis 1:26-27 NIV)

“Let us make Man....” – **’Ādām** – is Hebrew for mankind in the collective sense. It can refer to any given person, male or female. It was like saying, “Let us make mankind in our own image.” So, God goes on to define the specifics of mankind’s creation. God chose to make them male and female.

Male – zakar – Hebrew for male or man

Female – Nēqēbāh – Hebrew for female, rather human or animal.

At the beginning of the creation of the human race, God made one man and one woman to begin the human race. This was God’s design for building His people. Remember that we were created by Him and for Him. Note that God also created the animals male and female and each would only reproduce after its own kind. Then Genesis digresses and goes back to how and why God created female.

God set the man in the Garden of Eden to work the garden and to care for it. However, God was not finished with the creation of mankind. The man is part one. “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’” (Genesis 2:18 NIV) The man, the male alone was not complete. However, there was nothing yet created that could complete man and make all God wanted him to be. God could have created another man to hang out with Adam, but that was not His plan.

“But for Adam, no suitable helper was found. 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. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 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.’” (Genesis 2:20-24 NIV)

Woman – ’Iššāh – woman, wife, bride, female mate. Notice that Adam gives her the name, his wife, bride, his female mate, the one that completes him.

As mankind began to multiply and grow, people started to marry without consideration of the faith of the other person. A husband and wife were to complete one another. Each would make the other stronger and wiser. However, if their mate’s faith was not fully on God, there would be division and unholiness. This disobedience to the Creator caused evil to grow in the hearts of mankind. By the time of Noah, mankind had become evil. “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on earth had become, and that every inclination of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So, the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of God. (Genesis 6:5-8).

God only found 8 people on the entire earth who had not embraced evil. Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives were the only people left who embraced their Creator. God had Noah preach for the entire 120 years it took him and his sons to build the ark. No one would listen to God’s messenger who warned them. When the flood was over, God told Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come. I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.” (Genesis 9:12-16 NIV)

No one has a right to take the sign of God’s covenant and distort and abuse it. That gives us a very clear look at what has happened in the world. In 1978 the Gay rights movement created a flag with the rainbow as the symbol of Gay pride. It has been used blasphemously as a sign of the LBGTQ movement since then. Imagine standing before God trying to defend the perversion of His beautiful creation, claiming it as your symbol of sexual freedom.

After the flood, God told Noah and his family to go out of the ark, rule over all the earth, plants and animals, birds, reptiles, and fish of the sea. He told them to be fruitful and increase in

number to multiply for Him across the earth. As couples, the way mankind was created, they were to once again establish God's presence on earth through His people.

1 Corinthians – Paul addresses immorality and relationships

Paul realizes that men and women have sexual desires. The question has been brought to him about marriage and its role in the New Testament Church. Paul wishes everyone could be like him and focus solely on teaching and planting churches, spreading the Gospel, but he knows that everyone does not have the gift of celibacy. The hormones God created within us can be a blessing or a curse. Therefore, unless someone had the gift of sexual celibacy, they should definitely seek out a spouse and marry. Here are Paul's instructions from God to the people at Corinth.

“Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry. But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

(1 Corinthians 7:1-5 NIV)

Just it was at creation, God's intent is clearly one man and one woman coming together as one flesh to live out our lives. Paul leaves no room for seeking a spouse from the same sex. From the beginning God created man and woman to complete each other.

Romans – God defines and addresses immorality

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Rome around AD 56. Imagine you were there at that time and place. You are living in the midst of a polytheist culture, the worship of many gods. Society is telling you that you can pick the god that best suits your desires. If you want a worship that involves temple prostitutes, you can find that. Religion is a smorgasbord of ideas and beliefs. If you are a holy man, no problem, the prostitutes do not count as actual sin. They are simply there to meet your inner needs that cannot be ignored. Many of the religions involve sexual immorality as a part of their worship. That makes it very convenient to meet erotic desires and call it faith.

Romans was written primarily to the Gentile converts to Christianity to help them understand the one body grafted together as Jew and Gentile becoming one family in Christ. It is critical we understand the culture the Christians were living in that could easily influence the church and pervert their faith. That is why Paul begins this letter being very direct with no concern about using Roman political correctness to censor the truth. Remember, not being politically correct in Rome was a quick death sentence. What Paul teaches from God could be his last words. This was not acceptable teaching in ancient Rome. He could be labeled and cancelled.

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Emperor Claudius (AD 41-54; see Acts 11:28; 18:2) had four wives; his fourth wife, whom he later had executed, practiced prostitution at night. His niece and fifth wife, Agrippina, poisoned him with mushrooms in order to advance her son Nero as emperor since Claudius had adopted Nero in place of his son Britannicus.

Emperor Nero (AD 54-68) likewise descended into a sexual debauchery. Nero married a boy, who played the part of a woman; and Nero had incestuous relations with his mother, Agrippina, whom he later murdered. Nero also married a man, Doryphorus, while he, Nero, played the part of a woman. Paul was not alone in condemning such sexual practices (Rom. 1:26-27); Juvenal, a second-century pagan satirist, did as well. According to church tradition, Nero executed Paul by beheading during the 60s.

Contextual flow of Paul's teaching:

1. Paul establishes the fact that he was set apart as an apostle by Jesus and given the mission to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Verse 6 shares an important insight, “And you also [Gentiles] are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.”
2. Verse 7 adds, “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to belong to Jesus Christ.” Probably referring the Jewish Christians in addition to the Gentile Christians in Rome.
3. Paul thanks God for the Roman Christian’s faith that is evidently so strong it is being talked about all over the world of the early church. He is praying he can come to Rome and teach them deeper truths, impart spiritual gifts and encourage them in their faith.
4. He declares the Gospel is for Jew and Gentile and it is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Habakkuk written around 600 BC predicting this time they are living in when righteousness would be offered to everyone but it would only come through faith.
5. Then Paul addresses the world they are living in to be sure they understand God’s will so they are not in danger of embracing the morality and idolatry of the times. Paul is clearly drawing the line between the morality of the people who truly seek out the true God and those who do not, those who worship false gods.

Word Study to fully comprehend the clear teaching from God through Paul

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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. 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. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 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. 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. 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, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.” 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.” (**Romans 1:19-31 NIV**)

God’s Judgment

- ***Wrath of God of God is being revealed from heaven***
 - **Wrath – *orgē*** – a rational calculated anger, Aristotle referred to it as anger with grief. It was used of God’s anger against Israel in the wilderness that caused them to wander for 40 years and not be able to enter the Promised Land. God’s anger is filled with grief because His creation is suffering. However, His wrath will be carried out.
- ***Against all Godlessness***
 - **Godlessness – *asebeia*** – ungodliness, unpiety, irreverent, disrespectful, any attitude that does not respect and fear God. To lust or desire after ungodly things. Refusing to follow God’s Word. Choosing not to continue in the image of God we were created in.
- ***Against all wickedness***
 - **Wickedness – *adikia*** – evil, wrongdoing, unrighteousness, injustice, it is a failure to act according to what is right, going against God. It is a state of mind that sets itself not to follow God’s will in living out what is moral and ethical.

Summary of God's actions: The anger and punishment of God is being clearly revealed. That anger is brought about by all the ungodliness and evil, wrongdoing, all who want to challenge God's instructions for living, who refuse to live by God's moral and ethical compass. God's anger is filled with grief because His creation is suffering. However, it will be carried out. It is not what God wants, but it is what must be poured out because of those who continue in sin. God does not look the other way and say, "O well, it's the 21st century, what are you gonna do? Everyone is doing it." God's truth stands forever from Creation to the new heaven and earth. God stands outside of time and knows the beginning, the end, and every idea and choice lived out in between. God's teachings on moral and ethical behavior were established at creation and set in place as the standard everyone throughout all history will live by or be judged by. God wants us to have piece and morality is critical to that peace. So, who is God's anger against?

The Actions that Bring Down God's Judgment

- **Suppress**
 - **Suppress – *katechō*** – to restrain, to bind, to hold fast or intensively, a death grip or strangle hold. Note the intensity of restraint or prevention. They are holding intensively, a death grip so that God's truth does not get out and influence others. They are standing between God and man to keep truth silenced.
- **Plain**
 - **Plain – *phaneros*** – clear, visible, plain, to make shine, obvious. These people want to be sure the God's truth is not visible, unclear, distorted and they are working to keep it hidden or rejected.
- **Divine Nature**
 - **Divine nature – *theiotēs*** – divinity, deity used only this one time in Scripture to clearly declare God's divinity. He is the Creator and author and ruler of all life. Within the intricacy of creation from cells, DNA, the universe, the laws of reproduction, the order of the universe and infinite details of life, we see the overwhelming abilities of God that can only come from deity, not from man and certainly not by an accident in space and time. Without a Creator there is no space and time. In creation we see and somewhat understand our Creator and giver of life.
- **Did not Glorify God**
 - **Glorified - *doxazō*** – to give praise and honor, to glorify, to recognize, giving honor to that which is excellent and powerful. It signifies and opinion. We form an opinion of God. It is to refuse to recognize and stand in awe of the Almighty God.
- **Those under God's anger did not give thanks to God**
 - **Give thanks – *eucharisteō*** – to render gratitude, to thank, to show oneself to be grateful. We do not even live or breath were it not for God. These people had no thanks to God for the life He gave them. They are indifferent to all around them that God has created.

- ***The thinking of those under God's anger was futile***
 - **Futile – *mataioō*** – given over to worthlessness, to make vain. Used only this one time to reflect the change due to rejecting the knowledge of God. They reject the knowledge of God to embrace the knowledge of society or the practices they prefer. They are setting themselves up to their own god and do not reason from truth.
- ***The thinking of those under God's anger had foolish hearts***
 - **Foolish - *asynetos*** – senseless, dull, without understanding, without insight or discernment. A lack of mental perception thereby darkening the heart. The more they look away from God for truth, the duller and more insensitive their understanding becomes.
 - **hearts - *kardia*** – desire, feelings, affections, the heart, the mind, the seat of emotions. It shapes who we are and what we think and do. The inner depth and emotions that make us who we are have been turned over to a senseless understanding of truth.
- ***The thinking of those under God's anger exchanged the truth of God for something else and gave up wisdom to embrace being a fool***
 - **Exchanged – *allassō*** – to change, trade, replace, trading out God's truth for an alternate truth, embracing nothing more than foolish ideas as truth. Setting themselves, their societal norms, their desires as the source of truth is trading wisdom for foolishness. They have traded truth for lies.

Summary - The root cause of their behavior: They refused to look at all creation, the perfection, the balance and see the hand of God. They would not think about giving thanks and affection to a Creator. They were in effect only seeing themselves as god. To deny God is to set yourself up as deity. Today we see the damage that continues from that thinking when the created sees themselves as the creator. Evolution pushed God aside in an effort to explain life without the need for a creator. When the human mind and thought is seen as the source of truth, our thinking becomes vain, selfish, egotistical, and worthless. We only dig ourselves a deeper and deeper hole to live in. This selfish ungodly thinking dulls our heart and emotions and begins to shape and mold us into an image that is not of God. It is pure idolatry. The truth of God that gives life is traded for vanity and foolish ideas that have no hope, only self-destruction. Sadly, they will take others with them on their path and God is angered at all who will not be what they were created to be, all who will not share in eternity with Him. Anyone who sets their own ideas and truth about God's will bring about God's wrath for destroying what He has created.

Paul is first speaking of mankind in general in v. 18, but as he goes on, he has Gentiles specifically in view. He weighs up the Hellenistic society of his day and finds it wanting. Everywhere is chaos. Animals have become gods, man has become woman, wrong has become right. Nature without the true God has become unnatural. The Creator has been rejected and creation is in chaos: for the apostle these two facts are cause and effect. The absence of truth is not God's fault: it has been deliberately suppressed. 'There is no possible defense' (NEB) for the non-Jew. God has shown enough of Himself in the natural world for men to be unable to plead ignorance. The natural world is a window through which God has shown part of Himself to man, through which thinking man may 'see' His unseen power and

‘divineness’ (Knox. The NEB brings out the paradoxical play on words). *New International Bible Commentary*

I was listening to a deep discussion between this Jewish man and a very famous atheist and evolutionist. The Jewish man kept pushing the fact that all creation, the universe had to start somewhere. The atheist was absolutely certain there was no creator. It was all fairy dust. Finally, when pressed for a beginning point, he said that he had no idea but it could be some extraterrestrial life planted the seeds on earth to start civilization. Great! So, who created the aliens that brought the human seeds to plant on earth?

The Behaviors that Brought God’s Judgment

- *Foolishness was embracing images made to look like mortal man, birds, animals and reptiles*
 - **Look like** – *homoiōma* – likeness, looking like, image, a form, appearance
- *Sinful desires*
 - **Sinful desires** – *epithymia* – coveting, craving, lusting, longing. These are a form of self-worship because it places someone’s needs about others.
- *Sexual impurity*
 - **Sexual impurities** – *akatharsia* – impurities, moral and physical uncleanness. Uncleanness kept you from being able to worship God. These are sexual in nature. They contradict the basic order of creation that sex is a part of a marriage relationship where a man and woman choose to become one to complete each other’s life until they die. Marriage is a covenant relationship between a man and woman. Seeking selfish sexual desires outside of marriage is sexually impure.
- *Degrading of their bodies*
 - **Degrading of** – *atimazō* – to dishonor, disgrace, treat shamefully, to insult the body. Sexual immorality, sex outside the design of God is a degrading of our body. That is just as true of male female sexual relations outside of marriage as it is homosexual. It is not God’s design.
- *Worshiped and served created things*
 - **Created things** – *ktisis* – creation, things made, used of God’s creation and also of human creation. They were devoted to things created by God, but gave Him no glory or recognition and well as created things, like human beings, statues, etc. It is an embracing of humanism; we are our own creator and we serve one another. Society is seen as the true source of life and meaning.
- *Shameful lusts*
 - **Shameful** – *atimia* – dishonoring, shameful, disgraceful + lusts 4079 – $\pi\alpha\theta\sigma$, pathos – lust, sexual passion – a sexual passion that is not normal, but is disgraceful and dishonoring to our creation and to our Creator. Again, there is the natural created lust of a husband and wife for each other. To take the sexual passion outside of marriage is a shameful lust that is never satisfied.
- *Women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones*
 - **Women** – *thelys* - female, pertaining to women + exchanged – traded + **natural relations** – *chrēsis* – relationships, functions – The function

of a woman with a woman as a couple is not a natural relationship. They traded what God created, natural relationships for completing someone (Genesis 2), for unnatural ones, only serving their own desires. They are embracing what they have created sexually and replacing what God created. This was a lesbian relationship.

- ***Men abandoned natural relations with women***
 - **Abandoned** – *aphiēmi* – to cancel, to leave or abandon. Men have replaced God's design of a natural relationship where a man and woman sexually and emotionally complete one another and replace it with another relationship they have created. Another example of setting themselves up as god.
- ***Men were inflamed with lust for one another***
 - **Lust** – *orexis* – desire, lust. The men were sexually lustfully desiring another man to complete them.
- ***Men committing indecent acts with other men and earned the due penalty for their perversion***
 - **perversion – plane.** Wandering, forsaking the right path. Scripture, doctrine and morals are never divided. When there is not doctrine, Scripture is not followed and therefore morals are not in alignment with Scripture, the path leads them to indecent acts and the penalty from God for their refusing to follow His truth. To walk your own path leads to perversion and unholiness, in this case male homosexuality.
- ***They did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God***
 - **Think it worthwhile** – *dokimazō* – to prove, to make a deliberate choice. They thought it was worthless to allow God to supply the knowledge for their choices. The knowledge of God was deemed not worth their time because it would contradict their unnatural desires and relationships.
- ***He gave them over to a depraved mind***
 - **Depraved** – *adokimos* – impure, unfit + mind – ***nous*** – the seat of emotions, the way of thinking and feeling. God stepped back and let them believe what they were obviously going to apart from truth. They are embracing impure feelings and emotions that make them who they are and embrace what they have chosen apart from God's truth.
- ***A depraved mind would do what ought not be done***
 - Do - present active infinitive – continually present activity, an ongoing lifestyle - *poieō* – to practice + not to be done – *kathēkō* – that which ought to be, that which is fitting and proper and then the word NOT added to it. They are continually doing things that are not proper or fitting sexually in their homosexual relationships. Unless they wake up and repent, God's voice will have no presence in their life and beliefs.

Summary - The Results of their thinking: They began to worship images, animals, reptiles. Throughout history the ignorance and selfishness has led to worshiping the sun, moon, stars, constellations, Venus, fire, mother earth, the stars, a golden calf, the Apis bull in Egypt, emperors, Satan, Odin, Marduk. Marduk was the god who defeated Tiamat and the forces of Chaos to create the world (Mesopotamia myth). They worshiped Aphrodite of the Greeks, Isis of the Egyptians, Venus of the Romans, Hindu belief system contains 330 million gods, and the history of seeking other gods goes on and on. We have to include that setting ourselves up as our own god is still prevalent today, even in America.

The context demands we address the gods in Rome during the time Paul wrote Romans. It was a heavily polytheistic culture. They embrace the Greek gods. Every time Rome conquered a people, they added their gods to the collection. Paganism in a variety of forms was prevalent in local cults. Greek mythology had gained wide acceptance, and divination was common. So-called mystery religions from the East promised devotees to receive immortality, direct revelation, and approach to the gods through mystic rites. These religions spread throughout the empire. Popular in the early centuries C.E. were the cults of the Egyptian god Serapis and goddess Isis, the Syrian fish-goddess Atargatis, and the Persian sun-god Mithra.

The Bible book of Acts clearly portrays the pagan atmosphere surrounding early Christianity. For instance, the Roman proconsul of Cyprus kept company with a Jewish sorcerer. (Acts 13:6, 7) In Lystra local people mistook Paul and Barnabas for the Greek gods Hermes and Zeus. (Acts 14:11-13) When he was in Philippi, Paul had an encounter with a servant girl who practiced divination. (Acts 16:16-18) In Athens the apostle remarked that its inhabitants ‘seemed to be more given to the fear of the deities than others were.’ In that city, he had also seen an altar inscribed “To an Unknown God.” (Acts 17:22, 23) Residents of Ephesus worshipped the goddess Artemis. (Acts 19:1, 23, 24, 34) Domitian, emperor from 81 to 96 C.E., was the first Roman ruler to demand worship as a god. Christians in Rome need to know there are not many choices to consider. There is only one source of truth who will lead you down a righteous path. Do not listen to the culture around you. That is critical for us today. Truth comes from God alone or our behavior will not be God’s will. If we do not seek out our Creator for truth and wisdom, our path will be dark and displeasing to God.

Summary: Worshiping false gods brings about God’s judgment. It can lead us, as it did those mentioned who were likely influenced by the pagan worship in Rome, to immorality as a way of life and worship. God specifically lists the natural creation relationship of male and female completing each other.

For a man to lust for a man or a woman for a woman, is unacceptable, depraved and perverse affection and homosexuality is not acceptable and angers our Creator. Imagine equally how it would appear to God for a man or woman to tell him they had decided to change their gender. How does one tell the God of creation that you are wiser about who which gender you should be than the One who knit you together in your mother’s womb and had a plan for your life? It does not matter what society believes.

Rome was a haven for homosexuality in the days of the early church. It was expected and socially acceptable for a freeborn Roman man to want sex with both female and male

partners, as long as he took the penetrative role. The morality of the behavior depended on the social standing of the partner, not gender *per se*. Both women and young men were considered normal objects of desire, but outside marriage a man was supposed to act on his desires with only slaves, prostitutes (who were often slaves), and the *infames*.

Gender did not determine whether a sexual partner was acceptable, as long as a man's enjoyment did not encroach on another man's integrity. It was immoral to have sex with another freeborn man's wife, his marriageable daughter, his underage son, or with the man himself; sexual use of another man's slave was subject to the owner's permission.

The culture was not to creep into the church. Do not listen to the times, listen to the Creator of time.

List of Actions God Despises

(Note that these are in addition to the immoral actions listed)

- *A list of what God despises*
 - **every kind of wickedness – adikia** – evil, wrongdoing, unrighteousness, injustice, it is a state of mind that refuses to listen to God's truth, a failure to act according to what is right, going against God.
 - **evil – ponēros** – sorrow, pain, badness, malicious, wicked, evil in a moral or spiritual sense. To have an evil nature. Satan is the author of all ponēros in the world. Those who have an evil nature are following Satan whether they realize it or not. He is their god.
 - **greed – pleonexia** – to covet, to be greedy, a love of money or a love of sins of the flesh, love of immorality. Greed does not care who it hurts as long as it is satisfied.
 - **depravity – kakia** – depravity, wickedness, malice, evil which leads to envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice
 - **gossips – psithyristēs** – a whisper, a secret slanderer who quietly works behind the scenes to slander another person. They are the worst because they are covert slanderers.
 - **slanderers – katalalos** – to speak against, to defame, to speak against a person in such a way as to malign or discredit them (modern day – to bad mouth), to intentionally destroy someone's good name.
 - **God-haters** – the atheist and all who set themselves against Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord are God haters. Jesus came to tell us that there is one way ONLY to the Father and that is through the Son. Anyone with another way is a liar and a false witness to truth.
 - **insolent – hybristēs** – mistreating others for pleasures or personal gain with no concern for those they are hurting or taking advantage of. God hates people who mistreat other people to gain pleasure or success. It is against the nature of God who sacrifices for us.

- **arrogant** – *hyperēphanos* – to shine proud, to show arrogance, often associated with rejecting God. Choosing to live as if we are wiser than our Creator, ignoring His truth and wisdom.
- **boastful** – *alazōn* – someone who wanders about bragging, charlatan, anyone who overblown pompous, self- promotions, grossly exaggerate to make themselves look good, a blow-hard, wind-bag, those who make false promises to serve themselves.
- **invent ways of doing evil, disobey their parents** – *apeithēs* - stubborn, disobedient, refusing to be persuaded, hard-headed
- **senseless** – *asynetos* – without insight, lacking judgment, a lack of mental perception or moral acuity, the inability to ‘get-it’ They do not care to listen and analyze God’s wisdom.
- **faithless** – *asynthetos* - A truce breaker, refusing to abide by agreements, someone who cannot be trusted to keep their word.
- **heartless** – *astorgos* – without natural love, without natural affections, brutal, heartless
- **ruthless** - *aneleēmōn* – without mercy or compassion, unconcerned about the they get what they want.
- **Those who follow this morality while knowing God’s righteous decree deserve death.**
 - Righteous decree – *dikaiōma* – righteous ordinance or requirement, the required rule of conduct from God, an express standard and rule for righteous conduct.
- **Those who approve of others who are also practicing this immorality deserve death.**
 - Practice - present active participle - *prassō* – to choose to do something. In this instance it is approving of others practicing immorality as a way of life. It is a mindset of joining in with others and all approving of immorality that angers God.
- **He moves on to say live out your faith, do not judge others but leave it up to God who will take care of the justice side of things.** When those around us live this lifestyle, it is not our place to judge them and rail against them, God alone will handle that. They are not choosing to live by God’s wisdom and truth and therefore are not saved and their worldview is not God’s truth. Therefore, our role is to see them as lost and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd and try to lead them to Christ. Only after embracing Jesus and God’s truth and having the Holy Spirit will they be able to listen to God and change their morality and ethics. Our worldview aligns our morals and ethics with God’s truth or the world’s deception.

Notice: These are other areas of life and choice where selfish desires turn us from being made in the image of God. Any form of idolatry is a dangerous path to take. These are all areas of our life to check and allow God to correct if need be. God’s anger extends beyond homosexuality to all selfish behavior. Notice that joining the crowd and approving of these behaviors is also an affront to God.

Application of Romans 1

- We understand God’s teaching on living a moral and ethical life.

- We realize that to embrace anything or anyone in place of the Creator of all life is idolatry that can lead us down many different roads that pervert the life God created us to live.
- We live and teach what is true and do not waiver. God forgive us if we know someone has a disease that will cost them their eternity and we remain silent.
- We realize that those whose lifestyle is following these moral and ethical choices pointed out by the Holy Spirit are living against the will of God and are therefore lost.
- We approach these lifestyles as we would anyone who does not know Jesus as Lord.
- We realize they have been lied to by the father of lies and need our compassion for being caught up in his evil rebellion against God.
- We do not embrace or make excuses for the behaviors that anger God.
- We teach truth when we can yet love everyone. Without love we cannot help anyone see.
- If it is a Christian who has fallen into this ungodly lifestyle, listen to James. “My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19-20).
- We love, teach in love and pray for the outcome.

God's list of actions that will cause omission from Heaven

“Or 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***, nor thieves, nor ***the covetous***, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 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. (1 Corinthians 6:9–11 NASB)

The unrighteous (adikos) – unjust, unrighteous, failure to maintain justice and right conduct. Those who live according to their own conception of value and fairness. In the list of right conduct, these are related to morality and gender injustice. This is critical information because these actions are listed as actions that will keep them from inheriting the kingdom of God. It does not matter what society says on the matter. Our Creator is our Savior and His terms are final. People often feel that society has changed, that there is a new normal. However, homosexuality and prostitution, as well as stealing, drunkenness and crooked people cheating others has been around for most of history. The Greek and Roman cultures were full of this lifestyle and embraced it just as many do today.

- **fornicators** – a male prostitute; also used for all those who commit sexual immorality.
- **Adulterers** – ***moichos***, extramarital sexual unfaithfulness.
- **Effeminate** - ***malakos*** - This term literally means soft. It could be used of clothing (cf. Matt. 11:8). When applied metaphorically of persons it referred to male prostitutes, usually young men.

- **Homosexuals – *arsenokoitēs*** – sodomite, one who abuses themselves with mankind. One who engages in homosexual acts. A sexual deviant.

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: **immorality, impurity, sensuality**, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” **(Galatians 5:19–21 NASB)**

- **Immorality – *porneia*** – harlotry, adultery, incest, used figurative of idolatry.
- **Impurity – *akatharsia*** – physical and moral uncleanness
- **Sensuality – *aselgeia*** – filthy, lasciviousness, wantonness, madness, debauchery, perversion

” For this you know with certainty, that no **immoral** or **impure** person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.” **(Ephesians 5:5 NASB)**

- **Immoral - *pornos – pornos*** – a male prostitute; also used for all those who commit sexual immorality.
- **Impure – *akarthartos*** – impure, unclean, immoral, foul, wicked

“But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, 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 and **immoral** men and **homosexuals** and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

(1 Timothy 1:9-11 NASB)

- **Immoral - *pornos – pornos*** – a male prostitute; also used for all those who commit sexual immorality.
- **Homosexuals - *arsenokoitēs*** – sodomite, one who abuses themselves with mankind. One who engages in homosexual acts. A sexual deviant, a sodomite. (In Sodom, all the men of the town came and wanted to have sex with the men who came to see Lot).

“But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and **immoral** persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part *will be* in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” **(Revelation 21:8 NASB)**

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the **immoral** persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

(Revelation 22:12-15 NASB)

- **Immoral persons - *pornos*** – a male prostitute; also used for all those who commit sexual immorality.

In a time when society is embracing morality that is not what God has set forth for us, we are in great danger. There is a glimpse of this behavior recorded in Revelation 17. This imagery depicts what has been happening throughout time. Evil is the great prostitute who leads people to her bed to embrace her. All the time this evil is destroying lives, nations and cultures, dragging them to embrace her and not the God who created and loves them. God never laid down the definitions of sexuality, morality and immorality to manipulate us. He laid them down clearly because He loves us deeply and wants us to see the sickness that will consume us, if we listen to the lies that are prostituting people.

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke to me. “Come,” he said, “I will show you the condemnation and punishment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality and the earth’s inhabitants got drunk with the wine of her immorality.” So, he carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and there I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that that was full of blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. Now the woman was dressed in purpose and scarlet clothing, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She held in her hand a golden cup filled with detestable things and unclean things from her sexual immorality. On her forehead was written a name, a mystery: “Babylon the Great, the Mother of prostitutes and of the detestable things of the earth. **(Revelation 17:1-6 NASB)**

Ever since Cain killed his brother Abel out of selfish greed, mankind has continually turned away from their Creator to be their own God. God is not impressed with a faith that ignores His teachings that are all out of love to help us become all He created us to be. To ignore God’s truth in areas of life we do not like or our friends convince us are good, is to drink the wine of the Great Prostitute who has been serving it up since those days in the Garden of Eden when Satan offered man the fruit that would destroy us.

It is important to see that in these lists that address morality within all genders, the adulterer shares the same fate as a homosexual or any sexually promiscuous and immoral behavior. Jesus clearly told us that we cannot serve two Masters. Either our Master we choose to serve is the Lord Almighty and we choose to live By His truth, or we serve the world and the Prince of this World. We drink the wine that will destroy us and keep us from inheriting eternal life with our Creator and Lord.

Those are the only two choices. It is the prince of this world that has taken human sexuality and made it something that was not part of creation. God has taught us the beauty of true love through the Song of Songs (Solomon). He teaches us about the sexuality of a husband and wife in First Corinthians. He teaches us about the roles of the husband and wife and the children, about godly parenting in Ephesians and Colossians. It is always the union of one man and one woman coming together as one flesh. The standard is clearly set when God created woman and made this union for all mankind. ***“For this reason a man shall leave***

his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24 NASB). This is God’s original and only plan for mankind for all ages.

When we embrace what God calls immorality and call it freedom, we have embraced darkness. Sexuality is a blessing created by God to raise up godly children and to bless our lives as we together are fulfilled and one flesh. It is a holy union that represents the union between the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To use our bodies in an unholy manner is to treat our God with contempt and disrespect, to try and serve two masters. That is impossible and will destroy us. No government choices, no church board decisions, nothing can change what God has created and taught. We will live and be judged by our choices to follow God’s plan or choose our own.